

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Postsecondary Success Initiative for Select Community Colleges

AZ GEAR UP invites proposals from six postsecondary institutions to increase freshmen retention and success in 2018-19

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MESSAGE FROM NAU PROVOST AND ARIZONA GEAR UP PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Welcome and congratulations!

I write to welcome you and thank you for partnering with Arizona GEAR UP and Northern Arizona University. As you are aware, the GEAR UP program has been an effort of NAU for more than a decade and a half, and I have been honored to serve as principal investigator—working with an outstanding team of professionals—for this wonderful program. Thousands of young people from across our state have had the support necessary to experience the life-changing opportunity to finish high school and transition to post-secondary education.

Our most recent grant has worked with young people in Arizona since 2012, when the students were in seventh grade, and this cohort graduates in the spring of 2018. Unlike previous programs, this cohort of students will receive support as they enter college or university. And this is where our partnership takes on its importance. Thanks for agreeing to join with us in support of these students. Over the past six years, our team has collaborated to instill confidence in these young people as they develop the knowledge and skill to launch their next steps in life. We share the commitment to student success that Arizona's colleges have made a hallmark of their work, and in collaboration with the colleges, we expect to see these students experience a powerful beginning to their college careers.

This document, along with consultation with the GEAR UP team, provides guidance for you to put together a plan to assist the new graduates in their goals. Building on the strong foundation laid for these students and the rich programs in your colleges, we can join together to marshal excellent strategies that will assist the students. One of the key goals of Northern Arizona University is student success; collaborating with you to extend this to students across the state represents a great step forward.

Wishing you the best in your commitment to Arizona's future,



Daniel L. Kain
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Principal Investigator, Arizona GEAR UP

BACKGROUND

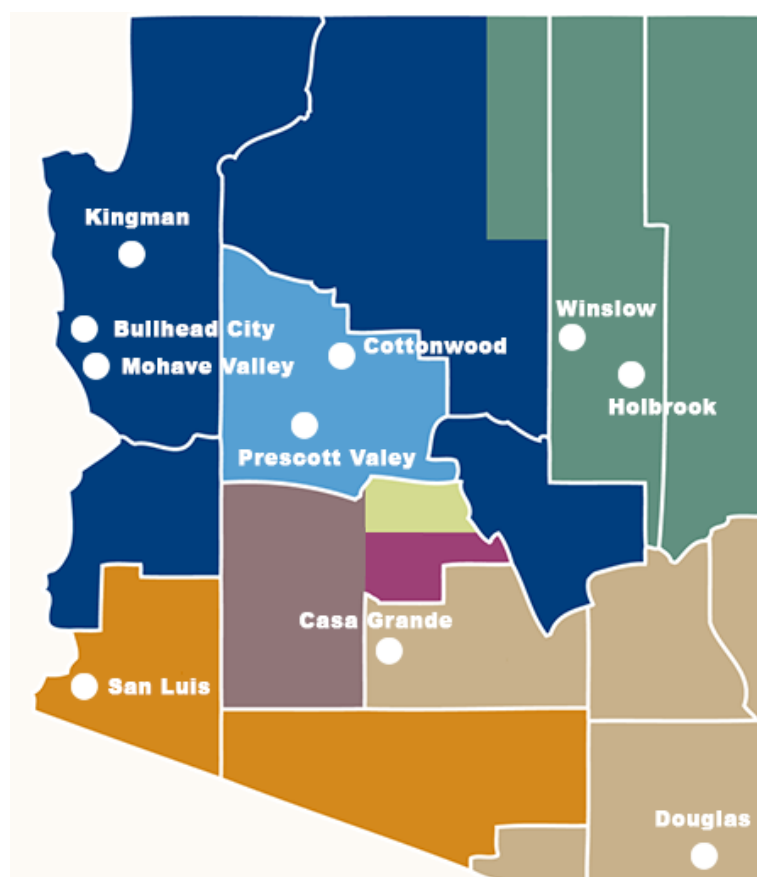
GEAR UP, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, is a discretionary grant program administered by the US Department of Education to increase college access and success for students from low-income families and under-resourced communities.

Northern Arizona University (NAU) was awarded a State GEAR UP grant from July 2012 to July 2019 to work with approximately 4,000 students in the High School Graduating Class of 2018, starting when these students were in seventh grade, to provide the academic preparation and college knowledge needed for college success. The students attended high schools in the following high school districts: Casa Grande Union, Colorado River Union, Douglas Unified, Holbrook Unified, Humboldt Unified, Kingman Unified, Mingus Union, Winslow Unified, and Yuma Union.

The NAU project, AZ GEAR UP, is currently in its sixth year, and students in the AZ GEAR UP cohort are in their senior year of high school. The NAU project includes a seventh year, to provide services to this cohort during their first year of college.

AZ GEAR UP COMMUNITIES

AZ GEAR UP K-12 PARTNERS



Casa Grande Union HS District

- Casa Grande Union High School
- Casa Verde High School
- Vista Grande High School

Colorado River Union HS District

- Mohave High School
- River Valley High School

Douglas Unified School District

- Douglas High School

Holbrook Unified School District

- Holbrook High School

Humboldt Unified School District

- Bradshaw Mountain High School

Kingman Unified School District

- Kingman High School
- Lee Williams High School

Mingus Union HS District

- Mingus Union High School

Winslow Unified School District

- Winslow High School

Yuma Union HS District

- San Luis High School

PURPOSE AND GOALS

The mission of GEAR UP, per the enabling legislation (20 U.S. Code 1070a-21 – 1070a-28), is to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education (PSE). With increasing attention on not just college *access*, but also college *success*, the US Department of Education began, in 2011, making 7-year awards to enable entities to “provide services to a student through the student's first year of attendance at an institution of higher education.” AZ GEAR UP has three specific objectives related to the seventh year:

Outcome 2.3: Significantly more GEAR UP students will be enrolled in postsecondary education by the fall semester following their graduation from high school, than students in a carefully matched control group. Analysis completed on PSE enrollment percentages in summer 2018.

Outcome 2.4: Significantly more GEAR UP students will be on track for graduating from college by completing their freshman year in good academic standing as defined by their institution, than students in a carefully matched control group. Analysis completed on academic standing percentages in summer 2019.

Outcome 2.5 Significantly more GEAR UP students will be placed into college level English and math without the need for remedial courses, than students in a matched comparison group. Analysis completed on remedial course percentages in summer 2019.

This Request for Proposals under the Postsecondary Success Initiative for Select Community Colleges is premised on these common goals and objectives shared by GEAR UP and community colleges alike: increased student enrollment in PSE; students’ success in credit-bearing courses; students’ completion of their freshmen year in good standing, and first-year retention.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS / FUNDING AVAILABLE / PROJECT PERIOD

AZ GEAR UP staff have derived enrollment estimates at in-state postsecondary institutions based on historical data from GEAR UP partner schools, as well as GEAR UP students’ stated plans, intentions, and college applications to date. Based on those estimates, and in the interest of meeting the above shared goals, NAU GEAR UP invites six community colleges to submit proposals to serve the GEAR UP students attending their institutions. Funding is available at a maximum of \$500 per the number of GEAR UP students estimated to enroll at each college in 2018-19.

The number of GEAR UP students estimated to attend each institution in 2018-19, and the maximum funding to each, is shown below.

Eligible Institution	Estimated # of GEAR UP enrollees in 2018-19	x \$500 per GEAR UP enrollee in 2018-19	Maximum Funding Available (for project period)
Arizona Western College	250 students	x \$500 per student =	\$125,000
Central Arizona College	450 students	x \$500 per student =	\$225,000
Cochise College	140 students	x \$500 per student =	\$70,000
Mohave Community College	230 students	x \$500 per student =	\$115,000
Northland Pioneer College	100 students	x \$500 per student =	\$50,000
Yavapai College	200 students	x \$500 per student =	\$100,000

The AZ GEAR UP Postsecondary Success Initiative for Select Community Colleges makes one-time funding available to serve a subset of students for a project period that may include up to 14 months (May 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019). Colleges *may* choose to begin services as early as May 1, 2018 (i.e., while students are still in high school), and/or *may* offer services during the summer of 2018. By design, all Colleges *must* serve students throughout the entire 2018-19 academic year, at minimum.

Because funding beyond June 30, 2019 (i.e., to continue services to students in subsequent years) is, unfortunately, not available, institutions are encouraged to think and plan strategically, and creatively, about how this unique initiative might be structured to provide maximum, sustained benefit.

ELIGIBLE SERVICES

AZ GEAR UP is interested in partnering with eligible colleges to support activities, initiatives, programs, etc. that serve the cohort of freshmen (GEAR UP) students enrolling in these institutions in 2018-19, to foster student success and retention.

The AZ GEAR UP Postsecondary Initiative seeks to support research-based/informed proposals, and recognizes the expertise and experience of each institution as the best source for ideas and crafting of proposals that capitalize on this existing knowledge base. Colleges may have plans that have been under consideration, but for which, funding has not been available. Thus, the permissible services are wide and varying.

The Initiative, generally, will support services that promote the outcomes and objectives listed in the Purpose and Goals section, and that address student needs in at least one of the following domains:

- Academic Support (e.g., tutoring, co-requisite remediation)
- Integration and Connections (e.g., mentoring, residence-based or major-based initiatives)
- Transition Activities (e.g., summer bridge programs, expanded orientations)
- Financial Support (e.g., FAFSA completion initiatives)
- Academic Advising (e.g., Information on degree progress, intrusive/proactive advising)

⇒ **AZ GEAR UP is especially interested in supporting proposals that include co-requisite remediation.**

See https://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/core_principles_nov5.pdf and <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oepd/education-strategies.pdf>

⇒ **AZ GEAR UP will be operating a text messaging service for all GEAR UP students in college in 2018-19.** Text messaging, therefore – as a proposed service activity for funding -- would be duplicative, and so, is not allowable; the service, however, may be proposed/used in conjunction with the AZ GEAR UP contract.

PLANNING & BUDGETING CONSIDERATIONS

Allowable Costs:

Allowable costs are those necessary to achieve approved plans aimed at increasing freshmen academic achievement and retention during the project period, May 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019. Requested funds must directly link to a service, activity, initiative or program described in the proposal.

Each eligible college is permitted (encouraged) to request funding up to the available maximum for the project period, but may request less; that is, colleges can expect maximum funding available but are not required to request the maximum level. Further, proposals need not include activities for the full project period to receive maximum funding, but may request 'full funding' for the academic year only. No award will exceed the designated maximum level, as indicated in the table on Page 4.

Eligible institutions are advised to read the Fiscal Guidance provided for this Initiative to ensure compliance when crafting the budget and administering the grant once funded.

Planning considerations:

- Who will devote the time necessary to effectively implement the proposed activity or activities
 - Will new staff need to be hired? Can existing staff be special-assigned during the project period? Are consultants needed? Are volunteers a viable option? Will training be required, and if so, by whom?
- How much time, and what is the cost of that time (salaries + benefits, consultant fees, etc.)
- Other resources (supplies, fees, transportation) necessary to accomplish tasks
- Scope (how many students/families are involved, etc.)

Common cost components (federal) include:

- Institutional Personnel (salaries + benefits)
- Non-Institutional Personnel (consultants, independent contractors, AmeriCorps members, etc.)
- Materials & Supplies (associated with program implementation)
- Printing, Photocopying & Postage
- Student Transportation
- In-State Travel (registration, mileage, m&ie, lodging)
- Technology Purchases (computers, apps, software, etc.)

Note: Costs for software licenses, software or computer hardware should be discussed with AZ GEAR UP staff prior to including in your proposal.

Important Reminders:

- ⇒ **GEAR UP FUNDS ARE TO SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT:** Approved costs must "supplement" existing resources and not "supplant" them.
- ⇒ **INDIRECT COSTS:** The maximum indirect rate allowed by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) for GEAR UP partnerships is 8%.
- ⇒ **COST ALLOCATION:** Costs can be shared (split) among sources; for example, a task / initiative can be paid with 50% GEAR UP funds and with 50% institutional funds.

- ⇒ **SUBRECIPIENT COMMITMENT FORM:** Each institution must complete and submit a subrecipient commitment form with their proposal. The form, and instructions for its completion and return, will be emailed to each institution upon receipt of a proposal.

FORMAT OF APPLICATION

The proposal must be submitted using the fillable PDF forms provided electronically to the eligible PSE institution, as described at the Pre-Proposal Meeting.

PROPOSAL PROCESS / TIMELINE

- ▶ **December 6, 2017, 2-4:30 p.m.** - Pre-Proposal Meeting in Phoenix, NAU North Valley Campus
- ▶ **December 7, 2017- February 16, 2018** – AZ GEAR UP staff available to answer questions, provide guidance; eligible partner institutions are encouraged to reach out and work closely with AZ GEAR UP staff to develop proposals and budgets that will meet all requirements for expeditious approval.
- ▶ **February 16, 2018** – Proposals Due
- ▶ **February 16 - March 30, 2018** – AZ GEAR UP staff review proposals, contact institutions as needed for clarification and to finalize language for scope of work. Each institution completes and submits subrecipient commitment form to NAU.
- ▶ **April 15, 2018** – Community College Partners notified by NAU / AZ GEAR UP of approved plans/awards.
- ▶ **April 30, 2018** – NAU issues Partner Agreements
- ▶ **May 1, 2018** – Earliest Project-Period Start Date
- ▶ **June 30, 2019** – Latest Project-Period End Date

REVIEW CRITERIA

AZ GEAR UP's overarching goal under the Postsecondary Success Initiative is to successfully partner next year with each eligible community college to help ensure / enhance the academic success and first-year retention of students matriculating to their institutions in 2018-19 from GEAR UP high schools. **To this end, staff in the State GEAR UP Office invite collaboration during the proposal/budget-preparation period; preparers are highly encouraged to provide hard copy drafts of sections of their proposal to GEAR UP staff for feedback and discussion in advance of the due date (see Contact Information below).**

Final proposals, received on or before the due date, will be reviewed and considered against the following set of questions or criteria:

- Do all proposed services align with at least one of the identified domains of support?
- Does the staffing plan seem appropriate to accomplish the proposed scope of work?
- Does it seem likely that a large percentage of GEAR UP students at the college will benefit from the proposed service(s)?
- Does the budget seem appropriate for the proposed scope of work?
- Are the indicators of success aligned with GEAR UP Year 7 objectives?

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Academic Data: A person must be designated responsible for providing academic data at the end of each semester that informs on students' course placement and progress. More information on the specific academic data reporting requirements will be provided.

Financial Reporting: A person must be designated responsible for submitting quarterly financial packets, per instructions and forms provided by NAU. More information on the specific financial reporting requirements will be provided.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions and assistance with participation in the Postsecondary Success Initiative for Select Community Colleges, please contact:

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To learn more general / background information about GEAR UP, please visit the following websites:

www.nau.edu/gearup
www.edpartnerships.org/
www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/index.html