

TRIO COMMUNITY CALL TO ACTION

(March 2026)

As advocates of the Federal TRIO Programs, you know how essential the mentorship, tutoring, and guidance provided by TRIO is to students' higher education success. Recently, the [Department of Education proposed programmatic changes to TRIO](#) that steer TRIO away from its mission of college access and transform TRIO into a pipeline for employment training.

Your voice is critical to assuring TRIO's future! Please take a moment to let Congress know that this is NOT acceptable and must be stopped! (You can find contact information for staff working for your House Representative and Senators here: <https://bit.ly/CapitolHillContactListMarch2026>.) Your advocacy will ensure that thousands of low-income, first-generation students continue to have access to these life-changing opportunities.

Step 1: Visit <https://www.congress.gov/members/find-your-member> to identify your House Representative and Senators.

Step 2: Craft and share your message by phone. Your message does not have to be lengthy or fanciful. But it must be clear and direct. When you call the office, ask to speak with the education aide. You may get a voicemail or you may be asked to "leave a message" with the front desk. That's ok. Share your message!

Here is a sample message:

"My name is _____ and I am a constituent from [District/State]. I am very concerned that the Department of Education is taking steps to remove TRIO programs from my community and to transform TRIO from a college access program into an employment training program. I am asking that [Senator/Representative] contact the Secretary of Education today and insist that the agency rescind and revise this proposal and that these changes not be made to TRIO! I also need [Senator/Representative] to tell the Secretary that there must NOT be a lapse in TRIO services, even if that means extending current awards.

Step 3: Craft and share your message by email. It's important to follow up your calls with emails reinforcing your message. Send them to not only the education aide, but also the Legislative Director and District Directors. You can find the email addresses for the staff members for all Members of Congress at <https://bit.ly/CapitolHillContactListMarch2026>.)

Here is a sample email message:

Dear [Senator/Representative]:

My name is _____ and I am a constituent from [District/State]. Recently, the U.S. Department of Education proposed sweeping changes to TRIO that threaten its mission of college access for low-income, first-generation students across the country.

In the recently released application for the TRIO Talent Search competition, the Department has reduced the number of projects to be funded to 175 and limited the eligibility for five additional Competitive Preference Priority (CPP) points to state agencies while also allowing them to apply for massive grant awards. This has the potential to completely eliminate Talent Search – and TRIO programs generally – in entire sections of the country, with funds flowing to just a handful of states.

We recognize the CPP is at the discretion of the ED Secretary. However, ED's approach to the Talent Search competition has raised significant concern across the TRIO community. As it stands, these changes could result in more than 300 programs losing funding, which would have a devastating impact on thousands of students who rely on these services.

We really need [Senator/Representative] to contact the Secretary of Education immediately and insist that this application be rescinded and revised. In making these changes, it's important that [Senator/Representative] impress upon the Secretary that there should not be any lapse in TRIO services – even if that means extending current grant awards.

[Senator/Representative]'s voice and leadership are especially important as the TRIO community responds to these developments.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Step 4: Engage at least five others to do the same! Multiply the strength of your efforts and invite five friends, colleagues, and other alumni to engage in these same steps. This should include administrators at your institutions and target schools – they would be devastated to lose TRIO!

- ***Share the document linked below with your alumni to get them involved in the fight!***
<https://bit.ly/TRIOAlumniMarch2026>

Through this **collective action** our voices will be heard, our messages will be clear, and we will prevail in our assignment to **#ProtectTRIO!** With any questions or for more information on communicating with your Members of Congress, please reach out to the Council for Opportunity in Education's Vice President of Public Policy, Diane Shust (diane.shust@coenet.org), or Public Policy Associate, Christian Bell (christian.bell@coenet.org).