



GEAR UP

Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

WHAT IS GEAR UP?

GEAR UP is a grant program **created and funded by Congress** and administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

GEAR UP helps students from low-income communities prepare for and succeed in **education and training beyond high school** so they can achieve their career goals.

PROUDLY SERVING KENTUCKY

GEAR UP serves over 500,000 students at almost 3,000 schools across the country. Programs start in middle school and continue through a student's first year of education beyond high school.

Statewide, GEAR UP Kentucky currently serves:

3,400+

high school students

11-12

grade levels

12

KY high schools

500+

KY college freshmen

9

KY colleges

GEAR UP CREATES A STRONG WORKFORCE



63%

of jobs in Kentucky will require education beyond high school by 2031

Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce

By increasing career and college readiness, GEAR UP contributes to **a stronger workforce and economic growth.**

The program helps prepare students for the demands of the 21st-century job market, benefiting both individuals and the local and national economy.



ROOTED IN LOCAL NEEDS

GEAR UP Kentucky supports 12 schools in 11 KY counties: Bath, Bracken, Bourbon, Fleming, Franklin, Kenton, Marion, Mason, Mercer, Pendleton and Robertson.

25

years of serving
Kentucky
students, families
& schools

GEAR UP Kentucky began investing in and transforming the community in 2000. Since then, GUK has served 66,000+ students in 208 KY schools.



WHAT MAKES GEAR UP UNIQUE

Expands opportunity & increases mobility

GEAR UP opens doors to opportunity for students & their families by providing guidance on post-high school plans.

“I grew up in a very poor household, neither my mom or dad went to college. **I always thought going to college was taboo**, that I didn’t need to go ... Honestly, before I went to GEAR UP, my plan was to work at McDonald’s and just get by as much as I can. Since I started getting into GEAR UP and got accepted to EKU, **my canvas has been painted brighter just seeing that there really is a future for me** and a possibility I can greater than I am now.”

- Ochi Casillas, Eastern KY University student, 2024 GUK graduate of Bourbon County High School

Demonstrates a proven track record & gets results

For over 25 years, GEAR UP has been a proven program, supporting millions and improving academic outcomes.

- GUK schools have met or exceeded statewide graduation rates since 2012 and state and national FAFSA completion rates since 2019.
- Since 2011, GUK graduating classes have surpassed statewide college-going rates for low-income students by at least 7 percentage points.

GUK students have higher college persistence rates and grades than their non-GUK peers.



Builds community investment & partnerships

GEAR UP fosters collaboration between schools, state agencies, industry, and community organizations. Since 2000, GEAR UP KY has **partnered with 208 businesses, agencies and organizations** at the statewide and local levels to support students’ successful transition to post-high school education and training.

There’s a return on investment for taxpayers, as GEAR UP KY matches federal funds with an equal amount from non-federal sources. Since 2000, we have **matched our federal funding with \$83 million** in local dollars.

Allows for local control & flexibility

GEAR UP empowers communities to identify and address their unique needs, offering tailored solutions rather than a one-size-fits-all federal approach.

GEAR UP Kentucky **employs 32 staff from the communities we serve** and **supports 450+ educators in our local schools**. We work with school administrators and staff to identify and meet the unique needs of their students and families.



Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. (2021). Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2031.

This document was created by GEAR UP Kentucky, a U.S. Dept of Education grant administered by the KY Council on Postsecondary Education. For more information, visit: gearupky.org/about/gearupworks