



FREQUENTLY ASKED



QUESTIONS?

What is the GEAR UP College Tuition Waiver?

The GEAR UP college tuition waiver is a last-dollar “tuition only” waiver available to the members of the GEAR UP Birmingham (GUB) cohorts, upon successful completion of high school, who meet the specified criteria for college admission. The GEAR UP college tuition waiver is also available to the parents/legal guardian(s) of GEAR UP Birmingham students who are currently enrolled in the GEAR UP cohort who qualify for admission at any institution or technical college within the Alabama Community College System (ACCS).

Eligibility

Initial Eligibility: Parent/Legal Guardian

- Must be the legal guardian of a GUB cohort student currently enrolled in the GUB Program (verified by your child’s GEAR UP cohort)*
- Must enroll in a public community or technical college in the state of Alabama no later than May 31, 2022
- Must meet all admission requirements at the desired public community or technical college in the state of Alabama
- Must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (fafsa.ed.gov)
- Must demonstrate financial need (have a tuition balance remaining once all Federal Grant funding, scholarships, and gift aid have been applied towards the student’s tuition balance)
- Must be a resident of Alabama/or Active Military with a child who is a member of the GUB cohort*

*Child must be actively enrolled in a GUB cohort no later than August of his/her 11th grade year and remain actively enrolled until successful graduation.

Renewal Eligibility: Parent/Legal Guardian

- Must make Satisfactory Academic Progress towards a degree or certificate
- Must maintain continuously enrolled status unless granted an exception by the institution
- Must maintain a minimum cumulative college GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale
- Must have an updated FAFSA on file and continue to demonstrate financial need (have a tuition balance remaining once all Federal Grant funding, scholarships, and gift aid have been applied towards the student’s tuition balance)

- Must provide an updated parent letter from your GEAR UP cohort verifying your student's continued participation in the GEAR UP cohort. Please check with your GEAR UP cohort for GEAR UP requirements for parent/legal guardian(s).

Initial Eligibility: Student

- Must graduate an active member of a GUB cohort from a participating school*
- Must enroll in any institution or technical college within the Alabama Community College System within 1 year of graduating high school
- Must meet all admission requirements at the desired public community or technical college within the Alabama Community College System
- Must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (fafsa.ed.gov)
- Must demonstrate financial need (have a tuition balance remaining once all Federal Grant funding, scholarships, and gift aid have been applied towards the student's tuition balance)
- Must be a resident of Alabama or Active Military and graduate as a member of a GUB cohort*

Renewal Eligibility: Student

- Must make satisfactory academic progress towards a degree or certificate
- Must maintain continuously enrolled status unless granted an exception by the institution
- Must maintain a minimum cumulative college GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale
- Must have an updated FAFSA on file and continue to demonstrate financial need (have a tuition balance remaining once all Federal Grant funding, scholarships, and gift aid have been applied towards the student's tuition balance)

NOTE: No recipient may receive the GEAR UP college tuition waiver for longer than the amount of credit hours required to complete one Certificate or Associate program. A maximum of 82 attempted hours with no repeats. (Whichever comes first)

*Must be actively enrolled in GUB cohort no later than August of your 11th grade year and remain actively enrolled until successful graduation.

I'm currently pursuing a certificate or degree in a community or technical college in Alabama, is this program for me?

Student

No, the GEAR UP college tuition waiver is only available to students who graduate from one of the GEAR UP cohorts and meets all of the GEAR UP college tuition waiver eligibility requirements.

Parents/Legal Guardians

Yes, as long as you meet all of the legal guardian eligibility requirements and are enrolled in any institution or technical college within the Alabama Community College System, you may use the GEAR Up college tuition waiver to complete your degree or certificate. The tuition waiver application must be received before your college's deadline for the semester you are applying and will only be applied from that point forward. The tuition waiver will not retroactively pay for already completed semesters.

I have already earned a certificate or degree (Associate's, Bachelor's, or Master's), can I return to school using the GEAR UP College Tuition Waiver?

Individuals who already have a certificate or degree (Associate's, Bachelor's, or Master's) are not excluded from using the tuition waiver to return to school. If you fall within this category you must complete a tuition waiver verification application which can be obtained from your child's site facilitator located at their school. Your application once submitted, will be further reviewed by an advisory committee. All applicants will be notified by letter of the advisory committee's decision.

If I complete a short-term or long-term certificate program and received the GEAR UP College Tuition Waiver, am I eligible to return to complete additional credentials using the GEAR UP College Tuition Waiver?

Yes, if you have completed a short-term certificate program, you may continue your education towards a long-term certificate or degree. If you have completed a long-term certificate program, you may continue your education towards a degree. To continue receiving the benefit you must seek a certificate/degree under the same program. The GEAR UP college tuition waiver will only provide funding for one degree a maximum of 82 credit hours attempted no repeats (whichever one comes first). Any eligible individual wishing to continue their education must be enrolled in a public community or technical college in the state of Alabama no later than May 31, 2022.

How is the GEAR UP College Tuition Waiver Applied?

The GEAR UP college tuition waiver is a last-dollar "tuition only" waiver. The dollar amount of the waiver will be determined once all other financial resources have been exhausted such as: Federal Pell Grant, Institutional Scholarships, Outside Scholarships and any other gift aid.

If the total cost of tuition is covered by federal grants, scholarships, and gift aid, the student at that time will not be eligible to receive the tuition waiver.

If the student has a remaining tuition balance once all Federal Grants, scholarships, or gift aid has been applied, the tuition waiver will cover the remaining cost of tuition only at any institution or technical college within the Alabama Community College System.

What expenses will I be responsible for?

The GEAR UP college tuition waiver can only be applied towards "tuition". The student will be responsible for all institution fees, program fees, room and board, transportation, books, and all other school related expenses.

Is the GEAR UP College Tuition Waiver available to students who are enrolled less than full time?

Yes, the tuition waiver is available to students who are enrolled less than full time. To receive the tuition waiver you must be enrolled in at least 6 credit hours or more.

Is there a Max Number of Hours the Tuition Waiver will Pay for Each Semester?

Yes, the tuition waiver will pay up to 19 credit hours a semester. If a student chooses to take more than 19 hours a semester, they will be responsible for the additional tuition expenses.

Does the GEAR UP College Tuition Waiver cover remedial courses?

Yes, the GEAR UP college tuition waiver will cover remedial courses as long as they are required for you to enroll in courses required for your degree/certificate. The need for you to enroll in remedial courses will be based on your admissions test scores (ACT/SAT) and/or your placement test scores (ACCUPLACER). See the admissions office at your college for more information regarding remedial courses and placement testing.

When do I need to apply for the GEAR UP College Tuition Waiver? Is there an application deadline?

One can apply for the GEAR UP college tuition waiver as soon as they have been admitted to their desired college and have completed the FAFSA. In order to be considered for the tuition waiver, your application for the waiver, FAFSA, and all outstanding FAFSA requirements must be on file at your college's financial aid office. For specific deadline dates and processing times, please contact your desired college or visit their website.

How do I apply for the GEAR UP College Tuition Waiver?

Parent/Legal Guardian: Must complete a Guardian Tuition Waiver Verification Application. This document can be obtained from your child's school. Once, this is completed you will then receive a Guardian Tuition Waiver Letter from your GEAR UP cohort. This letter must then be taken to the community or technical college, of your choice, within the Alabama Community College System. Your college will then assist you with the final steps in the application process.

Students: Please check back for additional information.

How often do I have to Renew my GEAR UP College Tuition Waiver? How do I renew?

Students must submit a tuition waiver application once each academic year. An application can be obtained from your college's financial aid office. An updated FAFSA must be on file and all outstanding FAFSA requirements must be submitted and reviewed before your renewal application can be processed. For specific deadline dates and processing times, please contact your desired college or visit their website.

Parent/Legal Guardians must submit a tuition waiver application and an updated parent letter verifying your student's continued participation in the GEAR UP cohort each semester you are enrolled in college. An application can be obtained from your college's financial aid office. An updated FAFSA must be on file and all outstanding FAFSA requirements must be submitted and reviewed before your renewal application can be processed. For specific deadline dates and processing times, please contact your desired college or visit their website.

How will I be notified of my award?

Individuals will be notified by their college once their award package has been created. For specific information on how your college notifies students of their award, please contact your desired college's financial aid office or visit their website.

How do I Get a Parent Letter?

Parent letters are generated and sent to you by your GEAR UP cohort team. Please see your local GEAR UP cohort representative or click on your GEAR UP cohort link to find your site facilitator's contact information:

GEAR UP Birmingham (<http://www.gearupbham.org/schools>)

Can I use my Tuition Waiver to pay for the summer semester?

Yes, after applying any remaining financial aid, scholarships and/or gift aid the tuition waiver can be applied. The waiver will cover tuition costs up to 6 credit hours for the summer semester.

Will the Tuition Waiver pay for dual enrollment during high school?

No, the waiver is only applicable after high school graduation when a student is fully admitted to their desired college and eligible for federal student aid (Title IV funding). Talk to your high school counselor for other dual credit funding opportunities available at your school.

What certificates or degree programs are eligible for the GEAR UP college Tuition waiver?

One may use the GEAR UP college tuition waiver for any certificate or degree program offered at any institution or technical college within the Alabama Community College System that is eligible for Title IV funding. Check with your desired college for more information about the different certificate and degree programs they offer.