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Graduate Assistantship Job Description

Position Summary:

Title: Research Assistant

Department: Catherine E. Culter Institute, Population Health and Health Policy

Hours per Week: 20 hours/week

Location(s): Portland
Lab (if applicable): N/A
Duration: 12-months, January-December 2027
Anticipated Start Date: 1/18/2026

Total Stipend: $16,243 for master's-level students / $18,950 for doctoral-level students, paid biweekly
Tuition Waiver: up to 6 graduate credits per semester during each the Spring 2027 semester, Summer 2027 semester (pending enrollment), and Fall 2027 semester

Supervisor Name: Mary Lindsey Smith
Supervisor Email: m.lindsey.smith@maine.edu
Supervisor Phone: 207-228-8370

*** Per CBA, Art. 38, § 7, graduate workers who are on approved remote work arrangement may need to physically come to campus periodically to perform work or attend meetings. Check with the supervisor for any on-campus requirements.*

Other Information:

- The University offers a GA/TA/RA health benefit plan to USM graduate workers through Gallagher Health. Additionally, effective July 1, 2026, workers have access to dental and vision insurance options and voluntary retirement savings plans; USM will not cover these costs.
- Graduate workers are also eligible for resources through the UMS Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Position Details:

Statement of Job:

The Graduate Research Assistant (RA) will support the implementation and evaluation of the Sunrise Partnership for Success, a Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) grant funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This is a partnership between a community-based organization in Downeast Maine and the Substance Use Research and Evaluation unit within the Catherine E. Cutler Institute. This position provides hands-on experience in community-based prevention program monitoring and evaluation as well as public health substance use prevention practice.

Working under the supervision of SURE staff, the GRA will assist with activities that support prevention planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities for this SPF initiative. Responsibilities may include: supporting the SURE unit with literature reviews; qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis; survey development and administration; supporting Federal reporting; data visualization; and dissemination of findings. The research assistant will support the team in examining prevention infrastructure, community prevention strategies, behavioral health outcomes, and population-level indicators related to substance use and well-being to support program monitoring and evaluation.

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This position provides training and professional development in applied health services evaluation and research methods as well as stakeholder engagement and translation of findings into policies and practice. The RA will gain experience working on federally funded public health initiatives while developing skills relevant to careers in public health, evaluation, behavioral health, and community-based research.

Essential Functions:

1. Assist SURE staff with implementation and evaluation activities for the SAMHSA-funded Strategic Prevention Framework - Partnerships for Success grant.
2. Conduct literature reviews and summarize findings relevant to substance use prevention and prevention science.
3. Assist with survey development, administration, data management, and quality assurance activities.
4. Support qualitative research activities, including interview scheduling, transcription review, coding, and thematic analysis.
5. Collect, organize, and analyze qualitative and quantitative data related to SPF-PFS objectives and outcomes.
6. Prepare data summaries, presentations, reports, dashboards, and other materials for project staff, community partners, and funders.
7. Assist with stakeholder engagement activities, including meeting preparation, documentation, and communication with community partners.
8. Support reporting and documentation requirements associated with the SPF-PFS grant.
9. Contribute to dissemination products, including conference presentations, manuscripts, and other written reports.
10. Participate in project meetings, trainings, and other professional development opportunities.
11. Perform other duties as assigned that support project goals and the student's professional development.

Supervisory Responsibilities:
N/A

Budget Responsibilities:
N/A

Public and Professional Activities Related to Job Performance:

1. Participate in project team meetings, trainings, and professional development opportunities related to prevention science, public health, and program evaluation.
2. Assist with the preparation of presentations, reports, fact sheets, and other dissemination materials for community stakeholders and funding agencies.
3. Support communication and coordination with community coalitions and prevention partners participating in the Strategic Prevention Framework - Partnerships for Success (SPF-PFS) initiative.
4. Participate in webinars, professional meetings, or conferences as appropriate and funding permits.
5. Contribute to monitoring and evaluation products, including reports, presentations, and potential manuscripts.

Internal Contacts:
Mary Lindsey Smith, Director SURE and MOSS

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Katherine Rosingana, Research Associate II
Tyler Egland, Research Analyst II
Sarah McLaughlin, Research Analyst II

External Contacts:
Healthy Acadia
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) project officers
Community prevention coalitions participating in the SPF-PFS initiative
Behavioral health and prevention service providers
Local public health partners, schools, and community organizations involved in prevention activities

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:

- Knowledge of or interest in public health, substance use prevention, behavioral health, or program evaluation
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Strong organizational skills and attention to detail
- Ability to manage multiple tasks and meet deadlines
- Ability to work both independently and collaboratively as part of a team
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office applications, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Teams
- Ability to learn new software applications as needed
- Experience with data collection, data management, survey research, or qualitative research methods preferred but not required

Required Qualifications:

- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Demonstrated organizational skills and attention to detail
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively in a professional environment
- Proficiency with Microsoft Office applications
- Interest in public health, prevention science, behavioral health, community-based research, or program evaluation
- Ability to maintain confidentiality and exercise sound professional judgment
- Must not be a non-student University of Maine System employee.
- The use of a personal computer or laptop IS required for this position. Note: designated on-campus computer lab workstations are available on a first come, first served basis.

Preferred Qualifications:

- Coursework or experience in public health, social work, sociology, psychology, policy, evaluation, or a related field
- Experience with quantitative and/or qualitative research methods
- Experience with survey platforms (e.g., Qualtrics) and/or data analysis software (e.g., Excel, SPSS, R, NVivo)
- Experience working with community organizations, coalitions, or public health initiatives
- Suggested academic programs: Social Work, Public Health, Nursing, sociology, psychology

This position shall be covered by the University of Maine System and University of Maine Graduate Workers Union Collective Bargaining Agreement.

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To Apply:

Submit your application, including your resume and cover letter, via the Graduate Assistant Application form linked here by 12/1/2026. In your cover letter, include a self-assessment about how this position relates to your academic program and professional aspirations. Candidates should receive notice of employment decisions by 1/1/2027.

Please direct any questions specific to this position to the supervisor at m.lindsey.smith@maine.edu or 207-228-8370. For general questions about the GA program, or the Graduate Assistant Application form, reach out to the Office of Graduate Studies, usmgradstudies@maine.edu or 207-780-4872.

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