

TRIO SSS PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

TRIO

TRIO is a set of federally-funded college opportunity programs that motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds in their pursuit of a college degree. **790,000 low-income, first-generation students and students with disabilities — from sixth grade through college graduation — are served by over 2,800 programs nationally.** TRIO programs provide academic tutoring, personal counseling, mentoring, financial guidance, and other supports necessary for educational access and retention. TRIO programs provide direct support services for students, and relevant training for directors and staff.

Student Support Services Program

The Student Support Services Program provides grants for projects designed to **increase the college retention and graduation rates of eligible students**; Increase the transfer rate of eligible students from two-year to four-year institutions; and foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, individuals with disabilities, homeless children and youth, foster care youth, or other disconnected students; and improve the financial and economic literacy of students in areas such as—

- (1) Basic personal income, household money management, and financial planning skills; and
- (2) Basic economic decision-making skills.

Activities and Services

A Student Support Services project **must** provide the following services:

- (1) **Academic tutoring**, directly or through other services provided by the institution, to enable students to complete postsecondary courses, which may include instruction in reading, writing, study skills, mathematics, science, and other subjects.
- (2) Advice and assistance in **postsecondary course selection**.
- (3) Information on both the full range of Federal student **financial aid programs and benefits** (including Federal Pell Grant awards and loan forgiveness) and resources for locating public and private scholarships; and assistance in completing financial aid applications, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- (4) Education or counseling services designed to improve the **financial and economic literacy** of students, including financial planning for postsecondary education.
- (5) Activities designed to assist participants enrolled in four-year institutions of higher education in applying for admission to, and obtaining financial assistance for enrollment in, **graduate and professional programs**.
- (6) Activities designed to assist students enrolled in two-year institutions of higher education in applying for admission to, and obtaining financial assistance for enrollment in, a **four-year program** of postsecondary education.

A Student Support Services project **may** provide the following services:

- (1) Individualized counseling for personal, career, and academic matters provided by assigned counselors.
- (2) Information, activities, and instruction designed to acquaint students participating in the project with the range of career options available to the students.
- (3) Exposure to cultural events and academic programs not usually available to disadvantaged students.
- (4) Mentoring programs involving faculty or upper class students, or a combination thereof.
- (5) Securing temporary housing during breaks in the academic year for — Students who are homeless children and youths or were formerly homeless children and youths; and Foster care youths.
- (6) Programs and activities as described in above and in this section that are specially designed for students who are limited English proficient, students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, students who are individuals with disabilities, students who are homeless children and youths, students who are foster care youth, or other disconnected students.
- (7) Other activities designed to meet the purposes of the Student Support Services Program.

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Eligibility

A student is eligible to participate in a Student Support Services project if the student meets all of the following requirements:

- (1) Is a citizen or national of the United States or meets the residency requirements for Federal student financial assistance.
- (2) Is enrolled at the grantee institution or accepted for enrollment in the next academic term at that institution.
- (3) Has a need for academic support, as determined by the grantee, in order to pursue successfully a postsecondary educational program.
- (4) Is—
 - (a)) A low-income individual;
 - (b)) A first generation college student; or
 - (c)) An individual with disabilities.

First generation college student

- (1)) A student neither of whose natural or adoptive parents received a baccalaureate degree;
- (2)) A student who, prior to the age of 18, regularly resided with and received support from only one parent and whose supporting parent did not receive a baccalaureate degree; or
- (3) An individual who, prior to the age of 18, did not regularly reside with or receive support from a natural or an adoptive parent.

Low-income individual

An individual whose family's taxable income did not exceed 150 percent of the poverty level amount in the calendar year preceding the year in which the individual initially participated in the project. The poverty level amount is determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

NOTE: Documentation of **Household Size and Taxable Income** is required to determine low-income eligibility for participation in TRIO Student Support Services. It is very important that you indicate your **TAXABLE** income and not total income or adjusted gross income, (see Federal Tax Form 1040 – Line 43, Form 1040A – Line 27, **or** Form 1040EZ – Line 6). [Federal TRIO Programs Current-Year Low-Income Levels](#) may be found at the Ed.gov website.

Individual with a disability

A person who has a disability, as that term is defined in section 12102 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*). Documentation of a disability is satisfied by proof of registration with the campus Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD).

Academic need

A student whom the grantee determines needs one or more of the services provided to succeed in a postsecondary educational program. For more information contact the TRIO SSS Coordinator or Director.

Participant

An individual who—

- (1)) Is determined to be eligible to participate in the project; and
- (2) Receives project services that the grantee has determined to be sufficient to increase the individual's chances for success in a postsecondary educational program

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Foster care youth

Youth who are in foster care or are aging out of the foster care system are defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Homeless children and youth

Individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and includes — children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement; children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and migratory children (as such term is defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described above. (Reference McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987)

Limited English proficiency

A person whose native language is other than English and who has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language to deny that individual the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms in which English is the language of instruction

MORE INFORMATION

US Department of Education www.ed.gov

Federal Student Aid <http://studentaid.ed.gov/>

Internal Revenue Service www.irs.gov

Council for Opportunity in Education www.coenet.us

TRIO SSS at Michigan State University www.oss.msu.edu