27% of West Virginians have earned an associate’s degree or higher.  

49% of jobs in West Virginia will require postsecondary education by 2018.  

15 to FINISH WEST VIRGINIA  
Through its CFWV initiative, the Higher Education Policy Commission launched “15 to Finish,” a system-wide effort to support on-time graduation and timely degree completion. 15 to Finish is a call to action encouraging students to take a full course load every semester. All public four-year colleges are supporting the awareness campaign.  

Counselor & Educator Training  
Community Outreach  
Partnership Building  

CFWV’s Higher Education Readiness Officers (HEROs) program empowers students to be postsecondary advocates in their communities. HEROs students participate in intensive leadership workshops and learn to support inclusive and engaging educational environments. HEROs student groups are active in 14 high schools across West Virginia.  

MAJOR INITIATIVES:  
• One-stop college planning web portal, cfwv.com  
• Counselor and educator training programs NEARLY 500 INDIVIDUALS TRAINED IN 2014  
• College Application and Exploration Week 3,900* STUDENTS APPLIED, OCT. 20-24, 2014  
• College Goal Sunday FAFSA workshops 1,850 RECEIVED FINANCIAL COUNSELING, FEB. 9, 2014  
• Statewide Student Success Summit 300+ EDUCATION PARTNERS CONVENE, JULY 2014  

In 2014, CFWV launched an innovative pilot project to provide students with personalized reminders and college counseling by text message. 900+ students received counseling via text in the project’s first year.  

Hi! It’s Jess w/ CFWV. Did u know WV 4-year colleges require either the ACT or SAT? Need to take the ACT? Reg. by Jan 9 for the Feb test – http://bit.ly/1t43VMm  

Do you have to take it for 2 year colleges?  

No – it’s not required for admission. But did you know you can use the PROMISE scholarship at 2 year colleges? You might want to take it to try to qualify for that. CFWV.com offers free test prep!  

1. United States Census (2009)  
2. Georgetown University, Center on Education and the Workforce (2010)  
3. WVHEPC, Text Messaging Project Participation Data (2014)  
4. WVHEPC, College Application & Exploration Week Data (2014)  
5. WVHEPC and US, Department of Education, FAFSA Completion Data (2014)  
6. Google Analytics, College Foundation of West Virginia (2014)  

More than 60,000 students learned about college options during College Application and Exploration Week. More than 225 elementary, middle, and high schools, and adult basic education classes participated.  

55% of WV 12th graders completed a FAFSA in 2014, up six percentage points over the past two years.  

A central component of the CFWV initiative is WV’s one-stop college access web portal, CFWV.com. In 2014, more than 290,700 individuals visited CFWV.com, which features information about colleges, scholarships, and more.  

CFWV.com  
ADMINISTERED BY THE WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION  

SERVICES & OBJECTIVES:  

ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE:  

87,000+ college applications have been submitted through the CFWV.com portal since the site’s launch in October 2009.  

WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION, DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS • (304) 558-0655 • CFWV@HEPC.WVNET.EDU
West Virginia GEAR UP is a federal grant program aimed at assisting students in “Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs.”

The Commission’s first GEAR UP project launched in 2008 and continued through the 2014-15 academic year. This fact sheet highlights outcomes achieved during that project.

**Good news!** The Commission received its second GEAR UP grant in fall 2014. This new project will serve upwards of 13,000 students and continue through 2021.

**TARGET AUDIENCES:**
- First-generation students
- Low-income students
- Parents of these students
- Educators, counselors, administrators, and community leaders working with these students

**STUDENTS SERVED:**
During the Commission’s first GEAR UP project (2008-14), the program provided services to more than 13,000 students in Boone, Clay, Lincoln, McDowell, Mingo, Roane, Summers, Webster, Wirt, and Wyoming counties.

**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, GEAR UP Annual Survey (2014)**
**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, Senior Opinion Survey (2012)**
**West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, GEAR UP Participation Data (2014)**

**84%**
94% of GEAR UP students in the class of 2014 report having spoken with someone regarding the availability of financial aid to help pay for college.

**When you turn your dreams into goals, they can become a reality.**

12th grade student, describing his takeaway from a GEAR UP student leadership workshop
River View High School, McDowell Co.

**COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE**
GEAR UP provides information sessions on the cost of college, the availability of financial aid, and financial planning and literacy.

Students statewide consistently overestimate the cost of tuition at West Virginia’s public colleges.

However, GEAR UP students are far more likely to know the true cost of pursuing higher education and to be informed about financial aid resources and opportunities.

**GEAR UP Students**
**All WV Students**

Percentage of students who are able to provide an accurate estimate of the cost of tuition.

54% 25.6%

Percentage of students who feel informed about financial aid resources.

FEDERAL LOANS
PELL GRANTS
PROGRESS SCHOLARSHIP
HIGHED GRANT

70% 65% 70% 79% 79% 77% 66% 52%

GEAR UP Students All WV Students

**ASPIRATIONS**

When the GEAR UP program started in 2008, only 63% of parents of students in the class of 2014 expected their child to earn a two-year degree or higher. Now 87% of those same parents expect their child to earn a degree.

**MENTOR PROGRAM**

Can we talk?

Since 8th grade, 38% of GEAR UP students in the class of 2014 have participated in WV GEAR UP’s mentoring program. GEAR UP mentors have dedicated over 5,953 hours of extra support to these students.

Nearly 6,000 students visited a college campus between 2008 and 2014 as a result of the GEAR UP program.

**WEST VIRGINIA HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY COMMISSION, DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS**