

GEAR UP Maine (GU-ME) ABSTRACT

Applicant Name: University of Maine Farmington

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Goal: To significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. **Objectives:** (1) Increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education of GEAR UP (GU-ME) students; (2) Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education of participating students; and (3) Increase GU students' and their families' knowledge of postsecondary education, options, preparation and financing.

Participating Schools and Students to be Served: Utilizing a hybrid model, 2800 students in Year 1. The 7th grade cohort will begin in Year 1 and be served through their first year in postsecondary. 11th, 12th grade and 1st year PSE Priority students will be served in each year. 8th-10th graders in GU-ME continuing schools will be served through their first year in postsecondary. 12 LEAs and two Charter Schools from the most rural, remote and economically disadvantaged regions of the state will be served.

Partners: Syntiro, 12 LEAs and 2 Charter Schools, the University of Maine System campuses, the Community College System of Maine campuses, Finance Authority of Maine, Xcalibur, Rural Aspirations Project, JMG, FOCUS Training, SEEDS Training, Maine Resilience Building Network, Maine College Access Network, Maine Department of Education/Maine Learning Technology Initiative, Maine Educational Loan Marketing Corporation, Husson and Thomas College.

Activities and Services: GU-ME will provide critical support and early intervention services to build the capacity of participating schools and partners to improve student achievement, increase the high school graduation rate and the number of students who enroll and succeed in college. The RISE framework will guide our efforts in Maine's most rural, remote and under-resourced schools: **Relevance, Inquiry, Supports and equity for all, and Expectations and Aspirations.** GU-ME will utilize Cohort and Priority Specialists working directly with students, families, educators, community members and partners to provide an array of supportive services including College and Career Access Plans, early career exploration, college immersion and college visits, scholar coaching, student leadership, family engagement, comprehensive mentoring, rigorous curricula and early college/dual enrollment courses and support and coaching in the first year of postsecondary education. Educators will receive professional development in inclusive practice, math strategies and coaching and have access to earn GU-ME's microcredentials in College Access which was piloted in 2019-20 with GU programs across the country. GU-ME will change how schools provide students with opportunities for academic achievement and college attainment while simultaneously ensuring that students receive individualized support services. School leaders and staff, students, and the community will be supported to create a college going culture and degree attainment. LEA services will be guided by district and building level needs assessments to identify the tailored services and support necessary to meet project outcomes. Common needs across LEAs will drive regional and statewide professional development and other program support. GU-ME will participate in local and regional community and economic development efforts to leverage resources and build mentoring and apprenticeship and internship opportunities.