



February 2026

MISSION

The Council for Opportunity in Education (COE), a nonprofit organization established in 1981, is dedicated to **furthering the expansion of college opportunities for low-income, first-generation students (FGLI) and students with disabilities**. The national network of Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO) is the largest federal infrastructure serving this student population. COE is the sole national advocate for TRIO helping to ensure its demonstrated impact on educational and economic equity continues.

POPULATION SERVED



817,000+
First-Generation/
Low-Income Students



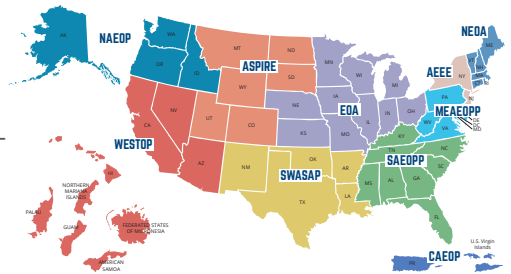
3,400
TRIO Programs



6,000,000
TRIO Alumni

FOOTPRINT

TRIO programs operate in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., the Pacific Islands, and Puerto Rico. **COE provides support to over 3,400 TRIO programs nationwide** at more than 1,000 member colleges, universities, and community-based agencies within our 10 regional associations. Collectively, these programs help nearly one million students enter and graduate from college each year.



TRIO PROGRAMS

PRE-COLLEGIATE

- **Talent Search (TS)** – Promotes early college awareness and preparation. Talent Search students are **22% more likely** to enroll in college than students in the bottom income quartile nationally.
- **Upward Bound (UB)** – Provides intense college preparation and academic enrichment services. Upward Bound students are **more than 2X as likely** to earn a bachelor’s degree by age 24 than students in the lowest income quartile.
- **Upward Bound Math-Science (UBMS)** – Increases youth exposure to STEM fields. Upward Bound Math-Science students are **more than 2X as likely** to earn a bachelor’s degree by age 24 than students in the lowest income quartile.

COLLEGE

- **Student Support Services (SSS)** – Boosts undergraduate student retention and graduation rates. Student Support Services students were **47% more likely** to complete a 2-year degree or transfer and **18% more likely** to complete a bachelor’s degree than a matched comparison group of nonparticipants, according to the Department of Education’s 2019 rigorous evaluation.
- **Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program (McNair)** – Increases the STEM/Ph.D. pipeline. Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement students are **52% more likely** to enroll in graduate school than college graduates in the bottom income quartile.

ADULT LEARNERS

- **Veterans Upward Bound (VUB)** – Supports veteran postsecondary enrollment. Veterans Upward Bound students are **42% more likely** than other low-income veterans to earn an associate or bachelor’s degree in six years.
- **Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC)** – Supports adult postsecondary enrollment. Educational Opportunity Center participants in 2018-19 found that 59% of “college-ready” students were enrolled in institutions of higher learning, and **73% of eligible EOC participants applied to college**.

LOW-INCOME AND FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS

ASIAN AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISPANIC NATIVE AMERICAN OTHER WHITE



IMPACT

MORE THAN 6 MILLION STUDENTS have graduated from college with the special assistance of TRIO programs.

MORE THAN 3,000 ACCESS AND SUCCESS PROFESSIONALS receive professional development and technical assistance either in-person, virtually, or both.

Provide numerous opportunities exclusively for TRIO students, including **STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS** in the Netherlands, Mexico, Great Britain, South Africa, and Spain; **CONGRESSIONAL INTERNSHIPS** and **NATIONAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES** in Washington, DC; and mentor-led internship and career preparation programs.

COE's **PELL INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF OPPORTUNITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION** produces research that informs policymakers, educators, and the public on issues impacting educational opportunities and outcomes for low-income, first-generation students, and students with disabilities.



NOTABLE TRIO ALUMNI



Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony Award-winning actress **Viola Davis** took her first acting class through the **Upward Bound** program at Rhode Island College. In 2018, Viola, her mother, and her sisters (who also participated in Upward Bound and Student Support Services) received the first TRIO Family Achievement Award.



Sarah Smarsh, an award-winning author and former journalism professor, chronicled her experience growing up as a fifth generation Kansan in *The New York Times* bestseller, *Heartland: A Memoir of Working Hard and Being Broke in the Richest Country on Earth*. Smarsh is an alumna of the **Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate** Achievement program at the University of Kansas.



Former migrant farm worker **José Hernández** did not learn to speak English until he was 12. With the help of both **Upward Bound** and the **Student Support Services** program at the University of the Pacific, Hernández obtained an engineering degree and achieved his dream of becoming an astronaut. He served as a crew member of space shuttle mission STS-128.



Before becoming the first Black Democratic Senator from the South, **Reverend Raphael Warnock** was a student in the **Upward Bound** program at Savannah State University. With the program's help, he matriculated at Morehouse University. Eventually, he became Pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, which Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr once led.



John Quiñones, ABC News correspondent and host of "What Would You Do?" grew up in a migrant farm family in San Antonio, TX. He says the **Upward Bound** program at St. Mary's University "saved his life." He earned a bachelor's degree in speech communication from St. Mary's and a master's from the Columbia University School of Journalism.

To learn more about the Council for Opportunity in Education, please visit www.coenet.org.