



# **GEAR UP TN**

**POWERED BY THEC  
IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE**

**2026-2027**



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IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE**

**2026-2027**

**THIS GUIDE BELONGS TO:**

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# GEAR UP TN

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## PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Contact Information

GEAR UP TN Site Coordinators and Project Directors

The College Access Landscape in Tennessee

GEAR UP National Program Overview

GEAR UP TN Overview & County Map

College-Going Culture and Research

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# GEAR UP TN SITE COORDINATORS & PROGRAM DIRECTORS

## BEDFORD COUNTY

### HIGH SCHOOLS

Cascade High School  
Community High School  
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### FEEDER SCHOOLS

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### HIGH SCHOOLS

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# GEAR UP TN SITE COORDINATORS & PROGRAM DIRECTORS

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**HIGH SCHOOLS**  
Grainger County HS  
Washburn School

**FEEDER SCHOOLS**  
Rutledge Middle School  
Washburn School

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**HIGH SCHOOLS**  
Bolivar Central High School  
Middleton High School

**FEEDER SCHOOLS**  
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Rural Vale School  
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# THE COLLEGE-GOING LANDSCAPE IN TENNESSEE

## College-Going in Tennessee

College-going in Tennessee has had a series of very significant ups and downs over the past decade. In 2014, the college-going rate in Tennessee was at 58.6% and had been fairly stable for the past few decades. However, with the launch of the Drive to 55 and TN Promise, Tennessee's college-going rate increased to 64.4% in 2015. This was the largest percentage-point increase that Tennessee has ever experienced in a single year. Tennessee's college-going rate fluctuated between 61 and 64 percent between 2015 and 2019. However, the state college-going rate, along with the rest of the nation, experienced a significant decrease between 2019 and 2021 due to the COVID 19 pandemic, and the impact that it had on K-12 and higher education. Tennessee's college-going rate dropped to 52.8% by the class of 2021. Tennessee's college-going rate has been slowly recovering and rebounding since 2021. Including the college-going *Momentum Year* of the class of 2023, it has climbed back up to 56.7%.

There is still a lot of work to be done to return the college-going rate in TN to the pre-pandemic levels and beyond. However, the college-going rate for the state does not tell the full picture. With the class of 2023, college-going rates across the state of Tennessee varied by counties between 38 percent and 82 percent. Furthermore, the college-going rates for economically disadvantaged students in Tennessee for the class of 2023 was 26 percentage points lower than it was for students not economically disadvantaged. At the same time, females are going to college at a rate that is 13.7 percentage points higher than males, and white students are going to college in Tennessee at a rate that is 11.9 percentage points higher than black or African American students and 21.5 percentage points higher than Hispanic or Latino students in Tennessee.

Although the college-going challenge is still significant in Tennessee, there are currently more college access organizations and initiatives in Tennessee than ever before. Tennessee has committed almost one billion dollars into vocational and technical training, had significant growth in the number of dual enrollment courses and other Early Post Secondary Opportunities (EPSOs) offered and taken, and there are numerous state and non-profit programs aimed at helping students that start college to stay on track and graduate.

# GEAR UP NATIONAL PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a federally funded college access grant program. GEAR UP was authorized by Title IV of the 1998 Amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965. The purpose of GEAR UP is to increase the number of low-income and first-generation students who are prepared to enroll in and succeed in college.

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

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

The U.S. Department of Education provides six or seven-year GEAR UP grants to states and partnerships to provide college access services at high-poverty middle and high schools.

Partnerships consisting of one or more local education agencies and one or more higher education institutions and community organizations may apply for GEAR UP partnership grants. The governor of each state may designate only one agency to apply for and administer a GEAR UP state grant.

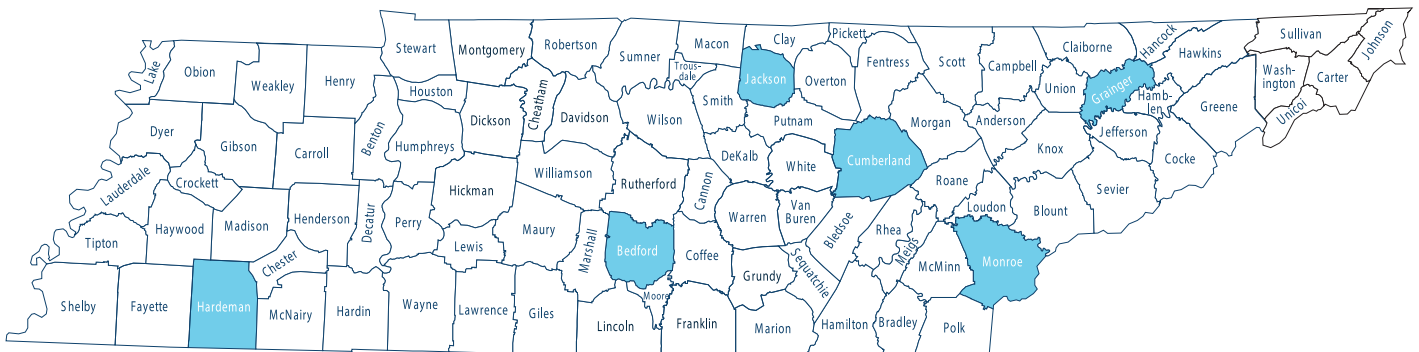
GEAR UP TN is a state grant that is administered by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. GEAR UP TN follows a cohort or whole-grade model, meaning that services are provided to all students in the participating grade level, rather than a selected group of students. This grant provides college access and success services to all cohort students starting in the 7th grade and will continue to provide services through their first year of postsecondary education for the class of 2030 and through high school graduation for the class of 2031.

# GEAR UP TN OVERVIEW

GEAR UP TN works with community-based sites in six counties across the state in order to accomplish these goals. Through the sites, GEAR UP TN provides students with direct services, including mentoring, tutoring, college visits, and financial aid counseling. The program will provide services to two cohorts of 1,600 students beginning in the 7th grade. The first cohort, the Class of 2030, will receive services through their first year of college. The second cohort, the Class of 2031, will be in their senior year of high school in the final year of the grant. GEAR UP TN will also serve 1,450 priority seniors in years 2-7 and continue to serve them during their first year of college. GEAR UP TN anticipates that it will serve 9,000 students over the seven years of the grant.

For the seniors, GEAR UP TN services will primarily focus on helping them meet college-going milestones such as the completion of TN Promise applications, college applications, and the FAFSA. However, the GEAR UP model focuses on the work with the cohort students because this is the group of students that the program follows for the entire grant. The cohort group is also used to develop the college-going culture at each GEAR UP school and to develop partnerships and strategies that will lead to sustaining the outcomes and services of GEAR UP once the grant ends. For those reasons, a majority of each site's time, funds, and resources should be focused on the cohort group each year. As a guide, about 60 percent of a site's time, effort, and resources should be spent on the cohort and about 40 percent on the seniors.

## Schools and Counties Served by GEAR UP



### High Schools

- Bolivar Central High School • Cascade High School • Community High School • Cumberland County High School
- Grainger County High School • Jackson County High School • Middleton High School
- Shelbyville High School • Tellico Plains High School • Washburn School

### Middle Schools

- Bolivar Middle School • Brown Elementary School • Cascade Middle School • Coker Creek Elementary School
- Community Middle School • Dodson Branch School • Harris Middle School • Hornsby Elementary School
- Jackson County Middle School • Liberty School • Martin Elementary School • Pleasant Hill Elementary School • Rural Vale School
- Rutledge Middle School • South Cumberland Elementary School
- Tellico Plains Junior High School • Toone Elementary School • Whiteville Elementary School

## MISSION OF GEAR UP TN

GEAR UP TN aims to expand the college-going culture in Tennessee. By using an empowerment model that recognizes the assets and needs of local communities, GEAR UP TN looks to shift the state's educational culture. We aim to develop long-term, successful partnerships to support students in reaching college and providing them with the resources to succeed in college.

## GOALS OF GEAR UP TN

1. Increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education for GEAR UP students.
2. Increase the rates of high school graduation and enrollment in postsecondary education for GEAR UP students.
3. Increase GEAR UP students' and their families' knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing.

GEAR UP TN's programmatic objectives are to:

- Increase student academic achievement and course completion.
- Increase student performance on college entrance exams.
- Increase student high school graduation.
- Increase student postsecondary participation and success.
- Increase student and family educational expectations.
- Increase FAFSA completion rates.
- Increase dual enrollment participation.
- Increase student and family knowledge of and access to financial assistance for postsecondary education.
- Increase parent and community engagement in activities associated with student preparation for college.
- Increase educator content-area knowledge and understanding.

### Outcomes:

In the first GEAR UP TN grant (2005 – 2011), there was an average of a 10.7 percentage point increase in the college-going rate in high schools served by GEAR UP. The college-going rate of this cohort was 57.6%, surpassing the state average.

The 2012 – 2019 GEAR UP TN grant saw a 10-percentage point increase in college-going rates over the baseline with a 62% college-going rate for the cohort, FAFSA filing increased 17 percentage points over the pre-program baseline, and postsecondary retention increased 8 percentage points over the preceding class with a 70 percent retention rate. This grant provided direct services to almost 52,000 GEAR UP students and over 300,000 students statewide through College Application and Exploration Week, FAFSA Frenzy, and CollegeforTN.org.

In the third GEAR UP TN grant (2017-2024), the college-going rate for cohort students that participated in all years of the grant was 58%. Of these students, 61% persisted to their second Fall of postsecondary education. This GEAR UP TN grant directly served almost 20,000 students and provided statewide services to over 500,000 students through CollegeforTN.org and Path to College events such as College Application Month and FAFSA Frenzy. Over 90% of cohort seniors submitted a TN Promise application and were more likely to complete the FAFSA than students at similar, non-GEAR UP TN schools.

# GEAR UP TN TERMS

## GEAR UP

“Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP).” GEAR UP is a U.S. Department of Education grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. You should use the term “GEAR UP” when referring to the Department of Education’s nationwide GEAR UP program or GEAR UP activities that are not specific to Tennessee. “GEAR UP” is entirely in uppercase letters.

## GEAR UP TN

GEAR UP TN is Tennessee’s GEAR UP program. GEAR UP TN is a GEAR UP state grant (not a GEAR UP partnership grant) and the state recipient is the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. You should use “GEAR UP TN” when referring to funding for your site or the GEAR UP program specifically in Tennessee. For example, your site is a GEAR UP TN site and you provide services through GEAR UP TN. You may use the term “GEAR UP TN” or you may refer to “Tennessee’s GEAR UP program.” “GEAR UP TN” is entirely in uppercase letters.

## Tennessee Higher Education Commission

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is the state recipient for Tennessee’s GEAR UP funds and administers GEAR UP TN. In formal writing, please always use the term “Tennessee Higher Education Commission.” “THEC” is acceptable on second reference in conversational writing or informal documents.

## College

When we use the word college in our printed materials and outreach, we are referring to any training and certification after high school graduation. This can include certificates and diplomas through a TCAT or technical school, an associate degree from a community college, or a bachelor’s degree at a university.

We at GEAR UP TN regard every student as college-bound, and college material.

# COLLEGE-GOING FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH

GEAR UP TN implementation is driven by a logic model that is founded on current college access success research, experience in implementing successful college access programs, and replication of effective practice gleaned from the state and nation. The GEAR UP TN framework is organized around four focus areas: Think, Know, Act, and Go.

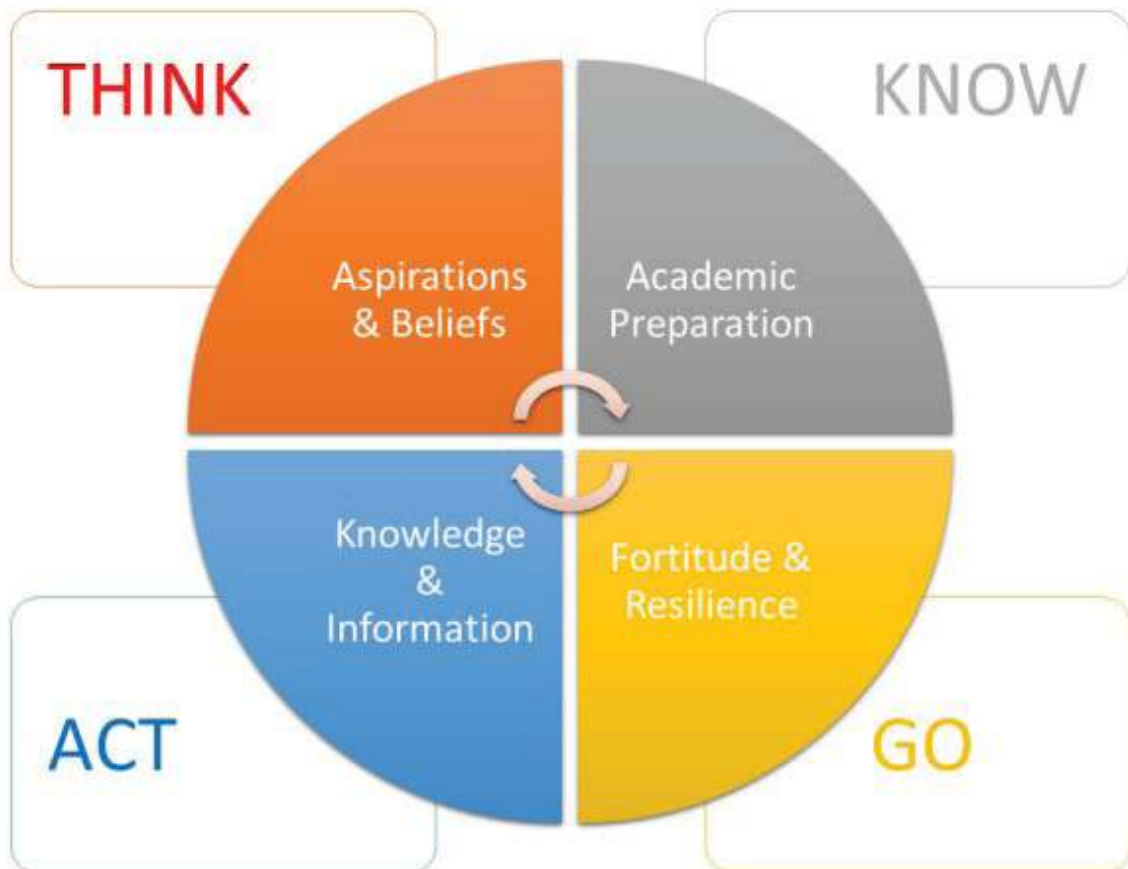
Think, Know, Act, Go: GEAR UP TN's theoretical framework is derived from Kurleander, Reed, and Hunt's review of the existing body of research on college readiness (2019). Each area includes services that have been studied and shown to produce evidence through the What Works Clearinghouse standards.

**Think** – Aspirations and Beliefs: Students will believe that college is possible and that it is important for future success. Schools will embrace a college-going culture and set high expectations for all students.

**Know** – Academic Preparation: Students will be academically prepared for education after high school.

**Act** – Knowledge and Information: Students and families will understand the steps needed to prepare, apply to, and pay for college. Schools will support students in completing critical steps in the college-going process.

**Go** – Fortitude and Resilience: Students will develop the social-emotional competencies and self-regulation skills to persist through challenges at school and on the path to college.



# GEAR UP TN Theoretical Framework

## Aspirations & Beliefs (Think)

- It is key that adolescents become active agents in their own postsecondary futures.  
Bouffard, S., & Savitz-Romer, M. (2012). *Ready, Willing, and Able: A Developmental Approach to College Access and Success*. Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.
- Student aspirations develop over time and are intrinsically linked to the educational environment at school.  
Knight, D.S., & Duncheon, J.C. (2020). Broadening conceptions of a “college-going culture”: The role of high school climate factors in college enrollment and persistence. *Policy Futures in Education*, 18(2), 314-340.
- Students from low-income backgrounds who receive intensive, frequent advising on college applications and financial aid are more likely to enroll and persist in college.  
Barr, A., & Castelman, B. (2017). *The bottom line on college counseling*. Boston, MA: Bottom Line. Students who received college coaching were significantly more likely to remain enrolled at their institutions after 12 months.

## Academic Preparation (Know)

- Academic preparation is the most effective means of increasing student postsecondary readiness, matriculation, and completion.  
Bedsworth, W., Colby, S., & Doctor, J. (2006). *Reclaiming the American Dream*. Boston, MA: Bridgespan Group.
- A rigorous high school curriculum has greater impact on postsecondary degree completion than any other pre-college indicator of academic preparation, regardless of socioeconomic status or race.  
Adelman, C. (1999). *Answers in the toolbox: Academic intensity, attendance patterns, and bachelor’s degree attainment*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

## Knowledge & Information (Act)

- A school culture where the entire faculty ensure all students are prepared, support students in completing college applications, and push students to go to college is the single most consistent predictor of postsecondary enrollment.  
Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J., Coca, V., Meller, E., Roddie, K., Gilliam, J., & Patton, D. (2008). *From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Academic preparation and aspirations are not enough if schools do not have organizational norms and structures in place to effectively guide students through the postsecondary-going process.  
Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J., Coca, V., Meller, E., Roddie, K., Gilliam, J., & Patton, D. (2008). *From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College*. Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research.
- Students who receive information and assistance in completing the FAFSA are 8.1 percentage points more likely to enroll in college.  
Bettinger, E., Long, B., Oreopoulos, P., & Sanbonmatsu, L. (2012). The role of application assistance and information in college decisions: Results from the H&R Block FAFSA experiment. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 127(3), 1205 - 1242.

## GEAR UP TN Theoretical Framework (Continued)

### Fortitude & Resilience (Go)

- Researchers found 35 studies with evidence to support a positive relationship between social-emotional interventions delivered by teachers and students' academic performance.

Durlak, J.A., Weissber, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D. & Schellinger, K.B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1): 405-432.

- Intelligence and abilities are not fixed and can be developed over time.

Dweck, C.S. (2008). *Mindset*. Ballantine Books.

- Small-scale growth mindset interventions delivered in the ninth grade has positive effects on academic achievement.

Yeager et al. (2019). A national experiment reveals where a growth mindset improves achievement. *Nature* 573, 364-369.

- Research shows that mentoring has a positive impact on a range of student outcomes, including grade promotion, absenteeism, academic goal achievement, school connection, college aspirations, and postsecondary transition and success (Coles, 2011).

Coles, A. (2011). *The Role of Mentoring in College Access and Success*. Washington, DC: Pathways to College Networks.



# **GEAR UP TN**

**POWERED BY THEC**

# 2

## **WORK PLAN PROCESS**

Work Plan Process  
THEC Outreach Division  
Grant Requirements Chart

# WORK PLAN PROCESS

## Work Plan Development Basics

GEAR UP TN Sites that plan effectively tend to have the best outcomes. The annual work plan process is designed to assist Sites in clearly articulating their plans to serve students, meet GEAR UP TN goals and objectives, and anticipate administrative and statewide expectations set forth by the GEAR UP TN central office. The work plan outlines the services and activities, by program objective, that are planned for the upcoming year, in addition to the anticipated dates, number of students, costs, and budget line items impacted by the activity. GEAR UP TN goals, objectives and required services should guide work plan development as they outline what you must do and what you may do.

There are two primary work plan development documents:

**GEAR UP TN Site Work Plan and Budget** – Sites must complete one site work plan for their entire grant program.

**GEAR UP TN School Work Plan** – Sites must complete one school work plan for each of their direct-service schools.

Each year, work plans will be submitted to regional directors. Plans will be reviewed and, if needed, site coordinators will be contacted to make revisions. Completed work plans serve as the road map for each sites' GEAR UP TN grant implementation.

The ideal work plan development team will include:

- Project director
- Site coordinator(s)
- Principals
- School and district administrators
- Counselors, key teachers
- Site partners
- Fiscal officer
- Steering Committee members
- College access partners
- College students who graduated from the high school

## Students Served

The grades of GEAR UP TN students that will be served, by academic year, are:

Academic Year	Grades Served
2024-2025	7th
2025-2026	7th, 8th, 12th
2026-2027	8th, 9th, 12th, College Freshmen
2027-2028	9th, 10th, 12th, College Freshmen
2028-2029	10th, 11th, 12th College Freshman
2029-2030	11th, 12th, College Freshman
<b>2030-2031</b>	<b>12th, College Freshmen</b>

## Site Work Plan and Budget

Sites are required to complete one site work plan. The site work plan consists of 6 parts:

**Section 1:** Site Contact Information – this section provides basic contact information for key grant and district personnel.

**Section 2:** Direct-Service School Contact Information – this section provides basic contact information for direct-service schools and school personnel.

**Section 3:** Adequacy of Facilities and Equipment – this section provides information about resources school districts are providing to local GEAR UP TN staff.

**Section 4:** Grant Implementation Activities – this section provides sites an opportunity to articulate their plans to fulfill the grant implementation activities outlined in the GEAR UP TN Required Services Chart.

**Section 5:** Sustainability Plan – this section asks sites to think critically about the services that have had the most significant impact this year and how these services might be sustained.

**Section 6:** Site Budget – this section allows sites to outline a budget for implementation. Sites should use the state budget form provided. Approved budgets become the site's contract budget.

**Section 7:** Signature Page – certifying signatures by the GEAR UP TN project director and grantee director of schools.

## School Work Plans

Use the GEAR UP TN school work plan form provided by the central office to create the work plan for each direct-service school. The school work plan is divided into two sections: (1) Proposed Student and Family GEAR UP TN Services and (2) Proposed Professional Development Activities. Student and family services are broken down by GEAR UP TN framework focus area. For each service listed on the work plan, sites are to indicate the number of individuals to be served, objectives met, and details regarding projected cost. The project director, direct-service school principal, and site coordinator responsible for implementing GEAR UP TN services at the school are required to sign-off on work plans once the planned activities and budget are agreed upon between central office and site.

When developing school work plans, include activities that:

1. Are included in the Required Activity Chart.
2. Support the GEAR UP TN goals and objectives.
3. Support the GEAR UP TN framework, strategies, and performance measures.
4. Will be sponsored by the GEAR UP TN central office.

Activities may include the following:

### Student Services

- Tutoring/homework assistance
- Comprehensive mentoring
- Financial aid counseling/advising
- Counseling/advising/academic planning/career counseling
- College campus visits/college student shadowing
- Job site visit/job shadowing
- Summer programs
- Educational field trips
- Workshops supporting any of the GEAR UP TN objectives

### Family Services

- Workshops on college preparation/financial aid
- Counseling/advising
- College visits
- Family events

### Professional Development for Educators

- Conferences
- Workshops/trainings
- Webinars for TN

# THEC OUTREACH DIVISION

## Collaboration

GEAR UP TN site coordinators are expected to collaborate with school counselors, teachers, the local community, site partners, and the GEAR UP TN central office. GEAR UP TN site coordinators should leverage the expertise of others to ensure the most robust services are being provided to students in eligible grades at the identified GEAR UP TN schools. In addition to local partnerships, we recommend working with the Outreach Team for financial aid programming.

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 jason.seay@tn.gov  
 collegefortn.org/tennessee-financial-aid

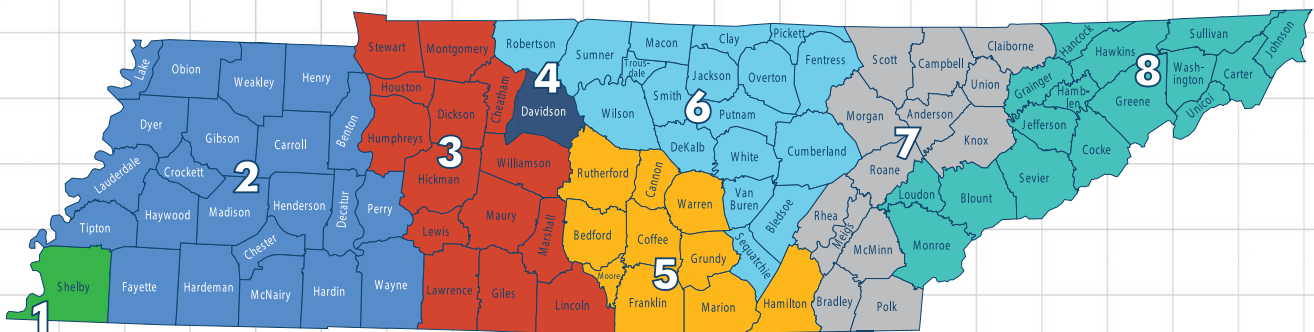
Contact for help with:

- Financial aid counseling
- FAFSA completion
- Assistance with state financial aid programs, including dual enrollment grant, HOPE, TSAA, etc.



Tennessee Higher Education Commission

## Outreach Specialist Map



### 1 - Dr. Felicia Orr

Director of College Access  
 615-390-4461  
 felicia.orr@tn.gov

### 3 - Jonathan Donald

Outreach Specialist  
 615-478-1575  
 jonathan.donald@tn.gov

### 5 - Eric Farmer

Outreach Specialist  
 423-326-7198  
 eric.farmer@tn.gov

### 7 - Rita Turchetta

Outreach Specialist  
 615-478-5584  
 rita.turchetta@tn.gov

### 2 - Lori Mitchum

Outreach Specialist  
 731-571-7888  
 lori.mitchum@tn.gov

### 4 - Jason Seay

Senior Director of Outreach  
 615-319-1740  
 jason.seay@tn.gov

### 6 - Jeffery Upshaw

Outreach Specialist  
 TBA  
 Jeffery.Upshaw@tn.gov

### 8 - Dr. Erika Adams

Outreach Specialist  
 615-417-0355  
 erika.adams@tn.gov

# GRANT REQUIREMENTS

## GEAR UP TN – Year 3 Grant Requirements

### Direct Student Services – Cohort and Priority

Domain	Student Service	8th	9th	12th	COMPLETION DEADLINE
Know	<b>College Advising Planning Sessions</b> (Target: 100% of student population)	X	X	X	<b>Ongoing</b>  <i>(Seniors by October 31, 2026 Cohort by Dec. 15, 2026)</i>
Know	<b>CollegeforTN.org</b> (Target: 80% - 100% of student population)	X	X		<b>Ongoing</b>
Know	<b>Comprehensive Mentoring</b> (Target: at least 30% of student population, specify data driven criteria)	X	X		<b>Ongoing</b>
Know	<b>Data-driven academic tutoring</b> (Target: 30% of student population, specify data driven criteria)	X	X		<b>Ongoing</b>
Act	<b>GEAR UP TN Orientation/Middle School</b> (Target: 90%-100% of student population)	X			<b>Sept. 1, 2026</b>
Act	<b>GEAR UP TN Orientation/High School</b> (Target: 90%-100% of student population)		X	X	<b>Sept. 1, 2026</b>
Act	<b>TN Promise Application Workshop</b> (Target: 90% - 100% of student population)			X	<b>Nov. 1, 2026</b>
Act	<b>TN FAFSA Frenzy / One-on-one FAFSA Completion counseling</b> (Please see comments for timeline and participation expectations)			X	<b>April 1, 2027</b>
Know	<b>Career Exploration</b> (Target: 80% - 100% of student population)	X	X		<b>May 31, 2027</b>

# GRANT REQUIREMENTS

Domain	Student Service	8th	9th	12th	COMPLETION DEADLINE
Go	<b>College Signing Day</b> (Target: 80% - 100% of student population)			X	May 31, 2027
Know	<b>College Visits</b> (Target: 80% - 100% of student population)	X	X	*	May 31, 2027
Go	<b>High School/College Transition Workshops</b> (Target: 80% - 100% of student population)			X	May 31, 2027
Think	<b>Next Guides</b> (Target: 100% of student population)	X	X	X	May 31, 2027
Think	<b>Youth Summit</b> (Participation number provided in the Spring of 2027)	X	X		June 2027
Act	<b>Summer academic enrichment program</b> (Target: 10% of student population)	X	X		July 31, 2027
Go	<b>Summer Melt</b> (Target: 80% - 100% of college-intending students)			X	Summer 2027

# GRANT REQUIREMENTS

## Parent/Family Services

Domain	Parent/Family Service	8th	9th	12th	COMPLETION DEADLINE
Act	<b>Parent/Family Engagement</b> (Target: 60% of students' families)	X	X	X	May 31, 2027
Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>One Parent/Guardian/Family service - Knowledge &amp; Information</b>                (Target: 40% of students' families)</li> </ul>		X	X	Sept. 1, 2026
Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>College and Career Planning Night</b>                (Target: 40% of students' families)</li> </ul>	X			May 1, 2027

# GRANT REQUIREMENTS

## Direct Student Services – 1<sup>st</sup> Year Postsecondary

Domain	Student Service	1 <sup>st</sup> Year PSE	COMPLETION DEADLINE
Know	<b>PS Student Success Workshops</b> (Target: 100% of student population)	X	Ongoing
Know	<b>PS Student Check-In and Advising</b> (Target: 100% of student population)	X	Ongoing
Act	<b>PS Student Financial Aid Counseling/Advising</b> (Target: 100% of student population)	X	April 1, 2027

# GRANT REQUIREMENTS

## Educator Professional Development

Domain	Educator Service	8th	9th	12th	1 <sup>st</sup> Year PSE	COMPLETION DEADLINE
	<b>GEAR UP TN Educator Orientation</b> (Target: 90% - 100% of school staff)	X	X	X		Sept. 1, 2026
	<b>Three Pre-Approved Professional Development Activities for Educators</b> (Target: 90% - 100% of school staff)	X	X	X		Sept. 1, 2026 - College-Going Culture Workshop  Dec. 15, 2026 - Social Emotional Learning Workshop  Feb. 28, 2027 - ACT Prep Workshop

# GRANT REQUIREMENTS

## Administrative Requirements

Domain	Student Administrative Requirements	8th	9th	12th	1 <sup>st</sup> Year PSE	COMPLETION DEADLINE
Think	<b>College-Going Culture Plan</b>	X	X	X		Aug. 31, 2026
Act	<b>College Application and Exploration Month</b> (Target: 80% - 100% of student population)	X	X	X		Sept. 2026
Think	<b>GEAR UP TN Welcome Packet</b> (Target: 80% - 100% of student population)	X	X	X		Sept. 1, 2026
Know	<b>GEAR UP Newsletter</b> (Target: 80% - 100% of student population)	X	X	X	X	Once per semester:  Fall Newsletter by 9/10/2026  Spring Newsletter by 1/10/2027
	<b>Collect senior student cell phone numbers</b> (Target: 80% - 100% of student population)			X		May 15, 2027 (ongoing)
Think	<b>21st Century Scholar Certificate</b> (Target: 80% - 100% of student population)	X	X	X		May 31, 2027
Act	<b>TN Promise Community Service Opportunity</b>			X	X	May 31, 2027
Act	<b>Text Messaging</b> (Target: 80% - 100% of student population)			X	X	Ongoing

# GRANT REQUIREMENTS

Domain	Grant Administrative Requirements	COMPLETION DEADLINE
	Regional Site Coordinator Meetings	Ongoing
	Completion of Monthly Activity Plan (MAP), Completed Activity Documentation, Data Entry, Reimbursement Request, and Over \$1000/\$5000 Purchase Requests.	10 <sup>th</sup> of each month 15 <sup>th</sup> of each month
	College-Going Culture Assessment and GEAR UP TN Surveys	Fall 2026
	Two College Access Steering Committee meetings	Sept. 2026 and April 2027
	Establish the College Access Steering Committee	Sept. 30, 2026
	Update District Contact Information	Sept. 30, 2026
	Travel to the mandatory GEAR UP TN Kickoff meeting	June 2027
	Professional development offered by the GEAR UP TN central office	Dates To Be Determined
	Data submission	Ongoing
	One Programmatic Site Visit	Spring 2027

# GRANT REQUIREMENTS

Domain	Grant Administrative Requirements	COMPLETION DEADLINE
	One Fiscal Site Visit	Spring 2027
	National GEAR UP Academy - Virtual Platform	February 2027
	Travel to the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) Annual Conference	July 2027



# GEAR UP TN

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# 3

## MONTHLY PROTOCOL

Monthly Activity Plan (MAP)

Sample MAP

MAP Excel Instructions

Example of Monthly Submission Schedule

Best Practices Submission Form

## Monthly Activity Plan (MAP)

The following subsections outline the monthly processes for pre-approval and documentation of services, as well as annual expectations and implementation policies.

### Monthly Activity Plan (MAP)

As outlined in Section 2, each Site will prepare an annual work plan designed to assist in clearly articulating your plans to serve GEAR UP TN students and meet GEAR UP TN goals and objectives. Each month, GEAR UP TN Sites are expected to submit a Monthly Activity Plan (MAP) outlining programming plans for the upcoming month.

**The MAP is submitted every month by the 15th, via email to your regional director, for review by the central office. The MAP should align with the approved work plan and budget. The MAP is intended as a means to seek pre-approval for project activity, with the goal of minimizing any delays or disallowed costs from the monthly claims for reimbursement.**

### GEAR UP TN Documentation

Each GEAR UP TN Site is required to document services provided to students, their families, and school faculty by month of service. Documentation includes, but is not limited to, original sign-in sheets, copies of vouchers, invoices, and agendas. It is recommended that GEAR UP TN Documentation should be kept in a secure, locked filing cabinet or secure area and be transitioned to new staff members should a GEAR UP TN position be vacated.

GEAR UP TN conducts regular site visits to partner school districts and will review the GEAR UP TN documentation process during those meetings. Each GEAR UP TN sponsored service requires a sign-in sheet or attendance roster with a cover sheet. GEAR UP TN sign-in and cover sheets are available online. Sign-in sheets should be included in your GEAR UP TN Documentation and should also be used as the source for entering data into the GEAR UP TN data system.

Sites also have the option of using classroom rosters or school attendance and absentee lists as documentation for large scale events or seminars that included the entire class.



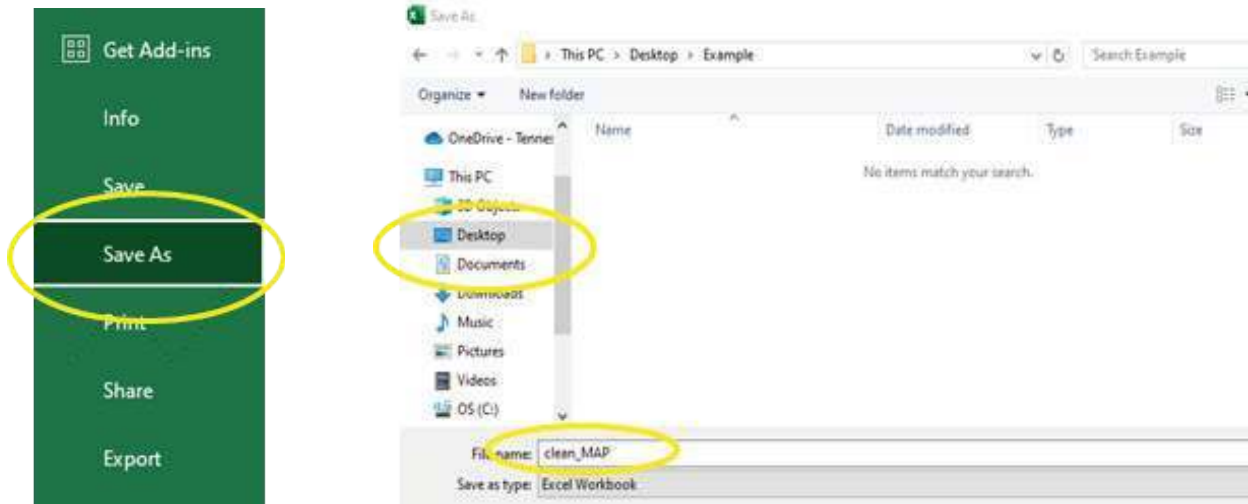
# Monthly Activity Plan (MAP) Excel Instructions

These instructions are provided to assist GEAR UP TN Sites with successful completion and submission of Monthly Activity Plans in Excel.

Before you get started, here are some tips that we hope you will find helpful:

1.) Be sure to save a “clean” version of this document somewhere you can easily access it. This will allow you to always have a clean template to use each month.

- Click: **File-Save As**-choose your preferred location (e.g., Desktop or My Documents)-**clean\_MAP**



2.) Repeat step 1, this time saving as “**YourSchoolName\_Month/Year\_MAP**”. Repeat this process each month. The name of the file should include the month in which activities will take place and your site name.

- i.e., **Example School\_March 2025\_MAP** should be submitted by February 15th and will outline activities scheduled between March 1st and 31st.

3.) Open the document and plan your activities!

- Since your MAP document for the month is now saved, you can make additions/edits to your plans until it is turned into your regional director for approval by the 15th of each month.

To begin entering planned activities:

1. Select the month in which services will take place using the dropdown box.
2. Select the name of the school in the dropdown menu

MONTHLY ACTIVITY PLAN											
School Name:											
Month:											
Name of Service	Required Service	Service Category	Service Subcategory	Date	Time	Responsible Parties	Anticipated Number Served		All Students or Subset	If you are targeting a subset, what criteria will be used to identify students (i.e., course grades, attendance, etc.)?	Total Estimated Cost
							7th Grade Cohort	Educators			

3. Starting with your first service (see far left column), input your estimates for each piece of information requested. Use the dropdowns to select the required service, service category, and service subcategory.

MONTHLY ACTIVITY PLAN											
School Name:											
Month:											
Name of Service	Required Service	Service Category	Service Subcategory	Date	Time	Responsible Parties	Anticipated Number Served		All Students or Subset	If you are targeting a subset, what criteria will be used to identify students (i.e., course grades, attendance, etc.)?	Total Estimated Cost
							7th Grade Cohort	Educators			

4. Parent/Family services are tracked by the student so you will indicate the number of GEAR UP TN students who will have parent/family member(s) participating.
5. There is a separate tab at the bottom labeled administrative items. This is an area for you to include information that will not go into the data system, but it would be helpful for us to know. This might include ACT school testing dates, in-service, steering committee meetings, PD that you are attending, or grant implementation activities such as planning meetings, fiscal visits, or student monitoring meetings.
6. The third tab at the bottom provides printing instructions for the MAP.

To begin implementing planned activities:

1. Submit the MAP via SharePoint for approval by the 15th. Initial MAP submissions will be reviewed, approved, or returned for revisions. If revisions are required, then the revised MAP must be sent to the regional director by the 25th. All planned activities, services and events will be finalized on the 1st of the service month.
2. Data entry is critical to grant reporting requirements. Enter data at least weekly, including recurring activities. **Inaccurate or incomplete data entry will cause delays in reimbursement processing.** The central office will audit completed activity documentation each month to ensure accurate and complete data entry into the GEAR UP TN data system.

# Completed Activity Documentation and Data Entry

## Completed Activity Documentation

**Sites will submit their sign-in sheets and attendance rosters by the 10th of each month** for completed activities from the previous month's MAP. **Reimbursement requests will not be paid until service data for the month covered in the request has been entered into the GEAR UP TN data system.**

**NOTE: All student, family, and staff events and services that have been created, expanded, or supported by GEAR UP are required to be documented and entered into the GEAR UP TN data system with the exception of administrative items.** If you are unsure whether a service should be included in the MAP, please contact your regional director.

## Data Entry and Audits

GEAR UP TN Sites are required to enter student, family, and professional development service data into the GEAR UP TN data collection system. Weekly data entry is required at a minimum. Service participation will be audited monthly by central office staff to ensure complete and accurate data entry into the GEAR UP TN data system. The central office will review all documented service participation to ensure that completed services are fully and accurately entered into the data system. You will be contacted with any questions regarding missing data and reimbursements may be delayed.

## Reimbursement Request

GEAR UP TN sites receive GEAR UP TN funds on a claim reimbursement basis. This means that the site must spend the funds on GEAR UP TN activities and then request reimbursement. All invoices and costs must be paid in advance of reimbursement. Claim reimbursements are submitted on a monthly basis unless other submittal arrangements have been approved. These requests are due by the 15th of the month following the expenditure. **Reimbursement requests will not be paid until activity data for the month covered in the request has been entered into the GEAR UP TN data system and evidenced by the submission of the completed activity documentation.** The central office will conduct regular audits comparing reimbursement requests, MAPs, documentation, and data entered into the GEAR UP TN data system. Refer to Section 5 for more information regarding the reimbursement process.

## Example of Monthly Submission Schedule



# GEAR UP TN Best Practices

GEAR UP TN is designed to allow each GEAR UP TN site the ability to independently design and implement services that improve their students' outcomes while meeting the requirements and expectations of the GEAR UP grant. This structure works best when sites share their effective practices with other GEAR UP TN sites. If a site implements a service or activity that they feel makes a difference for students and drives improvement along GEAR UP TN performance indicators, THEC asks that you share this best practice, form, process, or procedure with GEAR UP TN. We also want to make these resources available to all GEAR UP TN sites and increase everyone's efficiency and effectiveness.

## Path to College Surveys

You can submit your best practices for the four Path to College events through the surveys that are online after each event.



TN PATH TO COLLEGE EVENTS

## TN COLLEGE APPLICATION & EXPLORATION MONTH

As you begin to plan your College Application and Exploration Month, tailor the events to the needs of your school. From the timing of events to the location, work with your school's administrators and teachers to plan an event that works best for your school and students.



### OVERVIEW

The month of September is designated as TN College Application & Exploration Month in Tennessee. The goal of this event is to build excitement and knowledge around the college application process at all grade-levels and provide every graduating senior with an opportunity to apply to college. Activities for younger students should focus on college and career exploration. TN Path to College resources help schools plan events for each week of the month:

#### 2025-2026 Dates

- September 1-5 – Explore College & Career
- September 8-12 – Prepare to Apply
- September 15-19 – Apply
- September 22-26 – I Applied, Now What?

[2025-2026 COLLEGE APP & EXP MONTH SURVEY](#)

Click this link to be directed to the event survey



# GEAR UP TN

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# 4

## EVALUATION & DATA COLLECTION

GEAR UP TN Evaluation Plan  
Data Collection Requirements  
Site Coordinator's Data Collection Responsibilities  
Service Documentation  
Service Definitions

# GEAR UP TN Evaluation Plan

## Program Evaluation Overview

GEAR UP TN includes a rigorous third-party program evaluation – this is a federal requirement.

The purpose of the evaluation is to:

- 1) Assess the extent to which GEAR UP TN accomplishes project objectives;
- 2) Identify effective practices and strategies for replication; and
- 3) Provide feedback for programmatic improvement.

The evaluation plan is grounded in a rigorous quasi-experimental research design that incorporates formative (short-term continuous) and summative (long-term impact) evaluation. A statistically matched comparison group of similar students attending non-GEAR UP TN schools will allow us to assess the impact of the project on cohort student outcomes relative to what those outcomes would have been in absence of GEAR UP. The evaluation plan also incorporates student surveys and qualitative data gathered from biennial focus groups. A school college-going culture assessment rounds out the mixed-methods evaluation. To ensure objectivity, THEC will partner with an external evaluator (e.g., a research firm or higher education institution and faculty researchers) which will be selected through State procurement processes.

THEC will manage all aspects of the evaluation, but GEAR UP TN sites are expected to participate in evaluation activities, such as surveys and focus groups, administer surveys every other year, and to provide data when it is requested. In addition, every GEAR UP TN service must be documented and entered in a data system. This data system will link the manually entered service participation with student demographic, academic and outcomes data to facilitate both the program evaluation and federal reporting. After the data system vendor is selected through state procurement we will host training on its use.

# GEAR UP TN Evaluation Plan (Continued)

## THEC's Role

THEC's data team provides guidance and oversight to each GEAR UP TN site on data collection and progress monitoring processes. Importantly, this team also supports sites by providing relevant data (eg. FAFSA completion, college-enrollment rates) to inform and guide local services. The state is responsible for ensuring federal compliance, coordinating data collection, and facilitating the program evaluation activities. In addition, the state monitors service implementation and corresponding data entry processes to ensure that services are appropriately documented, and data entry is complete, accurate, and non-duplicative. The central office also completes all aspects of the U.S. Department of Education's annual performance report (APR) due April 15th of each year. In addition, the central office supports the implementation of data-driven decision making, ensuring that robust services and academic interventions are targeted to the individual students most in need of specific interventions.

## Annual Performance Report

THEC is required to report annually to the U.S. Department of Education on April 15th. The APR is used to determine whether substantial progress has been made toward meeting objectives outlined by the project and the APR determines continuation of grant funding at the state and local level. The APR is also used to collect data on the performance of GEAR UP at the local level. The APR has extensive data reporting requirements. THEC will manage all aspects of its completion, but sites are expected to be responsive to questions and to be timely responding to data requests.

## Logic Model

The logic model below represents all aspects of the evaluation plan. The program evaluation will assess the extent to which the project meets its short-, mid-, and long-term goals. Furthermore, the logic model provides a comprehensive picture of the types of academic and outcomes data that will be collected.

# GEAR UP TN Logic Model

Inputs		Implementation			Outcomes and Impact		
Needs	Resources	Activities	Outputs	Short-term	Mid-term	Long-term	
<p>Students with low rates of college enrollment who are academically under-prepared</p> <p>Families lack knowledge of postsecondary education (PSE) options and financing</p> <p>Low performing schools with weak college-going cultures</p> <p>High poverty, rural communities with low educational attainment, few resources</p>	<p>Students, Families, and Schools desire and opportunity to develop college-going culture and identity; Full-time GU school-based site coordinator; Local steering committees, GU scholarships for students</p> <p><b>THEC</b> Personnel; technical assistance, GEAR UP funding from USDOE; research and evaluation findings</p> <p><b>Partners</b> Families, schools, postsecondary institutions, statewide resources and non-profit organizations</p>	<p><b>Aspirations &amp; Beliefs (Think)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counseling/advising/academic planning (College Planning Advisory Session model; College Student Coaching)* (CPP 3 and CPP 4)</li> <li>• Family activities (CPP 3)</li> <li>• Reconnect services for families</li> <li>• College visits</li> <li>• Job site visits/shadowing (CPP 3)</li> <li>• Focus groups/interviews and surveys</li> </ul> <p><b>Academic Preparation (Know)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand dual enrollment courses offered &amp; ↑ participation* (PE, CPP 4)</li> <li>• ACT preparation (CPP3)</li> <li>• Tutoring/homework assistance (CPP3)</li> <li>• Credit recovery programs (CPP 3)</li> <li>• Comprehensive mentoring (CPP 3)</li> </ul> <p><b>Knowledge &amp; Information (Act)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial aid counseling/advising, including hands-on FAFSA help*</li> <li>• Early postsecondary registration*</li> <li>• Career exploration (CPP 3)</li> <li>• Path to College Events</li> <li>• NEXT Guides (CPP 3)</li> </ul> <p><b>Fortitude &amp; Resilience (Go)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth mindset interventions/SEL skills* (CPP 3)</li> <li>• Transition plans</li> <li>• Summer melt interventions</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> yr college retention services</li> <li>• Professional development (CPP 3)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Students</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of students participating in GU services</li> <li>• Hours of participation</li> <li>• # of students taking EPSOs/dual enrollment</li> <li>• Course enrollment/completion</li> <li>• GPA</li> <li>• ACT scores</li> <li>• Absences</li> <li>• # FAFSA, scholarship, college applications</li> <li>• Student survey</li> </ul> <p><b>Families</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of family members participating in GU services</li> </ul> <p><b>Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of educators participating in PD</li> <li>• # of EPSOs offered</li> <li>• # community partnerships</li> <li>• Teacher postsecondary expectations for students</li> <li>• College-going culture survey</li> <li>• Focus groups/interviews</li> </ul>	<p>↑ Students passing Algebra 1 by the ninth grade (1.a)</p> <p>↑ <b>9<sup>th</sup> Grade GPA*</b></p> <p>↑ Students taking dual enrollment courses (4.b)</p> <p>↑ Students on-track to graduate from high school</p> <p>↑ Students taking ACT</p> <p>↑ Regular attendance</p> <p>↑ Student aspirations for PSE (4.a)</p> <p>↑ EPSOs/ dual enrollment options at GU schools</p> <p>↑ Communication to families</p> <p>↑ Students/ families engaging in GU activities (4.c)</p> <p>↑ Student/ family knowledge of PSE preparation/financing</p>	<p>↑ Students earning early college credit through dual enrollment (4.b)</p> <p>↑ Students taking 2 maths beyond Alg 1 by end of 12<sup>th</sup> grade</p> <p>↑ ACT Scores (PE)</p> <p>↑ Students with 3.0 cumulative GPA ( 4.d)</p> <p>↑ <b>Rates of FAFSA completion* (3.a)</b></p> <p>✓ Students identify as college-bound</p> <p>✓ Schools exhibit characteristics of a college-going culture (survey)</p> <p>✓ Students connect career goals with PSE requirements</p> <p>✓ Families expect PSE enrollment and success for their children</p> <p>✓ Schools adopt a growth mindset towards student achievement</p>	<p>↑ <b>High school graduation*</b> (PE, 2.a)</p> <p>↑ <b>Postsecondary enrollment*</b> (PE, 2.b)</p> <p>↑ <b>Postsecondary persistence*</b> (CPP 4, PE, 2.c)</p> <p>↑ Postsecondary completion</p> <p>↑ And sustain college-going culture at GU schools</p> <p>✓ Schools institutionalize the practice of assisting students and families with college process</p> <p>✓ Schools involve community partners in GU sustainability</p>	

## Objectives and Performance Measures

The GEAR UP grant competition requires applicants to detail the extent to which project performance measures are clearly specified and measurable. GEAR UP TN's project performance measures are shown below. They are aligned with the three federal GEAR UP objectives, federally required program measures, and the project-specific design approach (think, know, act, go).

<b>Federal GEAR UP Objective 1: Increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education for GEAR UP students</b>		
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Goal</b>
1a. The percentage of GEAR UP students who pass Algebra 1 or its equivalent by the end of ninth grade will increase ten percentage points by grant year 3 (GPRA 1)	69%	79%
<b>Federal GEAR UP Objective 2: Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education for GEAR UP students.</b>		
2a. The percentage of GEAR UP students who graduate from high school will increase by five percentage points over baseline by grant years 6 and 7 (GPRA 2)	90%	95%
2b. The percentage of GEAR UP students and former GEAR UP students who are enrolled at an IHE will increase twelve percentage points by grant years 6 and 7 (GPRA 4)	45%	57%
2c. The percentage of GEAR UP students and former GEAR UP students who enroll at an IHE and persist to the second year of postsecondary education will increase to a target of at least 68% by grant year 7 (GPRA 5)	60%	68%
<b>Federal GEAR UP Objective 3: Increase educational expectations and knowledge of postsecondary options, preparation and financing among GEAR UP students and their families.</b>		
3a. The percentage of GEAR UP students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid will increase by ten percentage points to reach an annual target of 74% (GPRA 3)	64%	74%
<b>Project Objective 4: (Project Design Rationale/ Theory of Change): Increase schools' college-going culture by implementing services guided by the four domains of college readiness.</b>		
4a. <i>Aspirations &amp; Beliefs (Think)</i> : The percentage of GEAR UP students who report they expect to pursue education or training after high school graduation will reach a target of 75% by senior year (Program-Specific Measure)	N/A	75%
4b. <i>Academic Preparation (Know)</i> : The percentage of GEAR UP students who take at least one dual enrollment course by the end of 12th grade will increase by twenty percentage points by grant years 6 and 7 (Program-Specific Measure)	34%	54%
4c. <i>Knowledge &amp; Information (Act)</i> : The percentage of GEAR UP students who participate in postsecondary readiness activities will reach an annual target of 90% (Program-Specific Measure)	N/A	90%
4d. <i>Fortitude &amp; Resilience (Go)</i> : The percentage of GEAR UP students who demonstrate self-regulation and motivation, as measured by achieving a final cumulative high school GPA of 3.0 or higher in grant years 6 and 7 (Program-Specific Measure)	60%	68%

# Data Collection Requirements

To meet the federal requirements related to evaluation and performance reporting, THEC will collect and manage a significant amount of data on GEAR UP TN participants, the services in which they participate, their academic progress, and their postsecondary and workforce outcomes.

To the extent possible, THEC will directly access data through the state's longitudinal data system (also known as the TN DATA system). Any data that is not available in the TN DATA system must be provided by the participating school or district. Data sharing agreements are included in the site contracts to permit data sharing. THEC will provide access to a State-approved secure file sharing site for this purpose.

## Required Data Elements.

Each GEAR UP TN site is responsible for providing THEC with certain regularly requested data files, the specifics of which are bulleted below. Accessing and/or requesting this data on the local level is the responsibility of the site coordinator. Many site coordinators have direct access to the local student information system and can pull the needed reports themselves, while others will work with district data contacts who pull the data for them. Site Coordinators are expected to review the data for accuracy and completion prior to submitting it to THEC. Templates outlining the required file format will be provided

## Data that sites will provide to THEC:

- Student enrollment rosters, including dates of attendance and withdrawals, collected twice annually. This data is available in the TN DATA system but it is significantly delayed, necessitating LEAs to provide this information. We typically ask for student enrollment rosters once per semester.
- Directory information for teachers of GEAR UP TN students, including name, subject taught, and contact information. This is requested once annually, alongside student enrollment rosters in the fall.
- Transcript data, including course grades, cumulative and term GPA, and dual enrollment participation. This is requested annually at the conclusion of the academic year.
- Student service participation, college applications and acceptances. This will be entered into the data system on an ongoing basis.
- Any data from the list below that is not available in the TN DATA system.

THEC will provide you with the following student-level data to inform delivery of student services:

- TN Promise application completion and eligibility status;
- FAFSA filing information, including application data, completion status, and verification selection status;
- Postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion outcomes; and,
- Any other data that is determined to be necessary for project implementation, such as dual enrollment grant award information.

## Data Collection Requirements (Continued)

Data that THEC will pull directly from the TN DATA system:

- Full directory information (student first, middle, and last name, date of birth, address, student and parent contact information).
- Student State ID.
- Social Security Number (SSN).
- Dates of enrollment, including withdrawal reasons, year entered 9th grade, and expected graduation year.
- Demographic background, including race/ethnicity and gender.
- English Language Learner (ELL) status.
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) status.
- Economically disadvantaged status.
- Free or reduced-price lunch eligibility.
- Homelessness status (McKinney-Vento).
- Foster care status.
- Absences and average daily attendance.
- ACT composite and subject area scores.
- TN Ready and End of Course state standardized test scores, including proficiency level and raw score.
- High school graduation status, including diploma type and graduation date.
- Any other data that is required to fulfill the United States Department of Education (“USDOE”) reporting requirements, which may change over the life of the grant.

# The Site Coordinator's Data Collection Responsibilities

## Weekly

- Maintain accurate service documentation records (see next page).
- Enter service participation into the data system using the GEAR UP TN Service Definitions.
- Review and update student enrollment records in the data system.
- Add newly enrolled students to the data system.
- End enrollment for students who have left your schools (do not delete). Assign an end reason and date.

## Monthly

- Submit the MAP to your regional director for approval.
- Submit service documentation records from the previous month to THEC.
- Ensure all services from the previous month's MAP are completely entered into the data system and that they match the submitted documentation.

## Annually, Fall

- Submit student enrollment rosters to THEC upon request.
- Submit educator rosters, if needed, to THEC.
- In the data system, identify the college students (the previous year's priority seniors) who are attending an institution of higher education so that they can receive services in their first year of college.

## Annually, Spring

- Submit student enrollment rosters to the THEC upon request.
- Submit the academic year's transcript data to THEC upon request, typically by June 15th.
- Assist THEC in obtaining any additional data items that are needed to complete the Annual Performance Report or for the third-party evaluation.

## Every Other Year or As Needed

- Administer student surveys in partnership with the evaluator.
- Participate in focus groups and/or interviews conducted by the external evaluator.
- Provide assistance with identifying students, family members, and/or school staff to participate in focus groups and/or interviews conducted by the evaluator.
- Collaborate with THEC staff to administer a college-going culture assessment.

# Service Documentation

All GEAR UP TN services provided to students, families, and educators must have supporting documentation – this is a federal requirement. For each GEAR UP TN service provided, there must be a record of each participant, the duration of the service, and the date the service occurred. We use either sign-in sheets or school attendance rosters, along with a cover sheet detailing the service, as the supporting documentation to meet this federal requirement. Site coordinators must maintain all hard copy documentation for the duration of the grant. Monthly data audits will be performed to ensure documentation matches the service participation data entered into the data system. Lack of proper documentation is a common audit finding and these requirements are in place both to ensure accurate data entry and to protect local school systems in the event of a federal audit. Service sign-in sheets are included, and data collection and reporting procedures are further explained in the following section.

## What Does NOT Require documentation?

In general, if an activity does not get entered in the data system, we would not expect documentation. Only services provided directly to students, family members, and educator professional development get entered into the data system. Below are some general guidelines:

- Not everything we do is documentable. If a service is not documentable then we do not enter in the data system. Examples may include brief hallway conversations and some asynchronous virtual services (i.e., emailing a video without the ability to track who viewed it).
- Not everything we do is a direct student/family service. Grant administrative requirements are an example of a requirement that does not get entered into the data system. Examples include survey administration, leading the steering committee, etc. These are not entered into the data system and therefore would not require documentation.
- Services open to students who are not a part of the cohorts or priority students. College Signing Day is an example of a service that is often attended by an entire school. Only documentation for cohort students and priority students (both 12th grade priority seniors and college priority students) should be documented and entered into the data system.

## In-Person Service Documentation Guidelines

### **Option 1: Sign-in Sheets**

Must use THEC provided sign-in sheets and logs.

### **Option 2: Attendance Rosters**

- Intended for use at larger events, such as College Signing Day, where the entire grade-level participates.
- Must include a THEC provided cover sheet.

# Service Documentation

## Virtual Service Documentation Guidelines

### **Synchronous virtual services (live)**

- If the service is provided through a platform that has a registration list or a participant log, the participant log may be printed and stored in the documentation notebook along with a service information cover sheet.
- If there is no participant log options include asking participants to raise a hand, comment with their names, and to include a survey or polling question to obtain participant information.
- Please include a cover sheet with the service information.

### **Asynchronous virtual services (pre-recorded and viewed on participants' own time)**

- There must be documentation of participation for the service to be entered into the data system.
- Documentation through Smore or a similar technology can identify recipients who open a link and provide proof of participation.
- If we cannot document who views an asynchronous service than it would not be entered into the data system.

## Documentation Best Practices

- Organize sign-in/cover sheets by the date the service was provided. This makes it easy for regional directors (or auditors) to locate documentation for services provided.
- Use consistent labeling. The service category, subcategory, service name and date located on your sign-in/cover sheets, MAP, and data entries should be the same.
- Keep up with documentation and service data entry on a weekly basis.
- Only documentation of service participation for cohort and priority students, parents, and educators should be documented. If a service is entered into the data system, there must be documentation.

# GEAR UP TN Student Service Definitions

## College Visit/College Student Shadowing

College visit/college student shadowing services take place on college campuses.

- A college visit is a physical visit to a college campus by a student facilitated/supervised/ led by GEAR UP TN staff, teachers, college representatives, or other school staff. College visits should include an official tour, presentation(s) by admissions, financial aid, academic departments, athletics, student affairs, residence life, multicultural affairs, or other college departments.
- College student shadowing is one-on-one experience in which a middle or high school student spends a day on a college campus with an undergraduate student seeing typical college life.
- Virtual college visits include services that are provided via remote access through the internet or other means. Virtual college visits must be facilitated/supervised/led by GEAR UP TN staff, teachers, or other school staff and include the same elements as a physical college visit.

NOTE: Data entry needs to indicate whether college visit services are “in-person” or “virtual,” as well as the name and/or type of college visited, i.e., 2- or 4-year college.

NOTE: College fairs should be entered under the Student Workshop category.

## Comprehensive Mentoring

Comprehensive mentoring services are provided when GEAR UP TN staff, teachers, or other school staff identifies students who would benefit from an ongoing supportive relationship with a trained, caring adult or older student, i.e., “mentor.” Mentors meet regularly with their assigned student(s). Meetings may be on or off campus and either during or outside of the school day. Typical issues addressed during mentoring meetings include academic, social, organization or life skill development. Per the 2008 HEOA, comprehensive mentoring must provide students with financial aid information, and encourage students to stay in school, enroll in rigorous and challenging coursework, apply for postsecondary education, and, if applicable, the GEAR UP scholarship.

**Virtual comprehensive mentoring** includes services that are provided via remote access through the internet or other means.

Mentoring Programs may include:

- Traditional mentoring programs that match one youth and one adult.
- Group mentoring that links one adult with a small group of young people.
- Team mentoring that involves several adults working with small groups of young people, ideally with a ratio of no more than four youth to one adult.
- Peer mentoring that connects caring youth with other adolescents.
- E-mentoring that functions via email and the internet.

NOTE: Data entry needs to indicate whether mentoring is “in-person” or “virtual.”

NOTE: Data entry needs to indicate whether mentoring is provided by a College Mentor Corps organization.

## Counseling/Advising/Academic Planning/Career Counseling

Counseling/advising/academic planning/career counseling services span a spectrum of activities with individual students or small groups of students. Services are defined as follows:

- Counseling services discuss personal growth issues with students, such as decision making, problem solving, goal setting, attendance, behavior concerns, or family issues.
- Advising provides assistance on course selection (secondary or postsecondary), college and/or career choices, or college and/or career planning.
- Academic planning provides assistance on coursework selection, course of study choices, college major selection, assessment advising or interpretation of scores, or assistance with placement tests.

- Career counseling provides assistance about career choices, career planning, internships, or career interests.
- Virtual counseling/advising/academic planning/career counseling includes services that are provided via remote access through the internet or other means.

NOTE: Data entry needs to indicate whether counseling/advising/academic planning/career counseling services are “in-person” or “virtual.”

## Educational Field Trips

Educational field trips are services during which students leave their school to travel to another location and include an academic component that is linked to classroom activities. Examples would include a science demonstration on a college campus (the purpose of the event was the science demonstration not a college visit), a class trip to attend a science or history museum linked to curriculum, academic competitions, cultural experiences such as performing arts, museums, or similar activity, and field trips that complement and enhance existing curriculum in key content areas. Educational field trips should be recorded by subject area (Mathematics, English/Reading, Science, Other).

## Financial Aid Counseling/Advising

Financial aid counseling/advising services assist students in understanding and navigating the complexities of financial aid, including providing hands-on assistance with the FAFSA and scholarship applications, presentations on financial aid or literacy, using financial aid or literacy curriculum, and the benefits and how-tos of participation in college savings plans.

**Virtual financial aid/counseling/advising** includes services that are provided via remote access through the internet or other means.

NOTE: Data entry needs to indicate whether financial aid counseling/advising is “in-person” or “virtual.”

## Job Site Visit/Job Shadowing

Job site visit/job shadowing services offer students exposure to the workplace in an occupational area of interest and reinforces the link between classroom learning, work requirements, and the need for postsecondary education. Students witness the work environment, employability and occupational skills in practice, the value of professional training, and potential career options.

- Job site visit is a physical visit to a local business or work environment and facilitated/ supervised/ led by GEAR UP staff, teachers, or other school staff. Visits should include visits to local businesses, employers, and agencies to explore different professions or career selections and can be followed by job shadowing.
- Job shadowing is one-on-one experience in which a middle or high school student spends a day at a business or work environment with an employee seeing typical job duties.
- Virtual job site visit includes services that are provided via remote access through the internet or other means. Virtual job site visits must be facilitated/supervised/led by GEAR UP staff, teachers, or school staff and include the same elements as a physical job visit.

NOTE: Data entry needs to indicate whether job site visit services are “in-person” or “virtual.”

## Student Workshops

Student Workshops are services that include interactive informational classroom-level or large- or small-group sessions that involve hands-on experience for each student in the workshop. Workshops are offered to groups of students on topics like secondary school success and college awareness, and general elements of college readiness such as study skills, self-monitoring, goal setting, time management, and problem-solving. This includes guest speakers that motivate students and highlight careers. Workshops are informational in nature and are not intended to provide direct counseling or guidance to individual or small groups of students. Workshops should be recorded by subject area.

College and career fairs should be recorded here.

**Virtual student workshops** include services that are provided via remote access through the internet or other means.

NOTE: Data entry needs to indicate whether workshops are “in-person” or “virtual.”

NOTE: Report college and career fairs in this section.

### Summer Programs

NOTE: Summer programs can also include non-school year services for year-round schools. Summer programs are services that include an experience over one or multiple days during the summer (or other non-school year time, i.e., for year-round schools). Summer programs could be a statewide GEAR UP TN summer camp, a local summer camp funded by GEAR UP TN, or a residential GEAR UP TN program hosted by a college/university/community organization, or another camp attended by a GEAR UP TN student that supports the GEAR UP TN mission. These programs include academic enrichment, college preparatory programs/camp experience, credit recovery, and/or remediation programs.

NOTE: Data entry needs to indicate whether summer programs are providing services for “academic enrichment” or “remedial services.” In addition, summer programs may include other services that should be recorded as such, i.e., college visit.

### Tutoring/Homework Assistance

Tutoring/homework assistance services provide additional academic instruction designed to increase the academic achievement of students. Tutoring can occur one-on-one or in small groups before school, during school, after school, during study or lunch breaks, or on weekends and can be provided by GEAR UP TN staff, hired tutors, teachers, trained peers, and/or volunteers. Tutoring should be recorded by subject area (Mathematics, English/Reading, Science, Other).

**Virtual tutoring/homework assistance** services include services that are provided via remote access through the internet or other means.

NOTE: Data entry needs to indicate whether tutoring is “in-person” or “virtual.”

# GEAR UP TN Family/Parent Service Definitions

## Family Events

Family events are services in which parents or families participate. These services involve GEAR UP TN students and their families/guardians or just their parents/ guardians. Family events include GEAR UP TN activities that recognize the role of families in student success and are not defined under a previous category.

## Parent/Family College Visit

College visit services take place on college campuses. A physical visit to a college campus by a parent/guardian, with or without a student, facilitated/supervised/led by GEAR UP staff, teachers, college representatives, or other school staff. The primary objective of the event would be to conduct a college visit. The visit should include an official tour, presentation(s) by admissions, academic departments, athletics, student affairs, residence life, multicultural affairs, or other college departments.

**Virtual college visit** services include services that are provided via remote access through the internet or other means. Virtual college visits must be facilitated/ supervised/led by GEAR UP staff, teachers, or other school staff and include the same elements as a physical college visit.

NOTE: Data entry needs to indicate whether college visit services are “in-person” or “virtual,” as well as the name and/or type of college visited, i.e., 2- or 4-year college.

## Parent/Family Counseling/Advising

Counseling/advising services span a spectrum of activities that can include one-on- one or small group advising for parents/guardians/adult family members designed to meet the specific needs of the individuals engaged in the activity. These services include when a parent/guardian or adult family member meets with the GEAR UP school staff or counselor, with or without a student, to discuss the student’s academic goals, college plans, school progress, etc.

- Counseling includes meeting with parents/guardians to discuss student’s personal growth issues such as decision making, goal setting, behavior concerns, family issues, home visits, etc.
- Advising provides individual assistance to parents/guardians on their student’s college choices, college planning, financial aid planning, etc.

## Parent/Family Workshops of College Prep/Financial Aid

Workshops of college prep/financial aid services include a parent/guardian or adult family member’s attendance with or without their child(ren) at a workshop that demonstrates how to assist their student with college preparation or financial aid information. These services include informational sessions for parents focusing on college entrance requirements and financial aid opportunities.

**Virtual parent/family workshops** include services that are provided via remote access through the internet or other means.

NOTE: Data entry needs to indicate whether workshops are “in-person” or “virtual.”

## Postsecondary Family Engagement

A GEAR UP family member, for the purposes of CCREC, comprises a variety of roles related to the GEAR UP student, including parents, guardians, and other adult family members.

Family engagement services or activities involve family members supporting students’ needs (such as social, financial, and/or academic needs) during the college transition and the first year as a college

student. Examples include family workshops and orientations, GEAR UP family move-in weekend events, or other GEAR UP family events during the summer and/or first year of postsecondary education. All family member participation will fall under the category of family engagement.

## **GEAR UP TN Student Service Postsecondary Definitions**

### **Postsecondary Transition Services**

Services or activities to support students as they transition from high school to postsecondary education, with a transition timeframe from the summer after completing high school through the first fall of college enrollment. Examples include orientation programs, bridge programs, summer melt, senior launch activities, and workshops on navigating college systems, developing pathways to completion, learning college terminology, self-efficacy, and understanding expectations of college life. This also includes reengagement efforts for unenrolled students and mitigating barriers to college.

### **Postsecondary Academic Advising & Support**

Services or activities designed to support students in achieving academic success in postsecondary education. Academic advising sessions are intended for individual or small groups of students in selecting courses, developing academic plans and career pathways, and accessing academic support services. This also includes helping students understand how to review course schedules, their syllabus, and their degree plan; identify summer courses and add/drop periods, navigate the college website, and connect students with other student support programs that can assist them academically. Academic support may include tutoring, providing resources for improving study habits, and addressing academic challenges.

### **Postsecondary Social Integration**

Services or activities to help students build connections within their campus communities and foster a sense of belonging. These include encouraging participation in student organizations, campus clubs, networking events, campus mentoring programs, and cultural or social events. This also includes nonacademic student advising, time management, goal and priority setting, familiarizing students with campus support and community resources, and connecting students to mental health centers.

### **Postsecondary Financial Support**

Services or activities designed to directly support students in managing the financial aspects of college, including workshops on scholarships, FAFSA, and money management; scholarship and FAFSA completion assistance; financial literacy workshops; and financial aid counseling. This also includes assisting students in accessing campus resources such as work-study, campus student services, on-campus jobs, food pantries, and campus emergency funds. Also, phone calls, emails, and text nudges to complete financial aid and scholarship applications, and to provide reminders on these topics.

# GEAR UP TN Instructor Professional Development Service Definitions

## Conference

Conferences include conferences hosted by NCCEP, NCAN, TCASN, GEAR UP or others that can be directly tied back to the three measures defined by the U.S. Department of Education that assist in meeting the goals and objectives set by GEAR UP TN.

## Meeting

Meetings provide information about the GEAR UP TN program and implementation to teachers, counselors, or administrators. This includes meetings focused on planning and program development.

## Training

Trainings deliver instruction to improve practice provided through GEAR UP TN. Trainings may include topics such as Common Core, the GEAR UP TN data system, and financial literacy and can be directly tied back to the three measures defined by the USDOE that assist in obtaining the goals and objectives set by GEAR UP TN.

## Other

Please contact the GEAR UP TN central office prior to selecting the "Other" category. This category will only be used in unique circumstances.



# **GEAR UP TN**

**POWERED BY THEC**

# 5

## **EXPENDITURES & REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES**

GEAR UP TN Funding Regulations  
Allowable Costs  
Common GEAR UP Costs  
Indirect Costs  
Guidelines for Reimbursement  
Audits

# GEAR UP TN Funding Regulations

The federal policies that govern GEAR UP are diverse and sometimes confusing. You may find inconsistencies that come from government and agency policies trying to accommodate many unique grant programs. In GEAR UP, you are subject to a number of regulatory sources. When you come across conflicts or inconsistencies between the sources, generally you should begin with the GEAR UP statute, and then move down the hierarchy for answers. The following list provides a brief description of each of the major policy sources.

## Statute

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

For more information: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/gearup-statute.pdf>

## Program Regulations

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

## EDGAR

The Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) set broad administrative policies that impact nearly all grant programs funded at the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). The regulations are published in Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The pertinent sections of EDGAR to your grant administration are 34 CFR parts 74, 75, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97, 98, and 99. For more information: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.html>

The Office of Management and Budget also streamlined the federal government’s guidance on Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for federal awards. These can be found at 2 CFR Part 200. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/grants/resources/uniform-guidance>

## GEAR UP Program Regulations

Whereas EDGAR sets broad agency-wide policies, the GEAR UP program regulations address the very unique administrative matters associated with GEAR UP. GEAR UP program regulations are published in 34 CFR parts 694.

For more information: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-694>

## OMB Circulars

The circulars are developed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and provide federal agencies with instructions and guidance on a wide variety of administrative issues of interest to the executive branch. As guidance documents, they tend to be revised every few years. The OMB Circulars will affect your day-to-day decision-making because EDGAR cites specific OMB Circulars as regulation. Thus, many of the discussions in the grant administration world will revolve around the circulars, as they define cost principles, administrative requirements, and audits. Common circulars are organized by their purpose and audience and are addressed by their circular number.

In 2013, the federal OMB issued the Super Circular in the form of final regulations officially titled “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.” The Super Circular supersedes and streamlines requirements from the following OMB Circulars applicable to the administration, use and audit of federal grant funds by nonprofit organizations, state, local and tribal governments, and colleges and universities:

- A-87 Revised (Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments)
- A-21 (Cost Principles for Educational Institutions)
- A-110 Revised (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and Other Non-Profits)
- A-102 (Grants and Cooperative Agreements with State and Local Governments)
- A-89 Revised (Federal Domestic Assistance Program Information)
- A-133 (Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations)
- A-50 (Audit Follow-Up)

The Super Circular is divided into six parts:

- Subpart A—Acronyms and Definitions;
- Subpart B—General Provisions;
- Subpart C—Pre-Federal Award Requirements and Contents of Federal Awards;
- Subpart D—Post-Federal Award Requirements;
- Subpart E—Cost Principles; and
- Subpart F—Audit Requirements

In addition to understanding federal requirements, you are expected to follow the policies of the fiscal agent of the grant, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC). THEC has additional policies it must follow to comply with state and federal law. It is important to rely on GEAR UP TN staff when the federal regulations aren’t clear on an issue. You also must follow GEAR UP TN reporting guidelines and budget categories.

## Time and Effort

Federal regulations require that every GEAR UP staff member whose salary is supported in full or in part needs to document the time, effort and activities during any given pay period.

**Time and Effort forms must be completed and submitted monthly when requesting reimbursements for salary.**

**Site Coordinators who work 100% of their time on GEAR UP can have Time and Effort certified and reported by the local Project Director, on a blanket Time & Effort certification. Staff who do not work 100% of their time on GEAR UP are required to complete a Personnel Activity Report (PAR) which requires that each working cost objective as a percentage and totaling 100% of their workload.**

**An example of a Blanket Certification and PAR report meeting the time and effort requirement is included here.**



# Allowable Costs

Sound fiscal GEAR UP administration begins with understanding what types of expenses can be paid for with federal funds. Allowable costs are those expenses that are specifically permitted (or not explicitly prohibited) by the laws, regulations, principles and standards issued by the USDOE and other authoritative sources. <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E>

To help you decide if costs are allowable or not, ask if the expense is:

- **Reasonable and necessary:** reflecting an action that a prudent person would take and generally recognized as necessary for the organization to accomplish a work plan activity, guided by established institutional policies and practices.
- **Allocable:** applied in proportion to relative benefits, as approximated through reasonable methods.
- **Allowable:** connected to the required or permissible services of the federal program.
- **Consistent:** treating anything not allowed by the partner organization as not allowed by GEAR UP.
- **Compliant:** follows limitations and exclusions as stated in federal cost principles, these guidelines, and the annual subcontract/amendment.

## Supplement but Not Supplant

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

### Scenarios:

- For the last five years, your school has paid for a career exploration software license. This year, the school needs new PE equipment, so you have been asked to pay for the software license with GEAR UP funds to free up funding for PE equipment. This is supplanting and is not allowed.
- For the last several years, your school has annually purchased \$500 of new library books. This year you have been asked to use GEAR UP funds to pay for the books. This is supplanting and is not allowed.
- For the last two years, your school has been unable to purchase any curriculum enhancement materials for math classes, including an essential software package, because of budget cuts. You have been asked to purchase this software with GEAR UP funds this year. This is not supplanting and is allowed - because without GEAR UP funding, your school would not be able to make this purchase.

(Sources: GEAR UP Statute, EDGAR, OMB Circular A-21, OMB Circular A-87)

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

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

## Advertising and Public Relations Costs: **Generally Unallowable**

The OMB cost principles define advertising costs as the expenses associated with the costs of advertising media (magazines, newspapers, radio and television, direct mail, exhibits, electronic or computer communication) and associated administrative costs.

### **For GEAR UP, reasonable advertising costs are allowable when:**

1. Recruiting and advertising for vacant GEAR UP staff positions in a manner that is acceptable and standard for the hiring entity. The term public relations is defined as activities dedicated to maintaining the image of the institution/governmental agency or maintaining or promoting understanding and favorable relations with the community or public at large or any segment of the public.

### **For GEAR UP, public relations costs are potentially allowable when:**

1. The activity is part of your approved application.
2. You are communicating with the public and press pertaining to specific activities or accomplishments which result from your grant performance (these costs are considered necessary as part of the outreach effort for the sponsored agreement).
3. You are conducting general liaison with news media and government public relations officers, to the extent that such activities are limited to communication and liaison necessary to keep the public informed on matters of public concern.

## Advisory Councils: **Allowable**

Costs incurred by advisory councils or committees are allowable as a direct cost when authorized by the awarding agency, or as an indirect cost where allocable to the GEAR UP award.

## Alcoholic Beverages: **Unallowable**

## Commencement and Convocation Costs: **Unallowable**

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

## Communication Costs: **Allowable**

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

## Compensation (Salaries, Wages & Fringe Benefits): **Allowable**

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

## Consultants & Contracts: **Allowable**

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

## Providing Donations and Contributions: **Unallowable**

Contributions or donations (including cash, property, and services) are unallowable costs. GEAR UP may receive donations, contributions, or services.

### Entertainment Costs: **Unallowable**

Costs of entertainment, including amusement, diversion, and social activities and any costs directly associated with such activities (such as tickets to shows or sports events, recreational activities such as swimming, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, and gratuities) are unallowable. Be sure to distinguish these unallowable expenses from similarly worded and allowable student activities, meetings, and conferences that are approved as part of your grant agreement.

### Equipment: **Allowable**

Equipment means an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year, and, for GEAR UP accounting purposes, has a **per-unit cost equal to or greater than \$5,000**. **Grantees must obtain approval from the GEAR UP TN central office prior to purchasing any item or set of items costing \$1,000 or more.** The title (documented ownership) of the equipment vests in the grantee and may be used for other projects as long as that use does not interfere with the terms of the grant award.

### Fines and Penalties: **Unallowable, with Exceptions**

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

### Fund Raising: **Unallowable**

Costs of organized fund raising are not allowed.

### Goods or Services for Personal Use: **Unallowable**

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

### Lobbying: **Generally Unallowable, with Exceptions**

Federal funds cannot be used to:

- Influence the outcome of a referendum, initiative, or similar procedure, through in-kind or cash contributions, endorsements, publicity, or similar activity.
- Support a political party, campaign, or political action committee.
- Influence the introduction, enactment, or modification of state or federal legislation through direct or grassroots lobbying.

#### **However, there are a few exceptions, including:**

- Technical and factual presentations on topics directly related to the performance of a grant, contract, or other agreement.
- Efforts to influence state legislation in order to directly reduce the cost, or to avoid material impairment of the institution's authority to perform the grant, contract, or other agreement.
- Any activity specifically authorized by statute to be undertaken with funds from the grant, contract, or other agreement.

## Memberships, Subscriptions, and Professional Activity Costs: Allowable, with Exceptions

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

Please note that the circulars make the following exceptions:

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

## Meetings and Conferences: Allowable

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

## Publications and Printing: Allowable

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

## Rental Cost of Buildings and Equipment: Allowable

With stipulations, rental costs are allowable to the extent that the rates are reasonable in light of such factors as: (1) rental costs of comparable property, if any; (2) market conditions in the area; (3) alternatives available; and, (4) the type, life expectancy, condition, and value of the property leased. Rental arrangements should be reviewed periodically to determine if circumstances have changed and other options are available.

## Severance Pay: Allowable

Costs of severance pay for personnel whose services have been terminated are allowable only to the extent that such payments are required by law, by employer-employee agreement, by established policy that constitutes in effect an implied agreement on the institution's part, or by circumstances of the particular employment.

## Student Activity Costs: Generally Unallowable, with Exceptions

Costs incurred for intramural activities, student publications, student clubs, and other student activities, are unallowable, unless specifically provided for in the grant agreement and approved by the GEAR UP TN central office.

## Supplies: Allowable

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

## Travel Costs: Allowable

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

Travel costs also may be incurred in relation to local events for students, parents or professionals participating in programs authorized by the GEAR UP statute. Tennessee Higher Education Commission rules and policies regarding travel apply.

# Common GEAR UP Costs

The rate tables outlined below are subject to approval from the U.S. Department of Education.

## Site Coordinator Salary

In year three, GEAR UP will pay site coordinators salary with no cap, aside from what is feasible within the contracted budget. However, be aware that in year four, each contract will require the subrecipient to match a minimum of 25% on one site coordinator’s salary and the match will increase an additional 25% each year until 100% of one site coordinator’s salary is paid by the subrecipient.

## Allowable Incentives

Clothing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Items w/ GEAR UP TN or college message</li> <li>• Any printing, setup, and delivery charges must be included.</li> </ul>	Up to \$20 each	Students, staff, chaperones to wear for field trips, school events, special programs, community service and other events to promote GEAR UP TN, teamwork, and safety. <small>*All designs must be submitted using the t-shirt approval form.</small>
Pencil/Pens	Up to \$1 each	Student reward or incentive
Stickers	Up to \$0.50 each	Student reward or incentive
Backpacks	Up to \$20 each	Student reward or incentive
Coffee Mugs	Up to \$7 each	Appreciation token for volunteers/ staff
Bags w/ GEAR UP TN or college message	Up to \$10 each	Student reward or incentive
General Supplies (binders, folders, paper, bookmarks, highlighters, lanyards, markers, candy, and other supplies)	Up to \$25 per student per year	Student reward or incentive
Career or educational books	Up to \$25 each	Student reward or incentive
Decorations for events (flowers, centerpieces, balloons)	Up to \$50 per event	For GEAR UP TN events only
Candy	Up to \$2 each	Student reward or incentive
Educational Games	Up to \$25 each	Student reward or incentive
Flash Drives	Up to \$15 each	Student reward or incentive

Gift cards of any kind cannot be purchased with GEAR UP funds.

NOTE: All GEAR UP TN t-shirt designs must be submitted to the Coordinator of College Access Communications for design approval.

## Meal, Beverage, and Snack Allowance

Food and beverages may be offered to participants only in conjunction with GEAR UP TN training, workshops, and structured activities/services where the participants are receiving GEAR UP TN information. Use the following guidelines when planning to provide food for a GEAR UP TN event.

Description	Amount	Purpose
Meals	Up to \$15 per student, parent, or staff	Family/parent night event
Meals	Up to \$15 per student per meal	Field trips, college visits, test taking
Snacks	Up to \$5 per student per day	Field trips, college visits, after school programs
Coffee and light refreshments or light meals (e.g., fruit, bagels, donuts, muffins, cookies, or crackers and cheese)	Up to \$7 per person per event	Steering committee meetings, volunteer meetings, family events, faculty meetings

## Student Classes, Camps, College Credit

GEAR UP TN allows expenses related to dual credit options, credit recovery, student camps and placement tests. Use the following guidelines when planning for these expenses.

Description	Allowability	Purpose
College classes, online classes for credit retrieval, AP test costs or similar expenses, including required materials associated with such courses	Allowable Request pre-approval	Academic support or enrichment
Individual student camps, on a college campus	Allowable Request pre-approval	Field trips, college visits, test taking
SAT or ACT tests	Published amount and allowable only if student is not eligible for a waiver	Pre-college tests

## Indirect Costs

Consistent with section 76.563 – 76.569 of EDGAR, all grant recipients are limited to a maximum indirect cost rate of eight percent of a modified total direct cost base or the amount permitted by its negotiated restricted indirect cost rate agreement, whichever is less. This rule applies to grantees under programs with a statutory requirement prohibiting the use of Federal funds to supplant non- Federal funds, and to the subgrantees under these programs. GEAR UP legislation contains a requirement prohibiting the use of GEAR UP funds for supplanting. As outlined in section 76.564 of EDGAR, sites must use the restricted indirect cost rate when developing their budget. Indirect Costs are costs incurred that cannot be directly traced back to the grant. These costs do not replace grant funds, but they supplement grant funds. For example, if there is a specific GEAR UP event happening, however, there is a cleaning crew that needs to be paid as a result of this event, then the charges for this cleaning crew can be accounted for as an indirect cost.

Keep in mind, indirect costs cannot exceed 8% of total annual budget ( $\$100,000$  total budget  $\times$  8% =  $\$8,000$  indirect cost budget). Each site must maintain a copy of their signed indirect cost certification received from the TN Dept of Education. This certification for the upcoming school year must be submitted with the June Reimbursement Request. This allows time for any necessary corrections or updates to take place prior to July 1st.

## Restricted Indirect Cost Rate for GEAR UP TN Sites

My district is \_\_\_\_\_.

My district's 2026-27 indirect cost rate is \_\_\_\_%.

**Please note:** the indirect cost rates change annually.

# Guidelines for Reimbursement

## Reimbursement Overview

Subrecipients receive GEAR UP funds on a claim reimbursement basis. This means that the subrecipient must spend local funds on GEAR UP activities and then request reimbursement. All invoices and costs must be paid in advance of requesting reimbursement. Claim reimbursements are submitted on a monthly basis unless other arrangements have been approved. **These requests are due to your regional director and Emily Curtis by the 15th of the month following the expenditure.** Once a reimbursement claim has been submitted and approved, the THEC accounting office processes the claim through the state's accounting system (Edison). When the claim has processed through Edison, an electronic transfer to the subrecipient is made.

## \$1,000 or Above Purchase Request

Any purchase of \$1,000 or above, including any invoice, event, or activity over \$1,000 (but excluding budgeted salaries), requires pre-approval from THEC. However, keep your regional director informed of all upcoming events, activities, and expenses. Invoices must not be split into separate invoices to avoid reaching the \$1,000 threshold. \$1,000 or Above Purchase Request forms must be submitted with the corresponding Monthly Activity Report (MAP). **This form must be sent to your GEAR UP TN Regional Director for approval.**

***An example of the \$1,000 or Above Purchase Request Form is included both here and in the Forms section.***

**Please note:** For reimbursement requests to be processed, your regional director must have received and approved the corresponding Monthly Activity Report (MAP) and your documentation for the previous month must be complete.



## \$1,000 or Above Purchase Request

**Directions:** GEAR UP TN sites must receive prior approval for any purchase of \$1,000 or above. \$1,000 or Above Purchase Requests must be submitted along with the Monthly Activity Plan (MAP) by the 15th of the month. Upon approval, the GEAR UP TN central office will send a signed copy of the form back to the GEAR UP TN Site's Project Director. Sites should include a copy of the **approved** \$1,000 or Above Purchase Request along with any reimbursement request containing an expense meeting or exceeding \$1,000.

**Site:** \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Detailed Description of Item	Qty.	Price	Total
				\$ -
				\$ -
				\$ -
				\$ -
				\$ -
				\$ -
<b>Grand Total</b>				\$ -

**Purpose:** Include 1) Purpose of purchase and 2) GEAR UP TN Goal and Objective addressed

**Contract Budget Line Item(s):** (supplies, equipment, etc.)

**Approvals**

GEAR UP TN Site Project Director Name	GEAR UP TN Site Project Director Signature	Date
GEAR UP TN Regional Director Name	GEAR UP TN Regional Director Signature	Date
State GEAR UP TN Grant Director Name	State GEAR UP TN Grant Director Signature	Date

## \$5,000 or Above Purchase Request

Any purchase of \$5,000 or above, excluding budgeted salaries, not only necessitates the submission of the \$1,000 or Above Purchase Request, as outlined above, but also requires a detailed memo outlining the following:

1. A brief explanation of how the purchase will assist the site in meeting GEAR UP TN goals and objectives,
2. A detailed narrative of how any programs or items purchased will be implemented (i.e., how are students being targeted to use equipment purchased, how are teachers integrating software into their instruction, etc.),
3. A brief narrative of how the purchase will be maintained or sustained over time.

\$5,000 or Above Purchase Requests and supporting materials must be submitted with the corresponding Monthly Activity Report (MAP). Approval by the GEAR UP TN Regional Director and Project Director is also required.

## GEAR UP TN Reimbursement Process

There are three parts required for monthly GEAR UP TN reimbursements: the Reimbursement Request, the Expenditure Detail Form, and the required backup documentation.

If you have questions, or would like assistance, please contact Emily Curtis at [emily.curtis@tn.gov](mailto:emily.curtis@tn.gov) or 615-946-7565.

### Step 1 - Filling Out the Expenditure Detail Form:

Salaries, Benefits, and Taxes Section of the Expenditure Detail Form:

1. In the "Vendor Name – Who Was Paid?" column, type the names of the staff that were paid – each staff member gets their own line.
2. In the "Purpose or Reason for Expenditure" column, type why that staff member is getting paid with GEAR UP funds.
  - a. Regular GEAR UP TN staff, including tutors: In the space provided, type the person's GEAR UP TN title.
  - b. Substitutes: In the space provided, type who that person subbed for, what day(s) they subbed, and what event occurred that required a substitute.
  - c. Other: In the space provided, type what that staff person did, what event occurred that required their work, what day(s) they worked for GEAR UP TN.

Payroll backup should include images of payroll or ledger which includes names of staff being paid, date of pay and pay-period, and amounts. (Please redact any personal information not related to reimbursement.)

## All Other Expenses (Travel, Materials, etc.):

1. Gather all invoices and detailed receipts for the month, including any additional backup documentation that may be needed (staff travel forms, transportation logs, student field trip meal allowance form, etc.).
2. Make one copy of the invoice or receipt and additional required backup documentation. (Your district keeps originals.)
3. Organize the invoices and backup documentation according to the section they belong in on the Expenditure Detail Form then fill out the detail in the space provided:
  - a. "Vendor Name – Who Was Paid?" - Type the name that appears on the invoice or receipt. This is who the district paid.
  - b. "Purpose or Reason for Expenditure" – Type why your district made this GEAR UP TN purchase. What was it for? Who was it for?
    - i. Food: What event/activity was food purchased for? How many GEAR UP TN students, family members, etc. was food purchased for? If the food was paid for by multiple funding sources, for example, if you included non-GEAR UP TN students/families, then that would be documented on the Expenditure Detail Form.
  - c. "Receipt or Billing #" - You need to MANUALLY write a number on each invoice or receipt as well as its backup (do not duplicate numbers). Take the number you assigned to the invoice/receipt and in the "Receipt or Billing Number" column, type in the number you assigned to it. These should be consecutive numbers, starting with 1.
  - d. "Invoice Date" – In the space provided, type the date that appears on the invoice or receipt (not the date it was paid for by the district).
  - e. "Receipt Amount" – Type in the space provided the amount that appears on the invoice or receipt.
    - i. If you are asking GEAR UP TN to pay a different amount than what is shown: Type in the amount that GEAR UP TN should pay (GEAR UP TN can pay less, but cannot pay more than the amount shown on any invoice/receipt) and EXPLAIN WHY either in the Purpose or Reason for Expenditure column or by including additional documentation.
  - f. Attach any Over \$1,000 approvals for any invoice, program, activity, or service over \$1,000.

**Direct Costs:** This line on the Expenditure Detail Form automatically adds up all the category subtotals.

**Indirect Costs:** If your district is claiming indirect costs (refer to your contract), in the 'Purpose or Reason' column add your indirect rate percentage, the amount the rate is being calculated from, and the time period for which you are requesting indirect cost payment. Then enter the calculated requested amount in the 'Receipt Amount' column.

**Total Reimbursement Requested:** This line calculates the sum of your direct and indirect totals.

An example of the Expenditure Detail Form is included both here and in the Forms section.



## Expenditure Detail and Reimbursement Form

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REIMBURSEMENT PERIOD	DATE FROM	DATE TO		
Vendor Name (Who was paid?)	Purpose or Reason for Expenditure	Receipt or Billing #	Payment or Invoice Date	Receipt Amount
<b>Salaries, Benefits &amp; Taxes</b>				
<b>Category sub total</b>				\$ -
<b>Professional Fee, Grant &amp; Award</b>				
<b>Category sub total</b>				\$ -
<b>Supplies, Telephone, Postage &amp; Shipping, Occupancy, Equipment Rental &amp; Maintenance, Printing &amp; Publications</b>				
<b>Category sub total</b>				\$ -
<b>Travel, Conferences &amp; Meetings</b>				
<b>Category sub total</b>				\$ -
<b>Insurance</b>				
<b>Category sub total</b>				\$ -
<b>Specific Assistance to Individuals</b>				
<b>Category sub total</b>				\$ -
<b>Depreciation</b>				
<b>Category sub total</b>				\$ -
<b>Other Non-Personnel</b>				
<b>Category sub total</b>				\$ -
<b>Capital Purchase</b>				
<b>Category sub total</b>				\$ -
<b>Total Direct Costs (Total of items above)</b>				\$ -
<b>Indirect Costs</b>				
<b>Category sub total</b>				\$ -
<b>Total Reimbursement Requested (total of direct costs and indirect costs)</b>				\$ -

Category sub totals automatically transfer to the Request for Reimbursement tab.

## Step 2 - Filling out the Reimbursement Request Form:

1. In the same Excel spreadsheet as the Expenditure Detail Form, select the Request for Reimbursement tab.
2. Fill out all required fields.
  - Fill out the required fields. The amount fields should automatically populate from the "Expenditure Detail" sheet.
3. Print the Reimbursement Request, sign and date it.

A sample of the Reimbursement Request Form is provided both here and in the Forms section.



## Request for Reimbursement

NAME AND ADDRESS OF GRANTEE		[FOR STATE USE ONLY]	
SUBMITTING REQUEST		APPROVED FOR PAYMENT	
High School		I certify that this payment is for goods and/or services delivered.	
District		Grant Director Signature	
District Address		Department:	3320105130
Phone		Project:	HEGUPEXPEND_4.0
		Invoice #:	
		Contract #:	85259
		Vendor #:	000000
REIMBURSEMENT PERIOD	DATE FROM	DATE TO	AMOUNT REQUESTED
	1/0/1900	1/0/1900	
BUDGET LINE-ITEM			
Salaries, Benefits & Taxes			\$ -
Professional Fee, Grant & Award			\$ -
Supplies, Phone, Postage & Shipping, Occupancy, Equipment Rental & Maintenance, Printing & Publications			\$ -
Travel, Conferences & Meetings			\$ -
Insurance			\$ -
Specific Assistance To Individuals			\$ -
Depreciation			\$ -
Other Non-Personnel			\$ -
Capital Purchase			\$ -
Indirect Costs			\$ -
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED</b>			<b>\$ -</b>

As an authorized representative of the above named contractor or grantee, I certify that this Request for Reimbursement and the attached Expenditure Detail Form are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and hereby request funds for the total amount shown above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Fiscal or District Project Director Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Fiscal or District Project Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - GEAR UP TN CENTRAL OFFICE USE ONLY
I certify that this invoice was submitted in accordance with appropriate requirements and is proper for payment.
_____ Fiscal Manager Signature
_____ Regional Director Signature

### Step 3 - Submission:

Sites will send a monthly fiscal submission email to Emily Curtis at emily.curtis@tn.gov by the 15th of each month with their regional director copied on the email. This submission will contain both the Reimbursement Request (see instructions below for formatting) and Time and Effort documentation as separate attachments.

#### First Attachment: Reimbursement Request

All documents in the monthly Reimbursement Request should be combined into **one PDF file** using the order below:

**Page 1** - Signed Reimbursement Request

**Page 2** - Expenditure Detail Form

**Page 3 and beyond** - Corresponding Backup, numbered and in order of Expenditure Detail

*Be sure to include any images of pre-approved \$1,000/\$5,000 approvals/memos in the backup section.*

#### Subsequent Attachment(s): Time and Effort Documentation

Make sure to send signed Time and Effort documentation in the monthly fiscal email. See page 59 for details.

## Additional Fiscal Information

### Budget Balance Spreadsheet

On a monthly basis, school districts receive a budget balance spreadsheet from the GEAR UP TN central office that outlines reimbursed expenditures to date and remaining GEAR UP TN funds.

### Spending Down Funds

It is vital to the success of this grant that each site spend down their funds regularly throughout the year and close the year by spending as close to all of their annual budget as possible. Do not wait to see what is left in your budget and make major purchases at the end of the year but plan and budget your funds throughout the year and make those more significant purchases as soon as possible. In the spring of each year, each site will need to provide a spending plan for their remaining budget to their regional director and GEAR UP TN fiscal manager for approval. Your unspent funds will NOT roll over from one year to the next, so plan ahead with the GEAR UP TN central office and your local fiscal office to spend down your funds. Since we work through a reimbursement process, all expenses filed through the reimbursement request must have been incurred and paid during the final month of the grant year.

### Monthly Reimbursement Following Completed Activity Documentation Audits

On a monthly basis, GEAR UP TN central office personnel will audit reimbursement requests of GEAR UP TN Sites to ensure expenditures listed on reimbursement requests align with monthly Completed Activity Documentation and data entered in the GEAR UP TN data management system.

## Budget Revisions

Throughout the academic year, school districts may identify priorities and activities aligned with GEAR UP TN goals and objectives not originally included in the annual GEAR UP TN work plan and/or budget. In addition, some planned activities may come in under cost, making funds available for additional activities related to GEAR UP TN program goals and objectives. If the need to revise the site budget is identified, the school district must submit a formal request to the GEAR UP TN central office by completing the GEAR UP TN Budget Revision Form. Forms must be sent to regional directors for approval. Regional directors will then forward revision requests to the GEAR UP TN central office. Budget revision requests are reviewed by the GEAR UP TN central office on a case-by-case basis. If approved, the GEAR UP TN central office will sign the GEAR UP TN Budget Revision form and return the approved request via email. Remember that this is a request for the approval to move your funds, so this needs to be submitted prior to the expenditure of the funds and the budget being out-of-balance.

An example of the Budget Revision Form is provided both here and in the Forms section.



### Budget Revision Form

District & School:					
Project Director:					
Site Coordinator(s):					
The grant budget line-item amounts below shall be applicable only to expenses incurred during the following:					
Begin Applicable Period:					
End Applicable Period:					
	EXPENSE OBJECT LINE-ITEM CATEGORY	APPROVED BUDGET AMOUNT	REVISED BUDGET AMOUNT	CHANGE	EXPLANATION
1 & 2	Salaries and Benefits & Taxes			\$ -	
4, 15	Professional Fee/Grant & Award			\$ -	
5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	Supplies, Telephone, Postage & Shipping, Occupancy, Equipment Rental & Maintenance, Printing & Publications			\$ -	
11, 12	Travel/Conferences & Meetings			\$ -	
14	Insurance			\$ -	
16	Specific Assistance to Individuals			\$ -	
17	Depreciation			\$ -	
18	Other Non-Personnel			\$ -	
20	Capital Purchase			\$ -	
22	Indirect Cost			\$ -	
25	GRAND TOTAL	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	

Notes:

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1 Each expense object line-item shall be defined by the Department of Finance and Administration Policy 03, Uniform Reporting Requirements and Cost Allocation Plans for Subrecipients of Federal and State Grant Monies, Appendix A. (click for link)

2 Applicable detail attached if line-item is funded.

Signature of Requestor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - GEAR UP TN CENTRAL OFFICE USE ONLY

By signing below I indicate approval of this revision.

Fiscal Manager Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Regional Director Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Audits

THEC and subrecipients are subject to OMB Circular A-133 "Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations." This circular contains guidance for obtaining consistency and uniformity among federal agencies for the audit of states, local governments and non-profit organizations expending federal funds. The circular also codifies the requirements for states, local governments and non-profit organizations that expend greater than \$500,000 per year in federal funds to have a "single audit" conducted in accordance with Section 500 of the circular.

This circular is especially important for GEAR UP recipients since it provides guidance regarding grantees' responsibilities. These responsibilities include maintaining adequate internal controls for the expenditure of federal funds, expectations for financial reports and reporting systems, as well as requirements for documentation and records management.

### **Subrecipient responsibilities:**

- Identification of federal awards received and expended in its accounts
- Maintenance of adequate internal controls over federal programs
- Compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and provisions of grant programs
- Preparation of appropriate financial statements, including schedule of expenditures from federal awards
- Ensure audits are properly performed and reports submitted when due
- Follow up and corrective action on audit findings
- Risk Monitoring

### THEC responsibilities:

- Ensure sub-recipient monitoring complies with State of Tennessee, "Department of Finance and Administration" Policy 22 – Sub-recipient Contract Monitoring to ensure federal funds are used for authorized purposes and in accordance with laws/regulations/grant agreements
- Advise sub-recipients of applicable laws, regulations, and provisions of grant agreements
- Monitor sub-recipient activities to ensure sub-recipients subject to OMB Circular A-133 have met audit requirements
- Issue a management decision on audit findings within six months
- Determine whether a sub-recipients' audit necessitates adjustments to its own records
- Require sub-recipients to grant THEC and auditors necessary access to records and financial records

### Recent areas of focus for federal audits:

- Time and effort reporting
- Financial and technical reporting
- Sub-recipient monitoring
- Risk monitoring & mitigation

Grant recipients need to ensure compliance with federal regulations, laws, and grant requirements. THEC is constantly monitoring its systems and internal controls and encourages grant recipients to do the same. We recommend you:

- Review your time and effort reporting systems and strengthen as needed
- Review your written policies and procedures to ensure they are accurate and up-to-date
- Review your financial and programmatic reporting systems and work with agencies to establish reasonable deadlines

## Records Retention

The state of TN requires records retention for five years following the end of a grant, which is longer than the three years required by the federal government. Therefore, school districts must retain at least (but not limited to) the following GEAR UP TN supporting documentation:

- An auditable transaction record of both revenue received and expenses incurred during the reporting period for GEAR UP TN related financial activity.
- A payroll register that conforms to generally accepted accounting principles, as documentation for salaries, wages, and benefits of school personnel costs (for either reimbursement or cost-share).
- Copies of signed time and effort forms for each staff member whose personnel costs are being requested for reimbursement or reported as cost-share in a given month.
- Receipts, invoices, purchase orders, calculation sheets, cost-share contribution forms, transaction reports, accounting reports, email correspondence, and other types of documentation in support of expenses requested for reimbursement and cost-share reported to GEAR UP TN.
- All other supporting expenditure documentation, as backup for reimbursement and cost sharing related to operating, program, and summer program costs (for donated items and waived/discounted fees, written documentation from the contributor must indicate the actual cost or current fair market value).

## Sub-recipient Monitoring

Department of Finance Administration's Policy 22 establishes sub-recipient contract monitoring requirements for the State of Tennessee. The policy statement requires the monitoring of contracts awarded to sub-recipients that include state and/or federal funds from state departments, agencies and commissions. This is done to ensure financial records are being reported and maintained in a manner consistent with federal reporting requirements. The monitoring process includes the following areas:

- Review of approval documentation for program activities and expenditures
- Review for compliance with the monetary services outlined in the grant contract
- Review of audit procedures and prior audit results
- Personnel cost documentation and allocation methodology
- Fiscal record reconciliation and documentation
- Data reporting system usage and data retention
- Risk assessment in compliance with federal guidelines



# GEAR UP TN

POWERED BY THEC

## COMMUNICATIONS



- Messaging Guidelines
- Messages to Specific Audiences
- GEAR UP TN Style Guide
- Logo Usage Guidelines
- Media Engagement
- Press Releases
- Kickoff Event Overview
- T-Shirt Approvals
- Newsletter Process and Template

# GEAR UP TN Messaging Guidelines

## Tagline

Make college dreams a reality.

## Boilerplate Language

Funded through a seven-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education and administered by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, GEAR UP TN works with six counties to improve college readiness and success for students in underserved communities. Through academic support, career exploration, college planning, and financial aid assistance, GEAR UP TN helps students and families prepare for postsecondary education.

## Brief Description of GEAR UP TN

GEAR UP TN is a locally driven project that works to prepare students for success in middle school, high school, and postsecondary education.

## GEAR UP TN Personality

- Informative
- Approachable
- Invested
- Community-based
- Empowering
- Responsive
- Personable
- Dedicated
- Transparent
- Determined

## Benefits of GEAR UP TN

GEAR UP TN provides value to Tennessee communities through:

- Academic interventions and focused direct services to students who may not otherwise attend college.
- Recognition of the importance of community support in promoting college access.
- Navigation of the college preparation and application process with students and their families.
- Research to support and identify the most effective college success services.
- A long-term commitment to sustaining the GEAR UP TN model in local communities.

# Messages to Specific Audiences

## Students

- College is a real and reachable goal.
- You have many options to pay for college.
- Postsecondary education isn't just a bachelor's degree at a four-year institution; community colleges and technical programs provide strong opportunities.
- GEAR UP TN will support you as you navigate the process and help you to make decisions.

## Parents and Families

- You play an important role in encouraging your student to go to college.
- Any type of education after high school, from a TCAT to a community college to a 4-year university, will benefit your student in the long-term.
- The college process is complex, but with support, your student can find the right fit.
- GEAR UP TN can provide one-on-one support to you and your student on the college process.

## General Public

- GEAR UP TN will increase the number of college-bound students in your community.
- Developing a college-going culture requires support from the larger community, not just parents and schools.

## School Personnel and Community Partners

- GEAR UP TN relies on your knowledge and expertise to encourage students to attend college.
- College is a realistic goal for every student.
- Four-year colleges aren't the only choice; community colleges and technical centers are strong postsecondary options.

## Local Government, Policymakers

- GEAR UP TN is preparing students to have bright futures in the local community.
- The GEAR UP TN model will allow services to continue long after the life of the grant.

# GEAR UP TN Style Guide

## CollegeForTN.org

CollegeForTN.org is a web-based college and career planning system with information specific to Tennessee high school students and Tennessee higher education institutions. Refer to CollegeForTN.org.

## GEAR UP

Use “GEAR UP” in all uppercase letters, omitting “TN” when referring to the U.S. Department of Education’s nationwide GEAR UP program or GEAR UP activities that are not specific to Tennessee. “GEAR UP” is entirely in uppercase letters.

## GEAR UP TN

Use “GEAR UP TN” when referring to funding for your site or the GEAR UP program specifically in Tennessee. For example, a site is a GEAR UP TN site and you provide services through GEAR UP TN. You may use the term “GEAR UP TN” or you may refer to “Tennessee’s GEAR UP program”. “GEAR UP TN” is entirely in uppercase letters.

## GEAR UP TN Central Office

Use “GEAR UP TN central office” when referring to the state-level GEAR UP TN office based out of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. “Central office” may be used after the first reference. GEAR UP TN is entirely in uppercase letters, while “central office” is not capitalized. Alternately, the central office can be referred to as THEC’s College Access and Outreach Division, which would be capitalized, as it is the formal name of the division.

## Regional Director

When referring to a specific regional director, his or her title should be listed as “East GEAR UP TN Regional Director” or “West GEAR UP TN Regional Director”. The title should be capitalized when immediately preceding or following the regional director’s full name. Capitalization in other contexts is at your discretion, as long as it is consistent.

## Site Coordinator

When referring to a specific site coordinator, his or her title should be listed as “Site Name GEAR UP TN Site Coordinator” as in “Campbell County GEAR UP TN Site Coordinator” or “Haywood County GEAR UP TN Site Coordinator”. The title should be capitalized when immediately preceding or following the site coordinator’s full name. Capitalization in other contexts is at your discretion, as long as it is consistent.

## Tennessee Board of Regents

The Tennessee Board of Regents oversees the state’s community colleges and technology centers. When referring to Tennessee Board of Regents institutions, on first use, use the full name of the institution. For example, Roane State Community College or Tennessee College of Applied Technology at Jackson. On second use, a commonly used abbreviation or shortened name may be used (i.e., Roane State or TCAT Jackson.)

## Tennessee Higher Education Commission

The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is the state recipient for Tennessee's GEAR UP funds and administers GEAR UP TN. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission is the coordinating board for the Tennessee Board of Regents, the state's locally governed institutions (LGIs,) and the Board of Trustees of the University of Tennessee.

In formal writing, please always use the term "Tennessee Higher Education Commission" or "the Commission" on second reference. "THEC" is acceptable on second reference in conversational writing or informal documents.

## University of Tennessee

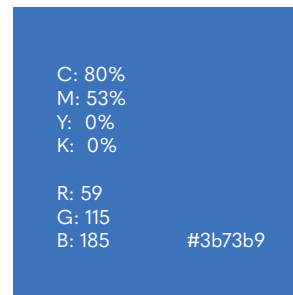
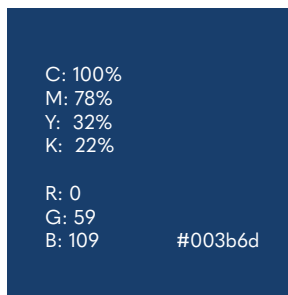
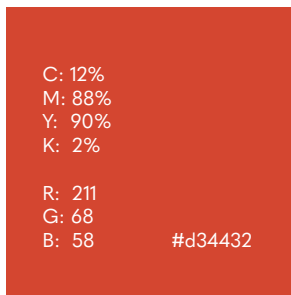
The University of Tennessee refers to the institution that includes all entities in the UT system. The governing body of the University of Tennessee is the Board of Trustees of the University of Tennessee. When referring to specific institutions, use one of the following: University of Tennessee, Knoxville; the University of Tennessee Health Science Center; the University of Tennessee Space Institute; the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture; the University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service; the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, the University of Tennessee Southern, or the University of Tennessee at Martin.

Acceptable abbreviations include, as appropriate: UT, UT system, UTHSC, UT Knoxville, UTSI, UTIA, UTM, UTC, UTS, IPS.

# Logo Usage Guidelines

## THEC's PRIMARY COLOR PALETTE

THEC's primary color palette is the heart of GEAR UP TN's visual identity. These are the main colors that consistently represent who we are and the program's tie to THEC.



## BLACK & WHITE

For black and white applications, the below usages are preferred: solid black on a white background or solid white on a black background.



IMPROPER LOGO USE

The logos should never be manipulated, stretched, or cropped in any way.



The colors should never be alternated or changed from the original palette.



Take care when placing the logo over an image. It should never obscure the focus of the picture. Make sure that the entire logo can be distinguished very clearly.



The logos should never have drop shadow or other graphic effects added.



FONT

QUASIMODA BLACK - HEADLINE

QUASIMODA BOLD - SUBHEAD

QUASIMODA REGULAR - BODY COPY

OPEN SANS BOLD - HEADLINE

OPEN SANS SEMI BOLD - SUBHEAD

OPEN SANS REGULAR/MEDIUM - BODY COPY

# Media Engagement

## Promoting GEAR UP TN in Your Community

The work of GEAR UP TN creates lasting benefits for students, families, and communities. Promoting program activities and successes builds awareness, fosters local support, and encourages participation in events. It also highlights the value of preparing students for college and careers, inspiring pride and advocacy within the community.

Media engagement amplifies your efforts, ensuring the broader public hears about the impact of GEAR UP TN. By sharing student stories, program achievements, and key milestones, you can celebrate successes and strengthen a college-going culture. Whether through a media advisory or a press release, involving local news outlets ensures your story reaches a wider audience.

## A Note About Student Photo and Video Releases

Before promoting events or activities, ensure that students and parents have signed photo and video release forms. These allow you to include images of students in your outreach efforts. A standard release form is available on the GEAR UP TN website. Please store signed releases securely.

## Requesting Media Support

Site coordinators should reach out to the GEAR UP TN communications team for assistance with writing media advisories or press releases. This ensures that all materials align with program branding and messaging.

### To request support:

1. Complete the Media Outreach Assistance Request Form (available on the GEAR UP TN website). Provide event details, including the who, what, where, when, why, and how, along with any key quotes or context for the announcement.
2. Submit your request at least two weeks before the desired release date.
3. Once your form is submitted, the communications team will collaborate with you to draft a professional media advisory or press release, tailored to your needs.

## Tips for Engaging the Media

- Know the Difference:
  - A **media advisory** invites the media to attend a specific event, providing essential details like date, time, location, and purpose.
  - A **press release** announces news or achievements, offering a full narrative that may not involve an event.
- Include Contact Information: Always list a media point of contact with their phone number and email address.
- Build Relationships: If you or others at your site have media connections, leverage those relationships for follow-up or outreach.

## Need Help?

The communications team is ready to assist with any media outreach needs. Submit your Media Outreach Assistance Request Form today to ensure your GEAR UP TN events and announcements get the attention they deserve!

## Press Releases

Press releases are a powerful way for GEAR UP TN schools to celebrate achievements, share success stories, and highlight impactful events in their communities. They help build awareness of the GEAR UP TN program and showcase the positive outcomes of its initiatives, from increased college readiness to innovative partnerships. By sharing these stories with local media, schools can strengthen community engagement, foster support, and inspire students and families to embrace higher education opportunities.

To help you craft an effective press release, we've included a sample press release in this guide. Use this example as a starting point to share the great work happening at your GEAR UP TN site with your community, and know that the GEAR UP TN Communications Team is here to help you along the way.

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: [Site Coordinator's Name]

Phone: [Site Coordinator's Phone Number]

Email: [Site Coordinator's Email Address]

## Central High School Recognized as a FAFSA Champion for Boosting TN Promise Completion Rates

[City, State] – Central High School is proud to announce its recognition as a FAFSA Champion for the 2024 school year, achieving an impressive 18% increase in Tennessee Promise FAFSA completion rates among seniors. This milestone reflects the school's dedication to equipping students with the tools they need to pursue higher education and career success.

Through targeted efforts supported by GEAR UP TN, Central High School staff worked closely with students and families to provide resources, guidance, and one-on-one assistance throughout the FAFSA completion process. These efforts not only boosted TN Promise participation but also opened doors for students to access scholarships and grants to make college more affordable.

"This achievement is a testament to the hard work of our students, families, and staff," said [Principal's Name], principal of Central High School. "By increasing FAFSA completion, we're ensuring more students have the opportunity to continue their education and pursue their goals."

GEAR UP TN, administered by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), is a statewide program dedicated to improving college readiness and success for students in underserved communities. Central High School's success exemplifies the program's mission to help students prepare for life after high school by building academic, financial, and career readiness.

Central High School will continue its commitment to supporting students on their path to college and beyond, celebrating this recognition as a call to further action in fostering a college-going culture.

## Kickoff Event Overview

An annual GEAR UP TN kickoff event is a great way to set the tone for the college-going culture in your local community. For the students, their families, and the educators working on GEAR UP TN, the kickoff event will provide a perfect opportunity to create energy and excitement around the grant program.

In planning your event, we encourage you to do what would work best for your students and your community. Work with your site team to determine the best time and place for your event and activities that will be most likely to engage your GEAR UP TN students. The information below will provide you with ideas to help you plan and promote your event, but ultimately, it is an event for your community. The event should reflect your site's personality and, most importantly, your students.

### Scheduling Your Event

Your year 1 kickoff event should happen between January and February. Determine the best day and time for your event. During previous years of GEAR UP TN implementation, sites that held kickoffs during the school day found they had higher student attendance and, in some cases, increased student engagement. You can also choose to schedule a separate evening or weekend event for family members or the larger community.

### Finding a Location

When choosing a location, consider a space that will be able to accommodate your GEAR UP TN students and any invited guests. Try to choose a location that will be easy for students to find, includes ample parking for visitors, such as invited guests and members of the media, and that will allow visitors to easily check into the event. This could be a school auditorium or a donated event space at a local business or organization.

### Who to Invite

Your GEAR UP TN students should be in attendance at the event. GEAR UP TN site partners, including the site coordinators, the project director, principals, and representatives from partner higher education institutions should also plan to attend.

Other guests to invite:

- Families of GEAR UP TN students
- Admissions representatives from local higher education institutions
- Local board of education members
- City council members
- County commissioners
- Tennessee State House Representatives and State Senators representing your area
- United States House of Representative members representing your area
- Local mayor(s)
- Local chamber of commerce
- Local community organizations, such as businesses, nonprofits, and religious organizations
- Former GEAR UP TN students currently in college
- Members of the local media

## Kickoff Event Invitations

When sending your invitations, choose a method that will suit both you and your guests. This may mean emailing invitations, mailing them, or a combination of both. If there are guests that you would particularly like to have attend your event, send a personal follow-up or note with the invitation. This will be a particularly important gesture for elected officials, who receive many invitations and have busy schedules.

If you need help with putting together an electronic invitation, the GEAR UP TN central office can provide you with guidance.

You are invited to attend

### **[Site Name]'s 2026-27 GEAR UP TN Kickoff**

Celebrate the launch of year 2 of the GEAR UP TN program in our community as we prepare [county/city/community name] students to attend and succeed in college.

**[Date]**

**[Time: Start - End]**

**[Location]**

Hosted by the [Site Name] GEAR UP TN Site:  
[Partner Names]

Please contact [name, phone number, email] with any questions.

## Kickoff Event Activity Ideas

Choose a structure for your kickoff event that will work best for you, your students, and the guests you invite. We ask that you do include a brief explanation of GEAR UP TN and the services that will be offered to students.

Other activity ideas for your GEAR UP TN kickoff:


- Invite a speaker, such as a motivational speaker or an alumnus of the school or GEAR UP TN program to speak at the event.
- Ask communications students at your high school or at a local university to make a short video about going to college or about GEAR UP TN in your community.
- Have the cohort students write and perform a song about GEAR UP TN or going to college.
- Have GEAR UP TN partners, including the site coordinator, the project director, principals, school counselors, community partners, and more, introduce themselves and announce where they went to college.
- Ask faculty members and other guests to wear college gear from the schools from which they graduated.
- Prior to the event, have the cohort students write brief essays about what college means to them. Choose one or a few students to read their essays at the kickoff.
- Write a GEAR UP TN college pledge for your students to recite at the event.

# T-Shirt Approvals

Your site may choose to print t-shirts for group recognition or school visits. The T-Shirt Approval Request form can be found at: [https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/t\\_shirt\\_approval\\_request\\_form](https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/t_shirt_approval_request_form). You must upload an image file of the artwork along with your request. Once the art is approved, your regional director will need to approve the purchase.

An example of a T-Shirt Approval Form is provided both here and in the Forms section.

T-Shirt Approval Request Form



**GEAR UP TN**  
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Complete and submit the form below with information about your t-shirt request. You will receive an email notification within two (2) business days with approval or a request for more information.

Site Coordinator Name \*

Site Coordinator Email \*

Collaborative Name \*

Purpose of T-Shirt Order \*

Benefit to GEAR UP TN Students \*

T-Shirt Quantity \*

Price Per Shirt \*

Additional Costs (design, shipping, etc.) \*

Total Cost (Quantity x Price + Additional Costs) \*

# GEAR UP TN Newsletter Process and Template

## Purpose

The purpose of the newsletter is to reach each of your GEAR UP TN students with news and helpful information about the program and your local events/activities. The newsletter should supplement other services provided by your GEAR UP TN site.

## Audience

The newsletter should be aimed at your GEAR UP TN cohort and seniors and/or their families. We encourage you to create separate newsletters for your cohort and your seniors, as tips and events will likely differ for the two audiences.

## Content

The newsletter should be 1-2 pages in length. Content should focus on building college aspiration among GEAR UP TN students. Additional topics may include student success strategies; parent involvement and support; upcoming GEAR UP TN events and dates; highlights of recent events or successes; information about a specific major, career area, or higher education institution; or other relevant college-going topics.

## Template

We have partnered with Smore for a license to their newsletter software, and we will help you create newsletters for your cohort and seniors each semester. Smore has a vast repository of different types of newsletters that can be copied and edited for your use.

## Distribution

You can either mail, email, or pass out hard copies of newsletters, however, newsletters given or emailed to students will only count as a student service, not a student and parent service. Newsletters emailed to parent's email addresses can be counted as a parent service. Newsletters mailed home (i.e., sent with report cards) can be counted as both a student and parent service. We highly encourage you to consider mailing the newsletters home or emailing to both students and parents to increase the services available to both students and parents.

Smore, our newsletter software, contains analytics which allow you to track the number of students and parents who read your newsletter. Smore newsletters can be emailed, printed, shared online, and embedded on your school's website.

## Frequency

The newsletters should be sent at least once per semester, and the fall newsletter must be sent prior to College Application and Exploration Month in September.

## Approval Process

Please send a copy of your newsletter to your regional director and to the Coordinator of College Access Communications at least one week prior to printing or finalizing. If you need any help with the newsletter design or suggestions for content, please do not hesitate to contact your regional director.



# GEAR UP TN

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## ADDITIONAL FORMS & RESOURCES

College Advising Planning Sessions: Meeting Protocol  
College Advising Planning Session: Meeting Form  
Sample Service Sign-In Sheets  
All Additional GEAR UP TN Forms  
Summary of GEAR UP TN Forms

# College Advising Planning Sessions: Meeting Protocol

College Advising Planning Sessions (CAPS) are one-on-one meetings between GEAR UP TN students and an advisor – typically the GEAR UP TN site coordinator, liaison, or faculty member. College Advising Planning Sessions and intentional follow-up provide a framework for ensuring that students receive individual, ongoing support. CAPS meetings serve as the primary vehicle to direct students to appropriate services based upon individual academic needs and postsecondary goals.

CAPS with each cohort and priority student aim to:

- Establish and strengthen the relationship between GEAR UP TN students and the GEAR UP TN site coordinator, or other caring adult
- Facilitate academic planning
- Facilitate student participation and engagement in school
- Facilitate student college and career exploration
- Facilitate postsecondary preparation
- Facilitate service delivery by directing students to appropriate interventions
- Ensure that, prior to high school graduation, students develop a portfolio that includes at least one postsecondary application, at least one scholarship application, and a completed FAFSA

**See Next Page for CAPS Implementation**

## CAPS Implementation

On or before the end of April, GEAR UP TN sites are responsible for conducting/coordinating at least one College Advising Planning Session with each cohort student.

### A. Pre-meeting preparation:

1. The GEAR UP TN site coordinator confers with principals and other staff as appropriate to determine times during the school day when students may be accessible for CAPS.
2. The GEAR UP TN site coordinator sets up weekly or monthly schedules for CAPS and notifies teachers and students according to agreed-upon procedures.
3. The GEAR UP TN site coordinator reviews the academic record, attendance, and service participation information about the student prior to individual meetings in order to refer students to needed interventions. The GEAR UP TN site coordinator fills in the appropriate information regarding academic indicators on the student questionnaire.
4. Some sites have found it helpful to introduce the CAPS to students in a larger classroom meeting where students complete a brief survey. Students' answers can guide the one-on-one or small group CAPS sessions.

### B. Individual CAPS meetings will cover the following topics:

#### 1. Academic Planning and Goal Setting

- a) Review student's academic status and connect them with resources, such as tutoring, credit recovery, summer school, etc., if needed.
- b) Review student's attendance record to determine need for intervention strategies.
- c) Discuss high school plan of study and postsecondary readiness.

#### 2. Exploring Interests and College and Career Awareness

- a) Explore the student's interests, hobbies, aspirations, talents, and strengths – this includes helping the student affirm a career or career interest area.
- b) Review student's preliminary postsecondary plan and top postsecondary choices
- c) Discuss relationship between academic standing, career goals, and postsecondary plans

#### 3. Student participation/ engagement

- a) Establish and strengthen the relationship between a student and the GEAR UP TN site coordinator or designated caring adult. Review student's level of participation in GEAR UP TN and school activities: discuss reasons for non-involvement and, if applicable, describe opportunities for future participation – upcoming events, services available, etc.
- b) Review a student's relationship with school (sense of belonging and extracurricular activities).

### C. CAPS Follow-up:

1. Legibly summarize the CAPS conversation in the CAPS Meeting Materials worksheet, ensuring the following information is provided:

- a. Date and duration of meeting
- b. Student's career interest area
- c. Student's preliminary postsecondary plan
- d. Student's top choices for postsecondary education, if s/he has any
- e. Agreed upon follow-up work and deadline
- f. Comments that will be most helpful when evaluating long-term progress

2. Enter the College Advising Planning Session into the data system as a student service.

# Sample College Advising Planning Session Form

## COLLEGE ADVISING PLANNING SESSIONS

Student Name: _____	Date: _____
Cell Phone Number: _____	Duration: _____
Email Address: _____	

### Academic Planning and Goal Setting

- Does the student have a C or below in any courses? Which courses?
- Has the student missed more than 5 days in one semester?
- Is student enrolled in any rigorous coursework?

	Academic Goals	School/Community Activity Goals	Other Goals
1.			
2.			
3.			

### Exploring Interests and Career Awareness

- What subject does student enjoy the most in school? Why?
- What does student do in their spare time?
- Does student know someone with a job they might like? If so, who and what is the job?
- Has student taken a career assessment?
- Has student attended a career fair?

	Career Interests	School Clubs/Organizations	Skills
1.			
2.			
3.			



**COLLEGE ADVISING PLANNING SESSIONS**

## College Awareness and Preparation

- Does student know the different types of postsecondary options?
- Does student know someone who attended college? If so, who and which college?
- Has student visited a college campus? If so, where?
- Student's Postsecondary Plan (Circle One):

Attend a Four-Year University	Attend a Two-Year Community College	Attended a Technical College/TCAT
Enlist in the Military	Enter the Workforce	Undecided

- What is the student's school(s) of interest?

Recommended Activities/Services

- Tutoring
- Mentoring
- Credit Recovery
- Attend a GEAR UP Event
- Join Student Club/Organization
- Take CollegeforTN.org Career Assessment
- Take class based on interest
- Other:

Notes/Follow-Up:

# Service Sign-in and Cover Sheets

## Instructions

Use these sheets to record event and service details and participation. Please note, there are several different sign-in sheets. Be sure to choose the correct sign-in sheet that matches the type of activity and the type of participants you are serving. Check the notations located at the top of each form to be sure you are using the correct sign-in form for each activity. For example, some forms are designed for activities where only parents are present. Others are designed for only educators. Some are designed for both parents and students, etc.

**Use one sheet indicating total hours per day if you are hosting a non-recurring activity (such as a welcome back event) and ALL of your information (participants, time, and activity) remains consistent through that day.**

**Use a new sheet if you host different activities or if different students attend a recurring event each day.**

Please attach any supporting material to this sheet, including: lesson plan, agenda, promotional materials, student activity evaluations, parent/guardian activity evaluations, and the activity report.

**GEAR UP TN "Students" include:**

All GEAR UP TN cohort students or all 12th grade students at participating GEAR UP TN schools.

**GEAR UP TN "Guardians" include:**

Parents/Guardians of all students in the cohort or 12th grade at participating GEAR UP TN schools.

**Non-GEAR UP TN participants should NOT sign in.**

Non-GEAR UP TN participants include: students, family members, and guardians who are not participants or affiliates of the GEAR UP TN cohort, but receive or participate in GEAR UP TN services and activities.

**See Next Page for Sample Sign-In Sheets**

# GEAR UP TN Parent/Family Service Sign-in Sheet



School: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Event: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Provider of Service: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Service Category: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Service Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
 End Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total # of Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Print your name and your GEAR UP TN student's name and grade level. Indicate with a Y/N if the student also attended. *Only parents of current GEAR UP TN students need to sign in. If multiple parent/guardians are present, please include all names.*

	Parent/Guardian Name	Student Name	Grade Level	Did Student Attend? (Y/N)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				
21.				
22.				
23.				
24.				
25.				
26.				
27.				
28.				
29.				
30.				

Total Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Coordinator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Data Entry: \_\_\_\_\_

# GEAR UP TN Parent/Guardian Service Sign-in Sheet



School: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Provider of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Category: \_\_\_\_\_

Total # of Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Subcategory: \_\_\_\_\_

Print your name and you GEAR UP TN student's name and grade level. *Only parents of current GEAR UP TN students need to sign in. If multiple parent/guardians are present, please include all names.*

	Parent/Guardian Name	Student Name	Grade Level
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			
21.			
22.			
23.			
24.			
25.			
26.			
27.			
28.			
29.			
30.			

Total Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Site Coordinator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Design courtesy of GEAR UP Washington*

Date of Data Entry: \_\_\_\_\_

# \$1,000 or Above Purchase Request



## \$1,000 or Above Purchase Request

**Directions:** GEAR UP TN sites must receive prior approval for any purchase of \$1,000 or above. \$1,000 or Above Purchase Requests must be submitted along with the Monthly Activity Plan (MAP) by the 15th of the month. Upon approval, the GEAR UP TN central office will send a signed copy of the form back to the GEAR UP TN Site's Project Director. Sites should include a copy of the **approved** \$1,000 or Above Purchase Request along with any reimbursement request containing an expense meeting or exceeding \$1,000.

**Site:** \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Detailed Description of Item	Qty.	Price	Total
				\$ -
				\$ -
				\$ -
				\$ -
				\$ -
				\$ -
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>\$ -</b>

**Purpose:** Include 1) Purpose of purchase and 2) GEAR UP TN Goal and Objective addressed

**Contract Budget Line Item(s):** (supplies, equipment, etc.)

**Approvals**

GEAR UP TN Site Project Director Name	GEAR UP TN Site Project Director Signature	Date
GEAR UP TN Regional Director Name	GEAR UP TN Regional Director Signature	Date
State GEAR UP TN Grant Director Name	State GEAR UP TN Grant Director Signature	Date

## **\$5,000 or Above Purchase Request**

### **\$5,000 or Above Purchase Request**

Any purchase of \$5,000 or above, excluding budgeted salaries, not only necessitates the submission of the \$1,000 or Above Purchase Request, as outlined above, but also requires a detailed memo outlining the following:

1. A brief explanation of how the purchase will assist the site in meeting GEAR UP TN goals and objectives,
2. A detailed narrative of how any programs or items purchased will be implemented (i.e., how are students being targeted to use equipment purchased, how are teachers integrating software into their instruction, etc.),
3. A brief narrative of how the purchase will be maintained or sustained over time.


\$5,000 or Above Purchase Requests and supporting materials must be submitted with the corresponding Monthly Activity Report (MAP). Approval by the GEAR UP TN Regional director and Project Director is also required.

# T-Shirt Approval Request

All t-shirt designs must be approved. Use the T-Shirt Approval Request form to submit your t-shirt for approval. You must have a photo proof of the t-shirt to be considered for approval.

Access the form at: [https://stateofennessee.formstack.com/forms/t\\_shirt\\_approval\\_request\\_form](https://stateofennessee.formstack.com/forms/t_shirt_approval_request_form)

T-Shirt Approval Request Form



GEAR UP TN  
POWERED BY THEC

Complete and submit the form below with information about your t-shirt request. You will receive an email notification within two (2) business days with approval or a request for more information.

Site Coordinator Name\*

Site Coordinator Email\*

Collaborative Name\*

Purpose of T-Shirt Order\*

Benefit to GEAR UP TN Students\*


T-Shirt Quantity\*

Price Per Shirt\*

Additional Costs (design, shipping, etc.)\*

Total Cost (Quantity x Price + Additional Costs)\*

Please upload image file of t-shirt design\*



Drag and drop here or [Browse files](#)  
Max file size: 10 MB

# Request for Reimbursement



## Request for Reimbursement

NAME AND ADDRESS OF GRANTEE		[FOR STATE USE ONLY]	
SUBMITTING REQUEST		APPROVED FOR PAYMENT	
<b>High School</b>		I certify that this payment is for goods and/or services delivered.	
<b>District</b>		Grant Director Signature	
<b>District Address</b>		<b>Department:</b>	3320105130
<b>Phone</b>		<b>Project:</b>	HEGUPEXPEND_4.0
		<b>Invoice #:</b>	
		<b>Contract #:</b>	85259
		<b>Vendor #:</b>	000000
REIMBURSEMENT PERIOD	DATE FROM	DATE TO	AMOUNT REQUESTED
	1/0/1900	1/0/1900	
BUDGET LINE-ITEM			
Salaries, Benefits & Taxes			\$ -
Professional Fee, Grant & Award			\$ -
Supplies, Phone, Postage & Shipping, Occupancy, Equipment Rental & Maintenance, Printing & Publications			\$ -
Travel, Conferences & Meetings			\$ -
Insurance			\$ -
Specific Assistance To Individuals			\$ -
Depreciation			\$ -
Other Non-Personnel			\$ -
Capital Purchase			\$ -
Indirect Costs			\$ -
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED</b>			<b>\$ -</b>

As an authorized representative of the above named contractor or grantee, I certify that this Request for Reimbursement and the attached Expenditure Detail Form are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and hereby request funds for the total amount shown above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Fiscal or District Project Director Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
District Fiscal or District Project Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - GEAR UP TN CENTRAL OFFICE USE ONLY
I certify that this invoice was submitted in accordance with appropriate requirements and is proper for payment.
Fiscal Manager Signature
Regional Director Signature

# Budget Revision Form



## Budget Revision Form

District & School:					
Project Director:					
Site Coordinator(s):					
<b>The grant budget line-item amounts below shall be applicable only to expenses incurred during the following:</b>					
Begin Applicable Period:					
End Applicable Period:					
	EXPENSE OBJECT LINE-ITEM CATEGORY	APPROVED BUDGET AMOUNT	REVISED BUDGET AMOUNT	CHANGE	EXPLANATION
1 & 2	Salaries and Benefits & Taxes			\$ -	
4, 15	Professional Fee/Grant & Award			\$ -	
5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	Supplies, Telephone, Postage & Shipping, Occupancy, Equipment Rental & Maintenance, Printing & Publications			\$ -	
11, 12	Travel/Conferences & Meetings			\$ -	
14	Insurance			\$ -	
16	Specific Assistance to Individuals			\$ -	
17	Depreciation			\$ -	
18	Other Non-Personnel			\$ -	
20	Capital Purchase			\$ -	
22	Indirect Cost			\$ -	
25	GRAND TOTAL	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	

Notes:

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1 [Each expense object line-item shall be defined by the Department of Finance and Administration Policy 03, Uniform Reporting Requirements and Cost Allocation Plans for Subrecipients of Federal and State Grant Monies, Appendix A. \(click for link\)](#)

2 Applicable detail attached if line-item is funded.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Requestor Date

**DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE - GEAR UP TN CENTRAL OFFICE USE ONLY**

By signing below I indicate approval of this revision.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fiscal Manager Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Director Signature Date

## GEAR UP TN Forms Summary

FORM	PURPOSE	SUBMIT TO	HOW TO SUBMIT IT	HOW OFTEN	MORE INFO
Request for Reimbursement	To detail all expenditures and request reimbursements	Emily Curtis (Emily.Curtis@tn.gov) and your regional director	Via email; all documents, including supporting documentation, must be included in one email	By the 15th of each month	p. 61
\$1,000 or Above Purchase Request	To gain prior approval for any purchase, invoice, event, or activity that will cost \$1,000 or above	Your regional director	Via email, with your MAP	With your MAP by the 15th of each month	p. 75
T-Shirt Approval Form	For all design and spending approval on t-shirts with the GEAR UP TN logo and using GEAR UP funds	Formstack and your regional director	Via email (Typically, this will also involve a \$1,000 or above purchase request.)	As needed	p. 96
Media Use Permission Form	To ensure parents and students provide permission for student images to be used on GEAR UP TN publications, online communications, and other communications materials	Keep in your files	If requested, via email	As needed	n/a
Budget Revision Form	To make any changes to the budget submitted with your annual work plan	Your regional director	Via email	As needed	p. 82

<b>FORM</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>SUBMIT TO</b>	<b>HOW TO SUBMIT IT</b>	<b>HOW OFTEN</b>	<b>MORE INFO</b>
Service Sign-In Sheets	To track attendance at events and services for data collection	Aubrey Badon (Aubrey.Badon@tn.gov) and your regional director	Via SharePoint; Enter participation data into data system	By the 10th for prior month's services Services must be entered into data	p. 103
Service Cover Sheets	To track attendance at events and services for data collection	Aubrey Badon (Aubrey.Badon@tn.gov) and your regional director	Via SharePoint; Enter participation data into data system	By the 10th for prior month's services Services must be entered into data	p. 103
Montly Activity Plan	To plan the events and activities of the upcoming month and ensure you are meeting the plans set out in your annual work plan	Aubrey Badon (Aubrey.Badon@tn.gov) and your regional director	Via SharePoint	By the 15th of the month prior	p. 42
College Advising Planning Session Form	To report on the progress of students participating in College Advising Planning Sessions	Keep in your files	Regional directors will review these files in person	As needed	p. 99





