

# WEST VIRGINIA GEAR UP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES GUIDE



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[www.wvgearup.org](http://www.wvgearup.org)





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## SECTION 1: PROGRAM INFORMATION

### Program Contact Information

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[www.wvgearup.org](http://www.wvgearup.org)

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College Access and Success Program Director (Central Region)  
Vacant

College Access and Success Program Director (Southern  
Region)  
Vacant

*West Virginia GEAR UP is administered by the West Virginia Higher  
Education Policy Commission.*



## Federal Program Overview

**Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs** (GEAR UP) is a federally -funded discretionary grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP provides six-year or seven-year grants to states and partnerships to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools. GEAR UP grantees serve an entire cohort of students beginning no later than the seventh grade and follow the cohort through high school. The governor of each state may designate only one agency to apply for and administer a GEAR UP state grant.

GEAR UP was authorized by Title IV of the 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965. The purpose of GEAR UP is to increase the number of low-income and first-generation students who are prepared to enter and succeed in college.

To meet this goal, legislation enables GEAR UP programs to provide:

- Financial assistance, academic support, counseling, mentoring, outreach and supportive services to secondary school students to reduce the risk of students dropping out of school or the need for remedial education at the postsecondary level.
- Information to students and their families about the advantages of postsecondary education and information about college financing options.

## West Virginia GEAR UP Overview

The program's goal is to help more students pursue their dreams of earning a college diploma or skillset certificate. West Virginia's project aims to dramatically increase the number of West Virginia students who access and succeed in higher education.

To this end, WV GEAR UP provides students with a clear path to college. WV GEAR UP works with collaboratives of community partners across the state to promote college readiness and success. The program provides students with direct services, including but not limited to mentoring, tutoring, college visits, financial aid counseling, and academic interventions.

West Virginia GEAR UP is managed by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Commission), in collaboration with the West Virginia Community and Technical College System, the West Virginia Department of Education and many other community partners.

The Commission is administering its third consecutive GEAR UP grant, which began in 2021 and will conclude in 2028. GEAR UP provides many free activities and services to help students and their families plan, apply and pay for education and training beyond high school. GEAR UP also provides training and resources to counselors and educators to help further develop a supportive college-going culture in schools and communities.

WV GEAR UP offers extra support to two groups of students and their families:

Students in the class of 2027 and class of 2028 who are graduating from participating high schools can participate in GEAR UP from their seventh-grade year all the way through their high school graduation. All 12th grade students graduating from participating high schools between 2022 and 2028 can participate in GEAR UP during their senior year. Students participating in GEAR UP during their senior year between 2022 and 2027 will also be served during their first year of postsecondary. At times, WV GEAR UP may offer activities and services to other students, depending on funding regulations and availability. WV GEAR UP also provides statewide access services.

# West Virginia GEAR UP

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

West Virginia GEAR UP (WV GEAR UP) is a federally-funded program that helps students prepare to succeed in education and training beyond high school. "GEAR UP" stands for "Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs," and the program's goal is to help more students pursue their dreams of earning a college diploma or certificate after high school.

WV GEAR UP is managed by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WV HEPC), in collaboration with the West Virginia Community and Technical College System, the West Virginia Department of Education and many other community partners.

The GEAR UP program operates on seven-year cycles. WV HEPC is concluding its second consecutive GEAR UP grant, which began in 2014. In September 2021, WV HEPC was awarded a third grant of \$24.5 million to serve an estimated 17,500 students from 50 secondary schools across 11 counties.

## RESOURCES TO GEAR UP STUDENTS, FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS

- WV GEAR UP stresses the importance of earning a trade certificate, two-year degree or four-year degree after high school and provides students with resources to prepare for and succeed in college.
- The program offers students the chance to participate in free college tours, ACT and SAT test preparation workshops, tutoring, mentoring, financial aid workshops, and college preparation summer academies.
- WV GEAR UP also offers college-planning workshops for parents and provides professional development opportunities for teachers working in counties served by the program.

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

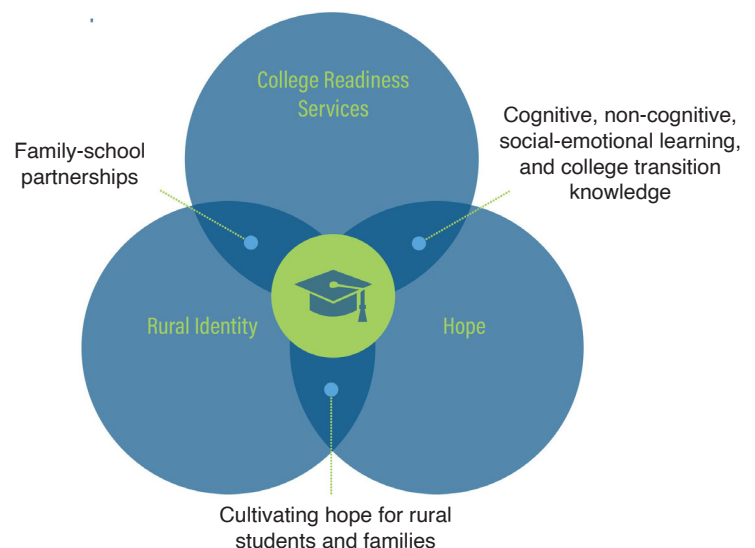


## PROGRAM PURPOSE

WV GEAR UP provides students and their families in rural WV communities with college-readiness services to increase their hope for a college-going future and the ability to imagine a better reality for themselves and their families.

WV GEAR UP aims to achieve this by:

1. Increasing WV GEAR UP students' academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education.
2. Increasing their rates of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education.
3. Increasing educational expectations and knowledge of postsecondary options, preparation and financing of students and families.
4. Increasing students' and educators' hope and expectations for students' future postsecondary plans.





## PROGRAM IMPACT

More than 28,000 students have participated in WV GEAR UP activities since WVHEPC received its first GEAR UP award in 2008. This has resulted in students participating in more than 750,000 hours of activities, including mentoring, financial literacy programs, tutoring, workshops, financial aid assistance and college and job site visits.

## PROGRAM RESULTS FOR THE CLASS OF 2020

- 99% graduated from high school on time
- 96% of their parents and guardians spoke to them about college
- 91% of their parents and guardians believed that attending college is important to their student's future
- 70% expected to obtain a postsecondary credential
- 85% spoke to someone about financial aid
- 60% filed a FAFSA

*"As a teacher, it is important to help students with college prep. Also, to encourage them. GEAR UP makes a huge difference at our school. I see more and more students looking into college since GEAR UP."*

*- Teacher quote, 2020 School Personnel Survey*

## NOTABLE QUOTES

*"I have experienced firsthand how the West Virginia GEAR UP program helps students discover opportunities to continue their education beyond high school and the message of affordability.*

*I credit the program for helping me select my postsecondary pathway. I have witnessed those lightbulb moments that students have when they discover that education is attainable, and West Virginia GEAR UP helped do that for me."*



West Virginia DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**

## CONTACT

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## West Virginia GEAR UP Participating School Districts

Schools participating in West Virginia GEAR UP's 2021-2028 grant program are:

Matewan PK-8 School  
Mingo Central Comprehensive High School  
Tug Valley High School  
Williamson PK-8 School

### **Nicholas County School District**

Nicholas County High School  
Richwood High School  
Richwood Middle School  
Summersville Middle School

### **Roane County School District**

Geary Elementary/Middle School  
Roane County High School  
Spencer Middle School  
Walton Elementary/Middle School

### **Wayne County School District**

Buffalo Middle School  
Ceredo-Kenova Middle School  
Crum PK-8 School  
Fort Gay PK-8 School  
Spring Valley High School  
Tolsia High School  
Vinson Middle School  
Wayne High School  
Wayne Middle School

### **Webster County School District**

Hacker Valley Elementary School  
Webster County High School

### **Wirt County School District**

Wirt County High School  
Wirt County Middle School

### **Regional College Partners**

Glennville State College  
200 High Street  
Glennville, WV 26351  
[www.glennville.edu](http://www.glennville.edu)

Marshall University  
1 John Marshall Drive  
Huntington, WV 25755  
[www.marshall.edu](http://www.marshall.edu)

Southern WV Community and Technical College  
2900 Dempsey Branch Road  
Mt. Gay, WV 25637  
[www.southernwv.edu](http://www.southernwv.edu)

### **Boone County School District**

Madison Middle School  
Scott High School  
Sherman High School  
Sherman Jr. High School  
Van Junior/Senior High School

### **Clay County School District**

Clay County High School  
Clay County Middle School

### **Lincoln County School District**

Duval PK-8 School  
Guyan Valley Middle School  
Hamlin PK-8 School  
Harts PK-8 School  
Lincoln County High School

### **Logan County School District**

Chapmanville Middle School  
Chapmanville Regional High School  
Logan Middle School  
Logan Senior High School  
Man Middle School  
Man Senior High School

### **Mason County School District**

Hannan High School  
Point Pleasant Junior/Senior High  
Wahama High School

### **Mingo County School District**

Burch PK-8 School  
Gilbert PK-8 School  
Kermit PK-8 School  
Lenore PK-8 School



# West Virginia GEAR UP Service Areas and Schools

2021-22 Academic Year



**SOUTHERN REGION** - served by *Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College*

**BOONE:** Madison Middle School; Scott High School; Sherman Junior High School; Sherman High School; Van Junior/Senior High School

**LOGAN:** Chapmanville Middle School; Chapmanville Regional High School; Logan Middle School; Logan High School; Man Middle School; Man High School

**MINGO:** Burch PK-8; Gilbert PK-8; Kermit PK-8; Lenore PK-8; Matewan PK-8; Williamson PK-8; Mingo Central High School; Tug Valley High School

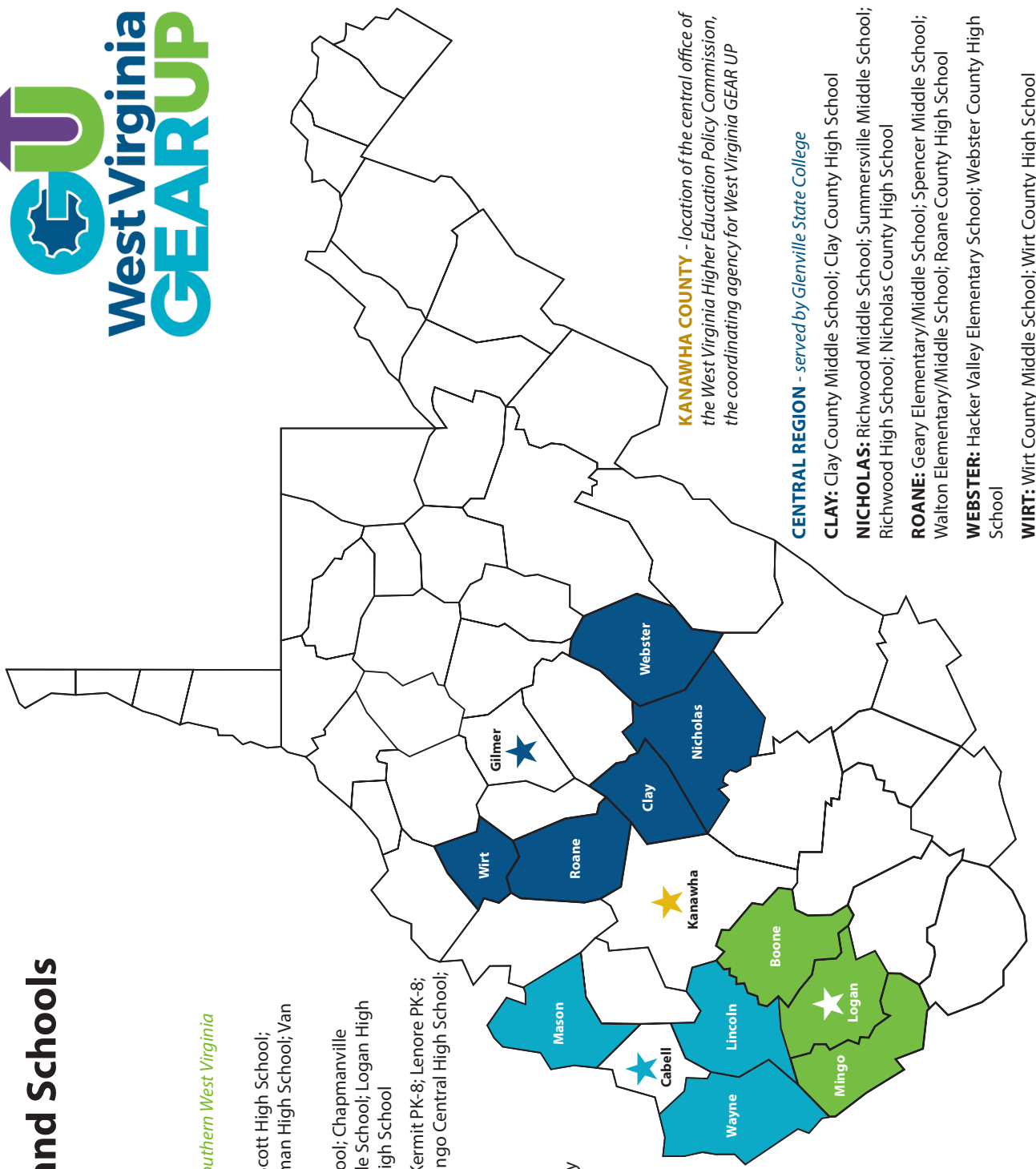
**SOUTHWESTERN REGION** - *Marshall University*

**LINCOLN:** Duval PK-8; Guyan Valley Middle School; Hamlin PK-8; Harts PK-8; Lincoln County High School

**MASON:** Hannan High School; Point Pleasant Junior/Senior High School; Wahama High School

**WAYNE:** Buffalo Middle School; Ceredo-Kenova Middle School; Crum PK-8; Fort Gay PK-8; Vinson Middle School; Wayne Middle School; Spring Valley High School; Tolsia High School; Wayne High School

[WWW.WVGEARUP.ORG](http://WWW.WVGEARUP.ORG)



**KANAWHA COUNTY** - location of the central office of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, the coordinating agency for West Virginia GEAR UP

**CENTRAL REGION** - served by *Glenville State College*

**CLAY:** Clay County Middle School; Clay County High School  
**NICHOLAS:** Richwood Middle School; Summersville Middle School; Richwood High School; Nicholas County High School  
**ROANE:** Geary Elementary/Middle School; Spencer Middle School; Walton Elementary/Middle School; Roane County High School  
**WEBSTER:** Hacker Valley Elementary School; Webster County High School

**WIRT:** Wirt County Middle School; Wirt County High School



## SECTION 2: PROGRAM GOALS AND WORKPLAN

### West Virginia GEAR UP Goals

The WV GEAR UP program has four goals:

**Goal 1:** Increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education for WV GEAR UP students.

**Goal 2:** Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education for GEAR UP students.

**Goal 3:** Increase educational expectations and knowledge of postsecondary options, preparation and financing among WV GEAR UP students and their families.

**Goal 4:** Increase students' and educators' hope and expectations for students' future postsecondary plans.

**Activities and Services:** According to the Code of Federal Regulations, a grantee must provide comprehensive outreach, and supportive services to students participating in the GEAR UP program. These services must include the following activities:

1. Providing information regarding financial aid for postsecondary education to eligible participating students.
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. Implementing activities to improve the number of participating students who—
  - Obtain a secondary school diploma, and
  - Complete applications for, and enroll in, a program of postsecondary education.(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1070a-24(a))

To meet these requirements, WV GEAR UP services over a seven-year grant will implement a workplan for both the cohort(s) and priority groups. The annual workplan outlines minimum services to be implemented at the site-level and is revised prior to each academic year.

## CLASS OF 2027 COHORT: YEAR 1

# WV GEAR UP WORKPLAN

# 2022

### MINIMUM WORKPLAN ACTIVITIES



#### VIRTUAL CAMPUS VISIT

Participation in at least **one virtual campus tour** for all GEAR UP students, and 50% cohort student participation in at least **two virtual campus tours**. Schedules will be posted at [wvgearup.org](http://wvgearup.org). Registration will open in January.

Allowable Expenditures:

**Deadline: May 1, 2022**



#### FINANCIAL LITERACY PROGRAM

Provide financial literacy information to students and parents. Event may take place in coordination with other school events; host the Get a Life Program, utilize the MakeCentsWV.org resources, or secure a guest speaker.

Allowable Expenditures:

**Deadline: May 1, 2022**

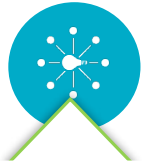


#### STEM BOOTCAMP

Event will be coordinated by the HEPC/GEAR UP central office. Site Coordinators will coordinate registration and facilitate virtual classroom access for cohort students.

Allowable Expenditures:

**Deadline: May 1, 2022**



#### ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

Provide tutoring support to cohort students in person or through an online platform. Funds may be used to hire tutors/intervention classroom support staff, or purchase software.

Allowable Expenditures:

**Deadline: Ongoing**



#### COLLEGE FOR WEST VIRGINIA

Assist cohort students with CFWV.com account creation and exploration of college readiness resources available on the one-stop-shop web portal.

Allowable Expenditures:

**Deadline: May 1, 2022**



#### GEAR UP BACK TO SCHOOL EVENT

Host a welcome to GEAR UP back to school event for students, parents, and families. Event must include information about GEAR UP services for the 2022-23 academic year, and college planning resources.

Allowable Expenditures:

**Deadline: September 24, 2022**



### KEY



Activity Completion  
Deadline



Hospitality  
Not to exceed \$10.00/head  
for school events



Materials & Supplies



Student Services



Family Services

### ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

#### REQUIRED MEETINGS

WV GEAR UP Grant Program Launch  
January 18-19, 2022

WV GEAR UP Grant Program Meetings  
March 3, 2022 | May 5, 2022 | July 12, 2022

WV STUDENT SUCCESS SUMMIT  
July 13-14, 2022 | Team of 4

GRANT ADMINISTRATION MEETINGS  
TBD

#### DATA COLLECTION

Activity Backup Documentation  
Immediately: Due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month

#### PRESENTATIONS

GEAR UP Faculty Senate Presentation  
Spring 2022

#### SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Baseline Data Surveys  
February 2022  
80% Student | 50% Parent

School Personnel Surveys  
May 2022  
60% Response Rate

#### INTERVENTION ASSESSMENT

Reading & Writing Intervention Activity  
March 2022







## CLASS OF 2022 PRIORITY: YEAR 1




# WV GEAR UP WORKPLAN




# 2022




### MINIMUM WORKPLAN ACTIVITIES




- 



**VIRTUAL CAMPUS VISIT**  
Participation in at least one virtual campus tour for all GEAR UP priority students, and 50% student participation in at least two virtual campus tours. Schedules will be posted at [wvgearup.org](http://wvgearup.org). Registration will open in January.  
Allowable Expenditures:   
Deadline: April 1, 2022 
- 

**FINANCIAL AID AND FAFSA COMPLETION WORKSHOP**  
Host a financial aid information and FAFSA completion workshop for students and families. Assist families with filing the FAFSA. Event must include information about the availability of state-level financial aid programs.  
Allowable Expenditures:   
Deadline: April 15, 2022 
- 

**CFWV TXT 4 SUCCESS**  
Assist all priority students with enrolling in the CFWV/GEAR UP Txt.4 Success college counseling and advising program. Activity should take place in coordination with college planning/transition workshop.  
Allowable Expenditures:   
Deadline: May 1, 2022 
- 

**ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT**  
Provide tutoring/ACT/SAT support to priority students in person or through an online platform. Funds may be used for approved dual credit courses (Found on the Core Coursework Transfer Agreement), AP exams or credit recovery.  
Allowable Expenditures:   
Deadline: Ongoing 
- 

**COLLEGE DECISION DAY & TRANSITION EVENT**  
Coordinate a College Decision Day event for high school seniors and families. Event must include college readiness, transition, and student success component to assist families to better prepare for postsecondary pathways.  
Allowable Expenditures:   
Deadline: June 1, 2022 
- 

**GEAR UP BACK TO SCHOOL EVENT**  
Host a welcome to GEAR UP back to school event for students, parents, and families. Event must include information about GEAR UP services for the 2022-23 academic year, and college planning resources.  
Allowable Expenditures:   
Deadline: September 24, 2022 



### KEY

 Activity Completion Deadline

 Hospitality  
Not to exceed \$10.00/head for school events

 Materials & Supplies

 Student Services

 Family Services

### ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

#### REQUIRED MEETINGS

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Spring 2022

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Baseline Data Surveys  
February 2022

80% Student | 50% Parent

School Personnel Surveys  
May 2022

60% Response Rate



## SECTION 3: PERSONNEL PROCEDURES

All GEAR UP hired personnel positions adhere to GEPA and WVHEPC's hiring practices stating that HEPC is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, or physical, language and/or learning disabilities in the administration of its employment practices. WVHEPC is deeply committed to diversity and equal opportunity in its employment practices. LEA-based WVGU Staff: Each proposed district has appointed one WVGU LEA Coordinator by the superintendent and is based at the County Board of Education in each of the 11 counties GEAR UP will serve. They serve as a liaison between the schools and the county office. The LEA Coordinator is a non-paid position, devoting 10% of their time to coordinate WVGU LEA-level activities, including PD, LEA WVGU implementation team meetings, assisting with fiscal oversight of subawards, and serving on the College Access and Success Advisory Council.

Additionally, WVGU uses a model proven successful during its past grant, in which each of WVGU's 50 partner schools will have a dedicated project staff member, known as a site coordinator. Site coordinators are LEA employees contracted by WVGU to work, on average, 20 hours per month above-and-beyond normal school hours to implement building-level programs and activities outlined within this grant. Site coordinators are supported and managed by WVGU regional program directors (HEPC staff) under the direction of the assistant director of WVGU to ensure effective program implementation.

The West Virginia GEAR UP site coordinator is focused on dramatically increasing the number of West Virginia students who access and succeed in higher education. The site coordinator serves in a professional student support role responsible for implementing the WV GEAR UP program and ensuring adequate activities for students and parents/families. The position requires programmatic, data management, and counseling responsibilities, and directly reports to the College Access and Success Program Director in their region.

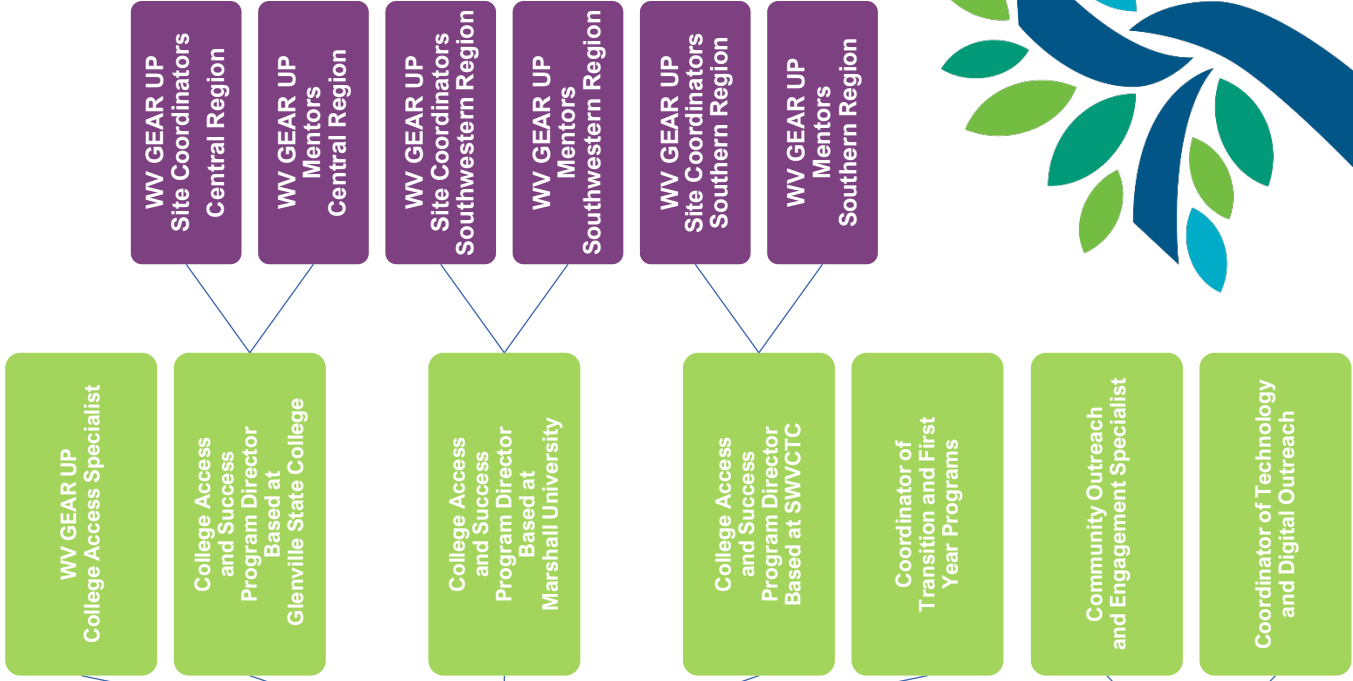
Under the direction of WV GEAR UP administration, the site coordinator serves as a member of the program's implementation team responsible for implementing the GEAR UP grant at designated school, adhering to Federal and State guidelines. GEAR UP funding will be provided annually to each of the eligible GEAR UP local education agencies (LEAs) through grant agreements. The grant will include funding for each participating GEAR UP school, an operating budget, and a work plan. Site coordinators will not only serve students, and parents, but they also agree to work with staff at the respective school to enhance college access opportunities, academic preparation, and successful student outcomes. Site coordinators work in conjunction with a county coordinator based at the LEA central office identified by administration to ensure grant partnership requirements are being fulfilled.

### Key Responsibilities

Deliver WV GEAR UP services in assigned school with the intent to increase students' academic readiness for higher education and dramatically increase the number of students who access and succeed in postsecondary education.

Ensure compliance with grant requirements as determined by HEPC and the U.S. Department of Education.

Establish productive working relationships with principals, teachers, and community partners in assigned middle and/or high schools.



# WV GEAR UP Organization Chart

Revised: December 2021

## SECTION 4: FISCAL GUIDANCE

GEAR UP funds are federal discretionary grant funds awarded to an organization after its application has been reviewed and approved by the U.S. Department of Education. This investment of taxpayer dollars means that the federal government must set up strong controls over grant projects to ensure the proper use of public funds. An award indicates that an application has met program requirements and is approved for certain kinds of expenditures. Federal funds are restricted funds, meaning the grantee must use the dollars awarded in exactly the manner outlined in their application.

All expenditures must meet the requirements outlined in the GEAR UP statute and must use the dollars according to requirements of the U.S. Department of Education and General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) and federal cost principles. In addition to understanding federal requirements, you are expected to follow the policies of the fiscal agent of the grant—The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Commission). The Commission has additional policies it must follow to comply with state and federal law. It is important to rely on GEAR UP staff when the Federal regulations aren't clear on an issue. You also must follow GEAR UP reporting guidelines and budget categories.

The spending guidelines detailed in this manual are provided to advise staff with regards to spending WVU funds. Expenditure guidelines in this manual do not comprise a comprehensive list, but rather serve as a reference resource of the categories of spending, the allowability of expenditures and the parameters for spending in each category.

Note: Expenditure guidelines apply to match even if non-WVU funds are used. If the expenditure is not allowable using WVU funds, it is also not allowable to be documented as match.

### Statute

The statute is a Federal law that authorizes or governs a program. In the case of GEAR UP, the term statute refers to the program legislation found in Title IV of the 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 [P.L. 105-244]. The statute sits at the top of the hierarchy but affords the Secretary of Education the authority to set program-specific policies, which are commonly known as program regulations. The statute only broadly defines how the program will operate.

### Program Regulations

Program regulations provide additional guidance when the statute is silent or vague on an issue. They provide detail that govern the application competition, dictate how programs will be put into action, and other implementation details. There are two types of regulations that you should become familiar with: EDGAR and GEAR UP program regulations.

### GEAR UP Program Regulations

Whereas EDGAR sets broad agency-wide policies, the GEAR UP program regulations address the unique administrative matters associated with GEAR UP. GEAR UP program regulations are published in 34 CFR parts 694. To review the full Code of Federal Regulations for GEAR UP, see CFR Title 34, Subtitle B, Chapter VI, Part 694.

GEAR UP is subject to a number of regulatory sources. The following list provides a brief description of each of the major policy sources. More information can be found here: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/legislation.html>. Uniform Guidance (2CFR200)

The Uniform Guidance (2CFR200) streamlines and consolidates government requirements for receiving and using federal awards so as to reduce administrative burden and improve outcomes.

## Supplement but not Supplant

GEAR UP regulations require that GEAR UP funds supplement but not supplant. GEAR UP funds are intended to build the capacity of school districts to create a college going culture. Therefore, GEAR UP funding may be used to enhance what is already in place or to create new activities (supplement). GEAR UP funds cannot be used to replace other federal, state or local funding (supplant).

GEAR UP funds may be used to pay for activities that support the West Virginia GEAR UP goals and objectives, as outlined in the grant awards. GEAR UP funds may be used to support GEAR UP eligible students only. No funds may be used for non-GEAR UP eligible students to participate.

## Cost Policies and Spending Practices

The oversight and management of federal GEAR UP funds is carried out by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. The Commission approves an annual workplan. Expenditures must align with services directly outlined in the workplan. Expenditures made without approval may not be reimbursed. Grantees may submit a request in writing to the Senior Director of Student Services for expenditures not outlined in the annual WV GEAR UP workplan. The Senior Director will approve or deny in writing.

Allowable costs are those expenses that are specifically permitted (or not explicitly prohibited) by the laws, regulations, principles, and standards issued by the U.S. Department of Education and other authoritative sources and specifically aligned in the approved WV GEAR UP state grant proposal.

To help you decide if costs are allowable or not, ask these questions:  
Is the expense:

- Allowable and necessary to implement the program.
- Reasonable.
- Allocable to program objectives.
- Compliant with the program's federal administrative regulations.

WV GEAR UP funds must be used to pay for activities that support the WVGU goals and objectives, as outlined in the approved state grant application. To be allowable and allocable funds must:

- Support the implementation of WVGU goals and objectives.
- Support enrichment or complimentary activities aimed at deepening student experience in WVGU.
- Support school personnel participation in WVGU sponsored professional development, leadership activities or other WVGU sponsored school improvement services.
- Enable student, parent, and/or school personnel participation in WVGU sponsored outreach activities.
- Support parent participation in WVGU sponsored and other approved parent engagement activities.

Funds may be used to support activities for eligible WVGU students only. WV GEAR UP students are defined as students in approved GEAR UP schools from the class of 2027, 2028, and each senior class. Schools may elect to serve additional students by including them in WVGU activities, but WVGU funds may not cover costs for those additional, non-program eligible students. For example, if you take only WVGU eligible students on a college visit you may pay the full cost of the trip with WVGU funds. If you opt to take both WVGU eligible students and other students on a field trip, costs should be proportionately covered by WVGU and other funds. An exception is when including non-WVGU students will not increase the cost. For example, if you bring in a speaker for WVGU students, and there are empty seats in the auditorium, you may invite non-WVGU students to participate.



## Common GEAR UP Costs

The following list may help you determine whether your program expenses are allowable or not. It includes costs that are commonly incurred in GEAR UP or are the subject of frequent questions or discussions about their permissibility.

**Alcoholic Beverages:** unallowable

**Commencement and Convocation Costs:** unallowable  
For education institutions, costs associated with commencement and convocations are disallowed, but costs associated with GEAR UP activities that take place during commencement events may be allowable under student activity costs if approved as part of your grant agreement.

**Communication Costs:** allowable

Costs incurred for telephone services, local and long-distance telephone calls, telegrams, postage, messenger, electronic or computer transmittal services and the like are allowable. However, you will need to check if these expenses are captured in your indirect costs.

**Compensation (Salaries, Wages and Fringe Benefits):** allowable

Personnel costs such as salaries, wages and fringe benefits are allowable to the extent that the total compensation to individual employees conforms to the established policies of the institution, consistently applied, and provided that the charges for work performed directly on sponsored agreements.

Fringe benefits costs should be in line with institutional policies regarding annual leave, sick leave, military leave, and employer contributions or expenses for social security, employee insurance, workmen's compensation insurance, and tuition or remission of tuition for individual employees.

**Consultants and Contracts:** allowable

EDGAR states that costs associated with consultants are allowable if there is a need in the project for the services and the grantee cannot meet that need by using an employee rather than a consultant.

**Providing Donations and Contributions:** unallowable

Contributions or donations (including cash, property, and services) are unallowable costs.

This should be distinguished from the match. GEAR UP may receive donations, contributions or services under the GEAR UP match guidelines.



**Entertainment Costs: unallowable**

Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such activities (such as tickets to shows or sports events, recreational activities) are unallowable.

**Equipment: allowable, with prior approval**

Note: West Virginia GEAR UP does not allow furniture purchases. Schools are expected to provide program staff with necessary furniture.

Equipment means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and for GEAR UP accounting purposes, has a per-unit cost equal to or greater than \$5,000.

The title (documented ownership) of the equipment vests in the grantee and may be used for other projects as long as that use does not interfere with the terms of the grant award.

**Fines and Penalties: unallowable, with exceptions**

Costs resulting from violations or failure of the fiscal agent to comply with, Federal, state, and local or foreign laws and regulations are unallowable, except when incurred as a result of compliance with specific provisions of the sponsored agreement, or instructions in writing from the authorized official of the sponsoring agency authorizing in advance of such payments. Late fees, including late fees for registrations, and interest charges on credit cards are unallowable. Student fines are also unallowable.

**Fund Raising: unallowable**

Costs of organized fund raising are not allowed.

**Goods or Services for Personal Use: unallowable**

Costs of goods or services for personal use of the governmental unit's employees are unallowable regardless of whether the cost is reported as taxable income to the employees.

**Memberships, Subscriptions and Professional Activity Costs: allowable, with exceptions**

Costs associated with memberships in business, technical, and professional organizations are allowable. In addition, subscriptions to business, professional, and technical periodicals are allowable.

Please note that the circulars make the following exceptions:

- State entities can use Federal funds for membership in civic, community, and social organizations which are allowable as a direct cost with the approval of the USDOE.
- State entities cannot use Federal funds for membership in organizations substantially engaged in lobbying.

**Meetings and Conferences: allowable**

Costs of meetings and conferences, the primary purpose of which is the dissemination of technical information, are allowable. This includes costs of meals, transportation, rental of facilities, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences. Be aware of restrictions pertaining to entertainment costs.

**Publications and Printing: allowable**

Publication costs—including the costs of printing, distribution, promotion, mailing, and general handling—are allowable Federal costs if they are allocable to project objectives. If not, any publications or printing should be paid for by institutional or indirect funds.

**Rental Cost of Buildings and Equipment: allowable**

With stipulations, rental costs are allowable to the extent that the rates are reasonable in light of such factors as: (1) rental costs of comparable property, if any; (2) market conditions in the area;

(3) alternatives available; and (4) the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased. Rental arrangements should be reviewed periodically to determine if circumstances have changed, and other options are available.

**Student Activity Costs:** generally unallowable, with exceptions

Costs incurred for intramural activities, student publications, student clubs, and other student activities, are unallowable, unless specifically provided for in the grant agreement.

**Supplies:** allowable

Costs incurred for supplies to carry out the grant are allowable. Supplies have a per-unit cost of less than \$5,000.

**Travel Costs:** allowable

Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by employees who are in travel status on official business of the institution. Travel outside of the United States requires prior approval.

**NOTE:** Just because a cost is interpreted as being allowable under the OMB cost principles, it is not guaranteed that you will be able to make that expenditure. The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission is the primary entity that determines if an allowable cost is acceptable. This may happen when, for example, a cost identified as allowable under the circular may be disallowed in program regulations or statute or fail to pass the USDOE's judgment that it is justified, allowable, or reasonable.

## **County Budget Policy and Procedures**

Each fiscal year, WV GEAR UP Federal grant funding will be allocated by the WV GEAR UP Administrative Office to each of the 11 eligible counties. Funds will be officially awarded through a grant agreement to each county. Allocations are contingent until funding for the next fiscal year is approved and the Grant Agreement is executed with the counties. Funding categories will be allocated based upon priorities set by the WV GEAR UP Administrative Office to ensure academic enrichment activities occur as well as social and outreach programs are accomplished.

Schools and counties will have flexibility in budgeting for the grant activities as long as they accomplish the expected activities that will be outlined in their statement of work in the annual grant agreement. Classroom enhancements must be itemized on the budget form along with an estimated price and quantity.

Each Site Coordinator must collaborate with the school principal in developing the fiscal year budget and anticipated activities. Once approved by the school principal, the school budget must be submitted to the County Coordinator and Treasurer to review and approve. The County Coordinator and Treasurer will ensure that all school budgets agree to the grant allocation prior to submitting to the WV GEAR UP Administrative Office.

Indirect cost is allowable. The approved budget at both the school(s) and county level will be in effect for the duration of the grant unless a budget revision is required. Budget revisions require prior approval and are in effect for each school. The impact of the revisions will roll up to the county level budget and grant. Budget revision prior approvals are necessary for each of the following items:

Cumulative school transfers to budget category line-item totals that exceed 10% of the total grant for the school. Funds cannot be transferred from the academic enrichment line. Budget category line items include salary, fringe benefits, travel, materials and supplies, and consultants/contracts.

Proposed classroom enhancements exceeding \$1,000 but less than \$4,999 (see Classroom Enhancement Fiscal Policy) that was not included in the original budget.



An increase or decrease in a grant award. A revised budget must be submitted for the new grant total. Funding is contingent on availability and individual grants may be reduced if this occurs.

Transfer funds allocated to one school to another school within the county. All schools are expected to work within their budget, but isolated instances may occur in which a transfer may be requested. These will be approved on a case-by-case basis.

The revised budget must be submitted to the WV GEAR UP Administrative Office for approval prior to incurring the expenditures.

The approved original budget and budget revisions submissions will be maintained at the WV GEAR UP Administrative Office. The approved budget and budget revisions will be included in the grant agreement. The processing of a change order reflects an official approval.

If an issue exists with a budget submission or revised budget, the County Treasurer, County Coordinator and Site Coordinator will be contacted by the WV GEAR UP Administrative Offices to work out the issue.

Documentation of Match should be submitted in writing to the WV GEAR UP Administrative Office and should reflect projected annual match that was included in the partnership/cost share form submitted by the county when the grant proposal was submitted.

### **County Invoicing**

After receipt of a fully executed Grant Agreement, the Grantee (County) will submit an invoice for reimbursement of actual costs incurred during the previous month. Invoices will be due to the WV GEAR UP Administrative Office no later than the 15th of the following month. For example, July's invoice for July's expenditures will be due no later than the 15th day of August.

Expenditures must be in line with the approved budget and workplan for the fiscal year. The expenditures must be reasonable, allocable and allowable per applicable Federal guidelines.

Expenditures posted may only be for services (and items) that will be rendered (or used) in the current year. Prepayment is non-allowable outside the grant period.

The county WV GEAR UP grant must follow their administrative and fiscal policies. These policies should be in line with state and fiscal administrative and fiscal policies. Policy variations are fine as long as they do not violate state and local policies.

The billing must be submitted on the invoice form provided by the WV GEAR UP Administrative Office. This invoice will be personalized to include each county's total budget as well as the individual budgets of each school.

The Treasurer must post the monthly expenditures as well as the year-to-date expenditures on each school detail invoice. All other columns will be locked, and it will not be necessary to enter information into the "budget" and "remaining on grant" columns because this information has been preset with information and formulas. All monthly and year to date billing information will automatically be generated on the County Monthly Invoice – Coversheet.

The coversheet and each school budget detail must be submitted for payment by the 15th of the following month. All invoices must be signed in blue ink by an authorized individual at the county level.

Expenditure documentation must be submitted with the monthly invoice.

The final invoice must be submitted within forty-five (45) days following the end of the grant agreement. Failure to submit the final invoice within these guidelines may result in the invoice not being honored by the Commission since the availability of funds is restricted to the time period of the Grant Agreement and must be closed out with the Department of Education. Please mark your invoice coversheet – Final Invoice.

Any unexpended grant funds not invoiced at the end of the annual grant period will be cancelled and the grant award reduced to the amount of actual expenditures.

If the Grantee discovers the county has been overpaid, the amount of the overpayment must be refunded to the WV Higher Education Policy Commission within forty-five (45) days following the end of the grant agreement. Extensions may be granted based upon the situation.

Invoices are to be submitted to the address below:  
Division of Student Affairs/WV GEAR UP  
WV Higher Education Policy Commission  
1018 Kanawha Boulevard, East, Suite 700  
Charleston, WV 25301

Invoice instructions are located on the [www.wvgearup.org](http://www.wvgearup.org) website.

## **College Partner Budget Policy and Procedures**

Each fiscal year, WV GEAR UP Federal grant funding will be allocated by the WV GEAR UP Administrative Office to each of the three (3) college partners. Program priorities will be established by the WV GEAR UP administrative office and funding will be allocated for each partner to accomplish the set priorities. WV GEAR UP program budget and expenditures must be for new program activities that are in compliance with WV GEAR UP goals per the Federal grant agreement. Funding cannot be used to supplant normal routine partner expenditures.

Funding categories will be allocated based upon priorities set by the WV GEAR UP administrative office to ensure academic enrichment activities occur as well as social and outreach programs are accomplished. These funds will be allocated for the regional college access and success program director to administer in conjunction with the partner. The program director is an employee of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, and their salary will be paid directly to the program director. In addition, the program director will also follow the travel policies of the Commission and travel will be reimbursed directly by the Commission to the program director. When program directors are utilizing sub-grant college partner funds for travel, he or she shall follow the partner college's travel policies.

College partners, in conjunction with the program directors, will have flexibility in budgeting for the grant activities as long as they accomplish the expected activities that will be outlined in their statement of work in the annual grant agreement.

Projected expenditures must be reasonable, allocable, and allowable per applicable federal guidelines. Indirect cost is permitted. The approved budget will be in effect for the duration of the grant unless a budget revision is required. The approved original budget will be included as Appendix B in the grant agreement.

Budget revisions require prior approval from the WV GEAR UP's Administrative Office and a change order to the grant will be processed, if approved. Prior approvals for budget revisions are necessary for each of the following items:

- Cumulative transfers to budget category line-item totals that exceed 10% of the total grant. Budget category line items include salary, fringe benefits, travel, materials and supplies, and consultants/contracts.
- Proposed minor equipment (classroom enhancements) exceeding.
- \$1,000 but less than \$4,999 that was not included in the original budget.
- An increase or decrease in a grant award. A revised budget must be submitted for the new grant total. Funding is contingent on availability and individual grants may be reduced if this occurs.
- Change of scope of grant.

The revised budget must be submitted to the WV GEAR UP Administrative Office for approval prior to incurring the expenditures.

## **College Partner Invoicing**

After receipt of a fully executed Grant Agreement, the Grantee (College Partner) will submit an invoice for reimbursement of actual costs incurred during the previous month. Invoices will be due to the WV GEAR UP Administrative Office no later than the 15th of the following month.

Expenditures must be in line with the approved budget and workplan for the fiscal year. The expenditures must be reasonable, allocable and allowable per applicable Federal guidelines. Expenditures posted may only be for services (and items) that will be rendered (or used) in the current year. Prepayment is non-allowable outside the grant period.

The WV GEAR UP grant must follow the grantee's administrative and fiscal policies. These policies should be in line with state and fiscal administrative and fiscal policies. The billing must be submitted on the invoice form provided by the WV GEAR UP Office. All invoices must be signed by an authorized individual at the grantee level.

The Regional Program Director should review the invoice for accuracy and agreement with expenditures. Expenditure documentation should be submitted with the monthly invoice. Invoice documentation must be maintained at the grantee level for three year after the grant is closed.

WV Higher Education Policy Commission reserves the right to withhold invoice payment until program compliance is met. And, if an expenditure is deemed to be nonallowable due to not being reasonable, allocable or allowable per Federal guidelines, the invoice amount may be adjusted.

The final invoice must be submitted within forty-five (45) days following the end of the grant agreement. Failure to submit the final invoice within these guidelines may result in the invoice not being honored by the Commission since the availability of funds is restricted to the time period of the Grant Agreement and must be closed out with the Department of Education. Please mark your invoice coversheet – Final Invoice.



Any unexpended grant funds not invoiced at the end of the annual grant period will be cancelled and the grant award reduced to the amount of actual expenditures.

If the Grantee discovers the overpayment, the amount of the overpayment must be refunded to the WV Higher Education Policy Commission within forty-five (45) days following the end of the grant agreement. Extensions may be granted based upon the situation.

## **Overview of Match and In-kind**

WVGU is required to collect a dollar-for-dollar match, meaning that for every dollar of Federal grant money spent on the project, we must collect an equal dollar amount of match in the form of state, local or donated funds. It is our responsibility to collect and document this match with the same care and attention to accuracy, accountability and timeliness as documenting the use of federal grant funds. If we do not meet the match requirement, we could have our Federal funds reduced or our award could be terminated. Qualifying match contributions must be necessary to accomplish program activities, verifiable and only allowable according to GEAR UP guidelines. Match follows the same rules as the actual funds spent on WVGU. Match must be allocable, allowable, and reasonable.

### **Definition of Match**

Match or Cash Match is the non-Federal share of program costs, or money spent on the program that comes from a non-Federal source. If an organization purchased the goods or services, paid for WVGU travel, etc. but did not request reimbursement from the grant, then the generic term match applies. If another person or organization donated the goods or services, then the more specific term in-kind applies.

### **Definition of In-Kind**

“In-Kind” refers to non-cash contributions of goods or services made by third party individuals or organizations to WVGU Projects. Examples of in-kind include work done by unpaid volunteers in support of WVGU and donations of supplies, facilities/space usage, or equipment.

Match cannot be claimed from other sources/ programs that are Federally funded. In other words, if you receive other Federal grants, it cannot be used as match to the GEAR UP program.

### **Monitoring:**

The Commission has a responsibility to monitor activities as necessary to provide reasonable assurance that the Grantee uses these grant funds for intended



purposes; complies with laws, regulations and the provisions of contracts and grant agreements; and achieves performance goals. The Commission or its authorized representative(s) shall be given full and complete access to all information related to the Grant Agreement to ensure that the program activities are consistent with goals and objectives of the grant.

If as a result of its monitoring efforts, the Commission uncovers deficiencies in the Grantee's administration of this grant or related project/program, the Commission shall notify the Grantee in writing of said deficiencies. The Grantee agrees to take immediate and timely action as determined by the Commission in an attempt to rectify any identified and reported deficiencies and to resolve the matter to the overall satisfaction and sole discretion of the department.

Penalties and Sanctions for Noncompliance: Failure to comply with the audit, monitoring requirements and reporting policies or failure to respond in a timely manner to the Commission's request for reports, records, documentation or other information related to monitoring or Federal reporting may result in disallowed costs, suspension or termination of funding for this grant.

**WV GEAR UP official fiscal policies are located at [www.wvgearup.org](http://www.wvgearup.org).**

## **SECTION 5: DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING**

### **Requirements and Annual Reporting**

An integral part of the GEAR UP program is gathering and reporting data. Each year, all grantees are required to complete an Annual Performance Report (APR) where grantees provide the US Department of Education information on a variety of measures used to assess how programs are progressing against the goals they stated in their grant proposals. Much of the required data for this report includes activity participation levels of students, educators and family members, and the demographic characteristics of participating students in aggregate. While some of these goals and their corresponding performance measures are required of all programs, each program also provides goals and performance measures that are unique to their specific program.

The WV GEAR UP program has four goals:

**Goal 1:** Increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education for WV GEAR UP students;



**Goal 2:** Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education for WV GEAR UP students;

**Goal 3:** Increase educational expectations and knowledge of postsecondary options, preparation and financing among WV GEAR UP students and their families; and

**Goal 4:** Increase students’ and educators’ hope and expectations for students’ future postsecondary plans.

The first three are national goals, with the fourth being a goal specific to our program. Each one of the goals is made up of multiple performance measures that help assess if the goals are being met. The table below contains the comprehensive list of goals and their corresponding performance measures on which the WV GEAR UP program must report progress.

<b>Goal 1 (National): Increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education for GEAR UP students.</b>			
<b>WV GEAR UP Performance Measures</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Outcome Attained By</b>
1a: The percentage of GEAR UP students who pass Algebra 1 or its equivalent by the end of ninth grade.	84.6%	90%	Year 4
1b. The average daily attendance of cohort students will increase.	93.1%	95%	Year 4
1c. The rate of students taking at least one Dual Enrollment course will increase.	Year 1	5% from baseline	Year 5
<b>Goal 2 (National): Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education for GEAR UP students.</b>			
2a: The percentage of GEAR UP students who graduate from high school.	90.7%	96%	Year 6
2b: The percentage of GEAR UP students and former GEAR UP students who are enrolled at an IHE.	47.5%	55%	Year 6
2c: The percentage of current GEAR UP students and former GEAR UP students who enrolled at an IHE and persisted to the second year of postsecondary education at the initial or a subsequent IHE.	68.4%	75%	Year 7
2d: The percentage of GEAR UP students promoted on time to successive grade levels.	99.7%	99.7%	Annually
<b>Goal 3 (National): Increase educational expectations and knowledge of postsecondary options, preparation and financing among GEAR UP students and their families.</b>			
3a. The percentage of GEAR UP students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.	60.7%	67%	Year 6
<b>Objective 4 (WV GEAR UP): Increase students’ and educators’ hope and expectations for students’ future postsecondary plans.</b>			
4a: WVGU students will increase hope as reported by the Child Hope Scale.	Year 1	5% from baseline	Year 6
4b: WVGU educators, counselors, and administrators will increase students’ educational aspirations/expectations of postsecondary options annually.	Year 1	5% from baseline	Year 6
4c: WVGU middle and high schools will increase their College-Going Culture.	Year 1	5% from baseline	Year 7

Several research and evaluation activities are conducted as part of this grant to gather data on the program's performance and its impact on students, their families and educators. While some data like activity participation will be collected by the schools, much of the data collection will be conducted by our third-party evaluator, ICF. The next few sections provide further details on each of these data-gathering activities.

## Tracking and Reporting Service Activity

Capturing service participation is a vital part of GEAR UP data collection. The total number of participants in activities and the total hours that they have engaged in them are included in each of our APRs submitted to the US Department of Education. Engagement in activities can be captured using an Activity Sign-in Sheet. An Activity Sign-in Sheet should be completed for each activity in which students, and their parents if relevant, participate. The Activity Sign-in Sheet can be found on the WV GEAR UP website and captures a variety of information, such as:

1. The school and county hosting the activity.
2. The title of the activity and the date it took place.
3. The start and end time of the activity, as well as the total amount of time which students were actively engaged in it. It should be noted that the time participants were actively engaged in the activity may not be the same amount of time that the activity took place. For example, a FAFSA workshop may last for 4 hours, but students might only join for 30 minutes. In this case, the student would have engaged in 30 minutes of activity while the start and end times would be 4 hours apart.
4. The activity category, which specifies the type of activity that was conducted. This includes:
  - a. Counseling/Advising - Includes activities with individual or small groups of students and involves discussing personal growth issues like decision making, goal setting and family issues, college/career planning, and course selection
  - b. Mentoring - For students identified by GEAR UP staff, teachers or other school staff as benefitting from an ongoing relationship with a trained, caring adult or other students.
  - c. Financial Aid Counseling/Advising - Assists students in understanding financial aid, including FAFSA, scholarships, financial aid literacy, savings plans and comparing award letters
  - d. Student Workshops - Include interactive informal classroom-level or large- or small-group sessions that involve hands-on experiences for each student
  - e. Tutoring/Homework Assistance - Provides supplementary academic instruction designed to increase students' academic achievement
  - f. College Visit - A student's visit to a college campus that is facilitated/led by WV GEAR UP staff, teachers, other school staff or college representative
  - g. Job Site Visit/Job Shadowing - Offers students exposure to the workplace and reinforces the link between classroom learning, work requirements and postsecondary education
  - h. Educational Field Trips - Where students leave their school and travel to another location, and include an academic component linked to classroom activities
  - i. Summer Programs - Include an experience over the course of one or multiple days during the summer and can serve to bridge knowledge between school years
  - j. Rigorous Academic Curricula - Supplemental rigorous coursework that is provided through GEAR UP funds
  - k. Family/Cultural Events - Social activities for students and/or their families
5. The delivery type, which documents the way the activity was delivered. This includes:
  - a. In-person - These activities are face-to-face and the duration of engagement to be reported is the amount of time students are actively engaged in the activity.
  - b. Email - Here, students are engaged in activities by email. Only in-bound emails from students should be reported as activity; emails from schools to students that are not responded to by students are considered outreach rather than activity. Every two in-bound emails from students count as 5 minutes of activity, while a single email can be recorded as 3 minutes of activity.
  - c. Phone - These activities are conducted by phone and the amount of time reported should equal the length of the call.

d. Text – This includes all activity engaged in by text message. The guidelines that apply to emails apply for texts - Only in-bound texts from students should be reported as activity; texts from schools to students that are not responded to by students are considered outreach rather than activity. Every two in-bound texts from students count as 5 minutes of activity, while a single text can be recorded as 3 minutes of activity.

e. Web-conferencing live – These activities occur as synchronous web-conferences, such as live Zooms. The amount of time each student participated can be captured during the live session by the host or school staff and can be recorded as activity.

f. Web-conferencing recorded – These activities occur as asynchronous web-conferences, such as recorded videos posted online. Recorded activity can only be counted as activity if participation can be documented. For example, a video posted to YouTube for all students to watch cannot be counted as activity unless there is documentation that specific students actually watched it. Schools can document participation by having students complete a Google Form or emailing staff providing their name and answering a question or two about the content to confirm they actually watched it. A complete list of students who participated in the activity, including their full name, grade, WVEIS ID and whether any of their parents attended can be included when capturing data.

Activity data can also be provided using reports generated on the back end from computer-based programs and apps. For example, a report from tutor.com that lists individual students and the amount of time they engaged in tutoring on a specific date can be used instead of entering activity data for each student manually into an Activity Sign-in Sheet. However, all data presented on the Activity Sign-in Sheet still need to be provided for each student in these reports, such as name, ID and whether parents attended. Additionally, the top part of the Activity Sign-in Sheet, including points 1-5 above, still needs to be completed and appended to the computer-generated student-level data reports.

Staff can also report engagement in activities meant for them, such as participation in professional development, as this is also reported on the APR. Engagement in these activities can be captured using a less formal version of a sign-in sheet, like a sign-in sheet used during a staff/faculty senate meeting or one used at conference. However, in addition to the list of staff attending the activity, many of the abovementioned pieces of information, including the event name, date and duration of participation, should be included.

Completed activity sheets and any other backup documentation should be sent to the appropriate WV GEAR UP Regional Program Director for entry into our data reporting system, SCRIBE, which is the source of the data reported in the APR. The appropriate WV GEAR UP Regional Program Director will enter the data reported in the Activity Sign-in Sheets and any other backup documentation into the system, which tracks participation at the student-, parent- and educator-levels. After data are entered, they are then checked and finalized as part of a data validation process, and any questions regarding the data will be forwarded to the site coordinator who submitted the data.

The US Department of Education currently requires that we keep all data records for three years after the grant ends, which would be until September 30, 2031. Therefore, all data collected as part of the program has to be retained until that date. Any change to the record retention policy made by the US Department of Education will be communicated to school and county staff.

## Surveys

Surveys will be administered on an annual basis to capture feedback from students, parents and school staff. Surveys will include questions about each group's attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. School staff will be surveyed each year, currently anticipated to be conducted in the spring of each year. There will also be annual surveying of students and parents, which will occur between November and January. While there are annual surveys for students and parents, not every class and their parents will be surveyed each year. The table below delineates when each class and their parents will be surveyed.

SCHOOL YEAR							
Class of	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
2022 Students	X	X					
2023 Students							
2024 Students			X	X			
2025 Students							
2026 Students & Parents	X		X		X	X	
2027 Students & Parents	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2028 Students & Parents			X		X		X
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7

ICF will be creating online surveys for school staff, students and parents. Students and parents can also receive paper surveys if they are requested. ICF will share guidelines for the survey administration process, including how individuals can access surveys and how to follow up with those who are non-responsive. They will also be providing weekly response rate updates for each school to assist in follow up.

### Focus Groups

ICF will be conducting focus groups with students to capture student voice and to evaluate our HEROs program. They will work with schools to identify potential participants and to arrange the timing of data collection.

### Reading and Writing Intervention and Activity

Students of the class of 2027 will participate in a short reading and writing intervention and activity during the spring of their 7th and 8th grades. This peer-reviewed intervention and associated activity takes approximately one hour to complete and includes two components. The first component has students focus on their academic performance and the second has them focus on social belonging. ICF will create and share a formal administration plan that staff can implement at their schools to assist in data collection.

### Other Data and Research Activities

While most of the data to be analyzed will be captured in the activities mentioned above, there are additional performance measures, such as student GPA and Algebra I pass rate, that we are required to report to the US Department of Education, but that we cannot gather using those approaches. These additional data will be provided annually by the WV Department of Education in aggregate to the WV GEAR UP team directly as part of our data sharing agreement. Further, ICF will be conducting additional analyses to understand the impact the WV GEAR UP program has on students, which will incorporate other data provided by the WV Department of Education and the WV Higher Education Policy Commission as part of our data sharing agreement.

## SECTION 6: COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES



### **GEAR UP Messaging**

It is the mission of WV GEAR UP to bolster and fuel a statewide culture that values education and actively cultivates the advanced academic achievements of citizens by building solid educational foundations among middle and high school students located in three of West Virginia's most critical regions.

West Virginia GEAR UP will help students in West Virginia plan, apply and pay for education beyond high school. The program offers an amazing opportunity for students and families to obtain a college degree—and improve our communities by building a more prepared workforce. Most jobs—particularly those paying higher wages—require training beyond high school.

One of the great things about GEAR UP is that it focuses not only on students, but also on students' support networks. The program works with families to show them that degree programs are available and affordable. And it provides extra training for teachers, so they can better serve students in the classroom.

This is not only an excellent opportunity for students in our region, but it's also a great investment for the state of West Virginia toward building a better educated and more prepared workforce—and the stronger economy that will come with that.

West Virginia GEAR UP has a social commitment of advancing educational opportunities for citizens throughout the state of West Virginia. Staff members are advised and encouraged to lend their talents to volunteer organizations that promote higher learning throughout the state, and staff should be willing to serve as an "on-the-spot" mentor for those who need extra guidance in pursuing college. Whether in the grocery line, at a baseball game or on the clock, members of our staff should be prepared to promote and encourage the pursuit of higher learning among potential students.

### **WV GEAR UP Identity Brand and Logo Usage**

Branding gives a face to an organization and shows what it stands for. Building a brand increases public awareness and recognition of the organization.

Few things affect an organization's tone like color and typeface choice. The two are arguably the most important indicators of brand identity — and can be even more expressive than photos, illustrations or writing style.

It is important to adhere to the WV GEAR UP color guide and logo standards when creating documents on behalf of West Virginia GEAR UP to maintain consistency

throughout the organization. Consistency is important for the audience to recognize the WV GEAR UP brand.

The WV GEAR UP Brand Standards and Identity Manual is housed under resources on the WV GEAR UP website. The manual includes information on WV GEAR UP ideology, logo standards, typefaces and color palette, talking points and correspondence templates.

## **Social Media**

### **West Virginia GEAR UP Social Media Channels**

- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/wvgearup](http://www.facebook.com/wvgearup)
- Twitter: [www.twitter.com/wvgearup](http://www.twitter.com/wvgearup)
- Instagram: [www.instagram.com/wvgearup](http://www.instagram.com/wvgearup)
- YouTube: [www.youtube.com/c/wvgearuporg](http://www.youtube.com/c/wvgearuporg)

**National Hashtag: #GEARUPWorks**

### **WV GEAR UP Program Events**

A calendar of upcoming WV GEAR UP events can be found at <https://www.wvgearup.org/calendar/>. Registration for most WV GEAR UP events coordinated by the central office staff will be done online through Eventbrite.

All GEAR UP events funded through the project are required to have a completed event request form submitted. Forms must be submitted two weeks in advance for approval and assistance from the WV GEAR UP Administrative Office to promote the event and add to the online calendar. Regional Program Directors will respond via email regarding approval or request for additional information. The event request form may be found at [wvgearup.org](http://wvgearup.org).

### **WV GEAR UP Program Website and Resource Warehouse**

West Virginia GEAR UP information and resources may be found at [www.wvgearup.org](http://www.wvgearup.org). Information about upcoming WV GEAR UP events, program resources and information for schools, counties, and college partners are housed at this location for easy access.

Updates and revisions to the West Virginia GEAR UP Policy and Procedures Manual will be uploaded to the WV GEAR UP website. For the most recent information, visit [wvgearup.org](http://wvgearup.org).





West Virginia GEAR UP is managed by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission in collaboration with the West Virginia Community and Technical College System, the West Virginia Department of Education and many other community partners.

