GEAR UP at a Glance
GEAR UP at a Glance

WHAT IS GEAR UP?
GEAR UP stands for “Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs.”

GEAR UP is a highly innovative program begun by Congress in 1998 that served 660,000 students in the 2008-2009 academic year low-income children nationwide.

GEAR UP differs from other college access programs:
1) GEAR UP raises the academic aspirations of entire cohorts of low-income children—not just selected individuals—and cultivates the motivation, knowledge, and skills they need to succeed along the pathway to college.
2) GEAR UP begins serving children early in their academic careers, beginning in the 6th or 7th grade, when students’ career and academic aspirations are at their peak.
3) GEAR UP continues to serve cohorts of students all the way through high school, preparing them to succeed in college.
4) GEAR UP is a working education partnership that enlists the involvement of parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and school administrators as well as community groups, business, labor, and places of worship. GEAR UP is based on the premise that if all students are to be college and career ready, none of us can stand idly by: Everyone has work to do to help low-income students enroll and succeed in college.
5) GEAR UP is locally relevant and responsive. The program recognizes that parents and local school districts—not Washington bureaucrats—are best equipped to teach children.

EXPLAINING GEAR UP TO YOUR COMMUNITY
GEAR UP is:
• An innovative community/education partnership created by Congress to help low-income students gain access to college.
• An innovative community/education partnership that helps whole grade levels of students beginning in middle school and continuing all the way through high school and into college.
• A federal program that provides the flexibility to innovate and develop more effective teaching strategies.

KEY GEAR UP MESSAGES
1) Because of GEAR UP, more schools are able to offer the kinds of rigorous coursework and college preparatory instruction that are crucial to a student’s ability to gain admission to and succeed in college.
2) Because of GEAR UP, more schools and educators are providing better instruction in math, science, and reading and are using technology to support student achievement.
3) Through GEAR UP we have learned that supplemental programs and services have the most impact when they are aligned with classroom instruction, teaching, and learning practices and are coordinated to help improve student achievement and academic performance, both of which are key to college enrollment and success.
4) GEAR UP has helped transform the relationship between colleges and universities and K–12 public schools. The program has provided university faculty and college administrators with opportunities to develop a closer working relationship with their K–12 colleagues. We hope that their experience of GEAR UP will improve the way institutions of higher education train future teachers and the way high schools prepare their students for college.
5) Given the early success of GEAR UP, it is imperative that we work together to increase its reach.
nationally so that more students and schools may benefit from the program’s unique and effective approach.

6) Although they are complementary access programs, GEAR UP differs from other federally-funded programs in that it uses a macro-level, cohort approach that works with schools and districts rather than a micro-level, targeted approach that works with individual students. Because GEAR UP’s cohort approach ensures that all students in a particular grade (or grades) are served, the program is inherently a vehicle for systemic change and innovation. GEAR UP is the federal government’s initial approach to supporting K–16 education models.

7) GEAR UP programs serve not only students but also the education needs of low-income families through academic and college counseling, parent involvement programs, and other activities that involve families in the education process.

WHY YOU SHOULD PROMOTE GEAR UP

There are plenty of reasons you should get involved in helping to promote GEAR UP. Here are just a few:

1) **It’s good for the nation.** GEAR UP has earned its place as one of the most innovative and inclusive federal education programs. Since 1999, it has served 1.2 million students in 48 states, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and other U.S. territories.

2) **It’s good for schools and students.** GEAR UP practitioners are reporting gains in student achievement within GEAR UP schools and are documenting ways in which interventions are creating system(s) change in schools and districts. That GEAR UP is helping to improve schools and public education is good news worth talking about with the media and your local community.

3) **It’s good for colleges and universities.** College presidents have said that increasing numbers of students arrive at their institutions poorly prepared and in need of remediation. GEAR UP provides extra academic support to help middle and high school students become proficient in the subjects that matter most, helping to reduce the number of college students who require remediation; this, in turn, should help reduce college costs.

4) **It’s good for the community.** GEAR UP brings together all kinds of people—local businessmen and women, community leaders, educators, clergy, parents—in the cause of improving student achievement. Unlike other programs of this type, GEAR UP is a true working partnership that seeks not just financial support but the active input and participation of everyone involved.

5) **It’s good for business.** Business leaders today are concerned about the significant cost of re-training high school graduates. GEAR UP is designed to increase students' proficiency in math, science, reading, and technology and so helps to better prepare them for college and the workplace.

6) **It’s good for you.** GEAR UP practitioners hold great promise for helping our nation meet this administration’s goal of increasing the percentage of Americans who hold a college degree. GEAR UP is seen by many educators and college access professionals as one of the most innovative new college access programs to be funded by Congress. GEAR UP is helping many students locally because you are making it happen in your community.
Communicating with Members of Congress
Communicating with Members of Congress

IN PERSON
As a GEAR UP grantee, you are permitted to meet with members of Congress and congressional staff to inform them, subject to certain guidelines, about the impact your GEAR UP program is having in their district and/or state. It is important that you ensure that:

1) federal funds do not subsidize your travel to their local offices; and
2) your discussions with congressional representatives and staff are factual.

GEAR UP grantees are prohibited from using federal funds to engage in lobbying. GEAR UP grantees may not use federal funds to attempt to influence elected officials or their staff with regard to the introduction, enactment, or modification of any legislation. This prohibition extends to any discussions about increased funding or appropriations for related programs.

To ensure compliance with all applicable restrictions on federal education grantees, NCCEP has consulted the U.S. Department of Education. The Department has confirmed that GEAR UP grantees **are permitted** to meet with their members of Congress or congressional staff for informational briefings, provided that grantees adhere to the rules described herein. If you decide to meet with your representative or his/her staff, you must do so on your own time, and you may not use federal funds to do so. **You must not use any federal funds for transportation to or from meetings with your elected officials or staff.** You may take public transportation provided you pay for it with funds other than federal grant monies.

The following list of Dos and Don’ts was developed by NCCEP to assist you in communicating effectively with members of Congress and congressional staff without violating any applicable federal lobbying restrictions.

**DO**
- **Plan your meeting.** Choose a facilitator who will be the primary spokesperson, and assign other speaking roles to share information.
- **Be prepared to spend only 15 minutes with your member or staffer and plan accordingly.** This is no time for long introductions. Remember to allow time to respond to questions.
- **Talk about the number of families and students served by your program** and the impact your efforts are having on student performance, college aspirations, parent involvement, etc.
- **Provide statistical evidence of your program’s impact and share personal stories** of students for whom GEAR UP has made a difference, e.g., “We’ve doubled the number of eighth graders enrolled in algebra. Alison Benton, one of those students, now hopes to be the first in her family to go to college.”
- **Discuss state, local, and private involvement in your program.** As appropriate, describe the role of community and business partners in helping you achieve your program’s objectives.
- To the best of your ability, **answer factually any questions the representative, senator, or staffer asks.**
- **Use this opportunity to build a relationship with your members of Congress and their staff.** Invite the member and staff to visit your program site and to use you as a resource. Be sure to thank the member and staff (including the receptionist) as you conclude your visit.

**DON’T**
- **Request increases (specific amounts or otherwise) in GEAR UP funding.** (As noted above, federal law and regulations prohibit using federal funds to attempt to influence specific legislation, including legislation that has not yet been introduced and federal appropriations, or spending, bills.)
- **Attempt to answer questions if you are unsure of the facts.** Offer to find the correct information and/or suggest NCCEP as a resource.
- **Feel slighted if you meet with staff rather than the member of Congress.** This is normal and should not be interpreted as a sign of disrespect. Staff members often are as knowledgeable about programs as their bosses.
- **Be intimidated by the legislative process or jargon.** Your expertise as a practitioner who works with students every day is of value to your members of Congress and staff. They have much to learn from you!
- **Do their jobs for them.** Members of Congress and staff often ask, “What should we cut to fund your program?” They were elected to make those decisions. Besides, you are prohibited from discussing program funding levels.
- **Overstay your welcome.** Members of Congress and staff keep hectic schedules—be considerate of their time.
- **Forget to let NCCEP staff know if we should follow up** by providing factual information or data requested during your meetings.
VISITING CAPITOL HILL OR LOCAL STATE OFFICES*

Meeting with a member of Congress or congressional staff is an effective way to convey a message about a specific legislative issue. Below are some suggestions for planning a visit to a congressional office.

1) **Plan your visit carefully.** Be clear about what it is you want to achieve. Determine in advance which member or committee staff you need to meet with to achieve your purpose.

2) **Make an appointment.** To schedule a meeting with a member, contact the Appointment Secretary/Scheduler. Explain your purpose and whom you represent. Congressional staff can more readily arrange a meeting if they know what you wish to discuss and your relationship to the area or interests represented by the member.

3) **Be prompt and be patient.** When it is time to meet with a member, be punctual and be patient. It is not uncommon for a congressman or congresswoman to be late or to have a meeting interrupted; their schedules are full. If interruptions do occur, be flexible. Continue your meeting with the member’s staff if and when the opportunity presents itself.

4) **Be prepared.** Whenever possible, bring to the meeting information and materials that support your position. Members are required to take positions on many different issues but sometimes lack important details about the pros and cons of a particular one. For that reason, it is helpful to share information and examples that demonstrate clearly the impact of a particular issue or piece of legislation.

5) **Be compelling.** Members of Congress want to represent the best interests of their districts or states. Whenever possible, demonstrate the connection between what you are requesting and the interests of the member’s constituency. Describe how you or your group may be of assistance to the member. If it is appropriate to do so, ask for a commitment.

6) **Be responsive.** Be prepared to provide additional information in the event the member expresses interest or asks questions. Follow up the discussion with a thank-you letter that outlines the different points addressed, and include any additional information and materials requested.

TALKING POINTS FOR YOUR MEETING

Expect to visit for 15 to 20 minutes. If your meeting is with a senator or representative rather than his or her staff, the meeting likely will be even shorter. Do not feel slighted: They are very busy, and scheduling a meeting at all can be a challenge. Be aware that time runs out quickly, and do everything possible to make the most of the opportunity to share important information. If your meeting is with a staff person, be sure to leave materials that can be passed along to the senator or representative.

The following outline is intended to help you build relationships with your congressional leaders, but you know your group and your project best!

1. **Designate a facilitator to briefly introduce everyone. (2-3 minutes)**
   a. Names and program roles are sufficient.
   b. This part can be lengthy, so politely move things along.
   c. If you have more than eight (8) people in a meeting, introduce several in groups (“these folks are parents, we have three teachers from the middle school,” etc.)

2. **Describe why you applied for a GEAR UP grant. (1-2 minutes)**
   a. Share concerns about student achievement (or other reasons).
   b. Share goals pertaining to high school graduation and college attendance rates.

3. **Briefly describe your program. (2-3 minutes)**
   a. What services/activities are provided?
   b. How many students/families are served?
   c. What are your program(s) demographics?

4. **Describe your program’s accomplishments. (3-5 minutes)**
   a. Support your description with facts.
   b. Demonstrate the impact of GEAR UP, e.g., your program receives $450,000 annually but brings the program’s value to more than $1 million per year as a result of the matching requirement.

*Adapted with permission from NAICU.*
5. Share personal stories. (3-5 minutes)
   a. Share stories (one to three, depending on their length) about students and families that have benefited from your GEAR UP program.
   b. Be sure to use success stories and not sob stories; the goal is to put a human face on all the education policy and jargon heard on Capitol Hill.
   c. Be sure to make use of supporting materials—including photographs—particularly from students and parents.

6. Describe your plans for the future of the program.
   a. What are your goals for student achievement?
   b. What is your timeline for accomplishing those goals?

7. Invite the member of Congress to visit the program.

8. Report back to NCCEP Government Relations at (202) 530-1135, or via e-mail to GEARUP@edpartnerships.org.

BY TELEPHONE
To find your senators’ and representative’s phone numbers, use the searchable online congressional directories (www.house.gov and www.senate.gov) or call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask for your senators’ and/or representative’s office(s).

Remember that telephone calls usually are taken by a staff member, not the member of Congress. Ask to speak with the aide who handles the issue about which you wish to comment.

After identifying yourself, tell the aide you would like to leave a brief message, such as: “Please tell Senator/Representative (Name) that GEAR UP is having a positive impact in our community and I hope that GEAR UP remains one of the (Senator’s/Representative’s) legislative priorities.

You also will want to share with them examples/statistics that show how GEAR UP has had a positive impact in your community. Ask for your senator’s or representative’s position on the bill. You also may request a written response to your telephone call.

IN WRITING
The letter is the most popular means of communication with a congressional office. Heeding the following suggestions will help maximize your letter’s effectiveness:

1) State your purpose for writing in the first paragraph. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it accordingly, e.g., GEAR UP.
2) Be courteous and explicit, and include key information, citing examples to support your position.
3) Use the letter templates included in this toolkit as a guide.

Addressing Correspondence to a Senator:

The Honorable (full name)
______ (Rm. #) ______ (name of) Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

Addressing Correspondence to a Representative:

The Honorable (full name)
______ (Rm. #) ______ (name of) House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

Note: When writing to the Chair of a Committee or the Speaker of the House, it is proper to address him or her as “Dear Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairwoman” or “Dear Mr. Speaker.”
LETTER-WRITING TIPS

1) **Send NCCEP duplicate copies of all correspondence you send to the White House and Congress so we can compile them and use them to support your program as we work with policy makers in Washington, DC. To expedite our receipt of your letters, fax copies to us at (202) 530-0809 prior to mailing them.**

2) **To maximize the effect of your letters, make them unique.** The more your letters reflect your personal voice and experience, the more effective they will be.

3) **Have a clear message.** Thank members of Congress for their previous support and request their continued support of GEAR UP and NCCEP.

4) **Be compelling, but do not overstate your case.** White House and congressional staff process volumes of correspondence every day. To have the greatest impact, keep your letter clear and concise.

5) **Clearly explain why policy makers should continue to support GEAR UP.** You can do this in many ways, for example, by pointing out what a difference GEAR UP has made in your family, school, and/or community; demonstrating the effectiveness and value of the program using relevant statistics and/or examples; describing how GEAR UP programs have enhanced student achievement and sustained improvements in your school; describing your program’s connection to business and industry; describing the importance of early college awareness; and/or explaining how GEAR UP emphasizes collaboration, cooperation, and coordination among partners that, prior to GEAR UP, had little opportunity to work together.

6) **Emphasize the uniqueness of GEAR UP.** Many congressional and administrative leaders argue that GEAR UP is redundant: They seek either to eliminate it altogether or to fold it into other programs, such as TRIO. In order to ensure the continued success of GEAR UP, it is important to highlight the uniqueness of GEAR UP programming as well as its emphasis on local control and flexibility.

7) **Tell your story.** Remember that one of the advantages of involving as many people as possible in a letter-writing campaign is that everybody doesn’t have to say everything. Speak from your experience, and keep your message simple.

8) **Put a human face on GEAR UP.** In sharing your program and experience, focus on the impact GEAR UP is having on the lives of students and their families. Remind your audience that GEAR UP helps real people.

9) **Provide as many specific and detailed examples as possible.** Provide your audience with compelling examples that provide poignant insight into the impact of your work.

10) **Enclose memorabilia and/or newspaper articles with your letters.** GEAR UP memorabilia (e.g., pens, posters, hats, or t-shirts) can help make your program come alive to your audience. If you do choose to send memorabilia, please use good judgment: Extravagance is not appropriate when taxpayers’ money is in use. Student art and letters are best. Newspaper articles let policy makers know that GEAR UP has widespread public support.

11) **Be efficient.** With a few minor variations, your message can be tailored to each of several audiences: the White House, congressional leaders, and members of the appropriations subcommittees in the House and Senate. The idea is to flood Washington, DC, with letters of support for GEAR UP while taking into account individual programs’ time and resource limitations.

12) **Have fun, and do the right thing.** Know that your advocacy work on behalf of low-income students is your civic, moral, and professional responsibility. Helping low-income families help their children get a college education is the right thing for all of us to do. This is democracy in action!

**E-MAIL**

All members of Congress utilize e-mail. Most often you will receive an automatic acknowledgment that your message has been received. At a later date, you will receive a personalized written response. E-mail correspondence should address the Member as “Representative” or “Senator” and should include your name, address, and district.

**FAX**

A fax is given the same attention as a letter delivered by the U.S. Postal Service. Remember to include your contact information (name, address, and district). Most likely, you will receive via regular mail a written response from the member of Congress.
Sample Letters
GEAR UP Director Letter - U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education

[Date]

The Honorable David Obey, Chairman  The Honorable Todd Tiahrt, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education  Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education
Appropriations Committee  Appropriations Committee
2358B Rayburn House Office Building  2441 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515  Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

On behalf of the [your partnership name] located in [your city and state], our partners [# or list here—only include if it helps], and [the (number and description) beneficiaries of your program], I applaud your subcommittee’s continued support for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). As a GEAR UP [your role/title/relationship] I believe it is important that you learn about the significant impact this program is having in our community. As you finalize the Fiscal Year 2011 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriation bill, please know that we strongly believe that GEAR UP is extremely effective and virtually irreplaceable. GEAR UP is truly a powerful education reform model that is improving the quality of our middle and high schools, making higher education a possibility for [thousands/hundreds] of our students.

Since GEAR UP was created by Congress in 1998, we have been empowered to better prepare more of our students to enter into and graduate from college by implementing effective academic programs that target students who may otherwise be left behind their more affluent peers. Through the creation of partnerships between families, community-based organizations, businesses, schools, and institutions of higher education, we are able to have a far greater impact than working in isolation. By working together towards common goals, we are ensuring that students stay in school, raise their academic and career aspirations, succeed in challenging courses, and receive quality counseling as they prepare for higher education.

While GEAR UP is undoubtedly strengthening the future of our nation by readying 1.4 million students from low-income communities for a college degree, I would like to share how GEAR UP is having an impact in [City/State]. [Describe the impact of GEAR UP on your students/community/school. Be concise (no more than two paragraphs) yet specific. This is your opportunity to share a GEAR UP story close to your heart and thereby to “put a human face” on the program. You should include a fact sheet that highlights your local program’s primary accomplishments and relevant quantitative data.]

On behalf of our partnership, we hope that we can count on your continued support of GEAR UP and thank you for making education a legislative priority. Together, we can ensure that a quality education is within the reach of all children in our community, and nationwide.

GEAR UP is succeeding in [city] and I urge you to contact me at [insert your phone number] should you have any questions or should you wish to visit our GEAR UP schools to meet with students, teachers, and families that benefit from the GEAR UP program.

Sincerely,

[First and Last Name]
[Your Role/Title]

CC: (Local Representatives)
Enclosures: (Fact Sheets, Invites to events, etc.)
Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Enzi:

On behalf of the [your partnership name] located in [your city and state], our partners [# or list here—only include if it helps], and [the (number and description) beneficiaries of your program], I applaud your subcommittee’s continued support for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). As a GEAR UP [your role/title/relationship] I believe it is important that you learn about the significant impact this program is having in our community. As you prepare the Fiscal Year 2006 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriation bill, please know that we strongly believe that GEAR UP is extremely effective and virtually irreplaceable. GEAR UP is truly a powerful education reform model that is improving the quality of our middle and high schools, making higher education a possibility for [thousands/hundreds] of our students.

Since GEAR UP was created by Congress in 1998, we have been empowered to better prepare more of our students to enter into and graduate from college by implementing effective academic programs that target students who may otherwise be left behind their more affluent peers. Through the creation of partnerships between families, community-based organizations, businesses, schools, and institutions of higher education, we are able to have a far greater impact than working in isolation. By working together towards common goals, we are ensuring that students stay in school, raise their academic and career aspirations, succeed in challenging courses, and receive quality counseling as they prepare for higher education.

While GEAR UP is undoubtedly strengthening the future of our nation by readying 1.4 million students from low-income communities for a college degree, I would like to share how GEAR UP is having an impact in [City/State]. [Describe the impact of GEAR UP on your students/community/school. Be concise (no more than two paragraphs) yet specific. This is your opportunity to share a GEAR UP story close to your heart and thereby to “put a human face” on the program. You should include a fact sheet that highlights your local program’s primary accomplishments and relevant quantitative data.]

On behalf of our partnership, we hope we can count on your continued support of GEAR UP and thank you for making education a legislative priority. Together, we can ensure that a quality education is within the reach of all children in our community, and nationwide.

GEAR UP is succeeding in [city] and I urge you to contact me at [insert your phone number] should you have any questions or should you wish to visit our GEAR UP schools to meet with students, teachers, and families that benefit from the GEAR UP program.

Sincerely,
[First and Last Name]
[Your Role/Title]

CC: (Local Representatives and Senators)
Enclosures: (Fact Sheets, materials, etc.)
GEAR UP Director Letter - House & Senate
All Members of Congress

[Date]

The Honorable [Senator/Representative Full_Name]
[Address]
Washington, DC [zip]

Dear [Senator/Representative] [Last_Name]:

On behalf of the [your partnership name] located in [your city and state], our partners [# or list here—only include if it helps], and [the (number and description) beneficiaries of your program], I applaud your continued support for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). As a GEAR UP [your role/title/relationship] I believe it is important that you learn about the significant impact this program is having in our community. As you and your colleagues prepare the Fiscal Year 2006 [House/Senate] Appropriation bill, please know that we strongly believe that GEAR UP is extremely effective and virtually irreplaceable. GEAR UP is truly a powerful education reform model that is improving the quality of our middle and high schools, making higher education a possibility for [thousands/hundreds] of our students.

Since GEAR UP was created by Congress in 1998, we have been empowered to better prepare more of our students to enter into and graduate from college by implementing effective academic programs that target students who may otherwise be left behind their more affluent peers. Through the creation of partnerships between families, community-based organizations, businesses, schools, and institutions of higher education, we are able to have a far greater impact than working in isolation. By working together towards common goals, we are ensuring that students stay in school, raise their academic and career aspirations, succeed in challenging courses, and receive quality counseling as they prepare for higher education.

While GEAR UP is undoubtedly strengthening the future of our nation by readying 1.4 million students from low-income communities for a college degree, I would like to share how GEAR UP is having an impact in [City/State]. [Describe the impact of GEAR UP on your students/community/school. Be concise (no more than two paragraphs) yet specific. This is your opportunity to share a GEAR UP story close to your heart and thereby to “put a human face” on the program. You should include a fact sheet that highlights your local program’s primary accomplishments and relevant quantitative data.]

On behalf of our partnership, we hope we can count on your continued support of GEAR UP and thank you for making education a legislative priority. Together, we can ensure that a quality education is within the reach of all children in our community, and nationwide.

GEAR UP is succeeding in [city] and I urge you to contact me at [insert your phone number] should you have any questions or should you wish to visit our GEAR UP schools to meet with students, teachers, and families that benefit from the GEAR UP program.

Sincerely,
[First and Last Name]
[Your Role/Title]

CC: (Local Representatives and Senators)
Enclosures: (Fact Sheets, materials, Invites to events, etc.)
Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

As a parent of a student participating in [your GEAR UP partnership name] located in [your city and state], I applaud your subcommittee’s continued support for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). I believe it is important that you learn about the significant impact this program is having on my [son/daughter/children] and in our community. As you finalize the Fiscal Year 2011 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriation bill, please know that I strongly believe that GEAR UP is making a meaningful difference in my child’s life and urge you to continue to support the GEAR UP program for years to come.

[Describe the impact of GEAR UP on your child/family/community/school. Be concise (no more than two paragraphs) yet specific. This is your opportunity to “put a human face” on the program. Be sure to emphasize the ways in which GEAR UP is helping your child academically (such as summer programs, tutoring, mentoring, college campus visits, etc.) You may wish to also describe the services and/or local programs that GEAR UP provides to parents and families.]

On behalf of families and students served by [your partnership name], we hope that we can count on your continued support of GEAR UP and I and my family thank you for making education a legislative priority. Together, we can ensure that a quality education is within the reach of all children in our community, and nationwide.

Thank you for the work you do. Please don’t hesitate to call me at [insert your phone number] if you’d like further information about our local GEAR UP program and all it has done for my [son/daughter/children].

Sincerely,

[First and Last Name]  
[Address]
Parent Letter - U.S. Senate
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education

<Date>

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman
Committee on Health, Ed., Labor & Pensions
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education
United States Senate Committee on Appropriations
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Enzi:

As a parent of a student participating in [your GEAR UP partnership name] located in [your city and state], I applaud your subcommittee’s continued support for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). I believe it is important that you learn about the significant impact this program is having on my [son/daughter/children] and in our community. As you finalize the Fiscal Year 2011 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriation bill, please know that I strongly believe that GEAR UP is making a meaningful difference in my child’s life and urge you to continue to support the GEAR UP program for years to come.

[Describe the impact of GEAR UP on your child/family/community/school. Be concise (no more than two paragraphs) yet specific. This is your opportunity to “put a human face” on the program. Be sure to emphasize the ways in which GEAR UP is helping your child academically (such as summer programs, tutoring, mentoring, college campus visits, etc.) You may wish to also describe the services and/or local programs that GEAR UP provides to parents and families.]

On behalf of my family and my child served by [your partnership name], we hope we can count on your continued support of GEAR UP and thank you for making education a legislative priority. Together, we can ensure that a quality education is within the reach of all children in our community, and nationwide.

Thank you for the work you do. Please don’t hesitate to call me at [insert your phone number] if you’d like further information about our local GEAR UP program and all it has done for my [son/daughter/children].

Sincerely,

[First and Last Name]
[Address]
[Date]

The Honorable [Senator/Representative Full_Name]
[Address]
Washington, DC [zip]

Dear [Senator/Representative] [Last_Name]:

As a parent of a student participating in [your GEAR UP partnership name] located in [your city and state], I applaud your continued support for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). I believe that it is important that I share with you about the significant impact that GEAR UP is having on my [son/daughter/children] and in our community. It is especially important as you and your colleagues finalize the Fiscal Year 2011 Senate Appropriation bill; please know that I strongly believe that GEAR UP is making a meaningful difference in my child’s life and urge you to continue to support the GEAR UP program for years to come.

[Describe the impact of GEAR UP on your child/family/community/school. Be concise (no more than two paragraphs) yet specific. This is your opportunity to “put a human face” on the program. Be sure to emphasize the ways in which GEAR UP is helping your child academically (such as summer programs, tutoring, mentoring, college campus visits, etc.) You may wish to also describe the services and/or local programs that GEAR UP provides to parents and families.]

On behalf of my family and [child/children] served by [your partnership name], we hope we can count on your continued support of GEAR UP and we thank you for making education a legislative priority. Together, we can ensure that a quality education is within the reach of all children in our community, and nationwide.

Thank you for the work you do. Please don’t hesitate to call me at [insert your phone number] if you’d like further information about our local GEAR UP program and all it has done for my [son/daughter/children].

Sincerely,

[First and Last Name]
[Address]
GEAR UP Partner Letter - U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education

[Date]

The Honorable David Obey, Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education
Appropriations Committee
2358B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education
Appropriations Committee
2441 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

As a [type of partner: business, community based organization, etc.] partner of [GEAR UP partnership name] located in [your city and state], I applaud your continued support for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). As a GEAR UP partner I believe it is important that you learn about the significant impact this program is having in our community. As you and your colleagues prepare the Fiscal Year 2011 [House/Senate] Appropriation bill, please know that we strongly believe that GEAR UP is extremely effective and virtually irreplaceable. GEAR UP is truly a powerful education reform model that is improving the quality of our middle and high schools, making higher education a possibility for thousands of our children.

Since GEAR UP was created by Congress in 1998, we have noticed how our schools with GEAR UP programs better prepare more of our students to enter into and graduate from college by implementing effective academic programs that target students who may otherwise be left behind their more affluent peers. Through our partnership with the [GEAR UP partnership name] we are able to have a far greater impact than working in isolation. By working together towards common goals, we are ensuring that students stay in school, raise their academic and career aspirations, succeed in challenging courses, and receive quality counseling as they prepare for higher education.

While GEAR UP is undoubtedly strengthening the future of our nation by readying 1.4 million students from low-income communities for a college degree, I would like to share with you that GEAR UP is having an impact in [City/State]. [Describe the impact of GEAR UP on your students/community/school. Be concise (no more than two paragraphs) yet specific. This is your opportunity to share a GEAR UP story close to your heart and thereby to “put a human face” on the program. You should include a fact sheet that highlights your local program’s primary accomplishments and relevant quantitative data.]

We hope we can count on your continued support of GEAR UP and thank you for making education a legislative priority. Working together with GEAR UP, we can ensure that a quality education is within the reach of all children in our community, and nationwide.

GEAR UP is succeeding in [city] and I urge you to contact me at [insert your phone number] should you have any questions.

Sincerely,
[First and Last Name]
[Your Role/Title]

CC: (Local Representatives and Senators)
Enclosures: (Fact Sheets, materials, etc.)
Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Enzi:

As a [type of partner: business, community based organization, etc.] partner of [GEAR UP partnership name] located in [your city and state], I applaud your continued support for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). As a GEAR UP partner I believe it is important that you learn about the significant impact this program is having in our community. As you and your colleagues prepare the Fiscal Year 2011 [House/Senate] Appropriation bill, please know that we strongly believe that GEAR UP is extremely effective and virtually irreplaceable. GEAR UP is truly a powerful education reform model that is improving the quality of our middle and high schools, making higher education a possibility for thousands of our children.

Since GEAR UP was created by Congress in 1998, we have noticed how our schools with GEAR UP programs better prepare more of our students to enter into and graduate from college by implementing effective academic programs that target students who may otherwise be left behind their more affluent peers. Through our partnership with the [GEAR UP partnership name] we are able to have a far greater impact than working in isolation. By working together towards common goals, we are ensuring that students stay in school, raise their academic and career aspirations, succeed in challenging courses, and receive quality counseling as they prepare for higher education.

While GEAR UP is undoubtedly strengthening the future of our nation by readying 1.4 million students from low-income communities for a college degree, I would like to share with you that GEAR UP is having an impact in [City/State]. [Describe the impact of GEAR UP on your students/community/school. Be concise (no more than two paragraphs) yet specific. This is your opportunity to share a GEAR UP story close to your heart and thereby to “put a human face” on the program. You should include a fact sheet that highlights your local program’s primary accomplishments and relevant quantitative data.]

We hope we can count on your continued support of GEAR UP and thank you for making education a legislative priority. Working together with GEAR UP, we can ensure that a quality education is within the reach of all children in our community, and nationwide.

GEAR UP is succeeding in [city] and I urge you to contact me at [insert your phone number] should you have any questions.

Sincerely,
[First and Last Name]
[Your Role/Title]

CC: (Local Representatives and Senators)
Enclosures: (Fact Sheets, materials, etc.)
GEAR UP Partner Letter - House & Senate
All Members of Congress

[Date]

The Honorable [Senator/Representative Full_Name]  
[Address]  
Washington, DC [zip]

Dear [Senator/Representative] [Last_Name]:

As a [type of partner: business, community based organization, etc.] partner of [GEAR UP partnership name] located in [your city and state], I applaud your continued support for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). As a GEAR UP partner I believe it is important that you learn about the significant impact this program is having in our community. As you and your colleagues prepare the Fiscal Year 2011 [House/Senate] Appropriation bill, please know that we strongly believe that GEAR UP is extremely effective and virtually irreplaceable. GEAR UP is truly a powerful education reform model that is improving the quality of our middle and high schools, making higher education a possibility for thousands of our children.

Since GEAR UP was created by Congress in 1998, we have noticed how our schools with GEAR UP programs better prepare more of our students to enter into and graduate from college by implementing effective academic programs that target students who may otherwise be left behind their more affluent peers. Through our partnership with the [GEAR UP partnership name] we are able to have a far greater impact than working in isolation. By working together towards common goals, we are ensuring that students stay in school, raise their academic and career aspirations, succeed in challenging courses, and receive quality counseling as they prepare for higher education.

While GEAR UP is undoubtedly strengthening the future of our nation by readying 1.4 million students from low-income communities for a college degree, I would like to share with you that GEAR UP is having an impact in [City/State]. [Describe the impact of GEAR UP on your students/community/school. Be concise (no more than two paragraphs) yet specific. This is your opportunity to share a GEAR UP story close to your heart and thereby to “put a human face” on the program. You should include a fact sheet that highlights your local program’s primary accomplishments and relevant quantitative data.]

We hope we can count on your continued support of GEAR UP and thank you for making education a legislative priority. Working together with GEAR UP, we can ensure that a quality education is within the reach of all children in our community, and nationwide.

GEAR UP is succeeding in [city] and I urge you to contact me at [insert your phone number] should you have any questions.

Sincerely,
[First and Last Name]  
[Your Role/Title]

CC: (Local Representatives and Senators)
"I probably would have said ‘Skip it, I’m not going,’ but I actually had a chance to experience what college was about... all because of GEAR UP."

GEAR UP Student - Chicago GEAR UP Alliance