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

Summary of Public Comments on

Proposed Changes to the 2023 Final Performance Report (FPR)

Following 60 Day Review Period

On July 10, 2023, the Department of Education (Department) published a Notice of Proposed Information Collection Request (Notice) in the Federal Register inviting comments by September 8, 2023, on the proposed final performance report (FPR) for the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) program. Two respondents submitted comments and a summary of our responses is below.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS

COMMENT: Commenter requested that we add in the word/character count limit for each of the open-ended questions.

RESPONSE: The character count has been added to all of the open-ended questions.

COMMENT: Commenter asked that we ensure consistency between the on-line and paper versions.

RESPONSE: The intention was always to have consistency between the on-line and paper versions of the report. No changes were made.

COMMENT: Commenter requested that we revisit the numbering system.

RESPONSE: The numbering has been changed to go across the entire report.

COMMENT: Commenter requested that we change the tense for Section II, Questions 1, 2, 3 and 5.

RESPONSE: This change was made for clarification purposes.

COMMENT: Commenter requested that we add a question to have grantees describe their project's successes and challenges in advancing their approved project evaluation plan for program improvement during the reporting period.

RESPONSE: We added this question to be consistent with the Annual Performance Report (APR).

COMMENT: Commenter requested that we eliminate or limit the scope of questions 9 and 10 in Section III because of burden and redundancy.

RESPONSE: These questions are unchanged from the former FPR. The Department feels it is important to have some cumulative questions on the FPR looking back on the work of the entire performance period, instead of needing to compile the information together from various APRs. No changes were made.

COMMENT: Commenter requested that we eliminate or phase in the new questions about the scholarship component of the program.

RESPONSE: No changes are being made to questions 13 and 14 as these are for all grantees to fill out regardless of waiver status and they provide room for estimates where exact data may not have been tracked.

Question 15 is for any applicant that received a waiver. Given the commenters' feedback, we have phased this question in so only applicants who received the waiver in 2019 or later will need to respond to this question. Beginning in 2019, the application package required waiver applicants to describe how eligible students would receive scholarships through other means and lets them know that they would have to report on the number of students who received scholarships and the average amount disbursed. The question also provides flexibility for estimates to be provided.

Question 16 is for any applicant that received a waiver. Given the commenters' feedback, we have phased this question in so only applicants who received the waiver in 2023 or later will need to respond to this question, which is consistent with what those grantees had to provide in their waiver application.

COMMENT: Commenter requested that we make the time period in Question 17 in Section IV clearer.

RESPONSE: We made changes to the question to clarify that it should cover all students served during each year of the grant and to make clear what years each part covers.

COMMENT: Commenter requested that the Race/Ethnicity section be aligned to IPEDS guidance and that the reporting be phased in.

RESPONSE: While we did not change the format of the questions, institutions can collect the data as a two-part question and provide the data in the format in the report. We did not change it to be phased in, but it should be noted that there are no negative impacts to the grantee if they do not have the complete information to respond to this question.

COMMENT: Commenter requested that for Questions 17 and 18 in Section IV an open-ended question be added to allow grantees to provide an explanation if they do not have aggregate information.

RESPONSE: We added in these questions.

COMMENT: Commenter requested that revisions be made to Section V on the questions about student outcomes.

RESPONSE: We accepted the recommended changes in order to make this section consistent with the questions in the APR.

COMMENT: Commenter requested that we renumber the grant budget information section.

RESPONSE: We made this change.

COMMENT: The second commenter agreed with the Department's changes and additions to the FPR and with the estimated burden hours.

RESPONSE: No changes were made.