

POLICY SEMINAR 2026



REGISTRATION BROCHURE

Policy Seminar 2026 • Washington, D.C. • Sunday through Wednesday, March 8-11, 2026 • This year, the Council for Opportunity in Education's (COE) annual Policy Seminar includes three events: the Leadership Summit, the Seminar on Relations with the U.S. Department of Education, and the Legislative Conference.



COUNCIL *for* OPPORTUNITY *in* EDUCATION

www.coenet.org

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In a year marked by unprecedented federal grant delays, program cancellations, and widespread workforce disruptions within the U.S. Department of Education, the 2026 COE Policy Seminar arrives at a defining moment for TRIO. Despite these challenges, an enduring truth remains: TRIO is essential for students and the nation's economic future. Against this backdrop, TRIO educators and alumni will gather in Washington, D.C. under the theme "One Mission. One Voice. One TRIO."

Together, we will stand united in purpose. Policy Seminar includes our **Leadership Summit, Seminar on Relations with the U.S. Department of Education, and Legislative Conference.**

Leadership Summit • Sunday, March 8, 2026

This high-energy, full-day experience unites TRIO professionals in a shared commitment to lead boldly and advance educational opportunity for all. Blending visionary keynotes, hands-on leadership labs, case study presentations from the Executive Leadership Institute, and breakout sessions across themes like adaptive leadership, coalition-building, and operational excellence, the Summit equips attendees with concrete skills, inspiration, and a clear charge to elevate the TRIO mission. If you have questions about the Leadership Summit, please contact **Jen Rudolph** at jennifer.rudolph@coenet.org.

TENTATIVE AGENDA

- 10:00 – 10:15 a.m.: Welcome
- 10:15 – 11:00 a.m.: Opening Keynote
- 11:00 – 11:30 a.m.: Case Studies I
- 11:30 – 11:45 a.m.: Transition to Breakouts
- 11:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.: Breakout Session Round 1: "Leadership in Action"
- 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.: Leadership Lunch and Collaborative Lab
- 2:00 – 2:45 p.m.: Case Studies II
- 2:45 – 3:00 p.m.: Break

- 3:00 – 3:45 p.m.: Breakout Session Round 2: "Leadership for Tomorrow"
- 3:45 – 4:00 p.m.: Break
- 4:00 – 4:45 p.m.: Case Studies III
- 4:45 – 5:15 p.m.: Collective Closing Experience: "Leadership that Lasts"

Seminar on Relations with the U.S. Department of Education • Monday, March 9, 2026

TRIO's mission—to open doors of opportunity for all students—requires a keen understanding of the legislation and regulations governing TRIO programs as well as the latest innovations in college access and success. Join us in Washington as we engage directly with leaders from the U.S. Department of Education, strengthen our partnerships, and ensure that TRIO remains a powerful force for expanding access and success in higher education.

This seminar offers participants the latest updates and insights, including:

- The Student Service division's fiscal and programmatic priorities;
- The newest developments in TRIO regulations and guidance; and
- A forward look at upcoming TRIO grant competitions.

TENTATIVE AGENDA

- 9:00–10:00 a.m.: Opening Plenary
- 10:15–11:30 a.m.: Breakout Sessions with U.S. Department of Education Program Specialists
- 11:45 a.m.–2:00 p.m.: Luncheon Featuring Remarks from the U.S. Department of Education
- 2:15–3:30 p.m.: Breakout Sessions with U.S. Department of Education Program Specialists (continued)
- 3:45–5:00 p.m.: Professional Development Sessions to Assist Your Programs

For questions about the Seminar on Relations with the U.S. Department of Education, please contact **Angelica Vialpando** at angelica.vialpando@coenet.org.

Legislative Conference • Monday through Wednesday, March 9-11, 2026

COE works to expand college opportunities for low-income, first-generation students. The TRIO community must educate Congress on the history and impact of Federal TRIO programs. Conference participants will receive advocacy training to prepare for visits with their elected officials in Congress.

IMPORTANT NOTE: All congressional meetings will be held in person on Capitol Hill. If you have any questions, please contact **Diane Shust** at diane.shust@coenet.org or **Christian Bell** at christian.bell@coenet.org.

TENTATIVE AGENDA

Monday, March 9, 2026

- 2:00–8:00 p.m.: Registration
- 6:30–7:30 p.m.: Opening Session
- 7:45–8:30 p.m.: Orientation for Hill Team Leaders

Tuesday, March 10, 2026

- 8:30 a.m.–4:00 p.m.: Registration
- 9:00–10:00 a.m.: Congressional Staff Panel
- 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.: Advocacy Skills Development (Interactive)
- 12:00–2:00 p.m.: Lunch on Your Own
- 2:00–3:00 p.m.: Member of Congress Address
- 3:00–4:00 p.m.: Capitol Hill Talking Points Overview
- 4:00–4:15 p.m.: Break
- 4:15–5:30 p.m.: State Team Meetings

Wednesday, March 11, 2026

- 8:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.: Congressional Visits
- 6:30–7:15 p.m.: Closing Plenary

Bring your TRIO alumni to the Legislative Conference! Alumni participation at this event will give graduates the skills they need to be TRIO advocates at the local, state, and national levels.

COE staff are delighted to help TRIO directors provide fulfilling policy experiences in Washington for their students on school breaks. Students should *not* miss school to attend the Legislative Conference.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Neither the Leadership Summit nor the Seminar on Relations with the Department of Education will involve lobbying activities. They are allowable costs on a federal award; however, certain aspects of **the Legislative Conference** will involve such activity and cannot be paid for using federal grant funds. Therefore, federal grantees **must allocate expenses for these activities appropriately and consistently with their institutional policies.** Contact **Angelica Vialpando** at angelica.vialpando@coenet.org or **Jen Rudolph** at jennifer.rudolph@coenet.org if you have any questions about cost allocation.

Hotel Information

NEW HOTEL! Capital Hilton

1101 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

[Make hotel reservations here](#) or by calling 800-774-1500 and using the group code **COE3**.

- Single/Double: \$299 + taxes and fees, per night.

The cut-off date is **Tuesday, February 10, 2026**, or when the room block is full—whichever comes first. Make your reservation early!

Policy Seminar Registration Instructions and Deadlines

For individuals participating in the Policy Seminar, **online registration at coenet.org is strongly encouraged**. Online registrants will receive an immediate receipt.

All registrations not completed online must include a credit card payment, check, or purchase order to be accepted.

The registration fees include all conference sessions and materials. The cost for the Seminar on Relations with the U.S. Department of Education provides coffee and rolls in the morning, plus a luncheon. The price for the Leadership Summit includes lunch.

Special Discounts

Newcomer Discount: If you attended last year's Legislative Conference and plan to bring a newcomer this year, **the newcomer can register for half their regular registration rate** (member or non-member). These registration forms must be submitted by email at the same time. **There is no online registration option for this special offer.**

Government Relations/Institutional Representative: If you bring a member of your institution's government relations staff or campus institutional leadership, their registration for the **Legislative Conference** is

also half off the regular registration price. (This does not include Leadership Summit or the Seminar with the U.S. Department of Education). Registration for this special discount must be submitted by email—**there is no online registration for this special offer.**

IMPORTANT NOTE: These half-price discounts apply to the Legislative Conference only. For instance, if you register for both the Legislative Conference and the Seminar on Relations with the U.S. Department of Education, **the half-price discount will apply only to the Legislative Conference portion.**

Refund Policy

If requested on or before **Friday, February 27**, registration fees paid in advance are refundable (less a \$250 processing fee). To request a refund, **you must email notice of your registration cancellation to finance@coenet.org**. COE will process refunds *after* the seminar ends.

Important Dates

Deadline for Early Registration | **Thursday, January 15, 2026**

Deadline for Hotel Room Block | **Tuesday, February 10, 2026** (or at capacity)

Leadership Summit | **Sunday, March 8, 2026**

Seminar on Relations with the Education Department | **Monday, March 9, 2026**

Legislative Conference | **Monday through Wednesday, March 9-11, 2026**



2026 POLICY SEMINAR

MARCH 8-11, 2026 • #COEPS2026

COE

Policy Seminar Registration Form

Regular Registration

Postmarked *after* January 15, 2026

FOR ALL REGISTRANTS

How many Seminars have you attended? ____

____ Check here if you currently work for a Federal TRIO Program.

____ Check here if you are an alumnus of a Federal TRIO Program.

____ Check here if you are a current/former participant in COE's Executive Leadership Institute.

____ Check here if you have special needs, food allergies, require disability accommodation, or vegan, vegetarian, or gluten-free meals. (COE will contact you.)

Policy Seminar: ED + Leg. Conf.

____ \$810 Members ____ \$960 Non-Members

____ +\$260 **Leadership Summit**

Policy Seminar: Legislative Conf. ONLY

____ \$495 Members & Non-Members

____ +\$260 **Leadership Summit**

Policy Seminar: Relations with ED ONLY

____ \$760 Members ____ \$885 Non-Members

____ +\$260 **Leadership Summit**

Retiree Rate*

____ \$250 Policy Seminar: Legislative Conf. ONLY *Register by form only.

Total Amount Due: _____

Contact Information

FOR TRIO PROFESSIONALS

Name: _____ Project Affiliation: _____

Title: _____ Institution: _____

Institution's Mailing Address (No P.O. boxes, please)

Street Address Line 1: _____

Street Address Line 2: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Home Address for Congressional district lookup. (No P.O. boxes, please)

Street Address Line 1: _____

Street Address Line 2: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Personal Phone: _____ Personal E-mail: _____

FOR TRIO ALUMNI NOT EMPLOYED BY TRIO

Name: _____ E-mail (work): _____

TRIO Project and Institution Graduated From: _____

Current Employer: _____ Job Title: _____

Work Address Line 1: _____

Work Address Line 2: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Work Phone: _____ Personal E-mail: _____

PAYMENT INFORMATION

Charge my ____ American Express, ____ Master Card, ____ Visa, or ____ Discover card (Please check one).

Name on Card: _____

Card No. _____

Expiration Date: _____ Security Code: _____

Submission Instructions: To register, email this completed form to finance@coenet.org.
Save time and register online at coenet.org.

