

Changes in TRIO in HEA Reauthorization

In late July 2008, both chambers of Congress passed the Higher Education Opportunity Act by overwhelming majorities. This legislation reauthorized the Higher Education Act of 1965 for the first time in 10 years and included numerous provisions that enhance TRIO programs. Specifically, this legislation:

- extends all TRIO grants from four to five years;
- increases the minimum TRIO grant to \$200,000;
- allows branch campuses to apply for TRIO grants;
- creates an appeals process for unsuccessful TRIO grant applicants;
- kills the Upward Bound Absolute Priority, including the double-recruitment evaluation
- ensures that any future evaluation of TRIO programs protects the integrity of students and institutions by
 - disallowing over-recruitment and denial of services for the purposes of an evaluation
 - requiring consideration of institutional review boards and the burdens placed on TRIO program participants and grantees;
- allows TRIO grantees to target student populations with particular needs, including:
 - students with limited English proficiency
 - disabled students
 - homeless and foster youth
 - “disconnected youth” (i.e., teen parents and students who have been involved in the criminal justice system)
- expands eligibility for Veterans Upward Bound to include
 - older veterans who served before January 31, 1955
 - federal reservists who served for more than 30 days
 - federal reservists called to action on or after September 11, 2001

In addition to changes that benefit TRIO, the legislation also:

- creates a simplified, 2-page Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application form;
- allows students to receive Pell Grants year-round;
- expands eligibility for the Academic Competitiveness and National SMART grant programs; and
- creates greater educational access for servicemen and women and their families through deferred and interest-free loans.

These are only some of the enhancements created by this bill that will benefit American students in pursuit of higher education. Please be sure to thank your Member of Congress for their support for this important piece of legislation.