

# The Path



**From GEAR UP Wyoming | Summer 2023 | Vol. 3.1**



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 contributors

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GEAR UP Wyoming Staff have been busy all summer. Read our latest updates to learn what we've been up to this summer and what's to come!

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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 summer updates:

### Summer 2023 Highlights

This summer, GEAR UP staff worked hard to plan and execute some fun and educational events for GEAR UP participants. GEAR UP Wyoming had the amazing opportunity to provide selected applicants with an all-expenses paid trip to Boston, MA, for some college and historical monument touring. Students toured Boston University, Northeastern, and Brown as well as attended a Rockies vs. Red Sox game at the Fenway Ball Park.



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## Summer 2023 Highlights (cont'd)

This trip was a great opportunity for our Wyoming participants to see part of the country many of them had never seen before. After a long day of walking and touring the fun didn't stop there, as these landlocked lubbers got an opportunity to see the ocean for the first time. It was a quick trip that allowed our students to see some of the most historical and reputable universities the east coast has to offer.

Later, GEAR UP Wyoming had the opportunity to host the GEAR UP Summer Academy at the University of Wyoming for the second year in a row. Students from all over the state drove down from their respective towns for a week in the life of a college student. Students stayed in the dorms, ate at the cafeteria, attended workshops and classes, and still managed to find some time to have fun. With guest speakers such as Rockell Bartoli and Lamarr Womble, students learned how to perfect their scholarship essays as well as how to let go of the obstacles and self-doubts that hold them back. Students experienced many University of Wyoming resources such as the planetarium, the MakerSpace, and the Cowboy Swing club where students learned some line and square dancing basics.

GEAR UP Wyoming staff are constantly thinking of ways to better serve our students. Whether that be through activities and events such as the Boston trip and Summer Academy, or through career prep, tutoring services, and more, GEAR UP Wyoming works to get low-income and first-generation students into and through undergraduate programs. Keep an eye on our socials, and [subscribe](#) to our newsletter to stay updated on upcoming GEAR UP exclusive events and activities.

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## Back to School Tips



### i. Used unfinished school supplies

It's really easy to get caught up in the excitement of back to school shopping, and I know all of those new notebooks and pens look so much more enticing in their new packaging. Resist the temptation to buy all new school supplies and use up the rest of your old school supplies when you can.

By using the rest of your old supplies you can save both money and time. Much of the beginning of the school year is spent relearning content that was lost over the summer, content that is most likely still written down in your notebooks. Maybe last year you took Intro to Algebra and now this year you're taking Algebra I; those notes from last year are still going to be applicable to your current math class. Having those old notes on hand is going to make it a little easier for you to remember all of the content from last year. Only when you've truly reached the end of your notebooks and pens is it time to treat yourself to new supplies.

### ii. Make friends!

Of course we all want friends, and sometimes it's easier said than done, but having a friend or two in every class can be incredibly beneficial for everyone involved.

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## **Back to School Tips (cont'd)**

If you miss a day, having a trusty friend to ask for notes or to help explain the concepts you missed can mean the difference between a 75% and an 80% when quiz day comes around. When you don't understand a lecture, asking your teacher for further explanation is a great course of action, but teachers are busy people. Whether they're planning, prepping, or actively teaching one of their other classes, teachers are overworked and it's always a good idea to have a second course of action available to you. Having friends in every class also means that you essentially have a built in study partner. Making friends allows you to use each other's strengths to counter your weaknesses when studying, so get out there and make some friends today!

### **iii. Remember to start small**

As we get into the school year, the size and expected quality of assignments seems to grow exponentially. When you're staring at a checklist of assignments, getting them all done can quickly become overwhelming. Your nerves and resistance to starting a large assignment are completely understandable, but sometimes starting is the most difficult part of such a large task. If you have a week to write a ten page essay, you're not going to produce the highest quality of work if you procrastinate and don't actually start on the assignment until two days before it's due. Use all of the time allotted to increase the quality of your work; even if the first day all you're doing is jotting down themes and general ideas of the essay. It's better to start small than to not start at all, and who knows, once you've created an outline or completed the first few sets of math problems, the rest should come to you.

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## Changes to the FAFSA

The 2023-2024 school year is upon us, and with a new school year comes a new and improved FAFSA, known as “The Better FAFSA.” In order to make sure our students are as prepared as they can be, we as educators need to educate ourselves about some of the changes coming our way!



This year the FAFSA will open in December rather than its typical October date. This is to allow time for all of the bumps in the road to be sorted out for students to avoid any hiccups upon its release. Because the FAFSA is opening late, and some institutions may not be postponing their own scholarship FAFSA completion requirements, it is HIGHLY recommended that students and parents create their FSA ID before the FAFSA opening date. This is also due to a delay in verification between creating your FSA ID and when you may begin filling out the FAFSA. So, do your part to help students by encouraging them to create their FSA IDs before the new FAFSA becomes available in December.

To help streamline “The Better FAFSA,” the application process has been shortened. The Direct Data Exchange will replace the previous IRS Data Retrieval Tool and will reduce the number of questions families have to answer by pulling information from their previously filed taxes. This will include information and assets of all businesses and family farms, which differs from previous years when only family businesses with more than 100 employees were required to report asset information. Families must consent to the retrieval of information in order for the student to be eligible to receive Federal Financial Aid.

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## Changes to the FAFSA (cont'd)

More changes include:

- The Student Aid Report will now be known as the FAFSA Submission Summary and will include the Student Aid Index, Application Status, federal student aid eligibility, any flags or issues that arise, and a summary of FAFSA information. Tax information will no longer be included.
- The Student Aid Index (SAI) will be replacing the Expected Family Contribution and will include a negative score of up to - \$1,500. The SAI is expected to increase the number of Pell Grant recipients.
- Every contributor (Student, Parent, Spouse) will be required to set up multi-factor authentication using a phone number, email, or authentication app.

To stay up top date with the changes included in The Better FAFSA, check out the different trainings offered by NCAN which can be found at:

<https://www.ncan.org/page/better-FAFSA>

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