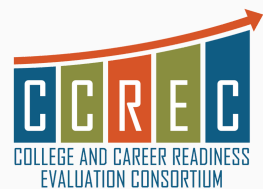# College and Career Readiness Evaluation Consortium

Data. Research. Evaluation.

What is CCREC? The College and Career Readiness Evaluation Consortium (CCREC) is a member organization that works to examine the impact of GEAR UP. The aim is to build a culture of evidence-based knowledge stemming from a committed learning community. CCREC fosters collaboration among grantees with the goal of demonstrating the success of GEAR UP at the local, state, and national level. Twenty-eight state and partnership grants from 19 states across the U.S. are currently members of the CCREC community.
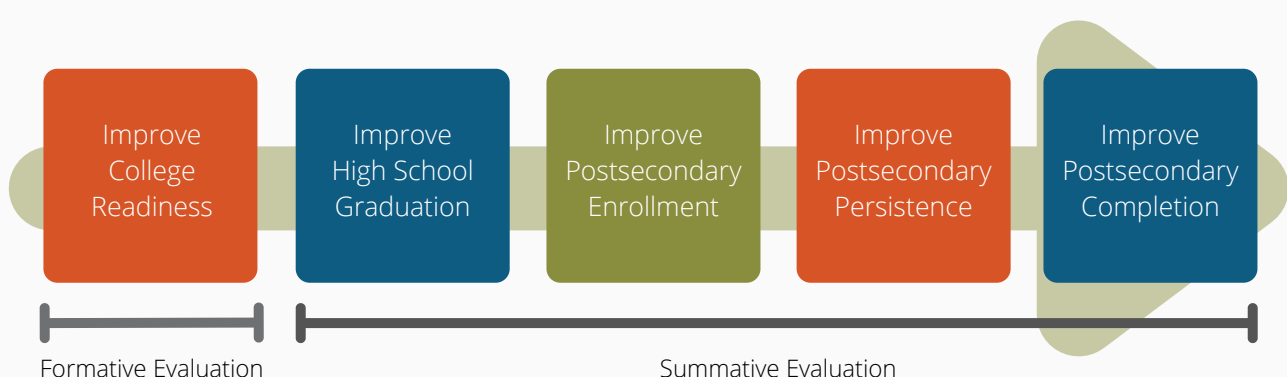

Figure 1. Participating CCREC member grants. Funding organizations with more than one participating grant project are represented by one star.

History of CCREC. Established in 2010, CCREC was a voluntary, grantee-led response to gaps in knowledge about the collective GEAR UP program. Working with the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP), the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), the NSC Research Center, and ACT, the founding 13-member states established the necessary infrastructure to conduct a longitudinal, multi-state grant evaluation. Referred to as CCREC 1.0, these initial 13 state programs were: Arizona, Idaho, Kentucky, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. As CCREC has evolved into 2.0, evaluation is ongoing and currently encompasses 188,677 GEAR UP students in 643 participating secondary schools as they progress from 7th grade through postsecondary completion. This project has not only continued to develop by accounting for lessons learned, but has transitioned to an ongoing evaluation effort that continuously onboards GEAR UP grantees.

> *What began as an idea written on the back of a napkin has since become a collaborative, multi-grant effort to systematically evaluate a federally funded grant program.*
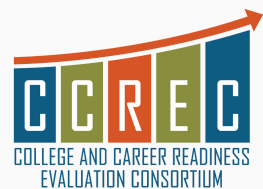
What is the focus of CCREC? CCREC has four primary, student-centered research questions. Effectively responding to the research questions requires a focused effort to coordinate around specific practices and standards. This includes: adhering to common definitions; establishing data-sharing agreements; collecting, validating, and uploading student-level data to the CCREC data repository housed at NSC; working with the NSC to incorporate postsecondary data; and providing expert insight to shape our reporting.

CCREC examines the extent to which GEAR UP services are related to the following outcomes:

Improve College Readiness | Improve High School Graduation | Improve Postsecondary Enrollment | Improve Postsecondary Persistence | Improve Postsecondary Completion

Formative Evaluation   Summative Evaluation

Ultimately, what is learned from CCREC will lead to advanced support for GEAR UP programs, targeted advocacy efforts with policymakers, and published research findings.

College and Career Readiness Evaluation Consortium

Data. Research. Evaluation.

Benefits of CCREC. While CCREC is not designed to replace the local evaluation work of individual GEAR UP programs, it enhances it by providing a framework for data collection, analyses, and reporting as well providing a platform for an ever-growing learning community. This unique, collaborative effort illustrates the strong desire of the GEAR UP community to be on the forefront of innovation, research, and evaluation.
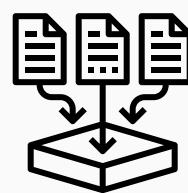
SHARED GOVERNANCE

While NCCEP serves as the managing partner, CCREC is governed by three committees: the Executive Committee, the Research and Evaluation Committee, and the Communications Committee. Committee members are nominated from and elected by the CCREC community. Collectively, the committees guide the vision, goals, and work of CCREC.

DATA MANAGEMENT

CCREC can serve as a catalyst for improving your research and evaluation processes. From asking better questions and shared definitions of services to access to comparative data to contextualize local progress, members will gain deeper knowledge on how to effectively organize, manage, and analyze data. Overall, CCREC will result in improved fidelity of data collection.

DATA REPORTING

CCREC increases access to feedback to improve formative evaluation, decision-making, and continuous improvement. In the short term, CCREC will improve data reporting through annual reports and data visualization tools. In the long term, CCREC will analyze data by archetype, as well as explore the extent to which predictive analytics can enhance our understanding of GEAR UP service.

LEARNING COMMUNITY

The CCREC learning community provides support and professional growth through collaboration, training, and technical assistance in face-to-face national meetings and technology platforms. Through the CCREC community, members will learn from each other, design potential solutions to challenging issues, and lead the effort to sustain and advance GEAR UP nationally.

Contributions of CCREC. To date, CCREC has developed a number of resources available to the larger GEAR UP community. In December 2020, CCREC released the updated *GEAR UP Student and Family Definitions: Guidelines for Program Services*, a guide defining common GEAR UP service definitions across multiple modalities. CCREC has also established a longitudinal data repository in partnership with NSC that allows for enhanced analyses of data related to GEAR UP services and student outcomes. Additionally, CCREC pioneered a GEAR UP typology initiative designed to group similar GEAR UP grant projects to improve professional development and training, facilitate small learning and networking communities, enhance research and evaluation, and advance advocacy efforts. This type of innovation is paramount to GEAR UP's sustainability.

How to join CCREC. CCREC onboards new grantees each year. If you are interested and would like to join, contact Chrissy Tillery, NCCEP's Vice President of Research and Evaluation at Chrissy_Tillery@edpartnerships.org.