

Student Spotlight - Brianna Holston

How long have you been at USM?

I am in my third year at USM and should be graduating in 2024.

What made you choose USM?

I grew up in Portland and had a lot of exposure to USM during my school years. I originally applied to some other schools, but ultimately realized I wanted to stay in Maine and the community at USM seemed very welcoming.

What made you decide on your major?

I started out at USM as a social work major, and wanted to possibly go into counseling and behavioral health. During 2022, I felt more drawn to the health side of public service, and decided to switch to the public health program over the summer. I have always enjoyed STEM topics and thought that public health would provide a decent mix of STEM and humanities. I am happy I started out in social work as the knowledge I gained from my first two years has really supplemented the public health coursework I've taken.

Anything you would like to mention about your major or any classes or faculty that you've enjoyed?

I have really enjoyed the public health program so far, and all of the faculty members I've taken classes with have been awesome. Professor Ziller in particular has been a great mentor to me over this past school year, though I have enjoyed working with all of the faculty members of Muskie I've met so far. I love how many different perspectives there are in the public health world, and I've really appreciated the variety of perspectives that I've been exposed to in the public health program. I have also had the opportunity to work with the Maine Rural Health Research Center since November. I've been helping with some of their projects as well as some smaller tasks. One that I am currently helping with is a poverty chartbook which I have made some figures for. I

really enjoy working with the team and learning new skills in the process.

What plans do you have after graduation?

I am definitely still figuring out what exactly I want to focus on in my further studies, but I would like to pursue an MPH and USM is my top choice for doing so. I have really enjoyed the research side of public health, and I think I will want to integrate statistics and data science in my future learning.
