



# The Path

From GEAR UP Wyoming | Winter 2025 | Vol. 4.3



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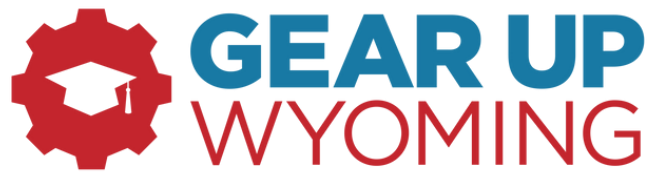
Our gears are always in motion at GEAR UP Wyoming, and winter is no exception. Read our newsletter to stay informed and up to date on all things GEAR UP Wyoming.

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## What is our mission?

GEAR UP Wyoming strives to increase the number of low-income students who graduate high school and enter a post-secondary educational institution to improve their access to career and life opportunities. [Visit our page!](#)

## Here are our winter updates:

### The Path to College

As we enter the new year, high school seniors are one step closer to graduation, and the next big milestone, college, is just around the corner. To ensure you're headed down *The Path* to success, take time to reflect on your progress and make sure you are on track for college.

By now, most of you should have submitted your college applications. If you've applied early, you may have already heard back, while regular decision applications are likely still open. If you haven't submitted your applications yet, make sure to submit them soon and confirm that all required materials have been sent.

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## The Path to College (cont'd)

The FAFSA should be at the top of your to-do list. If you haven't submitted it, do so as soon as possible. It's crucial for securing financial aid, and the sooner you complete it, the more aid you could qualify for.

Additionally, take the time to apply for local scholarships, many of which have deadlines early in the year. Now is also a good time to visit the campuses of your top schools, either virtually or in person, to get a feel for each environment. If interviews are required for admissions, be sure to schedule those soon.

Looking ahead, by May 1st, you'll need to decide which college to attend and submit your enrollment deposit. As you compare offers, consider factors like financial aid packages, campus life, and your chosen major. Once you've made your decision, you'll need to secure housing, select a meal plan, and register for orientation and classes. Don't forget to check on any health forms or immunizations required for enrollment.

Remember, college readiness is about more than just checking boxes. It's about preparing yourself mentally, emotionally, and financially for the challenges ahead. Stay organized, ask for help when needed, and remain focused on your goals. With the right preparation, your transition into college life will be smooth and successful. Keep up the hard work—you're almost there. The next chapter is waiting, and each step you take moves you further down *The Path* to your bright future!



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## Camp GEAR UP 2025!

Camp GEAR UP is scheduled to be held on the University of Wyoming (UW) campus in June 2025! We know that Camp GEAR UP is always a hit, and spots fill up fast, so you'll want to stay in the loop to make sure you reserve

your spot as soon as possible. Camp applications may be available as early as February, but ask your advisor to stay up to date on all things GEAR UP.

At Camp GEAR UP, students will stay in UW residence halls and enjoy a meal plan through the Washakie Dining Center for a fully immersive college experience. The camp offers an exciting and educational experience, with activities like campus tours, lectures, and fun events such as line dancing with the Cowboy Swing Club, to provide a glimpse into college life in and outside of the classroom. Don't miss your opportunity to join us for Camp GEAR UP 2025!



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## Supporting Students Through Winter

Winter is in full swing, and with it comes a new set of challenges for students, teachers, and community members to navigate. Transportation may be less reliable as the sub-zero nightly temperatures cause battery drainages. Walking commuters may elect to stay home to avoid trudging through the snow and, while school buses make an admirable effort to keep students on time, late arrivals and an increase in truancy are par for the course during winter. Of course, safety is the number one priority when it comes to winter travel, but how might you assist your students to arrive on time and prepared to learn?

Be observant. Take note of the types of clothing your students are wearing. Are they wearing summer clothing? Do they have a sturdy winter coat? Are they wearing soggy tennis shoes? The expense of winter clothing can be a huge limiting factor for some students. There is no expectation for teachers or counselors to single handedly clothe their students, but it helps to be aware of the local resources that might be available to students. Take note of any clothing closets available on school grounds and in your community. Many second hand stores offer voucher programs that allow low-income and otherwise under-resourced people take what they need, up to a predetermined dollar value.



Don't be afraid to start the conversation, while remembering that winter hardships are often invisible. If a student seems to be frequently arriving without a proper winter coat or footwear,

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## Supporting Students Through Winter (cont'd)

consider speaking to them privately, expressing concern, and offering help. It's crucial to approach these situations with sensitivity and respect. Frame the conversation around available support and resources that may help alleviate the burden.



Be patient with chronically absent or tardy students. Late arrivals can disrupt the classroom routine and absent students often need extra time to catch up on missed work. The whole classroom flows better when students are present, but many students have legitimate reasons to arrive late, especially during the winter. Even when students don't have a clear, justifiable explanation for their tardiness—perhaps they simply have an aversion to school—lack of empathy will only exacerbate the issue. A warm welcome, understanding, and patience can go a long way in easing their anxieties about being late.

In the end, the winter season is a time of heightened challenges, but it is also an opportunity for schools to demonstrate their commitment to the well-being of their students. By staying vigilant, supportive, and proactive, educators can help ensure that all students have the tools and support they need to succeed, regardless of the obstacles winter might bring.

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## Professional Development: Past, Present, and Future

**Past:** This November, GEAR UP Wyoming partnered with the Wyoming Association of Secondary School Principals (WASSP) to sponsor speaker Liesl Sisson at the WASSP Conference in Casper, held from November 10th to 12th. Sisson delivered an inspiring presentation on how educators can harness their own strengths, as well as those of their students and colleagues, to ignite passion, foster growth, and overcome challenges. Her message emphasized the importance of embracing individual gifts to unlock potential and exceed expectations. The conference was a success, with special guest appearances from State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Megan Degenfelder, and Wyoming's senior Senator, John Barasso.



**Present:** School counselors, now is the time to register for the 2025 Wyoming School Counselor Association (WySCA) Conference, scheduled for February 19th and 20th at the Ramkota in Casper. GEAR UP Wyoming is thrilled to sponsor Mark Perna, who will present "Unleashing Passion, Purpose, and Performance in Younger Generations." In this session, Perna will offer practical strategies for engaging students in a way that connects them to their education and motivates them to pursue purposeful career paths. By focusing on how to tap into students' intrinsic (cont'd)

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## Professional Development (cont'd)

motivations and align their strengths with their goals, Perna's presentation will equip counselors with the tools to inspire students to reach their full potential. You don't want to miss this invaluable opportunity to gain insights that will enhance your approach to student engagement and career guidance. [Follow this link for conference registration.](#)

Future: GEAR UP Wyoming understands that student success begins with informed educators, so we're always looking for ways to provide or sponsor professional development for teachers, staff, and administrators working with GEAR UP Wyoming students. If you have a professional development event in mind, or have identified an area of need, please email the GEAR UP Wyoming Professional Development Coordinator, Christian Cabral, at [ccabral1@uwyo.edu](mailto:ccabral1@uwyo.edu) to get the conversation started!



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