



**COLORADO**  
Gov. John Hickenlooper



**COLORADO**  
Department of  
Higher Education

## For Immediate Release

Office of Gov. John Hickenlooper

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# Gov. Hickenlooper announces Colorado is among six states to receive federal GEAR UP grant

*The \$35 million award will power pre-collegiate programs for seven years*

DENVER — Monday, Oct. 29, 2018 — Gov. Hickenlooper and the Colorado Department of Higher Education celebrated Colorado's win as one of six states to receive a federal GEAR UP grant that will power pre-collegiate programming for up to 5,000 students across the state—the fourth consecutive award Colorado has received since 1999.

Spread across seven years, the \$35 million grant will support [15 high schools](#) that offer intensive student services, including mentoring and advising, concurrent enrollment opportunities and assistance with college admissions. Half of the award amount will fund scholarships for GEAR UP participants as they transition to postsecondary education.

"Colorado continues to receive this prestigious award because we continue to show impressive results," said Governor John Hickenlooper. "GEAR UP's success shows us that, with some academic and financial support, students seize the opportunity to continue their education and give back to our state."

The program has dramatically improved outcomes for Colorado GEAR UP students, who mostly come from low-income, first-generation backgrounds. GEAR UP participants are more likely to graduate and continue their education than their peers; the class of 2017 boasted a 95 percent graduation rate, and 86 percent of GEAR UP students went on to college, apprenticeship program or the military compared to just 56.5 percent of Colorado high school seniors.

GEAR UP, which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, is a national program administered by the U.S. Department of Education that provides grants to states and partnerships that serve high schools with historically low college-going rates. Colorado GEAR UP students begin their program in ninth-grade and receive guidance through their first year of college.

"Colorado has set an ambitious goal to close the disparities in educational attainment—chiefly among white and Latinx and Hispanic groups—by 2025," said Dan Baer, executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education. "By leveraging this proven model, Colorado GEAR UP directly supports the students who need it most."

Currently, Colorado GEAR UP operates in several Denver metro area school and in rural communities, including Rocky Ford, Pueblo, Montezuma and Fort Lupton. Many GEAR UP students come from families that have little experience navigating higher education.

“During my high school career, GEAR UP worked towards guiding me and giving me whatever tools or knowledge I needed to figure out what path I wanted to take in life. They taught me a lot about financial aid, applying for scholarships, applying to colleges, getting ready for the ACT exam and tips about what I might expect while in college,” said Paola Garcia, a first-generation GEAR UP alumna who currently attends the University of Northern Colorado. “The campus has become a home away from home. Without GEAR UP, I would feel very lost and alone.”

For more information on Colorado GEARUP, visit [www.coloradogearup.org/](http://www.coloradogearup.org/).

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