



COUNCIL for OPPORTUNITY in EDUCATION

Federal TRIO Programs Emergency COVID-19 Funding Request for Phase 4

COVID Phase 4 (CV-4) Request: \$450,000,000 emergency funding for TRIO programs to support low-income students and their families from middle school through college through the immediate COVID-19 crisis as a result of school closures and shutdown of major sectors of the economy.

BACKGROUND: TRIO's unique structure enables its educators to maintain personal relationships with the nation's low-income, first-generation students, students with disabilities, military veterans, and unemployed adults. Without emergency intervention for TRIO, this generation of existing and prospective students is at risk of permanently losing a higher level of education. It is critically important TRIO receives additional resources to ensure students maintain academic standing and continue enrollment throughout the next several months and in the fall despite the severe disruptions in their academic and personal lives as a result of the public health crisis. Additionally, with increased unemployment and lost wages, there are thousands more low-income families and displaced adult workers who stand in need of TRIO services in order to help improve their economic situations through postsecondary education. By providing \$450 million in TRIO emergency funding, Congress will ensure TRIO programs are there to help students absorb the near-term economic shock of this crisis and mitigate long-term economic impacts through a higher level of education.

Federal TRIO Program Capacity Increases: \$250,000,000

- **All TRIO Programs: \$164,000,000** would increase capacity by 15% for all TRIO programs to serve an additional 330,000 low-income, first-generation students, students with disabilities, veterans, and unemployed adults. Immediate investment in academic tutoring and counseling, peer mentoring, and financial literacy will yield long-term dividends for individual students and their families. The emergency funding request will help assure that TRIO will be there to help students and families absorb the economic shock of this crisis. The request also includes targeted increases for the following two far-reaching TRIO programs with a competition scheduled in FY21:
- **Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC): \$32,000,000** for EOC would increase program capacity by 50% so that more than 144,000 additional unemployed and low-income adults will have the opportunity to earn their GED, obtain guidance in completing financial aid and college admissions applications, and receive financial and career counseling. EOC has a tremendous impact for its nearly 200,000 participants annually. This request would enable EOC to provide low-income and unemployed adults opportunities to improve their economic outlook.
- **Talent Search: \$54,000,000** for Talent Search would increase capacity by 25% and enable an additional 139,000 low-income, first-generation middle and high school students to gain the tools necessary to prepare for and apply to college. The abrupt closure of schools this spring has disrupted the educational paths of many youth. Ensuring that students do not fall behind and stay on their path of postsecondary preparation will require deliberate and targeted action by TRIO programs and personnel. This would give these most vulnerable students a chance for success.

Technology Support for TRIO Students and Families: \$200,000,000 would allow TRIO students to gain broadband access, hardware (laptops/tablets), and software to continue academic work and support services online. The emergency request would provide home internet and laptops for the approximately 45% of TRIO students who lack such critical resources. As schools across the nation have canceled in-person classes, students at every educational level have been told to continue academic work online. Low-income and first-generation students who do not have internet access or laptops in their homes are at a distinct disadvantage. Many are attempting to complete assignments from a mobile phone in the parking lot of a coffee shop. Students in rural communities have even fewer options. However, TRIO programs have direct access to these students and their families and the capacity to provide such support if adequate resources are available.