

The Regents of the University of California, Office of the President  
California GEAR UP Program

California's GEAR UP State Grant proposal has the following goal:  
To develop and sustain the organizational capacity of middle schools to prepare all students for high school and higher education through a statewide network of support for adults who influence middle school students, specifically their counselors, faculty, school leaders, and families. As a result of this expanded capacity, a higher proportion of students, particularly from backgrounds and communities that have not historically pursued a college education, will enroll and succeed in higher education. The proposed design is a two-by-four model. There are two modes of delivery. The first is the School-Based Model that involves 90 middle schools that average 1,038 students. Each school will receive services for at least two and a half years. This grant is expected to impact 93,420 students directly. The second mode of delivery is the Statewide Dissemination Model. This mode will expand the program's reach and promote a college-going culture to a state audience as part of the program's sustainability strategy. Each mode has four components: 1) Professional Development; 2) Support Systems for Families and Communities; 3) Public Awareness Campaign; and 4) Education Trust Awards.

The expected impact on participating schools and students are:

- More course sections will be offered in pre-college and college preparatory classes.
- More students will complete those pre-college and college preparatory classes.
- Student performance will increase on statewide standards assessments.
- Families will have more knowledge about the college preparation process.

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Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE)  
Colorado GEAR UP

**Need being addressed.** One of the key lessons that CCHE learned during the 1999–2005 GEAR UP funding period is that the scope of services previously offered is not adequate to compensate for the large gaps in core knowledge that eligible students continue to show on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) and the American College Test (ACT). The schools targeted for this project are well below the state average in student proficiency in reading, writing and math. Therefore, GEAR UP will partner with regional community colleges and schools of education to provide students with intensive remediation so they are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

**Proposed activities.** To ensure that students who are below grade level in core subject areas gain the knowledge they need to succeed in college, Colorado GEAR UP will provide intensive remediation. Additional academic services that will be provided include tutoring, academic success strategies and college prep programs. To ensure that low-income, underrepresented students graduate with the expectation that they can succeed in college, Colorado GEAR UP will provide the following: campus visits; college counseling; career planning workshops; college entrance exam preparation; financial aid counseling; and scholarships. Finally, this project includes extensive parent engagement activities so that parents will become actively involved and educated about their child's college preparation and planning.

**Intended outcomes.** The project will achieve the following outcomes for GEAR UP students: students will achieve proficiency in the Colorado State Standards; students will pass pre-algebra and Algebra I; students will have fewer unexcused absences; students and their parents will have knowledge of financial aid options; students and their parents will have knowledge of necessary academic preparation for college; and students will graduate from high school and enroll in college. CCHE will contract with an independent evaluator to conduct a rigorous evaluation to determine if these outcomes are achieved. The evaluation design includes mechanisms to inform the project staff of any adjustments or modifications that are needed to accomplish these intended outcomes.

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Connecticut Department of Higher Education  
Connecticut State GEAR UP Project

In its initial funding cycle, the applicant's GEAR UP Project focused on mathematics, based on research showing that students who take upper level math courses in high school are better prepared and more likely to graduate from college. The Project's principle goal was to increase the number of eighth-graders taking and successfully completing Algebra I, expecting that these students would subsequently take advanced math courses. Project outcomes included substantial curriculum change, including elimination of low-level math courses in both middle and high schools, and establishment of new graduation requirements. The proposed Project will continue emphasizing math but the focus will be placed, as a logical progression, on academic rigor to improve student academic achievement. Research has identified the rigor of high school curriculum as the strongest factor associated with students enrolling and graduating from college.

The need for the Project is documented by low student performance levels on state assessment tests at its target schools. This documentation of students' need to improve their level of academic performance aligns the Project with the needs of target school districts and target schools, all have been designated as "in need of improvement." An experienced and competent Project staff will implement an ambitious array of 30 student or parent activities and systemic change activities, integral elements of target schools' improvement plans. Implementation will be guided by the Project's management and evaluation plans, constructed in an action plan structure of an integrated, strategic management approach, which in turn will guide achievement of the Project's mission, goals and objectives. Project programs and services, in collaboration with districts' and schools' improvement plans will undoubtedly further development of a college-going culture of achievement that will have a positive, enduring influence upon students' academic performance and parental involvement.

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University of Hawai'i  
GEAR UP Hawai'i State Grant

Hawai'i is a partnership of the University of Hawai'i System (UH), the Hawai'i State Department of Education (HIDOE), and a multitude of community agencies, professional organizations, and local businesses. GEAR UP Hawai'i will employ a strategic approach to improving Hawai'i's "educational pipeline," increasing the number of low-income students who "make it" through the pipeline to postsecondary education. GEAR UP services are designed to support students, increase the flow of students throughout the pipeline, and improve educational systems, addressing systemic issues and transitions in the pipeline.

From 2005-2011, GEAR UP Hawai'i will serve approximately 22,000 students in low-income schools. Services include: (1) dissemination of research-based practices through demonstration sites and innovation grants; (2) expanding regional college outreach to students through Hawai'i's institutions of higher education; (3) increasing public awareness with a mass media and grassroots marketing campaign; (4) promoting closer alignment between high school and postsecondary expectations through both policy and practice-focused articulation exercises; (5) creating a network for college access professionals with the Hawai'i College Access Network (HI-CAN); (6) expanding access to credit-based transition programs; and (7) providing low-income students access to need- and merit-based college scholarships.

The GEAR UP services are designed to: 1) impact student achievement based on up-to-date knowledge and research-based and effective practices; 2) capitalize on the unique GEAR UP partnership of the UH, HIDOE and community partners; and 3) build the capacity of schools, teachers, students and families through long-term sustained efforts in low-income communities. GEAR UP Hawai'i is not a six-year project but an opportunity to make long-term systemic change, and develop college-going cultures for Hawai'i's low-income students.

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Illinois Department of Human Services  
Illinois Steps AHEAD

Despite strides in recent years, poor and minority school-communities in urban and rural areas of Illinois still show low educational attainment, which locks many students into a life of despair and hopelessness. In these communities, large percentages of students do not meet state standards and do not attend post-secondary education.

The proposed GEAR UP program, Illinois Steps for Attaining Higher Education through Academic Development (AHEAD), will assist families, schools, and communities engage and motivate students—and provide the necessary resources and supports—to attend and succeed in higher education. Illinois Steps AHEAD will provide early intervention educational services and post-secondary educational scholarships for priority middle and high school students. Program components will include increased parental involvement, creative and engaging academic support for students, career exploration programs, college preparation and increased collaboration with local schools. The program will be implemented through leveraging resources within a successful infrastructure: the Illinois Department of Human Services Teen REACH Initiative and State Board of Education 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLCs).

Illinois Steps AHEAD will be overseen by a state-level advisory board that will include leaders from state agencies and organizations that are integral to academic and school reform, higher education, human services, professional development, and evaluation.

The program evaluation will be led by Dr. Peter Mulhall, Director of the Center for Prevention Research and Development at the University of Illinois. The Center has extensive experience with national and statewide evaluations, particularly in the areas of school reform and programming for high-risk youth. The Center is the evaluator for Illinois' Teen REACH Initiative and numerous 21st CCLCs, the framework upon which Steps AHEAD is based.

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State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana  
Twenty-first Century Scholars Program

Established in 1990, the Twenty-first Century Scholars Program was enacted as legislation to: reduce the number of students who withdraw from high school before graduation; increase the number of students prepared to enter the workforce upon graduation; increase the number of low-income students entering institutions of higher education; decrease drug and alcohol use by encouraging higher education pursuits; increase individual economic productivity; and improve the overall quality of life for Indiana residents. Students meeting free or reduced price lunch eligibility criteria enroll in the Twenty-first Century Scholars Program during the seventh or eighth grade year. Enrolling students sign the Twenty-first Century Scholars Program Pledge agreeing to remain alcohol, drug and crime free and to graduate from an Indiana high school with a 2.0 or higher based on a 4.0 grade point average scale. Students, in their high school senior year who sign an affirmation that they have kept the pledge, are awarded full tuition awards to Indiana's public colleges or a comparable award to a private in-state college.

The impact of the Twenty-first Century Scholars program on college-going rates in Indiana has been demonstrated from the impact of the Twenty-first Century Scholars Program on college-going rates in Indiana has been demonstrated from 1995 to-to 2004. During this time, 25,538 program participants filed the Free Application For Federal Student Aid with 19,307 entering into college as full time students. While more students are enrolling in college, according to U.S. Census data, Indiana ranks 46th among the fifty states in educational attainment with 21 percent of Indiana residents holding a bachelors degree compared to the national average of 26.5 percent.

In the state of Indiana a gap between college readiness and financial access exists. The Twenty-first Century Scholars Program will use funds provided through GEAR UP to address this gap by providing readiness programming to students, professional development opportunities to teachers, and parental engagement opportunities.

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Council on Postsecondary Education  
GEAR UP Kentucky TWO

Kentucky requests \$21,000,000 over six years from the U. S. Department of Education to implement GEAR UP Kentucky, a second statewide project to increase the number of low-income middle school students who enroll in postsecondary institutions and complete a degree. Under the oversight of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, the GEAR UP Kentucky statewide project will utilize the resources of state and local education agencies, postsecondary institutions, businesses, and other organizations to establish a college-going culture by implementing essential activities keyed to five strategic priority areas (awareness, rigor, engagement, access, support) and working with postsecondary institutions to develop school-specific activity plans targeting at-risk students. State grant activities: (a) develop rigorous, college-preparatory curricula in middle schools; (b) provide professional development to teachers and counselors in support of a college-going culture; (c) involve families in pre-college planning; and (d) provide an array of mentoring, tutoring, and enrichment activities designed to support GEAR UP students in succeeding academically in school and postsecondary education. GEAR UP Kentucky will employ a cohort model to provide services to seventh-grade students in high-poverty, lower performing schools; new cohorts will be adopted in each of the first three years of the grant.

GEAR UP Kentucky includes a comprehensive evaluation component focused on project goals and objectives. The evaluation will be formative, providing feedback and information to key decision-makers throughout the project, and summative, determining if project objectives are being achieved. In support of long-term sustainability, responsibility for providing services will be transitioned from the grant to districts and postsecondary institutions; this regional partnership structure enhances the likelihood that project activities will continue after grant funding ceases.

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Massachusetts Board of Higher Education  
GEAR UP Massachusetts

Since 1999 GEAR UP Massachusetts has resulted in more high--poverty students obtaining the academic background to succeed in higher education and has supported whole school change efforts in 11 high poverty middle and high schools. GEAR UP Massachusetts is now proposing to focus program services within seven even middle schools and eight high schools in the same seven even high--poverty urban districts.

GEAR UP Massachusetts's middle schools have increased the number of students passing the high stakes Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System(MCAS) exam. However, schools are still struggling, particularly in mathematics and have not yet met their Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) as required through No Child Left Behind. GEAR UP will provide more targeted academic support programs so that the middle schools move closer to their AYP goals. Through improved assessment tools and analysis of data, GEAR UP will become a research model that provides schools and districts with evidence of success of targeted interventions. GEAR UP will provide professional development that supports the certification requirements of NCLB and each school's improvement plans. Mathematics is clearly a gatekeeper, not only for MCAS, but also for students getting into and succeeding in college; GEAR UP resources will target mathematics achievement through tutoring, after-school and summer programs; and particularly math camps.

Schools will have on-site GEAR UP Coordinators to coordinate academic support programs, college admissions and financial aid guidance and outreach to parents and community resources. Local GEAR UP Directors will work closely with principals and school districts and the statewide GEAR UP Director will provide overall direction and link GEAR UP to state and regional initiatives that share our goals.

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Maryland State Department of Education  
Maryland GEAR UP – Focus of Math

The Maryland GEAR UP – Focus on Math proposal is based on the need of high-poverty, low-performing schools to increase achievement in mathematics. For students to aspire to and succeed in college, early intervention and intensified support are needed. Seven schools have been selected on the basis of clearly defined criteria.

Based on the premise that student achievement will increase as student's work with highly qualified teachers, professional development for teachers, focusing on both math operations and pedagogy, will be a major focus of the grant. All schools selected lack highly qualified staff in the area of mathematics. The collaborative program will bring professional development resources to the math challenge from Maryland colleges and universities, state department personnel, business, and non-profit organizations. Professional development will feature summer academies as well as embedded staff development sustained through each academic year.

Student support services will include tutoring, mentoring, weekend academies, summer academies, as well as campus-based instruction. Embedded supplemental instruction will also be a major focus. Based on research evidence that students tend to perform better in school if families support academic efforts, family involvement will be another major initiative of the program.

Early college awareness activities will begin in the sixth grade. As the program progresses, college preparation will become the focus, followed by college admissions and financial aid support. Parents will be educated as to the financial aid resources and college alternatives in the early phases of the program in order for them to be actively supportive of their child's aspiration to attend and succeed in college.

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Maine Department of Education  
Maine GEAR UP Program

The Maine Department of Education's GEAR UP Program, in collaboration with the University of Maine System, the Community College of Maine System, 28 local school districts, and the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME), proposes to serve 755 seventh grade low-income students, and an additional 3,051 priority students previously served in Maine's 1999 GEAR UP grant, for a total 3,806 low-income students over a six-year grant period.

The project goal will leverage Maine's advanced technological infrastructure to create a sustainable program that supports low-income students in preparing for, accessing, and succeeding in postsecondary education. Maine's new GEAR UP proposal will build on the most successful aspects of its current program, and anchor its new program in a rich technology component that builds on the State of Maine's robust telecommunication network and the Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI), which provides a laptop to every seventh and eighth grade student and teacher in the state.

All GEAR UP interventions will focus on creating an electronic learning community to build professional development skills for GEAR UP advisors and professional staff and provide an innovative and systemic approach to parental engagement.

Early college awareness activities, comprehensive mentoring, academic counseling and parental support will be linked to the GEAR UP program. In addition a strong component of cultural diversity will be embedded in the activities of the grant to service a changing urban population within the state.

Scholarships will be established for eligible GEAR UP students to provide financial assistance and renewable scholarships for continued postsecondary support. Maine's State GEAR UP program will forge strong collaborative bonds with other state projects designed to benefit students' aspirations toward postsecondary opportunities. A progressive sequence of responsibilities with local districts will be built into the grant over a six-year period to guarantee the sustainability of the GEAR UP program following the years of federal funding.

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Minnesota Higher Education Services Office  
Get Ready/GEAR UP

Building on the experience and success of its current Get Ready/GEAR UP Program, the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office proposes to implement a state GEAR UP Program that will provide elementary through high school students and parents of color, low-income, or no previous post-secondary education experiences with information about college options, required courses, and financial aid; and intensive academic tutoring and mentoring. Program curricula will cover such topics as goal setting, career awareness, post-secondary options, and financing a post-secondary education. Summer academic enrichment camp opportunities, post-secondary campus visits; programs and activities to increase parental involvement; and on-going staff training, and professional development for teachers, counselors, and principals will also be provided. In the first two years of the GEAR UP grant, Get Ready staff will provide direct service to elementary and junior high students in seven Minneapolis and St. Paul schools. In year three, as Get Ready student's transition to senior high school, program services will expand, adding specific cohorts in two Minneapolis and St. Paul high schools. In addition, through its program outreach component, students outside the targeted direct service delivery schools will receive program curricula delivered by their classroom teachers, and a field trip opportunity to a local post-secondary institution. Minnesota is seeking a waiver from the scholarship component.

New opportunities exist to further leverage GEAR UP resources through the Agency's membership on the Minnesota P-16 Partnership, and its relationship with the newly formed Minnesota College Access Network (MCAN). The Minnesota GEAR UP Program builds in several mechanisms to ensure long-term collaboration—including with five known GEAR UP Partnership proposals.

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Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, Montana GEAR UP

Montana GEAR UP is currently in the sixth and final year of its grant, funded by the U.S. Department of Education in 1999. Montana's geography, demographics, and economic status create educational gaps in academic rigor; academic support and enrichment; infrastructure; professional development; career, college and financial awareness; and scholarship opportunities. In the aggregate, these limitations place many Montana students at risk of educational failure. Under this proposal, Montana GEAR UP will use the cohort model, adding a new cohort of seventh grade students every year, in 25 demonstration schools. By the sixth year of the grant, more than 4880 students will benefit from Montana GEAR UP services.

Montana GEAR UP believes that postsecondary education is possible for all Montana students, regardless of economic background. With its partners, Montana GEAR UP will provide college and career awareness; opportunities for parental involvement and professional development; financial counseling and education; scholarships; academic enrichment and support; and curriculum improvement services to schools and students. Montana GEAR UP expects to: 1) increase student and family knowledge of postsecondary education preparation; 2) improve school staff expectations of students; 3) increase student college and career awareness; 4) increase student and family knowledge of postsecondary education financing; 5) increase scholarship participation and qualification; 6) increase student academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education; 7) and increase student high school graduation and postsecondary education participation rates. The program's budget request is for \$3 million per fiscal year. With outstanding personnel, a comprehensive annual management plan, and a robust evaluation plan, Montana GEAR UP is poised to expand its successes in the next six years. Montana GEAR UP will also further efforts to institutionalize its mission in GEAR UP schools and statewide and create a working model of early college and career awareness for statewide dissemination.

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University of North Carolina  
GEAR UP North Carolina

The need for a statewide GEAR UP program in North Carolina is evident in the numbers of students who fail to complete high school and never have an opportunity for postsecondary education. Nationally, North Carolina ranks sixth in the percentage of high school graduates who enroll in college, however, only 59 out of every 100 ninth graders complete high school. The barriers that prevent students from experiencing academic success include lack of awareness and benefits of college; limited role models; lack of rigor in high school curriculum, relevance and relationships in high school; language barriers and lack of cultural awareness; and lack of focused and comprehensive professional development plans for schools.

GEAR UP North Carolina will provide a statewide, sustained and collaborative effort to provide early intervention services to 20 targeted low-income schools, reaching 13,724 students. It will offer professional development opportunities to educators statewide and support the dissemination of college preparation and planning materials to low-income students and families throughout the state. A strong partnership includes the University of North Carolina Office of the President, the North Carolina Community Colleges, the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the North Carolina State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, the College Foundation, Inc., and the North Carolina State Educational Assistance Authority. This partnership will insure that students who are most at risk of educational failure will receive early intervention services that will significantly increase their academic, social, financial, and emotional preparation for college enrollment and success. GEAR UP North Carolina and College Foundation of North Carolina share the same mission: to significantly increase the number of low income students who complete high school and are prepared to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education.

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New Jersey Commission on Higher Education  
New Jersey GEAR UP State Project

New Jersey's GEAR UP State Project will focus on 18 middle and 11 high schools in five of the state's most distressed urban cities: Camden, Jersey City, Newark, Paterson, and Trenton. Student performance on proficiency tests in language arts literacy, mathematics, and science in these schools is far below the state average. In collaboration with the state Department of Education, the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority, the state Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF), and seven colleges and universities, the Commission on Higher Education will provide students with encouragement, academic and support services, and funding to pursue undergraduate education. Parents will be involved in each step of their children's educational pathway from middle to high school. The program will provide parents with early information about postsecondary options and availability of financial aid. Teachers in all target schools will be provided professional development in content-based areas, and all instructional content for students and teachers is aligned with New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards and No Child Left Behind priorities. In year one, 1,505 students in grades six through twelve of the target schools will receive extensive grade appropriate services including counseling, after-school tutoring, Saturday classes, summer programs, mentoring, and college visits. By year six, 1,645 students will participate in comprehensive services.

In addition, a minimum of 460 middle and high school students will be served annually through tutoring, early information about a college-bound curriculum, early information about college financial assistance, the Online SAT Readiness Program and assistance with preparing a college application and filing for financial aid. The project expects that 2,760 students over the six years of the project will participate in these school-based services. In total, the project will serve 1,965 students in year one, and will increase the number of students to 2,105 by year six. In addition to early intervention, the project will have a strong scholarship component.

Following award of the federal and a comparable state 21st Century Scholar Certificate, students will receive financial assistance workshops and individual application assistance. The project features a \$4,050 New Jersey GEAR UP scholarship to students who participate in the program in 7th grade, complete the program, and enroll in a New Jersey college or university. These funds will be put in trust each year until students enroll in college. These students are also guaranteed eligibility for the state's EOF program, which provides scholarship assistance and support services, including a bridge program, between high school and the freshman year in college.

As a result of this project, almost one in seven of the sixth through eighth graders in the target middle schools will receive an unprecedented level of academic and personal support. All students enrolled in the target schools will benefit from the information disseminated in the schools about college preparation and financial aid options. Ultimately, we expect that 1,045 students (85 percent of the total number of New Jersey GEAR UP seniors graduating from the target high schools each year) from 2006 to 2012 will enroll and succeed in college as a result of the services made available to them by the New Jersey GEAR UP State Project.

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New York State Higher Education Services Corporation  
New York GEAR UP

The New York State Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) will serve as the state program Lead Agency for GEAR UP, partnering with major stakeholders: the State Education Department, the State University of New York, the City University of New York, the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities, the New York State Association of Proprietary Colleges, the College Board, the New York State Association of College Admissions Counselors and the New York State Financial Aid Administrators Association.

**The need:** fifty percent of New York's K-12 grade students meet at least one risk criteria for dropping out of school. The risk is particularly high in urban centers and rural areas. These differences are often associated with social and economic realities between low-need and high-need school districts.

**The plan:** New York GEAR UP will provide services to both students participating in federally-funded GEAR UP Partnerships in the state, as well as students within local school district projects selected for funding under this proposal, the subgrantees. Guided by nine measurable objectives, New York GEAR UP will provide direct services to local school district delivery sites selected through a competitive request for proposal process. Required comprehensive support services will include: early college preparation awareness and instruction; academic counseling; tutoring; parental involvement; college visits; mentoring; test preparation; academic skills assessments; financial aid information; ongoing professional staff development; online guidance; financial aid; and career and college planning information via the electronic New York Mentor system. In order to ensure an environment of continuous improvement, HESC will centralize the state evaluation of New York GEAR UP.

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Ohio Board of Regents  
Ohio's Statewide GEAR UP Plan

Ohio's proposed 2005 GEAR UP state project will demonstrate the benefits of a comprehensive approach to increasing college participation, access, and success. Middle and junior high schools and senior high schools in eight high-poverty communities with low college participation and high remediation rates will become "lighthouse" schools for this project.

With assistance from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR), schools will implement research-based academic interventions and professional development. Students also will have access to a menu of proven college access best practices, such as tutoring, enrichment programs, early awareness activities and college and financial aid advising from Ohio's successful 1999 GEAR UP state project, as well as access programs of the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN), a successful public-private partnership.

Three of the project's four goals reflect its commitment to eliminate major college access barriers for more than 30,000 priority students over the six years of the grant: 1) to assure that GEAR UP students are academically prepared for high school completion and success in post-secondary education; 2) to increase GEAR UP student and parent understanding of the importance and relevance of higher education and increase the number of students who aspire to higher education; and 3) to increase student and parent understanding of actual college costs and the availability of financial aid opportunities to assure financial affordability.

Leadership from the Student Access and Success Coordinating Council of Ohio, support by OCAN and increased community involvement will help sustain the sites and spread GEAR UP practices to other school sites and communities. Thus goal four will be met: to ensure that the eight "lighthouse" sites will become self-sustaining, develop civic participation in their programs, and spread awareness and replication in other schools and communities.

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Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education  
Oklahoma GEAR UP

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education is requesting funds to continue their state GEAR UP program which began in 1999. Phase II of the program will bring additional funds to insure that ALL students are prepared for postsecondary success. The need for continued support is substantiated by the high generational poverty risk factors such as a 54 percent statewide free and reduced lunch rate and a 15 percent student poverty rate. Need is also evident in the weak academic preparation of students as evidenced by the high college remediation rates. Also, as compared with the nation, Oklahoma has more courses in grades 7-12 taught by teachers without a major in their subject area, currently at 47 percent of core academic teachers in middle and high schools.

In order to meet these needs, Oklahoma GEAR UP will provide: 1) intensive, core curriculum professional development to statewide GEAR UP eligible school district teachers, counselors and administrators; 2) opportunities for 120 school districts to receive sub-grants to meet their individual district needs; 3) a statewide public engagement campaign to include a college access information component, student classroom materials, student and parent guides, web-based information, and financial aid awareness; 4) continuous support of the statewide Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OHLAP) college scholarship program; 5) community and faith-based outreach services to develop parent skills and increase access to college; and 6) support for a statewide student portal system.

Partners in Oklahoma GEAR UP will include state colleges and universities and business such as Thinking Maps, aha! Process, creators of "A Framework for Understanding Poverty," USA Today, and the College Board. These partners will provide research-based, on-going services to Oklahoma students, parents, teachers and administrators during the next six years to ensure student academic preparation. The program includes an internal and external evaluation that will measure student expected outcomes as determined by established benchmarks.

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Ministry of Education  
Palau GEAR UP State Project

Palau Ministro of Education, State Education Agency, has been designated by the President of the Republic of Palau to be the primary applicant of the Palau GEAR UP State Project, in collaboration and partnerships with institutions of higher education, parent, school, community and business organizations, and other government and non-government agencies. The proposal seeks financial assistance from GEAR UP State Grants for early intervention to provide early college awareness and preparation activities for participating students and their parents. This will be provided through comprehensive mentoring, counseling, outreach, and other support services. It will contain a scholarship component that will establish and maintain a financial assistance program that will award scholarships to eligible students so that they may attend institutions of higher education.

The primary goal of the Palau GEAR UP State Project is to significantly increase the number of low-income students in the Republic of Palau who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. The Project hopes to: (1) better prepare students to succeed in college by providing additional instruction in core subject areas especially math, science and reading for grades seven through twelve, (2) improve the quality of instruction for students by training teachers and school principals, and (3) familiarize parents with the requirements of college and educate them in ways to prepare their children.

Overall, the expected outcomes of the Palau GEAR UP State Project are: (1) improved academic achievements of participating students, (2) increased high school graduation rates, (3) increased postsecondary enrollment, (4) higher success rates for students who attend college, (5) increased awareness and preparation among parents and students of college requirements including financial assistance.

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South Carolina Commission on Higher Education  
South Carolina GEAR UP

Historically, South Carolina has ranked in the lowest quartile in almost every level of academic achievement as compared to other states. Two reliable indicators of students' likelihood of future success are high school graduation rates and postsecondary enrollment rates. State comparisons reflect that South Carolina has the lowest high school graduation rate. South Carolina GEAR UP (SCGU) will provide a broad range of intensive programs and services to 22 targeted schools across the state. The ultimate goal of the project is to produce positive, long-term, and systemic effects on low-income students' participation in postsecondary education. SCGU will be using the cohort approach and will begin by serving seventh graders, a total of 4,333 students in 22 schools.

The Governor has designated the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (SCCHE) as the state agency to apply for and administer the GEAR UP state grant because of its role in promoting postsecondary education. A comprehensive needs assessment of school programs and services was conducted for the purposes of this proposal. The programs to be implemented, as identified by the needs assessment, will address gaps in students' academic performance and increase the number of students prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Strategies will be used to create a multi-pronged approach to educating and supporting students. SCGU will be providing: service coordination; college and financial aid counseling; school, business and community partnerships; professional development and curriculum improvement; mentoring; tutoring; summer programs; and program evaluation.

SCGU expects that the implementation of these programs over the six years of the grant will increase: standardized test scores, GPA, the numbers of students taking rigorous courses, attendance, promotion rates, graduation rates, teacher expectations of student's academic achievement, and parent's knowledge about college requirements and financial aid information.

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South Dakota Department of Education  
South Dakota Gear Up Program

The mission of the South Dakota Department of Education, along with its partner Oceti Sakowin Education Consortium (OSEC), is to increase the number of first generation, low-income Native American students who successfully transition and complete higher education through the participation in the GEAR UP program. The project seeks to meet four master goals:

Goal 1: Increase opportunity for low-income Native American students to participate in college preparatory course work via distance learning.

Goal 2: To assist and prepare parents or guardians to support college bound students in schools with high concentrations of low-income Native American students.

Goal 3: Increase the number of low-income Native American students who are prepared to enter and succeed in higher education.

Goal 4: Increase the development and availability of school-based infrastructures that will encourage and support underserved and low-income students who participate in the GEAR UP program.

Native American children in South Dakota are failing to benefit from the educational institutions in the state. Reservation-based schools see a dropout rate as high as 60 percent. Only 11 percent of college students in South Dakota State Universities are Native American when the overall Native American population within the state is closer to 99 percent. The GEAR UP Program will be an opportunity for over 800 first generation, low-income Native American students that will be prepared to successfully transition and complete higher education.

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Tennessee Higher Education Commission  
Tennessee GEAR UP - State Grant Plan

Tennessee's 2005-2010 GEAR UP project is designed to promote student achievement and enhance awareness of the need to expand access to post-secondary education statewide, especially in those areas of the state that are traditionally underserved. Through the creation of early intervention programs, enhanced academic assessments, and a broad-based outreach campaign articulating the importance of post-secondary access, the state aims to significantly improve transition rates across all facets of the P-16 educational pipeline. The statewide GEAR UP project will incorporate best practices from ongoing site-specific GEAR UP activities in the state in order to maximize programmatic impacts. Through the implementation of the initiatives articulated above, the state will aim to: (1) increase the academic performance and preparation of students in order to prepare them for post-secondary education; (2) increase high school graduation rates and transition rates to post-secondary education; and (3) increase education expectations and aspirations for students and their families.

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Utah Valley State College  
Utah GEAR UP: A Statewide Nexus of Support for Success in Postsecondary Education

Utah GEAR UP: A Statewide Nexus of Support for Success in Higher Education, Utah state's GEAR UP application is a collaborative effort between the Utah Offices of Higher Education and Public Education. Utah will use both a cohort and priority student approach and collaborate with other GEAR UP partnerships within the state. Utah Valley State College (UVSC), as lead agency and fiscal agent, will direct the project implementation with three other college and university partners for the statewide priority student component. A separate cohort component (seventh through twelfth through grade) will focus on implementation within the Salt Lake City School District. Targeted interventions will be on behalf of students who are residing in pockets of poverty along urban corridors and in remote rural regions in our economically diverse state. Utah has the fifth lowest college participation rate for students from low-income families. Further, ethnic minorities are three times less likely to enroll than white students. The risks of educational failure and economic distress can be significantly reduced by creating a statewide nexus of support so students are competent, prepared, and financially equipped to enter, navigate, and succeed in post-secondary education.

Utah's program has three goals: (1) competency: to increase basic skills competency and preparation for college; (2) preparedness: to increase the high school graduation rate and college enrollment for at-risk, minority and low income students; and (3) scholarships: to increase priority and GEAR UP student access to postsecondary education options and financing. The service delivery model will be based on the historically successful partnership programs organized and administered by UVSC since 1991. Heavy emphasis will be placed on direct, individualized services consistent with best practice standards in both education and child welfare services. The federal government and Utah will each invest over \$18.6 million respectively over six years. The overall strength of the partners, activities and evaluation process will result in a positive synergy to change and improve the K-16 education system in Utah.

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Vermont Student Assistance Corporation  
Vermont State GEAR UP Project

Vermont State GEAR UP (VSGU) is housed at Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC), a public, non-profit agency created to administer state financial aid programs. VSAC also hosts the state's only Talent Search and EOC (TRIO) projects, and is Vermont's single point of delivery for career, post-secondary and financial aid information. Vermont struggles with access to information due to its isolating geography and postsecondary affordability, and this arrangement promotes the ability to address several critical education planning needs facing families.

Vermont students living in poverty face challenges that lead to lower academic achievement when compared to their classmates not living in poverty. They face a growing achievement gap between elementary and middle school, are twice as likely to drop out of high school, less likely to take rigorous math and science curricula, less likely to have teachers with a masters degree in the field they are teaching, less likely to be enrolled in college by age 19 and more likely to face higher loan debt if they do make it to college. Vermont's state GEAR UP Project has been in existence since 1999. Vermont was one of only nine states to host the National Early Intervention Scholarship Program, a national model that the GEAR UP state grants were built upon. As this proposal will demonstrate, VSGU targets the most needy schools and regions in the state and provides comprehensive services that directly address GEAR UP goals and objectives. VSGU will identify and select 1,700 low-income students and provide the necessary information, academic support and financial resources through the VSGU Scholarship to assure that each student has the opportunity to enroll and succeed in higher education. VSGU will provide resources to schools in partnership with the Vermont Department of Education to all schools failing to meet Adequate Yearly Progress according to the No Child Left Behind Act. VSGU will also coordinate, support, supplement and provide resources for state partnerships created to advance school reform efforts with emphasis on teacher preparation and professional development.

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State of Washington, Office of the Governor  
Washington State GEAR UP Program

Washington State's GEAR UP proposal addresses the following needs: helping low-income students and parents understand that higher education is attainable; helping them secure the financial resources to make it affordable; identifying and addressing societal, home, community, and institutional factors that can alienate low-income students and cause them to leave school without earning a diploma; improving the quality of teaching preparedness, especially as it relates to serving low-income students; and those whose first language is not English.

The Higher Education Coordinating Board will administer a GEAR UP Scholars Project serving low-income, priority students in tenet communities, rural and urban, throughout the state. Services will include comprehensive counseling, tutoring, and college preparedness and awareness activities beginning with 1,000 or more seventh seventh-grade students in 2005-06.

An additional GEAR UP Scholars program will utilize certificated teachers as mentors and role models in training students who are bilingual to be future teachers.

Washington Education Foundation will partner with GEAR UP in providing counseling, mentoring, and outreach activities at selected Achievers High Schools with large low-income student populations. Additionally, the University of Washington will offer year-round professional development activities for teachers and summer institutes and academic services for students.

Anticipated outcome: 80 percent - 90 percent of GEAR UP Scholars and participants in Achievers High Schools will graduate from high school, qualify for scholarship assistance, and attend a college or university within two years of graduating from high school.

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Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction GEAR UP Program

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI)-Wisconsin Educational Opportunity Programs (WEOP) proposes to serve 3,000 priority students in the sixth through twelfth grades in 11 rural and urban target school districts, 24 high schools, 22 middle schools, and two cohort schools in the state of Wisconsin at a per student cost of \$1,167. The cost of the project is \$3,500,000. The low-income students living in the target areas include African American, American Indian, Hispanic, Southeast Asian (predominantly Hmong), and Caucasian youth. The challenges these youth face are staying in school, breaking the cycle of poverty, finding post-secondary educational resources, financing an education, and choosing the right career path.

The mission of this GEAR UP project is to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. This proposal outlines **ten objectives that aim to: 1) retain the students in middle and high school; 2) help students graduate from high school; and 3) enroll students in postsecondary educational programs.** These objectives will be accomplished by providing a scholarship and an early intervention component. The early intervention component will include college awareness and preparation activities through academic and personal counseling, outreach, career development, supportive services, mentoring, tutoring, after school, summer and Saturday programs, college and financial aid counseling, college visits, cultural experiences, parental involvement, assistance with the college application and financial aid process as well as professional development opportunities to target school district staff. Once the participants are enrolled in college, eligible students will be provided financial assistance through the GEAR UP scholarship component.

A full-time Program Coordinator will lead the staff of nine full-time education specialists, eight part-time and one and three quarter full-time program assistants, and 25 peer tutors or mentors.

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University of Wyoming  
GEAR UP Wyoming

GEAR-UP Wyoming (GU-WY) has developed a powerful group of partners and a sound structure to systemically affect Wyoming's entire educational system. A local saying is that Wyoming, while large geographically, is really just a small town with long streets. GU-WY takes advantage of our "smallness" to gather all the relevant stakeholders together to bring about change so that Wyoming's children experience educational success.

GU-WY partners include every institution of higher education in the state (one four-year university and seven two-year community colleges), the Governor's office, the Wyoming Department of Education, the Wyoming Community College Commission, the Wyoming Business Council, all of the state's 48 school districts, and numerous local foundations and organizations. All of the major stakeholders in issues affecting low-income students have committed to partnering with this grant.

Low-income students in Wyoming perform significantly lower academically than non-low-income students. Low-income students also continue on to college at rates that are among the lowest in the country. Across the board, low-income eighth and eleventh graders fail to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in math, reading, and writing. These problems are exacerbated by a fragmented educational system and a lack of coordination among K-16 providers. Fortunately, the state is poised to address these issues in order to ensure that income is no longer a significant barrier to obtaining a college degree.

Initiatives will target students, parents, teachers and administrators, and schools. Curriculum and early academic planning issues will be central to services to students and parents, as well as teacher professional development and school reform. Students and their families will gain key knowledge and receive support that targets the causes for low academic performance and college-going rates. Beyond the individual services, long-term systemic change will be sought. Teachers, schools, and the educational processes will be assessed and, where needed, adjusted. Change will not be dictated from the outside, but led from those within through extensive partnership building. GEAR-UP funding, and these six years of intensive services, will leave Wyoming in a much better place to be ready for tomorrow's students.

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