TRIO ALUMNI
Advocacy Toolkit

#TRIOWorks
Six million grads and counting!

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September 2022

National TRIO Alumni Association
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Advocacy Timeline – How You Can Get Involved!

**Take Action** to tell your Member of Congress how TRIO works! The Alumni Advocacy Action link will allow you to send a message on current TRIO issues in Congress.

**January - February:** Contact the White House to ask for the President’s request to Congress include an increase for TRIO programs.

**March:** Attend COE Legislative Seminar!

**March - May:** Contact your elected officials in the House and Senate to request they sign on to the COE annual TRIO Funding Request Letter.

- If you are represented by a member of the House or Senate Appropriations Committee, they will not sign the letter; we will ask these individuals to support an increase for TRIO in committee.

**August:** Work with your local alumni network and TRIO programs to invite Members of Congress to visit.

**September - December:** Remind Members of Congress who signed the TRIO Funding Request Letter to request an increase for TRIO in the final funding bill.

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What is Advocacy?

**INFORMATION SHARING**

- Providing general information about your TRIO programs and students (participation rates, success stories, etc.)
- Keeping your elected officials aware of the good work TRIO is doing in your community
- Should be continuous and form a basis of relationship-building with congressional offices

Because it does not involve championing a specific stance on legislation nor any election campaigning, information sharing activities are “allowable” and should be done as frequently as possible.

**LEGISLATIVE**

- Asking a legislator to take a specific action regarding a piece of legislation (“Please vote ‘NO’ on H.R. 1!”)
- Most frequent form of TRIO advocacy

Examples:

- “Senator Jones, we want you to support an increase for TRIO in Fiscal Year 2012.”
- “Representative Brown, please vote yes on bill H.R. 1234.”
- Is not “allowable” and should be conducted on your own time and your own dime

**POLITICAL**

- Working for or against the election of a candidate (canvassing, political contributions, etc.)
- Less frequent but important form of advocacy
- Contributing to a political fundraiser
- Knocking on doors to encourage people to vote for a political candidate
- Absolutely must be conducted using your own time and resources!
Congress: Committees & Process

KEY CAPITOL COMMITTEES

U.S. House of Representatives

- **Budget Committee**
  - Sets spending caps for entire government
- **Appropriations Committee**
  - Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee
  - Sets specific funding level for TRIO
- **Education & Workforce Committee**
  - Writes TRIO legislation (Higher Education Act)

U.S. Senate

- **Budget Committee**
  - Sets spending caps for entire government
- **Appropriations Committee**
  - Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee
  - Sets specific funding level for TRIO
- **Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee (HELP)**
  - Writes TRIO legislation (Higher Education Act)

FUNDING PROCESS

**February**
President releases a “Budget Request” to Congress (Usually 1st Monday in February)

**March**
House and Senate Budget Committees pass “budget resolutions” that establish the overall federal budget

**March - July**
House and Senate Appropriations Committees draft spending bills
  - 12 Appropriations Subcommittees
  - TRIO funded through the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittee

**August**
Congress adjourns for summer recess

**September**
House and Senate agree on final funding numbers before the end of the fiscal year. If Congress unable to do so, it will pass a continuing resolution to level fund the government until they agree on final funding numbers

**October 1**
Beginning of Fiscal Year
Advocacy Tools

CONSTANT CONTACT WITH YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

• Face-toFace Meetings
  - Local Office
  - Townhall Meetings, Open Forums
  - Political Fundraisers
  - Federal Office (e.g., Policy Seminar)

• Written & Phone Campaigns
  - Formal letters
  - Postcards
  - Emails
  - Phone Calls

• Media Presence
  - Letters to the Editor
  - Opinion Pieces
  - Coverage of program events (e.g., community service activities, awards ceremonies, etc.)

• Visits to Your Program

CONNECT WITH CONGRESS

Find Contact and Social Media Information for Your Legislators!

In a poll of congressional offices, 75% OF SENIOR STAFF said that between one and 30 comments on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter were enough to grab their attention on an issue. 35% said that fewer than 10 comments were enough.

– Congressional Management Foundation, 2011

DON’T FORGET THE HASHTAGS!

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Impact of TRIO Advocacy

2020 - Defeated a proposal to slash TRIO funding by $140 million (13%)

2018 - TRIO funding tops $1 billion for first time in history!

2008 HEA Reauthorization
- Extended all grants to 5 years
- Established appeals process
- Eliminated unethical evaluation of Upward Bound

2007 - Secured $228 million in funding (over four years) to sustain nearly 200 Upward Bound programs serving 12,000 students that would have lost funding

2005, 2006 - Defeated Bush Administration’s attempts to eliminate Upward Bound, Talent Search, and GEAR UP

1995 - Defeated House Budget Committee’s recommendation to eliminate TRIO

1983 - Convinced Senate Appropriations Committee to reject subcommittee proposal to slash TRIO by 33% – and got Congress to increase funding by $10 million.

1980 - Established “prior experience” points for successful TRIO grantees.

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How to Deliver Your Message

DO YOUR HOMEWORK!

• Know your audience
• Read their biography (you might find out that you have some similarities)
• Focus on Key Points:
  - Academics
  - College Awareness
  - Career Exploration
  - Cultural Activities
  - Experience as a whole
• Be Short, Concise, and to the Point!

QUESTIONS TO ASK

• Are you familiar with TRIO?
• Have you visited a TRIO program recently? If not, would you be interested in visiting a program?
• What is happening in Congress to increase college access opportunities for first-generation and underrepresented students?
• What was your experience as a college student? Did you always know you were going to college and how did you get there?

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Any Questions?

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