

Vermont Educational Opportunity Programs in Action



2009 2010

gear up
A federally funded program

TRiO

Overview

History

The term “TRiO” refers to a collection of eight federal programs authorized by Congress to provide support to student populations typically underserved by post-secondary education. Funding is granted to educational institutions or non-profits that submit successful applications to provide support and enrichment activities for eligible students.

TRiO grew out of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which itself was part of President Lyndon Johnson’s War on Poverty. The first TRiO program, [Upward Bound](#) (UB), targeted high school students, providing support to eligible participants preparing to enter college. [Talent Search](#) (also targeting high school students) appeared in 1965, and in 1968 [Student Support Services](#) (SSS) was added, providing help to eligible college students to insure their success and graduation. The term “TRiO” itself originally referred to these first three educational opportunity programs.

Purpose

The purpose of TRiO programs is to prepare and support students for successful entry into, retention in, and completion of post-secondary education. To be eligible, students must fall into one or more of the following categories:

- be from a family where neither parent completed a four-year bachelor’s degree
- be from a low income background
- have a documented disability

TRiO programs are designed to increase student motivation, improve academic performance, and help students ascend the “educational ladder” from middle school to graduate school.

TRiO Programs in Vermont

Vermont hosts the following five TRiO programs:

- Upward Bound
- Student Support Services
- Talent Search
- Educational Opportunity Centers
- Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement

[GEAR UP](#) (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a federal grant program established by Congress in 1998 which shares many of the same purposes and goals as TRiO programs. In Vermont, GEAR UP is considered a “sister” TRiO program.

WHY TRiO PROGRAMS ARE EFFECTIVE

1. **One-on-One** - *Student/counselor ratio is low; TRiO counselors are personally committed to their students' success.*
2. **Performance-Based** - *Programs operate against specific measurable outcome objectives as defined in each approved grant proposal, and must annually meet these objectives in order to remain funded.*
3. **Focused on Early Intervention** – *Upward Bound and Talent Search effectively reach students in grades 6-12, keeping promising students in school and focused on college and career success.*
4. **Targets First Generation & Low Income Students** - *2/3 of TRiO students come from a low- income background where neither parent has earned a 4-year college degree. These parents may not understand the post-secondary process or value a college education.*
5. **Built on Relationships** – *TRiO staff build lasting personal and professional relationships with their students, serving as role models and providing a climate of support to assist them as they move out of poverty and dependence into a life of successful and responsible citizenship.*
6. **Committed to Tough Cases** - *A single parent raising several children; an older child helping to raise younger siblings; a physically disabled person with few resources; a struggling high school student trying to escape a life of poverty; these are the faces of TRiO!*
7. **Consistent and Accessible** – *TRiO staff are regularly available to students throughout the year in schools, on college campuses, out in the community, and in students' homes.*
8. **Comprehensive and Cultural** – *Services include academic enrichment, tutorial support, academic advising, personal counseling, help with college and financial aid applications, and exposure to cultural events.*
9. **“The Voice of Experience”** - *Many of the staff who serve TRiO students have overcome class, academic, social, and cultural barriers to succeed in higher education themselves; they have truly “been there!”*
10. **TRiO “looks” like America** –
 - *37% White*
 - *35% African American*
 - *19% Hispanic*
 - *4% Native American*
 - *4% Asian American*
 - *1% Other (including multiracial)*
 - *22,000 Students with disabilities*
 - *25,000 U.S. veterans*

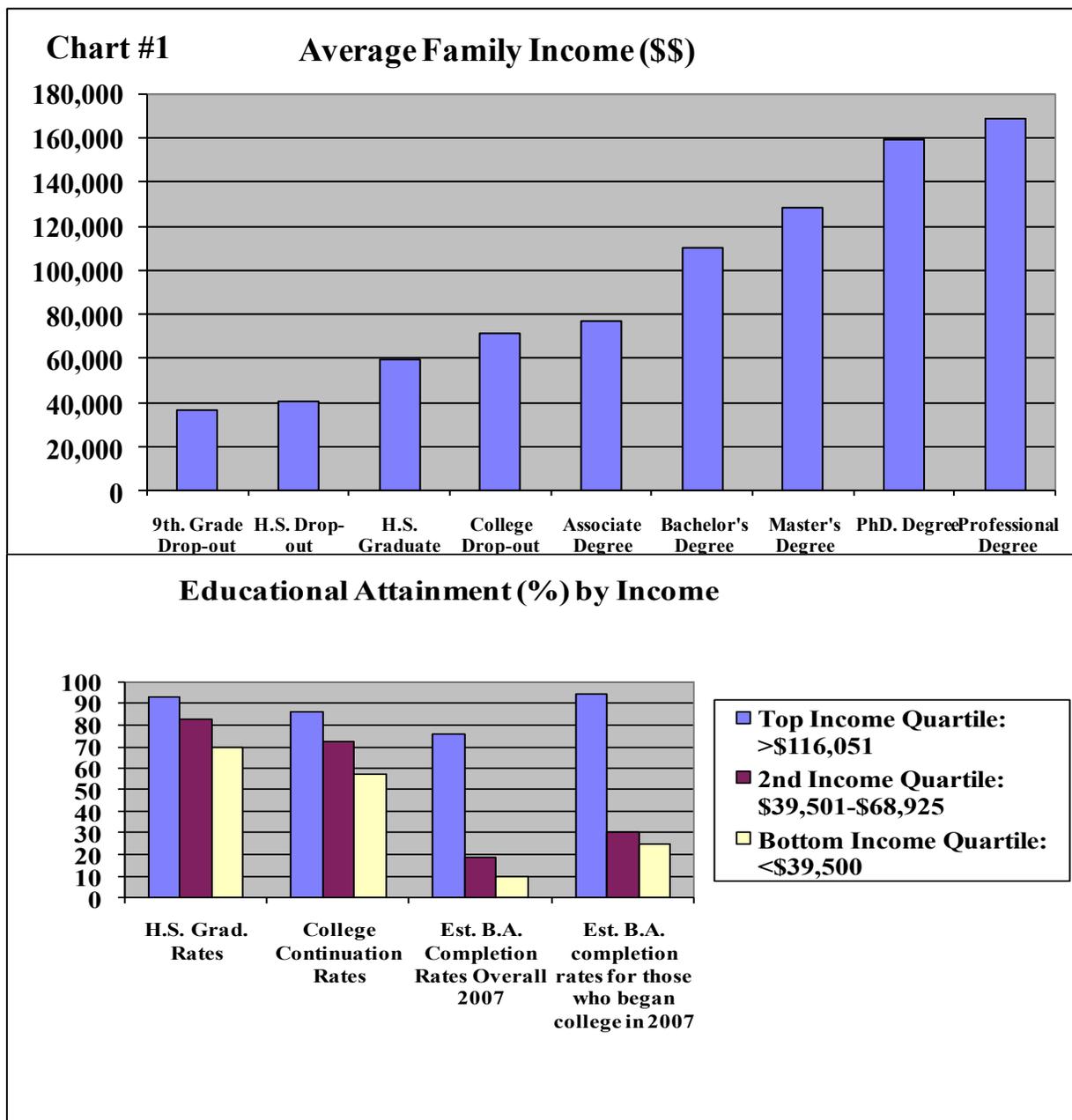
THE NEED FOR TRiO NATIONALLY

The Challenge: To break the cycle of poverty in the U.S.

The Solution: Education

- Education and earning power are directly correlated; the higher your degree, the more you'll earn (*see U.S. Census Bureau chart #1 below*).
- Level of educational attainment and family income are directly correlated; the more your family earns, the higher you'll climb up the educational ladder (*see U.S. Census Bureau chart #2 below*).
- Higher income levels ensure that educational values are passed on to the next generation, thus breaking the cycle of poverty (*see TRiO program participants' "success stories"*) In today's world, the bachelor's degree has become a necessary prerequisite for economic prosperity and success.

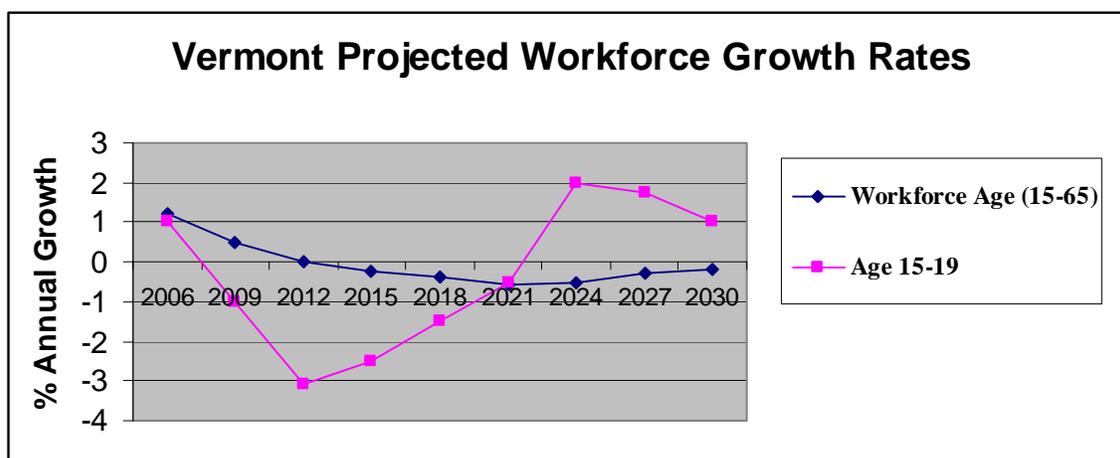
How TRiO Can Help: By targeting students from a low-income background with programs and funds to help them succeed in post-secondary education, TRiO can help break the cycle of poverty and give everyone a chance at the American Dream!



THE NEED FOR TRiO IN VERMONT

Vermont's Challenge: To maintain a stable and skilled workforce in the face of shrinking population demographics:

- Growth rates for Vermont's **working age** (15-65) population are declining.
- Growth rates for the state's **pre-working age** (15-19) population (the primary source of new workers) are declining (*see U.S. Census Bureau chart below*)
- Vermont has the oldest workforce in the nation.
- Vermont's workforce is being squeezed from both directions!
- Vermont's state colleges have the highest tuition costs in the U.S.



How Vermont TRiO Programs Can Help

- Educational Talent Search, Upward Bound & GEAR UP - Identify and support talented middle and high school students from typically under-served populations, thus increasing the pool of Vermonters attending college
- +
- Educational Opportunity Centers – Provide support and encouragement to adults to enter and continue with college
- +
- Student Support Services – Provide support to college students, increasing their retention and graduation rates and helping to prepare them for further education, employment, and life-long learning
- +
- McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Programs - Continue this support through doctoral-level studies

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Higher educational levels and more skilled workers!
Vermont's TRiO programs can surely make a difference!

Vermont TRiO “At a Glance”

Educational Opportunity Centers

Goal: To increase the number of adult participants who enroll and persist in post-secondary education institutions.

Programs/Services

- college admissions & financial aid information
- academic advice
- personal counseling
- career workshops
- tutoring
- assistance completing college forms

Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program

Goal: To increase the number of students typically underserved by higher education who earn doctoral degrees.

Programs/Services:

- research and summer internships for undergraduates
- academic advising
- mentoring
- tutoring
- financial aid and graduate school admission assistance

Student Support Services

Goal: To increase students’ rate of retention and graduation from college and to prepare them for further education, employment, and life-long learning.

Programs/Services

- intensive academic advising
- services for students with disabilities
- tutoring/mentoring
- academic skills development
- financial aid counseling
- career development
- graduate school counseling

Vermont TRiO “At a Glance”

Educational Talent Search

Goal: To increase the number of low-income middle and high school students who complete high school and go on to post-secondary education; also encourages high school dropouts to reenter and complete their education.

Programs/Services

- academic advising
- personal counseling
- career exploration
- aptitude assessment
- tutoring
- college visits
- college entrance exam preparation
- assistance completing college admissions and financial aid forms

Upward Bound

Goal: To increase the rate at which eligible students graduate from high school and continue to post-secondary institutions.

Programs/Services

- mentoring
- cultural enrichment programs & college visits
- assistance in completing college entrance and financial aid forms
- SAT/ACT prep
- summer college residency program providing instruction in English, math, science, foreign languages, and study skills

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs)

Goal: To increase the number of low-income students who complete high school and go on to post-secondary education.

Programs/Services:

- improving middle and high school students' academic performance
- increasing parental involvement in college preparation
- helping partner schools strengthen curriculum and teacher development
- renewable college scholarships for low-income students

Vermont Educational Opportunity Programs

Serving Vermont

VEOP Projects Fact Sheet 2009-2010

There are 16 projects in Vermont serving 11,770 students and adults. Federal funding in Vermont for these programs is more than \$8 million dollars.

Project	Institution	Students	Funding
Student Support Services			
	Castleton State College	230	\$313,557
	Community College of VT	200	\$369,774
	Johnson State College	235	\$417,395
	Lyndon State College	190	\$280,298
	Southern Vermont College	200	\$261,536
	University of Vermont	225	\$334,349
	Vermont Technical College	190	\$310,065
	Total	1470	\$2,286,974
Talent Search	Vt. Student Assistant Corp.	1250	\$443,887
Upward Bound			
	Castleton State College	50	\$250,000
	Johnson State College	90	\$456,501
	Lyndon State College	70	\$324,765
	Southern Vermont College	64	\$331,376
	University of Vermont	50	\$250,000
	Total	324	\$1,612,642
Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement	University of Vermont	26	\$231,000
Educational Opportunity Centers	Vt. Student Assistance Corp.	2000	\$471,944
GEAR UP	Vt. Student Assistance Corp.	1700 caseloads 5000 partnership programs	\$3,500,000
Total for 16 Projects		11,770	\$8,546,447

VERMONT EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTERS

Program description: EOC’s provide information and counseling to adults seeking to enter or continue post-secondary education programs, with a special focus on financial aid. The goal of the program is to increase the number of adult participants who enroll in post-secondary education institutions.

Participant eligibility: Students must reside in the target area served by an Educational Opportunity Center and 2/3 of all served must be at least 19 years old, from a family where neither parent completed a four-year bachelor’s degree, and from a low-income background.

Sponsoring Institution Vermont Student Asst. Corp. (VSAC)	Application/Funding Process Next grant competition: Winter 2010	Total Funding \$471,944
Services Provided: ♦Career exploration ♦Education planning ♦Assistance completing college admissions & financial aid forms	Number of Students served: 2000	Average \$ per Student \$235



Participant Profile

Julie (Raboin) Evans graduated from North Country Union High School in 1989 with no immediate plans for college. She married, became the mother of three children, and was a stay-at-home mom for a number of years. After experiencing some major life changes, she entered Community College of Vermont (CCV) in 2000, taking the Assessment of Prior Learning as her first college course. Julie received many credits for her life work, which allowed her to graduate from CCV fairly quickly. After graduating, Julie — then a single mom on public assistance — wanted to pursue a bachelor’s degree in order to improve her position in the job market. In 2002, Julie worked with one of VSAC’s EOC counselors to create a postsecondary education (PSE) plan. PSE, a program designed to help public assistance recipients achieve self-sufficiency, would afford Julie the opportunity to complete her bachelor’s degree while receiving a stipend and other support services. Her EOC counselor helped her complete her financial aid forms, prepare an education plan for submission, and work on career planning. With her sights set on a career in human services and a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Johnson State College, Julie’s plan was accepted unanimously by the PSE committee, and she was also awarded several scholarships based on her financial need and academic excellence. In 2005, Julie graduated *summa cum laude* from Johnson State College with a 3.97 GPA. Within two months, she secured a full-time job as coordinator of Success by Six in Orleans County. In 2009 she took on a new challenge as the human resources administrator at Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA). Julie has recently organized and participated in regional legislative forums, and has testified in front of legislative committees in Montpelier. In a recent interview, Julie said, *“Poverty sapped my self-esteem. A few years ago, I didn’t have the voice to advocate for my children or myself. I couldn’t imagine speaking to legislators about public policy. Though it’s embarrassing to sit in front of legislators and tell them that I used to be on public assistance, it’s crucial that regular people like me tell lawmakers that programs like Reach Up, PSE, and VSAC’s Adult Outreach program really work — they do help people get out of poverty.”*

Measures of Success

- ♦ 63% of high school graduates served enrolled in college for the first time
- ♦ 61% of the postsecondary “stopouts” served resumed their college education

VERMONT MCNAIR POST-BACCALAUREATE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

Program description: This program prepares eligible college students with strong academic potential for doctoral studies by providing research and summer internship opportunities while they complete their undergraduate studies, and encourages them to enroll in graduate programs. McNair’s goal is to increase the number of students typically underserved by higher education who earn doctoral degrees.

Participant eligibility: Students must be enrolled in a degree-granting program at an eligible institution and meet the following criteria:

- be from a family where neither parent completed a four-year bachelor’s degree
- be from a low-income background
- be from groups that are underrepresented in graduate education.

Sponsoring Institution University of Vermont	Application/Funding Process Next grant competition: FY 2011	Total Funding \$231,000
Services Provided: ♦Academic advising ♦Summer research/internship opportunities ♦Financial aid assistance ♦Graduate school admission assistance ♦Mentoring ♦Tutoring	Number of Students served: 26	Average \$ per Student \$8,885



Participant Profile

I grew up in small Vermont town, as a first generation, lower-income student, so I didn’t have much experience in higher education within my family. I wasn’t prepared for college; I didn’t know what I wanted to study, where I wanted to go, how I would ever be able to afford it, or even how to start the process.

During my sophomore year in high school I took part in the Upward Bound program at Lyndon State College, which provided me with a support structure that gave me the help that my parents could not. Because of their help I attended and excelled academically at the University of Vermont with minimal cost to my family, and both my brothers have enrolled and are utilizing the program’s services.

During my first year at UVM I established a wonderful relationship with my Student Support Services advisor, who helped make my transition to college as smooth as possible. Through my association with SSS I became a tutor for several courses at UVM and earned my tutoring certification. During my second year at UVM I applied and was accepted to the McNair Scholars program. I realized that I would not only enjoy continuing my education in Electrical Computer Engineering, but also that a higher degree would benefit me when I began my job search. Their summer research program helped me to become more involved in my field and inspired me to continue collaborating on research projects. After the summer program I applied for and received a research grant from URECA to conduct my own research during the spring of my junior year. That summer I participated in a research program at the University of California at Berkeley.

My educational career is flourishing due to the help offered by TRIO programs. Not only have I been able to attend college and afford it, but I have also succeeded academically. I know that I always have someone to go to if I have a question or concern about my education. With TRIO’s help, I am now a PhD candidate at the University of California at Santa Cruz.

VERMONT STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

Program description: SSS provides a broad range of support to college students throughout their careers. SSS' goals are to increase students' rate of retention, transfer from two-year to four-year programs, and graduation from college, and to prepare them for further education, employment, and life-long learning.

Participant eligibility: Students must have a demonstrated need for academic support and meet one or more of the following criteria: be from a family where neither parent completed a four-year bachelor's degree, be from a low-income background, and/or have a documented disability.

Sponsoring Institutions	Application/Funding Process	Total Funding
Castleton, Lyndon, & Johnson State Colleges, Vermont Technical College, Community College of VT., Univ. of Vermont, S. Vermont College	Next grant competition: Winter 2010	\$2,286,974
Services Provided:	Number of Students served:	Average \$ per Student
♦Academic advising ♦Services for students with disabilities ♦Tutoring ♦Mentoring ♦Academic skills development ♦Financial aid counseling ♦Career development ♦Graduate school and transfer counseling ♦Direct grant aid to eligible students	1470	\$1556



Participant Profile

Sean M., a student enrolled in Southern Vermont College's Entrepreneurship and Management Program, has been a Student Support Services participant since 2008. Sean works very hard to keep his grades up, and regularly uses the SSS Success Center to improve his writing, goal-setting, and time management skills. As a result, he has been on the Provost's list for both semesters of his freshman year, and was named TRiO Student of the Month for October. In addition to being a stellar student, Sean is also co-captain of the men's soccer team. He is indeed a very driven and determined young man. Coming from a low-income background, Sean is aware of the value of education, both financially and personally. He often consults with SSS staff on how to find money to pay for his tuition, and is determined not to let financial challenges get in the way of completing his education. The following comments by Sean's TRiO advisor and sociology instructor attest to his character and ability:

"I had the pleasure of having Sean in my Introduction to Sociology class at SVC this past semester and found him to be an exceptionally conscientious and respectful student. He always made sure that he understood course content and expectations, asking for clarification and elaboration when needed. In addition to being open to suggestions for improvement, Sean was proactive in seeking help from the Success Center (where I also serve as Academic Advisor). In particular, Sean took the initiative to ask for assistance from writing tutors who helped him turn "B" papers into "A's". Sean has backed up his commitment to get the most out of his college education with action – one reason why he was named Student of the Month. He is a role model who positively impacts all who know him."

Measures of Success

- ♦ Average post-secondary retention rate: 80%
- ♦ Average college graduation rate: 50% (doesn't include CCV)
- ♦ Average Good Academic Standing rate: 84%

VERMONT EDUCATIONAL TALENT SEARCH PROGRAM

Program description: This program identifies and assists middle and high school students from low-income backgrounds who demonstrate the potential to succeed in higher education. Talent Search also encourages high school dropouts to reenter and complete their education. The program's goal is to increase the number of low-income/first generation students who complete high school and go on to post-secondary education.

Participant eligibility: Students must have completed the 5th grade, be 11-27 years old, and 2/3 of all served must meet the following criteria: be from a low-income background and from a family where neither parent completed a four-year bachelor's degree.

Sponsoring Institution Vermont Student Asst. Corp. (VSAC)	Application/Funding Process Next grant competition: Fall 2010	Total Funding \$443,887
Services Provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦Academic advising♦Personal counseling♦Career exploration♦Tutoring♦Interest inventory & assessment♦College visits & summer programs♦College entrance exam prep & fee waivers♦Assistance completing college admission & financial aid forms.	Number of Students served: 1250	Average \$ per Student \$355



Participant Profile

My name is Fallon and I grew up in a very small town of only about 4000 people, and the biggest question that I had for myself in high school was whether or not to go to college. Most people in my town, including my parents and relatives, had never been to college. Was it the right choice for me?

I sought some help with this decision and was referred to the VSAC Outreach program. My counselor helped me look over my options and clarify what my actual interests were. Because I have many different interests picking a college was difficult, but with the help of my VSAC counselor I decided that a liberal arts school was the best choice for me. The VSAC Outreach program also helped me with the time-consuming paperwork and college application process.

Attending college was a bit of a shock at first. There is no better time to grow up than during the first week of living in your new college dorm room! Even though I was no longer a high school client of hers, my VSAC counselor kept in touch and made sure everything was okay. It was nice, and still is nice, to be able to connect with someone who truly cares about and understands some of the hardships of being a new college student.

Being a college student has helped me to grow in so many ways, but the biggest has been the growth of my independence. I no longer have my parents managing my life; I have to be my own reminder, calendar, and datebook. With the help of the VSAC staff, I have made my decision to pursue my doctorate degree and become a college professor. I pride myself on being a great student and I feel that VSAC has helped me become just that.

Measures of Success

- ♦ High school graduation rate: 98%
- ♦ Post-secondary enrollment rate: 87%

VERMONT UPWARD BOUND PROGRAM

Program description: UB provides support to eligible high school students going on to post-secondary education. The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which eligible students graduate from high school and continue to post-secondary institutions.

Participant eligibility: Students must have completed the 8th grade, be 13-19 years old, have a demonstrated academic need, and meet one or more of the following criteria: be from a family where neither parent completed a four-year bachelor's degree and/or be from a low-income background.

Sponsoring Institutions Castleton, Lyndon & Johnson State Colleges, Univ. of Vermont, Southern Vermont College	Application/Funding Process Next grant competition: FY 2011	Total Funding \$1,612,642
Services Provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none">♦Mentoring♦Cultural enrichment programs♦Assistance in completing college entrance & financial aid forms♦SAT/ACT prep♦College visits♦Summer college residency program with instruction in English, math, science, foreign languages, & study skills	Number of Students served: 324	Average \$ per Student \$4977



Participant Profile

My name is Maggie, and I joined the Johnson State College Upward Bound program in my freshman year of high school. I also participated in the Bridge program and returned to work as a summer resident assistant for one year. My five years with Upward Bound provided invaluable experiences and benefits that have helped shape my goals for the future and my ability to achieve them.

My years with Upward Bound helped me in three key ways: emotionally/socially, financially, and academically. I was raised by a single mother with severe Bi-Polar Disorder. My mother was unable to work full time and we lived on a combination of disability and welfare. This unstable and confusing environment caused me to rebel. I was doing poorly in school and my friends were frequently in trouble. Upward Bound provided a stable environment that moved me away from the destructive course I was headed on. Not only did my grades improve but they recognized and fostered my academic aptitude and self confidence by encouraging me to tutor other UB students and to attend leadership programs. Upward Bound also enabled me to pay for advance prep courses, the pre-SAT exam, and college applications, and helped me choose which colleges to apply to. Since we could not afford to travel to visit schools, Upward Bound arranged for me to visit St. Lawrence University, which I decided to attend on an academic scholarship.

The confidence and academic skills Upward Bound helped foster in me contributed to my success as an undergraduate. I received awards for excellence in writing and as the outstanding environmental sociology major. I also participated in a study abroad program in London and eventually graduated magna cum laude.

Today I am in my third year of a PhD program at Michigan State University, one of the top environmental sociology graduate programs in North America. Not only did Upward Bound help shape my love of learning, but it also gave me the opportunities and self confidence I needed to get to where I am today. I still have lasting relationships with former UB students and staff. When I look at my pre-UB friends, they are high school drop-outs, teenage parents and/or have prison records, and this only reminds me of just how big an impact Upward Bound has had on me.

Measures of Success

Average high school graduation rate: 96%
Post-secondary enrollment rate: 86%

VERMONT STATE GEAR UP PROJECT (VSGU)

Program description: This program provides assistance and support to middle and high school students, their parents, and to partner schools to better prepare students to succeed in post-secondary education. GEAR UP also provides college scholarships to Pell-eligible students. The program's goal is to increase the number of low-income students who complete high school and go on to post-secondary education.

Participant eligibility: Students must be U.S. citizens, nationals, or permanent residents and must be enrolled in grades 6-12 within the targeted middle or high schools, be eligible for the federal free- or reduced-lunch program and be recommended by their school counselors as facing significant barriers to graduation and higher education.

Sponsoring Institution

Vt. Student Assistance Corp.

Application/Funding Process

Next grant competition: To be determined

Total Funding: \$3,500,000 divided as follows:

- ♦ scholarships - \$1,400,000; divided among 312 students
- ♦ school improvement projects - \$700,000
- ♦ support to student & parents - \$1,400,000

Number of Students served:

Caseloads: 1700 Partner Programs: 5000

Services Provided:

- ♦ Tutoring and mentoring
- ♦ Assistance with academic preparation, including high school course planning
- ♦ Career and post-secondary exploration
- ♦ College visits, career fairs, summer programs, cultural enrichment activities
- ♦ Renewable scholarships to financially eligible students
- ♦ Information and support to increase parent involvement in preparing students for college
- ♦ Curriculum resources for teachers and counselors on careers and postsecondary options
- ♦ Teacher development and general school improvement activities



Participant Profile

My name is Ashley. Participating in VSAC's GEAR UP program throughout junior high and high school has had a phenomenal impact on my educational and professional objectives, but has also had a wonderful influence on my life. This past year I graduated cum laude with honors from Clark University. I am continuing my education through Clark's accelerated Master's degree program in International Development. These are opportunities I would not have otherwise had, if I not been guided and supported by GEAR UP and VSAC. Through the support of GEAR UP I learned how to shape my career goals. I visited colleges, excelled academically, and became involved in my local community. Such opportunities have continued to shape my goals of traveling and working internationally. Each month my GEAR UP counselor would come to our high school to help GEAR UP participants formulate our career and college plans. GEAR UP helped me financially by paying for any educational costs that arose, whether it was college application fees or SAT test fees. Along with the emotional support and vision of GEAR UP counselors, this placed me on an equal footing with students from a higher socio-economic bracket. Some of my first trips outside of the state of Vermont were with GEAR UP. Growing up with the amazing support of a strong single mother and a large family did not always afford many opportunities to travel. Through GEAR UP I discovered an overwhelming passion to attend college and am the first in my family to do so.

I cannot begin to express the gratitude that I have for all of the support GEAR UP and VSAC has offered me. This program has not only changed my life, but also provided me with amazing opportunities that my family will now have because I have an education and am on track for an amazing career.

Measures of Success

- High school graduation rate: 98%
- Post-secondary enrollment rate: 80%; 66% at a Vermont institution

TRiO Program Contact Information

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**Printing funded by a grant from the
Council for Opportunity in Education.**