Federal Access Programs

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education's three federal college access programs: GEAR UP, Educational Talent Search, and Educational Opportunity Center, help first-generation and low-income students understand and access postsecondary opportunities and support statewide college access information and programs.

	Population Served	Services Provided
Montana GEAR UP	Direct service to ~4,400 students annually at 12 middle and high-school districts and into their first year in college. Districts are eligible to participate if they have high shares of low-income, first generation, rural or indigenous students. All students in the following districts can receive program supports. 1. Libby 2. Thompson falls 3. St. Regis 4. Superior 5. Arlee 6. St. Ignatius 7. Browning 8. Rocky Boy 9. Box Elder 10. Pryor 11. Hardin 12. Lodge Grass	<u>District Services</u> Supports district staff who provide academic support in math and writing, college and career planning, and financial aid awareness programming. Starting with the 2025 cohort, participants are eligible for a one-time $1,000 scholarship. <u>Statewide Services</u> • FAFSA Completion programming through Apply Montana • Support for the 1-2-Free Dual Enrollment Program • The MUS College Access Arc of Events
Educational Talent Search	Direct service to ~1,300 students annually in four service regions. Students may receive educational talent search services if they are first in their family to attend college, are free and reduced-price lunch eligible, or otherwise demonstrate financial need. 1. Blackfeet – Browning and Heart Butte Public Schools 2. Crow – Hardin and Lodge Grass Public Schools 3. Flathead – Polson, Ronan, and St. Ignatius Public Schools. Two Eagle River School. 4. Great Falls – Paris Gibson, CMR HS, Great Falls HS, North MS, East MS	Talent Search supports six pre-college advisors, who provide educational tutoring, guidance on middle and high school course selection, career counseling, financial aid resources, and college and scholarship information. Participants can attend college tours, educational field trips and learn about different career opportunities.
Educational Opportunity Center	Direct service to ~850 across 11 southwestern Montana counties. Provides services to adult learners, youth aging out of foster care, current or retired military personnel, and low-income and/or first-generation seeking to enroll in college.	College application and financial aid counseling, career workshops, connection to local resources, including adult and vocational education, and academic supports like tutoring.

Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education | 560 N. Park Ave., PO Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620 | (406) 449-9124 | www.mus.edu