



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

DATE: July 9, 2012

TO: Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), OMB

THROUGH: Kate Mullan

FROM: Linda-Byrd Johnson *Linda Byrd-Johnson*
Director, Student Service, Office of Postsecondary Education

The Department of Education's (Department) Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) published a Notice of Proposed Priorities (NPP) in the Federal Register on June 1, 2012 (Vol. 77, Pages 32612-32621) seeking public comment on the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) College Savings Account Demonstration Project. The public comment period ends on July 2, 2012. The purpose of this memorandum is to request that the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) expedite the clearance of the collection package so that awards can be made by the end of the fiscal year.

Need for Expedited Review

The NPP was published in the Federal Register without a Paperwork Reduction Act burden section unfortunately. Therefore, the NPP related collection, 1840-0821, Gear Up, needs a separate 30-day Federal Register Notice (FRN) to solicit public comment on the collection packages. That is, since this is a discretionary grant application, the first 60-day FRN comment period is waived under this process. The NPP informs the public that the successful grantees would be required to select GEAR UP participants who will be in the 9th grade during the 2013-2014 academic year. We believe it is important that we make the awards prior to the end of the 2012 fiscal year to ensure that the College Savings Account Demonstration Project yields data necessary to assess the effectiveness of pairing federally supported college savings accounts with GEAR UP activities as part of an overall college access and success strategy. Making the awards in fiscal year 2012, would allow successful grantees to immediately use federal funds to open the accounts for the 9th graders and provide opportunity for GEAR UP participants and their parents to match the funds over a four-year period.

We hope OIRA will expedite review of the GEAR UP College Savings Account Demonstration Project collection package. We plan to have the collection package available for review within a week of the end of the public comment period. Our current plan is to have the final Notice Inviting Applications published in the Federal Register on or before August 17, 2012 with application due date of September 17, 2012. Please feel free to contact James Davis at (202) 502-7802 in case you need additional information.