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VIII. Other Information

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To use PDF you must have Adobe Acrobat Reader, which is available free at this site. If you have questions about using PDF, call the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO), toll free, at 1-888-293-6498; or in the Washington, DC, area at (202) 512-1530.

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Dated: January 18, 2006.

Christopher J. Doherty,

Acting Assistant Deputy Secretary, Office of Innovation and Improvement.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Postsecondary Education; Overview Information; Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs; Notice Inviting Applications for New Awards for Fiscal year (FY) 2006

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Numbers: 84.334S (State grants) and 84.334A (Partnership grants).

DATES: Applications Available: January 23, 2006. Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: March 9, 2006. Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: May 2, 2006.

Eligible Applicants: (1) A State; or (2) a partnership consisting of (A) one or more local educational agencies acting on behalf of (i) one or more elementary schools or secondary schools, and (ii) the secondary schools that students from the schools described in (i) would normally attend; (B) one or more degree granting institutions of higher education; and (C) at least two community organizations or entities, such as businesses, professional associations, community-based

organizations, philanthropic organizations, State agencies, institutions or agencies sponsoring programs authorized under subpart 4 of part A of Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, or other public or private agencies or organizations.

Note: For State grants, the fiscal agent/applicant must be a single State agency as designated by the State's governor. For partnership grants, the fiscal agent/applicant must be either an institution of higher education that is not pervasively sectarian or a local educational agency.

Estimated Available Funds: \$24,500,000 for partnership grants and \$12,000,000 for State grants.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$100,000-\$7,000,000 for partnership grants and \$500,000-\$3,000,000 for State grants.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$1,200,000 for partnership grants and \$3,000,000 for State grants.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application for a State grant that proposes a budget exceeding \$3,000,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. We will reject any application for a partnership grant that proposes a budget exceeding \$800 per student for a single budget period of 12 months. We also will reject any State or partnership grant application that proposes an increase in its budget after the first 12-month budget period. The Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education may change any of these maximum amounts through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Estimated Number of Awards: 4 State grants and 20 partnership grants.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 72 months.

Full Text of Announcement

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is to support early college preparation and awareness activities for low-income students.

Priority: Under this competition we are particularly interested in applications that address one or both of the following priorities.

Invitational Priority: For FY 2006 these priorities are invitational priorities. Under 34 CFR 75.105(c)(1) we do not give an application that meets these invitational priorities a competitive or absolute preference over other applications.

These priorities are:

Invitational Priority 1

Applicants are encouraged to include plans to develop and administer an assessment in the tenth and/or eleventh grade to determine whether GEAR UP students are adequately prepared for postsecondary education. Assessments would include math and language skills, and other content areas or skills the applicant believes are sound indicators of preparedness for college-level work. The results of such an assessment would then be used as a substitute for placement tests that members of the cohort who are admitted to a partner institution of higher education would otherwise be required to take, and to guide intervention strategies that focus on the needs of individual GEAR UP students to help ensure that, by the time they graduate from high school, they are prepared for college.

The Secretary will review the results of this invitational priority (including the number of applicants who include information responsive to this priority and whether any grantees develop and administer an assessment), and may propose to modify the regulations for the GEAR UP program (34 CFR part 694) to require that grantees conduct this type of an assessment of the students receiving services through GEAR UP partnership or State grants.

Invitational Priority 2

Partnership applicants are encouraged to include plans to establish and maintain a financial assistance program that awards college scholarships to GEAR UP students consistent with the requirements governing GEAR UP scholarships that State grantees must meet in section 404E of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended. That provision includes requirements regarding the amounts of the scholarships and student eligibility. Applicants proposing plans that include this priority should be sure to consider how the financial assistance program will be administered after Federal funding for the grant has ended. Since any Federal funds or non-Federal matching contributions to be used for scholarships in future years must be obligated during the appropriate budget period, the requirement of an obligation requires that these funds be placed in a trust or other irrevocable instrument for the benefit of the GEAR UP students until such time as the funds are awarded to individual students.

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

Applicable Regulations: (a) The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82,

84, 85, 86, 97, 98, and 99. (b) The regulations for this program in 34 CFR part 694.

Note: The regulations in 34 CFR part 86 apply to institutions of higher education only.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Discretionary grants.
Estimated Available Funds: \$24,500,000 for partnership grants and \$12,000,000 for State grants.

Estimated Range of Awards: \$100,000—\$7,000,000 for partnership grants and \$500,000—\$3,000,000 for State grants.

Estimated Average Size of Awards: \$1,200,000 for partnership grants and \$3,000,000 for State grants.

Maximum Award: We will reject any application for a State grant that proposes a budget exceeding \$3,000,000 for a single budget period of 12 months. We will reject any application for a partnership grant that proposes a budget exceeding \$800 per student for a single budget period of 12 months. We also will reject any State or partnership grant application that proposes an increase in its budget after the first 12-month budget period. The Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education may change any of these maximum amounts through a notice published in the **Federal Register**.

Estimated Number of Awards: 4 State grants and 20 partnership grants.

Note: The Department is not bound by any estimates in this notice.

Project Period: Up to 72 months.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants:* (1) A State; or (2) a partnership consisting of (A) one or more local educational agencies acting on behalf of (i) one or more elementary schools or secondary schools, and (ii) the secondary schools that students from the schools described in (i) would normally attend; (B) one or more degree granting institutions of higher education; and (C) at least two community organizations or entities, such as businesses, professional associations, community-based organizations, philanthropic organizations, State agencies, institutions or agencies sponsoring programs authorized under subpart 4 of part A of Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, or other public or private agencies or organizations.

Note: For State grants, the fiscal agent/applicant must be a single State agency as designated by the State's Governor. For partnership grants, the fiscal agent/applicant

must be either an institution of higher education that is not pervasively sectarian or a local educational agency.

2. *Cost Sharing or Matching:* Section 404C of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, requires grantees under this program to provide not less than 50 percent of the total cost of the project over six years. By regulation, a partnership may propose a non-Federal contribution of less than 50 percent, but not less than 30 percent of the total cost of the project, if the partnership includes three or fewer institutions of higher education as members and meets the high-need criteria in 34 CFR 694.7(b)(2). The non-Federal share of project costs may be in cash or in-kind. Applicants will be held to the matching commitment proposed in the application for funding, even if the proposed match is higher than the percent required by statute.

3. *Other:* For State grants, at least 25 percent, and not more than 50 percent of grant funds must be spent on early college preparation and awareness, and at least 50 percent of grant funds must be spent on postsecondary scholarships to eligible GEAR UP students. The Secretary may waive the scholarship percentage requirement if the applicant demonstrates that it has another means of providing the students with financial assistance.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address to Request Application Package:* You may obtain an application package via the Internet by downloading the package from the program Web site at: <http://www.ed.gov/programs/gearup/index.html>.

You also may obtain a copy of the application package at the following address: Angela Oliphant, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., suite 6101, Washington, DC 20006-8524. Telephone: (202) 502-7676.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), you may call the Federal Relay Service (FRS) at 1-800-877-8339.

Individuals with disabilities may obtain a copy of the application package in an alternative format (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, or computer diskette) by contacting the program contact person listed in this section.

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

Page Limit: The application narrative addresses the selection criteria that reviewers use to evaluate your application. You must limit the application narrative found in Part 4 of the application to the equivalent of no more than 40 pages, using the following standards:

- A "page" is 8.5" x 11", on one side only, with 1" margins at the top, bottom, and both sides.

- Double space all text in the application narrative, including titles, headings, footnotes, quotations, references, and captions, as well as all text in charts, tables, figures, and graphs.

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

- Use a font that is either 12-point or larger.

The page limit does not apply to the cover sheet; the budget section, including the narrative budget justification; the assurances and certifications; or the one-page abstract.

We will reject your application if:

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

3. *Submission Dates and Times:* Applications Available: January 23, 2006.

Deadline for Transmittal of Applications: March 9, 2006. Applications for grants under this program must be submitted electronically using the Electronic Grant Application System (e-Application) available through the Department's e-Grants system. For information (including dates and times) about how to submit your application electronically or by mail or hand delivery if you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, please refer to section IV. 6. *Other Submission Requirements* in this notice.

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

Deadline for Intergovernmental Review: May 2, 2006.

4. *Intergovernmental Review:* These programs are subject to Executive Order 12372 and the regulations in 34 CFR part 79. Information about Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs under Executive Order 12372 is in the application packages for these programs.

5. *Funding Restrictions:* We reference regulations outlining funding

restrictions in the *Applicable Regulations* section of this notice.

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

a. *Electronic Submission of Applications.*

Applications for grants under the GEAR UP State and Partnership Competitions—CFDA Numbers 84.334S and CFDA 84.334A must be submitted electronically using e-Application available through the Department's e-Grants system, accessible through the e-Grants portal page at: <http://e-grants.ed.gov>.

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

While completing your electronic application, you will be entering data online that will be saved into a database. You may not e-mail an electronic copy of a grant application to us.

Please note the following:

- You must complete the electronic submission of your grant application by 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. The e-Application system will not accept an application for this program after 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you do not wait until the application deadline date to begin the application process.

- The regular hours of operation of the e-Grants Web site are 6 a.m. Monday until 7 p.m. Wednesday; and 6 a.m. Thursday until midnight Saturday, Washington, DC time. Please note that the system is unavailable on Sundays, and between 7 p.m. on Wednesdays and 6 a.m. on Thursdays, Washington, DC time, for maintenance. Any modifications to these hours are posted on the e-Grants Web site.

- You will not receive additional point value because you submit your application in electronic format, nor will we penalize you if you qualify for an exception to the electronic

submission requirement, as described elsewhere in this section, and submit your application in paper format.

- You must submit all documents electronically, including the GEAR UP Title Page Form, Project Budget Summary Forms and all necessary assurances and certifications.

- You must attach any narrative sections of your application as files in a .DOC (document), .RTF (rich text), or .PDF (Portable Document) format. If you upload a file type other than the three file types specified above or submit a password protected file, we will not review that material.

- Your electronic application must comply with any page limit requirements described in this notice.

- Prior to submitting your electronic application, you may wish to print a copy of it for your records.

- After you electronically submit your application, you will receive an automatic acknowledgment, that will include a PR/Award number (an identifying number unique to your application).

- Within three working days after submitting your electronic application, fax a signed copy of the GEAR UP Title Page Form to the Application Control Center after following these steps:

- Print the GEAR UP Title Page Form from e-Application.

- The applicant's Authorizing Representative must sign the GEAR UP Title Page Form.

- Place the PR/Award number in the upper right hand corner of the hard-copy signature page of the GEAR UP Title Page Form.

- Fax the signed GEAR UP Title Page Form to the Application Control Center at (202) 245-6272.

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

Application Deadline Date Extension in Case of e-Application System Unavailability:

If you are prevented from electronically submitting your application on the application deadline date because the e-Application system is unavailable, we will grant you an extension of one business day to enable you to transmit your application electronically, by mail, or by hand delivery. We will grant this extension if:

- You are a registered user of e-Application and you have initiated an electronic application for this competition; and

- (a) The e-Application system is unavailable for 60 minutes or more between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date; or

- (b) The e-Application system is unavailable for any period of time between 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m., Washington, DC time, on the application deadline date.

We must acknowledge and confirm these periods of unavailability before granting you an extension. To request this extension or to confirm our acknowledgment of any system unavailability, you may contact either (1) the person listed elsewhere in this notice under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** (see VII. Agency Contact) or (2) the e-Grants help desk at 1-888-336-8930. If the system is down and therefore the application deadline is extended, an e-mail will be sent to all registered users who have initiated an e-Application. Extensions referred to in this section apply only to the unavailability of the Department's e-Application system.

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

- You do not have access to the Internet; or

- You do not have the capacity to upload large documents to the Department's e-Application system; and

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

Address and mail or fax your statement to: Angela Oliphant, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., suite 6101, Washington, DC 20006-8524. Fax: (202) 502-7675.

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

b. *Submission of Paper Applications by Mail.*

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you may mail (through the U.S. Postal Service or a commercial carrier) your

application to the Department. You must mail the original and two copies of your application, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the applicable following address: *By mail through the U.S. Postal Service:* U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: 84.334S or 84.334A (as appropriate), 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20202-4260, or *By mail through a commercial carrier:* U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: 84.334S or 84.334A (as appropriate), 7100 Old Landover Road, Landover, MD 20785-1506.

Regardless of which address you use, you must show proof of mailing consisting of one of the following:

(1) A legibly dated U.S. Postal Service postmark,

(2) A legible mail receipt with the date of mailing stamped by the U.S. Postal Service,

(3) A dated shipping label, invoice, or receipt from a commercial carrier, or

(4) Any other proof of mailing acceptable to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

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

(1) A private metered postmark, or

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

If your application is postmarked after the application deadline date, we will not consider your application.

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

a. Submission of Paper Applications by Hand Delivery.

If you qualify for an exception to the electronic submission requirement, you (or a courier service) may deliver your paper application to the Department by hand. You must deliver the original and two copies of your application, by hand, on or before the application deadline date, to the Department at the following address: U.S. Department of Education, Application Control Center, Attention: 84.334A or 84.334S (as appropriate), 550 12th Street, SW., Room 7041, Potomac Center Plaza, Washington, DC 20202-4260.

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

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

(1) You must indicate on the envelope and—if not provided by the Department—on the GEAR UP Title Page Form the CFDA number—and suffix letter, if any—of the competition under which you are submitting your application.

(2) The Application Control Center will mail a grant application receipt acknowledgment to you. If you do not receive the grant application receipt acknowledgment within 15 business days from the application deadline date, you should call the U.S. Department of Education Application Control Center at (202) 245-6288.

V. Application Review Information

Selection Criteria: The selection criteria for this program are from the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR 75.210 and are listed in the application package.

VI. Award Administration Information

1. *Award Notices:* If your application is successful, we notify your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators and send you a Grant Award Notification (GAN). We may also notify you informally.

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

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

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

3. *Reporting:* At the end of your project period, you must submit a final performance report, including financial information, as directed by the Secretary. If you receive a multi-year award, you must submit an annual performance report that provides the most current performance and financial expenditure information as specified by the Secretary in 34 CFR 75.118.

4. *Performance Measures:* The objectives of the GEAR UP program are:

(1) To increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education of participating students; (2) to increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education of participating students; and (3) to increase educational expectations

for participating students and student and family knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing.

To assess the performance of the program in achieving these objectives, the Department has developed a number of performance measures that are included in the application package. All grantees will be expected to submit an annual performance report documenting their success in addressing these performance measures.

VII. Agency Contact

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Angela Oliphant, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, U.S. Department of Education, 1990 K Street, NW., suite 6101, Washington, DC 20006-8524. Telephone: (202) 502-7676.

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Dated: January 18, 2006.

Sally L. Stroup,

Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.

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