

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20510**

May 13, 2026

The Honorable Linda E. McMahon  
Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20202

The Honorable Russell Vought  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Secretary McMahon and Director Vought:

We write to express our deep concern regarding the Department of Education's (Department) delay in issuing Grant Award Notifications (GANs) for fiscal year (FY) 2026 TRIO Upward Bound programs that begin on June 1. For the second year in a row, GANs have not been sent to grantee institutions in a timely manner, creating unnecessary disruption to essential programming and uncertainty for the students and educators who depend on the critical services that these federal funds help to provide.

The TRIO Programs are a cornerstone of our nation's commitment to educational access and upward mobility. TRIO supports individuals from low-income backgrounds, students who would be the first person in their families to earn college degrees, students with disabilities, among others, in accessing and achieving postsecondary success. From personalized tutoring to personal mentoring and advising, to assistance applying for and identifying funding options, TRIO programs make a real difference in a student's ability to attend and complete college. These programs are evidence-based and results-driven. TRIO graduates, according to the Department of Education's own data, are more likely to enroll in higher education and earn their degrees than non-TRIO students with similar backgrounds.<sup>1</sup> For these reasons, TRIO programs have long enjoyed strong bipartisan support in Congress. They reflect a shared national value—every American, regardless of their zip code, deserves the chance to pursue higher education and the American dream.

Sadly, this is not the first we have seen of ongoing delays in issuing GANs which are having real-world consequences in our home state of New Hampshire. We are particularly concerned about the damage being caused by the Department's delayed notification to the University of New Hampshire's (UNH) Upward Bound program which faced similar delays in FY25. UNH's program is slated to begin June 1. They only have enough carry over funding for roughly one month before they would need to lay off staff and shutter a program that has had such a significant positive impact on the lives of so many Granite Staters. Currently, the program serves 115 students across 11 schools, and 98% of them have persisted to the next grade level or on-time graduation, and 97% of graduates have enrolled in college in the fall too.

A core component of UNH's Upward Bound program is the operation of the Summer Academy which begins June 21, with staff training and move-in starting June 13. With summer programming rapidly approaching, these delays and uncertainty threaten to undermine planning, staffing, and student participation and long-term educational success. Accordingly, we respectfully request responses to the following questions no later than May 30, 2026.

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<sup>1</sup> Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, National Studies Find TRIO Programs Effective at Increasing College Enrollment and Graduation (Washington, DC: Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education, May 2009), <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED508928>.

1. Will the Department of Education commit to issuing GANs for FY26 TRIO programs ahead of June 1?
2. If not, when will you issue them?
3. What specific factors have caused the Department to, once again, miss its usual timelines for delivering GANs to grantees?

We urge you to act without further delay to ensure that TRIO programs can operate on schedule and provide the services that New Hampshire's students and those across the country are counting on. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



Maggie Goodlander  
Member of Congress