



Explore. Plan. Achieve.

Brand Styleguide

2025

A comprehensive document that outlines the visual and verbal elements of the GEAR UP brand identity.



Welcome to the GEAR UP Brand Style Guide

This style guide is your essential resource for consistently and effectively representing the GEAR UP brand. It serves as a comprehensive roadmap for all visual and verbal communications, ensuring that every touchpoint—from our logos and photography to our typography and messaging—speaks with one clear, powerful voice.

Our brand is more than just a logo or a tagline; it's the visual and emotional representation of our unwavering commitment to empowering students on their journey toward higher education and successful futures. By adhering to these guidelines, we collectively uphold the integrity, professionalism, and impact of the GEAR UP mission.

This guide provides the tools and direction needed to:

- **Build Strong Recognition:** Ensure instant recognition of the GEAR UP brand across all platforms.
- **Maintain Consistency:** Guarantee a unified look and feel in every communication.
- **Communicate Clearly:** Deliver our message with precision and impact.
- **Foster Trust:** Cultivate confidence and reliability with our students, families, partners, and communities.

Thank you for being a steward of the GEAR UP brand. Your commitment to these guidelines is vital in inspiring and empowering the next generation.

Explore. Plan. Achieve.

LOGO VARIATIONS

Primary Logo



The GEAR UP primary logo is the cornerstone of our brand identity. It's the most recognizable and frequently used visual representation of our mission and values. This logo is designed for maximum clarity and impact, serving as the first visual touchpoint for many of our students, families, and partners. Consistent and correct use of this logo is vital to building strong brand recognition and communicating our dedication to empowering students on their path to college and career readiness.

Color Palette: Two-Color



PMS: GEAR UP Blue
Hex #: 00B3DC
CMYK: C73,M6,Y7,K0



Hex #: 231F20
CMYK: C0,M0,Y0,K100

LOGO VARIATIONS

Simplified Logo (Black & White)

Black



Hex #: 231F20
CMYK: C0,M0,Y0,K100

Reverse-Out (white)



One-Color



PMS: GEAR UP Blue
Hex #: 00B3DC
CMYK: C73,M6,Y7,K0

The GEAR UP primary logo is designed to maintain its strength and recognition even when full color isn't an option. Our black and white and one-color versions ensure that the brand remains clear, consistent, and impactful across all mediums, regardless of technical or budgetary limitations.

Always prioritize legibility and contrast when selecting between the black, white, or a single-color application. If the background is dark, use the white (reversed) version. If the background is light, use the black version. For one-color applications, ensure the chosen color contrasts sufficiently with the background to make the logo pop.

LOGO DO'S and DON'TS

Logo DO's

Our GEAR UP logo is designed to be versatile, ensuring it stands out clearly and professionally whether placed on light or dark backgrounds. Following these guidelines ensures our brand always looks its best and maintains maximum impact.

Logo on Light Backgrounds



When placing the GEAR UP logo on light-colored backgrounds (including white), always use the full-color version of our primary logo. This allows our vibrant brand colors to pop and be immediately recognizable.

Clarity is Key: Ensure the background color provides sufficient contrast for all elements of the logo to be clearly visible. Avoid light pastels that might cause the logo's lighter colors to blend in.

Preferred Use: This is our go-to application for most digital and print materials, such as our website, brochures, and standard documents.

LOGO DO'S and DON'TS

Logo on Dark Backgrounds



When placing the GEAR UP logo on dark-colored backgrounds (including black), use the reversed, white version of our primary logo. This ensures maximum legibility and allows the logo to stand out against the darker tone.

Maximum Contrast: The white version is specifically designed to create strong contrast on dark fields, making our brand instantly recognizable even in less-than-ideal lighting or busy environments.

Versatile Application: This version is perfect for merchandise, dark-themed digital interfaces, presentations with dark backgrounds, and any situation where a light logo on a dark field is required.

LOGO DO'S and DON'TS

Logo DON'Ts: What to Avoid

To maintain the integrity and strength of the GEAR UP brand, it's crucial to understand what not to do with our logo. Adhering to these "don'ts" ensures consistency, clarity, and the continued professional representation of our mission. Refer to the examples below to see common mistakes to avoid.



A. DON'T crop the logo.



B. DON'T stretch or distort the logo.



C. DON'T change the orientation of the logo.



D. DON'T change the color of the logo.



F. DON'T reduce the color of the logo.



G. DON'T encroach on the logo's clear space.

A. DON'T Crop the Logo.

The GEAR UP logo is a complete unit. Never cut off any portion of the logo, including the word-mark, icon, or "WASHINGTON STATE" sub-brand.

B. DON'T Stretch or Distort the Logo.

Always scale the logo proportionally. Stretching or squishing the logo horizontally or vertically distorts its intended design and appearance.

C. DON'T Change the Orientation of the Logo.

The GEAR UP logo must always remain horizontal. Do not rotate or angle the logo.

D. DON'T Change the Color of the Logo.

Only use the approved color variations (full-color, black, or white). Do not introduce unauthorized colors to any part of the logo.

E. DON'T Reduce the Color of the Logo.

Do not desaturate or reduce the vibrancy of the logo's approved colors. The colors should always be vibrant and true to the brand guidelines.

F. DON'T Encroach on the Logo's Clear Space.

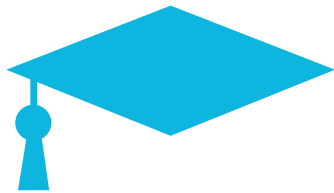
The logo requires a specific amount of clear space around it, free from any other text, graphics, or design elements. Violating this space diminishes the logo's impact and readability.

ICON DO'S and DON'TS

Icon DO's: Proper Usage

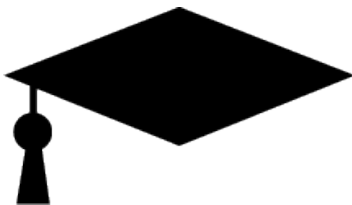
The GEAR UP icon (the graduation cap) is a powerful, standalone symbol of our mission. When used independently from the full logo, it must maintain its integrity and clarity. Adhering to these guidelines ensures its consistent and impactful representation.

Primary Blue Icon



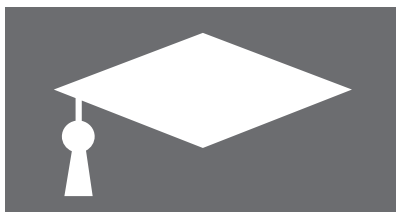
PMS: GEAR UP Blue
Hex #: 00B3DC
CMYK: C73,M6,Y7,K0

Use: Ideal for representing the GEAR UP brand in a vibrant and recognizable way on light backgrounds where our primary blue color is suitable.



Hex #: 231F20
CMYK: C0,M0,Y0,K100

Use: Best for monochromatic applications, black & white printing, or when a strong, neutral icon is required on light backgrounds.



Hex #: FFFFFFFF
CMYK: C0,M0,Y0,K0

Use: Essential for placement on dark-colored backgrounds, images, or whenever a reversed, high-contrast icon is needed.

ICON DO'S and DON'TS

Icon DON'T's: What to Avoid

To maintain the clarity, integrity, and consistent recognition of the GEAR UP icon, it is crucial to avoid the following misuses. Adhering to these guidelines ensures our brand symbol always represents our mission effectively.



A. DON'T crop the icon.



B. DON'T stretch or distort the icon.



C. DON'T change the orientation of the icon.



D. DON'T change the color of the icon.



E. DON'T reduce the color of the icon.



F. DON'T encroach on the icon's clear space.

A. DON'T Crop the Icon.

The GEAR UP icon should always appear in its complete form. Never cut off or obscure any part of the icon.

B. DON'T Stretch or Distort the Icon.

Always scale the icon proportionally. Do not stretch it horizontally, vertically, or in any way that alters its original dimensions or shape.

C. DON'T Change the Orientation of the Icon.

The GEAR UP icon should always maintain its original upright orientation. Do not rotate, tilt, or angle the icon.

D. DON'T Change the Color of the Icon.

Only use the approved color variations for the icon (primary blue, black, or white). Do not introduce any unauthorized colors.

E. DON'T Reduce the Color of the Icon.

Do not desaturate, fade, or reduce the vibrancy of the icon's approved colors. The colors should always be vibrant and true to the brand guidelines.

F. DON'T Encroach on the Icon's Clear Space.

The icon requires an appropriate amount of clear space around it, free from any other text, graphics, or design elements. Violating this space diminishes the icon's impact and readability.

TAGLINES: Our Brand's Voice

Our taglines are concise, powerful statements that encapsulate the essence of the GEAR UP brand. They are designed to articulate our mission, values, and the transformative impact we have on students and communities. Used strategically, our taglines reinforce our core message and resonate deeply with our audience, serving as a memorable verbal identifier alongside our visual assets.

Logo with Tagline: A Unified Identity

When the tagline is paired with the logo, they work in powerful tandem to create a unified and instantly recognizable brand identity. The tagline strategically reinforces the brand's core message and values, providing a verbal hook that deepens understanding, while the logo delivers immediate visual recognition and serves as our primary identifier. This combined presence ensures our brand communicates both who we are and what we stand for with maximum clarity and impact.

Primary Tagline: Explore. Plan. Achieve.

Meaning: This tagline encapsulates the entire student journey that GEAR UP facilitates.

Explore: Encourages curiosity, discovery of possibilities, and understanding of diverse educational and career pathways. It's about opening doors to new ideas and opportunities.

Plan: Emphasizes the strategic guidance and preparation GEAR UP provides, helping students map out their academic and financial steps towards college and career readiness. It's about setting clear goals and outlining the path to reach them.

Achieve: Highlights the ultimate success and fulfillment students experience by reaching their college and career goals, empowered by the knowledge and support gained through GEAR UP. It's about realizing potential and celebrating accomplishments.

Font Style: Brother 1816, Book

Usage: This is our core tagline, to be used prominently with the logo in its full-color and black-and-white versions. It is ideal for broad awareness campaigns, general program overviews, and materials where a direct and aspirational message is needed.



Explore. Plan. Achieve.

Two-Color Logo with Tagline in Blue:

PMS: GEAR UP Blue

Hex #: 231F20

Hex #: 00B3DC

CMYK: C0,M0,Y0,K100

CMYK: C73,M6,Y7,K0



Explore. Plan. Achieve.

One-Color Logo with Matching Tagline:

Hex #: 231F20

CMYK: C0,M0,Y0,K100



Explore. Plan. Achieve.

One-Color Logo with Matching Tagline:

PMS: GEAR UP Blue

Hex #: 00B3DC

CMYK: C73,M6,Y7,K0

TAGLINES: Our Brand's Voice (CONT.)

Tagline Usage: Independent of Logo

While the primary tagline, “Explore. Plan. Achieve.,” is most impactful when paired with our logo, it can also be used independently in specific scenarios. This allows for greater flexibility in messaging while consistently reinforcing the GEAR UP brand’s core promise.

Key Considerations for Independent Tagline Usage:

- **Brand Consistency:** The tagline must always be presented using the exact approved typography, color (primary blue or black as per context), and style as defined in the “Font Specifications” and “Taglines” sections of this guide. This ensures visual harmony and immediate recognition, even without the logo present.
- **Contextual Relevance & Value Addition:** Only deploy the tagline independently in contexts where it genuinely adds value and clearly reinforces the brand message. It should serve to clarify, summarize, or enhance the surrounding content, not merely exist as decorative text.
- **Strategic Brand Awareness:** In situations where the audience’s familiarity with the GEAR UP brand might be lower, using the tagline alone may not be as effective in immediately conveying our identity. In such cases, consider pairing it with other prominent brand elements (like our primary colors or specific iconography) to ensure optimal brand recognition and message delivery.
- **Clarity and Legibility:** Ensure the tagline is always placed in a way that is highly legible against its background, maintaining sufficient contrast.
- **Avoid Overuse:** While flexible, avoid overusing the tagline to the point where it loses its impact or becomes redundant with other messaging.

Explore. Plan. Achieve.

Font Style: Brother 1816, Book

PMS: GEAR UP Blue

Hex #: 00B3DC

CMYK: C73,M6,Y7,K0

Explore. Plan. Achieve.

Font Style: Brother 1816, Book

Hex #: 231F20

CMYK: C0,M0,Y0,K100

TAGLINES: Our Brand's Voice (CONT.)

To illustrate the versatile application of our primary tagline, "Explore. Plan. Achieve.", here are examples demonstrating its use both independently and in conjunction with the GEAR UP logo. These formats ensure consistent brand messaging across various communication platforms.

Explore. Plan. Achieve.



Explore. Plan. Achieve.

Explore. Plan. Achieve.



Explore. Plan. Achieve.

FONT SPECIFICATIONS

Typography plays a critical role in establishing the visual tone and readability of the GEAR UP brand. Our chosen typefaces ensure consistency, clarity, and professionalism across all communications, reflecting our commitment to academic excellence and support.

GEAR - BARRANCO REGULAR

UP - REBELTON MEDIUM

Washington State - Brother 1816 Bold

BARRANCO

REGULAR

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

!@#\$%^&*()_.,:;''

REBELTON

MEDIUM

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

!@#\$%^&*()_.,:;''

FONT SPECIFICATIONS (CONT.)

Brother 1816

Bold

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

1234567890

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

!@#\$%^&*().,;:"

Call-to-Action (CTA) Buttons

Our Call-to-Action (CTA) buttons are designed to guide users towards key interactions and information, playing a crucial role in our digital communications. Consistency in their appearance ensures a seamless and intuitive user experience.

Standard Button Styles: We have two primary button styles: Long Buttons and Short Buttons, each with distinct states for user interaction.

Regular Button (Default State)

This is the standard appearance of our primary action buttons, used when the button is not being hovered over or actively engaged.

LONG BUTTON

LONG BUTTON:
44H x 183W Pixels
14pt Brother 1816
Hex#: 00B3DC

SHORT

SHORT BUTTON:
44H x 120W Pixels
14pt Brother 1816
Hex#: 00B3DC

Hover Button (Interactive State)

This state indicates that a user's cursor is over the button, signaling interactivity. The subtle color change provides clear visual feedback.

LONG BUTTON

LONG BUTTON:
44H x 183W Pixels
14pt Brother 1816
Hex#: A7A9AC

SHORT

SHORT BUTTON:
44H x 120W Pixels
14pt Brother 1816
Hex#: A7A9AC

Text Button Styles: For less prominent actions or to seamlessly integrate links within text, we use Text Buttons.

Regular Text Button (Default State)

This style is used for contextual links or secondary actions where a full button box isn't required.

Read More

14pt Brother 1816
Hex#: 00B3DC

Hover Text Button (Interactive State)

This state provides visual feedback when a user's cursor is over a text button.

Read More

14pt Brother 1816
Hex#: A7A9AC

PHOTO GUIDELINES

Photo Guidelines: Photography is a powerful tool for sharing the GEAR UP story. These guidelines are designed to ensure a consistent, compelling, and authentic visual representation of our mission, strengthening our brand identity and reinforcing our commitment to empowering students. To achieve this, every photo we use must meet the following criteria, which will guide us in selecting imagery that truly reflects our work and resonates with our audience.

Photo Selection Criteria:

1. Authenticity: Many photographs capture students in active learning environments, collaborating, and engaging with educational content or mentors. This visual narrative supports the goal of highlighting the potential and achievements of GEAR UP students. The image of students enthusiastically collaborating around a computer particularly underscores engagement and shared learning



2. Diversity and Inclusion: The photos consistently showcase a diverse range of individuals, including students and staff, representing various perceived racial and ethnic backgrounds, perceived gender identities, and different abilities. For instance, one image prominently features individuals in wheelchairs and another on crutches, strongly aligning with the guideline to showcase diversity and inclusion.



3. Positive and Empowering: The interactions between students and staff, and among students themselves, often convey a sense of mentorship, collaboration, and community. The image of a diverse group of students and staff on what appears to be a college campus, many smiling and interacting, suggests a supportive and encouraging atmosphere.



4. High-Quality: The images provided appear to be high-resolution, well-lit, and professionally composed, indicating an adherence to quality standards in photography. This reinforces the brand's commitment to presenting a polished and credible image.



PHOTO GUIDELINES

Once selected, the way we use our photos is just as critical as the selection process itself. These guidelines ensure our imagery is used ethically, respectfully, and effectively to reinforce the GEAR UP brand and mission.

Photo Usage Guidelines:

1. Obtain Necessary Permissions:

- **DO:** Always secure written permission (e.g., through a photo release form) from all identifiable individuals featured in a photo, especially minors. This is paramount for legal compliance and respectful representation. Ensure that releases are current and cover the intended usage.
- **DON'T:** Use photos without explicit consent or if you are unsure about the usage rights.

2. Ensure Respectful & Accurate Representation

- **DO:** Portray all individuals with dignity and respect. Select photos that highlight their strengths, engagement, and potential. Our imagery should empower and uplift.
- **DON'T:** Use photos that stereotype, misrepresent, or inadvertently perpetuate negative biases about GEAR UP students, staff, or the communities we serve. Avoid imagery that could be perceived as exploitative or demeaning.

3. Maintain Contextual Relevance

- **DO:** Use photos that directly relate to and enhance the accompanying content or message. The image should clarify, illustrate, or emotionally connect with the narrative it supports.
- **DON'T:** Include photos merely for decoration or visual filler if they do not add value or are irrelevant to the specific story or information being conveyed.

4. Uphold Brand Consistency

- **DO:** Ensure every photo aligns with the overall visual and thematic identity of the GEAR UP brand. This includes adherence to our brand's voice, tone, and visual aesthetic as outlined in this guide. Photos should feel authentically "GEAR UP."
- **DON'T:** Use photos that clash with our brand's established look and feel, or that convey a message inconsistent with our mission and values.

PHOTO GUIDELINES *(CONT.)*

Photo Usage Guidelines:

5. Stock Photography (Optional, but Recommended Addition)

While authentic, original photography is always preferred to genuinely capture the GEAR UP experience, stock photography may be used under specific circumstances.

DO:

- **Prioritize Authenticity:** If using stock, strive for images that appear as natural and un-staged as possible, avoiding overly generic or cliché scenarios.
- **Align with Brand Aesthetics:** Select stock photos that match the overall quality, lighting, composition, and visual tone of our original photography.
- **Uphold Diversity & Inclusion:** Ensure any stock photography adheres strictly to our diversity and inclusion criteria, reflecting a broad range of backgrounds, abilities, and experiences.
- **Contextual Relevance:** Use stock photos only when they accurately represent the message or concept being conveyed and enhance the content.
- **Verify Licensing:** Always confirm that you have the appropriate licensing for the intended use (e.g., commercial use, web, print).

DON'T:

- **Rely Heavily on Stock:** Avoid using stock photography as your primary source of imagery. It should be a supplemental resource.
- **Use Generic or Staged Images:** Steer clear of images that look overtly “stock” or artificial, as these can dilute our brand’s authenticity.
- **Violate Inclusivity Standards:** Never use stock photos that reinforce stereotypes or lack diverse representation.
- **Substitute for Real Stories:** Stock photography should not replace the powerful impact of genuine photos featuring real GEAR UP students and staff.

PHOTO GUIDELINES (CONT.)

Prohibited Photo Content:

To maintain the professional integrity and positive messaging of the GEAR UP brand, certain types of imagery are strictly prohibited. Adhering to these guidelines is crucial for upholding our brand's reputation and ensuring ethical usage.

1. Low-Quality and Unprofessional Images

DON'T: Use any photos that are blurry, pixelated, poorly lit, out of focus, or otherwise appear amateurish. Images that lack sharpness, proper exposure, or clear composition detract from our brand's credibility and professionalism. Our visual content must always reflect the high standards of GEAR UP.

2. Negative, Controversial, or Inappropriate Imagery

DON'T: Include photos that depict negative, controversial, or disrespectful situations. This includes images showing distress, conflict, illegal activities, or anything that could be perceived as offensive, discriminatory, or contrary to GEAR UP's values. All imagery must reflect a positive, safe, and empowering environment.

3. Copyright and Trademark Infringements

DON'T: Use any photos obtained without proper licensing or permission. This includes images sourced from the internet without clear usage rights, copyrighted material, or photos featuring visible third-party trademarks without authorization. Always ensure full compliance with copyright and intellectual property laws. When in doubt, do not use the image.

4. Revelation of Sensitive Personal Information

DON'T: Use photos that inadvertently reveal sensitive personal information about individuals, such as addresses, phone numbers, full names (unless explicitly permitted and necessary for the context), or other private details that could compromise their privacy or safety. Prioritize the protection of personal data in all visual content.

By consistently applying these photo guidelines, we collectively ensure our visual storytelling is powerful, authentic, and truly representative of the GEAR UP mission, inspiring and empowering our students and communities.

VISUAL LANGUAGE PHOTOGRAPHY

When considering the visual language of photography for the GEAR UP brand, the provided images offer excellent examples of how to convey key messages and align with the brand's values. For a detailed understanding of our brand's overarching visual theme, ***please refer to page 13.***



Photo Criteria:

1. Authenticity
2. Diversity and Inclusion
3. Positive and Empowering
4. High-Quality

VISUAL LANGUAGE

GRAPHIC ELEMENTS

Our iconography style is a cornerstone of the GEAR UP visual language, designed to enhance clarity, improve user engagement, and maintain a modern aesthetic across all platforms. By adhering to these guidelines, we ensure our graphic elements are always consistent and reinforce our brand's approachable and informative nature.

Iconography:

The icons provided exemplify our preferred style:

Simplicity & Clarity: We utilize clean, minimalistic line art icons. This ensures immediate recognition and avoids visual clutter, making complex ideas easily digestible.

Modern & Contemporary: The flat design approach with a limited, purposeful color palette (e.g., the light blue background circle) gives our visual elements a fresh, contemporary feel that aligns with current design trends.

Purposeful Engagement: Each icon is crafted to directly support and visually represent key concepts related to GEAR UP's mission, such as identifying goals, college readiness, financial planning, and grant eligibility.



How Do I Identify Goals?



Does College Matter?



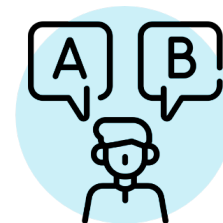
How Much Should I Budget?



How Do I Identify Goals?



Am I Eligible for Grants?



What Are My Options?



VISUAL LANGUAGE

GRAPHIC ELEMENTS *(CONT.)*

Application Guidelines for New Graphic Elements:

When creating or incorporating any new graphic elements, including icons, illustrations, or informational graphics for the website, presentations, or any GEAR UP document, always use this established iconography style as your primary reference. This ensures:

- **Brand Consistency:** All graphic elements will seamlessly integrate with our existing visual identity, reinforcing a cohesive and recognizable GEAR UP brand.
- **Enhanced Readability:** Consistent iconography aids in quick comprehension and improves the overall user experience across all our materials.
- **Professional Presentation:** Maintaining a unified graphic style elevates the professionalism and polish of our communications.



Explore. Plan. Achieve.

THANK YOU

GEARUP.WA.GOV | PO BOX 43430 917 LAKERIDGE WAY SW OLYMPIA, WA 98504-3430
360-753-7800