

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202-6450**

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/index.html>

**FY 2017
APPLICATION FOR GRANTS
UNDER THE GAINING EARLY AWARENESS
AND READINESS FOR
UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS (GEAR UP)
STATE GRANTS**

CFDA Number 84.334S

FORM APPROVED

OMB No. 1840-0821, Expiration Date: 09/30/2018



**DATED MATERIAL – OPEN IMMEDIATELY
CLOSING DATE: April 24, 2017**

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) program. We are pleased to provide the application package for the fiscal year (FY) 2017 GEAR UP State grant competition. Included in this application package are the program statute and regulations, and the instructions and forms needed to submit a complete state application package to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) through Grants.gov.

The GEAR UP program is designed to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP provides six- or seven-year grants to States to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools and through the first year of college. The required services include: providing information regarding financial aid for postsecondary education to participating students in the cohort, encouraging student enrollment in rigorous and challenging curricula and coursework, and improving the number of participating students who obtain a secondary school diploma and complete applications for and enroll in a program of postsecondary education. State grantees must also use GEAR UP funding to provide scholarships to students unless the State demonstrates that it has other means of providing the students with financial assistance. The statute also identifies a range of permissible activities to which State grantees can direct GEAR UP funding.

This letter highlights a few items in the FY 2017 application package that will be important to you in applying for grants under this program. You should review the entire application package carefully before preparing and submitting your application. Information on the GEAR UP program is accessible at the Department's Web site at:

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/gearup/index.html>

In the FY 2017 competition, there are three competitive preference priorities. Under the competitive preference priorities, an applicant is eligible to receive up to an additional nine points based on the degree to which an applicant proposes to meet the priorities. For additional information about the FY 2017 priorities, refer to the Federal Register Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards (Notice) for FY 2017 in this application booklet.

Please be sure to review thoroughly this entire application booklet for information concerning the GEAR UP program. Applicants should pay particular attention to the section entitled "Competition Highlights" that outlines program and competition details.

The Department is requiring that applications for FY 2017 grants under the GEAR UP program be submitted electronically using Grants.gov. You are urged to acquaint yourself with the

requirements of Grants.gov early. A more thorough discussion is included in the application package. Grants.gov is accessible through its portal page at: <http://www.grants.gov>.

We also urge you to consider the following if you are planning to apply for this program:

1. We strongly encourage you to register in Grants.gov early. The registration procedures may require 5 or more days to complete.
2. We strongly recommend that you **submit your application 2-3 days prior to the closing date**. The time it takes to upload an application will vary depending on a number of factors, including the size of the files and the speed of your Internet connection. The application submission process must be completed prior to the deadline for transmittal of applications.
3. In order to submit successfully, you must remember to provide on your application, the DUNS number that was used when your organization registered with the System for Awards Management (SAM).

Please carefully review the enclosed materials regarding eligibility and program requirements. Also, please note that GEAR UP grantees are obligated to provide at least 50 percent of the total project cost (a dollar-for-dollar match) from State, local, institutional, or private funds in the form of cash or documented in-kind contributions.

The Notice published in the Federal Register is the official document describing the requirements for applying for a GEAR UP State grant and provides application submission procedures. You should not rely upon any information that is inconsistent with the guidance contained within the official document.

We appreciate your interest in the GEAR UP program. For further information regarding the project, please contact Karmon.Simms-Coates, the GEAR UP Program Lead, at (202) 453-7917 or karmon.simms-coates@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/Signed/

Adam Kissel
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Higher Education Programs

COMPETITION HIGHLIGHTS

1. Purpose of the Program

GEAR UP is a discretionary grant program which encourages applicants to provide support and maintain a commitment to eligible low-income students, including students with disabilities, to assist the students in obtaining a secondary school diploma and preparing for and succeeding in postsecondary education.

2. Eligible Applicants

The Governor of the State must designate, in writing, the eligible State entity that can apply for a GEAR UP State grant on behalf of the State.

3. Competitive Preference Priorities

In FY 2017, and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applicants from this competition, these priorities are competitive preference priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c) (2) (i) we award up to an additional nine points to an application depending on how well the application meets these priorities. These priorities are:

Competitive Preference Priority 1: The Secretary shall give priority to an eligible applicant for a State GEAR UP grant that has both: (a) Carried out a successful State GEAR UP grant prior to August 14, 2008, determined on the basis of data (including outcome data) submitted by the applicant as part of its annual and final performance reports, and the applicant's history of compliance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements; and (b) A prior, demonstrated commitment to early intervention leading to college access through collaboration and replication of successful strategies. We will award up to an additional 2 points for this competitive preference priority depending on how well the application meets the priority.

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Projects designed to reduce the need for remedial education for secondary school students, including students with disabilities, at the postsecondary level. We award up to five additional points to an application, depending on how well the application meets this priority.

Competitive Preference Priority 3: Projects designed to implement at least one strategy supported by evidence of effectiveness that meets the conditions set out in the definition of "moderate evidence of effectiveness." We award two points to an application that meets this priority.

4. Electronic Submission of Applications

GEAR UP applications submitted for the FY 2017 competition must be submitted electronically using Grants.gov, that is accessible through its portal page at:

<http://www.grants.gov>

You are urged to acquaint yourself with the requirements of Grants.gov early as the registration procedures may require 5 or more days to complete. A more thorough discussion is included later in this application package. For technical support regarding Grants.gov, please email Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or by telephone at 1-800-518-4726. Also, refer to “Grants.Gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants” found in this application booklet.

Please note, once you download an application from Grants.gov, you will be working offline and saving data on your computer. Please be sure to note where you are saving the Grants.gov file on your computer. You will need to log on to Grants.gov to upload and submit the application.

You must provide on your application the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number that was used when your organization registered with the System for Award Management (SAM).

Electronic submission of applications is required; therefore, you must submit an electronic application unless you follow the procedures outlined in the Federal Register Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards (Notice) and qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirements. If you think you may need an exception, you are urged to review the requirement promptly.

Please note that you must submit your application by 4:30:00 p.m. (Washington, D.C. time) on or before the application deadline date. Late applications will not be accepted. We suggest that you submit your application several days before the deadline. The Department is required to enforce the established deadline to ensure fairness to all applicants. No changes or additions to an application will be accepted after the deadline date and time.

5. **Format of Application**

Applicants must double space the application narrative and use a font that is either 12-point or larger. Charts, tables, figures, and graphs must also be double spaced; however, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions may be single spaced. The following fonts are required to be used: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial.

Applications submitted in any other font, including Times Roman and Arial Narrow, will not be accepted.

All attachments must be in PDF format only. Other file types of files will not be accepted.

6. **GEAR UP Program-Specific Forms**

The following forms are specific to the GEAR UP program and should be reviewed

carefully to ensure the accuracy of the information submission. Additional information on these documents is provided in this application package.

- ❑ Students To Be Served Form
- ❑ Project Budget Summary Form (and Detailed Budget Narrative)
- ❑ Applicant Organization Identification Form and Cost Share Worksheet
- ❑ Partner Identification Form and Cost Share Worksheet
- ❑ Documentation of Student Eligibility for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
- ❑ Program Profile Sheet

Please note that more detailed instructions for attaching these forms are covered in the “INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION PACKAGE” section of the application.

7. **Page Limit**

The Notice for new awards for FY 2017, published in the Federal Register, contains specific information governing page limits for each grant type and formatting instructions. **The total page limit for the application narrative for the FY 2017 GEAR UP competition is 40 pages. Competitive preference priorities may include up to four additional pages for each priority.**

8. **Project Abstract**

The project abstract is limited to one page, single spaced. The abstract should include: applicant name, information about the project’s goals and objectives, number of students to be served, the target school(s), a list of partners, and the activities and services that will be implemented during the six- or seven-year performance period.

9. **Selection Criteria**

The selection criteria in EDGAR 34 CFR part 75 sections 75.209(a) and 75.210 are used to evaluate applications. The selection criteria and maximum possible points are included in the Notice.

10. **Notice to Successful Applicants**

The Department’s Office of Legislation and Congressional Affairs will inform the Congress regarding applications approved for new GEAR UP program grants. Successful applicants will receive award notices electronically shortly after the Congress is notified. No funding information will be released before the Congress is notified.

11. **Notice to Unsuccessful Applicants**

Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing following the notice to successful applicants.

12. Annual Performance Report Requirements

If you receive an FY 2017 new grant award, you will be required to submit annual and final performance reports during the six- or seven-year funding cycle using an Internet-based reporting system. This online system collects narratives and data about funded projects, to enable program specialists to determine if a grantee is making substantial progress toward meeting approved project objectives. The Annual Performance Report used for this program can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/index.html>

State grantees providing scholarships must report, annually to the Secretary, information on Federal and non-Federal reserved funds held for GEAR UP scholarships and the disbursement of these funds to eligible students until these funds are fully expended or returned to the Secretary.

13. Contact Information

For GEAR UP program-related questions and assistance, please contact:

Program Lead: Karmon Simms-Coates
Address: Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for
Undergraduate Programs
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Room 5W250
Washington, D.C. 20202
Telephone: (202) 453-7917
Fax: (202) 260-7464
E-mail Address: karmon.simms-coates@ed.gov

For technical support regarding Grants.gov, please contact:

Telephone: (800) 518-4726
E-mail: support@grants.gov
Grants.gov Contact Center is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except federal holidays.
Also, refer to “Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants” found in this application booklet.

You are reminded that the information published in the Notice is the official document, and that you should not rely upon any information that is inconsistent with the guidelines contained within the official document.

IMPORTANT – PLEASE READ FIRST

U.S. Department of Education

Grants.gov Submission Procedures and Tips for Applicants

To facilitate your use of Grants.gov, this document includes important submission procedures you need to be aware of to ensure your application is received in a timely manner and accepted by the Department of Education.

Browser Support

The latest versions of Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE), Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, and Apple Safari are supported for use with Grants.gov. However, these web browsers undergo frequent changes and updates, so we recommend you have the latest version when using Grants.gov. Legacy versions of these web browsers may be functional, but you may experience issues.

For additional information or updates, please see the Grants.gov Browser information in the Applicant FAQs: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html#browser>.

ATTENTION – Adobe Forms and PDF Files Required

Applications submitted to Grants.gov for the Department of Education will be posted using Adobe forms. Therefore, applicants will need to download the latest version of Adobe Reader. Information on computer and operating system compatibility with Adobe and links to download the latest version is available on Grants.gov at this link: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>. We strongly recommend that you review these details on www.Grants.gov before completing and submitting your application. In addition, applicants should submit their application a day or two in advance of the closing date as detailed below. Also, applicants are required to upload their attachments in .pdf format only. (See details below under “Attaching Files – Additional Tips.”) If you have any questions regarding this matter, please email the Grants.gov Contact Center at support@grants.gov or call 1-800-518-4726.

NEW: In addition to the Adobe form application package, Grants.gov now offers a new option called Workspace for application completion and submission. Workspace allows a team of registered Grants.gov applicants to use a shared online space for completing individual forms and submitting the final application. These forms can be filled out simultaneously by different users, instead of exchanging a single PDF package file via email or a flash drive as is used when completing the traditional Adobe application package. Please go to this Grants.gov link for more information and training, etc. on using Workspace: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>.

- **REGISTER EARLY** – Grants.gov registration involves many steps including registration on SAM (www.sam.gov) which may take approximately one week to complete, but could take upwards of several weeks to complete, depending upon the completeness and accuracy of the data entered into the SAM database by an applicant. You may begin working on your application while completing the registration process, but you cannot submit an application until all of the Registration steps are complete. Please note that once your SAM registration

is active, it will take 24-48 hours for the information to be available in Grants.gov, and before you can submit an application through Grants.gov. For detailed information on the Registration Steps, please go to: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>. [Note: Your organization will need to update its SAM registration annually.]

Primary information about SAM is available at www.sam.gov. However, to further assist you with obtaining and registering your DUNS number and TIN in SAM or updating your existing SAM account, the Department of Education has prepared a SAM.gov Tip Sheet which you can find at: <http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/sam-faqs.html>.

- **SUBMIT EARLY – We strongly recommend that you do not wait until the last day to submit your application. Grants.gov will put a date/time stamp on your application and then process it after it is fully uploaded.** The time it takes to upload an application will vary depending on a number of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection, and the time it takes Grants.gov to process the application will vary as well. If Grants.gov rejects your application (see step three below), you will need to resubmit successfully to Grants.gov before 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time on the deadline date.

Note: To submit successfully, you must provide the DUNS number on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov. This DUNS number is typically the same number used when your organization registered with SAM. If you do not enter the same DUNS number on your application as the DUNS you registered with, Grants.gov will reject your application.

- **VERIFY SUBMISSION IS OK –** You will want to verify that Grants.gov received your application submission on time and that it was validated successfully. To see the date/time your application was received, log in to Grants.gov and click on the Track My Application link. For a successful submission, the date/time received should be earlier than 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, DC time, on the deadline date, AND the application status should be: Validated, Received by Agency, or Agency Tracking Number Assigned. Once the Department of Education receives your application from Grants.gov, an Agency Tracking Number (PR/award number) will be assigned to your application and will be available for viewing on Grants.gov’s Track My Application link.

If the date/time received is later than 4:30:00 p.m. Washington, D.C. time, on the deadline date, your application is late. If your application has a status of “Received,” it is still awaiting validation by Grants.gov. Once validation is complete, the status will change to either “Validated” or “Rejected with Errors.” If the status is “Rejected with Errors,” your application has not been received successfully. Some of the reasons Grants.gov may reject an application can be found on the Grants.gov site: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/encountering-error-messages.html>. For more detailed information on troubleshooting Adobe errors, you can review the Adobe Reader Software Tip Sheet at: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>. If you discover your application is late or has been rejected, please see the instructions below.

Note: You will receive a series of confirmations both online and via e-mail about the status of your application. Please do not rely solely on e-mail to confirm whether your application has been received timely and validated successfully.

Submission Problems – What should you do?

If you have problems submitting to Grants.gov before the closing date, please contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or by e-mail at: support@grants.gov or access the Grants.gov Self-Service Knowledge Base web portal at: <https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants>.

If electronic submission is required, you must submit an electronic application before 4:30:00 p.m., unless you follow the procedures in the *Federal Register* notice and qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. If electronic submission is optional and you have problems that you are unable to resolve before the deadline date and time for electronic applications, please follow the transmittal instructions for hard copy applications in the *Federal Register* notice and get a hard copy application postmarked by midnight on the deadline date. (See the *Federal Register* notice for detailed instructions.)

Helpful Hints When Working with Grants.gov

Please note, once you download an application from Grants.gov, you will be working offline and saving data on your computer. Please be sure to note where you are saving the Grants.gov file on your computer. You will need to log on to Grants.gov to upload and submit the application. **You must provide the DUNS number on your application that was used when you registered as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) on Grants.gov.**

Please go to <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html> for help with Grants.gov. For additional tips related to submitting grant applications, please refer to the Grants.gov Applicant FAQs found at this Grants.gov link: <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.html>.

Dial-Up Internet Connections

When using a dial up connection to upload and submit your application, it can take significantly longer than when you are connected to the Internet with a high-speed connection, e.g., cable modem/DSL/T1. While times will vary depending upon the size of your application, it can take a few minutes to a few hours to complete your grant submission using a dial up connection. **If you do not have access to a high-speed connection and electronic submission is required, you may want to consider following the instructions in the *Federal Register* notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.** (See the *Federal Register* notice for detailed instructions.)

Attaching Files – Additional Tips

Please note the following tips related to attaching files to your application, especially the requirement that applicants **only include read-only, non-modifiable .PDF files** in their application:

- Ensure that you attach ***.PDF files only*** for any attachments to your application, and they must be in a **read-only, non-modifiable format**. PDF files are the only Education approved file type accepted as detailed in the *Federal Register* application notice. Applicants must submit individual .PDF files only when attaching files to their application. Specifically, the Department will not accept any attachments that contain files within a file, such as PDF Portfolio files, or an interactive or fillable .PDF file. Any attachments uploaded that are not .PDF files or are password protected files will not be read.
- Grants.gov cannot process an application that includes two or more files that have the same name within a grant submission. Therefore, each file uploaded to your application package should have a unique file name.
- When attaching files, applicants should follow the guidelines established by Grants.gov on the size and content of file names. Uploaded file names must be fewer than 50 characters, and, in general, applicants should not use any special characters. However, Grants.gov does allow for the following UTF-8 characters when naming your attachments: A-Z, a-z, 0-9, underscore, hyphen, space, period, parenthesis, curly braces, square brackets, ampersand, tilde, exclamation point, comma, semi colon, apostrophe, at sign, number sign, dollar sign, percent sign, plus sign, and equal sign. Applications submitted that do not comply with the Grants.gov guidelines will be rejected at Grants.gov and not forwarded to the Department.
- Applicants should limit the size of their file attachments. Documents submitted that contain graphics and/or scanned material often greatly increase the size of the file attachments and can result in difficulties opening the files. For reference, the average discretionary grant application package with all attachments is less than 5 MB. Therefore, you may want to check the total size of your package before submission.

Dial-Up Internet Connections

When using a dial up connection to upload and submit your application, it can take significantly longer than when you are connected to the Internet with a high-speed connection, e.g., cable modem/DSL/T1. While times will vary depending upon the size of your application, it can take a few minutes to a few hours to complete your grant submission using a dial up connection. **If you do not have access to a high-speed connection and electronic submission is required, you may want to consider following the instructions in the Federal Register notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.** (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

MAC Users

For MAC compatibility information, review the Operating System Platform Compatibility Table at the following Grants.gov link: http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp. **If electronic submission is required and you are concerned about your ability to submit electronically as a non-windows user, please follow instructions in the Federal Register notice to obtain an exception to the electronic submission requirement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.** (See the Federal Register notice for detailed instructions.)

Attaching Files – Additional Tips

Please note the following tips related to attaching files to your application, especially the requirement that applicants only include .pdf files in their application:

1. Ensure that you attach .pdf files for any narrative attachments. PDF files are the only Education approved file type accepted as detailed in the Federal Register application notice. Also, do not upload any password protected files to your application. Any attachments uploaded that are not .pdf files or are password protected files will not be read. If you need assistance converting your files to a .pdf format, please refer to this Grants.gov webpage with links to conversion programs:
http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp#pdf_conversion_programs
2. Grants.gov cannot process an application that includes two or more files that have the same name within a grant submission. Therefore, each file uploaded to your application package should have a unique file name.
3. When attaching files, applicants should limit the size of their file names. Lengthy file names could result in difficulties with opening and processing your application. We recommend you keep your file names to less than 50 characters. In addition, applicants should avoid including special characters in their file names (for example, %, *, /, etc.) Both of these conditions (lengthy file names and/or special characters including in the file names) could result in difficulties opening and processing a submitted application.
4. Applicants should limit the size of their file attachments. Documents submitted that contain graphics and/or scanned material often greatly increase the size of the file attachments and can result in difficulties opening the files. For reference, the average discretionary grant application package totals 1 to 2 MB. Therefore, you may want to check the total size of your package before submission.

APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

ATTENTION ELECTRONIC APPLICANTS: Please note that you must follow the Application Procedures as described in the Federal Register notice announcing the grant competition.

This program requires the electronic submission of applications; specific requirements and waiver instructions can be found in the Federal Register notice.

According to the instructions found in the Federal Register notice, those requesting and qualifying for an exception to the electronic submission requirement may submit an application by mail, commercial carrier or by hand delivery.

If you want to apply for a grant and be considered for funding, you must meet the following deadline requirements:

Applications Submitted Electronically

You must submit your grant application through Grants.gov portal site (<http://www.grants.gov>) by 4:30:00 p.m. (Washington, D.C. time) on or before the deadline date. Applications received by Grants.gov are date and time stamped.

If you submit your application through the Internet via the Grants.gov Web site, you will receive an automatic acknowledgement when we receive your application.

For more information on using Grants.gov, please refer to the “Notice Inviting Applications” that was published in the Federal Register or visit <http://www.grants.gov>.

Submission of Paper Applications by Mail:

If you submit your application in paper format by mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier), you must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

**U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.334S)
LBJ Basement Level 1
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20202-4260**

You must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do **not** accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark.

- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

An applicant should note that the U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, an applicant should check with its local post office.

Special Note: Due to potential disruption to normal mail delivery, the Department encourages you to consider using an alternative delivery method (for example, a commercial carrier, such as Federal Express or United Parcel Service; U.S. Postal Service Express Mail; or a courier service) to transmit your application for this competition to the Department. If you use an alternative delivery method, please obtain the appropriate proof of mailing under “Applications Delivered by Mail,” and then follow the instructions for “Applications Delivered by Hand.”

Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery:

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number **84.334S**)
550 12th Street, S.W.
Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260

Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications: If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department—

- (1) You must indicate on the envelope and--if not provided by the Department--in Item 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and
- (2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this notification within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

Application Control Center Hours of Operation

The Application Control Center accepts application deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (Washington, D.C. time) except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

Late Applications

If your application is late, we will notify you that we will not consider the application.

4000-01-U

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Applications for New Awards; Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (State grants)

AGENCY: Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice.

Overview Information:

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)

Notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2017.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 84.334S.

Dates:

Applications Available: March 13, 2017.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: April 24, 2017.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: June 21, 2007.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The GEAR UP Program is a discretionary grant program that provides funding for academic and related support services to eligible low-income students, including students with disabilities and English learners, to help them to obtain a secondary school diploma and to prepare for and succeed in postsec-

ondary education. Under the GEAR UP Program, the Department awards grants to two types of entities: (1) States and (2) partnerships comprised, at minimum, of institutions of higher education (IHE)s and local educational agencies (LEAs).

Supplemental Information: In this notice we invite applications for State grants only. We will invite applications for partnership grants in another notice. Required services under the GEAR UP Program are specified in sections 404D(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA) (20 U.S.C. §1070a-24(a)), and permissible services under the GEAR UP Program are specified in section 404D(b) and (c) of the HEA (20 U.S.C. §1070a-24(b) and (c)). For State grantees, services must include providing financial aid information, encouraging enrollment in challenging coursework in order to reduce the need for remediation at the postsecondary level, implementing activities to improve the number of students who obtain a high school diploma and complete applications for and enroll in a program of postsecondary education, and provision of scholarships as specified in section 404E of the HEA. GEAR UP funds may also be used to provide a number of additional support services such as mentoring, tutoring, academic English language development, academic and career counseling, and exposure to college campuses.

Background:

The GEAR UP Program is a critical component of the Department's efforts to improve college access and completion for students who have been traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education. The Department believes that GEAR UP projects can play an essential role in improving postsecondary outcomes of their participants by placing a greater emphasis on increasing readiness for success once students reach the postsecondary level.

Each year, rather than being able to enroll in entry-level general education courses in subject areas such as reading or math that are required as a part of almost any postsecondary program of study, hundreds of thousands of beginning college students are referred to noncredit-bearing "developmental" or "remedial" courses based on their performance on a placement test or academic reference. Remedial or developmental courses are designed to bring academically underprepared students to expected competency levels for college-level work.

Remediation needs are common at all types of colleges. According to recent National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) research, 68 percent of public two-year students and 40 percent of public four-year students who began their postsecondary education in 2003 took at least one remedial course by 2009.¹ Remedial course-taking rates are higher among some

¹ <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016405.pdf>.

subgroups of students, including African American students, Hispanic students, English learners, students from low-income families, and first-generation students.²

Unfortunately, for too many students remedial education represents a barrier to postsecondary persistence and completion.³ While in remediation, students spend time and money, may accumulate debt, add to their opportunity costs of lost earnings, and in some cases, deplete a significant portion of their eligibility for financial aid. Further, available evidence suggests that participation in remedial education, especially longer sequences of remedial courses, generally does not improve outcomes; on the contrary, data show that students who take remedial education courses are more likely to drop out before completing a degree.⁴ Remedial education also carries significant costs to the Federal government and to States, in addition to the costs borne by students and families.

² <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2016/2016405.pdf>.

³ MDRC, *Unlocking the Gate: What We Know About Improving Developmental Education*, June 2011 (www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full_595.pdf).

⁴ Attewell, P. A., Lavin, D. E., Domina, T., & Levey, T., 2006, *New Evidence on College Remediation*, *The Journal of Higher Education*. (www.jstor.org/stable/3838791 (even after controlling for high school preparation and family background, taking developmental courses reduced the chances of graduation at four-year colleges and universities by 6 to 7 percent). Thomas Bailey, Dong Wook Jeong, Sung-Woo Cho, *Referral, Enrollment, and Completion in Developmental Education Sequences in Community Colleges*, Community College Research Center, Working Paper No. 15, November 2009 (<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/referral-enrollment-completion-developmental.pdf>). Nguyen Barry, M. & Dannenberg, M., 2016, *The high cost of inadequate high schools and high school student achievement on college affordability*, Retrieved from <https://edreformnow.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/EdReformNow-0-0-P-Embargoed-Final.pdf>.

GEAR UP grantees can improve college readiness by identifying at an early age students likely to be referred to remediation at the postsecondary level and by engaging in strategies to address their needs at the secondary level, limiting their need to take remedial courses in college. For these reasons, this notice includes a competitive preference priority intended to encourage applicants to propose GEAR UP projects that address remediation strategies designed to help students address deficiency gaps well before they graduate and enroll in postsecondary education.

In addition, to more strategically align GEAR UP grants with broader reform strategies intended to improve postsecondary access and completion, this notice includes a competitive preference priority that encourages applicants to propose activities that are supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness (as defined in this notice). The Department is particularly interested in receiving applications that include plans to provide services for students, supported by evidence, that increase the likelihood that students will complete high school and enroll in and complete a program of postsecondary education.

Priorities: This notice contains three competitive preference priorities. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(ii), Competitive Preference Priority 1 is from section 404A(b)(3) of the HEA (20 U.S.C. §1070a-21(b)(3)) and the GEAR UP Program regulations

in 34 CFR 694.19, and Competitive Preference Priority 3 is from 34 CFR 75.226. In accordance with 34 CFR 75.105(b)(2)(iv), Competitive Preference Priority 2 is from section 404Aa(1) of the HEA(20 H.S.C. §1070a-21-1070a-28).

Competitive Preference Priority 1: For FY 2017 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is a competitive preference priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), we award up to an additional two points, depending on how well the application meets this priority.

This priority is:

We give priority to an eligible applicant for a State GEAR UP grant that has: (a) carried out a successful State GEAR UP grant prior to August 14, 2008, determined on the basis of data (including outcomes data) submitted by the applicant as part of its annual and final performance reports from prior GEAR UP state grants administered by the applicant and the applicant's history of compliance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements; and (b) a prior demonstrated commitment to early intervention leading to college access through collaboration and replication of successful strategies.

Competitive Preference Priority 2: For FY 2017 and any subsequent year in which we make awards from the list of unfunded applications from this competition, this priority is a competitive

preference priority. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i), we award up to five additional points to an application, depending on how well the application meets this priority.

This priority is:

Projects designed to reduce the need for remedial education for secondary school students, including students with disabilities, at the postsecondary level.

Note: GEAR UP projects begin well before participating students are ready to apply for admission to a postsecondary institution. Therefore, as they consider how to respond to this competitive preference priority, we encourage applicants to think about how their projects will determine throughout the project period what services students will need in order to reduce or eliminate their need for remedial education at the postsecondary level. In addition, we encourage all applicants applying for a seventh project year to think about how the services they would provide during a seventh project year will include strategies to help those new postsecondary-level students progress into college-level coursework.

Competitive Preference Priority 3:

This priority is:

Projects designed to implement at least one strategy supported by evidence of effectiveness that meets the conditions set

out in the definition of “moderate evidence of effectiveness” in 34 CFR 77.1(c) (and as defined in this notice).

To address the priority, an applicant may submit up to two studies that it believes supports the implementation of an authorized activity proposed in the application that meets the moderate evidence of effectiveness standard. The Department will review the studies cited by the applicant to determine if they meet requirements for moderate evidence of effectiveness, which, depending on methodology, may require reference to either one or two studies) as well as whether they are sufficiently aligned with the project proposed.

Cited studies may include both those already listed in the Department’s What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Database of Individual Studies (see <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/ReviewedStudies#/OnlyStudiesWithPositiveEffects:false.SetNumber:1>) and those that have not yet been reviewed by the WWC. Studies listed in the WWC Database of Individual Studies do not necessarily satisfy any or all of the criteria needed to meet the moderate evidence of effectiveness standard. Therefore, it is important that applicants themselves ascertain the suitability of the study for the evidence priority. Competitive preference priority points can only be awarded if the study or studies submitted by the applicant meet the Department standard for moderate evidence of effectiveness and if the study or studies cited are relevant to the pro-

posed project. The proposed studies must be cited in the section of the application that addresses competitive preference priority three.

Note: As they consider the activities they propose to implement in their GEAR UP projects and how to respond to this competitive preference priority, we encourage applicants to review research related to authorized GEAR UP activities to identify evidence that meets the moderate evidence of effectiveness standard.

For State grantees, required GEAR UP services are specified in sections 404D(a) of the HEA (20 U.S.C. 1070a-24(a)), and permissible services under the GEAR UP Program are specified in section 404D(b) and (c) of the HEA (20 U.S.C. 1070a-24(b) and (c)).

Definitions: These definitions are from 34 CFR 77.1.

Evidence of Promise means there is empirical evidence to support the theoretical linkage(s) between at least one critical component and at least one relevant outcome presented in the logic model for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice. Specifically, evidence of promise means the conditions in both paragraphs (i) and (ii) of this definition are met:

(i) There is at least one study that is a

(A) Correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias;

(B) Quasi-experimental design (QED) study that meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations; or

(C) Randomized controlled trial (RCT) that meets the What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with or without reservations.

(ii) The study referenced in paragraph (i) of this definition found a statistically significant or substantively important (defined as a difference of 0.25 standard deviations or larger) favorable association between at least one critical component and one relevant outcome presented in the logic model for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice.

Large Sample means an analytic sample of 350 or more students (or other single analysis units), or 50 or more groups (such as classrooms or schools) that contain 10 or more students (or other single analysis units).

Moderate evidence of effectiveness means one of the following conditions is met:

(i) There is at least one study of the effectiveness of the process, product, strategy, or practice being proposed that meets the WWC Evidence Standards without reservations, found a statistically significant favorable impact on a relevant outcome (with no statistically significant and overriding unfavorable impacts on that outcome for relevant populations in the study or in other studies of the intervention reviewed by and reported on by the

WWC), and includes a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed to receive the process, product, strategy, or practice.

(ii) There is at least one study of the effectiveness of the process, product, strategy, or practice being proposed that meets the WWC Evidence Standards with reservations, found a statistically significant favorable impact on a relevant outcome (with no statistically significant and overriding unfavorable impacts on that outcome for relevant populations in the study or in other studies of the intervention reviewed by and reported on by the WWC), includes a sample that overlaps with the populations or settings proposed to receive the process, product, strategy, or practice, and includes a large sample and a multi-site sample.

NOTE: Multiple studies can cumulatively meet the large and multi-site sample requirements as long as each study meets the other requirements in this paragraph.

Multi-site sample means more than one site, where site can be defined as an LEA, locality, or State

QED means a study using a design that attempts to approximate an experimental design by identifying a comparison group that is similar to the treatment group in important respects. These studies, depending on design and implementation, can meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards with reservations

(but not What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations).

RCT means a study that employs random assignment of, for example, students, teachers, classrooms, schools, or districts to receive the intervention being evaluated (the treatment group) or not to receive the intervention (the control group). The estimated effectiveness of the intervention is the difference between the average outcomes for the treatment group and for the control group. These studies, depending on design and implementation, can meet What Works Clearinghouse Evidence Standards without reservations.

Relevant outcome means the student outcome(s) (or the ultimate outcome if not related to students) the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice is designed to improve; consistent with the specific goals of a program.

WWC Evidence Standards means the standards set forth in the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook (Version 3.0, March 2014), which can be found at the following link: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/DocumentSum.aspx?sid=19>.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-21-1070a-28.

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 75, 77, 79, 81, 82, 84, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The Office of Management and Budget Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and

Suspension (Nonprocurement) in 2 CFR part 180, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3485. (c) The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR part 200, as adopted and amended as regulations of the Department in 2 CFR part 3474. (d) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR part 694.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.

Estimated Available Funds: The Administration has requested \$322,754,000 for the GEAR UP Program for FY 2017, of which we intend to use an estimated \$49,000,000 for new GEAR UP awards. The estimated funding available for the new GEAR UP State awards is \$24,500,000. The actual level of funding, if any, depends on final congressional action. However, we are inviting applications to allow enough time to complete the grant process if Congress appropriates funds for this program.

Contingent upon the availability of funds and the quality of applications, we may make additional awards in FY 2018 and subsequent years from the list of unfunded applications from this competition.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$2,500,000-\$3,500,000.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$3,000,000.

Maximum Award: We will not fund any application for a State grant above the maximum award of \$3,500,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. Additionally, no funding will be awarded for increases in budget after the first 12-month budget period. The Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education may change the maximum amounts through a notice published in the Federal Register.

Estimated Number of Awards: Seven.

Project Period: Either 72 months or 84 months.

Note: An applicant that wishes to seek funding for a seventh project year (i.e., for a project period of greater than 72 months), in order to provide project services to GEAR UP students through their first year of attendance at an IHE, must propose to do so in the application provided in response to this notice.

III. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants: States.

2.a. Cost Sharing or Matching: Section 404C(b)(1) of the HEA requires grantees under this program to provide from State, local, institutional, or private funds, not less than 50 percent of the cost of the program (or \$1 of non-Federal funds for every \$1 of Federal funds awarded), which may be provided in cash or in-kind. The provision also specifies that the match may be accrued over the full duration of the grant award period, except that the grantee must make substantial progress towards meeting

the matching requirement in each year of the grant award period. In-kind contributions may include equipment and supplies, cash contributions from non-Federal sources, discounted program services and facility usage. Section 404C(c) of the HEA provides that in-kind contributions may include (1) financial assistance obligated under GEAR UP to students from State, local, institutional, or private funds, (2) the amount of tuition, fees, room or board waived or reduced for recipients of financial assistance under GEAR UP, (3) the amount expended on documented, targeted, long-term mentoring and counseling provided by volunteers or paid staff of non-school organizations, including businesses, religious organizations, community groups, postsecondary educational institutions, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, and other organizations, and (4) equipment and supplies, cash contributions from non-Federal sources, transportation expenses, in-kind or discounted program services, indirect costs, and facility usage.

b. Supplement-Not-Supplant: This program involves supplement-not-supplant funding requirements. Under section 404B(e) of the HEA (20 U.S.C. 1070a-22)), grant funds awarded under this program must be used to supplement, and not supplant, other Federal, State, and local funds that would otherwise be expended to carry out activities assisted under this program.

3. Other: Under Section 404E(b)(1) of the HEA (20 U.S.C. 1070a-25)(b)(1)), a State must use not less than 25 percent and not more than 50 percent of the grant funds for activities targeted at the school and LEA level as described in section 404D 20 U.S.C. 1070a-24) (excluding the provision of funds for postsecondary scholarships required by section 404D(a)(4) and with the remainder of grant funds spent on postsecondary scholarships to eligible GEAR UP students as described in section 404E). However, section 404E(b)(2), of the HEA permits the Secretary to allow a State to use more than 50 percent of grant funds received under this program for activities targeted at the LEA level if the State demonstrates in its grant application that it has another means of providing the students with the financial assistance described in section 404E.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package: You can obtain an application package via the Internet by downloading the package from the program Web site at:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/index.html>.

You also can request a copy of the application package from the following: Karmon Simms-Coates, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5W250, Washington, DC

20202-6450. Telephone: (202) 453-7917 or by email:
karmon.simms-coates@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call, toll free: 1-877-576-7734.

Individuals with disabilities can obtain a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc) by contacting the program contact person listed in this section.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission: Requirements concerning the content of an application, together with the forms you must submit, are in the application package for this program.

Page Limit: The application narrative is where you, the applicant, address the selection criteria that reviewers use to assess your application. There is a limit for the application narrative of no more than 40 pages using the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Page numbers and an identifier may be within the 1" margin.
- Each page on which there is text or graphics will be counted as one full page.
- Double space (no more than three lines per vertical

inch) all text in the application narrative, including charts, tables, figures, and graphs. Titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions may be singled spaced.

- Use a font that is either 12 point or larger, or no smaller than 10 pitch (characters per inch).

- Use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial. An application submitted in any other font (including Times Roman and Arial Narrow) will not be accepted.

The page limits do not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the budget narrative and summary form; the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract. If you include any attachments or appendices not specifically requested and required for the application, these items will be counted as part of the narrative for the purposes of the page limit.

Any application addressing the competitive preference priorities may include up to four additional pages for each priority. These additional pages must be used to discuss how the application meets the competitive preference priority. The additional pages allotted to address the competitive preference priority cannot be used for or transferred to the project narrative or any other section of the application.

We will reject your application if—

- You apply these standards and exceed the page limit;
- or
- You apply other standards and exceed the equivalent of the page limit.

3. Submission Dates and Times:

Applications Available: [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: [INSERT DATE ___ DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically using the Grants.gov Apply site (Grants.gov). For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically, or in paper format by mail or hand delivery if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, please refer to Other Submission Requirements in section IV of this notice.

We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements.

Individuals with disabilities who need an accommodation or auxiliary aid in connection with the application process should contact the program contact person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice. If the Department provides an accommodation or auxiliary aid to an individual with a disability in connection with the application process, the

individual's application remains subject to all other requirements and limitations in this notice.

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: [INSERT DATE ___ DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

4. Intergovernmental Review: This program is subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application package for this program.

5. Funding Restrictions: We reference regulations outlining funding restrictions in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

6. Data Universal Numbering System Number, Taxpayer Identification Number, and System for Award Management: To do business with the Department of Education, you must--

a. Have a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and a Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN);

b. Register both your DUNS number and TIN with the System for Award Management (SAM), the Government's primary registrant database;

c. Provide your DUNS number and TIN on your application; and

d. Maintain an active SAM registration with current information while your application is under review by the

Department and, if you are awarded a grant, during the project period.

You can obtain a DUNS number from Dun and Bradstreet at the following Web site: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. A DUNS number can be created within one to two business days.

If you are a corporate entity, agency, institution, or organization, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service. If you are an individual, you can obtain a TIN from the Internal Revenue Service or the Social Security Administration. If you need a new TIN, please allow two to five weeks for your TIN to become active.

The SAM registration process can take approximately seven business days, but may take upwards of several weeks, depending on the completeness and accuracy of the data you enter into the SAM database. Thus, if you think you might want to apply for Federal financial assistance under a program administered by the Department, please allow sufficient time to obtain and register your DUNS number and TIN. We strongly recommend that you register early.

Note: Once your SAM registration is active, it may be 24 to 48 hours before you can access the information in, and submit an application through, Grants.gov.

If you are currently registered with SAM, you may not need to make any changes. However, please make certain that the TIN

associated with your DUNS number is correct. Also note that you will need to update your registration annually. This may take three or more business days.

Information about SAM is available at www.SAM.gov. To further assist you with obtaining and registering your DUNS number and TIN in SAM or updating your existing SAM account, we have prepared a SAM.gov Tip Sheet, which you can find at: <http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/sam-faqs.html>.

In addition, if you are submitting your application via Grants.gov, you must (1) be designated by your organization as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (2) register yourself with Grants.gov as an AOR. Details on these steps are outlined at the following Grants.gov Web page: www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html.

7. Other Submission Requirements: Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically unless you qualify for an exception to this requirement in accordance with the instructions in this section.

a. Electronic Submission of Applications.

Applications for grants under the GEAR UP Program, CFDA number 84.334S, must be submitted electronically using the Governmentwide Grants.gov Apply site at www.Grants.gov. Through this site, you will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it offline, and then upload and submit your ap-

plication. You may not email an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

We will reject your application if you submit it in paper format unless, as described elsewhere in this section, you qualify for one of the exceptions to the electronic submission requirement and submit, no later than two weeks before the application deadline date, a written statement to the Department that you qualify for one of these exceptions. Further information regarding calculation of the date that is two weeks before the application deadline date is provided later in this section under Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement.

You may access the electronic grant application for the GEAR UP Program at www.Grants.gov. You must search for the downloadable application package for this program by the CFDA number. Do not include the CFDA number's alpha suffix in your search (e.g., search for 84.334, not 84.334S).

Please note the following:

- When you enter the Grants.gov site, you will find information about submitting an application electronically through the site, as well as the hours of operation.

- Applications received by Grants.gov are date and time stamped. Your application must be fully uploaded and submitted and must be date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system no later than 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application

deadline date. Except as otherwise noted in this section, we will not accept your application if it is received--that is, date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system--after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. We do not consider an application that does not comply with the deadline requirements. When we retrieve your application from Grants.gov, we will notify you if we are rejecting your application because it was date and time stamped by the Grants.gov system after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

- The amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors, including the size of the application and the speed of your Internet connection. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

- You should review and follow the Education Submission Procedures for submitting an application through Grants.gov that are included in the application package for this program to ensure that you submit your application in a timely manner to the Grants.gov system. You can also find the Education Submission Procedures pertaining to Grants.gov under News and Events on the Department's G5 system home page at www.G5.gov. In addition, for specific guidance and procedures for submitting an application

through Grants.gov, please refer to the Grants.gov Web site at: www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

- You must submit all documents electronically, including all information you typically provide on the following forms: Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424), the Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424, Budget Information--Non-Construction Programs (ED 524), and all necessary assurances and certifications.

- You must upload any narrative sections and all other attachments to your application as files in a read-only, non-modifiable Portable Document Format (PDF). Do not upload an interactive or fillable PDF file. If you upload a file type other than a read-only, non-modifiable PDF (e.g., Word, Excel, WordPerfect, etc.) or submit a password-protected file, we will not review that material. Please note that this could result in your application not being considered for funding because the material in question--for example, the application narrative--is critical to a meaningful review of your proposal. For that reason it is important to allow yourself adequate time to upload all material as

PDF files. The Department will not convert material from other formats to PDF.

- Your electronic application must comply with any page-limit requirements described in this notice.
- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive from Grants.gov an automatic notification of receipt that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. This notification indicates receipt by Grants.gov only, not receipt by the Department. Grants.gov will also notify you automatically by email if your application met all the Grants.gov validation requirements or if there were any errors (such as submission of your application by someone other than a registered Authorized Organization Representative, or inclusion of an attachment with a file name that contains special characters). You will be given an opportunity to correct any errors and resubmit, but you must still meet the deadline for submission of applications.

Once your application is successfully validated by Grants.gov, the Department then will retrieve your application from Grants.gov and send you an email with a unique PR/Award number for your application.

These emails do not mean that your application is without any disqualifying errors. While your application may have been successfully validated by Grants.gov, it must also meet the Department's application requirements as specified in this notice

and in the application instructions. Disqualifying errors could include, for instance, failure to upload attachments in a read-only, non-modifiable PDF; failure to submit a required part of the application; or failure to meet applicant eligibility requirements. It is your responsibility to ensure that your submitted application has met all of the Department's requirements.

- We may request that you provide us original signatures on forms at a later date.

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of Technical Issues

with the Grants.gov System: If you are experiencing problems submitting your application through Grants.gov, please contact the Grants.gov Support Desk, toll free, at 1-800-518-4726. You must obtain a Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number and must keep a record of it.

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because of technical problems with the Grants.gov system, we will grant you an extension until 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, the following business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically or by hand delivery. You also may mail your application by following the mailing instructions described elsewhere in this notice.

If you submit an application after 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, D.C. time, on the application deadline date, please contact the

program contact person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice and provide an explanation of the technical problem you experienced with Grants.gov, along with the Grants.gov Support Desk Case Number. We will accept your application if we can confirm that a technical problem occurred with the Grants.gov system and that the problem affected your ability to submit your application by 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. We will contact you after we determine whether your application will be accepted.

Note: The extensions to which we refer in this section apply only to the unavailability of, or technical problems with, the Grants.gov system. We will not grant you an extension if you failed to fully register to submit your application to Grants.gov before the application deadline date and time or if the technical problem you experienced is unrelated to the Grants.gov system.

Exception to Electronic Submission Requirement: You qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, and may submit your application in paper format, if you are unable to submit an application through Grants.gov because--

- You do not have access to the Internet; or
- You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to

the Grants.gov system;

and

- No later than two weeks before the application deadline date (14 calendar days; or, if the fourteenth calendar day before the application deadline date falls on a Federal holiday, the next business day following the Federal holiday), you mail or fax a written statement to the Department, explaining which of the two grounds for an exception prevents you from using the Internet to submit your application.

If you mail your written statement to the Department, it must be postmarked no later than two weeks before the application deadline date. If you fax your written statement to the Department, we must receive the faxed statement no later than two weeks before the application deadline date.

Address and mail or fax your statement to: Eileen Bland, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5C135, Washington, DC 20202-6450. Fax: (202)260-7464.

Your paper application must be submitted in accordance with the mail or hand delivery instructions described in this notice.

b. Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) your application to the Department. You must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.334S)
LBJ Basement Level 1
400 Maryland Avenue, SW.
Washington, DC 20202-4260

You must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

- (1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark.
- (2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service.
- (3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier.
- (4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

If you mail your application through the U.S. Postal Service, we do not accept either of the following as proof of mailing:

- (1) A private metered postmark.
- (2) A mail receipt that is not dated by the U.S. Postal Service.

Note: The U.S. Postal Service does not uniformly provide a dated postmark. Before relying on this method, you should check with your local post office.

We will not consider applications postmarked after the application deadline date.

c. Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application, by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Application Control Center
Attention: (CFDA Number 84.334S)
550 12th Street, SW.
Room 7039, Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-4260

The Application Control Center accepts hand deliveries daily between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30:00 p.m., Washington, DC time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and Federal holidays.

Note for Mail or Hand Delivery of Paper Applications: If you mail or hand deliver your application to the Department--

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and--if not provided by the Department--in Item 11 of the SF 424 the CFDA number, including suffix letter, if any, of the competition under which you are submitting your application; and

(2) The Application Control Center will mail to you a notification of receipt of your grant application. If you do not receive this grant notification within 15 business days from the

application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

V. Application Review Information

1. Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this competition are from 34 CFR 75.210 of EDGAR.

a. Need for the project (15 points).

The Secretary evaluates the need for a GEAR UP project in the proposed target area on the basis of—

- The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project; and
- The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

b. Quality of project design (15 points).

In determining the quality of project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable;
- The extent to which the project design reflects up-to-date research and the replication of effective practices;
- The extent to which the project supports systemic changes from which future cohorts of students will benefit; and

- The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory.

c. Quality of project services (15 points).

In determining the quality of project services provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers:

(1) The quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

(2) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The extent to which the project services are likely to increase the percentage of students taking rigorous courses that reflect challenging academic standards and reduce the need for remedial education at the postsecondary level; increase the percentage of secondary school completion; increase students' knowledge of and access to financial assistance for postsecondary education; increase the percentage of students enrolling and succeeding in postsecondary education; and are appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services; and

- The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.

d. Quality of project personnel (10 points).

In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers:

(1) The extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability.

(2) In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator; and
- The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key personnel.

e. Quality of the management plan (10 points).

In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;

- The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project;
- The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project; and
- How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

f. Quality of the project evaluation (20 points).

In determining the quality of the project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project;
- The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible;
- The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes; and

- The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

g. Adequacy of resources (15 points).

In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies and other resources from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization;
- The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project;
- The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits; and
- The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.

2. Review and Selection Process: We remind potential applicants that in reviewing applications in any discretionary grant competition, the Secretary may consider, under 34 CFR 75.217(d)(3), the past performance of the applicant in carrying out a previous award, such as the applicant's use of funds, achievement of project objectives, and compliance with grant con-

ditions. The Secretary may also consider whether the applicant failed to submit a timely performance report or submitted a report of unacceptable quality.

In addition, in making a competitive grant award, the Secretary requires various assurances including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department of Education (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

For this competition, a panel of non-Federal reviewers will review each application in accordance with the selection criteria in 75.217(d)(3) and the competitive preference priorities. The individual scores of the reviewers will be added and the sum divided by the number of reviewers to determine the peer review score received in the review process.

If there are insufficient funds for all applications with the same total scores, the Secretary will choose among the tied applications so as to serve geographic areas with consideration to the distribution of grant awards between urban and rural applicants for the GEAR UP Program.

3. Risk Assessment and Special Conditions: Consistent with 2 CFR 200.205, before awarding grants under this competition the Department conducts a review of the risks posed by applicants. Under 2 CFR 3474.10, the Secretary may impose special conditions

and, in appropriate circumstances, high-risk conditions on a grant if the applicant or grantee is not financially stable; has a history of unsatisfactory performance; has a financial or other management system that does not meet the standards in 2 CFR part 200, subpart D; has not fulfilled the conditions of a prior grant; or is otherwise not responsible.

4. Integrity and Performance System: If you are selected under this competition to receive an award that over the course of the project period may exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$150,000), under 2 CFR 200.205(a)(2) we must make a judgment about your integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards--that is, the risk posed by you as an applicant--before we make an award. In doing so, we must consider any information about you that is in the integrity and performance system (currently referred to as the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)), accessible through SAM. You may review and comment on any information about yourself that a Federal agency previously entered and that is currently in FAPIIS.

Please note that, if the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from the Federal Government exceeds \$10,000,000, the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, require you to report certain integrity information to FAPIIS semiannually.

Please review the requirements in 2 CFR part 200, Appendix XII, if this grant plus all the other Federal funds you receive exceed \$10,000,000.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices: If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN); or we may send you an email containing a link to access an electronic version of your GAN. We may notify you informally, also.

If your application is not evaluated or not selected for funding, we notify you.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements: We identify administrative and national policy requirements in the application package and reference these and other requirements in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice.

We reference the regulations outlining the terms and conditions of an award in the Applicable Regulations section of this notice and include these and other specific conditions in the GAN. The GAN also incorporates your approved application as part of your binding commitments under the grant.

3. Reporting: (a) If you apply for a grant under this competition, you must ensure that you have in place the necessary processes and systems to comply with the reporting requirements in 2 CFR part 170 should you receive funding under the competi-

tion. This does not apply if you have an exception under 2 CFR 170.110(b).

(b) At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multiyear award, you must submit an annual performance report and biennial report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as directed by the Secretary under 34 CFR 75.118. The Secretary may also require more frequent performance reports under 34 CFR 75.720(c). For specific requirements on reporting, please go to www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/appforms.html.

(c) Under 34 CFR 75.250(b), the Secretary may provide a grantee with additional funding for data collection analysis and reporting. In this case the Secretary establishes a data collection period.

4. Performance Measures: The objectives of the GEAR UP Program are--(1) to increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education of participating students; (2) to increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education of participating students; and (3) to increase educational expectations for participating students and increase student and family knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing.

The effectiveness of this program depends on the rate at which program participants complete high school and enroll in and complete a postsecondary education. Under the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA), we developed the following performance measures to track progress toward achieving the program's goals:

1. The percentage of GEAR UP students who pass Pre-algebra by the end of 8th grade.

2. The percentage of GEAR UP students who pass Algebra 1 by the end of 9th grade.

3. The percentage of GEAR UP students who take two years of mathematics beyond Algebra 1 by the 12th grade.

4. The percentage of GEAR UP students who are on track for graduation at the end of each grade.

5. The percentage of GEAR UP students who are on track to apply for college as measured by completion of the SAT or ACT by the end of 11th grade.

6. The percentage of GEAR UP students who graduate from high school.

Note: For each GEAR UP project, the State's high school graduation rate is defined in the State's approved accountability plan under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA)._

7. The percentage of GEAR UP students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid

8. The percentage of GEAR UP students and former GEAR UP students who are enrolled in college.

9. The percentage of GEAR UP students who place into college-level Math and English without need for remediation

10. The percentage of current GEAR UP students and former GEAR UP students enrolled in college who are on track to graduate college.

In addition, to assess the efficiency of the program, we track the average cost in Federal funds, of achieving a successful outcome, where success is defined as enrollment in postsecondary education of GEAR UP students immediately after high school graduation. These performance measures constitute GEAR UP's indicators of the success of the program. Under Section 1116 of the HEA, grant recipients must collect and report data on steps they have taken toward achieving these goals. Accordingly, we request that applicants include these performance measures in conceptualizing the design, implementation, and evaluation of their proposed projects.

5. Continuation Awards: In making a continuation award under 34 CFR 75.253, the Secretary considers, among other things: whether a grantee has made substantial progress in achieving the goals and objectives of the project; whether the grantee has

expended funds in a manner that is consistent with its approved application and budget; and, if the Secretary has established performance measurement requirements, the performance targets in the grantee's approved application.

In making a continuation grant, the Secretary also considers whether the grantee is operating in compliance with the assurances in its approved application, including those applicable to Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance from the Department (34 CFR 100.4, 104.5, 106.4, 108.8, and 110.23).

VII. Agency Contact

For Further Information Contact: Karmon Simms-Coates, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5W250, Washington, DC 20202-6450. Telephone: (202) 453-7917 or by email: Karmon.simms-coates@ed.gov.

If you use a TDD or a TTY, call the FRS, toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

VIII. Other Information

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document and a copy of the application package in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or computer disc) on request to the program contact person listed under For Further Information Contact in section VII of this notice.

Electronic Access to This Document: The official version of this document is the document published in the Federal Register. Free Internet access to the official edition of the Federal Register and the Code of Federal Regulations is available via the Federal Digital System at: www.gpo.gov/fdsys. At this site you can view this document, as well as all other documents of this Department published in the Federal Register, in text or PDF. To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at this site.

You may also access documents of the Department published in the Federal Register by using the article search feature at: www.federalregister.gov. Specifically, through the advanced search feature at this site, you can limit your search to documents published by the Department.

Dated:

Linda Byrd-Johnson,
Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary,
Higher Education Programs, and Senior Director,
Student Service.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965, as amended

Subpart 2 – Federal Early Outreach and Student Services Programs

CHAPTER 2- GAINING EARLY AWARENESS AND READINESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

SEC.404A. [20 U.S.C. 1070a-21] EARLY INTERVENTION AND COLLEGE AWARENESS PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.

(a) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.-The Secretary is authorized, in accordance with the requirements of this chapter, to establish a program that-

encourages eligible entities to provide support, and maintain a commitment, to eligible low-income students, including students with disabilities, to assist the students in obtaining a secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent), and to prepare for and succeed in postsecondary education, by providing-

(1) financial assistance, academic support, additional counseling, mentoring, outreach, and supportive services to elementary school students, including students with disabilities, to reduce—

(A) the risk of such students dropping out of school; or

(B) the need for remedial education for such students at the postsecondary level;

and

(2) information to students and their families about the advantages of obtaining a postsecondary education and, college financing options for the students and their families.

(b) AWARDS.-

(1) IN GENERAL.-From funds appropriated under section 404H for each fiscal year, the Secretary shall make awards to eligible entities described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (c) to enable the entities to carry out the program authorized under subsection (a).

(2) AWARD PERIOD.-The Secretary may award a grant under this chapter to an eligible entity described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (c) for-

(A) six years; or

(B) in the case of an eligible entity that applies for a grant under this chapter for seven years to enable to eligible entity to provide services to a student through the student's first year of attendance at an institution of higher education, seven years.

(3) PRIORITY.-In making awards to eligible entities described in paragraph (c)(1), the Secretary shall-

(A) give priority to eligible entities that-

(i) on the day before the date of enactment of the Higher Education Opportunity Act, carried out successful educational opportunity programs under this chapter (as this chapter was in effect on such day); and

(ii) have a prior, demonstrated commitment to early intervention leading to college access through collaboration and replication of successful strategies; and

(B) ensure that students served under this chapter on the day before the date of

enactment of the Higher Education Opportunity Act continue to receive assistance through the completion of secondary school.

(c) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE ENTITY.-For the purpose of this chapter, the term “eligible entity” means-

(1) a State; or

(2) a partnership-

(A) consisting of –

(i) one or more local educational agencies; and

(ii) one or more degree granting institutions of higher education; and

(B) which may include not less than two other community organizations or entities, such as businesses, professional organizations, state agencies, institutions or agencies sponsoring programs authorized under subpart 4, or other public or private agencies or organizations.

SEC. 404B. [20 U.S.C. 1070a-22] REQUIREMENTS.

(a) FUNDING RULES.-

In awarding grants from the amount appropriated under section 404H for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall-

make available-

- to eligible entities described in section 404A(c)(1), not less than 33 percent of such amount

(2) to eligible entities described in section 404A(c)(2), not less than 33 percent of such amount and

(3) to eligible entities described in paragraph (1) or (2) of section 404A(c), the remainder of such amount taking into consideration the number, quality, and promise of the applications for the grants, and to the extent practicable-

(A) the geographic distribution of such grant awards; and

(B) the distribution of such grant awards between urban and rural applicants.

(b) COORDINATION.-Each eligible entity shall ensure that the activities assisted under this chapter are, to the extent practicable, coordinated with, and complement and enhance-

(1) services under this chapter provided by other eligible entities serving the same school district or State; and

(2) related services under other Federal or non-Federal programs.

(c) DESIGNATION OF FISCAL AGENT.-An eligible entity described in section 404A(c)(2) shall designate an institution of higher education or a local educational agency as the fiscal agent for the eligible entity.

(d) COHORT APPROACH.-

(1) IN GENERAL.- The Secretary shall require that eligible entities described in section 404A(c)(2)-

(A) provide services under this chapter to at least one grade level of students, beginning not later than 7th grade, in a participating school that has a 7th grade and in which at least 50 percent of the students enrolled are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (or, if an eligible entity determines that it would promote the effectiveness of a program, an entire grade level of students, beginning not later than the 7th grade, who reside in public housing as defined in section 3(b)(1) of the United States Housing Act of 1937);

(B) ensure that the services are provided through the 12th grade to students in the participating grade level and provide the option of continued services through the student's first year of attendance at an institution of higher education to the extent the provision of such services was described in the eligible entity's application for assistance under this chapter and

(C) provide services under this chapter to students who have received services under a previous GEAR UP grant award but have not yet completed the 12th grade.

(2) COORDINATION REQUIREMENT.-In order for the Secretary to require the cohort approach described in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall, where applicable, ensure that the cohort approach is done in coordination and collaboration with existing early intervention programs and does not duplicate the services already provided to a school or community.

(e) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.- Grant funds awarded under this chapter shall be used to supplement, and not supplant, other Federal, State, and local funds that would otherwise be expended to carry out activities assisted under this chapter.

SEC.404C. [20 U.S.C. 1070a-23] APPLICATIONS.

(a) APPLICATION REQUIRED FOR ELIGIBILITY.-

(1) IN GENERAL.-In order for an eligible entity to qualify for a grant under this chapter, the eligible entity shall submit to the Secretary an application for carrying out the program under this chapter.

(2) CONTENTS.-Each application submitted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall be in such form, contain or be accompanied by such information or assurances, and be submitted at such time as the Secretary may require by regulation. Each such application shall, at a minimum-

(A) describe the activities for which assistance under this chapter is sought, including how the eligible entity will carry out the required activities described in section 404D(a);

(B) describe, in the case of an eligible entity described in section 404A(c)(2) that chooses to provide scholarships, or an eligible entity described in section 404A(c)(1), how the eligible entity will meet the requirements of section 404E;

(C) describe, in the case of an eligible entity described in section 404A(c)(2) that requests a reduced match percentage under subsection (b)(2), how such reduction will assist the entity to provide the scholarships described in subsection (b)(2)(A)(ii);

(D) provide assurances that adequate administrative and support staff will be responsible for coordinating the activities described in section 404D;

(E) provide assurances that activities assisted under this chapter will not displace an employee or eliminate a position at a school assisted under this chapter, including a partial displacement such as a reduction in hours, wages, or employment benefits;

(F) described, in the case of an eligible entity described in section 404A(c)(1) that chooses to use a cohort approach, or an eligible entity described in section 404A(c)(2), how the eligible entity will define the cohorts of the students served by the eligible entity pursuant to section 404B(d), and how the eligible entity will serve the cohorts through grade 12, including-

(i) how vacancies in the program under this chapter will be filled; and

(ii) how the eligible entity will serve students attending different secondary schools;

(G) describe how the eligible entity will coordinate programs under this chapter with other existing Federal, State, or local programs to avoid duplication and maximize the number of students served;

(H) provide such additional assurances as the Secretary determines necessary to ensure compliance with the requirements of this chapter;

(I) provide information about the activities that will be carried out by the eligible entity to support systemic changes from which future cohorts of students will benefit; and

(J) described the sources of matching funds that will enable the eligible entity to meet the matching requirements described in subsection (b).

(b) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.-

(1) IN GENERAL.-The Secretary shall not approve an application submitted under subsection (a) unless such application-

(A) provides that the eligible entity will provide, from State, local, institutional, or private funds, not less than 50 percent of the cost of the program, which matching funds may be provided in cash or in kind and may be accrued over the full duration of the grant award period, except that the eligible entity shall make substantial progress towards meeting the matching requirement in each year of the grant award period;

(B) specifies the methods by which matching funds will be paid; and

(C) includes provisions designed to ensure that funds provided under this chapter shall supplement and not supplant funds expended for existing programs.

(2) SPECIAL RULE.-Notwithstanding the matching requirement described in paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary may by regulation modify the percentage requirement described in paragraph (1) (A) for eligible entities described in section 404A(c)(2). The Secretary may approve an eligible entity's request for a reduced match percentage-

(A) at the time of application-

(i) if the eligible entity demonstrates significant economic hardship that precludes the eligible entity from meeting the matching requirement; or

(ii) if the eligible entity is described in section 404A(c)(2) and requests that contributions to the eligible entity's scholarship fund established under section 404E be matched on a two to one basis; or

(B) in response to a petition by an eligible entity subsequent to a grant award under this section if the eligible entity demonstrates that the matching funds described in its application are no longer available and the eligible entity has exhausted all revenues for replacing such matching funds.

(c) METHODS FOR COMPLYING WITH MATCHING REQUIREMENT.-An eligible entity may count toward the matching requirement described in subsection (b)(1)(A)-

(1) the amount of the financial assistance obligated to students from State, local, institutional, or private funds under this chapter, including pre-existing non-Federal financial assistance programs, including-

(A) the amount contributed to a student scholarship fund established under section 404E; and

(B) the amount of the costs of administering the scholarship program under section 404E;

(2) the amount of tuition, fees, room or board waived or reduced for recipients of financial assistance under this chapter;

(3) the amount expended on documented, targeted, long-term mentoring and counseling provided by volunteers or paid staff of non-school organizations, including businesses, religious organizations, community groups, postsecondary educational institutions, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, and other organizations; and

(4) other resources recognized by the Secretary, including equipment and supplies, cash contributions from non-Federal sources, transportation expenses, in-kind or discounted program services, indirect costs, and facility usage.

(d) PEER REVIEW PANEL.- The Secretary shall convene peer review panels to assist in making determinations regarding the awarding of grants under this chapter.

SEC.404D. [20 U.S.C. 1070a-24] ACTIVITIES.

(a) REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.- Each eligible entity receiving a grant under this chapter shall provide comprehensive mentoring, outreach, and supportive services to students participating in the programs under this chapter. Such activities shall include the following:

(1) providing information regarding financial aid for postsecondary education to participating students in the cohort described in section 404B(d)(1)(A) or to priority students described in subsection (d).

(2) encouraging student enrollment in rigorous and challenging curricula and coursework, in order to reduce the need for remedial coursework at the postsecondary level.

(3) improving the number of participating students who-

(A) obtain a secondary school diploma; and

(B) complete applications for and enroll in a program of postsecondary education.

(4) in the case of an eligible entity described in section 404A(c)(1), providing for the scholarships described in section 404E.

(b) PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES FOR STATES AND PARTNERSHIPS.- An eligible entity that receives a grant under this chapter may use grant funds to carry out one or more of the following activities:

(1) providing tutors and mentors, who may include adults or former participants of a program under this chapter, for eligible students.

(2) conducting outreach activities to recruit priority students described in subsection (d) to participate in program activities.

(3) providing supportive services to eligible students.

(4) supporting the development or implementation of rigorous academic curricula, which may include college preparatory, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate programs, and providing participating students access to rigorous core academic courses that reflect challenging State academic standards.

(5) supporting dual or concurrent enrollment programs between the secondary school and institution of higher education partners of an eligible entity described in section 404A(c)(2), and other activities that support participating students in-

(A) meeting challenging State academic standards;

(B) successfully applying for postsecondary education;

(C) successfully applying for student financial aid; and

(D) developing graduation and career plans.

(6) providing special programs or tutoring in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics.

(7) in the case of an eligible entity described in section 404A(c)(2), providing support for scholarships described in section 404E.

(8) introducing eligible students to institutions of higher education, through trips and school-based sessions.

(9) providing an intensive extended school day, school year, or summer program that offers-

- (A) additional academic classes; or
- (B) assistance with college admission applications.

(10) providing other activities designed to ensure secondary school completion and postsecondary education enrollment of at-risk children, such as-

- (A) the identification of at-risk children;
- (B) after-school and summer tutoring;
- (C) assistance to at-risk children in obtaining summer jobs;
- (D) academic counseling;
- (E) financial literacy and economic literacy education or counseling;
- (F) volunteer and parent involvement;
- (G) encouraging former or current participants of a program under this chapter to serve as peer counselors;
- (H) skills assessments;
- (I) personal and family counseling, and home visits;
- (J) staff development; and
- (K) programs and activities described in this subsection that are specially designed for students who are limited English proficient.

(11) enabling eligible students to enroll in Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses, or college entrance examination preparation courses.

(12) providing services to eligible students in the participating cohort described in section 404B(d)(1)(A), through the first year of attendance at an institution of higher education.

(13) fostering and improving parent and family involvement in elementary and secondary education by promoting the advantages of a college education, and emphasizing academic admission requirements and the need to take college preparation courses, through parent engagement and leadership activities.

(14) disseminating information that promotes the importance of higher education, explains college preparation and admission requirements, and raises awareness of the resources and services provided by the eligible entities to eligible students, their families, and communities.

(15) in the event that matching funds described in the application are no longer available, engaging entities described in section 404A(c)(2) in a collaborative manner to provide matching resources and participate in other activities authorized under this section.

(c) **ADDITIONAL PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES FOR STATES.**- In addition to the required activities described in subsection (a) and the permissible activities described in subsection (b), an eligible entity described in section 404A(c)(1) receiving funds under this chapter may use grant funds to carry out one or more of the following activities:

- (1) providing technical assistance to-
 - (A) secondary schools that are located within the State; or
 - (B) partnerships described in section 404A(c)(2) that are located within the State.

(2) providing professional development opportunities to individuals working with eligible cohorts of students described in section 404B(d)(1)(A).

(3) providing administrative support to help build the capacity of eligible entities described in section 404A(c)(2) to compete for and manage grants awarded under this chapter.

(4) providing strategies and activities that align efforts in the State to prepare eligible students to attend and succeed in postsecondary education, which may include the development of graduation and career plans.

(5) disseminating information on the use of scientifically valid research and best practices to improve services for eligible students.

(6)(A) disseminating information on effective coursework and support services that assist students in obtaining the goals described in subparagraph (B)(ii).

(B) identifying and disseminating information on best practices with respect to-

(i) increasing parental involvement; and

(ii) preparing students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient, to succeed academically in, and prepare financially for, postsecondary education.

(7) working to align State academic standards and curricula with the expectations of postsecondary institutions and employers.

(8) developing alternatives to traditional secondary school that give students a head start on attaining a recognized postsecondary credential (including an industry-recognized certificate, an apprenticeship, or an associate's or a bachelor's degree), including school designs that give students early exposure to college-level courses and experiences and allow students to earn transferable college credits or an associate's degree at the same time as a secondary school diploma.

(9) creating community college programs for drop-outs that are personalized drop-out recovery programs that allow drop-outs to complete a regular secondary school diploma and begin college-level work.

(d) PRIORITY STUDENTS.- For eligible entities not using a cohort approach, the eligible entity shall treat as a priority student any student in secondary school who is:

(1) eligible to be counted under section 1124(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965;

(2) eligible for assistance under a state program funded under part A or E of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq., 670 et seq.);

(3) eligible for assistance under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.); or

(4) otherwise considered by the eligible entity to be a disconnected student.

(e) ALLOWABLE PROVIDERS.- In the case of eligible entities described in section 404A(c)

(1), the activities required by this section may be provided by service providers such as community-based organizations, schools, institutions of higher education, public and private agencies, nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, businesses, institutions and agencies sponsoring programs authorized under subpart 4, and other organizations the State deems appropriate.

SEC. 404E. [20 U.S.C. 1070a-25] SCHOLARSHIP COMPONENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.-

(1) STATES.- In order to receive a grant under this chapter, an eligible entity described in section 404A(c)(1) shall establish or maintain a financial assistance program that awards scholarships to students in accordance with the requirements of this section. The Secretary shall encourage the eligible entity to ensure that a scholarship provided pursuant to this section is available to an eligible student for use at any institution of higher education.

(2) PARTNERSHIPS.- An eligible entity described in section 404A(c)(2) may award scholarships to eligible students in accordance with the requirements of this section.

(b) LIMITATION.-

(1) IN GENERAL.- Subject to paragraph (2), each eligible entity described in section 404A(c)(1) that receives a grant under this chapter shall use not less than 25 percent and not more than 50 percent of the grant funds for activities described in section 404D (except for the activity described in subsection (a)(4) of such section), with the remainder of such funds to be used for a scholarship program under this section in accordance with such subsection.

(2) EXCEPTION.- Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the Secretary may allow an eligible entity to use more than 50 percent of grant funds received under this chapter for such activities, if the eligible entity demonstrates that the eligible entity has another means of providing the students with the financial assistance described in this section and describes such means in the application submitted under section 404C.

(c) NOTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY.- Each eligible entity providing scholarships under this section shall provide information on the eligibility requirements for the scholarships to all participating students upon the students' entry into the programs assisted under this chapter.

(d) GRANT AMOUNTS.- The maximum amount of a scholarship that an eligible student shall be eligible to receive under this section shall be established by the eligible entity. The minimum amount of the scholarship for each fiscal year shall not be less than the minimum Federal Pell Grant award under section 401 for such award year.

(e) PORTABILITY OF ASSISTANCE.-

(1) IN GENERAL.- Each eligible entity described in section 404A(c)(1) that receives a grant under this chapter shall hold in reserve, for the students served by such grant as described in section 404B(d)(1)(A) or 404D(d), an amount that is not less than the minimum scholarship amount described in subsection (d), multiplied by the number of students the eligible entity estimates will meet the requirements of paragraph (2).

(2) REQUIREMENT FOR PORTABILITY.-Funds held in reserved under paragraph (1) shall be made available to an eligible student when the eligible student has-

- (A) completed a secondary school diploma, its recognized equivalent, or another recognized alternative standard for individuals with disabilities; and
- (B) enrolled in an institution of higher education.

(3) QUALIFIED EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES.- Funds available to an eligible student under this subsection may be used for-

- (A) tuition, fees, books, supplies, and equipment required for the enrollment or attendance of the eligible student at an institution of higher education; and
- (B) in the case of eligible student with special needs, expenses for special needs services that are incurred in connection with such enrollment or attendance.

(4) RETURN OF FUNDS.-

(A) REDISTRIBUTION.-

(i) IN GENERAL.-Funds held in reserve under paragraph (1) that are not used by an eligible student within six years of the student's scheduled completion

of secondary school may be redistributed by the eligible entity to other eligible students.

(ii) RETURN OF EXCESS TO THE SECRETARY.-If, after meeting the requirements of paragraph (1) and, if applicable, redistributing excess funds in accordance with clause (i) of this subparagraph, an eligible entity has funds held in reserve under paragraph (1) that remain available, the eligible entity shall return such remaining reserved funds to the Secretary for distribution to other grantees under this chapter in accordance with the funding rules described in section 404B(a).

(B) NONPARTICIPATING ENTITY.- Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), in the case of an eligible entity that does not receive assistance under this subpart for six fiscal years, the eligible entity shall return any funds held in reserve under paragraph (1) that are not awarded or obligated to eligible students to the Secretary for distribution to other grantees under this chapter.

(f) RELATION TO OTHER ASSISTANCE.-Scholarships provided under this section shall not be considered for the purpose of awarding Federal grant assistance under this title, except that in no case shall the total amount of student financial assistance awarded to a student under this title exceed such student's total cost of attendance.

(g) ELIGIBLE STUDENTS.- A student eligible for assistance under this section is a student who-

(1) is less than 22 years old at time of first scholarship award under this section;

(2) receives a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent on or after January 1, 1993;

(3) is enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a program of undergraduate instruction at an institution of higher education that is located within the State's boundaries, except that, at the State's option, an eligible entity may offer scholarship program portability for recipients who attend instructions of higher education outside such State; and

(4) who participated in the activities required under section 404D(a).

SEC. 404F. [(20 U.S.C. 1070a-26)] 21ST CENTURY SCHOLAR CERTIFICATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.-An eligible entity that receives a grant under this chapter shall provide certificates, to be known as 21st Century Scholar Certificates, to all students served by the eligible entity who are participating in a program under this chapter.

(b) INFORMATION REQUIRED.-A 21st Century Scholar Certificate shall be personalized for each student and indicate the amount of Federal financial aid for college and the estimated amount of any scholarship provided under section 404E, if applicable, that a student may be eligible to receive.

SEC.404G. [20 U.S.C. 1070a-27] EVALUATION AND REPORT.

(a) EVALUATION.-Each eligible entity receiving a grant under this chapter shall biennially evaluate the activities assisted under this chapter in accordance with the standards described in subsection (b) and shall submit to the Secretary a copy of such evaluation. The evaluation shall permit service providers to track eligible student progress during the period such students are participating in the activities and shall be consistent with standards developed by the Secretary pursuant to subsection (b).

(b) EVALUATION STANDARDS.-The Secretary shall prescribe standards for the evaluation described in subsection (a). Such standards shall-

- (1) provide or input from eligible entities and service providers; and
 - (2) ensure that data protocols and procedures are consistent and uniform.
- (c) FEDERAL EVALUATION.-In order to evaluate and improve the impact of the activities assisted under this chapter, the Secretary shall, from not more than 0.75 percent of the funds appropriated under section 404H for a fiscal year, award one or more grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to or with public and private institutions and organizations, to enable the institutions and organizations to evaluate the effectiveness of the program and, as appropriate, disseminate the results of the evaluation. Such evaluation shall include a separate analysis of-
- (1) the implementation of the scholarship component described in section 404E; and
 - (2) the use of methods for complying with matching requirements described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 404C(c).
- (d) REPORT. -The Secretary shall biennially report to Congress regarding the activities assisted under this chapter and the evaluations conducted pursuant to this section.

SEC. 404H [20 U.S.C. 1070a-28] AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this chapter \$400,000,000 for fiscal year 2009 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the five succeeding fiscal years.

GEAR UP PROGRAM REGULATIONS

PART 694--GAINING EARLY AWARENESS AND READINESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS (GEAR UP)

120. The authority citation for part 694 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-21 to 1070a-28.

121. Section 694.1 is amended by revising paragraph (a), introductory text to read as follows:

§694.1 What is the maximum amount that the Secretary may award each fiscal year to a Partnership or a State under this program?

(a) Partnership grants. The Secretary may establish the maximum amount that may be awarded each fiscal year for a GEAR UP Partnership grant in a notice published in the Federal Register. The maximum amount for which a Partnership may apply may not exceed the lesser of the maximum amount established by the Secretary, if applicable, or the amount calculated by multiplying--

* * * * *

122. Section 694.4 is amended by revising paragraph (b)(2) to read as follows:

§694.4 Which students must a State or Partnership serve when there are changes in the cohort?

* * * * *

(b) * * *

(2) Must continue to provide GEAR UP services to at least those students in the cohort who attend one or more participating schools that together enroll a substantial majority of the students in the cohort.

* * * * *

123. Section 694.7 is revised to read as follows:

§694.7 What are the matching requirements for a GEAR UP grant?

(a) In order to be eligible for GEAR UP funding--

(1) An applicant must state in its application the percentage of the cost of the GEAR UP project the applicant will provide for each year from non-Federal funds, subject to the requirements in paragraph (b) of this section; and

(2) A grantee must make substantial progress towards meeting the matching percentage stated in its approved application for each year of the project period.

(b) Except as provided in §§694.8 and 694.9, the non-Federal share of the cost of the GEAR UP project must be not less than 50 percent of the total cost of the project (i.e., one dollar of non-Federal contributions for every one dollar of

Federal funds obligated for the project) over the project period.

(c) The non-Federal share of the cost of a GEAR UP project may be provided in cash or in-kind.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-23)

124. Part 694 is amended by redesignating §§694.8, 694.9, 694.10, 694.11, 694.12, 694.13, and 694.15 as follows:

Old Section	New Section
§694.8	§694.10
§694.9	§694.11
§694.10	§694.13
§694.11	§694.15
§694.12	§694.17
§694.13	§694.18
§694.15	§694.19

125. New §694.8 is added to read as follows:

§694.8 Under what conditions may the Secretary approve a request from a Partnership applying for a GEAR UP grant to waive a portion of the matching requirement?

(a) The Secretary may approve a Partnership applicant's request for a waiver of up to 75 percent of the matching requirement for up to two years if the applicant demonstrates in its application a significant economic hardship that stems from a specific, exceptional, or uncontrollable event, such as a natural disaster, that has a devastating effect on the members of the Partnership and the community in which the project would operate.

(b)(1) The Secretary may approve a Partnership applicant's request to waive up to 50 percent of the matching requirement for up to two years if the applicant demonstrates in its application a pre-existing and an on-going significant economic hardship that precludes the applicant from meeting its matching requirement.

(2) In determining whether an applicant is experiencing an on-going economic hardship that is significant enough to justify a waiver under this paragraph, the Secretary considers documentation of such factors as:

(i) Severe distress in the local economy of the community to be served by the grant (e.g., there are few employers in the local area, large employers have left the local area, or significant reductions in employment in the local area).

(ii) Local unemployment rates that are higher than the national average.

(iii) Low or decreasing revenues for State and County governments in the area to be served by the grant.

(iv) Significant reductions in the budgets of institutions of higher education that are participating in the grant.

(v) Other data that reflect a significant economic hardship for the geographical area served by the applicant.

(3) At the time of application, the Secretary may provide

tentative approval of an applicant's request for a waiver under paragraph (b)(1) of this section for all remaining years of the project period. Grantees that receive tentative approval of a waiver for more than two years under this paragraph must submit to the Secretary every two years by such time as the Secretary may direct documentation that demonstrates that--

(i) The significant economic hardship upon which the waiver was granted still exists; and

(ii) The grantee tried diligently, but unsuccessfully, to obtain contributions needed to meet the matching requirement.

(c) The Secretary may approve a Partnership applicant's request in its application to match its contributions to its scholarship fund, established under section 404E of the HEA, on the basis of two non-Federal dollars for every one Federal dollar of GEAR UP funds.

(d) The Secretary may approve a request by a Partnership applicant that has three or fewer institutions of higher education as members to waive up to 70 percent of the matching requirement if the Partnership applicant includes--

(1) A fiscal agent that is eligible to receive funds under title V, or Part B of title III, or section 316 or 317 of the HEA, or a local educational agency;

(2) Only participating schools with a 7th grade cohort in which at least 75 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act; and

(3) Only local educational agencies in which at least 50 percent of the students enrolled are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-23)

126. New §694.9 is added to read as follows:

§694.9 Under what conditions may the Secretary approve a request from a Partnership that has received a GEAR UP grant to waive a portion of the matching requirement?

(a) After a grant is awarded, the Secretary may approve a Partnership grantee's written request for a waiver of up to--

(1) 50 percent of the matching requirement for up to two years if the grantee demonstrates that--

(i) The matching contributions described for those two years in the grantee's approved application are no longer available; and

(ii) The grantee has exhausted all funds and sources of potential contributions for replacing the matching funds.

(2) 75 percent of the matching requirement for up to two years if the grantee demonstrates that matching contributions from the original application are no longer available due to an

uncontrollable event, such as a natural disaster, that has a devastating economic effect on members of the Partnership and the community in which the project would operate.

(b) In determining whether the grantee has exhausted all funds and sources of potential contributions for replacing matching funds, the Secretary considers the grantee's documentation of key factors such as the following and their direct impact on the grantee:

(1) A reduction of revenues from State government, County government, or the local educational agency (LEA).

(2) An increase in local unemployment rates.

(3) Significant reductions in the operating budgets of institutions of higher education that are participating in the grant.

(4) A reduction of business activity in the local area (e.g., large employers have left the local area).

(5) Other data that reflect a significant decrease in resources available to the grantee in the local geographical area served by the grantee.

(c) If a grantee has received one or more waivers under this section or under §694.8, the grantee may request an additional waiver of the matching requirement under this section no earlier than 60 days before the expiration of the grantee's existing waiver.

(d) The Secretary may grant an additional waiver request for up to 50 percent of the matching requirement for a period of up to two years beyond the expiration of any previous waiver.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-23)

127. New §694.12 is added to read as follows:

§694.12 Under what conditions do State and Partnership GEAR UP grantees make section 404E scholarship awards?

(a)(1) State Grantees. All State grantees must establish or maintain a financial assistance program that awards section 404E scholarships to students in accordance with the requirements of §694.13 or §694.14, as applicable.

(2) Partnership Grantees. Partnerships may, but are not required, to award scholarships to eligible students. If a Partnership awards scholarships to eligible students pursuant to section 404E of the HEA, it must comply with the requirements of §694.13 or §694.14, as applicable.

(b)(1) Section 404E scholarship awards for grantees whose initial GEAR UP grant awards were made prior to August 14, 2008. A State or Partnership grantee making section 404E scholarship awards using funds from GEAR UP grant awards that were made prior to August 14, 2008, must provide such scholarship awards in accordance with the requirements of §694.13 unless it elects to provide the scholarships in accordance with the requirements of

§694.14 pursuant to paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(2) Election to use §694.14 requirements. A State or Partnership grantee making section 404E scholarship awards using funds from GEAR UP grant awards that were made prior to August 14, 2008, may provide such scholarship awards in accordance with the requirements of §694.14 (rather than the requirements of §694.13) provided that the grantee--

(i) Informs the Secretary, in writing, of its election to make the section 404E scholarship awards in accordance with the requirements of §694.14; and

(ii) Such election does not decrease the amount of the scholarship promised to any individual student under the grant.

(c) Section 404E scholarship awards for grantees whose initial GEAR UP grant awards were made on or after August 14, 2008. A State or Partnership grantee making section 404E scholarship awards using funds from GEAR UP grant awards that were made on or after August 14, 2008, must provide such scholarship awards in accordance with the requirements of §694.14.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-25)

128. Newly redesignated §694.13 is revised to read as follows:

§694.13 What are the requirements concerning section 404E scholarship awards for grantees whose initial GEAR UP grant awards were made prior to August 14, 2008?

The following requirements apply to section 404E scholarship awards for grantees whose initial GEAR UP grant awards were made prior to August 14, 2008 unless the grantee elects to provide such scholarship awards in accordance with the requirements of §694.14 pursuant to §694.12(b)(2).

(a)(1) The maximum scholarship amount that an eligible student may receive under this section must be established by the grantee.

(2) The minimum scholarship amount that an eligible student receives in a fiscal year pursuant to this section must not be less than the lesser of--

(i) 75 percent of the average cost of attendance for an in-State student, in a four-year program of instruction, at public institutions of higher education in the student's State; or

(ii) The maximum Federal Pell Grant award funded under section 401 of the HEA for the award year in which the scholarship is awarded.

(3) If an eligible student who is awarded a GEAR UP scholarship attends an institution of higher education on a less than full-time basis during any award year, the State or Partnership awarding the GEAR UP scholarship may reduce the scholarship amount, but in no case may the percentage reduction

in the scholarship be greater than the percentage reduction in tuition and fees charged to that student.

(b) Scholarships provided under this section may not be considered for the purpose of awarding Federal grant assistance under title IV of the HEA, except that in no case may the total amount of student financial assistance awarded to a student under title IV of the HEA exceed the student's total cost of attendance.

(c) Grantees providing section 404E scholarship awards in accordance with this section--

(1) Must award GEAR UP scholarships first to students who will receive, or are eligible to receive, a Federal Pell Grant during the award year in which the GEAR UP scholarship is being awarded; and

(2) May, if GEAR UP scholarship funds remain after awarding scholarships to students under paragraph (c)(1) of this section, award GEAR UP scholarships to other eligible students (i.e., students who are not eligible to receive a Federal Pell Grant) after considering the need of those students for GEAR UP scholarships.

(d) For purposes of this section, an eligible student is a student who--

(1) Is less than 22 years old at the time of award of the student's first GEAR UP scholarship;

(2) Has received a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent on or after January 1, 1993;

(3) Is enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a program of undergraduate instruction at an institution of higher education that is located within the State's boundaries, except that, at the grantee's option, a State or Partnership may offer scholarships to students who attend institutions of higher education outside the State; and

(4) Has participated in activities under §694.21 or §694.22.

(e) A State using a priority approach may award scholarships under paragraph (a) of this section to eligible students identified by priority at any time during the grant award period rather than reserving scholarship funds for use only in the seventh year of a project or after the grant award period.

(f) A State or a Partnership that makes scholarship awards from GEAR UP funds in accordance with this section must award continuation scholarships in successive award years to each student who received an initial scholarship and who is enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a program of undergraduate instruction at an institution of higher education.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-21 to 1070a-28)

129. New §694.14 is added to read as follows:

§694.14 What are the requirements concerning section 404E scholarship awards for grantees whose initial GEAR UP grant awards were made on or after August 14, 2008?

The following requirements apply to section 404E scholarship awards provided by grantees whose initial GEAR UP grant awards were made on or after August 14, 2008 and any section 404E scholarship awards for grantees whose initial GEAR UP grant awards were issued prior to August 14, 2008, but who, pursuant to §694.12(b)(2), elected to use the §694.14 requirements (rather than the §694.13 requirements).

(a)(1) The maximum scholarship amount that an eligible student may receive under section 404E of the HEA must be established by the grantee.

(2) The minimum scholarship amount that an eligible student receives in a fiscal year must not be less than the minimum Federal Pell Grant award under section 401 of the HEA at the time of award.

(3) If an eligible student who is awarded a GEAR UP scholarship attends an institution of higher education on a less than full-time basis during any award year, the State or Partnership awarding the GEAR UP scholarship may reduce the scholarship amount, but in no case may the percentage reduction in the scholarship be greater than the percentage reduction in tuition and fees charged to that student.

(b) For purposes of this section, an eligible student is a student who--

(1) Is less than 22 years old at the time of award of the first GEAR UP scholarship;

(2) Has received a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent on or after January 1, 1993;

(3) Is enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a program of undergraduate instruction at an institution of higher education that is located within the State's boundaries, except that, at the grantee's option, a State or Partnership may offer scholarships to students who attend institutions of higher education outside the State; and

(4) Has participated in the activities required under §694.21.

(c)(1) By the time students who have received services from a State grant have completed the twelfth grade, a State that has not received a waiver under section 404E(b)(2) of the HEA of the requirement to spend at least 50 percent of its GEAR UP funds on scholarships must have in reserve an amount that is not less than the minimum Federal Pell Grant multiplied by the number of students the State estimates will enroll in an institution of higher education.

(2) Consistent with paragraph (a) of this section and

§694.16(a), States must use funds held in reserve to make scholarships to eligible students.

(3) Scholarships must be made to all students who are eligible under the definition in paragraph (b) of this section. A grantee may not impose additional eligibility criteria that would have the effect of limiting or denying a scholarship to an eligible student.

(d) A State using a priority approach may award scholarships under paragraph (a) of this section to eligible students identified by priority at any time during the grant award period rather than reserving scholarship funds for use only in the seventh year of a project or after the grant award period.

(e) States providing scholarships must provide information on the eligibility requirements for the scholarships to all participating students upon the students' entry into the GEAR UP program.

(f) A State must provide scholarship funds as described in this section to all eligible students who attend an institution of higher education in the State, and may provide these scholarship funds to eligible students who attend institutions of higher education outside the State.

(g) A State or a Partnership that chooses to participate in the scholarship component in accordance with section 404E of the HEA may award continuation scholarships in successive award years to each student who received an initial scholarship and who is enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a program of undergraduate instruction at an institution of higher education.

(h) A GEAR UP scholarship, provided under section 404E of the HEA, may not be considered in the determination of a student's eligibility for other grant assistance provided under title IV of the HEA, except that in no case may the total amount of student financial assistance awarded to a student under title IV of the HEA exceed the student's total cost of attendance.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-25)

130. Newly redesignated §694.15 is revised to read as follows:

§694.15 May a Partnership that does not award scholarships under section 404E of the HEA provide, as part of a GEAR UP project, financial assistance for postsecondary education using non-Federal funds?

A GEAR UP Partnership that does not participate in the GEAR UP scholarship component may provide financial assistance for postsecondary education with non-Federal funds, and those funds may be used to satisfy the matching requirement.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-21 to 1070a-28)

131. Section 694.16 is added to read as follows:

§694.16 What are the requirements for redistribution or return

of scholarship funds not awarded to a project's eligible students?

The following requirements apply only to section 404E scholarship awards for grantees whose initial GEAR UP grant awards were made on or after August 14, 2008, and to any section 404E scholarship awards for grantees whose initial GEAR UP grant awards were made prior to August 14, 2008, but who, pursuant to §694.12(b)(2), elect to use the §694.14 requirements (rather than the §694.13 requirements):

(a) Scholarship funds held in reserve by States under §694.14(c) or by Partnerships under section 404D(b)(7) of the HEA that are not used by eligible students as defined in §694.14(b) within six years of the students' scheduled completion of secondary school may be redistributed by the grantee to other eligible students.

(b) Any Federal scholarship funds that are not used by eligible students within six years of the students' scheduled completion of secondary school, and are not redistributed by the grantee to other eligible students, must be returned to the Secretary within 45 days after the six-year period for expending the scholarship funds expires.

(c) Grantees that reserve funds for scholarships must annually furnish information, as the Secretary may require, on the amount of Federal and non-Federal funds reserved and held for GEAR UP scholarships and the disbursement of these scholarship funds to eligible students until these funds are fully expended or returned to the Secretary.

(d) A scholarship fund is subject to audit or monitoring by authorized representatives of the Secretary throughout the life of the fund.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-25(e))

132. Newly redesignated §694.18 is revised to read as follows:

§694.18 What requirements must be met by a Partnership or State participating in GEAR UP with respect to 21st Century Scholarship Certificates?

(a) A State or Partnership must provide, in accordance with procedures the Secretary may specify, a 21st Century Scholar Certificate to each student participating in its GEAR UP project.

(b) 21st Century Scholarship Certificates must be personalized and indicate the amount of Federal financial aid for college and the estimated amount of any scholarship provided under section 404E of the HEA, if applicable, that a student may be eligible to receive.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-26)

133. Newly redesignated §694.19 is revised to read as follows:

§694.19 What priorities does the Secretary establish for a GEAR UP grant?

The Secretary awards competitive preference priority points to an eligible applicant for a State grant that has both--

(a) Carried out a successful State GEAR UP grant prior to August 14, 2008, determined on the basis of data (including outcome data) submitted by the applicant as part of its annual and final performance reports, and the applicant's history of compliance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements; and

(b) A prior, demonstrated commitment to early intervention leading to college access through collaboration and replication of successful strategies.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-21(b))

134. New §694.20 is added to read as follows:

§694.20 When may a GEAR UP grantee provide services to students attending an institution of higher education?

(a) The Secretary authorizes an eligible State or Partnership to provide GEAR UP services to students attending an institution of higher education if the State or Partnership--

(1) Applies for and receives a new GEAR UP award after August 14, 2008, and

(2) In its application, requested a seventh year so that it may continue to provide services to students through their first year of attendance at an institution of higher education.

(b) A State grantee that uses a priority (rather than or in addition to a cohort) approach to identify participating students may, consistent with its approved application and at any time during the project period, provide services to students during their first year of attendance at an institution of higher education, provided that the grantee continues to provide all required services throughout the Federal budget period to GEAR UP students still enrolled in a local educational agency.

(c) If a grantee is awarded a seven year grant, consistent with the grantee's approved application, during the seventh year of the grant the grantee--

(1) Must provide services to students in their first year of attendance at an institution of higher education; and

(2) May choose to provide services to high school students who have yet to graduate.

(d) Grantees that continue to provide services under this part to students through their first year of attendance at an institution of higher education must, to the extent practicable, coordinate with other campus programs, including academic support services to enhance, not duplicate service.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-21(b)(2))

135. New §694.21 is added to read as follows:

§694.21 What are required activities for GEAR UP projects?

A grantee must provide comprehensive mentoring, outreach, and supportive services to students participating in the GEAR UP program. These services must include the following activities:

(a) Providing information regarding financial aid for postsecondary education to eligible participating students.

(b) Encouraging student enrollment in rigorous and challenging curricula and coursework, in order to reduce the need for remedial coursework at the postsecondary level.

(c) Implementing activities to improve the number of participating students who--

(1) Obtain a secondary school diploma, and

(2) Complete applications for, and enroll in, a program of postsecondary education.

(d) In the case of a State grantee that has not received a 100-percent waiver under section 404E(b)(2) of the HEA, providing scholarships in accordance with section 404E of the HEA.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-24(a))

136. New §694.22 is added to read as follows:

§694.22 What other activities may all GEAR UP projects provide?

A grantee may use grant funds to carry out one or more of the following services and activities:

(a) Providing tutors and mentors, who may include adults or former participants in a GEAR UP program, for eligible students.

(b) Conducting outreach activities to recruit priority students (identified in section 404D(d) of the HEA) to participate in program activities.

(c) Providing supportive services to eligible students.

(d) Supporting the development or implementation of rigorous academic curricula, which may include college preparatory, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate programs, and providing participating students access to rigorous core academic courses that reflect challenging State academic standards.

(e) Supporting dual or concurrent enrollment programs between the secondary school and institution of higher education partners of a GEAR UP Partnership, and other activities that support participating students in--

(1) Meeting challenging State academic standards;

(2) Successfully applying for postsecondary education;

(3) Successfully applying for student financial aid; and

(4) Developing graduation and career plans, including career awareness and planning assistance as they relate to a rigorous academic curriculum.

(f) Providing special programs or tutoring in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics.

(g) For Partnerships, providing scholarships described in

section 404E of the HEA, and for all grantees providing appropriate administrative support for GEAR UP scholarships.

(h) Introducing eligible students to institutions of higher education, through trips and school-based sessions.

(i) Providing an intensive extended school day, school year, or summer program that offers--

(1) Additional academic classes; or

(2) Assistance with college admission applications.

(j) Providing other activities designed to ensure secondary school completion and postsecondary education enrollment of at-risk children, such as:

(1) Identification of at-risk children.

(2) After-school and summer tutoring.

(3) Assistance to at-risk children in obtaining summer jobs.

(4) Academic counseling.

(5) Financial and economic literacy education or counseling.

(6) Volunteer and parent involvement.

(7) Encouraging former or current participants of a GEAR UP program to serve as peer counselors.

(8) Skills assessments.

(9) Personal and family counseling, and home visits.

(10) Staff development.

(11) Programs and activities that are specially designed for students who are limited English proficient.

(k) Enabling eligible students to enroll in Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses, or college entrance examination preparation courses.

(l) Providing services to eligible students in the participating cohort described in §694.3 through the first year of attendance at an institution of higher education.

(m) Fostering and improving parent and family involvement in elementary and secondary education by promoting the advantages of a college education, and emphasizing academic admission requirements and the need to take college preparation courses, through parent engagement and leadership activities.

(n) Disseminating information that promotes the importance of higher education, explains college preparation and admission requirements, and raises awareness of the resources and services provided by the eligible entities to eligible students, their families, and communities.

(o) For a GEAR UP Partnership grant, in the event that matching funds described in the approved application are no longer available, engaging other potential partners in a collaborative manner to provide matching resources and to participate in other activities authorized in §§ 694.21, 694.22,

and 694.23.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-24(b))

137. New §694.23 is added to read as follows:

§694.23 What additional activities are allowable for State GEAR UP projects?

In addition to the required and permissible activities identified in §§694.21 and 694.22, a State may use grant funds to carry out one or more of the following services and activities:

(a) Providing technical assistance to--

(1) Secondary schools that are located within the State; or

(2) Partnerships that are eligible to apply for a GEAR UP grant and that are located within the State.

(b) Providing professional development opportunities to individuals working with eligible cohorts of students.

(c) Providing administrative support to help build the capacity of Partnerships to compete for and manage grants awarded under the GEAR UP program.

(d) Providing strategies and activities that align efforts in the State to prepare eligible students to attend and succeed in postsecondary education, which may include the development of graduation and career plans.

(e) Disseminating information on the use of scientifically valid research and best practices to improve services for eligible students.

(f)(1) Disseminating information on effective coursework and support services that assist students in achieving the goals described in paragraph (f)(2)(ii) of this section, and

(2) Identifying and disseminating information on best practices with respect to--

(i) Increasing parental involvement; and

(ii) Preparing students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient, to succeed academically in, and prepare financially for, postsecondary education.

(g) Working to align State academic standards and curricula with the expectations of postsecondary institutions and employers.

(h) Developing alternatives to traditional secondary school that give students a head start on attaining a recognized postsecondary credential (including an industry-recognized certificate, an apprenticeship, or an associate's or a bachelor's degree), including school designs that give students early exposure to college-level courses and experiences and allow students to earn transferable college credits or an associate's degree at the same time as a secondary school diploma.

(i) Creating community college programs for individuals who have dropped out of high school that are personalized drop-out

recovery programs, and that allow drop-outs to complete a secondary school diploma and begin college-level work.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-24)

138. New §694.24 is added to read as follows:

§694.24 What services may a GEAR UP project provide to students in their first year at an institution of higher education?

Consistent with their approved applications and §694.20, a grantee may provide any services to students in their first year of attendance at an institution of higher education that will help those students succeed in school, and that do not duplicate services otherwise available to them. Examples of services that may be provided include--

- (a) Orientation services including introduction to on-campus services and resources;
- (b) On-going counseling to students either in person or through electronic or other means of correspondence;
- (c) Assistance with course selection for the second year of postsecondary education;
- (d) Assistance with choosing and declaring an academic major;
- (e) Assistance regarding academic, social, and personal areas of need;
- (f) Referrals to providers of appropriate services;
- (g) Tutoring, mentoring, and supplemental academic support;
- (h) Assistance with financial planning;
- (i) Career counseling and advising services; or
- (j) Advising students about transferring to other schools.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-24)

139. New §694.25 is added to read as follows:

§694.25 Are GEAR UP grantees required to provide services to students who were served under a previous GEAR UP grant?

If a Partnership or State is awarded a GEAR UP grant on or after August 14, 2008 (i.e., initial grant), the grant ends before all students who received GEAR UP services under the grant have completed the twelfth grade, and the grantee receives a new award in a subsequent GEAR UP competition (i.e., new grant), the grantee must--

- (a) Continue to provide services required by or authorized under §§694.21, 694.22, and 694.23 to all students who received GEAR UP services under the initial grant and remain enrolled in secondary schools until they complete the twelfth grade; and
- (b) Provide the services specified in paragraph (a) of this section by using Federal GEAR UP funds awarded for the new grant or funds from the non-Federal matching contribution required under the new grant.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-21(b)(3)(B) and 1070a-22(d)(1)(C))

GEAR UP STATE GRANTS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Legislative Authority

Title IV, Sections 404A-404H, of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

Purpose

The GEAR UP program is a discretionary grant program which encourages applicants to provide support and maintain a commitment to eligible low-income students, including students with disabilities, to assist the students in obtaining a secondary school diploma and preparing for and succeeding in postsecondary education.

Description of the GEAR UP State Grant Program

The GEAR UP program is designed to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP provides six- or seven-year grants to States to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools and through the first year of college. The services include: providing information regarding financial aid for postsecondary education to participating students in the cohort, encouraging student enrollment in rigorous and challenging curricula and coursework, and improving the number of participating students who obtain a secondary school diploma and complete applications for and enroll in a program of postsecondary education. GEAR UP funding can also be used to provide scholarships to students.

Definitions

To assist applicants in preparing their GEAR UP application, we are providing commonly used definitions for the following terms: high-need children and high-need students, program of study, college-ready curriculum, and high school graduate and college enrollment.

High-need children and high-need students means children and students at risk of educational failure, such as children and students who are living in poverty, who are English learners, who are far below grade level or who are not on track to becoming college- or career-ready by graduation, who have left school or college before receiving, respectively, a regular high school diploma or a college degree or certificate, who are at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, who are in foster care, who are pregnant or parenting teenagers, who have been incarcerated, who are new immigrants, who are migrant, or who have disabilities.

Programs of study means career and technical education programs of study, which may be offered as an option to students (and their parents as appropriate) when planning for and completing future coursework, for career and technical content areas, that (a) Incorporate secondary education and postsecondary education elements; (b) Include coherent and rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant career and technical content in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses that align secondary education with postsecondary education to adequately prepare students to succeed in postsecondary education;

(c) May include the opportunity for secondary education students to participate in dual or concurrent enrollment programs or other ways to acquire postsecondary education credits; and
(d) Lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

College-Ready Curriculum – A high school curriculum which requires students to earn passing grades in at least the following: four years of English; three years of mathematics (including algebra I and a higher level course such as algebra II, geometry, or data analysis and statistics); three years of science (including at least two courses chosen from biology, chemistry, or physics); three years of social studies; and one year of a language other than English.

High School Graduate means students who receive a secondary credential that is fully aligned with each State’s academic standards or its recognized equivalent.

College Enrollment means attendance at a 4-year or 2-year college or university in a program of study that may advance the student towards a recognized college or university degree.

Competitive Preference Priorities

Competitive Preference Priority 1: The Secretary shall give priority to an eligible applicant for a State GEAR UP grant that has previously carried out a successful State GEAR UP grant prior to August 14, 2008, has had a demonstrated commitment to early intervention leading to college access through collaboration and replication of successful strategies, and will ensure that students receive assistance through completion of secondary school. We will award up to an additional 2 points for this competitive preference priority depending on how well the application meets the priority.

Competitive Preference Priority 2: Projects designed to reduce the need for remedial education for secondary school students, including students with disabilities, at the postsecondary level. We award up to five additional points to an application, depending on how well the application meets this priority.

Competitive Preference Priority 3: Projects designed to implement at least one strategy supported by evidence of effectiveness that meets the conditions set out in the definition of “moderate evidence of effectiveness,” as defined in the Federal Register notice inviting applications for new awards for FY 2017. We award two points to an application that meets this priority.

Size of Awards

The maximum Federal award for State grants awarded in FY 2017 is \$ 3.5 million. There is no minimum award.

Out-Year Costs

State grants originally funded with FY 2017 funds will receive level funding in the out years based on approved funding for the first-year award. For example, if a grantee requests \$100,000

of funding in year one of the grant and that amount is approved, the grantee will receive no more than \$100,000 of Federal funding for years two through six or seven of the grant.

Eligibility

The governor of each State must designate, in a letter, one agency to apply for and administer a GEAR UP State grant. Each State application must contain information or assurances that describe how the applicant will carry out the required activities component of the grant as well as how the applicant plans to meet the scholarship component. State applicants must provide assurances that adequate administrative and support staff will be responsible for coordinating the required activities component as well as assurances that the grant will not displace an employee or eliminate a position at a participating school. In addition, State applicants who elect to use a cohort approach must define the cohort of students it will serve through grade 12, including how vacancies in the program will be filled and how the applicant will serve students attending different secondary schools. State applicants must provide information about the activities that will be carried out to support systemic changes from which future cohorts of students will benefit and describe the sources of matching funds that will enable the applicant to meet the matching requirement.

Match Requirements

State applicants are required to provide from State, local, institutional, or private funds, not less than 50 percent of the cost of the program. Matching funds may be provided in cash or in kind and may be accrued over the full duration of the grant award period. Grantees are required to make substantial progress towards meeting the matching requirement in each year of the grant award period. Grantees must also specify the methods by which matching funds will be paid and include provisions designed to ensure that funds provided shall supplement and not supplant funds expended for existing programs. ***Please note that funded applicants will be held to the matching commitment proposed in the application for funding, even if the proposed match is higher than the percent required by statute.*** No points will be awarded for match exceeding the 50 percent level required by statute.

Required Elements of a GEAR UP State Grant

Each eligible entity receiving a grant shall provide comprehensive mentoring, outreach, financial aid information and supportive services to students participating in the programs. Such activities shall include the following:

- a. Financial aid information for postsecondary education to participating students in the cohort;
- b. Encouragement student enrollment in rigorous and challenging curricula and coursework, in order to reduce the need for remedial coursework at the postsecondary level; and
- c. Improvement the number of participating students who a) obtain a secondary diploma and b) complete applications for and enroll in a program of postsecondary education.

Cohort or Priority

States may choose to:

1. Serve “priority students” as defined below; and/or
2. Serve a cohort of students

States that target services to priority students must target any students in secondary school who are eligible:

1. To be counted under section 1124(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965;
2. For assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or under Federal Payments for Foster Care and Adoption Assistance (FPFCAA), authorized by Title IV of the Social Security Act; and
3. For assistance under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act; or
4. Any student the applicant considers to be disconnected.

States that opt to serve a *cohort* must provide services to at least one grade level of students, beginning not later than 7th grade, in a participating school that has a 7th grade and in which at least 50 percent of the students enrolled are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. If an applicant determines that it would promote the effectiveness of a program, it may choose to serve an entire grade level of students, beginning not later than the 7th grade, who reside in public housing, as defined in section 3(b) (1) of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

States must also ensure that the services are provided through the 12th grade to students in the participating grade level. States that applied for a seventh year of the grant are required to provide continued services through the student’s first year of attendance at an institution of higher education.

State grant applicants that choose to use the cohort approach must provide services to students who have received services under a previous GEAR UP grant award but have not yet completed the 12th grade.

21st Century Scholar Certificates

GEAR UP students must receive a one-time 21st Century Scholar Certificate congratulating them on their commitment and reminding them that if they study hard, take challenging courses, and finish high school, they will be able to go to college. On the reverse side of the certificate will be a summary of how much Federal aid may be available to them based on income. Supplemental information will also be provided which gives further detail about the forms of available Federal financial assistance and how families can learn more about Federal financial aid programs.

The grantee is responsible for supplying the 21st Century Scholar Certificates and the accompanying supplemental material to all GEAR UP students. The grantee should personalize the certificates by adding the students’ names, and distributing the certificates to participating GEAR UP students. GEAR UP students receive only one certificate throughout the

life of the grant. Grant funds may be used for hosting an event where families, faculty, partners, and others supporting the local Partnership are invited and students receive their certificates.

Permissible Activities for States

The following activities are permissible uses of Federal and matching funds:

1. Provide tutors and mentors, who may include adults or former participants of the GEAR UP program, for eligible students.
2. Conduct outreach activities to recruit priority students to participate in program activities.
3. Provide supportive services to eligible students.
4. Support the development or implementation of rigorous academic curricula, which may include college preparatory, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate programs, and provide participating students access to rigorous core academic courses that reflect challenging State academic standards.
5. Support dual or concurrent enrollment programs between the secondary school and institution of higher education partners and other activities that support participating students in:
 - a. meeting challenging State academic standards;
 - b. successfully applying for postsecondary education;
 - c. successfully applying for student financial aid; and
 - d. developing graduation and career plans.
6. Provide special programs or tutoring in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics.
7. Introduce eligible students to institutions of higher education, through trips and school-based sessions.
8. Provide an intensive extended school day, school year, or summer program that offers:
 - a. additional academic classes; or
 - b. assistance with college admission applications.
9. Provide activities designed to ensure secondary school completion and postsecondary education enrollment of at-risk children such as:
 - a. the identification of at-risk children;
 - b. after-school and summer tutoring;
 - c. assistance to at-risk children in obtaining summer jobs;
 - d. academic counseling;
 - e. financial literacy and economic literacy education or counseling;
 - f. volunteer and parent involvement;
 - g. encouraging former or current participants to serve as peer counselors;

- h. skills assessments;
- i. personal and family counseling, and home visits;
- j. staff development; and
- k. programs and activities that are specially designed for students who are limited English proficient.

10. Enable eligible students to enroll in Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses, or college entrance examination preparation courses.

11. Provide services to eligible students in the participating cohort through the first year of attendance at an institution of higher education.

12. Foster and improve parent and family involvement in elementary and secondary education by promoting the advantages of a college education, and emphasize academic admission requirements and the need to take college preparation courses, through parent engagement and leadership activities.

13. Disseminate information that promotes the importance of higher education, explains college preparation and admission requirements, and raises awareness of the resources and services provided to eligible students, their families, and communities.

Additional Permissible Activities for States

1. Provide technical assistance to;

- a. secondary schools that are located within the State; or
- b. partnerships that are located within the State.

2. Provide professional development opportunities to individuals working with eligible cohorts of students.

3. Provide administrative support to help build the capacity of eligible partnerships to compete for and manage GEAR UP grants.

4. Provide strategies and activities that align efforts in the State to prepare eligible students to attend and succeed in postsecondary education, which may include the development of graduation and career plans.

5. Disseminate information on the use of scientifically-valid research and best practices to improve services for eligible students.

6. Identify and disseminate information on best practices with respect to increasing parental involvement and preparing students, including students with disabilities and students who are

limited English proficient, to succeed academically in, and prepare financially for, postsecondary education.

7. Work to align State academic standards and curricula with the expectations of postsecondary institutions and employers.

8. Develop alternatives to traditional secondary school that give students a head start on attaining a recognized postsecondary credential including school designs that give students early exposure to college-level courses and experiences and allow students to earn transferable college credits or an associate's degree at the same time as a secondary school diploma.

9. Create community college programs for drop-outs that are personalized drop-out recovery programs that allow drop-outs to complete a regular secondary school diploma and begin college-level work.

COORDINATION AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Coordination

State projects must ensure that the activities proposed are, to the extent practicable, coordinated with, and complement and enhance services provided by, other eligible entities serving the same school district or State and related services under other Federal or non-Federal programs. GEAR UP grant funds shall be used to supplement and not supplant other Federal, State, and local funds.

Indirect Costs

Consistent with section 75.562 of EDGAR, all grant recipients are limited to a maximum indirect cost rate of eight percent of a modified total direct cost base or the amount permitted by its negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, whichever is less. Notwithstanding 34 CFR 75.560-75.562 and 34 CFR 80.22, the maximum indirect cost rate that an agency of a state or local government receiving funds under GEAR UP may use to charge indirect costs to these funds is the lesser of (a) the rate established by the negotiated indirect cost agreement; or (b) eight percent of a modified total direct cost base. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-21 to 1070a-28). Unrecovered indirect costs cannot be used to fulfill non-Federal matching requirements.

Scholarships

State applicants are required to establish or maintain a financial assistance program that awards scholarships to eligible students. Applicants are encouraged to ensure that a scholarship is available to an eligible student for use at any institution of higher education.

State applicants are required to spend not less than 25 percent and not more than 50 percent of the grant funds for required activities. The remainder of grant funds must be used to fund the scholarship program. The Secretary may allow an applicant to use more than 50 percent of grant funds for required activities if the applicant demonstrates it has another means of providing

students with financial assistance and describes these means in its application. A request to waive the requirement that 25 to 50 percent of funds must be spent on scholarships needs to be included as an attachment to the application.

Scholarship Eligibility

A student is eligible for a scholarship if the student:

1. is less than 22 years old at time of first scholarship award;
2. receives a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent on or after January 1, 1993;
3. is enrolled or accepted for enrollment in a program of undergraduate instruction at an institution of higher education that is located within the State's boundaries, except that, at the State's option, an eligible entity may offer scholarship program portability for recipients who attend institutions of higher education outside such State; and
4. participated in the required activities component.

Notification of Eligibility

Grantees must provide information on the eligibility requirements for the scholarships to all participating students upon the students' entry into the program.

Priority Approach

States using a priority approach may award scholarships to eligible students identified by priority at any time during the grant award period rather than reserving scholarship funds for use only in the seventh year of, or after, the grant award period. GEAR UP scholarships are designed to supplement, not supplant, other scholarship funding.

Scholarship Portability

States must provide scholarship funds to all eligible students who attend an institution of higher education in the State and may also provide scholarship funds to eligible students who attend institutions of higher education outside of the State.

Scholarship Amount

Individual States may determine the maximum amount of a scholarship that an eligible student shall receive. The *minimum* amount of the scholarship for each fiscal year *shall not* be less than the minimum Federal Pell Grant award.

Reserve Scholarship Funds

- a. State grantees that have not received a waiver must hold in reserve scholarship funds of at least the minimum required scholarship amount multiplied by the estimated number of eligible students.

- b. States using a priority model may award scholarships directly rather than holding funds in reserve.

Return of Funds

States must return to the Secretary any Federal scholarship funds that are not used by an eligible student within six years of the student's scheduled completion of secondary school or have not been redistributed to the other eligible students.

Reporting Requirements

- a. States must report, annually to the Secretary, information on Federal and non-Federal reserved funds held for GEAR UP scholarships and the disbursement of these funds to eligible students until these funds are fully expended or returned to the Secretary.
- b. Scholarship funds are subject to audit or monitoring by authorized representatives throughout the life of the fund.

Qualified Educational Expenses

The scholarship funds available to an eligible student may be used for:

- a. Tuition, fees, books, supplies, and equipment required for the enrollment or attendance of the eligible student at an institution of higher education; and
- b. In the case of an eligible student with special needs, expenses for special needs services that are incurred in connection with such enrollment or attendance.

EVALUATION OF PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Your application must explain your GEAR UP project's overall objectives. These objectives must be clear and measurable, and be outcome-oriented (i.e., related to achieving specific, desirable results of your GEAR UP services for participants) rather than process-oriented. The activities that you propose to implement for students, parents, and teachers must be linked to the objectives approved for your project.

Each year, successful applicants will be required to submit to the Department an annual performance report that includes evidence of their progress in meeting the project's objectives and overall program goals which are:

Objective 1: Increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education for GEAR UP students.

Objective 2: Increase the rate of high school graduation and enrollment in postsecondary education for GEAR UP students.

Objective 3: Increase GEAR UP students' and their families' knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing.

In addition, Public Law 100-315, Title IV, PART A, Sec. 404G requires each GEAR UP grant projects to report biennially on the progress in implementing the proposed services and other provisions, achieving the objectives/expected outcomes (and overall impact on the affected project participants), as well as any warranted adjustments to components (e.g., type, frequency, duration) to the services not achieving their expected desired results or enhancing student learning.

Overall, GEAR UP projects, similar to other Federal projects, are required to provide documented evidence of their accountability for the expenditures of the obligated funds and the utilization of the accompanying matching contributions. Therefore, if you are chosen as a GEAR UP grantee, you will be required to consistently collect, analyze, and report on the participation and outcome data that enables the Department to verify that your GEAR UP project is accomplishing the proposed (measurable) objectives during each year.

In this application, you need to report on each of your project objectives and associated **performance measures** for each of those objectives. (Note: there can be multiple performance measures tied to each (measurable) project objective.)

Your performance measures should include the following:

1. Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) measures, which are related to GEAR UP's performance indicators that are published in this application. (Please refer to the GEAR UP GPRA Performance Indicators for these measures.) These indicators include students' completion of courses such as Pre-algebra by the end of eighth grade, students' completion of Algebra I by the end of ninth grade, and students'

and parents' knowledge of necessary academic preparation for college. An example of a performance measure related to a GPRA indicator would be "Increase the percentage of GEAR UP students who have completed Algebra I by ninth grade by 10 percentage points each year of the project."

2. Program measures are additional performance measures the GEAR UP program office has established that are aligned with the GEAR UP statute and program goals. These specific measures are: (a) average daily attendance at the GEAR UP schools, (b) percentages of GEAR UP students promoted on time to successive grade levels, and (c) students' educational aspirations/expectations (i.e., percentages of GEAR UP students who expect to graduate from high school). An example of a program performance measure could be, "Each project year, at least 95 percent of GEAR UP students will be promoted to the next grade level on time."
3. Project-specific measures are performance measures in addition to those mentioned above that you establish and include in your GEAR UP application. These measures can relate to, for instance, academic factors such as grade point averages or standardized test scores. An example of a project-specific performance measure could be "Increase the average percentile rank of GEAR UP students' math scores by 5 points each year."

In addition to reporting the specific performance measures for each of your objectives, your application must show the **targets** you have set for each of those measures. Targets must be set for each of the six or seven years of your GEAR UP project. Please note that these targets are set **after** you have collected baseline data on the performance measures. If you have already collected baseline data on any of the performance measures (e.g., baseline data such as the average daily attendance of seventh graders in the middle school you propose to serve in your GEAR UP project) and included these data in this application, please set targets for each year of your GEAR UP project on those specific performance measures and include them in your application as well. If you have **not** included baseline data for each performance measure in your application, then baseline data should be collected during the first year of the project (on those specific measures). Once the baseline data are obtained for a particular measure, targets for that measure can then be set for the second and subsequent years of the project.

GEAR UP grantees must consistently collect and analyze student achievement, educational attainment (e.g., course completions), and other outcome data on an ongoing basis, especially data linked to the ten GPRA measures. The data also provide evidence that your grant project is meeting the GEAR UP mission of preparing students to graduate from high school and enter, persist, and succeed in postsecondary education. In order to show that your grant is in compliance, merits continuation of Federal funds in subsequent award years, and will eventually close in good standing, you must report the data requested in each Annual Performance Report (APR). Each year, when you submit your APR, Department of Education GEAR UP staff will compare the target you have established for each performance measure to the actual performance data. In your Final Performance Report (FPR), you must report on the numbers of cohort students who have graduated from high school with an official diploma and who have enrolled in postsecondary education.

Evaluation plan: A strong evaluation plan should shape the development of the project from the beginning to the end of the grant period. The evaluation plan should include benchmarks to monitor progress toward meeting specific project objectives and a summative evaluation approach for assessing the likely contribution of the project to improving student outcomes, particularly those identified in Program performance reporting.

Applicants are encouraged to think carefully about summative evaluation approaches and choose one that is cost-effective and feasible, but will maximize how much confidence the Project or the Program can have in the study results (see definitions of evaluation designs, below). The strongest evaluation designs are experimental/randomized control studies. Other evaluation designs may be easier to implement but do not provide such rigorous results. Each applicant will have different State and local conditions for implementing the program and capacity for collecting and analyzing data, which have to be taken into consideration when designing the evaluation. For example, larger districts with more than one middle school may be able to compare the change in outcomes for its GEAR UP schools to the change in outcomes for similar non-GEAR UP schools; small districts with only one middle school will not be able to use that evaluation approach.

The evaluation plan should clearly indicate: (1) what types of data will be collected; (2) when various types of data will be collected; (3) for which students data will be collected – participants only, participants and non-participants, which cohort (i.e., in what year did the students start); (4) what data collection methods will be used; (5) how the data will be analyzed; and (6) when reports and outcome data will be available. Applicants are encouraged to explain how they plan to gather data, such as by working with appropriate agencies to use State longitudinal data systems; schools; or other third-party verified data sources.

Definitions of Summative Evaluation Design Approaches

Experimental study means a study that employs random assignment of, for example, students, teachers, classrooms, schools, or districts to participate in a project being evaluated (treatment group) or not to participate in the project (control group). The effect of the project is the average difference in outcomes between the treatment and control groups.

Quasi-experimental study means an evaluation design that attempts to approximate an experimental design and can support causal conclusions (i.e., minimizes threats to internal validity, such as selection bias, or allows them to be modeled). Well-designed quasi-experimental studies include carefully matched comparison group designs, interrupted time series designs, or regression discontinuity designs.

Carefully matched comparison group design means a type of quasi-experimental study that attempts to approximate an experimental study. More specifically, it is a design in which project participants are matched with non-participants based on key characteristics that are thought to be related to the outcome. These characteristics may include, but are not limited to: (1) prior test scores and other measures of academic achievement (preferably, the same measures that the study will use to evaluate outcomes for the two groups); (2) demographic characteristics, such as age, disability status, gender, English proficiency, ethnicity, poverty level, parents' educational

attainment, and single- or two-parent family background; (3) the time period in which the two groups are studied (e.g., the two groups are children entering kindergarten in the same year as opposed to sequential years); and (4) methods used to collect outcome data (e.g., the same test of reading skills administered in the same way to both groups).

Interrupted time series design⁵ means a type of quasi-experimental study in which the outcome of interest is measured multiple times before and after the treatment for program participants only. If the program had an impact, the outcomes after treatment will have a different slope or level from those before treatment. That is, the series should show an “interruption” of the prior situation at the time when the program was implemented. Adding a comparison group time series, such as schools not participating in the program or schools participating in the program in a different geographic area, substantially increases the reliability of the findings.

Regression discontinuity design study means, in part, a quasi-experimental study design that closely approximates an experimental study. In a classic regression discontinuity design, participants are assigned to a treatment or comparison group based on the basis of some assignment variable, such as their score on a pretest. Individuals above or below some pre-determined point will be assigned to treatment or control groups based on that variable (e.g. students scoring below 70 on an Algebra I pre-test receive specialized tutoring sessions and those at 70 and above do not). The impact of the intervention is measured by determining the difference in outcomes between individuals immediately above or below the cut point on the initial assignment variable (e.g. comparing the final test scores of students who got a 69 on the pretest and received tutoring with those who scored 70 on the pretest and did not). High-quality regression discontinuity designs require large numbers of individual cases at or near the cut point in order to increase statistical power.

Independent evaluation means that the evaluation is designed and carried out independent of, but in coordination with, any employees of the entities who develop a practice, strategy, or program and are implementing it. This independence helps ensure the objectivity of an evaluation and prevents even the appearance of a conflict of interest.

⁵ A single subject or single case design is an adaptation of an interrupted time series design that relies on the comparison of treatment effects on a single subject or group of single subjects. There is little confidence that findings based on this design would be the same for other members of the population. In some single subject designs, treatment reversal or multiple baseline designs are used to increase internal validity. In a treatment reversal design, after a pretreatment or baseline outcome measurement is compared with a post treatment measure, the treatment would then be stopped for a period of time; a second baseline measure of the outcome would be taken, followed by a second application of the treatment or a different treatment. A multiple baseline design addresses concerns about the effects of normal development, timing of the treatment, and amount of the treatment with treatment-reversal designs by using a varying time schedule for introduction of the treatment and/or treatments of different lengths or intensity.

Selection Criteria for State Grants

The Secretary considers seven criteria drawn from the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR): (1) the need for the project; (2) the quality of project design (3) the quality of project services; (4) the quality of project personnel; (5) the quality of the management plan; (6) the quality of the project evaluation; and (7) the adequacy of project resources. In addition, the 2017 competition includes three competitive preference priorities.

1. Need for the Project (15 points):

In determining the need for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project; and
- The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

2. Quality of Project Design (15 points):

In determining the quality of the project design, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable;
- The extent to which the project design reflects up-to-date research and the replication of effective practices; and
- The extent to which the project supports systemic changes from which future cohorts of students will benefit.
- The extent to which the proposed project is supported by strong theory.

Note: Strong theory means a rationale for the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice that includes a [logic model](#). Logic model (also referred to as theory of action) means a well-specified conceptual framework that identifies key components of the proposed process, product, strategy, or practice (i.e., the active ingredients that are hypothesized to be critical to achieving the relevant outcomes) and describes the relationships among the key components and outcomes, theoretically and operationally.

3. Quality of Project Services (15 points):

In determining the quality of project services provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The extent to which the project services are likely to increase the percentage of students taking rigorous courses that reflect challenging academic standards and reduce the need for remedial education at the postsecondary level; increase the percentage of secondary school completion; increase students knowledge of and access to financial assistance for postsecondary education; increase the percentage of students enrolling and succeeding in postsecondary education; and appropriate to the needs of the intended recipients or beneficiaries of those services; and
- The extent to which the services to be provided by the proposed project involve the collaboration of appropriate partners for maximizing the effectiveness of project services.

4. Quality of Project Personnel (10 points):

In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability. In addition, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator, and
- The qualifications, including relevant training and experience of key personnel.

5. Quality of the Management Plan (10 points):

In determining the quality of the management plan for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks;
- The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the operation of the proposed project;
- The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project; and
- How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

6. Quality of the Project Evaluation (20 points):

In determining the quality of the project evaluation, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.

- The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible;
- The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes; and
- The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

7. Adequacy of Resources (15 points):

In determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project, the Secretary considers the following factors:

- The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization;
- The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project;
- The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and the anticipated results and benefits; and
- The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.

8. Competitive Preference Priority 1 (2 points):

The Secretary may award up to 2 points to for this priority depending upon how well the applicant meets the following factors:

- Has carried out a successful State GEAR UP grant prior to August 14, 2008, determined on the basis of data (including outcome data) submitted by the applicant as part of its annual and final performance reports, and the applicant's history of compliance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements; and
- Has a prior, demonstrated commitment to early intervention leading to college access through collaboration and replication of successful strategies.

9. Competitive Preference Priority 2 (5 points):

The Secretary may award up to 5 points for this priority depending upon how well the applicant designed a project to reduce the need for remedial education for secondary school students, including students with disabilities, at the postsecondary level.

10. Competitive Preference Priority 3 (2 points):

The Secretary may award up to 2 points for this priority depending upon how well the applicant designed a project that will implement at least one strategy supported by evidence of

effectiveness that meets the conditions set out in the definition of “moderate evidence of effectiveness.”

COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY – MODERATE EVIDENCE

Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness (2 points): Applications supported by evidence of effectiveness that meets the conditions set out in the definition of “moderate evidence of effectiveness” in 34 CFR 77.1(c).

The Department views the GEAR UP program as a critical component of its efforts to improve college access and completion for students who have been traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education by focusing on improving college readiness. To more strategically align GEAR UP grants with broader reform strategies intended to improve postsecondary access and completion, the Department has included a competitive preference priority that encourages applicants to propose activities that are supported by moderate evidence of effectiveness (as defined in the notice). The Department is particularly interested in receiving applications that include plans to provide effective services for students that increase the likelihood that students will complete high school and enroll in and complete a program of postsecondary education. The Department is not specifying a particular service that must be tied to evidence, but is providing an opportunity for the applicant to decide which statutorily authorized service the project will implement based on available evidence of effectiveness.

To address the priority, an applicant must identify a study that the applicant believes supports the implementation of a specified statutory service proposed in the application and that meets the moderate evidence of effectiveness standard. The Department will review the study cited by the applicant to determine if it meets the requirements for moderate evidence of effectiveness, as well as whether it is sufficiently aligned with the project proposed.

Cited studies may include both those already listed in the Department’s What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) reviewed studies database (see <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Reviewed-Studies.aspx>) and those that have not yet been reviewed by the WWC. Studies listed in the WWC reviewed studies database do not necessarily satisfy any or all of the criteria needed to meet the moderate evidence of effectiveness standard. Therefore, it is important that applicants themselves ascertain the suitability of the study for the evidence priority. Competitive preference priority points can only be awarded if the study submitted by the applicant meets the standard for moderate evidence of effectiveness and if the study cited is relevant to the proposed project.

Applicants addressing the competitive preference priority should clearly demonstrate the relevance of the intervention evaluated in the cited study to an intervention outlined for the proposed project activities. Accordingly, applicants should clearly demonstrate how the proposed project activities align with the intervention evaluated in the cited study with sufficient fidelity--including, for example, the extent to which the outcomes or impacts cited in the study relate to the intended outcomes of the proposed project, the extent to which the population of the cited study may be similar to the population receiving services through the project, and the extent to which the cited study examines the effectiveness of the strategy or intervention proposed. Where modifications to the cited intervention will be made to account for student or institution/organizational characteristics, resource limitations, or other special factors, the applicant should provide a justification or basis for the modifications in the narrative response to the priority.

As noted in the Notice, multiple studies can cumulatively meet the large and multi-site sample requirements as long as each study meets the other requirements of the moderate evidence of effectiveness definition. Accordingly, applicants addressing the competitive preference priority may submit up to two study citations as long as the studies cited examined the same type of intervention.

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

Contact Information

Division Director
Eileen Bland, eileen.bland@ed.gov, 202-453-7152

Please contact lead program specialist with questions regarding the application:

Lead Program Specialist
Karmon Simms-Coates, karmon.simms-coates@ed.gov, 202-453-7917

Mailing Address

U.S. Department of Education, OPE
Higher Education Programs
Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Room 5W250
Washington, DC 20202
Web Page: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/index.html>

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION PACKAGE

The GEAR UP application consists of **three parts**. These parts are organized in the same manner that the submitted application should be organized. The parts are as follows:

Part I: 424 Forms

- Application for Federal Assistance – (SF 424)
- Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424

***Note:**

- Applicants must complete the Standard Form (SF 424) first because some of the information you provide here is automatically inserted into other sections of the Grants.gov application package.
- Please do not attach any narratives, supporting files, or application components to the SF 424. Although the form accepts attachments, the Department of Education will review only the materials/files attached to the forms listed below.

Part II: Application Narrative

- ED Abstract Form
- Project Narrative Attachment Form– includes the application narrative sections addressing the program selection criteria.
- Project competitive preference priorities
- Other Attachment Forms (GEAR UP Specific Forms)

The **ED Abstract Form** is where you attach your one-page project abstract.

The abstract should include: applicant name, information about the project's goals and objectives, number of students to be served, the target school(s), a list of partners, and the activities and services that will be implemented during the six or seven-year performance period.

Formatting Requirements:

Information provided in the one-page abstract may be single-spaced. However, the **font requirements in the Project Narrative Attachment Form also apply to the ED Abstract Form.**

Note the following:

- A “page” is 8.5 inches by 11 inches, on one side only, with 1-inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Page numbers and an identifier may be within 1-inch margin.
- Applicants may use one of the following fonts: *Times New Roman*, *Courier*, *Courier New*, or *Arial only*. Applications submitted in any other font (including Times Roman and Arial Narrow) will not be accepted. Do not use anything smaller than a 12-point font.

The **Project Narrative Attachment Form** includes the narrative sections addressing the program selection criteria that will be used to evaluate applications submitted for this competition. As a guide for reviewers, applicants are encouraged to label each section in the narrative by its associated criterion. **You must limit the application narrative to no more than 40 double-spaced pages. Applications that exceed the page limit will not be considered for funding. However, if you choose to address the competitive preference priorities, you must limit your discussion on the priorities to only 12 additional pages above the 40 page narrative limitation.** A page is 8.5 inches by 11 inches, on one side only, with 1-inch margins at the top, bottom, and both sides. Page numbers and an identifier may be within 1-inch margin. Applicants must double space the application narrative and use a font that is either 12-point or larger. Charts, tables, figures, and graphs must also be double spaced; however, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions may be single spaced. The following fonts are required to be used: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial. **Applications submitted in any other font, including Times Roman and Arial Narrow, will not be accepted.** The page limits do not apply to the Budget Summary Form and Budget Narrative; other application forms attached in the **“Other Attachments Form”** section; or the **Assurances and Certifications**. We will reject your application if you do not apply these standards and exceed the page limit.

Applicants may use one of the following fonts: Times New Roman, Courier, Courier New, or Arial only. Applications submitted in any other font (including Times Roman and Arial Narrow) will not be accepted. Do not use anything smaller than a 12-point font.

The **Other Attachments Form** is where you upload the following:

GEAR UP program-specific forms (found at the end of the application package):

- Students To Be Served Form, Project Budget Summary Form, Detailed Budget Narrative (no specific form), Applicant Organization Identification Form and Cost Share Worksheet, Partner Identification Form and Cost Share Worksheet (please provide for each partner), Documentation of Student Eligibility for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch (no specific form), Program Profile Sheet.
- Governor’s Letter
- Scholarship Waiver Request (if applicable)

Please do not modify or change the contents of these forms in any way. Please also note there is no specific form or format for the Detailed Budget Narrative and Documentation of Student Eligibility for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch.

Applicants must complete program-specific forms from this document (the application package). Once the forms have been completed and saved, the applicant must upload the documents (separate files) to the **“Other Attachments Form”** in the Grants.gov system. The documents must be in a PDF (Portable Document) format. Other types of files will not be accepted. Please note: Grants.gov cannot process an application that includes two or more files that have the same name within a grant submission. Therefore, each file uploaded to your application package should have a unique file name.

Part III: Assurances and Certifications

- GEPA Section 427 Requirement
- Lobbying Form (formerly ED form 80-0013)
- Assurances – Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372

This program falls under the rubric of Executive Order 12372 (Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs) and the regulations in 34 CFR Part 79. One of the objectives of the Executive Order is to strengthen federalism--or the distribution of responsibility between localities, States, and the Federal government--by fostering intergovernmental partnerships. This idea includes supporting processes that State or local governments have devised for coordinating and reviewing proposed Federal financial grant applications.

The process for doing this requires grant applicants to contact State Single Points of Contact for information on how this works. Multi-state applicants should follow procedures specific to each state.

Further information about the State Single Point of Contact process and a list of names by State can be found at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.pdf>

Absent specific State review programs, applicants may submit comments directly to the Department. All recommendations and comments must be mailed or hand-delivered by the date indicated in the actual application notice to the following address: The Secretary, EO 12372--CFDA# [commenter must insert number--including suffix letter, if any], U.S. Department of Education, room 7E200, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202.

Proof of mailing will be determined on the same basis as applications (see 34 CFR §75.102). Recommendations or comments may be hand-delivered until 4:30 p.m. (eastern time) on the closing date indicated in this notice.

Important note: The above address is not the same address as the one to which the applicant submits its completed applications. ***Do not send applications to the above address.***

NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)

What is GPRA?

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 is a straightforward statute that requires all Federal agencies to manage their activities with attention to the consequences of those activities. Each agency is to clearly state what it intends to accomplish, identify the resources required, and periodically report their progress to the Congress. In doing so, it is expected that GPRA will contribute to improvements in accountability for the expenditures of public funds, improve Congressional decision-making through more objective information on the effectiveness of Federal programs, and promote a new government focus on results, service delivery, and customer satisfaction.

How has the Department of Education Responded to the GPRA Requirements?

As required by GPRA, the Department of Education has prepared a strategic plan for 2014-2018. This plan reflects the Department's priorities and integrates them with its mission and program authorities and describes how the Department will work to improve education for all children and adults in the U.S. The Department's goals, as listed in the plan, are:

Goal 1: Postsecondary Education, Career and Technical Education, and Adult Education. Increase college access, affordability, quality, and completion by improving postsecondary education and lifelong learning opportunities for youths and adults.

Goal 2: Elementary and Secondary Education. Improve the elementary and secondary education system's ability to consistently deliver excellent instruction aligned with rigorous academic standards while providing effective support services to close achievement and opportunity gaps, and ensure all students graduate high school college- and career-ready.

Goal 3: Early Learning. Improve the health, social-emotional, and cognitive outcomes for all children from birth through 3rd grade, so that all children, particularly those with high needs, are on track for graduating from high school college- and career-ready.

Goal 4: Equity. Increase educational opportunities for underserved students and reduce discrimination so that all students are well-positioned to succeed.

Goal 5: Continuous Improvement of the U.S. Education System. Enhance the education system's ability to continuously improve through better and more widespread use of data, research and evaluation, evidence, transparency, innovation, and technology.

Goal 6: U.S. Department of Education Capacity. Improve the organizational capacities of the Department to implement this strategic plan.

What are the Performance Indicators for the GEAR UP Program?

The Department's specific goal for the GEAR UP Program is: "to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education."

Objective 1: Increase the academic performance and preparation for post-secondary education of GEAR UP students.

Objective 2: Increase the rate of high school graduation and enrollment in post-secondary education for GEAR UP students.

Objective 3: Increase GEAR UP students' and their families' knowledge of post-secondary education options, preparation, and financing.

Application Package Checklist

Before you submit the application package, please review the following list to ensure that you have attached all required materials/files.

Standard Departmental Application Forms, Assurances, and Certifications

- Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
- Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF-424
- GEPA Section 427 Requirement
- Grants.gov Lobbying form (formerly ED form 80-0013)
- Assurance - Non-Construction Programs (SF 424B)
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL)

GEAR UP Program Specific Forms

- Students to be Served Form
- Project Budget Summary Form
- Applicant Organization Identification Form and Cost Share Worksheet
- Partner Identification Form and Cost Share Worksheet
- Program Profile Sheet

Additional Documents

- Governor's Letter
- ED Abstract Form (one-page maximum)
- Project Narrative Attachment Form (40-page maximum)
- Competitive Preference Priorities (12-page maximum)
- Budget Narrative – Detailed
- Documentation of Student Eligibility for Free or Reduced – Price Lunch

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STANDARD AND PROGRAM SPECIFIC FORMS

PROGRAM-SPECIFIC FORMS INSTRUCTIONS:

STUDENTS TO BE SERVED: This form presents an outline of the proposed cohort of students to be served during the six- or seven-year performance period.

BUDGET SUMMARY FORM: This form presents a complete budget summary for each year of grant funding. Please provide a justification for this budget by including, *for the first year only*, a narrative for each budget line item, which explains: (1) the basis for estimating the costs of professional personnel salaries, benefits, project staff travel, materials and supplies, consultants and subcontracts, indirect costs, and any projected expenditures; (2) how the major cost items relate to the proposed activities; and (3) the costs of evaluation. Please include travel funds to attend annual conferences and workshops. Each trip will be for four days for up to six persons paid for out of project funds. At these meetings, each grant recipient will have an opportunity to strengthen its efforts by collaborating with other grantees funded in this program and receive technical assistance from U.S. Department of Education personnel. Applicants are reminded that GEAR UP funds must be used to supplement, not supplant, funds for existing programs.

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION IDENTIFICATION FORM AND COST SHARE WORKSHEET: The support, contribution, and commitment of the partner serving as the grant Applicant should be described clearly within the narrative. Additionally, the Applicant Organization Identification Form and Cost Share Worksheet, documents the role and contribution of the Partnership's Applicant Organization.

PARTNER IDENTIFICATION FORM AND COST SHARE WORKSHEET: The support, contributions, and commitment of each partner should be described clearly within the narrative. Additionally, a Partner Identification Form and Cost Share Worksheet for each member of the partnership, other than the lead partner, document the role and contribution of each partner. The total of the contributions on each of the Cost Share Worksheets should equal the total matching dollars on the Project Budget Summary Form.

STANDARD APPLICATION FORMS INSTRUCTIONS:

APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL EDUCATION ASSISTANCE (SF 424 FORM) INSTRUCTIONS: Applicants should read the accompanying directions before filling out this form.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION FOR SF 424 INSTRUCTIONS: Applicants should read the accompanying directions before filling out this form.

GEPA SECTION 427 REQUIREMENT: Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) requires each applicant to include in its application a description of proposed steps to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program. The statute, which allows applicants discretion in developing the required description, highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. You may use local circumstances to determine the extent to which these or other barriers prevent equitable participation by students, teachers, parents, or other community members. Your description need not be lengthy, but it should include a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances, and it should support the discussion of similar issues in the narrative section of the application.

GRANTS.GOV LOBBYING FORM (Formerly ED 80-0013): Applicants should refer to the regulations cited in each section of the form to determine the certification to which they are required to attest.

STANDARD FORM 424B, ASSURANCES-NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM: Applicants should read each section of the form to determine which of the assurances apply to their project.

DISCLOSURE OF LOBBYING ACTIVITIES (SF-LLL): Applicants should read the accompanying directions before filling out this form.

GEAR UP PROGRAM-SPECIFIC FORMS

STUDENTS TO BE SERVED FORM

For all grants using a cohort approach, indicate the number of students your project intends to serve in each grade level each year of the project period:

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7
Kindergarten							
1 st							
2 nd							
3 rd							
4 th							
5 th							
6 th							
7 th							
8 th							
9 th							
10 th							
11 th							
12 th							
First Year IHE*							
Total Students Served							

Target School(s)	Grade levels offered in the School(s)

For State grants not using a cohort approach:

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7
Total Students Served							

For Grants using a cohort approach:

Are at least 50% of all the students in the participating school(s) from which the cohort(s) is drawn *eligible* for free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Act? ____ Yes
 ____ No

*Institution of Higher Education

PROJECT BUDGET SUMMARY FORM

FEDERAL FUNDS REQUESTED FROM THE GEAR UP GRANT PROGRAM

Direct Cost	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	TOTAL
	Y							
1. Salaries and Wages								
2. Employee Benefits								
3. Travel								
4. Materials and Supplies								
5. Consultants & Contracts								
6. Other								
A. Total Direct Costs: <i>(Sum of lines 1-6)</i>								
B. Total Indirect Costs*: <i>(cannot be greater than 8% of Total Direct Costs)</i>								
C. Equipment								
D. Scholarships/ Tuition Assistance								
E. TOTAL REQUESTED <i>(A + B+ C+D)</i>								

All items must be addressed in the detailed budget justification

***Indirect Cost Information (To Be Completed by Your Business Office):**

If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs on line B, please answer the following questions:

(1) Do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government?
 Yes No

(2) If yes, please provide the following information:
 Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement:
 From: ___/___/_____ To: ___/___/_____ (mm/dd/yyyy)
 Approving Federal agency: ___ ED ___ Other (please specify): _____

(3) For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that: Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement? or Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)?

Direct Costs:	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	TOTAL
1. Salaries and Wages								
2. Employee Benefits								
3. Travel								
4. Materials and Supplies								
5. Consultants and Contracts								
6. Other								
A. Total Direct Costs: <i>(Sum of lines 1-6)</i>								
B. Total Indirect Costs: <i>(cannot be greater than 8% of Total Direct Costs)</i>								
C. Equipment								
D. Scholarships/ Tuition Assistance								
E. TOTAL MATCHING FUNDS FROM NON-FEDERAL SOURCES (A+B+C+D)								

MATCHING FUNDS PROVIDED BY NON-FEDERAL SOURCES
All items must be addressed in the detailed budget justification

APPLICANT ORGANIZATION IDENTIFICATION FORM AND COST SHARE WORKSHEET

Please provide the following information for the Applicant Organization and its share of matching commitments (cash or in-kind) for each year of the proposed project.

1. Type of Institution/Organization:

Are you a State Education Agency (SEA)?
 Yes No

Are you an Institution of Higher Education (IHE)?
 Yes No

Type of IHE:

Four-Year Two-Year

Public Private

College University

HBCU HSI TCCU NHSI

ANSI

2. Matching Funds Provided by Applicant Organization

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	TOTAL
1. Salaries and Wages								
2. Employee Benefits								
3. Travel								
4. Materials and Supplies								
5. Consultants and Contracts								
6. Other								
A. Total Direct Costs <i>(Sum of lines 1-6)</i>								
B. Total Indirect Costs: <i>(cannot be greater than 8% of Total Direct Costs)</i>								
C. Equipment								
D. Scholarships/ Tuition Assistance								
E. TOTAL COMMITMENT <i>(Lines A + B + C + D)</i>								

PARTNER IDENTIFICATION FORM AND COST SHARE WORKSHEET

Please complete one form for each partner (other than the Applicant Organization).

1. Institution/Organization _____

Point of Contact: Name _____

Title _____ Department _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ e-mail _____ Fax _____

2. Type of Organization:

Are you a Local Educational Agency (LEA)?

Yes No

Are you an Institution of Higher Education (IHE)?

Yes No

Type of IHE:

Four-Year Two-Year

Public Private

College University

HBCU HSI TCCU NHSI ANSI

Other types:

Business

Community-based organization

Professional association

Philanthropic Organization

State Agency

Other: _____

PR Award No. _____

3. Non-Federal Fund contribution provided by Partner

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7	TOTAL
1. Salaries and Wages								
2. Employee Benefits								
3. Travel								
4. Materials and Supplies								
5. Consultants and Contracts								
6. Other								
A. Total Direct Costs <i>(Sum of lines 1-6)</i>								
B. Total Indirect Costs: <i>(Cannot be greater than 8% of Total Direct Costs)</i>								
C. Equipment								
D. Scholarships/Tuition Assistance								
E. TOTAL COMMITMENT <i>(Lines A + B+ C+D)</i>								

Please summarize the partner's specific support and commitment to the project in this space.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL: _____

NAME OF AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL: _____

TITLE OF AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL: _____

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs
State Program Profile Sheet

Institution/Organization (Legal Name): _____

1. Governor’s Designation - The governor of each State must designate, in a letter, the agency that can apply for and administer the GEAR UP State grant. Has a signed and dated letter of designation from the governor been included in the application? ___ Yes ___ No

2. Prior Experience - If your agency is requesting prior experience points, please provide the PR/Award Number below for any grant that was successfully implemented prior to August 14, 2008.

P334S _____

P334S _____

3. Competitive Preference Priorities - An applicant may be eligible to receive additional points based on the degree to which Competitive Preference Priorities (CPPs) are addressed. Please indicate below which CPPs were addressed in your application.

___ Competitive Preference Priority 1 ___ Competitive Preference Priority 2

4. Implementation Model - Please check below which model you are proposing to implement.

a. ___ Priority Student Model

b. ___ Cohort Model: whole-grade approach public-housing approach

c. ___ Models a and b

5. If you are implementing the priority student model, please indicate how many students will be served each year.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Total

List the types of priority/disconnected students the project will serve (e.g., foster students, homeless, disabled).

6. If you are implementing the cohort model, please answer the following questions.

a. Grade Level. Are you planning to serve at least one whole grade level of students in the target school(s)? ___ Yes ___ No

- b. Free/Reduced Price Lunch. At least 50 percent of the students enrolled in the target school(s) must be eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Have you provided in the application free or reduced-price lunch documentation for the target school(s)?

Yes No

- c. Continued Services. Are you planning to provide services to participating GEAR UP students **beginning not later than 7th grade** through the 12th grade OR through the student's first year of attendance at an institution of higher education? Yes No

- d. Students to be Served - Please provide the total number of students to be served for each project year and check the corresponding grade levels.

Year	Total # of Students	Grade Level														
		K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1 st Year College	
Yr 1																
Yr 2																
Yr 3																
Yr 4																
Yr 5																
Yr 6																
Yr 7																

Note: GEAR UP projects must start serving students not later than 7th grade.

6. Funding Requested – The total amount of federal funds a State project can receive each year is \$3.5 million. The non-Federal cost provided by a project must be no less than 50 percent of the total cost of the project at the end of the 6- or 7-year project period (i.e., the project's cost-share must be \$1 if the requested federal amount is \$1, with a total project cost of \$2). Please provide below the amount of federal and matching funds you are requesting for each year of the project period.

Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Total
Federal								
Match								
Total								

Note: A project cannot request more Federal funds in subsequent project years than the total amount requested in the first year.

7. Scholarships – State projects are required to establish or maintain a financial assistance program that awards scholarships to eligible students (allocating at least 50 percent of total project funds to scholarships) and to ensure that scholarships are available for use at any institution of higher education. However, a state project can waive the 50 percent requirement if the project has another means of providing financial assistance to eligible students. Have you included in the application a request to waive the scholarship component? Yes No

Paperwork Burden Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 60.5 hours per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. The obligation to respond to this collection is required to obtain or retain benefit (Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) (Public Law 110-315)). Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to regulations.gov during the public comment period for this collection of information. If you have specific questions about the form, instrument or survey, please contact the U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20202.