

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 17, 2025

The Honorable Linda McMahon
Secretary
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary McMahon:

We write to you with deep concern regarding the future of the Federal TRIO Programs. The Department of Education's Budget Summary released on June 5, 2025, proposes eliminating funding for TRIO Programs¹, raising serious concerns about this administration's commitment to ensuring equitable access to higher education for students from all backgrounds.

As you know, TRIO Programs provide support services to disadvantaged students seeking access to postsecondary education.² Over 3,500 TRIO Projects are present in every U.S. state and territory and serve over 880,000 students each year. In Puerto Rico alone, 13,000³ students depend on TRIO Programs to plan and achieve their academic and career goals. Studies have consistently shown that participation in TRIO significantly enhances college enrollment and completion among low-income students, first-generation college students, and students with disabilities.⁴

While the Department of Education's cancellation of three Upward Bound projects⁵ have affected programs outside of Puerto Rico, we are deeply concerned about the potential consequences for TRIO programs on the island and nationwide. In Puerto Rico, over 950 students rely on Upward Bound services to navigate their educational journeys and attain a quality education. The termination of any additional projects would endanger the livelihoods of thousands nationwide who rely on these programs for employment and support.

We are deeply concerned that these actions and any future grant terminations will severely harm students from underserved backgrounds. Puerto Rico receives nearly \$15 million annually for TRIO Programs, which support students in pursuing and achieving their academic and career aspirations.

With that in mind, we request a timely response to the following questions no later than Monday, July 28, 2025.

1. Given that most TRIO programs, including Upward Bound, Veterans Upward Bound, Talent Search, Educational Opportunity Centers, and the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement program, are scheduled to conclude services by August 31, could you clarify when decisions on grant renewals will be communicated to grantees?
2. According to the standard grant cycle, the competition for Educational Talent Search and Educational Opportunity Centers is expected to begin this fall. Could you provide an update on the status of these competitions and the projected timeline for their release?

¹ <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/fiscal-year-2026-budget-summary-110043.pdf>

² <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R42724>

³ <https://ope.ed.gov/programs/mapED/storymaps/trio/?page=TRIO-Footprint-2022-23-Draft-2&views=All-Programs>

⁴ <https://www.pellinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/05.01.24ExecutiveSummary-MCNBHHMC-Indicators-2024.pdf>

⁵ <https://coenet.org/news-impact/advocacy-update/federal-cancellations-of-upward-bound-grants-signal-broader-threat-to-college-access-programs/>

3. What is the rationale for zeroing out funding for the Federal TRIO Programs in the President's Budget? Please share the data or evidence the Department used to determine these programs are no longer necessary to support underserved students.
4. How does the Department of Education plan to ensure that the needs of low-income students, first-generation college students, and students with disabilities are met in the absence of TRIO Programs?

We request that your office provide a prompt and thorough response to the questions outlined above.

Sincerely,



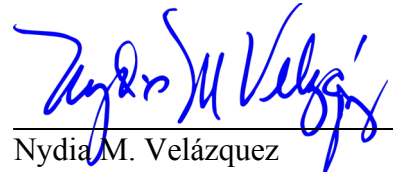
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