

Maine Educational Opportunity Association



Factbook 2025-2026

Return on Investment: TRIO is federal money well spent.

Impactful Life-Changing Programs

“I cannot even begin to hope to describe all the ways that UMF Upward Bound has and continues to impact my life...



...it was one of the most important and formative experiences I have ever had. Upward Bound made it possible for me to go to college; the process became so simple and understandable. I feel that I learnt more about myself and about school in the months spent at UMF than I ever would have in the years I spent at high school. Although UMF Upward Bound was for the underprivileged, I believe we were the privileged ones by being able to go.” -

Jasmine Bussiere, 2014-2016

“If I hadn’t had TRIO to help me earlier, I would never have attained an MBA. Without my MBA, I would never have gone on in my career to create over \$40 million in new growth for businesses in Maine.”
-Brandon McDonald (METS, UB, SSS, 2006-2013)

PROGRAM SUCCESS HIGHLIGHTS

UMF UB: 100% of students in the 2024 cohorts graduated from high school, with 74% having done so with a rigorous curriculum. 81% of those students enrolled in a post-secondary institution.

Bowdoin UB: 54% of 2018 graduates completed a degree within 6 years compared to only 21% of low-income, first-generation college students nationally.

EMCC SSS: Exceeded all objectives again notably including a persistence rate of 80%, and good academic standing rate 81%.

METS: 97.6% of participants graduated high school, 57.3% completed a PSE program within 6 years.

MEOC: Enrolled or re-enrolled 460 participants into PSE last year.



GEAR UP Maine Rise students during the 2025 Fall bus tours of College Campuses throughout the state.

On the cover: Students from across the state engaging in various activities: the TRIO alum recognition celebration at USM, UB students from UMF in attendance at the New England Student Leadership Conference in Vermont, UB students from UMPI visiting UNH, TRIO and GEAR UP Advocacy Day 2025 at the Statehouse, and the 2024 Johnson Scholars graduates.

President's Update

For over 60 years, TRIO has been the bridge for thousands of students across our great state of Maine. Whether you're a high schooler in the County looking at joining Upward Bound or a soon to be high school graduate looking at SSS options in prospective colleges, TRIO has always been more than just a "program." It's a promise that where you come from doesn't limit where you can go.

Sometimes, when things get chaotic in Washington, it's easy to lose sight of how much ground we've actually gained. But the numbers don't lie. They tell a story of grit and success right here at home. Nationally, first-generation students in TRIO are four times more likely to graduate than those without support. In Maine, that's thousands of degrees that might not have happened otherwise. With nearly 41% of our new college students being the first in their families to go, TRIO isn't just a "bonus"; it's the backbone of Maine's future workforce.

I know the news lately has been heavy. What seems to be constant attacks against TRIO by the current administration is deeply frustrating. Hearing these life-changing programs dismissed as "relics of the past" feels like a disconnect from the reality we see on the ground every day.

But here's the thing: resilience is part of our DNA here in Maine. We've seen this before, and every time, we've come out stronger because we stand together. From our state representatives' advocacy to the way our TRIO and GEAR UP programs at our community colleges, universities, and schools have rallied, Maine isn't backing down. We know that "educational opportunity" isn't a partisan buzzword; it's the key to achieving a successful future for the current generation and those to come.

Now, more than ever, we need to be each other's loudest cheerleaders. If you're a student feeling the weight of these headlines, know that there is an entire state of educators, alumni, and neighbors standing behind you. If you're a staff member feeling burnt out by the advocacy fight, look at the faces of the students you helped cross the finish line. That is your "why."

In Maine, "Dirigo" isn't just a motto; it's a promise to lead the way for one another. We navigate the woods, we navigate the winters, and we will navigate this. Let's keep sharing our stories, keep showing up for our neighbors, and keep proving that in Maine, we leave no one behind.

Don't lose sight of the impact you have made and continue to make. The work you're doing is changing the map of Maine and our country for the better, one student at a time.



Ashlee Fecteau
MEEOA President, 2025-2026

MEEOA's mission centers on advocating for students encountering substantial barriers to education due to factors such as socioeconomic status, disability, and limited cultural/educational experiences.

Rising Star Award Recipients

The MEEOA Rising Star Award identifies emerging professionals who are former participants of Maine's educational opportunity programs.

This award recognizes people just beginning to make an impact in their careers and communities and honors emerging leaders who strive toward the highest levels of personal and professional accomplishment. They excel in their chosen field, devote time and energy to their community in a meaningful way, and serve as a role model for others.

Rising Stars demonstrate excellence, creativity, and initiative in their profession. They have an Associate's or Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education, or are an outstanding senior-level student. They engage in or are developing leadership roles in civic, community, or professional development activities.

Rising Stars have participated in an educational opportunity program that has had a significant impact upon their ability to achieve educational and/or professional objectives.



The 2026 Rising Star Award Recipients: Izabella Comstock, Mya Hebert and Anna McKee at the annual MEEOA Conference in Augusta.

Anna McKee: Alumni of SMCC TRIO Student Support Services & UMF Johnson Scholars (SSS)



Both personally and professionally, Anna has come to embody the ways in which TRIO empowers students to believe in themselves on their own terms. In 2019, she applied to be a SMCC TRIO Peer Leader; she excelled in this role working one-to-one with fellow TRIO students. With her confidence growing, she decided to transfer to UMF to study special education. As someone with learning differences herself, Anna had often felt like an outsider. Her experiences at both SMCC and UMF allowed her to flip the script, looking from the inside out by learning about myriad ways people experience and navigate the world.

With her UMF degree in hand, she has strived to translate her book learning into practice to help people who face barriers to success, first as a Vocational Support Advisor at Goodwill and more recently, as a TRIO Coach at SMCC, working specifically with students with disabilities. Stepping into a position to provide the same services that she herself

received has been empowering and humbling, especially at a time when TRIO's very existence is at risk. TRIO has meant the world to her, both during her undergrad and as she begins her professional career.

Award recipients were recognized at the January 2026 annual MEEOA Conference in Augusta, where professionals from programs across the state gathered to strengthen their expertise through best-practice training, and to share in celebrating the success of our students.

Rising Star Award Recipients

Izabella Comstock: Alumni of Bowdoin Upward Bound



Bella credits Upward Bound as one of the most transformative influences of her academic journey, helping her build confidence, strengthen her skills, and to truly see herself as capable of achieving more than she ever thought was possible. While in UB, Bella was nominated for the TORCH Scholarship at Northeastern University, and ended up receiving said scholarship, which gave her a full-ride to her dream college. After finishing her first year at Northeastern, Bella returned to Maine and worked as a TA for the Upward Bound program because she wanted to give back to the program that had given her so much. Since graduating from Northeastern University with a degree in Criminal Justice/Criminology and minors in Psychology and Law & Public Policy, Bella has built a career dedicated to victim advocacy and public service, as well as receiving her National Advocate Credentials. Her co-op with the Kennebec County District Attorney's Office introduced her to the field of victim services, and after graduation she returned as a legal secretary and victim advocate for the Juvenile Crimes Unit, where she

worked closely with restorative justice programs. In 2022, she continued this work at the Sagadahoc County District Attorney's Office, focusing primarily on domestic violence cases. Bella now serves as a Victim Advocate in the Criminal Division of the Maine Attorney General's Office, working with families who have lost loved ones to homicide. Her role includes early support during investigations, ongoing communication through complex court processes, and standing with families as cases move toward trial.

Mya Hebert: Alumni of UMaine Educational Talent Search & CMCC Student Support Services

In high school, Mya was a part of the Educational Talent Search program through her high school (Lake Region). She credits ETS with helping her immensely through the college application and financial aid process, which was done mostly virtually due to COVID. During her senior year she applied and ended up enrolling in the Human Services major at CMCC. While at CMCC, Mya participated in the TRIO SSS program, which allowed her to be more prepared for what to expect in college. In July of 2023, while she was volunteering with Loaves and Fishes at a barbecue and resource fair for the unhoused, she was granted a Pay It Forward Certificate from the Alumni of Distinction for 2023, and was also a member of the board of directors of the Alumni Association of UMA. At the end of her major at CMCC, the TRIO program assisted her with navigating how to apply for a practicum and which organizations would best suit me. Through this, she ended up applying for her practicum at Safe Voices, an organization that supports survivors of Domestic Violence and Sex Trafficking. At the end of her practicum with Safe Voices and after graduating from CMCC, she was encouraged by the Shelter Advocates at Safe Voices to apply for a job with them. She applied and was hired immediately after her practicum. She now works as an Advocate at the Safe Voices shelters. In this role she works with survivors of Domestic Violence and Sex Trafficking at the shelters, and also supports survivors in finding housing.



TRIO programs strengthen the economy. When TRIO students attain college degrees, every dollar spent on getting them there is returned to the federal government in tax dollars.

The Federal TRIO Programs...

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY CENTER (EOC)

Maine's EOC program worked with 2,269 participants last year at an average cost of just \$359 per participant.

This program serves the entire state.

Last year, 460 Maine EOC participants enrolled in Post-Secondary Education (PSE).

MEOC offered academic advising, personal counseling, career workshops, college and financial aid application assistance, default loan rehabilitation, test preparation, and financial and economic literacy education.

EDUCATIONAL TALENT SEARCH (ETS)

Last year, Maine's two Educational Talent Search programs served 1,611 participants at an average cost of just \$577 per participant.

These programs serve Androscoggin, Aroostook, Cumberland, Oxford, Penobscot, and Waldo counties.

57.3% of UM Talent Search participants completed PSE within 6 years.

ETS program services include academic, financial, and career counseling; exposure to college campuses; tutoring services; assistance in completing the college admissions process; and assisting with financial aid applications.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES (SSS)

Maine's SSS programs supported 2,865 students at an average cost of just \$1,940 per participant last year.

These programs serve Androscoggin, Aroostook, Cumberland, Franklin, Kennebec, Penobscot, and Washington counties.

88% of reported students are in good standing, and 85% are continuing in PSE.

SSS program services include intensive academic, financial, and personal counseling, tutoring services, and assistance completing both graduate school, and financial aid applications.

TRIO Programs in Maine (and nationally) are directly addressing bipartisan priorities like: economic mobility, workforce development, educational choice, and increasing the tax base, which improve constituents' lives.

...serving the needs of Maine's students!

UPWARD BOUND (UB)

Maine's UB programs served 493 participants at an average cost of \$5,269 per participant.

These programs serve Androscoggin, Aroostook, Cumberland, Franklin, Kennebec, Lincoln, Oxford, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Sagadahoc, Somerset, Washington, and York counties.

Over 50% of 2018's participants completed a degree within 6 years.

Nationally, only 21% of low-income, first-generation college students complete a bachelor's in 6 years. (National Center for Education Statistics)

Services students received include academic instruction in math, science, composition, literature and foreign language; tutoring and mentoring; academic, financial, and personal counseling; assistance completing college and financial aid applications; and career exploration.

UPWARD BOUND MATH/SCIENCE (UBMS)

Maine's Upward Bound Math Science program served 67 participants at an average cost of \$5,489 per participant.

This program serves Cumberland, Franklin, Piscataquis, and Somerset counties.

79% of graduating seniors enrolled in Post Secondary Education (PSE).

This program includes an intensive summer program focusing on math and science training, year-round counseling and advising, computer training, exposure to university faculty who perform research in math and science, and scientific research conducted under the guidance of a faculty or graduate student mentor.*

VETERANS UPWARD BOUND (VUB)

Maine's Veterans Upward Bound program served 125 participants at an average cost of \$2,476 per participant.

This program serves the entire state.

80% of the 2021 participant cohort completed PSE.

Services included connection to qualifying veterans benefits; academic, financial, and personal counseling; tutoring services; refresher classes for subjects required in college; assistance completing college and financial aid applications; and basic skills development.

*UBMS services also include tutoring and mentoring; academic, financial, and personal counseling; assistance completing college and financial aid applications, and career exploration.

Program

Students Served

Budget

Educational Opportunity Center

University of Maine	2,269	\$814,113
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Educational Talent Search

University of Maine	1,111	\$640,981
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University of Maine at Presque Isle	500	\$288,470
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2 Educational Talent Search Projects	1,611	\$928,451
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Student Support Services

Central Maine Community College (2 separate projects)	295	\$620,879
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Eastern Maine Community College	150	\$272,364
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Kennebec Valley Community College	180	\$352,531
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Northern Maine Community College	175	\$306,511
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Southern Maine Community College (2 separate projects)	240	\$544,728
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University of Maine	400	\$694,807
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University of Maine at Augusta	340	\$566,531
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University of Maine at Farmington	180	\$352,530
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University of Maine at Fort Kent	165	\$356,773
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University of Maine at Presque Isle	180	\$373,084
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University of Southern Maine (2 separate projects)	260	\$544,728
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Washington County Community College	160	\$302,915
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15 Student Support Services Projects	2,725	\$5,288,381
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Upward Bound

Bowdoin College(two separate projects)	167	\$859,462
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University of Maine	60	\$309,509
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University of Maine at Farmington	79	\$437,584
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University of Maine at Presque Isle (2 separate projects)	129	\$749,621
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University of Southern Maine (2 separate projects)	127	\$681,380
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8 Upward Bound Projects	562	\$3,037,556
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Upward Bound Math-Science

University of Maine	67	\$367,745
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Veterans Upward Bound

University of Southern Maine	125	\$297,601
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	7,359	\$10,733,847
	Participants	Total Federal Funding

All TRIO programs work to develop students' 21st-century skills, financial literacy, leadership, professional, and networking skills.

Cultivating Talented Leaders

The Upward Bound Summer Program at UMF offers an exciting six-week residential experience designed to prepare high school students for college success. Participants live on campus, take engaging academic classes, and explore career and college pathways while developing leadership and teamwork skills. Beyond the classroom, students enjoy cultural activities, field trips, and community-building experiences that make learning fun and meaningful. The program helps students build confidence, independence, and a strong foundation for their future college journey.



During last year's program, 33 UMF UB students participated in work-based learning at 22 different locations on campus and in the Farmington area. Worksites included a local farm, child care center, library, veterinary clinic, assisted living center, retail locations, and university offices.



Students also job-shadowed in healthcare and automotive settings as well as at the courthouse. Student workers were supported through a relationship with the Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC). Through EMDC's Youth Workforce Services division, students received funding for their summer employment and professional training.

All UB students participate in career development during the summer. Rising juniors take a class called "Career Experience," where they explore various careers and work on important career skills.

Program Directory

Bowdoin College

Upward Bound

Project Director: Ginny Ward, vfowles@bowdoin.edu

<https://www.bowdoin.edu/upward-bound/>

Central Maine Community College

Student Support Services

Project Director: Erin Ouellette, eoulette@mainecc.edu

<https://www.cmcc.edu/academics/support/trio-student-support-services>

Eastern Maine Community College

Student Support Services

Project Director: Michael Schwabenbauer mschwabenbauer@emcc.edu

<http://www.emcc.edu/academics/support/trio-student-support-services>

Kennebec Valley Community College

Student Support Services

Project Director: Lisa Black, lblack@kvcc.me.edu

<http://www.kvcc.me.edu/academics/support/trio-student-support-services/>

Northern Maine Community College

Student Support Services

Project Director: Johna Lovely, jlovely@mainecc.edu

<https://www.nmcc.edu/academics/support/student-services/trio/>

Southern Maine Community College

Student Support Services

Project Director: Katharine Lualdi, klualdi@smccme.edu

<http://www.smccme.edu/academics/successs-programs/trio/>

University of Maine

Educational Opportunity Center & Educational Talent Search

Project Director: Laurie Davis, laurie.j.davis@maine.edu

<http://meoc.maine.edu>

<http://mets.maine.edu>

Student Support Services

Project Director: Eric Chapman, echapman@maine.edu

<http://www.umaine.edu/sss/>

Upward Bound & Upward Bound Math-Science

Project Director: Rusty R. Brown, rusty.brown@maine.edu

<http://www.umaine.edu/ub/>

Program Directory Cont.

University of Maine Augusta

Student Support Services

Project Director: Anastasia Lima, anastasia.lima@maine.edu

<http://www.uma.edu/academics/student-support/trio-sss/>

University of Maine Farmington

Upward Bound

Project Director: Elizabeth Hansen-Roosa, elizabeth.m.hansen@maine.edu

<https://umf.maine.edu/upwardbound/>

Student Support Services

Project Director: Ashlee Fecteau, ashlee.fecteau@maine.edu

<https://umf.maine.edu/academics/johnson-scholars-program>

University of Maine Fort Kent

Student Support Services

Project Director: Susan Dubay, susan.dubay@maine.edu

<http://www.umfk.edu/student-success/trio/>

University of Maine Presque Isle

Student Support Services

Project Director: Mary Kate Barbosa, mary.barbosa@maine.edu

<http://www.umpi.edu/trio-college-access/>

Talent Search & Upward Bound

Project Director: Carol McGlenn, carol.mcglenn@maine.edu

<https://www.umpi.edu/trio-college-access/educational-talent-search/>

<https://www.umpi.edu/trio-college-access/upward-bound/>

University of Southern Maine

Student Support Services

Project Director: Terri Plummer, teresa.plummer@maine.edu

<http://www.usm.maine.edu/trio-college-programs/>

Upward Bound & Veterans Upward Bound

Project Director: Alyssa West, alyssa.west@maine.edu

<http://www.usm.maine.edu/upwardbound/>

<https://usm.maine.edu/upward-bound-veterans-high-school-students/trio-upward-bound>

Washington County Community College

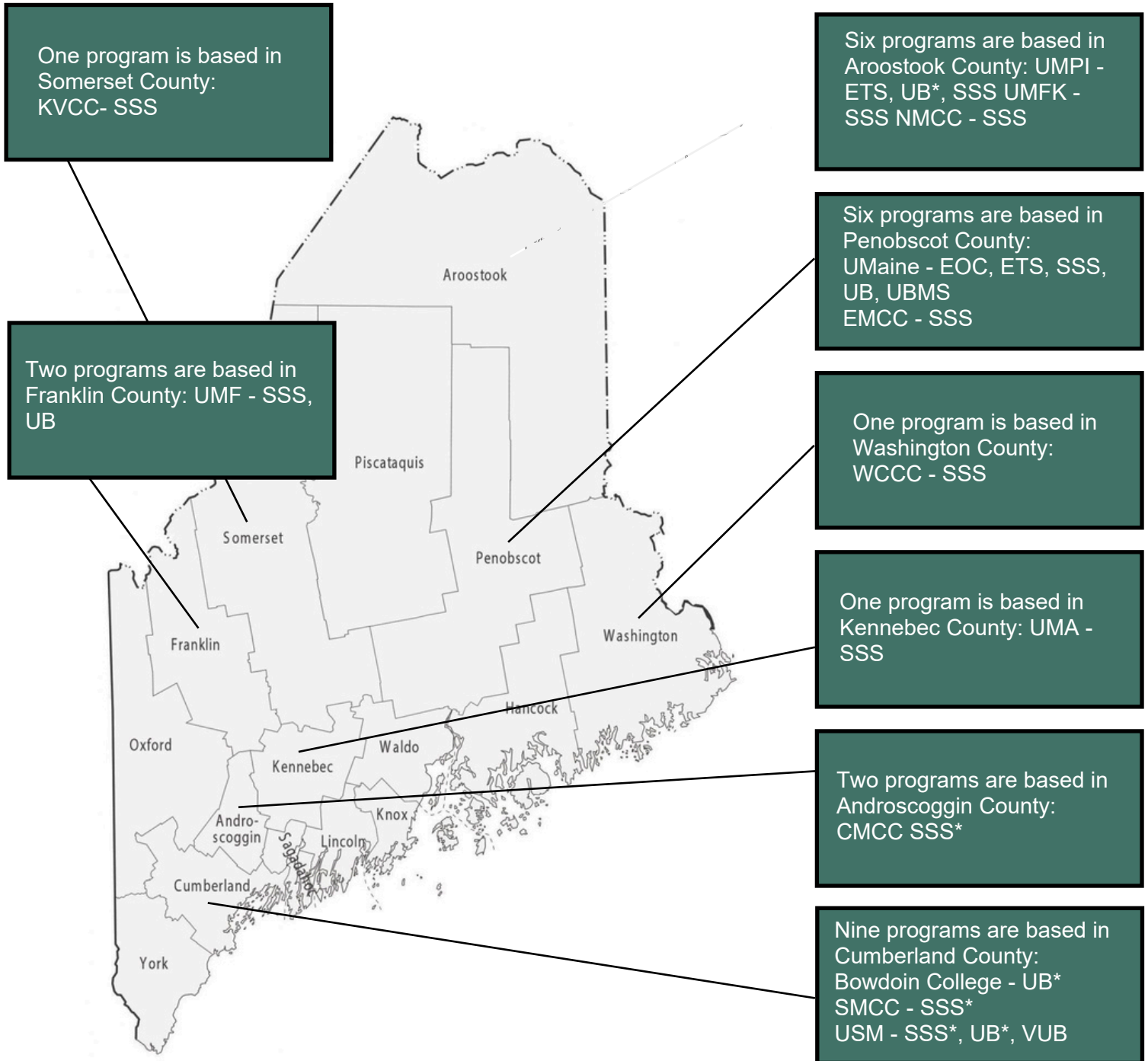
Student Support Services

Project Director: Kieve Leeman, Kleeman@mainecc.edu

<http://www.wccc.me.edu/academics/support/academic-support-2/trio/>

Visit MEEOA.org for more information

The 28 TRIO Programs throughout Maine



Many programs serve multiple counties. *Indicates multiple grants of the same type focused on serving specific sub-populations.



MEEOA.ORG