

# National TRIO Day Action Packet



The following packet includes a sample speaker invitation letter, TRIO Day proclamation, media advisory, and other tools to help you promote TRIO Day in your community.



COUNCIL *for* OPPORTUNITY *in* EDUCATION



# NATIONAL TRIO DAY



## ACTION PACKET

2024



COUNCIL for OPPORTUNITY in EDUCATION

Dear TRIO Colleague:

On February 24, 1986, a congressional resolution ([H. Con. Res. 278](#)) declared that February 28, 1986, should be designated as "National TRIO Day" to commemorate the annual achievements of the Federal TRIO programs in communities across the country.

Since then, our community has reserved **the fourth Saturday in February as National TRIO Day**. This day is an opportunity to focus the nation's "attention on the needs of disadvantaged young people and adults aspiring to improve their lives if they are to become contributing citizens of the country, and to the talent which will be wasted if that investment is not made."

We want to commemorate this momentous occasion by calling on TRIO programs nationwide to come together on **February 24, 2024, to celebrate the 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary of National TRIO Day** and raise awareness about the importance of educational opportunity for low-income, first-generation students. Members of Congress will be home in their states for a State Work Period in February. These are ideal dates to schedule a TRIO Day celebration and invite your Member of Congress to attend in person!

**The House will be home February 8-12 and February 19-27. The Senate will be home February 12-23.**

**For many programs, National TRIO Day has become a tradition.** It allows students who benefit from the TRIO programs to give back to their local communities through acts of service. In past years, National TRIO Day celebrations have included some of the following activities:

- TRIO program visits with Members of Congress
- Building homes with Habitat for Humanity
- Organizing voter registration drives
- Raising awareness about TRIO through visits to the State Capitol
- Reading to children at the local library
- Cleaning a park, river, or other public area
- Assisting the Salvation Army, Red Cross, United Way, or local non-profit
- Volunteering at the Humane Society, soup kitchen, or local animal shelter

**Help make TRIO Day a community-wide event by enlisting the participation of your campus and community, including corporations and businesses in the area.** We also highly encourage you to invite your Members of Congress and other elected officials to join you during the celebrations and service activities. The following packet includes:

- A sample speaker invitation letter,
- TRIO Day proclamation,
- Media advisory, and
- Other tools to help you promote TRIO Day in your community.

Please send the Council staff pictures and news clips about your TRIO Day activities! Don't forget to use #NationalTRIODay on social media! If you have any questions or need assistance, don't hesitate to get in touch with the COE public policy team: Diane Shust ([diane.shust@coenet.org](mailto:diane.shust@coenet.org)) and Owen Toomey ([owen.toomey@coenet.org](mailto:owen.toomey@coenet.org)) via email or phone (202) 347-7430.

Sincerely,  
The Council for Opportunity in Education

## Six Activities to Make Your TRIO Day the Best Day Ever



**Fight hunger by donating food at a food bank.** TRIO students in WESTOP's Southern California Chapter volunteer at the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank.



**Organize a service project in Your Local Community.** TRIO alumni organize a service project to collect snacks and hygiene items for Homeless Youth at Family Junction Center in Oklahoma City.



**Plan a visit with your legislators.** Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA) met with Southwestern Community College and presented the Karen and Cody Shay Scholarship to SSS participant Abbe Baumfalk.

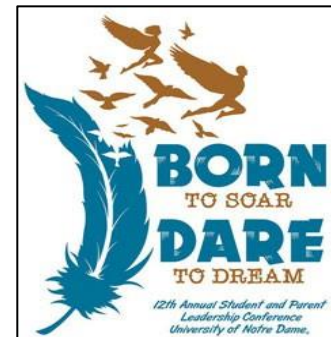
COMPLETE THESE ACTIVITIES AND  
SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA USING  
#NATIONALTRIODAY



**Host a reception at your institution.** TRIO programs at Murray State University hosted a reception and scholars' bowl to share the success of the TRIO programs and its students on campus.



**Organize a college fair for TRIO students.** NEOA provides participants in TRIO programs a chance to attend workshops, hear from speakers, attend a college fair, and go on a college visit.



**Coordinate a student-parent-teacher leadership conference.** TRIO programs at Notre Dame University host a "Leaders in Training" conference for students and parents across Indiana and Chicago.

# Sample Trio Day Speaker Invitation Letter

Email using the [congressional contact information spreadsheet](#).

[DATE]

[NAME]

[TITLE]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE]

Dear [ELECTED OFFICIAL]:

I hope you are well. On behalf of [# OF TRIO STUDENTS] in [INSTITUTION]'s [TRIO PROGRAM], it is my pleasure to invite you to speak to or visit our TRIO program at the [NAME OF EVENT] TRIO Day, which will take place in February. We are in the planning process and would like to confirm a date that works with your schedule during the upcoming state work period (The House will be home February 8-12 and February 19-27. The Senate will be home February 12-23.)

Our students greatly admire your work for our community in [LOCATION]. They would be honored to have you join us in commemorating the importance of educational opportunity by giving back to our communities on this important day. A total of [# OF PARTICIPANTS] constituents are expected to attend.

As the official National Day of Service for the Federal TRIO Programs, TRIO Day is an opportunity to focus on increased investment in first-generation, low-income students. Enacted by a Congressional Resolution in 1986, National TRIO Day calls citizens from all walks of life to unite to promote educational access and success in communities where TRIO Programs continue to create change. By providing students, professionals, alumni, and affiliates the chance to contribute through community service, TRIO Day celebrates the lives transformed by college access and success. We would be honored to have you join us to speak about civic engagement, community service, and our role as constituents in our neighborhoods and society.

In [CITY, STATE], TRIO programs have succeeded in graduating [# GRADUATES IN YOUR AREA TO DATE]. However, the problem of educational inequity remains. Our country faces a wider gap in educational attainment every day and a growing need for an educated workforce to remain globally competitive. We hope you can join us on this momentous occasion to commemorate the service of the TRIO Programs in [LOCATION].

The TRIO community is grateful for your continued support of educational opportunities. 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]

# Sample Proclamation

**NATIONAL TRIO DAY**

**FEBRUARY 24, 2024**

**A PROCLAMATION**

**WHEREAS**, TRIO is the first set of federal programs to address the serious social, economic and cultural barriers to higher education in United States. Today, more than 800,000 students in nearly 3,000 programs at host institutions, both urban and rural, make higher education a reality for students who are often the first members of their family to enroll in and graduate from college.

**WHEREAS**, On February 24, 1986, concurrent resolution H. Con. Res. 278 declared the sense of Congress that February 28, 1986, should be designated "National TRIO Day" and that the achievements of the TRIO programs should be recognized.

**WHEREAS**, TRIO emerged from an understanding that low-income, first generation students need more than financial aid to overcome the systematic obstacles in the way of their acquiring a college degree.

**WHEREAS**, National TRIO Day is meant to focus the nation's "attention on the needs of disadvantaged young people and adults aspiring to improve their lives if they are to become contributing citizens of the country, and to the talent which will be wasted if that investment is not made."

**WHEREAS**, By recognizing the untapped talent and potential of low-income, first-generation Americans, with diverse racial and economic backgrounds, TRIO programs open the doors to educational access and opportunity for all every day.

**On the thirty-eighth anniversary of National TRIO Day, let us proclaim our commitment to educational equity, access, and opportunity for all, regardless of racial or economic background.**

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, [PUBLIC OFFICIAL], [TITLE], do hereby proclaim February 24, 2024, as TRIO Day. I call upon all to observe this day with ceremonies and activities that celebrate these life-changing programs as sources of educational access and opportunity for low-income, first-generation students.**

# National TRIO Day Makes a Great Local Story

*Get coverage in the local news and promote TRIO Day on social media with the tips below!*

**Publish a TRIO Article in the Local Newspaper:** Pitch your TRIO Day event to local newspapers by reaching out to Education Reporters, Minority Affairs Reporters, City Desk Editors, Local News Reporters, and Assignment Editors when contacting your local newspaper.

**Get Coverage by the Local News Station:** Contact your local television station and ask for the News Director to pitch your story. To attract television coverage and capture pictures, be sure the event is visual — banners, decorations, and lots of attendees and wear your TRIO gear!

**Talk TRIO on your Local Radio Show:** During the off-air time, call the host or producer of a local radio talk show or television community affairs program and pitch your idea of doing a show on National TRIO Day. When the show airs, be sure to have plenty of callers lined up to flood the phone lines with support for TRIO.

## **Promote TRIO Day on Social Media:**

1. Use social media to promote and share your event.
2. Create an event on Facebook and post photos.
3. Keep followers updated on Twitter by using hashtags **#NationalTRIODay** and **#TRIOWORKS**.
4. Film your event, edit it, and post it on YouTube.

## **Facebook:**

1. Post information about your upcoming activities and create an event inviting others to RSVP.
2. Share your event with students, and community partners.
3. Create excitement by posting relevant links and opportunities to get involved during the event.
4. Engage your audience by sharing success stories and uploading photos during and after TRIO Day.

## **Twitter:**

1. Tweet announcements about the upcoming event, live tweets on TRIO Day and retweeting information from COE on TRIO to spread knowledge about the program and garner support.
2. Help start a trending topic by using the hash tags **#NationalTRIODay** and asking that your followers do the same.

## **Instagram:**

Share photos and a 10-second clip of your event. Use the caption option on Instagram to talk about the importance of TRIO Day in your community and tag future community partners, community agencies and people you want to engage in your local TRIO program throughout the year.

## **Blog:**

1. Post short blogs about the before, during and after of your event.
2. Talk about why TRIO Day is important and why your program chose to participate.
3. Post texts, images, videos, quotes or links about the upcoming event.
4. Share with other local TRIO programs, students, and community partners.

## **YouTube:**

Create a video during your event and post it online to share your event success year-round with your students and create media tools for your year-round programming.

Remember to link your multiple social media accounts before the day of the event and use the hashtags **#NationalTRIODay** and **#TRIOWORKS** to connect with COE and TRIO programs nationwide participating in the 2023 TRIO Day!

# Sample Media Advisory

## MEDIA ADVISORY

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INSERT Date

### CONTACT

INSERT Name

Email Address

Phone Number

### How [INSERT TOWN] Celebrates Educational Opportunity

[INSERT CITY, STATE HERE] -- Students and graduates from [INSERT PROJECT] will participate in the **2024 National TRIO Day of Service** on [INSERT DATE] to express appreciation to the community for its support of the TRIO programs. For millions of students from low-income families who strive to be the first in their families to attend and graduate from college, seven federally funded programs called TRIO are making a world of difference.

[List specific information about your project or the projects in your state here. List details such as the number of students served, the number of projects, and the number of years the project has been serving TRIO students. In addition, include one or two student quotes. Also include information about your event - speakers, awards, achievements, etc.]

[Council for Opportunity in Education](#) President Kimberly Jones conveyed, "The inaugural National TRIO Day arose as a response to potential federal funding cuts. Despite enduring financial challenges for TRIO and other vital education support programs, we find immense gratitude in transforming this annual occasion into a joyous celebration of the remarkable achievements and impactful contributions made by TRIO students and programs."

Jones emphasized the ongoing funding hurdles faced by TRIO while expressing appreciation for the program's evolution into a platform that honors the accomplishments of TRIO participants. "TRIO is privileged to garner bipartisan support on Capitol Hill," shared Jones. "It's truly gratifying to witness Members of Congress, spanning the political spectrum, unite with our students and programs to acknowledge and celebrate the commendable work of TRIO." This collective recognition underscores the bipartisan commitment to championing educational opportunities and success through the TRIO initiative.

Unlike student financial aid programs, which help students overcome financial hurdles to higher education, the TRIO programs recognize the importance of overcoming all barriers to success. For more than 50 years, they have been providing valuable supportive services to help first-generation students and students from low-income families, veterans, and students with disabilities enter and graduate from college.

TRIO services include:

- Assistance in choosing a college.
- Tutoring
- Personal and financial counseling
- Career counseling
- Assistance in applying to college.
- Workplace and college visits.
- Special instruction in reading, writing, study skills, and mathematics
- Assistance in applying for financial aid.
- Academic support in high school or assistance to re-enter high school.

Today more than 1,000 colleges, universities, and community agencies host more than 2,800 TRIO projects that serve more than 880,000 young people and adults. TRIO serves students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Currently, 34% of TRIO students are White, 33% are African American, 21% are Hispanic, 4% are Asian-American or Pacific Islander, 4% are American Indian, and 1% are listed as "other," including multiracial students.



# **Background on the TRIO Programs**

## **What is TRIO?**

TRIO is a set of federally-funded college-based educational opportunity outreach programs that motivate and support students from low-income backgrounds – including military veterans and students with disabilities. Currently serving more than 880,000 students from middle school through post-graduate study, TRIO provides academic tutoring, personal counseling, mentoring, financial guidance, and other supports necessary to promote college access, retention, and graduation. TRIO students come from families that earn less than \$38,000 a year and/or in which neither parent have earned a college degree.

## **Where did TRIO come from?**

The TRIO programs were the first national college access and retention programs to address the serious social and cultural barriers to education in America. (Previously only college financing had been on policymakers' radar.) The Educational Opportunity Act of 1964 established an experimental program known as Upward Bound. Then, in 1965, the Higher Education Act created Talent Search. Finally, another program, Special Services for Disadvantaged Students (later known as Student Support Services), was launched in 1968. Together, this “trio” of federally-funded programs encouraged access to higher education for low-income students. By 1998, the TRIO programs had become a vital pipeline to opportunity, serving traditional students, displaced workers, and veterans. The original three programs have grown to eight, adding Educational Opportunity Centers in 1972, Training Program for Federal TRIO programs in 1976, the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program in 1986, Upward Bound Math/Science in 1990, and the TRIO Dissemination Partnership in 1998.

## **Why Are the TRIO Programs Important?**

The TRIO programs help first-generation, low-income students overcome social, cultural, and academic barriers to succeed in higher education. By providing direct services and individually focused and intensive programming geared towards helping students navigate the college admissions and financial aid process, TRIO programs assist students in overcoming the obstacles they face as the first in their families to attend and graduate from college. Today, an estimated 6 million students have graduated from college with the support and assistance of TRIO programs across the country.

# Help Turn Your Member of Congress into aTRIO Champion!

*Follow these simple steps to plan a successful on-site visit and allow your Member of Congress to seeTRIO 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 the 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!

## 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, recognizing 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 COE public policy team informed of your efforts by contacting Diane Shust ([diane.shust@coenet.org](mailto:diane.shust@coenet.org)) or Owen Toomey ([owen.toomey@coenet.org](mailto:owen.toomey@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 Factsheet

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 800,000 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. A brief description of each program appears below.

**Talent Search:** Talent Search (TS) focuses on low-cost, early intervention, working with students deemed to have “college potential” in grades 6-12. Students receive information and assistance in applying for college admission, scholarships, and various student financial aid programs. Recent data show that, on average, 78% of TS participants enroll in postsecondary education immediately after high school graduation.<sup>1</sup>

**Upward Bound:** Upward Bound (UB) is an intensive intervention program that prepares students for higher education through various enrichment courses. Campus-based UB programs provide students instruction in literature, composition, mathematics, science, and foreign language during the school year and the summer. UB also provides intensive mentoring and support for students as they prepare for college entrance exams and tackle admission applications, financial aid, and scholarship forms. In 2012-13, 85.3% of graduating seniors who participated in UB enrolled in college.<sup>2</sup> This figure exceeded the Department of Education’s programmatic goal of 80.5%.

**Upward Bound Math/Science:** Using a model similar to the classic Upward Bound program, Upward Bound Math-Science (UBMS) 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 successfully major in critically important science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines in college. In 2012.13, 87.4% of students who participated in UBMS programs went directly to college after graduating from high school.<sup>3</sup>

**Veterans Upward Bound:** Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) provides a unique service to veterans hoping to return 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 Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans associations, and other veteran support organizations. Nationally, VUB has a strong record of aiding its participants in preparing for higher education. According to the National Association of Veterans Upward Bound Program Personnel, in 2010-2011, more than 60% of recent program participants were enrolled in postsecondary education programs.

**Student Support Services:** Student Support Services (SSS) programs help low-income and first-generation students to successfully begin and stay in college. Participants receive tutoring, counseling, and remedial instruction in order to achieve their goals of college completion. The most recent analysis of SSS found that program participation resulted in statistically significant higher rates of student retention and transfer, improved grade point averages, and credit accumulation. SSS participants also bested their similarly situated peers in degree completion at both two-year colleges (41% vs. 28%) and four-year colleges (48% vs. 40%).<sup>4</sup>

**Educational Opportunity Centers:** Educational Opportunity Centers (EOCs) target displaced or underemployed workers from low-income families. These centers help students choose colleges and guide them through the often-confusing financial aid process. ~~Recent analyses of EOC found that more than half (57.6%) of “college-ready”~~ students were enrolled in institutions of higher learning<sup>5</sup> and 71% of eligible EOC participants (high school seniors, postsecondary dropouts, etc.) applied to college.<sup>6</sup>

**Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate 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. In 2013-14, 69% of McNair Scholars who graduated in 2010-11 were enrolled in graduate school; meanwhile, 83% of students who first enrolled in graduate school in 2012-2013

persisted in their studies.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, *A Report on the Talent Search Program: 2007–08, With Select Comparative Data, 2002–07*, Washington, D.C., 2009.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education, *Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math-Science Grantee-Level Performance Results: 2013-14*.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Education, *Persistence and Completion in Postsecondary Education of Participants in the TRIO Student Support Services Program*, Washington, D.C., 2015.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, *Educational Opportunity Centers' GPRA and Efficiency Results: 2013–14*, Washington, D.C., 2015.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Education, *Federal TRIO Programs, A Report on the Educational Opportunity Centers Program: 2007-08, with Select Comparative Data, 2002-07*.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Education, *Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program Grantee Level Performance Results: 2013-14*, Washington, D.C., 2015.