

## **Project Abstract**

### **Expanding Charter School Opportunities for Traditionally Underserved Students Through the Threshold Program - An Alternative Program of the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences**

The purpose of this project is to increase enrollment in Threshold, a charter school program of the Maine Academy of Natural Sciences (MeANS), which primarily serves rural students who are economically disadvantaged and/or have disabilities. Threshold is designed for students that cannot succeed in the standard MeANS program including homebound students who are pregnant or parenting and/or suffer from a physical or psychological handicapping condition. These circumstances or conditions in turn lead to challenges with transportation, daycare and housing that make it difficult to come to school. By enrolling in Threshold, students will have the educational supports needed to complete their high school education within six years of enrollment and have realistic, actionable post-graduation plans. Threshold offers a teacher supervised home-based high school program, access to college courses, and supplementary on-campus learning and social activities. Guided by their personalized learning plan (PLP), students are expected to attend to their daily learning requirements, make progress towards meeting Maines's high school standards, show growth in their math, reading, and language skills, and participate in social activities. Now nearing the end of its first year of operation, Threshold has successfully re-engaged 20 students primarily from two high need target counties who are now making progress toward high school graduation.

MeANS requests funds to expand the program to 120 students in seven additional rural counties over five years.