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Tennessee Announces \$11.68 Million in Awards for GEAR UP TN College Readiness Grants

NASHVILLE - April 18— Students in 15 Tennessee counties will benefit from over \$11.68 million in funding to support college access and success efforts thanks to a federal grant. The funding is part of the U.S. Department of Education's Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant, which aims to increase the number of low-income students in Tennessee who are accessing and succeeding in higher education. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission, which secured the federal grant, announced the communities that will be a part of Tennessee's GEAR UP project, GEAR UP TN, following a competitive selection process.

Selected GEAR UP TN middle and high schools are located in the following counties: Anderson, Bradley, Campbell, Davidson, Fayette, Haywood, Henry, Jackson, Johnson, Lincoln, Meigs, Overton, Polk, Robertson, and Shelby. GEAR UP TN will provide services in 32 middle schools and 18 high schools statewide. In total, over 23,000 middle and high school students will directly benefit from GEAR UP TN services through 2024.

GEAR UP TN will provide academic readiness and college access services to a cohort of 3,500 students in participating schools. Students in the GEAR UP TN cohort will receive tutoring, career guidance, comprehensive college advising, and mentoring that will continue through their first year of postsecondary education.

Additionally, over 3,250 high school seniors at participating high schools will receive GEAR UP TN support during each year of the grant. Statewide services, including resources for fostering a college-going culture and a college access and success website, www.CollegeforTN.org, will serve over 35,000 students across Tennessee.

"We are thrilled to work closely with these 15 communities through the GEAR UP TN grant," said Mike Krause, executive director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. "Each of these communities brings a willingness and readiness to innovate and work relentlessly to ensure their students are ready to succeed in college."

This is Tennessee's third GEAR UP grant. Tennessee's first GEAR UP TN project, which began in 2005, resulted in a 22.8 percent increase in college-going rates in the nine rural school districts. Communities served by Tennessee's second GEAR UP TN grant, which began in 2012, have shown impressive results, including over 9 percentage points of growth in college-going rates since 2012. Tennessee was one of ten states awarded a GEAR UP grant as part of the 2017 competition.

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The Tennessee Higher Education Commission was created in 1967 by the Tennessee General Assembly. The Commission develops, implements, and evaluates postsecondary education policies and programs in Tennessee while coordinating the state's systems of higher education. There are nine public universities, two special purpose institutes, 13 community colleges, and 27 colleges of applied technology in Tennessee that educate nearly 250,000 students annually.