

WA State GEAR UP Funding Guidelines



Introduction

The U.S. Department of Education funds Washington State GEAR UP. This investment of taxpayer dollars means that the federal government must set up strong controls over grant projects to ensure the proper use of public funds. In addition to understanding federal requirements, you are expected to follow the policies of the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) GEAR UP (WAGU) program. WAGU has procedures and policies it must follow to comply with state and federal law. It is essential to rely on GEAR UP staff when the regulations are unclear.

WAGU Compliance

GEAR UP is subject to regulatory sources. WAGU guidance, policies, and procedures are aligned with federal and state requirements including the legislative guidance required of the U.S. Department of Education programs, found at www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/legislation.html; Uniform Guidance (2CFR200) for receiving and using federal awards to reduce administrative burden and improve outcomes, www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/guid/uniform-guidance/index.html; and the Washington State Administrative and Accounting Manual (SAAM) which provides control and accountability over the financial administrative affairs of the State of Washington. The policies and procedures in this manual are the minimum requirements that state agencies must meet. More information can be found at www.ofm.wa.gov/accounting/saam.

Time and Effort

All GEAR UP (GU) staff must complete a monthly time and effort form and/or a timesheet as required by school district policy and practice. School district employees will complete the form that their specific district uses to meet this requirement. Federal regulations require that every GU staff member whose salary is supported in whole or in part must document the time, effort, and activities during any given pay period.

Time as match: When you use in-kind personnel contributions as match, they must fulfill the same reporting obligations as if they were receiving federal funds.

GEAR UP Paid Staff Time

- GU staff paid with federal funds must be engaged in GU activities 100% of the time.
- GU staff may not be assigned lunch duty, hall duty, recess, or similar duties.
- GU staff are required to work the number of days and hours as assigned in the annual work plan. It is a misuse of Federal funds to release staff to coach student athletic/extracurricular activities or for any other reason while being paid by GU.
- GU staff may not be assigned to substitute for district staff while GU pays them.

Supplement, Not Supplant

GU regulations require that GU funds supplement, but not supplant, existing services or personnel. GU funds are intended to build school districts' capacity to create a college-going culture.

Therefore, GU funding may enhance existing initiatives or create new activities (supplement). GU funds cannot replace other federal, state, or local funding (supplant).

Examples:

- *For 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 GU funds to free up funding for PE equipment. This is supplanting and is not allowed.*
- *For several years, your school has purchased \$500.00 worth of new library books annually. You have been asked to use GU funds to pay for the books this year. This is supplanting and is not allowed.*
- *Your school purchases all materials annually required for instruction in core content courses, including textbooks and a software package. This year, the science teacher has requested that GU buy additional equipment to enhance learning and increase the rigor of the coursework. The school does not have funds available for this purchase. This is not supplanting and is allowed because, without GU funding, your school cannot make this purchase.*

Washington State GEAR UP Funds

You may use GU funds to pay for activities that support the WAGU goals and objectives, as outlined in the School District Interagency Agreement, Scope of Work, and the approved annual Work Plan and Budget. GU funds may only support GU-eligible students (all students in grades 7-12). No funds may be used for non-GU-eligible students (students in grades K-6) to participate.

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

- Allowable and necessary to implement the program?
- Reasonable?
- Allocable to program objectives?
- Compliant with the program's federal administrative regulations?

New Students

New students are considered GU students at the time of enrollment.

Homeschool or Alternative Program Students

Students enrolled in the district but not attending during the school day may be eligible to participate in GU activities. This will be determined in the Ineligible Student Verification process, which is completed each quarter.

Property of GEAR UP

All supplies, materials, and equipment purchased with GU funds are the property of the WAGU. They must be used exclusively to serve eligible GU students and remain with the program through the grant cycle. At the end of the grant cycle, WSAC may donate the remaining inventory to the school district for use with students like the GU population.