

FY18 Federal Budget: TRIO/GEAR UP and Latinos

TRIO and GEAR UP are programs that help disadvantaged students prepare for, enroll in, and complete college. Helping students become college- and career-ready is crucial for a modern, thriving economy. However, proposed cuts in federal funding levels for FY18 undermine the ability of these programs to reach students seeking opportunity in education.

What are TRIO and GEAR UP?

TRIO and GEAR UP are authorized under the Higher Education Act (HEA). The federal TRIO programs consist primarily of five discretionary grant programs that provide tutoring, rigorous coursework, and guidance to disadvantaged middle and high school students so that they are prepared to enter and complete college. TRIO programs have been proven effective in helping participants graduate from high school ready for college. Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) provide six-year grants to support early college preparation and awareness through supports for low-income elementary and secondary school students and through college scholarships to participating students. Funding for TRIO and GEAR UP flows directly from the federal government to grantees, through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education.

Who Benefits?

The first TRIO program—Upward Bound—began in 1965 and GEAR UP was created in 1998. TRIO serves close to 790,000 low-income Americans¹ and GEAR UP reaches more than 700,000 students.² Of those served, approximately 19% of TRIO program participants and 30% of GEAR UP beneficiaries are Latino.

What About the Federal Budget?

President Trump's FY18 budget request cuts funding for both programs: \$103 million to GEAR UP programs and \$90 million to TRIO.³ The House Appropriations Committee rejected these decreases in funding, and instead chose to increase investments in these programs, raising funding for TRIO by \$60 million and GEAR UP by over \$10 million.⁴ Senate appropriators should seek similar increases in funding for these programs, expanding some of the largest and most important higher education investments for low-income and first-generation college students.

¹ Council for Opportunity in Education, “Resources,” <http://www.coenet.org/trio.shtml> (accessed June 2017).

² U.S. Department of Education, *Higher Education, Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2013), <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget13/justifications/s-highered.pdf> (accessed June 2017).

³ Government Publishing Office, *Department of Education*, (Washington, DC: GPO, 2017), <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BUDGET-2018-APP/pdf/BUDGET-2018-APP-1-9.pdf> (accessed June 2017).

⁴ House Committee on Appropriations, *Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, 2018*, 115th Cong., 1st sess., 2017, Committee Print, <https://appropriations.house.gov/uploadedfiles/23920.pdf>