



# The Path

From GEAR UP Wyoming | Fall 2022 | Vol. 2.2



GEAR UP WYOMING IS FUNDED THROUGH A GRANT FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TOTALING \$3,430,000 ANNUALLY, WITH AN ADDITIONAL \$3,430,000 ANNUALLY PROVIDED BY IN-KIND & SCHOLARSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS

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GEAR UP Wyoming stays busy all year serving our participants. Check out the latest news:

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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 fall updates:

### FAFSA UPDATES:

As of October 1st, the [2023-2024 FAFSA application portal](#) is open! Seniors who plan to graduate from high school this spring should work with their guardians to complete the FAFSA as soon as possible. You've probably heard about the FAFSA ("Free Application for Federal Student Aid"). But why should you take the time to fill it out? Because you could earn thousands of dollars to go to college or university, that's why! Here are the types of funding:

- **Federal grants**, such as the Pell grant or the Supplemental Educational Opportunity grant. Receive thousands of dollars to go to college, and you don't have to pay the money back.
- **Federal loans**, which are great ways to offset college costs that aren't covered by your scholarships (such as living expenses). You usually need to pay loans back once you've earned your degree and gotten a job. But, there are also ways to make federal loans disappear! [Click here](#) to learn about federal loan forgiveness programs.



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### FAFSA UPDATES continued

- Work study awards, which provide part-time jobs to undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money and help pay education expenses. Bonus: you can often find jobs related to your major!

If you are having trouble completing your FAFSA, you can always reach out to your local GEAR UP coordinator or your high school counselor. Or just send us an email at [gearupwy@uwyo.edu](mailto:gearupwy@uwyo.edu)! Don't miss your chance and ask for help if you need it!

### GEAR UP 2023-2024 Scholarship Applications are Open!

If you're a senior in high school, it's time to apply to colleges, and also to apply for scholarships!

Did you know that GEAR UP Wyoming offers several scholarships to active GEAR UP participants to attend college both in-state and out-of-state?

**GEAR UP Federal Opportunity Award**

**Award Amount:** Up to \$800 per semester (depending on how many courses you take)

**Deadlines:** Opens October 1 - Closes June 1

**Requirements:**

- Must have participated in the GEAR UP program
- Must complete the FAFSA
- Can be used both in-state and out-of-state

**Length of Award:** 6 semesters for associates and 12 semesters for bachelors

[Click here](#) to apply for the GEAR UP Federal Opportunity Award.

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### GEAR UP 2023-2024 Scholarship Applications Continued



#### GEAR UP University of Wyoming (UW) Institutional Award

Award Amount: Up to \$5,500 per semester (depending on how many courses you take)

Deadlines: Opens October 1 - Closes April 1

#### Requirements:

- Must have participated in the GEAR UP program
- Must complete the FAFSA by January 15
- Must apply to attend UW

Length of Award: Up to 12 semesters

[Click here](#) to apply for the GEAR UP UW Institutional Award.

#### GEAR UP Community College Institutional Awards

Wyoming's seven community colleges set aside extra scholarships just for GEAR UP students.

For some colleges, all you have to do is mark that you were in GEAR UP when applying for all financial aid. Ask your local GEAR UP coordinator, or click one of the links below to learn more:

[Casper College](#)

[Central Wyoming College](#)

[Eastern Wyoming College](#)

[Laramie County Community College](#)

[Northwest College](#)

[Northern Wyoming Community College District](#)

[Western Wyoming Community College](#)

Have questions? Send them to us at [gearupwy@uwyo.edu](mailto:gearupwy@uwyo.edu). With the right planning, GEAR UP participants have the opportunity to get a good education with little to no debt. That's definitely a path worth taking.

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### GEAR UP Wyoming in the News!

GEAR UP Wyoming was featured in the Wyoming Truth series of articles titled “Wyoming Schools at a Crossroads.” In this edition, GEAR UP Wyoming Makes College Possible. Featuring stories from two previous GEAR UP students turned successful college students, this article provides insight into the demographic served as well as how GEAR UP offers more than just academic assistance, GEAR UP offers students hope.

Wyoming Truth interviewed former GEAR UP participant Christian Cabral to learn how the program helped her receive a full ride scholarship. Through academic advising, assistance with scholarship applications, and mock interviews Christian was more than prepared to advocate for herself through the scholarship application process for the highly sought-after Daniels Fund Scholarship - a scholarship that without doubt changed the trajectory of her post-high school career.



Despite the obstacles of being a first-generation student, Jose Atilano, a freshman at Northwest College spoke on his experience with GEAR UP and how the program left him feeling hopeful to break the generational cycles in his family. He spoke on how his experience with the program left him feeling prepared for college. The program offered him free services he would otherwise not be able to afford. With his newfound knowledge and preparation, Jose uses his skills to assist his colleagues who might not have received the same preparation.

[To read the full article click here!](#)

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### National GEAR UP Week

From September 26-30, GEAR UP Wyoming celebrated “National GEAR UP Week,” a week where the nation celebrates the federal GEAR UP program (from which GEAR UP Wyoming receives its annual project funding). As many of us know, the GEAR UP Wyoming grant provides supportive services to over 2000 students in well over 100 secondary schools across Wyoming, and in some of the most rural parts of our state.



GEAR UP Wyoming offices at community colleges across the state commemorated this week through social media fanfare, and by throwing events with students and families. Bighorn Radio Network also reported efforts to celebrate National GEAR UP Week at Northwest College Wyoming in Powell. The picture (above), shows GEAR UP staff celebrating by posing in front of the Teepee Fountain in Thermopolis, WY during a biannual professional development event.

However, this week reminds us that, even though GEAR UP is a grant, we mustn't take it for granted.

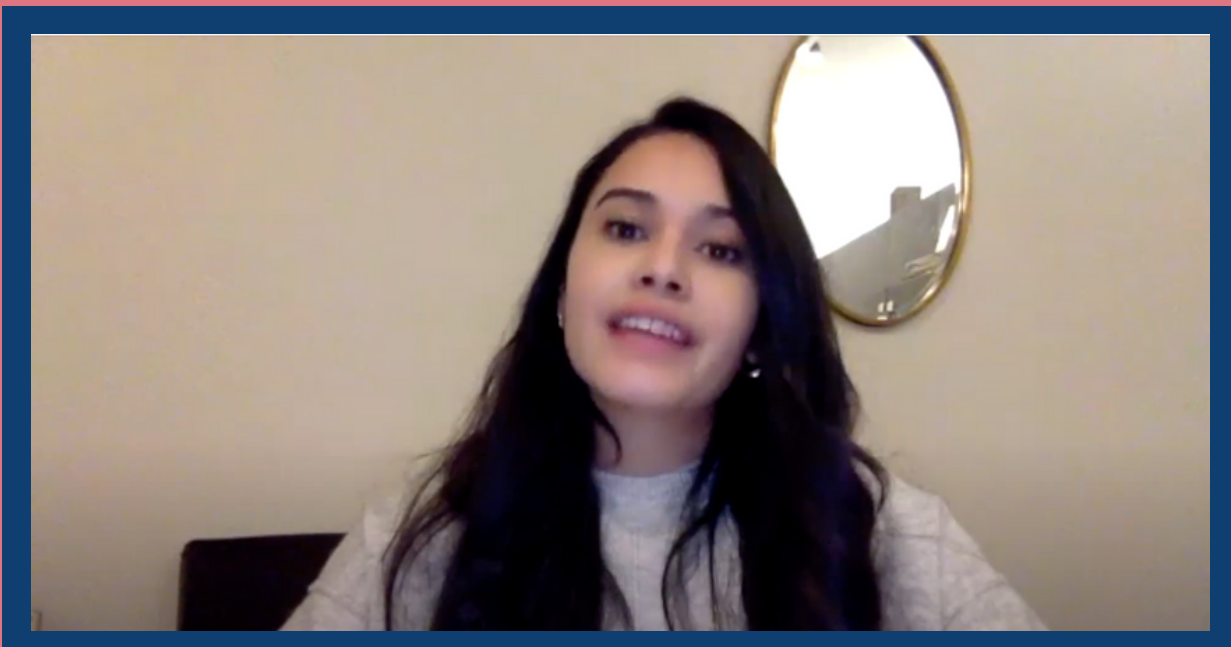
In FY 2022, Congress appropriated \$378 million for GEAR UP, a \$10 million increase over the prior year. Despite this increase, only a small fraction of eligible students are able to participate in the program. As a result of the growing demand for the program, access to GEAR UP has become extremely competitive (less than 1 in 5 applicants are funded) and remains persistently out of reach for many communities, despite their need for support. GEAR UP Wyoming is currently in its third cycle of grant funding, and the application to enter a fourth cycle will be submitted in 2023. Now, more than ever, it is important to raise awareness in Wyoming communities and legislators and key figures of the importance of this program.



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### Student Spotlight: Wendy



**It's Alex from GEAR UP Wyoming and I'm super excited to talk to Wendy, who was a GEAR UP student over 10 years ago. I will go ahead and let you tell us a little bit about you.**

Of course, thanks Alex. I grew up in Jackson Wyoming and then attended the University of Wyoming. I was actually born in Tlaxcala, Mexico but I was raised here. My parents immigrated when I was eight months old and I've been a Wyoming girl since then. I'm just very passionate about my career, and about education, and encouraging my community, especially students, the younger populations, to just continue their path to higher education.

**Would you mind telling us a little bit more about your experience with GEAR UP?**

I started as a freshman and then was very committed throughout the four years. All of the workshops I attended were around FAFSA, around scholarships, how to apply for scholarships. We took a lot of trips to the community colleges around the state. We took a few trips to the neighboring states, and that was really my first exposure and only exposure to a college campus. It was definitely an eye-opener and it was like me going and visiting college campuses. I saw myself there.

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### Student Spotlight: Wendy Martinez Continued

**When you ended up coming to the university of Wyoming what did you study and how was your experience pursuing your degree?**

Yeah so I focused on political science as my undergrad. It was a bachelor's degree in political science that I graduated with in 2015 and then stayed there at the university of Wyoming and then in 2018 I graduated with my masters degree in public administration and public policy. Through my connections that I was able to make early on with professors, through GEAR UP, I was able to secure a graduate assistantship that then paid for the extra two years in grad school.

**What did you do in 2018 when you graduated?**

I wanted to use my degree to give back to the community. So I came back to work for a non-profit. It turned out that Habitat for Humanity was hiring at the local affiliate and I ended up doing a case study exactly on the involvement of a non-profit on affordable housing, so I ended up using the case study as part of my interview. I got the job and then I've been there since. I am currently the director of homeowner services and community engagement

**What advice do you have for someone who might just be starting GEAR UP here in Wyoming?**

A lot of the times when we're talking GEAR UP and we're talking higher education it's always about excelling in your classes and getting that degree and that definitely that's a huge part of it, but it's also about the people you're going to meet during the experience. Connecting with those people later on could give you really good advice or open doors for you.

**To watch the full interview visit the [GEAR UP Wyoming YouTube page](#).**

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[uwyo.edu/gearup/](http://uwyo.edu/gearup/)

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