As required, Winthrop submitted a GEPA statement with the McNair project proposal submitted 04/21/2022. This revised document contains updates to links and content since that submission.

Background from the U.S. Department of Education[1]

> *Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. **The statute highlights** six types of **barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age.** Based on **local circumstances,** you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.*

Local Circumstances

At Winthrop, none of the following characteristics impede equitable access or participation in opportunities: Gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Winthrop recruits and welcomes diverse populations. Founded as a women's college in 1886, Winthrop has a long history of serving underserved populations.

Winthrop is proud to be a diverse, welcoming campus that promotes a number of initiatives aimed at ensuring that all students feel included, supported and able to succeed. Similarly, equal employment opportunity is an integral part of the mission and purpose of the University.

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[1] http://www2.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/gepa427.doc; OMB Control No. 1894-0005; Exp 06/30/2023 (downloaded from https://www.ed.gov/media/document/gepa-requirementspdf-13669.pdf)

Winthrop's Mission, Vision, and Values[2]:

MISSION
Winthrop University is a comprehensive public university that challenges undergraduate and graduate students of talent, ambition, and intellectual curiosity, equipping them to embrace and lead a world in transition by providing residential and online learning experiences and instilling critical thinking skills empowering them to create the future.

VISION
We aspire to be a transformational institution providing an excellent and affordable education within a vibrant and inclusive community offering the gift of learning, the tools for lifelong learning, and the confidence born of a robust and disciplined learning experience.

VALUES
We are Winthrop, where we value . . .

A commitment to leadership, service, community, and excellence.
A culture of belonging, courage, free expression, and open civil engagement.
Rigorous instruction and experiential learning that prepares our students for success and leadership.
Rational thought, truth reverence, sound judgment, deep ethics, and unwavering commitment to excellence.

Winthrop's current Equal Employment Opportunity Statement [3]
includes the following local circumstances and guidance which will be followed in the McNair program.

Winthrop University recognizes that employees are the essential resource of the institution. Winthrop is committed to the principles of equal employment. It is the policy of the University that all personnel related decisions be made without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and childbirth, or related medical conditions), national origin, age (fortyplus / 40+), protected disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state or local law. This policy applies to all personnel actions including, but not limited to, recruitment, hiring, classification/compensation, benefits, promotions, transfers, layoffs, recall from layoffs and educational, social or recreational programs of this institution.
...
Equal employment opportunity is an integral part of the mission and purpose of the University.

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[2] https://www.winthrop.edu/aboutus/mission-vision-values.aspx (downloaded 7/17/2025)
[3] http://www.winthrop.edu/uploadedFiles/hr/policies/ EqualEmploymentOpportunityStatement.pdf (downloaded 7/17/2025)

McNair Program Purpose

Winthrop's TRiO McNair Program prepares eligible undergraduates to be successful in research doctorate programs[4] by providing high quality research experiences, graduate admissions support, graduate funding assistance, and more. As per §1070a–15(d)[5] "not less than two-thirds of the individuals participating in the project ... be low-income individuals who are first generation college students."

Winthrop's program services include, but are not limited to, a paid summer research experience, faculty mentoring, workshops, graduate admissions test preparation, graduate application support, and travel to present research and explore graduate programs.

The U.S. Department of Education describes the program in this way:

> *Through a grant competition, funds are awarded to institutions of higher education to prepare eligible participants for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities. Participants are from disadvantaged backgrounds and have demonstrated strong academic potential. Institutions work closely with participants as they complete their undergraduate requirements. Institutions encourage participants to enroll in graduate programs and then track their progress through to the successful completion of advanced degrees. The goal is to increase the attainment of Ph.D. degrees by students from underrepresented segments of society.* (Downloaded 03/18/2025 from http://www.ed.gov/programs/triomcnair/index.html)

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[4] https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf21308/table/A-1
[5] https://www.govinfo.gov/link/uscode/20/1070a-15

Below are the steps Winthrop will take to ensure equitable access to and preparation in the McNair program.

1) **Deliberately and prudently recruit and select program participants that meet federal McNair eligibility requirements.**[6]

2) **Uphold relevant University Policies regarding equity in access and participation.** This includes the current Equal Employment Opportunity Statement (revised 12/01/18, http://www.winthrop.edu/uploadedFiles/hr/policies/EqualEmploymentOpportunityStatement.pdf). That statement includes the following local circumstances and guidance which will be followed in the McNair program.

3) **Ensure that online program communication is conveyed in accessible formats, as per the University policy regarding Section 508**[7] **that went into effect 01/18/2018**. A helpful check list is found here: https://webaim.org/standards/wcag/WCAG2Checklist.pdf.

4) **Advertise requests for participant and personnel applications using online resources and physical locations that are easily accessible to qualified individuals.**

5) **Regularly review all existing program communications, documents, and policies to ensure the language and procedures are inclusive and welcoming to all qualified individuals.**

6) **Include a discussion of this policy in the training of new personnel.**

7) **Solicit and use constructive recommendations from new program contacts regarding ways to improve Winthrop McNair equity in access and participation.**

8) **Involve all key staff in decisions for and recruitment of diverse, qualified staff and program participants.**

9) **Address concerns about potential violations of this policy and/or applicable institutional, state, and federal policies as quickly as possible, documenting progress to resolving the issue within 10 business days.**

10) **Post this statement on the program website (www.winthrop.edu/mcnair).**

Last Updated July 17, 2025

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[6] https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-647/subpart-A/section-647.3
[7] https://www.winthrop.edu/web/section-508-explained.aspx