

# Help Turn Your Member of Congress into a 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. They may 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. Plan your event based on the legislator's availability. Contact your legislator's scheduler to find out precisely when your Member of Congress might be available to visit.
- **Send an official invitation to your Member of Congress.** E-mail a letter inviting your Member of Congress to visit. The contact information for your Member of Congress including contact information for the scheduler, press secretary, and links to social media platforms 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 week be sure to follow up on your request to finalize a time and date for the big day!

## DURING THE VISIT

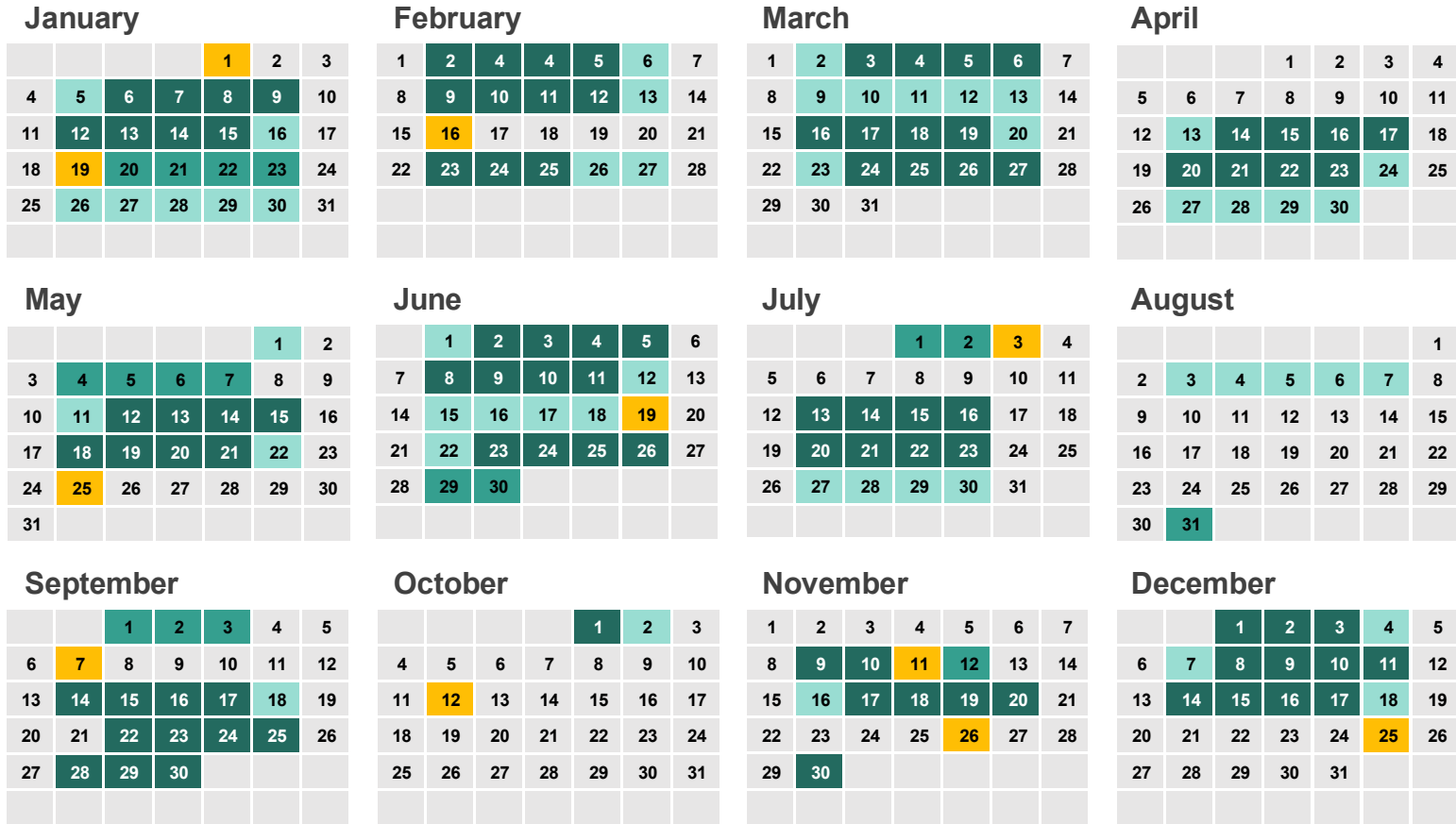
- **TRIO, TRIO, Everywhere TRIO!** Be sure to outfit all of the students in TRIO hats, pins, stickers, etc. You may even want to present the Member of Congress with his/her own "TRIO Works" button!
- **Make the Member of Congress feel welcome.** Have students greet your legislator when he or she arrives on campus and to escort him/her to the day's event site. If staff members accompany the Member, be certain to treat them with the same respect as the legislators themselves—staff often play a critical role in whether a legislator supports an issue or not!
- **Have an agenda.** Prioritize 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. Allow time for the Member of Congress to speak directly *with* the students and alumni.
- **Take photos!** Get photos of the event, especially of the Member with the students. These photos can be shared with the Member, posted on social media, and used in your newsletters.

## AFTER THE VISIT

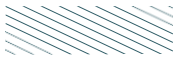
- **Publicize the event.** Share pictures from the event with COE and on social media using the hashtag #TRIOWORKS. Be sure to "tag" your member on social media and thank him/her for visiting.
- **Send a thank you letter.** Be sure to send a follow up letter thanking your Member of Congress for taking the time to visit your program. Include pictures from the event and hand-written notes from students.
- **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!

# 2026 congressional calendar

■ Both chambers in session ■ House only in session ■ Senate only in session ■ Federal holiday



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PRESENTATION CENTER 12/23/25



## Sample Invitation Letter

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

[DATE]

[NAME]

[TITLE]

[ADDRESS]

[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]

## Sample Agenda

<b>[INSERT DATE]</b> <b>8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.</b>		
8:30 – 9:00 a.m.	Welcome & TRIO Orientation Breakfast	Guests are greeted by TRIO students and staff and enjoy light breakfast. A brief introduction highlights TRIO’s history, mission, and legacy, emphasizing 60+ years of access. Student ambassadors share personal reflections to set the tone for a day rooted in lived experience and student voice.
9:00 – 9:30 a.m.	Opening Session: Understanding the TRIO Journey	A guided briefing walks participants through the TRIO journey—from access and admissions support to college completion and career readiness. Facilitators introduce the concept of “walking in a student’s shoes” to help guests enter the day with empathy and purpose.
9:30 – 11:00 a.m.	Immersive Experience: Life as a TRIO Scholar	Guests participate in real TRIO programming. Activities may include rotating through academic advising appointments, financial aid coaching, career and scholarship preparation, tutoring demonstrations, or a college-success workshop. Each participant is paired with a TRIO student or staff member to shadow and engage in the learning environment.
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Campus & Community Engagement Tour	Participants tour TRIO program spaces, meet staff, observe student study areas, and see campus resources that support first-generation success. Along the way, students highlight barriers, breakthroughs, and the community built through TRIO.
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	TRIO Student & Alumni Networking Lunch	Guests and students share a meal together. Alumni and current participants share their experiences, discuss the importance of persistence and resilience, and reflect on TRIO’s role in shaping their academic, personal, and professional paths. This lunch serves as both a celebration and a table-side storytelling.
1:00 – 2:00 p.m.	Reflection Circle & Advocacy Call-to-Action	Participants gather with TRIO students and staff for a facilitated reflection. Guests share what they observed and learned, and students respond with their own perspectives. Facilitators connect insights to TRIO’s national mission and invite participants to take meaningful next steps in TRIO support, advocacy, mentorship, and community engagement.
2:00 – 2:30 p.m.	Closing Appreciation & Group Photo	A closing message thanks guests for walking beside TRIO scholars and reinforces the importance of continued partnership. Participants receive follow-up materials and advocacy resources, and join for a commemorative photo celebrating 60+ years of TRIO programs.

The TRIO for a Day experience begins with a warm welcome and a student-led introduction to TRIO’s history, mission, and impact. Guests learn how TRIO opens the doors of higher education and why Congress continues to reaffirm its importance for low-income, first-generation students. They are then

immersed in the student experience: shadowing advising sessions, joining workshops, touring TRIO spaces, observing tutoring or mentoring, or working alongside student participants on real academic or college-readiness activities. Lunch becomes an intentional time of connection—students and alumni share their stories, answer questions, and build relationships that inspire continued support.

Following the immersive portion, the group gathers for a guided reflection circle. Participants process what they experienced, name insights and takeaways, and hear from students about the transformational role of TRIO in their lives and communities. The day concludes with a clear call to action: continue to champion TRIO through advocacy, partnership, and resource development. Participants leave informed, motivated, and ready to serve as ambassadors for educational access and opportunity.