



IowaCollegeAid.gov
Your Financial Aid Connection

NEWS RELEASE

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GEAR UP Iowa Announces \$2,600 Renewable Scholarship *Eligible GEAR UP Iowa students to receive up to \$2,600 a year for college*

Des Moines, IA., February 21, 2013 – GEAR UP Iowa, a program administered by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission (Iowa College Aid) and funded through a six-year federal Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant, announced today the dollar amount for the scholarship component of its college access and readiness program. Eligible GEAR UP Iowa students will receive up to \$2,600 each year, for up to four years, to attend the colleges of their choice.

To be eligible for the GEAR UP Iowa Scholarship, a student must be part of the GEAR UP Iowa cohort and:

- Have a high school diploma, GED, or home school diploma;
- Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen;
- Be 22 years of age or younger;
- Be enrolled in at least 3 semester hours in an undergraduate program at an eligible college or university; and
- Must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

GEAR UP Iowa's mission is to significantly increase the number of cohort students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education following high school graduation. The GEAR UP Iowa program began serving a cohort of seventh grade students during the 2008-2009 academic year at partner schools in 18 Iowa communities with greater than 50 percent of their student population participating in the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program. The approximately 7,000 GEAR UP Iowa students, now high school juniors, many of whom are from economically disadvantaged and/or academically at-risk backgrounds, are in more than 150 high schools across the state. GEAR UP Iowa has worked with partner schools over the past five years to help prepare students for success in postsecondary education. Now the students will have significant scholarships to help make the dream of education beyond high school a reality.

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“Research confirms the importance of overcoming income and information barriers to higher education,” explained Karen Misjak, executive director of Iowa College Aid. “GEAR UP Iowa has been working with these students for the past five years, providing information and services to ensure they are on the path to postsecondary success,” said Misjak. “With such a significant amount available through the GEAR UP Iowa Scholarship, we are so excited that we can impact financial barriers as well.”

High school graduates from middle- and low-income families are significantly less likely to enroll in two-year or four-year colleges than graduates from high-income families. Approximately 82 percent of high school graduates from families in the top 20 percent of the income scale enroll in college, compared to 66 percent for families in the middle and just 50 percent for families in the bottom 20 percent of the income scale.¹ The GEAR UP Iowa Scholarship, when combined with other federal and state financial aid, can help increase college enrollment of GEAR UP Iowa students.

The majority of GEAR UP Iowa cohort students attend high school in one of the following communities: Cedar Rapids, Clinton, Columbus Junction, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Denison, Des Moines, Diagonal, Jefferson, Keokuk, Marshalltown, Ottumwa, Perry, Sioux City, Storm Lake, Walnut and Waterloo.

More information on GEAR UP Iowa and the Scholarship can be found on GEAR UP Iowa’s website, www.GEARUPIowa.gov. In addition, families with questions on planning, preparing and paying for college can contact Iowa College Aid at 877-272-4456 or by accessing Iowa College Aid’s website, www.IowaCollegeAid.gov

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About the Iowa College Student Aid Commission

Iowa College Aid provides college access, financial literacy, and outreach services to Iowa’s students and families as they plan, prepare and pay for college. Iowa College Aid also administers state scholarship, grant, work study, and loan forgiveness programs totaling over \$60.0 million annually; provides I Have A Plan Iowa™, the state-designated career information system, free to all Iowans; partners with financial institutions in the state to offer an online financial literacy platform free to all Iowa high schools; conducts research and distributes higher education data; and offers Iowans assistance in obtaining student financial aid and college-related information. Additionally, Iowa College Aid is the administrator of the Federal GEAR UP Grant, a multi-year state-wide grant which is being used to provide early awareness programming and outreach initiatives to thousands of Iowa’s students and families. Through its role, Iowa College Aid also serves as the state-designated administrator of the U.S. Department of Education’s College Access Challenge Grant, which is designed to increase the college-going culture in Iowa. Iowa College Aid is also responsible for registering postsecondary institutions and other instructional schools under Iowa Code Chapter 261B and sections of Chapter 714. More information is available at www.IowaCollegeAid.gov.

¹ National Center for Education Statistics. The Condition of Education, 2010. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/tables/table-trc-1.asp>