

# West Virginia GEAR UP

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## What is it and what does it have to do with me?

West Virginia GEAR UP is a program that helps students in eleven West Virginia counties—including yours—get help planning, applying and paying for college.

Continuing your education after high school is more important now than ever. West Virginia GEAR UP can help you get the grades, get into college, and get a degree (that way, you can score better paying jobs and all the shiny, flashy, happy stuff that comes with them).

Sounds great, right? Well, honestly, it is. See, West Virginia GEAR UP is a federally funded grant program, and that means you get extra opportunities—chances other students in the state may not have—to prepare for your future.

But you've got to step up, and make good use of the resources offered. Check out the FAQs (on the next page) to learn about the sort of services WV GEAR UP can provide.

Then start thinking about what your goals are, and how you're going to make it all happen. Chances are, you'll see that the GEAR UP program can help.

Visit [www.wvgearup.org](http://www.wvgearup.org) for more info.



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## Frequently Asked Questions

**What does GEAR UP stand for?** GEAR UP stands for **G**aining **E**arly **A**wareness and **R**eadiness for **U**ndergraduate **P**rograms.

**What can West Virginia GEAR UP do for you?** It can help change your life. Students who complete training and education beyond high school make thousands (often tens of thousands) of dollars more per year than those who stop during or after HS. And since GEAR UP can help you get that training and education, GEAR UP can help change your life!

**What does GEAR UP provide?** Tutoring, mentoring, college visits, financial aid counseling and FAFSA completion workshops, educational tools and technology for your school, career planning/counseling, test prep and study skills workshops, parent and community activities, awards for students' hard work, and much more. Some services may vary from school to school.

**Who can participate in GEAR UP?** Only certain students in certain schools within certain counties are eligible to participate in West Virginia GEAR UP. There's a [list of eligible schools](#) online, but most schools in Boone, Clay, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Mingo, Nicholas, Roane, Wayne, Webster, and Wirt counties are considered GEAR UP schools. The classes of 2027 and 2028 at eligible schools are considered GEAR UP students and will be served beginning in the 7th grade all the way through graduation and into their first year of postsecondary education. Additionally, all 12th grade students at eligible schools will be served every year of the grant from now through 2028.

**Why are the classes of 2027 and 2028 so special?** They get to receive extra help so that GEAR UP can watch their progress every year and see which services are the most effective in helping students get to college. That way, the best GEAR UP services can be copied and used statewide in years to come.

**How long does this program last?** Through the 2027-2028 academic year.

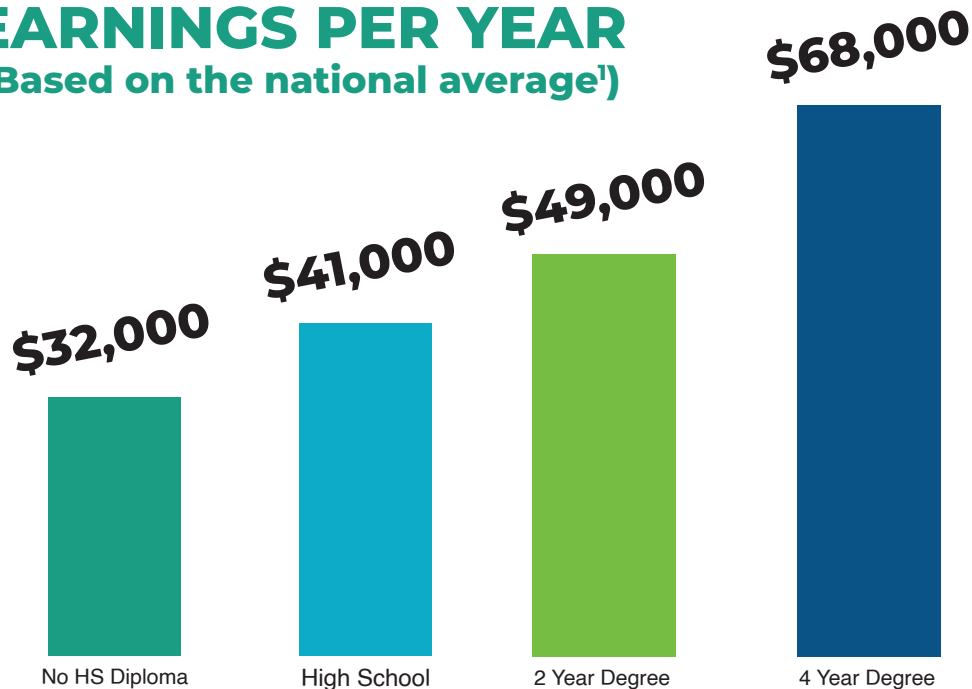
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# Learn More Earn More

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## EARNINGS PER YEAR (Based on the national average<sup>1</sup>)



Students who continue their training and education beyond high school almost always make more money than people who stop at high school. If you learn more, you stand to earn more — it's that simple.

It's estimated that 70% of West Virginia's future job openings will require more than a high school diploma.<sup>2</sup>

But how do you come up with the cash **RIGHT NOW** to pay for school? There are tons of **financial resources** available to help you earn your degree. Talk to your counselor. Do some research online. It's never too early to start planning, and it's worth it.

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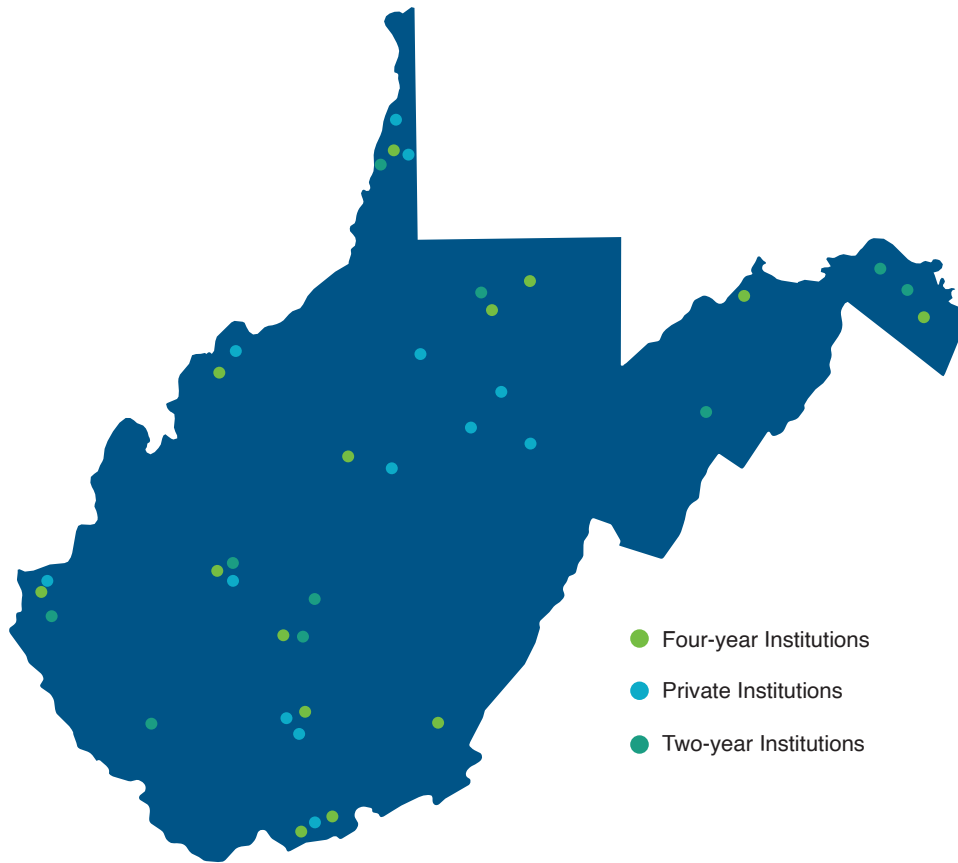
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2021/data-on-display/education-pays.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED605044.pdf>

# Colleges and Universities

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## in West Virginia



There are **13 financial aid programs** offered by the State of West Virginia to help students pay for school. That's 13 opportunities for you to go to college, earn your degree and score a job that brings in some serious cash.

Find the school that's right for you!

Visit [www.wvgearup.org](http://www.wvgearup.org) to learn how.



# You Can Get There

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## Here's How

Not sure if college is for you? Think again. There's a program and school to fit everyone's needs—and you can get there. If you break your goals into smaller pieces, you can work toward building a better life and achieving your dreams. Follow this step-by-step guide (click on your grade level or scroll through the pdf), to learn what you can do to take control of your future.

**7th Graders**

**8th Graders**

**9th/10th Graders**

**11th/12th Graders**

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## 7th Graders

### Explore Your Options

You know yourself better than anyone, and only you can determine what you want your future to look like. It's never too early to decide where you want to go, and how you're going to get there. The CFWV.com web portal is a great tool to use to explore different programs and schools. You can also explore different types of career options. Visit [CFWV.com](http://CFWV.com) and create a free account to save all the jobs that interest you in your [portfolio](#) so can come back and look at them later.

### Establish Good Study Habits

Now is a good time to learn how to manage your time, organize and strengthen your study skills. Start by establishing a homework and study routine, chose a study space that works best for you, and make sure you have all materials you need to complete assignments. Working on establishing good study skills early will is so important especially as your schoolwork becomes more challenging. Click here to learn more about [successful study skills](#).

### Make a Plan

Good intentions are great, but hard work earns results. Decide how you'll work toward achieving the goals you've outlined. Do you need to improve your grades? Start participating in a tutoring program. Think you'd like to learn more about a career? Ask a teacher or counselor if you can job shadow a professional or about the classes you should take in high school to prepare for a job in that field. This is also a great time to talk to your family about your plans and your goals. They can help keep you on track, and they may suggest options you haven't considered. Don't forget to use the college planning timeline and follow the steps in the timeline throughout the school year to help you stay on track during the college planning process. If you're wondering how you're going to pay for college, consider starting a [savings plan](#) with your family or on your own.

### Challenge Yourself

Getting to college and building a career you love can be challenging (but also incredibly rewarding). Get your grades up to par (if they aren't already), and plan to take the right classes in high school. If you feel like you can easily handle your schoolwork, participate in activities that can help you improve your skills even more. Your efforts will pay off when you earn your degree and land the job you want.

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## 8th Graders

### Set a Goal

You know yourself better than anyone, and only you can determine what you want your future to look like. And it's never too early to decide where you want to go, and how you're going to get there. The [CFWV.com](http://CFWV.com) web portal is a great tool to use to explore different career options. Take a few moments to visualize the way you want to live. What sort of career do you want? What hobbies or other interests would you like to explore? How much money do you want to make? Where do you want to live? Do you want to have children some day? Once you know exactly what you want to achieve, it's much easier to make it happen.

### Examine Your Life

Once you know where you want to go, think about the path you're on now. Is it likely to lead you in the right direction? How are your grades? Have you been working hard in English, math and science? Have you thought about taking a foreign language class, or joining an extra school organization? Think about the areas of your life you could improve, and the areas where you're doing well.

### Make a Plan

Good intentions are great, but hard work earns results. Decide how you'll work toward achieving the goals you've outlined. Start participating in a tutoring program. Think you'd like to learn more about a career? Ask a teacher or counselor if you can job shadow a professional or about the classes you should take in high school to prepare for a job in that field. This is also a great time to talk to your family about your plans and your goals. They can help keep you on track, and they may suggest options you haven't considered.

### Challenge Yourself

Now is a good time to think about the classes you will take in 9th grade. Get your grades up to par (if they aren't already), and plan to take the right classes in high school. If you feel like you can easily handle your school work, participate in activities that can help you improve your skills even more. Look into academic enrichment programs, including summer and weekend programs, available through your school or local colleges to help prepare you for the transition to high school and college. Your efforts will pay off when you earn your degree and land the job you want.

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## 9th/10th Graders

### Take the Right Classes

Advanced math, science, English and foreign language classes can be tough, but the work you put in now will pay off big time down the road. You may even be able to take some college classes later in high school that will help you earn credit toward a two or four-year degree. Talk to your guidance counselor or GEAR UP site coordinator to learn which high school courses will put you on the right track toward going to college and planning for a career, and to find out if college credit courses are available at your school. Then take those classes! Now is also a good time to really focus on your career and college research. Start thinking about the colleges you want to attend and look into the college entrance requirements for those schools.

### Ask a Million Questions

Your guidance counselors, teachers and principals want you to succeed, so don't feel bad about demanding their attention. Schedule time with them so they can help you plan for college. Ask if they can recommend a tutor or provide extra resources if you're struggling in one of those tough classes. Even ask them to help you find ways to pay for your education beyond high school. They chose to be teachers because they want to help students. Don't be shy about asking them to help you.

### Get the Whole Family Involved

You can go to college on your own, but it's way easier if you have the support of your family. Tell your parents (or another supportive adult) about your plans to attend college and pursue a career. As you research education and career options, share your discoveries with your family. Ask them to push you to do your best toward achieving your goals and tell them you need their support. If you can, attend college tours and open houses together. They may be able to help you make decisions about which school to attend, what program to enroll in, and how to [pay for your education](#).

### Make a Plan to Pay for College

Work with a counselor or your family to [make a plan to pay for college](#). Find out how much you can really expect to pay, and then start exploring scholarship and other financial aid options. If you can, set aside a little money each week or month in a savings account to help you pay for your education and living expenses once you graduate high school.

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## 11th/12th Graders

### Keep Pushing Yourself

Make sure you continue challenging yourself academically; math, science and writing skills are critical for succeeding in college. Talk to your guidance counselor or GEAR UP site coordinator to find out if your school offers college credit classes to help you earn credits while still in high school. If you think you're not ready or you're struggling, ask for additional help.

### Stay Focused On Your Goals

Your 11th grade year is the time to really focus on your career and college research. Narrow your list of colleges to include colleges with requirements above, below, and in-line with your current GPA. During your 12th grade year, you should sign up for CFVW's free [Txt 4 Success](#) program to receive college tips and reminders via text message. The Txt 4 Success program also allows students to send their questions via text to receive an answer from a professional college advisor!

### Take the ACT/SAT

Your scores on these tests will help determine what scholarships you can receive, the classes you will take your first year of college and even which colleges you can attend. They're a big deal, but the good news is (a) you can practice for them, and (b) you can take them more than once to try to get a better score. Don't forget to use CFVW's free [test preparation tools](#) to help you study! If you need help paying to take the tests, ask your counselor or GEAR UP site coordinator about fee waivers.

### Participate in College Application and Exploration Week & College Decision Day events

During your 12th grade year, be sure you participate in [College Application and Exploration Week](#) (CAEW)! CAEW is one of CFVW's three statewide college-planning events, along with [College Decision Day](#) and statewide financial aid completion events, that help guide 12th grade students and their families in planning, applying, paying for and enrolling in college.

### Master the Financial Aid Process

Applying for [financial aid for college](#) can sometimes be confusing, but there are experts that can help you. Ask your counselor for help or attend a financial aid night at your school. You'll need to complete something called a [FAFSA](#), and you can get help with that too!

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# Learn The Lingo

## College Planning and Admissions Terms

ACT - A college entrance test (like the SAT). Your scores on these tests will help determine what scholarships you can receive, what classes you will take your first year of college and even which colleges you can attend. They're a big deal, but the good news is (a) you can practice for them, and (b) you can take them more than once to try to get a better score. Many colleges accept scores from either the SAT or the ACT, but some require one or the other.

Admission/Application/Acceptance - You must apply to get into college. The process colleges use to decide who gets in is called admission. Colleges review each application and decide which students to accept. Students receive a letter of acceptance or rejection.

Advanced Placement (AP) - AP courses are classes you can take in high school that offer college-level coursework. Students can get college credit for this work by taking an end-of-the-year exam which covers all of the course material.

Application Deadline - This deadline is the last date to submit your application and be considered for acceptance for a particular term. Application deadlines vary for each college.

Application Fee - Some colleges charge a fee to process your application.

College Entrance Exams - These are standardized tests used to measure skills important for college success; many colleges require applicants to take at least one; most common are the SAT and the ACT.

Extracurricular Activities - Also known as co-curricular, these are activities in which a student participates outside of class, such as athletics, clubs, or music.

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# Learn The Lingo

**Enrollment** - Enrollment is the process a student must complete after they have been accepted in order to become an “official” student at the college. To enroll, students typically must complete all forms required by the college, pay tuition and fees, and sign up for classes.

**PSAT** - The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is designed for juniors and is co-sponsored by the College Board and the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. The PSAT/NMSQT measures critical reading, math problem solving, and writing skills. It does not measure things like creativity and motivation, and does not recognize the special talents that may be important to colleges.

**SAT** - This is another college entrance test (like the ACT). Your scores on this test will help determine what scholarships you can receive, what classes you will take your first year of college and even which colleges you can attend. They’re a big deal, but the good news is (a) you can practice for them, and (b) you can take them more than once to try to get a better score. Many colleges accept scores from either the SAT or the ACT, but some require one or the other.

## Financial Aid Process Terms

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC)** - EFC is the amount that, according to a government formula, your family should be able to pay toward college expenses. Your EFC is determined by information you submit on the FAFSA.

**FAFSA** - The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is the form students use to apply for financial assistance from the federal government.

**Financial Aid** - A financial aid package is the combination of grants, scholarships, loans, and work-study stipends or funds a student receives to help offset the cost of attending college. The most important step in applying for financial aid is completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

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# Learn The Lingo

Financial Need - This is the term for the difference between what your family is expected to contribute and the total cost of attendance for one year of college (cost of attendance). Financial Need equals Cost of Attendance minus Expected Family Contribution.

Grant - A financial award that does not need to be repaid.

Merit-Based Aid - This type of financial assistance is based on a student's academic success.

Need-Based Aid - These are financial aid programs that award funds based on the level of financial need of a particular student.

Work Study - The Federal Work-Study program is a financial assistance program that provides students with jobs, usually on campus.

## College Structure Terms

Associate's Degree - An associate's degree is granted after the completion of a two-year program.

Bachelor's Degree - A bachelor's degree is granted after the completion of a four-year program.

Certificate - A certificate is a recognition that a student has completed a program of study in a specialized area.

College - College includes schooling or training programs after high schools.

Community College - Sometimes called a two-year college, students can take classes, and then transfer to a four-year school, or they can earn certificates, diplomas or associate's degrees from these school.

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# Learn The Lingo

Credit - A credit is a measure of how much a particular course counts toward completing overall graduation requirements. Credits are typically equal to the approximate number of hours spent in class per week (i.e., 3 credit hours = 3 hours of in-class time).

Full-Time Student - A student is considered full-time if they are enrolled in a minimum of twelve undergraduate credit hours per semester or other comparable period at an institution with a non-traditional calendar. A student seeking to complete a four-year degree in four years or a two-year degree in two years must complete, on average, 15 credit hours per semester.

Internship - An internship is a program that lets students apply their studies in a work setting.

Liberal Arts - The liberal arts include subjects that cover a broad knowledge in a wide variety of subjects. Subjects such as history, literature and social sciences are considered liberal arts subjects.

Major - A student's major is the area of study in which they choose to specialize.

Master's Degree - A master's degree is an advanced degree following a bachelor's degree.

Proprietary or For-Profit Schools - These schools can offer bachelor's and master's degrees, but most offer associate's degrees or certificates in office management, medical assistance, cosmetology, dental hygiene, computer systems engineering, and more.

Private College - A private college is an independent college set up by individuals or organizations.

Postsecondary Education - Education and training beyond high school is called postsecondary education.

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# Learn The Lingo

Residence Hall - Also called a dormitory or dorm, a residence hall is a building that houses students who live on a college campus.

Student Level or Rank - Students are ranked as freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors depending on how many credit hours they have earned. Rank can be used to determine when a student is allowed to register for classes or what classes a student may take.

Public College or University - A public college or university is an institution of higher education set up with government support.

Semester - A period of time, usually about fifteen weeks, during which college is in session. In semestered schools, most courses last just one semester and students must register at the school each semester. This is similar to school terms.

Technical Institute - A technical institute is an institution after high school that emphasizes practical career and job skills, especially in technology and applied trades.

Transcript - A student's academic work is summarized in their transcript. This includes a listing of all the classes they took, the number of credits and the grade for each.

Transfer of Credits - Some students attend more than one college during their college careers. When they move or transfer from one college to another, they can transfer certain credit hours or classes from the old college to the new one. The new college determines which courses will count toward its graduation requirements.

Tuition - Tuition is the portion of college costs attributed directly to paying for classes.

Undergraduate - An undergraduate student is a college student who has not yet earned a bachelor's or associate's degree.

University - A university is an institution that usually combines one or more colleges with other schools, such as medical or law.

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