

# TRIO Champion!

*Follow these simple steps to plan a successful on-site visit and allow your Member of Congress to see TRIO programs and students in action!*

## PLANNING THE VISIT

- **Talk to your institution's Government Relations/Public Affairs Office about inviting your Member of Congress to Campus.** Be sure to involve your institutional officers to ensure campus buy-in and support of your idea. Quite often, they will want to assist in the planning to ensure a successful visit by your Member of Congress.
- **Find out when your Member of Congress is available to visit.** Be flexible. Members of Congress' schedules fill up quickly while at home. Take care to plan your event based on the legislator's availability. Contact your legislator's congressional scheduler to find out precisely when your Member of Congress might be available to visit. (COE can help with this, too!)
- **Send an official invitation to your Member of Congress.** E-mail a letter inviting your Member of Congress to visit. (A sample letter is available above.) The contact information for the scheduler and education legislative assistants of your Members of Congress can be found [here](#). COE can also assist you in following up with the legislator's Washington, D.C. office.
- **Follow up, follow up, follow up!** If you haven't heard back in a few days – a week at most – be sure to follow up on your request to finalize a time and date for the big day!

## DURING THE VISIT

- **TRIO, TRIO, Everywhere TRIO!** Be sure to outfit all of the students in TRIO hats, pins, stickers, etc. You may even want to present the Member of Congress with his/her own "TRIO Works" button!
- **Make the Member of Congress feel welcome.** Be sure to have students greet your legislator when he or she arrives on campus and to escort him/her to the day's event site. You may even wish to have the students prepare signs or a banner to welcome your guest to the program. Also, legislators often bring their own staff members to accompany them to such events. Be certain to treat them with the same respect as the legislators themselves—for the staff often play a critical role in whether a legislator supports an issue or not!
- **Have an agenda.** Craft a formal program agenda that prioritizes the legislator's time. Ideally, the Member of Congress should speak first. The program should also include remarks by any institutional officials and program participants.
- **Showcase students and alumni.** Now is the time to let your students and their stories shine! Hand-pick student and alumni representatives to share testimonials about their experience in TRIO. Be sure to limit each student to two to five minutes. If possible, allow time for the Member of Congress to speak directly *with* the students and alumni.

## AFTER THE VISIT

- **Publicize the event.** Share pictures from the event with COE and on social media using the hashtag #TRIOWORKS. Be sure to "tag" your Member of Congress on social media and thank him/her for visiting.
- **Send a thank you letter.** Be sure to send a follow up letter thanking your Member of Congress for taking the time to visit your program. (You may even want to have students' hand-write thank you notes for the legislator.) It would be wonderful to include pictures from the event with your message(s).
- **Share any media coverage with COE.** Let us highlight and celebrate your work! We will be sure to feature your efforts in our Weekly Summary and social media outlets.
- **Keep the relationship going!** After a successful visit, be sure to maintain contact with your Member of Congress and his/her staff. Provide the office with periodic updates on student successes and other events happening at your program. Remember, it's better to make a friend before you need a friend!

# SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER

*Send via Email using the [Congressional Contact Information](#).*

[DATE]

[NAME]

[TITLE]

[ADDRE

SS]

[CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE]

Dear [ELECTED OFFICIAL]:

My name is [NAME] and I am the [TITLE] for the [TRIO PROGRAM] at [INSTITUTION]. Over the years we have had a number of students come through our program and go on to earn college degrees. I would very much like to invite [SENATOR/REPRESENTATIVE NAME] to visit our [TRIO PROGRAM] program at [INSTITUTION] sometime this fall so that you can meet our students and learn about the impact of this program in their lives.

(House Recess: February 10-26, March 11-21, April 1-16 and Senate Recess: February 18-26, April 1-16)

Since [YEAR], we have been serving students through [TRIO PROGRAM] at [INSTITUTION] and we know our current students would be honored to meet you and/or a member of your staff.

Please let us know when you might be able to visit our students sometime this spring. We are more than happy to work with your staff to identify a time that would work best for your schedule. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

The TRIO community is grateful for your continued support of educational opportunity. If your office has any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact [POINT OF CONTACT NAME, EMAIL, and PHONE].

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[TITLE, TRIO  
PROGRAM]

[INSTITUTION]

## 2023 Visit Roadmap and Agenda

1. **Introduce yourselves.** Share who you are and your relevant TRIO affiliation (e.g., “*My name is Jim Smith and I’m the Director of the Educational Opportunity Program hosted by New State University.*”).
2. **Say “thank you.”** Thank the legislator and his/her staff for taking the time to meet. If they are a returning Member of Congress, thank the legislator and his/her staff for their past support of TRIO. Congress included a \$54 million (4.7%) increase for TRIO in FY23 to help meet the increase in need for TRIO service combat learning loss. Explain how this increase in funding will specifically help serve students in the state or district.
3. **Introduce or Refresh TRIO.** Explain how TRIO works on your campus/in your community to increase college access and success for low-income, first-generation students. Even experienced staffers could use a refresher. Share this [TRIO one-pager](#) and [TRIO by district and state](#). Share your [TRIO State Fact Book](#) (see link for a template to create or update yours).
4. **Tell your stories.** Offer stories about the impact of TRIO for low-income, first-generation students. Include specific programs and list local projects in Representative’s district or Senator’s state.
5. **TRIO students graduate!** Share with the legislator or staffer that a new report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education is only the latest to show that TRIO students persist, complete credits, and graduate at higher rates than nonparticipants with similar characteristics. [This factsheet highlights TRIO results](#).
6. **Respond to follow-up questions and listen.** Ask for and listen to responses. Search for opportunities to create a personal connection to your students, program, or institution.
7. **Share hard copies of information.** Designate a team member to give copies of TRIO information to staffers. Highlight any program-specific information you have.
8. **Express thanks.** Thank the legislator and/or staffer for taking the time to meet.
9. **Follow up with the staff.** E-mail (1) an additional thanks for the meeting, (2) electronic copies of all materials, and (3) follow-up on the ask. (This follow-up message should be sent within three days.)

## Examples of TRIO Advocacy from Across the Community

*Specific examples of TRIO students and staff making the most out of opportunities to promote TRIO!*

### SPOTLIGHT: Alaska

Victoria Smith, Director of Student Support Services at the University of Alaska Fairbanks hosts Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) on campus for a First-Gen Pinning Ceremony. The First-Gen Pinning Ceremony was part of a multi-day celebration, in recognition of National First-Generation College Student Day. Over 50 students and their families participated in the ceremony.



### SPOTLIGHT: Kansas

Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS) visits Emporia State University campus on in July 2022 to announce a new program. During his visit, he met with Upward Bound students during their Summer Institute afternoon activities and McNair students. Senator Moran serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies, a key position for determining funding levels for TRIO. Senator Moran is also a member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions which is responsible for TRIO law.



### SPOTLIGHT: Illinois

Senator Durbin (D-IL) shares a video to commemorate National TRIO Day. The Senator has long been a

champion for TRIO thanks to the great advocacy work by Illinois TRIO. Senator Durbin serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies, a key position for determining funding levels for TRIO.



## SPOTLIGHT: Nevada

Kimberly Williams, Ph.D. and Nevada TRIO met with Representative Steven Horsford (D-NV-04), who is the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress. The Representative met with current high school and college students, alumni, and faculty. Great work, Nevada TRIO!



These are just a handful of the examples of advocacy happening across the country! Please be sure to keep the Government Relations team informed of your efforts by contacting Diane Shust ([diane.shust@coenet.org](mailto:diane.shust@coenet.org)) or Zach Farmer ([zach.farmer@coenet.org](mailto:zach.farmer@coenet.org)) by e-mail or phone (202-347-7430).

**\*NOTE: The Council for Opportunity in Education is a non-profit, non-partisan organization and, as such, does not endorse any candidates or political parties. The piece above is for informational purposes only and should not be construed otherwise.**

# TRIO

## FACT SHEET

The Federal TRIO Programs (“TRIO”) are a set of educational opportunity programs that enable students from low-income backgrounds to become the first members of their families to earn college degrees. Currently serving more than 844,000 students from middle school through adult education, TRIO provides academic tutoring, personal counseling, mentoring, financial guidance, and other supports necessary to promote college access, retention, and graduation. Since its inception, TRIO has helped more than 5 million Americans earn college degrees.

### UPWARD BOUND

Established in 1964

### TALENT SEARCH

Established in 1965

### STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Established in 1968

### EOC

Established in 1972

### VETERANS UPWARD BOUND

Established in 1972

### MCNAIR

Established in 1986

### UPWARD BOUND MATH SCIENCE

Established in 1990

**Talent Search:** Talent Search focuses on early intervention, working with students deemed to have “college potential” in grades 6-12. Students receive information about college admissions, scholarships, and various student financial aid programs.

**Upward Bound:** Upward Bound is

an intensive intervention program that prepares students for higher education through various enrichment courses. These campus-based programs provide students with instruction in literature, composition, mathematics, science, and foreign language during the academic year and the summer. Upward Bound also provides intensive mentoring and support for students to prepare for college entrance exams and tackle admission applications, financial aid, and scholarship forms.

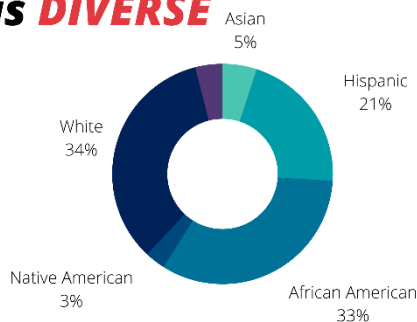
**Upward Bound Math/Science:** Using a model like the classic Upward Bound program, Upward Bound Math/Science aims to strengthen academic preparedness in math, science, and technology. The program assists students in a rigorous math and science curriculum in high school to encourage and enable them to pursue majors in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines in college.

**Veterans Upward Bound:** Veterans Upward Bound provides a unique service to veterans returning to college, aiding them in the transition process through intensive basic skills development and short-term remedial courses. Additionally, participants receive assistance in navigating the services offered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans associations, and other organizations that aid veterans.

**Student Support Services:** Student Support Services programs help low-income and first-generation students and students with disabilities to successfully begin and stay in college. Participants receive tutoring, counseling, and remedial instruction to achieve their college completion goals. Colleges can also apply for additional targeted SSS grants for students with disabilities, English Language Learners, students in STEM, Veterans, and students in Teacher Education.

**Educational Opportunity Centers:** Educational Opportunity Centers target displaced or underemployed workers from low-income families. These centers help students achieve their high school equivalency or pursue post-secondary education, guiding them through the often-confusing admissions and financial aid processes.

## TRIO is DIVERSE



### Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement:

The McNair program encourages and prepares low-income and minority students for doctoral study and to pursue careers in college teaching. The McNair program provides research opportunities and faculty mentoring.

For more information about the Federal TRIO Programs, please e-mail **Diane Shust** [Diane.Shust@coenet.org](mailto:Diane.Shust@coenet.org) **Zach Farmer** [Zach.Farmer@coenet.org](mailto:Zach.Farmer@coenet.org) or call 202-347-7430.