

*FY 2027
SUMMER RECESS
**ACTION
PACKET**
AT-HOME ADVOCACY*

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A Message from the President

Dear TRIO Colleagues:

This has been a challenging year for the Federal TRIO Programs. For the second consecutive year, the Trump Administration proposed eliminating funding for all TRIO Programs. The **Talent Search** and **Educational Opportunity Center (EOC)** grant applications, released in March, attempt to farm these programs out to state entities while also altering their mission from college access and higher education to workforce development and training.

If we are going to win our fight to sustain our FY27 funding and rescind, revise, and reissue the Talent Search and EOC grant competitions, it is critical that we ensure every Member of Congress understands the effectiveness and importance of the TRIO programs to students, their families, and their communities. **We must make our voices heard now!**

To accomplish this task, we must engage TRIO personnel, students, parents, alumni, and other supporters to demonstrate to federal House Representatives and Senators that **TRIO works!**

The upcoming Congressional summer recesses, when Members of Congress are home in their communities, present excellent opportunities for you to meet with them and their staff in their local offices, provide them with your program data and student success stories, and invite them to visit your programs. They may hold town-hall meetings, attend community outreach events, or hold “office hours” to meet with their constituents.

- **House Recess:** July 3-13, 2026; July 24-August 31, 2026
- **Senate Recess:** June 26-July 13, 2026; August 10-September 14, 2026

This is a key opportunity to strengthen relationships you have with your Members of Congress or create new ones. The district and staff contact list is [here](#). To help you with your congressional meetings, this Summer Advocacy Action Guide includes the following:

- Sample In-person Meeting Request
- How to Turn Your Member of Congress into a TRIO Champion
- Congressional Visit Roadmap
- Examples of Outreach Efforts by the TRIO Community
- Congressional TRIO Caucus List

After you meet with your Members, complete this short [form](#). We will compile the information you forward to us and use it to develop our strategy as we move through the legislative process. If you have any questions or need additional resources, please contact **Peter Mills** at peter.mills@coenet.org, **Diane Shust** at diane.shust@coenet.org, or **Christian Bell** at christian.bell@coenet.org.

Thanks to you and your consistent, dedicated advocacy and support, the Federal TRIO Programs have strong bipartisan, bicameral support in Congress. Let's remind your Members of Congress that **TRIO WORKS!**

Sincerely,

Kimberly Jones
President

Sample Invitation Letter

Send via email using 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.

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 best fits 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]

How To 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 the scheduler and press secretary, as well as 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 within a week, be sure to follow up on your request to finalize a date and time 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 determining whether a legislator supports an issue!
- **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 newsletter and on our social media channels.
- **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 Visit Roadmap and Agenda

1. **Introduce yourselves.** Share who you are and your relevant TRIO affiliation (e.g., “My name is Jim Smith and I’m the Director of the Educational Opportunity Program hosted by New State University.”).
2. **Say “thank you.”** Thank the legislator and his/her staff for taking the time to meet. If they are a returning Member of Congress, thank the legislator and his/her staff for their past support of TRIO. Explain how critical an increase in funding will be, specifically focusing on how it will help serve students in the state or district.
3. **Introduce or refresh TRIO.** Explain how TRIO works on your campus/in your community to increase college access and success for low-income, first-generation students. Even experienced staffers could use a refresher. Share this [TRIO Fast Facts](#), [TRIO by District](#), and [TRIO by State](#). Share your TRIO State Factbook.
4. **Tell your stories.** Offer stories about the impact of TRIO for low-income, first-generation students. Include specific programs and list local projects in the Representative’s district or the Senator’s state.
5. **TRIO students graduate!** Share with the legislator or staffer your program data that highlights the number of students who have entered, completed, and graduated from postsecondary education programs. Share specific student success stories. [This fact sheet](#) highlights TRIO successes and alumni.
6. **Respond to follow-up questions and listen.** Ask for and listen to responses. Search for opportunities to create a personal connection to your students, program, or institution.
7. **Share hard copies of information.** Designate a team member to give copies of TRIO information to staffers. Highlight any program-specific information you have.
8. **Express thanks.** Thank the legislator and/or staffer for taking the time to meet.
9. **Follow up with the staff.** E-mail (1) an additional thanks for the meeting, (2) electronic copies of all materials, and (3) follow-up on the ask. (This follow-up message should be sent within three days.)

Examples of TRIO Advocacy from Across the Community

Specific examples of TRIO students and staff making the most out of opportunities to promote TRIO!

Alaska

Victoria Smith, former director of Student Support Services at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, hosts **Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)** on campus for a First-Gen Pinning Ceremony. The First-Gen Pinning Ceremony was part of a multi-day celebration in recognition of National First-Generation College Student Day. Over 50 students and their families participated in the ceremony.



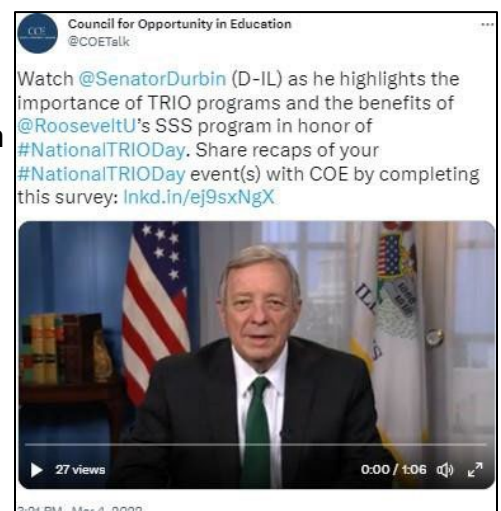
Kansas

Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS) visits the Emporia State University campus in July 2022 to announce a new program. During his visit, he met with Upward Bound students during their Summer Institute afternoon activities and McNair students. Senator Moran serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies, a key position for determining funding levels for TRIO. Senator Moran is also a member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, which is responsible for TRIO law.



Illinois

Senator Durbin (D-IL) shares a video to commemorate National TRIO Day. The Senator has long been a champion for TRIO thanks to the great advocacy work by Illinois TRIO. Senator Durbin serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, a key position for determining funding levels for TRIO.



California

Horacio Aceves, Assistant Director of the Upward Bound program at Occidental College, invited **Congressman Jimmy Gomez (CA-34)** to visit campus and meet students. During the meeting, Congressman Gomez pledged to support TRIO funding. The Congressman tweeted a picture of his visit to his thousands of followers!



Iowa

Director of Talent Search Erica Frey and Valerie White hosted **Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA)** at Southwestern Community College in Iowa. Student Abbe Baumfalk shared how she learned about TRIO and the resources TRIO provides to help students overcome class, social, and cultural barriers. TRIO helped her secure funding for college, including this \$1,000 scholarship from Southwestern.



Nevada

Kimberly Williams and Nevada TRIO met with **Representative Steven Horsford (D-NV-04)**, who was the Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus in the 118th Congress. The Representative met with current high school and college students, alumni, and faculty. Great work, Nevada TRIO!



These are just a handful of examples of advocacy happening across the country! Please be sure to keep the government relations office informed of your efforts by contacting Peter Mills at peter.mills@coenet.org, Diane Shust at diane.shust@coenet.org, or Christian Bell at christian.bell@coenet.org, or by phone at (202) 347-7430.

NOTE: The Council for Opportunity in Education is a non-profit, non-partisan organization and, as such, does not endorse any candidates or political parties. The piece above is for informational purposes only and should not be construed otherwise.

Congressional TRIO Caucus Member List

As of June 2026 (119th Congress)

The Congressional TRIO Caucus is a bipartisan, bicameral group in Congress that supports the Federal TRIO Programs and access to higher education for low-income, first-generation students and students with disabilities. The Caucus aims to generate support for TRIO in congressional offices, the U.S. Department of Education, and other entities, and to expand awareness of the need for improving educational opportunities for all Americans.

The Congressional TRIO Caucus is co-chaired by **Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Raphael Warnock (D-GA)** and **Representatives Gwen Moore (D-WI) and Mike Simpson (R-ID)**. To join the Congressional TRIO Caucus or to learn more information, please get in touch with any of the following staff members:

- Michael Delorge at michael_delorge@collins.senate.gov and Mark LeDuc at mark_leduc@appro.senate.gov with Senator Collins's office
- Annette Christie with Senator Warnock's office at annette_christie@warnock.senate.gov or 202-224-3643
- Anna Whitwam with Representative Moore's office at anna.whitwam@mail.house.gov or 202-225-4572
- Nick Dilorenzo with Representative Simpson's office at nick.dilorenzo@mail.house.gov or 202-225-5531

In Alphabetical Order

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC-12) | 22. Rep. Juan Ciscomani (R-AZ-06) |
| 2. Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-AL-04) | 23. Rep. Katherine Clark (D-MA-05) |
| 3. Rep. Mark Amodei (R-NV-02) | 24. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO-05) |
| 4. Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE-02) | 25. Rep. Stephen I. Cohen (D-TN-09) |
| 5. Rep. Becca Balint (D-VT-At Large) | 26. Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK-04) |
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| 10. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) | 31. Sen. Michael D. Crapo (R-ID) |
| 11. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR-01) | 32. Rep. Jasmine Crockett (D-TX-30) |
| 12. Sen. John Boozman (R-AR) | 33. Rep. Sharice Davids (D-KS-03) |
| 13. Rep. Brendan Boyle (D-PA-02) | 34. Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-IL-07) |
| 14. Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA-26) | 35. Rep. Don Davis (D-NC-01) |
| 15. Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA) | 17. |
| 16. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-CA-24) | 36. Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro (D-CT-03) |
| 17. Rep. Andre Carson (D-IN-07) | 37. Rep. Suzan DelBene (D-WA-01) |
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| 20. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) | 40. Sen. Richard J. Durbin (D-IL) |
| 21. Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA-28) | 41. Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA) |

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43. Rep. Cleo Fields (D-LA-06)
44. Rep. Bill Foster (D-IL-11)
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46. Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA-08)
47. Rep. Jimmy Gomez (D-CA-34)
48. Rep. Vicente Gonzalez (D- TX-34)
49. Rep. Maggie Goodlander (D-NH-02)
50. Sen. Charles E. Grassley (R-IA)
51. Rep. Morgan Griffith (R-VA-09)
52. Rep. Adelita S. Grijalva (D- AZ-07)
53. Rep. Steven Brett Guthrie (R-KY-02)
54. Rep. Josh Harder (D-CA-09) 85.
55. Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-NH) 86.
56. Rep. Pablo José Hernández (D-PR-01)
57. Rep. French Hill (R-AR-02) 88.
58. Rep. Jim Himes (D-CT-04)
59. Rep. Ashley Hinson (R-IA-02)
60. Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-HI)
61. Rep. Val Hoyle (D-OR-04)
62. Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA-02)
63. Rep. Bill Huizenga (R-MI-04)
64. Rep. Sara Jacobs (D-CA-51)
65. Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-SD-AL)
66. Rep. Henry C. Johnson (D-GA-04)
67. Rep. David Joyce (R-OH-14)
68. Rep. Bill Keating (D-MA-09)
69. Sen. Angus King (I-ME)
70. Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)
71. Rep. John Larson (D-CT-01)
72. Rep. Mike Lawler (R-NY-17)
73. Rep. Summer Lee (D-PA-12)
74. Rep. Susie Lee (D-NV-03)
75. Rep. Mike Levin (D-CA-49)
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89. Rep. Kevin Mullin (D-CA-15)
90. Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) 60.
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94. Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC)
95. Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ-06)
96. Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-CA-19)
97. Rep. Chris Pappas (D-NH-01)
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99. Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA-50)
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103. Rep. Michael Quigley (D-IL-05)
104. Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-MD-08)
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106. Rep. Joshua Riley (D-NY-19)
107. Sen. James E. Risch (R-ID)
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111. Sen. Bernard Sanders (I-VT)
112. Rep. Janice D. Schakowsky (D-IL-09)
113. Rep. Hillary Scholten (D-MI-03)
114. Rep. Robert C. Scott (D-VA-03)
115. Rep. Terri Sewell (D-AL-7)
116. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)
117. Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA-32)
- 118. Rep. Michael K. Simpson (R-ID-02)**
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- 143. Rep. Frederica Wilson (D-FL 24)