



# TRIO ALUMNI

## Advocacy Toolkit



NATIONAL

TRIO ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION

*Established by the Council for Opportunity in Education*

## #TRIOWorks

Six million grads and counting!

VISIT [coenet.org/for-alumni](https://coenet.org/for-alumni)

*September 2022*



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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!

#TRIOworks

#TRIOalumni



## 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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