

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – BY INVITATION ONLY

Guide to Partnering with GEAR UP

A Resource for Preparing Letters of Interest to NAU for Partnering under Arizona GEAR UP 2019-26 (Edited for the presentation)

GEAR UP PURPOSE AND GOALS

NAU's proposal on behalf of Arizona in the 2019 GEAR UP competition is guided by the federal objectives and performance measures (listed below), and will include an evaluation plan with state-specific objectives/measures as well -- informed in part by partnerships with others to meet these shared aims.

The mission of GEAR UP is to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education (PSE).

GEAR UP objectives aim to:

1. Increase the academic performance and preparation for PSE of participating students;
2. Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in PSE of participating students; and
3. Increase educational expectations for participating students, and increase student and family knowledge of PSE options, preparation, and financing.

Performance measures adopted by the US Department of Education to track GEAR UP progress, include:

1. The percentage of GEAR UP students who pass Pre-Algebra by the end of 8th grade.
2. The percentage of GEAR UP students who pass Algebra 1 by the end of 9th grade.
3. The percentage of GEAR UP students who take two years of mathematics beyond Algebra 1 by 12th grade.
4. The percentage of GEAR UP students who are on track for graduation at the end of each grade.
5. The percentage of GEAR UP students who are on track to apply for college as measured by completion of the SAT or ACT by the end of 11th grade.
6. The percentage of GEAR UP students who graduate from high school.
7. The percentage of GEAR UP students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
8. The percentage of GEAR UP students who enroll in an IHE immediately after high school graduation, and are on track to graduate one year after enrolling.
9. The percentage of GEAR UP graduates who place into college-level math and English without need for remediation.

PROJECT DESIGN

Arizona GEAR UP 2019-26 will be operationalized through two components of work: *direct services* and *statewide/local initiatives*.

Direct Services

GEAR UP law requires the provision of direct service to *eligible* students (using a cohort or priority model).

With support from partner organizations, Arizona GEAR UP – through the **State GEAR UP Office** -- intends to ensure direct services to 4,000 students on average, annually, following a priority model. This model provides for serving students in grades nine through twelve who are enrolled (between fall 2019 and spring 2026) in eligible schools selected in collaboration with partner organizations after the grant is awarded – as well as, the provision of services during the first year of postsecondary education (PSE), to students who graduate from these ‘GEAR UP high schools’ and enroll in PSE between (fall 2020 and summer 2026).

Statewide/Local Initiatives

To this end, with support from partner organizations, Arizona GEAR UP – through the **State GEAR UP Office** -- additionally expects to:

1. promote early college and career awareness in low-income **middle grade schools**
2. bolster post high school enrollment rates of low-income schools **statewide** by way of critical **senior year services**, including dissemination of, and training on, use of the *GEAR UP Senior Launch Guide*.

Additionally under this component of the grant, Arizona GEAR UP proposes to expand and enhance **statewide or local initiatives** that further educational attainment in Arizona widely, and across several years, through partnerships that leverage resources to achieve **goals that are common to both GEAR UP objectives and Arizona Achieve60 indicators**; these common goals, broadly, are:

- increase early academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education of low-income students, especially 8th grade students’ preparation for success in high school math;
- increase the four-year graduation rate of low-income schools, especially those with current rates of < 78%;
- increase the post high school enrollment rate of low-income schools, whether that be for the purpose of obtaining a degree or certificate; and
- increase knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation and financing for low-income students and their families.

In summary, NAU seeks partnerships with organizations to not only *expand* and *enhance* direct services to students in GEAR UP high schools and the first-year of PSE -- and educators/students, statewide, in the middle grades and senior year -- but partnerships that further **statewide/local initiatives beyond GEAR UP schools** that:

- ▶ address one or more of the common GEAR UP/Achieve60 aims through provision of eligible activities;
- ▶ promote systemic change from which future students benefit;
- ▶ increase capacity of school districts to meet students’ needs through collaboration with partners; and,
- ▶ best facilitate NAU’s obligation, on behalf of Arizona, to meet the federal 1:1 match requirement.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

Eligible GEAR UP activities are those specified in federal law and designated as: *required*, *permissible*, and *additional permissible activities for State grants*.

PARTNERING WITH GEAR UP – Matching Requirements, Budgeting and Cost Considerations

NAU's proposal on behalf of Arizona in the 2019 GEAR UP competition (for up to \$24.5M in federal resources), must evidence matching funds, dollar-for-dollar, (\$24.5M) from non-federal sources over the duration on the seven-year grant period.

Therefore, in its bid for the State GEAR UP grant, NAU expects to select partner organizations that are willing and most able to provide the cash and/or in-kind contributions from non-federal sources necessary to leverage these federal dollars.

Types of Contributions that Count toward the Matching Requirement

The standard for determining the types of costs/expenditures that are eligible to count toward the matching requirement – is whether the cost/expenditure is of federal GEAR UP funds are allowable for costs that are necessary to implement eligible activities/services aimed at achieving the common goals of Arizona GEAR UP and Achieve60AZ. Therefore, the same types of costs/expenditures are eligible as contributions to count toward the matching requirements. Whether federal or match, costs of non-school organizations (businesses, community organizations, philanthropic and other organizations), must directly link to an eligible service, activity, initiative or program that is clearly tied to these goals.

Common cost components (funded with federal and/or non-federal cash/in-kind contributions)

- Personnel (salaries + benefits) / value of volunteers' time and effort
- Materials & Supplies (associated with program implementation)
- Printing, Photocopying & Postage
- In-State Travel (registration, mileage, m&ie, lodging)
- Technology (computers, apps, software, etc.)
- Space/facility usage (on-going, occasional or one-time)

Budgeting and Cost Considerations

- Organizations may wish to partner on the grant by budgeting match contributions (cash or in-kind from non-federal sources), and not request federal funds.
- Budgets that include requests for federal funds are expected to include cash or in-kind contributions.
- GEAR UP funds are to supplement, not supplant existing resources. To this end, requests for federal funds, should make clear how federal funds will expand or enhance the scope and/or the quality of services.
- Indirect Costs: The maximum indirect rate allowed by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) for GEAR UP grants is 8%. Indirect funds may be requested in federal funds, or may be waived.
- Cost Allocation: Costs can be shared (split) among sources; for example, 25% of a task / initiative can be paid with GEAR UP funds and 75% with local/organization/private funds and donated services or goods.

- Entertainment: Tickets to sporting events or movies, gift cards, restaurant vouchers and the like can be great incentives for youth, but they are non-allowable as a federal expense, and therefore, non-allowable as a match contribution.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Upon notice that Arizona is awarded a grant in the 2019 competition, NAU will initiate a signed agreement with partners, including a scope-of-work and budget that will specify reporting requirements.

Progress and Financial Reporting

Depending on the nature of the partnership, the frequency and content of progress and financial reporting may vary. Partner organizations may be required to designate a person(s) responsible for submitting reports (progress and financial), typically on a quarterly basis, per instructions, forms, and guidance provided by NAU.