

## THE MAINE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ASSOCIATION "PROGRAMS THAT WORK"

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### THE PROGRAMS

**GEAR UP:** Currently one state program and one partnership program serve over 4500 students per year. GEAR UP ties universities, school districts and communities together to promote educational opportunities and creates long-lasting changes in K-16 education.

- **Maine State GEAR UP** - Provides services at high-poverty middle and high schools. GEAR UP funds are also used to provide college scholarships to low-income students.
- **UMF GEAR UP Partnership Program** - Serves students at Dirigo Middle School and Dirigo High School. Partnership programs provide a unique opportunity for early intervention and systemic change for schools.

**Maine TRiO Programs:** Currently 18 TRiO projects serve 6,430 students in Maine.

- **Educational Opportunity Centers** – Help primarily low-income adults who would be first generation college students gain admission to college and find financial assistance for their education.
- **Student Support Services** – Help low-income and first-generation college students and individuals with disabilities graduate from college.
- **Talent Search** – Identifies, prepares and assists students in grades six through twelve with applying for financial aid and college admission.
- **Upward Bound** – Prepares high school students for success in postsecondary education.
- **Upward Bound Math/Science** – Prepares high school students for college programs that lead to careers in math and science.

#### Evidence of Success

- Survey results show a majority of students at Dirigo High School are planning to go to college (94.5% of high school freshmen, and 74.3% of sophomores).
- 72.4% of academically prepared EOC adults enroll in college each year.
- Students in the Student Support Services program are more than twice as likely to remain in college than those students from similar backgrounds who did not participate in the program.
- 86.6 % of Talent Search graduating seniors enroll in college.
- Students in the Upward Bound program are four times more likely to earn an undergraduate degree than those students from similar backgrounds who did not participate in TRiO.

#### What makes these programs so successful?

##### Performance Based

Each program operates against specific, measurable outcome objectives as clearly defined in each approved grant proposal. Program directors are held accountable and must meet their stated objectives each year if they expect to remain funded and able to help participants in their targeted service area.

##### Focused on Early Intervention

Three of the programs, GEAR UP, Talent Search and Upward Bound, are early intervention programs. These programs effectively reach students in grades six through twelve who have "college potential" but often do not recognize or understand their academic and career options beyond high school.

##### Targeted Toward First-Generation and Low-Income

The majority of students in the programs come from families with incomes under \$24,000, where neither

parent graduated from college. In most cases, parents have no higher education experience, do not understand the postsecondary process and do not necessarily value a higher education.

### **Built on Relationships**

Over a period of several months or years, professionals build both personal and professional relationships with their students. Such positive relationships are critical to the success of every program. The staff of each program creates a climate of support for students as they strive to move out of poverty and dependence.

### **Committed to Tough Cases**

In most cases, students in the programs are poor and are desperately trying to climb out of "the vicious cycle of poverty in America." A single parent raising several children, an older child helping to raise younger siblings, a physically-disabled person with few financial resources and a struggling high school student trying to escape a life of poverty describe the young people and adults who turn to the programs for help and special assistance.

### **Consistent and Intense**

The programs and the professionals are consistently available to their students. In fact, some programs enable students to meet with counselors during the summer, in the evening, on weekends, or at home.

### **Comprehensive and Cultural**

The services administered through the programs are comprehensive and must go far beyond the traditional services offered by high school or college counselors. Many students receive instruction in literature, composition, foreign languages, mathematics and science. In addition, students receive assistance in completing college admission and financial aid applications, tutorial services and exposure to cultural events.

### **Community Based**

Community need is determined by the community, not the federal government. Funding is based on clear evidence that the program is needed in a particular community or town.

### **What is the need?**

Maine has large numbers of low income people. 22% or 75,644 live at or below 150% of the poverty level. (US Census Bureau 2000)

77% of individuals aged 25 or over in Maine DO NOT have a college degree. Maine has slipped from 26<sup>th</sup> to 38<sup>th</sup> in the percentage of adults with a 4-year degree. (US Census Bureau 2000 and Maine Center for Economic Policy)

Only 66% of 2001 Maine high school graduates enrolled in college the following fall. (Maine Department of Education)

Students from families whose parents did not attend college score significantly lower on the Maine Educational Assessment than students whose parents are college educated. (Maine Department of Education)

**Current funding levels allow Educational Opportunity Programs in Maine to help less than 10% of those individuals eligible for their services.**