

Match Guidance for Schools Receiving Maine State GEAR UP Funds

Below are questions we have had from our liaisons and other school personnel. We have addressed these questions to the best of our knowledge. We have also attached a more detailed description of match that may be useful as you are sorting out what you can certify.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Match contributions need to benefit GEAR UP students and be in line with grant goals and objectives. If the reason for its existence is -NOT- GEAR UP or if it doesn't serve GU students, then it probably doesn't count.
- If the person, item, etc is utilized by more than just GU students, you must calculate the % of GU use, you can't count the entire thing (this is done automatically in the online database).
- EVERYTHING must be documented! The school must keep documentation of everything shown as match, including time sheets, receipts, and letters.
- One activity may have match that should be reported in different categories. For example, expenses for college visits/cultural trips (% based on # of GU students)
 - a. Mileage (report in travel)
 - b. Buses (report in travel)
 - c. Volunteers (report in consultants/contracts)
 - d. College staff who talk with students (report in consultants/contracts)
 - e. Supplies and misc expenses (report in materials, supplies and gift certificates)

Certifying Match/In Kind

Legislation authorizing GEAR UP grant funding requires all state and partnership grant recipients to match the annual grant award 1:1 (one dollar of match for every federal dollar received). Matching contributions can be in the form of cash or documented in-kind contributions. Matching contributions *cannot* be fulfilled by using other federal funds or those that are used as match for other grants or projects.

We expect that contributions are entered by schools/partners on a monthly basis, and certified by the superintendent or other qualified administrator at the end of the school year. Certification guarantees that the match/in kind contributions are allowable and that supporting documentation for all contributions will be available for three years beyond the end of the grant (through 2014 in this case.)

Forms for Recording Match/In Kind

GEAR UP programs are required to maintain uniform records of all matching contributions. Standardized online forms used for the GEAR UP in-kind match will allow the Maine Support Network and the Maine Department of Education to document contributions in a consistent manner. These forms can be accessed using your login and password at www.gearupmedata.org.

The GEAR UP Match Forms are provided to enable partners to maintain accurate records of all allowable contributions such as personnel time, travel, equipment, materials and supplies, consultants and contracts, and other contributions received during each grant period that are not funded from federal sources.

A portion of the district yearly plan includes the budget, which documents estimated match contributions for the school year. As funds are expended, the online forms need to be completed monthly to show actual expenditures.

Match/In Kind details and FAQs by category:

I. Personnel

Personnel can include time donated by any member of someone who a staff member of your organization or school (teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, support staff, etc.)

****Important!!!! For any time that is counted, a signed time and effort sheet must be kept on record.*

Q: Can GEAR UP liaison time count as match?

A: Only the portion of their salary that is NOT paid with GEAR UP dollars or other federal funds could count. If the GEAR UP Liaison is fully paid by GEAR UP dollars, you may count contributions of time that exceed full-time and are not paid in overtime.

Q: Can administrator time count as match?

A: Yes, the percentage of their time spent on GU work can be counted as long as it is not paid by the GU budget or other federal funds.

Q: What about teachers?

A: Teacher time can ONLY count if they are doing GEAR UP work outside of their regular work day. This is true even if they receive NO funds from GEAR UP.

Q: And guidance counselors? Can their time count?

A: This depends on their contract with your school. If guidance counselors are considered as administrators, the rules for counting administrator time apply. If they are considered teachers, the rules for counting teacher time apply.

Q: What about benefit packages – can that count as match?

A: For district/organization employees, you can include an equal percentage of their fringe benefit package as match. For example, if an employee spends 10% time on GEAR UP work, you can also count 10% of their fringe benefit package and put that dollar amount in the "employee benefits" column. Again, this can only count if they are not paid out of the GEAR UP budget or other federal funds.

Q: Can professional development count as match?

A: For liaisons: if paid for out of the district budget, and not GU, this can count. PD workshops attended by teachers/staff outside the normal workweek that impact GU initiatives/goals can also count. Also, if a GU teacher attends a GU workshop during the normal workweek and the school pays for a sub, the cost of the sub is match.

Q: What about staff meetings attended by GU Liaisons?

A: This does not count unless it is outside regular work hours in their contract.

Q: What about teaching Early College? If this is a new thing, as a result of GU, can the % of teaching time count?

A: If it's not paid for out of the GEAR UP budget or other federal dollars, then yes! And, because it's something that was started because of GU it can count for all kids, not just GU kids. In general though, teachers' time cannot count unless it's outside of the school day. This exception is made because it's something that was initiated by GEAR UP and has been sustained by the school.

Q: I don't have access to the person's salary to calculate the percentage. How do I figure out how much their time is worth?

A: Exact amounts are always best, but if that is not possible there is an auto-calculate option in the database that you can use. You need to select the “employee type” and the number of hours spent on GU work, and it will auto-calculate based on average hourly wages for that position as reported by the Maine Department of Labor.

2. Travel

This covers travel expenditures not funded with your GEAR UP allocation. The Maine state mileage rate is .40/mile. You may use this figure or a district approved rate to calculate the contribution.

3. Equipment

Equipment is defined as a single item that exceeds \$5,000.00. If an item is under that amount, please enter it under materials and supplies.

4. Materials, Supplies & Gift Certificates (and waivers!)

Contributions of materials and supplies that benefit GEAR UP students or associated personnel can be counted. For example, the cost of laptops and other technology that is funded with local dollars should be recorded here at the percentage of time used by GEAR UP students and/or faculty and staff. Use of school fax, copier, desk chair etc. can count as match but documentation is necessary to show the rate, rental, per page amount, etc.

Gift certificates donated to the GEAR UP program can count as match, as well as the amount of any discounts received for products or services.

Waivers received by GEAR UP students for college applications as well as the SAT and other standardized tests can count as match.

Q: What about tuition and fees that are covered by Early College for ME? ****new information****

A: Early College for ME funds are already used to match the federal Perkins grant at the state level, so unfortunately we cannot use any Early College for ME funds as match.

Q: What about technology utilized by GU liaisons (e.g. computers at the school, AT room, software)

A: The percentage that supports GEAR UP students can count. If it's something that GEAR UP created and has been sustained by the school, the entire amount can count, but documentation of this must be clear and approved by the program director.

Q: What about graphing calculators funded by Great Maine Schools.

A: Because Great Maine Schools is not federally funded, the % that support GEAR UP can count as match.

Q: Can curriculum materials such as College Ed count as match since they are clearly in line with GU goals and objectives?

A: Yes! As long as they're not paid for out of the GEAR UP budget or other federal funds (does this sound like a broken record yet?)

Q: What about supplies purchased with MELMAC or other non-federal grant money?

A: Yes these can count as well.

Q: Do the materials have to be only for GEAR UP students in order for it to count as match or can we count the % for GEAR UP?

A: We can count the % that were GU -- so you have to enter the total number of students and the # of GU students for each contribution, except for scholarships (those have to be only offered to GU students)

5. Consultants and Contracts

Services donated or purchased with non-federal funds to be used for GEAR UP program initiatives. Aspirations initiatives, professional development, etc. funded with local dollars. This is the section for people not employed at the school district who volunteer their time or who are not paid with GU/federal dollars.

Q: Mentors – Do their hours count as match?

A: If they are volunteering, this falls under that category.

Q: Volunteers, Chaperones

A: Unless they are specialized in some way or offering a certain expertise, volunteers count at the minimum wage rate (auto calculated in the database using values from the Department of Labor)

Q: College Personnel (during college trips) do some colleges do their own in-kind?

A: Our college partners can submit match forms to us, and if they do this would duplicate the match (which is bad!) But, since we don't currently have match forms from them schools may count it. If in the future colleges send us match forms we will let you know.

Q: If a professional gives a GU school a lower rate for their services, can the discount count as match?

A: Yes! The difference between that rate and their usual rate can be counted as match.

Documentation of this reduced rate is necessary.