



# NSLC TRIO DIRECTOR HANDBOOK

COUNCIL FOR OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION

2026

# Table of Contents

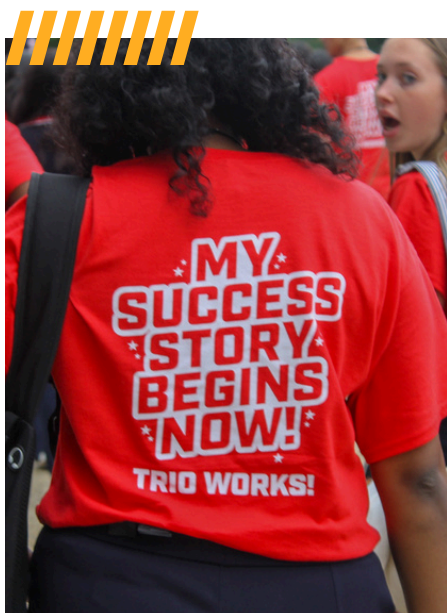
Overview	2
Learning Objectives	3
Student Eligibility	4
Student Expectations	5
Student Application	6
Application Tips	7
Costs	8
TRIO Staff Participation	10
Timeline	11
Resources	12
Contact Information	15

# A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE



The Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) is excited to host the 37th annual National Student Leadership Congress (NSLC). In summer 2026, 100 TRIO high school student delegates from Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, and Talent Search programs across the United States and territories will participate in a rigorous 4-day leadership experience in Washington, D.C. During the Leadership Congress, the student delegates will sleep, study, and dine on the campus of American University. In addition to meeting their Senators and Representatives on Capitol Hill, delegates will participate in community service projects, college and career planning workshops, and engage in a Mock Congress. This requires students to research critical policy issues, draft legislation, and debate with their peers.

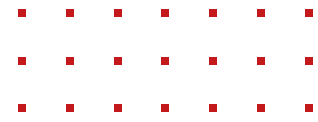
## EVENT OVERVIEW



- **DATE:**
  - June 7-11, 2026
- **LOCATION:**
  - American University, Washington, D.C.
- **COST:**
  - \$2,000 + Transportation to and from Washington, D.C.
- **AGENDA:**
  - The 2026 student agenda is currently being confirmed. You can find a draft of the 2025 agenda here: <https://bit.ly/25NSLC>

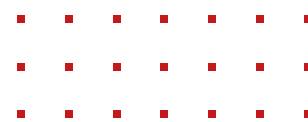
# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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- Cultivate advanced academic and professional competencies such as critical thinking, research skills, and collaborative problem solving while fostering confidence and civic agency.
- Enhance leadership skills in decision making, planning, goal setting, conflict resolution, and negotiating.
- Strengthen knowledge of the role of individuals and alliances in shaping national priorities, and career opportunities in government, public service, and education.
- Increase understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship through service.
- Develop skills in civic engagement and democratic participation through legislative simulation, policy analysis exercises, policy brief writing, and debate.
- Foster enhanced awareness of college affordability, financial literacy, and career readiness resources, in line with priorities to unlock educational opportunity and career success.

# STUDENT ELIGIBILITY



## 1 Invitation to Apply

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Outstanding students from the Class of 2027 and 2028 are encouraged to apply to serve as delegates for the 2026 National Student Leadership Congress. Students should be prepared for a rigorous program that will challenge them and provide an intensive learning experience. This program is for new applicants only; returning students may not apply.

*\*Please note that students graduating in 2026 are eligible to apply; however, priority consideration will be given to rising juniors and seniors.*

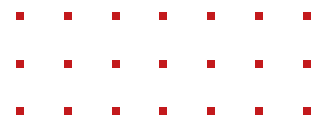
## 2 Eligibility Requirements

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- Participate in a TRIO Talent Search, Upward Bound, or UBMS program that is an *Institutional Member* of the Council for Opportunity in Education.
- Be a member of the graduating class of 2027 or 2028.
- Maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA\*.

*\*If a student does not meet the GPA requirement but you feel they could benefit from participating in NSLC, please contact Angela Holley at: [angela.holley@coenet.org](mailto:angela.holley@coenet.org) or by phone at 1-202-347-7430.*

# STUDENT EXPECTATIONS



## 1 Commitment to the Program —

Students who are selected and commit to attending NSLC must be in attendance for the entirety of the event. While in attendance, students must:

1. Fully participate in all NSLC activities.
2. Show attention and respect to NSLC staff and guest speakers.
3. Limit cell phone (calls, texts, social media) use until designated breaks. Phones are permitted for academic research.

## 2 Course Rigor —

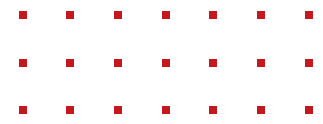
The NSLC is a rigorous academic program. Students can expect the following:

1. A full schedule of academic coursework and informative workshops.
2. Team collaboration and coordination with students from various backgrounds.
3. Strong use of critical thinking skills and objectivity when researching opposing viewpoints.
4. Substantial physical activity as part of campus tours, visits to Capitol Hill, and visiting D.C. museums and monuments.

## 3 Behavior —

For the safety and security of all students in attendance, participants are asked to follow program rules and guidelines. These will be reviewed in detail during the program orientation. Students are asked to remember that they represent their families, schools, TRIO Programs, and COE.

# STUDENT APPLICATION



## Number of Students

Up to four students can apply per campus.

If a campus has two TRIO programs on the same campus, the projects must work together to determine which four students will be selected to apply. For example, if a UB program wants to nominate three students and a TS program on the same campus wishes to nominate three students, the programs would need to work together to determine which four students will move forward with the application process.

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## Application Link

Student applications must be submitted by no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on February 23, 2026.

The link to the online application can be found below.

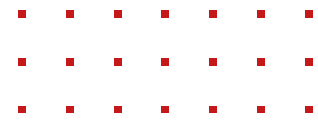
<http://app.campdoc.com/register/coe>.

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## CampDoc Platform

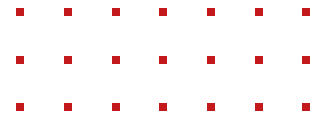
You can find step-by-step instructions on how to use the CampDoc application platform in [this instructional video](#) or on the COE Student Opportunities website.

# APPLICATION TIPS



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- All questions **must be completed** to move forward in the online application. If a **question does not apply**, please enter **“N/A”** in that field.
  - Please check the **accuracy of the student’s address**, as this will be used when setting up meetings with Senators or Representatives. Remind students that the **address does not mean their email address**.
  - When entering the student's email, please **do not use a school email address** since school systems often have technology in place that blocks COE correspondence. It is recommended that applicants use a personal email address.
  - Write down and **save the CampDoc login** information.
  - Please record G.P.A. on a **4.0 scale**
  - Make sure that the TRIO Staff Recommendation form is completed, signed by a TRIO staff member, and **uploaded into the online application**.
  - It is **highly recommended** that a TRIO staff member assist students with the application process to guarantee that all application materials are completed by the deadline. The online application does require the Director to confirm that students have permission to apply.

# COSTS



## 1 Cost Per Student

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The cost per student for the **2026 NSLC** is **\$2,000.00**. Upon notification of student acceptance, the **Director** will receive an invoice for the student registration fee.

## 2 Expenses Covered

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Please note that the **registration fee covers the following:**

- Student ground transportation throughout the event.
- All meals once the student arrives in Washington, D.C.
- Student lodging at American University, which includes all bed linens and towels.
- Two NSLC T-shirts.
- Expenses related to educational tours.
- All educational materials for workshops and the Mock Congress.
- On-site Nurse to address any healthcare needs.

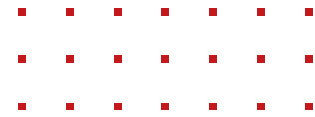
## 3 Expenses Not Covered

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The registration fee **does not** cover the following:

- Student transportation to and from Washington, D.C.
- Student meals while traveling to and from Washington, D.C.
- Baggage fees for air or train travel.
- Souvenirs that students may wish to purchase during their NSLC experience.

# COSTS



## 1 Traditional Refund

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The payment of \$2,000 per student is due to COE by **April 1, 2026**. After this date, the students wishing to withdraw from the NSLC program must notify COE in writing by sending an email to [angela.holley@coenet.org](mailto:angela.holley@coenet.org). The uncommitted portion of the registration fee (recoverable housing, meals, and instructional fees) will be refunded, minus a \$400 handling fee up to April 30, 2026. No refunds will be granted after this date.

## 2 Medical Refund

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If a student registers and cancels after May 1, 2026, due to a health issue that impacts their ability to attend the event, the program may receive a 50% refund WITH a physician's letter on the physician's letterhead.

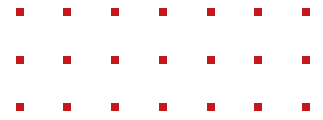
## 3 Payment

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Upon receipt of an invoice, there are three options for payment:

- a. Online Via Credit/Debit Card: Log in to the individual student account by following the instructions, which can be found [here](#).
- b. By Phone (Credit/Debit Card): call (202) 347-7430 to provide a credit/debit card. Please have your student's account number, invoice number, student's name, and form of payment ready.
- c. Check: mail a copy of the invoice and check to:
  - Council for Opportunity in Education  
ATTN: National Student Leadership Congress  
PO Box 742282  
Atlanta, GA 30374

# TRIO STAFF PARTICIPATION



## 1 Professional Development

NSLC is a student-focused event. However, the following opportunity will be available for TRIO Staff who wish to travel to Washington, D.C. with their students.

### Building and Sustaining Your TRIO Program

Building and Sustaining Your TRIO Program is a three-day professional development event designed for college access and success professionals who actively engage with students. This multi-faceted event provides participants with information such as legislation and regulations, recruiting and retaining strategies, and academic program strategies.

*Please note* that professionals will not be able to join students until Wednesday, June 10, 2026, to attend the Mock Congress presentations and participate in the closing dinner.

Additional information about this opportunity will be available after students are notified of their acceptance to participate in NSLC.

## 2 NSLC Counselor Applications

Applications are now open for NSLC Summer Counselor positions. TRIO staff interested in applying should note that annual leave is required to serve as an NSLC Counselor to remain in grant compliance. All counselors must arrive on June 1, 2026, for a mandatory week-long training. The NSLC Counselor Job Description is available [here](#), and the application can be submitted at this [link](#).

# NSLC TIMELINE

Applications Released

January 14, 2026

Informational Webinar

February 16, 2026

Applications Due

February 23, 2026

Student Decision Form Due

March 2, 2026

Director Orientation

March 18, 2026

Student and Family Orientation

March 18, 2026

NSLC Registration Fee Due

May 1, 2026

Student Travel Information Due

May 1, 2026

Student Health Forms Due

May 1, 2026

Students Arrive in D.C.

June 7, 2026

**Director Handbook**

# Resources

The flyers provided can be customized for your use when marketing NSLC to students and/or parents.



# APPLY TODAY!

## A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE!

The Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) is excited to host its annual National Student Leadership Congress (NSLC) in Washington, D.C.

This program is for high school students who participate in a TRIO Program (Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, Talent Search)

**June 7-11, 2026**

### Highlights

- ✓ Build Leadership and Career Skills
- ✓ Participate in a Mock Congress
- ✓ Meet your Senators and Representatives
- ✓ Meet other TRIO Students from across the U.S., and U.S. Territories
- ✓ Explore Monuments and Museums in Washington D.C.



To Learn More Contact:



# PARENT INFORMATION

## WHAT IS NSLC?

- It is a summer leadership program for students who participate in Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math-Science, and Talent Search
- The event is organized by the Council for Opportunity in Education ([www.coenet.org](http://www.coenet.org))

## WHERE IS THE EVENT HELD?

- The event is held on the campus of American University in Washington, D.C.

## IS IT A SAFE ENVIRONMENT?

- We have a highly trained staff that goes through extensive safety training
- Students are in small groups of 10 students with one chaperone for close monitoring
- We hire night security to make sure students are safe in their rooms
- When not on campus, students are closely chaperoned in high tourist areas. These areas are well-patrolled for safety.

## HOW WILL MY STUDENT TRAVEL TO D.C.?

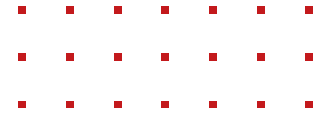
- Students travel to D.C. by car, train, and air
- You will work with your TRIO Program's staff to make these arrangements

## HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

- Your TRIO Program works to secure payment for registration and travel.
- Students may wish to bring money for souvenirs



# CONTACT INFORMATION



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Council for Opportunity in Education

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 <https://coenet.org/national-student-leadership-congress/>