



# Project Opportunity

Scholarships for Maine's Future Teachers

## College of Education and Human Development

### Program Description

As part of its' mission, Project Opportunity (POPP) prepares future teachers to work in Maine's public K-12 schools with students who are English Language Learners (ELL). POPP's programs and the English as a Second Language (ESL) endorsement naturally compliment any teacher preparation program in several ways. Together they help to increase a future teachers' ability to;

- afford ESL training prior to degree completion,
- facilitate a comprehensive learning environment for all students,
- increase employability within the Maine public school system,
- access new and rewarding employment opportunities,
- have access to professional development resources,
- develop a strong social network within the education system,
- and most of all, help some of societies' most vulnerable members.

### Financial & Professional Support

The competitive two year Scholarships for Maine's Future Teachers program provides a variety of services, scholarships and tuition waivers for coursework toward ESL endorsement (Maine Department of Education Endorsement 660: English as a Second Language). The program seeks undergraduate and graduate candidates in teacher preparation programs at the University of Maine in math, science, language arts, social studies, ESL, and other subject areas. Selected applicants will receive award packages of up to \$8,000: with funding limits of \$5,000 in tuition waivers and \$3,000 in scholarships, to help them become ESL endorsed teachers. Project Opportunity will support participants to complete their degree coursework and teaching certification, fulfill 15 hours of ESL coursework, and pass the ESL Praxis II exam. Participants may remain in the program for up to two years and will receive mentorship, advising, assistance with job placement, and other professional development services. In order to remain in the program, participants must meet minimum requirements similar to the admission criteria and demonstrate successful progress toward program completion.

### ESL Endorsement Curriculum

To fulfill endorsement requirements and prepare for the Praxis II exams, Project Opportunity highly recommends taking at least one course in each of the following areas related to ESL: multiculturalism, methods of teaching, linguistics, testing, and curriculum development. All of Project Opportunity's courses are available at both the undergraduate and graduate level. These classes prepare future teachers to work with ELL students in a variety of environments including mainstream, pull out, and push in, tutoring and ESL classroom situations. They also help individuals better understand how social factors impact educational environments. Classes are offered online and on-site during the academic school year and as one week institutes during the summer.

### Career Opportunities

Teaching ESL is a growing specialty in Maine's public school systems. Participation in this field varies from part- to full-time ESL instruction and/or tutoring, or in addition to mainstreamed classroom instruction. This flexibility provides an opportunity for teachers to share their knowledge and expertise in their subject area to traditional students and/or to students that might not have reasonable access to important information. In addition, each school district with ESL students is required to have an ESL teacher within the school district. Currently, 93 school districts with ELL students do not have an ESL endorsed teacher. Therefore, an ESL endorsement not only provides an opportunity for a future teacher to work in a new and rewarding capacity but it may also improve their employability.

### Contact Information

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### Scholarship Requirements

Admission Criteria include;  
enrollment at the University of Maine in a teacher certification program,  
a minimum grade point average of 3.0,  
passing Praxis I scores,  
an anticipated graduation date within two years,  
a dedication to obtaining ESL endorsement,  
a commitment to work in Maine's K-12 public schools,  
US and/or Maine residency.

### Application Process

Applications can be submitted by mail, e-mail or fax.  
Applications should include:

- A completed *Scholarships for Maine's Future Teachers Application* form,
- A personal statement from the applicant,
- Recent college transcripts,
- Most recent Praxis I scores,
- Two letters of recommendation and corresponding *Applicant Evaluation and Letter of Recommendation* forms.

Applications must be received by the application deadline. Late applications will be processed for the next application period if an extension has not been approved by Project Opportunity prior to the deadline. Notices are sent to applicants once their completed application packets are received.

Following the deadline, all completed applications are processed and sent to the review board. Applications from qualified applicants are then submitted to the approval committee. This process may take up to several weeks; individuals will be notified as soon as decisions are finalized.

### Application Deadlines

Scholarship application deadlines are:  
March 15 for summer enrollment,  
July 15 for fall enrollment,  
And October 15 for spring enrollment.

## Professional Development Resources

POPP courses are open to in-service education professionals as well. In addition to the classes recommended for ESL endorsement; classes on teaching subject specific content to ESL students are available. POPP also offers quality on-site and online workshops in several areas including multicultural education, heritage language classroom approaches, ESL, and second language content instruction. Courses and workshops qualify for college credit and Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to help teachers maintain their certification. To facilitate networking of individuals in the ESL education field at the local, state, regional and national levels; POPP also maintains a variety of links to current conferences on their website.

## Social Impact

Teaching ESL is a field that strives to improve a student's ability to integrate externally, internally, academically and through self-expression using multiple intelligences. This allows students to proactively bridge past and present language and cultural norms and foster self-actualization. POPP believes that helping students assimilate without losing their own personal identity can produce many benefits for society.

This area of study is also a vital part of the changing dynamics in Maine's public school system. Maine has experienced an preK-12 enrollment decline for several decades. However, during the last five years, ELL enrollment has increased 16%. In Portland, ELL students make up 22% of the school population. This population change is also occurring at a national level inside and outside of the school environment.

Nationwide, student enrollment at the preK-12 level has increased by only 3.66% in ten years. During the same time ELL enrollment has grown by 57.17%. In addition, in the last five years nearly half of the population increase of the United States has been due to immigration. Project Opportunity is committed to continually providing a full spectrum of professional services to help ensure that the intellectual resource every student possesses are not wasted but used to better the world around them. As an ESL endorsed teacher, you would directly facilitate a student's growth and provide them with the skills necessary to thrive in a new educational environment.

## The Future of Project Opportunity

POPP's focus is not only on current needs but also on providing high quality training, resources, and support for current and future teachers as well as Local Education Agencies with ELL students. POPP's Research Faculty Team continues to strive to improve and expand the ESL teacher training at UMaine through course development in subject specific areas, local research to better understand ELL issues in Maine, and collaboration with the State Education Agency. The team includes experts in ESL, mathematics and science education, language acquisition, civics and multiculturalism. To ensure its' effectiveness Project Opportunity continues to evaluate and refine its' services through outside evaluations and various sources of feedback.

## Endorsement Information

Eligibility for Endorsement 660: English as a Second Language can be established by completing one of three pathways. Information about these pathways is available on our website: <http://www2.umaine.edu/projectopportunity/ESL%20Endorsement.htm>

ESL Endorsement is offered through the Maine Department of Education. Project Opportunity offers courses and institutes that fulfill requirements for this endorsement. To research or apply for State Endorsement contact Maine Department of Education, Nancy Mullins, ESL/Bilingual Education Specialist, 23 Statehouse Station, Augusta, ME 04333, Telephone: 207.624.6788. Or visit their website at: <http://www.state.me.us/education/esl/homepage.htm>.

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