

# 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. Quite often, they will 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. Take care to plan your event based on the legislator's availability. Contact your legislator's congressional scheduler to find out precisely when your Member of Congress might be available to visit. (COE can help with this, too!)
- **Send an official invitation to your Member of Congress.** E-mail a letter inviting your Member of Congress to visit. (A sample letter is available above.) The contact information for the scheduler and education legislative assistants of your Members of Congress 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 in a few days – a week at most – be sure to follow up on your request to finalize a time and date 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.** Be sure to have students greet your legislator when he or she arrives on campus and to escort him/her to the day's event site. You may even wish to have the students prepare signs or a banner to welcome your guest to the program. Also, legislators often bring their own staff members to accompany them to such events. Be certain to treat them with the same respect as the legislators themselves—for the staff often play a critical role in whether a legislator supports an issue or not!
- **Have an agenda.** Craft a formal program agenda that prioritizes 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. If possible, allow time for the Member of Congress to speak directly *with* the students and alumni.

## 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 of Congress 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. (You may even want to have students' hand-write thank you notes for the legislator.) It would be wonderful to include pictures from the event with your message(s).
- **Share any media coverage with COE.** Let us highlight and celebrate your work! We will be sure to feature your efforts in our Weekly Summary and social media outlets.
- **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!

# SAMPLE INVITATION LETTER

*Send via Email using the [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.

(House Recess: February 10-26, March 11-21, April 1-16 and Senate Recess: February 18-26, April 1-16)

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 would work best for 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]