

## Community Toolkit

- Business Support for Youth Programs
- Creating an Education Program and Hiring Youth Outreach Staff
- **Creating Youth Recognition Awards/Scholarships**
  - Developing a Youth Training/Leadership Program
  - Involving Young People in the Election Process
  - Mentoring Students and Visiting Schools
    - Setting up Internship Programs
- Working with Youth to Address Specific Community Issues or Needs
  - Youth Philanthropy
- Youth on School, Municipal, and Advisory Boards / Councils

The Maine Department of Education's  
Citizenship Education Task Force

and

CAMPAIGN FOR THE CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS



2006

As important as it is for young people to become more civically engaged, it is equally important that they receive recognition for their efforts. Scholarships and award ceremonies create incentives to get involved, give young people a chance to gain public recognition for their work and demonstrate to their communities young people's ability to accomplish great things. The awards can be funded through a number of different sources and presented in a number of different ways.

### Maine Campus Compact

Maine Campus Compact makes annual awards to college students around the state who are involved in civic and community activities. The Heart and Soul Award is presented to up to six Maine undergraduate students who have been actively involved in turning their campuses and communities into places of democracy. These students have raised their voices on issues of local and global importance through civic engagement efforts. Recipients include students with a wide variety of experiences in any of the following areas: service, service-learning, activism, or political involvement. Examples of these efforts include direct community service, holding public forums, and running voter-registration drives. Recipients must demonstrate leadership skills through their successful involvement of other people in their innovative approaches to social, educational, environmental, health, economic, and/or legal issues facing their communities.

Maine Campus Compact also recognizes runners-up for the Heart and Soul Award with the PILLARS (Philanthropy Innovation Learning Leadership Action Responsibility Service) student award. These students are pillars of their campus and their communities. They support the civic efforts of others and take leadership roles in addressing and finding solutions to issues that face their communities.

A third award presented annually by Maine Campus Compact is the Unsung Heroes student award—presented to two students from each member campus to recognize their commitment to service and civic causes. These awards are given to students who, while not holding leadership roles, volunteer their time and services to address a cause. Recipients are the backbone of an organization, someone who always attends and volunteers for events, but does not necessarily plan or lead the event. Students' efforts may have been through service-learning projects, extracurricular programs, and/or entirely on their own initiative.

Award recipients are nominated by the presidents of their colleges or universities. In the case of the above awards, Maine Campus Compact staff and VISTA volunteers review nominations and select the recipients. The Heart and Soul Award is presented at an awards ceremony in the spring, and the others are awarded on campus. Each award recipient receives a certificate and his or her name is posted on the Maine Campus Compact Website.

### Teens Who Care Award

The Teens Who Care Award is presented to Maine high school students based on their academic- and community-based extra curricular achievements. Students are nominated by community members to receive \$1,000 scholarships, funded by Nelnet Superloan of Maine. According to a statement from the site by Laurie Curtis, Vice President at Nelnet, "Without exception, these teens demonstrate the highest level of compassion and work ethic and have earned the highest respect of their community." A diverse panel of judges review the nomination forms. The 2005 judges were Suzanne Olson, executive director of the Maine Children's Museum; Bill Vickerson, partner at Levenson, Vickerson, Beneman and member of the Children's Leadership Council (United Way of Greater Portland); Lynn Weisz, vice president of marketing and communications for United Way of Greater Portland; Shawn Yardley, city of Bangor's director of health and welfare; Charlene Belanger, community relations director, WCSH 6/WLBZ 2; and Steve Thaxton, president and general manager, WCSH 6.

Recipients attend an award banquet where they receive their awards and then each are featured in 30-second clips shown on channel 6 that give them statewide recognition for their achievements.

### Maine Secretary of State's Eighth Grade Citizenship Award Program

The Eight Grade Citizenship Award is sponsored by the Secretary of State's office and is part of the Fostering Youth Involvement (FYI) initiative. The award is designed to encourage and inspire young people to become more civically engaged, "because civic responsibility developed at an early age usually continues throughout a lifetime." The award is presented to one eighth grade student from each Maine school based on established criteria. The six recommended areas to take into consideration are:

- Volunteer service to the community;
- Involvement in citizenship or character building organizations;
- A good scholastic record;
- Participation in student government programs and school activities;
- Faithful school attendance; and
- Leadership qualities that motivate others to action for the benefit of the community.

The recipients of the award are selected by their own school based on the criteria listed above. The guidelines for award selection also recommend that students should be included in the selection process in an effort to "foster an awareness of the importance of citizenship qualities among their peers." Recipients of the award are presented with a framed certificate from the Secretary of State's office in a manner determined by each school.

## Ideas and Suggestions for Implementation

### Activities you want to recognize and why it is best to do an awards program.

Do we recognize young people for the volunteer efforts? For being involved in public policy and government? Do we recognize them in order to shine the spotlight on a youth program? These are all fine reasons to create awards and honor young people, but it is important to decide what would be the most affective kind of award. The Secretary of State's Eighth Grade Citizenship Award illustrates this by requiring award recipients to be well rounded and active in more than just one area. This will help to make the awards more competitive and to show communities the importance of encouraging young people to become active citizens.

### Use input from youth and the community when designing your award program.

Be sure to hold discussion sessions with the community, school, and young people to determine what would work best for the community.

### Consider who should give the award.

Think about the level of recognition the recipient should receive and how to achieve that. Should an individual teacher, a principal, or even your mayor give the award?

### Design the award carefully.

Based on funding, availability, and interest the award may work better as a certificate rather than a cash or scholarship award. For high-school-level students, scholarship awards may be more motivating because it is during these years that young people start to consider college. These are the kinds of issues that need to be taken into consideration when deciding how to present awards to young people.

### Set criteria for how award recipients will be selected.

There are a number of ways to select award recipients, and it is important to discuss and consider what selection process would work the best. As shown in the example above, some awards are presented by a nomination and some by student application.

### Choose a diverse panel of individuals to review nominations and choose recipients.

One person cannot be given the power to select award recipients. As has been demonstrated by the awards listed above, award recipients are most often chosen by a board of reviewers. This ensures that the decision is fair and non-biased. A review board should include adult community members as well as the community's young people, in an effort to really stress the importance and value of community and civic engagement.

### Decide when and where to present the awards.

Awards can be presented privately by a principal, advisor, or superintendent, or can be presented in a school or community assembly. While it may be more convenient to present an award privately, it may not be the most effective. Presenting awards through assemblies highlights the importance of what the students have done and can help other students to become excited about getting involved in their communities.

Generate press attention for the award.

Submit a brief ad to your local newspaper. Ask if your local gas station will volunteer billboard space to advertise. Ask your local television station to mention the award during the news. These are just a few ways to get news about awards out to community members.

## Case Study Resources

Liz McCabe Park  
**Maine Campus Compact**  
220 College Street. #2  
Lewiston, Maine 04240  
207-786-8216  
epark@bates.edu  
<http://www.mainecompact.org>

**Teens Who Care Award**  
WLBZ 2 (Bangor) /WCSH6 (Portland)  
<http://www.wcsh6.com>  
<http://www.wlbz2.com>

Doug Dunbar  
**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Citizenship Award Program**  
Office of the Secretary of State  
148 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0148  
207-626-8406  
doug.dunbar@maine.gov  
[http://www.state.me.us/sos/kids/fyigames/8th\\_citi.html](http://www.state.me.us/sos/kids/fyigames/8th_citi.html)

## Additional Resources

### 20 Below 20 Awards

A joint project of the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram and MaineToday.com, these awards identify 20 Mainers from ages 13 to 19 who are outstanding in areas of the visual arts, performing arts, technology, community service, civic involvement, and other areas where young people excel.  
<http://20below.maintoday.com/20/>

### The American Legion's National High School Oratorical Contest

The main objective of the contest is for high school students to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States. Other objectives include the development of leadership qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, the rights and privileges of American citizenship.  
[http://www.legion.org/?section=prog\\_evt&subsection=evt\\_oratorical&content=evt\\_oratorical](http://www.legion.org/?section=prog_evt&subsection=evt_oratorical&content=evt_oratorical)

### The Barge/McKee Scholarship for Environmental Studies

The Boothbay Region Land Trust annually sponsors the Barge/McKee Scholarship for students in Boothbay, Boothbay Harbor, Southport, and Edgecomb. There is no age limit, and the scholarship may be used to attend colleges, schools, camps, and conferences involved in the scientific study of the environment. Scholarships range from \$300 to \$500. <http://www.bbrlt.org/Education.htm>

### Constitution Essay and Poster Contest

Students in grade school may participate in two poster contests -- Official Maine Symbols and Maine History. Students at the junior high (middle school) and high school levels participate in the essay contests on the Maine Constitution and the importance of voting and democracy. [http://www.state.me.us/sos/kids/fyigames/const\\_essay06.html](http://www.state.me.us/sos/kids/fyigames/const_essay06.html)

### Finance Authority of Maine (FAME)

FAME offers information on their nine different financial aid programs to assist with high education tuition: Higher Education Loan Purchase Program; Maine State Grant Program; Educators for Maine Program; Robert Byrd Honors Scholars Program; Quality Child Care Education Scholarship; Tuition Waiver Programs; NextGen Access Scholarship Program; NextGen Student Grant Program; and Physicians/ Dentists/Veterinarians Programs. FAME also offers a \$50 NextGen grant for all newborns born after January 1, 2006. <http://www.famemaine.com>

### Gear Up

The GEAR UP program is a discretionary grant program of the U.S. Department of Education designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Funds can be used to provide college scholarships to low-income students.

<http://www.gearupme.org/>

### Governor's Service Awards

The Governor's Service Awards celebrate and recognize the work of Maine's volunteer community. This award program, sponsored by the Governor of Maine, aims to highlight the many examples of commitment, impact on local issues or needs, leadership, innovation, and active citizenship.

<http://www.volunteermaine.org./news/release.php?ID=251>

### The Gracie Fund

Established by an anonymous donor in 2001 at the Maine Community Foundation, the Gracie Fund seeks to reverse the youth "out migration" trend from Aroostook and Washington counties by offering incentives for skilled natives to return to or remain in, their communities of origin. School loan repayment grants of \$1,000 to \$5,000 are awarded to successful applicants annually for up to three years of program participation. <http://www.mainecef.org/html/grants/available/gracie.html>.

### The Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation

College juniors, nominated by their school, can receive a \$30,000 award based on their plans to enter a graduate program leading to a career in public service. <http://www.truman.gov>

### The Hearst Journalism Awards Program

This national program is designed to encourage excellence in journalism and journalism education to undergraduates at accredited schools of journalism. Winning students and their schools earn cash prizes and special medallions. Students may submit entries only through their schools of journalism.

[http://hearstfdn.org/hearst\\_journalism/index.html](http://hearstfdn.org/hearst_journalism/index.html)

### Holocaust Human Rights Center of Maine

This non-profit offers awards and scholarships to students (K-12), educators and citizens in relation to the topic of the Holocaust and human rights issues. <http://www.hhrc.org/>

### Island Institute Scholarship Programs

Since 1988 the Island Institute has provided support to island communities through its various scholarship programs. Each year the number of recipients has increased, as have the funds the Island Institute is able to give. To date the Island Institute has awarded almost \$200,000 to over 350 scholars.

<http://www.islandinstitute.org/education.asp?section=scholarships>

### K-12 Service Learning Awards

KIDS Consortium recognizes Maine service-learning leaders (students, teachers, community partners) and organizations who have made a significant contribution to supporting and/or expanding opportunities for Maine youth to participate in high quality service-learning experiences as a part of their K-12 education.

[http://www.kidsconsortium.org/learning\\_awards.html](http://www.kidsconsortium.org/learning_awards.html)

### The Legislative Memorial Scholarship Fund

The original scholarship funds began in memory of Representative Stephen Gould of Orono and House Page David Michaud, and were available to students attending the Universities in Orono and Fort Kent. The new fund makes scholarship awards available to Maine residents attending any accredited Maine institution of higher education, in honor of all Legislators and Staff who served the Maine Legislature.

<http://janus.state.me.us/legis/ljo/scholarship.htm>

### L.L.Bean Kids in Acadia Scholarships

The L.L.Bean Kids in Acadia scholarship program is open to all schools participating in the Schoodic

Education Adventure program. This scholarship fund is for students only.  
<http://www.nps.gov/acad/eeweb/programs/seaprogram.htm>

### Maine Center for Student Journalism Newspaper Contest and Conference

The Maine Center for Student Journalism has served the schools and journalists of Maine since 1993. The Center coordinates opportunities for students in Maine schools to learn about the technique, craft and profession of journalism through annual high school journalism conferences and newspaper contests.  
<http://www.umaine.edu/mcsj/default.htm>

### Maine College Circle

Maine College Circle awards \$100 "Future of Maine" college scholarships to students in grades 3-6. Students submit essays in response to questions on college and career aspirations. The larger Future of Maine College Scholarship Program is designed to help younger students throughout Maine understand their opportunities in education beyond high school, to encourage early academic planning for college, and to show public support for the aspirations of younger Maine students of all academic and economic backgrounds. <http://www.mainecollegecircle.org/>

### MELMAC (Principals Scholarship Program)

The Maine Principals Scholarship program provides a \$1,000 scholarship to one college-bound graduating senior from each participating Maine high school, public or private, chosen by that high school's principal. The scholarship is credited toward a student's third semester of study and is intended to assist students when additional financial support may make the difference in their decision to attend college and also to reward them for their persistence while attending college.  
<http://www.melmacfoundation.org/grants/principal/default.aspx>

### Maine Education Services (MES)

The Maine Education Services (MES) is a non-profit organization created to foster and promote access to higher education. Search for information on available scholarships and student loans.  
<http://www.mesfoundation.com/>

### Maine Engineers Recruitment and Retention Program

Public Law 2003, Chapter 710 was established to provide assistance to eligible employers seeking to recruit engineers for full-time employment in this State by providing financial assistance to eligible individuals who fill such positions. <http://janus.state.me.us/legis/statutes/20-a/title20-Ach428-Asec0.html>

### Maine Native American Essay Contest

Students in both middle and high schools explore one aspect of Maine native history, and then to write an essay of between 500-1000 words. Topics may include, but are not limited to, the history of Native American diplomacy, relations between the tribes, relations with European settlers, aspects of Native American economics, the migrations of Native American peoples or effects of treaties with European settlers. <http://www.state.me.us/sos/kids/nativeamerican/index.htm>

### Maine Scholarships

This link provides a listing of scholarships in Maine. <http://www.free-4u.com/main.htm>

### Maine Seacoast Mission Scholars

The Maine Sea Coast Mission provides scholarships to students from the islands and coastal communities of Downeast Maine to high school students enrolling in degree programs and to non-traditional students of all ages taking specialized courses to prepare for advancement in a variety of fields. The Missions scholarships are available for all four years of college. If Mission Scholars maintain a 2.5 grade point average, they are eligible to reapply for scholarship for another year.  
<http://www.seacoastmission.org/scholarships.htm>

### Margaret Chase Smith Essay Contest

Every year Maine high school seniors to submit essays explaining their views on the role government should play in protecting and extending civil rights.

<http://www.mcslibrary.org/program/edu/essay.htm>

### Margaret Chase Smith Public Affairs Scholarship

The scholarship was established on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Senator Smith's election to the U.S. House of Representatives and in recognition of her years of dedicated public service to the citizens of Maine and to the nation from 1940 to 1973. Main eligibility of the scholarships depends on Maine residency, maintaining and undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or better, and enrollment at the University of Maine.

<http://www.umaine.edu/mcsc/Scholar.htm>

### The Mitchell Institute

The Mitchell Institute awards a scholarship to a graduating senior from every public high school in Maine. Criteria for the scholarship are: academic performance/potential, a record of community service, and financial need.

<http://www.mitchellinstitute.org/scholarships.html>

### The New England Council: Summer Scholars Award

The New England Council is an alliance of businesses, colleges and universities, non-profits and other organizations dedicated to promoting economic development and a high quality of life in the six-state region. The Washington Summer Scholars Award is a summer stipend of \$2,000 for housing and expenses to six selected undergraduate students who have obtained an internship in a New England delegation congressional office in order to gain valuable exposure to the inner-workings of our federal government.

<http://www.newenglandcouncil.com/summerScholars.php>

### Points of Light Foundation

The awards and recognition programs of the Points of Light Foundation celebrate the success of volunteers across America and spotlight the impact that various individuals, groups, businesses and families have made in their communities.

<http://www.pointsoflight.org/awards/>

### Presidential Freedom Scholarships

Two students from the junior or senior class in each high school in the United States may receive a \$1000 college scholarship for outstanding leadership in service to community. This is a matching scholarship: \$500 is provided by a local organization such as the PTA or Kiwanis and \$500 is provided by Learn and Serve America. Since 2000, more than 225 Maine students have received these scholarships.

[http://www.nationalservice.gov/state\\_profiles/pdf/ME\\_LS.pdf](http://www.nationalservice.gov/state_profiles/pdf/ME_LS.pdf)

### Raise Your Voice

A variety of award and scholarship opportunities for young people to get recognized for their civic engagement work and leadership.

<http://www.actionforchange.org/getrecognized>

### United States Senate Youth Program

This program brings two student leaders from each state, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity to spend a week in Washington D.C. experiencing their national government in action. Each delegate will be awarded a \$5,000 College Scholarship for undergraduate studies.

<http://hearstfdn.org/ussyp/index.html>

### Youth Action Net

Since 2001, YouthActionNet has given awards to more than 60 dynamic young leaders in over 40 countries. YouthActionNet gives awards to youth leaders and their emerging projects that promote social change and connect youth with local communities. Final selections are made following a peer review process in which previous award winners select the next round of awardees. Award recipients will receive

US\$500 and are eligible to participate in an international capacity-building workshop.  
[http://www.youthactionnet.org/yan\\_awards](http://www.youthactionnet.org/yan_awards)

### Youth Scholarship Programs (VFW)

Every year, hundreds of thousands of students participate in the VFW's (Veteran's of Foreign Wars) Voice of Democracy Scholarship Competition and the Patriot's Pen Essay Contest.  
<http://www.vfw.org/index.cfm?fa=cmtty.levelc&cid=1836&tok=1>