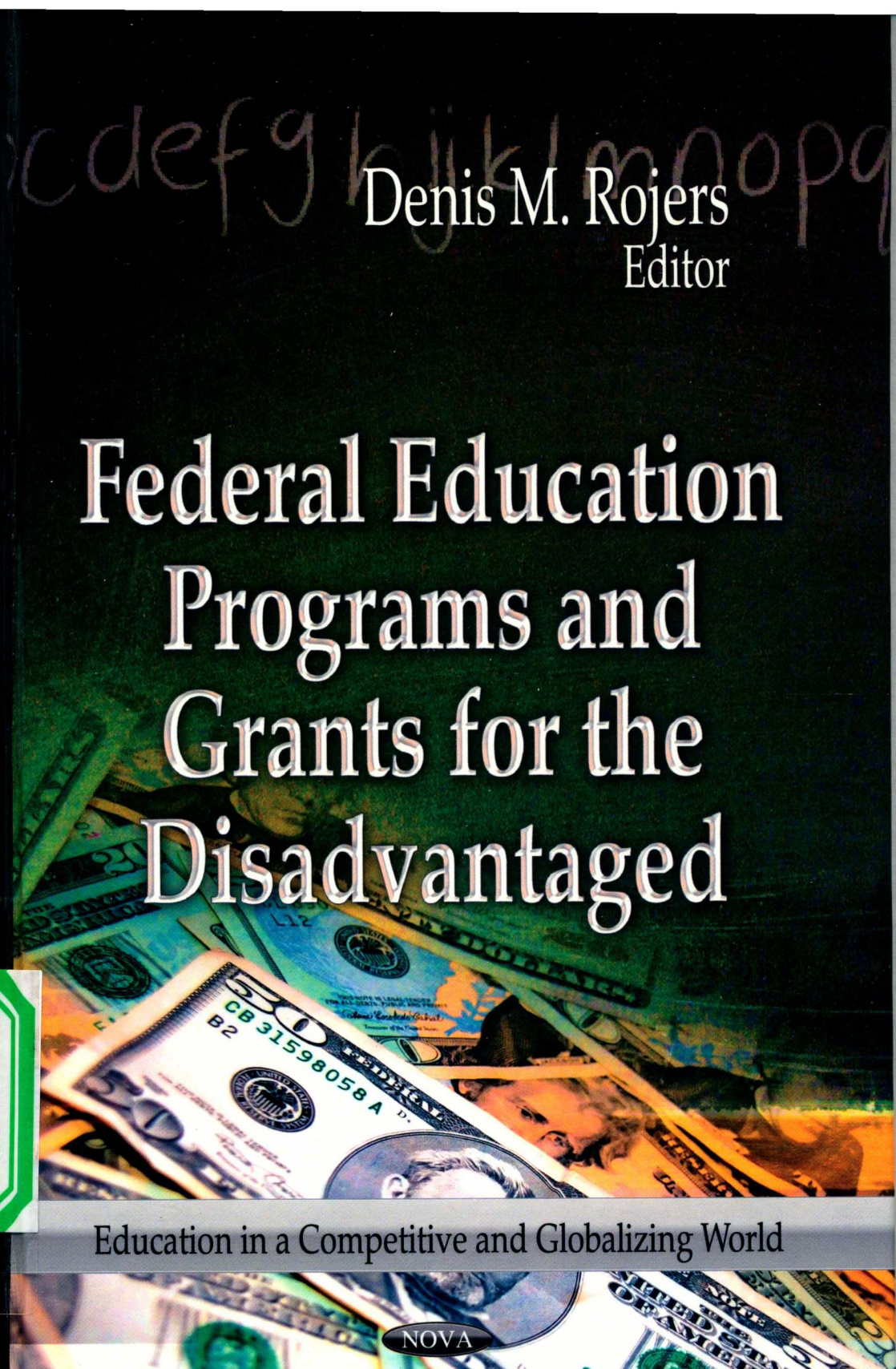


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Federal Education Programs and Grants for the Disadvantaged

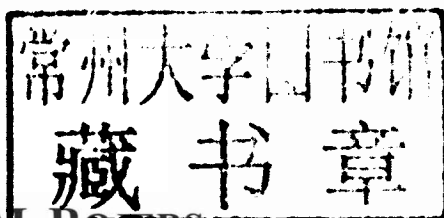


Education in a Competitive and Globalizing World

NOVA

EDUCATION IN A COMPETITIVE AND GLOBALIZING WORLD

**FEDERAL EDUCATION
PROGRAMS AND GRANTS
FOR THE DISADVANTAGED**



DENIS M. ROGERS
EDITOR



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PREFACE

The TRIO programs are the primary federal programs providing support services to disadvantaged students to promote achievement in postsecondary education. The TRIO programs have been designed to prepare qualified individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds for postsecondary education and encourage their success throughout the educational pipeline from secondary school to undergraduate and graduate education. While the TRIO programs primarily serve low-income, first-generation college students, they also serve students with disabilities, veterans, homeless youth, foster youth, and individuals underrepresented in graduate education. This book provides a description of the TRIO programs, with a focus on education for homeless children and youth; and the federal Pell Grant program of the Higher Education Act.

Chapter 1 – This chapter serves as an introduction to the TRIO programs. The TRIO programs are the primary federal programs providing support services to disadvantaged students to promote achievement in postsecondary education. This chapter provides a description of the TRIO programs, authorized in Title IV-A-2-1 of the Higher Education Act (HEA), as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA; P.L. 110-315) in 2008. Key program amendments of the HEOA as implemented through final Department of Education (ED) regulations published in 2010 are discussed. The chapter is intended to support congressional understanding of the programs, summarize recent evaluations and performance reports, and review the Department of Education's progress in implementing HEOA.

Chapter 2 – The Education for Homeless Children and Youth program (EHCY) provides formula grants to state educational agencies (SEAs) to help ensure that all homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free

and appropriate public education, including public preschool education, that is provided to other children and youth. It is the only federal education program exclusively focused on homeless children and youth. SEAs competitively subgrant funds to local educational agencies (LEAs). Not all LEAs receive EHCY grants. In school year (SY) 2010-2011, 3,651 LEAs, out of a total of 16,290, received awards. Although only 22% percent of LEAs received EHCY grants in SY2010-2011, they enrolled 71% of all homeless students in that year.

Education and related services for homeless children and youth are also funded through required set-asides from Title I-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. National data on the amount of funding set aside are not available.

Chapter 3 – The federal Pell Grant program, authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA; P.L. 89-329), is the single largest source of federal grant aid supporting postsecondary education students.

The program is estimated to have provided over \$35.7 billion to approximately 9.7 million undergraduate students in FY2011. For FY2012, the total maximum Pell Grant was funded at \$5,550. The program is funded primarily through annual discretionary appropriations, although in recent years mandatory appropriations have played a smaller yet increasing role in the program.

The statutory authority for the Pell Grant program was most recently reauthorized by the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA; P.L. 110-315).

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Chapter 1

THE TRIO PROGRAMS^{*}

Cassandra Dortch

SUMMARY

This report serves as an introduction to the TRIO programs. The TRIO programs are the primary federal programs providing support services to disadvantaged students to promote achievement in postsecondary education.

This report provides a description of the TRIO programs, authorized in Title IV-A-2-1 of the Higher Education Act (HEA), as amended by the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA; P.L. 110-315) in 2008. Key program amendments of the HEOA as implemented through final Department of Education (ED) regulations published in 2010 are discussed. The report is intended to support congressional understanding of the programs, summarize recent evaluations and performance reports, and review the Department of Education's progress in implementing HEOA.

In FY2012, the TRIO programs were funded at \$840 million and served almost 800,000 secondary, postsecondary, and adult students. The TRIO programs have been designed to prepare qualified individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds for postsecondary education and encourage their success throughout the educational pipeline from secondary school to undergraduate and graduate education.

^{*} This is an edited, reformatted and augmented version of a Congressional Research Service publication, CRS Report for Congress R42724, from www.crs.gov, prepared for Members and Committees of Congress, dated September 10, 2012.

While the TRIO programs primarily serve low-income, first-generation college students, they also serve students with disabilities, veterans, homeless youth, foster youth, and individuals underrepresented in graduate education. The TRIO programs are also designed to award prior grantees that implement successful projects and propose high-quality projects with subsequent grants before awarding applicants without prior TRIO experience.

There are six TRIO programs, each serving a different demographic. The TRIO Upward Bound (UB) Program serves secondary school students, providing relatively intensive preparation services and encouragement to help students pursue education beyond secondary school. the TRIO Talent Search (TS) Program provides less intensive services than UB in support of the completion of high school and enrollment in postsecondary education, and it encourages primarily students and out-of-school youth.

The TRIO Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) Program primarily serves adults. The TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) Program motivates undergraduate students to complete their undergraduate education. The Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement (McNair) Program prepares undergraduate students for graduate school. Finally, the TRIO Staff Development (Training) Program trains TRIO project staff to be more effective.

Several TRIO program provisions were amended through the HEOA. Two key HEOA amendments address issues pertaining to the application review process: scoring and second reviews (appeals). The first amendment defined outcome criteria that require the secretary and each grantee to agree upon objectives/targets for the criteria. The extent to which grantees meet or exceed these objectives determines the number of prior experience (PE) points the grantee may earn as part of its application in the next grant competition. Earning more PE points increases the likelihood of funding.

The FY2011 TS and EOC and FY2012 UB grant competitions requested that applicants propose objectives for the statutorily defined outcome criteria. The second amendment established an application review process by which those unsuccessful applicants that can identify a specific technical, administrative, or scoring error may have their applications reviewed a second time (appealed). The FY2012 TRIO UB competition is the first to use the revised application review process.

BACKGROUND

Since its inception, the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 has had a focus on increasing the postsecondary access and achievement of

disadvantaged students, including low-income and first-generation college students. The two major approaches are financial support or supportive services. The Pell Grant program is the single largest source of federal grant *aid* supporting primarily low-income postsecondary education students.¹ The Pell Grant program provided almost \$33.4 billion to approximately 9.7 million undergraduate students in award year 2011- 2012.

The TRIO programs are the primary federal programs providing *support services* to disadvantaged students to promote achievement in postsecondary education.² The TRIO programs were so named by the 1968 HEA amendments, which consolidated a trio of programs that support the educational achievement of disadvantaged students under one title. The number of TRIO programs has since expanded to six, and they were funded a total of \$840 million in FY2012.

Collectively, the TRIO programs are designed to identify qualified individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, prepare them for a program of postsecondary education, provide support services for postsecondary students, motivate and prepare students for doctoral programs, and train individuals serving or preparing for service in the TRIO programs.

TRIO services support the federal policy goals of secondary school completion, college preparation, college enrollment, undergraduate completion, and graduate school preparation. There are six main TRIO programs (in descending order of funding levels):

- TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) Program,
- TRIO Upward Bound (UB) Program,
- TRIO Talent Search (TS) Program,
- TRIO Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) Program,
- Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement (McNair) Program, and
- TRIO Staff Development (Training) Program.

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA; P.L. 110-315) of 2008 made several changes to the TRIO programs to increase accountability, rigor, and uniformity and to ensure that all disadvantaged students had access to the programs. In October 2010, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) released the final regulations to implement the HEOA TRIO program provisions.³

This report serves as an introduction to the TRIO programs. The initial section describes the provisions of each of the programs, as reauthorized by

HEOA. The subsequent section provides a brief overview of recent funding and participation trends for each of the programs.

This is followed by a description of unique provisions and regulations that are common to the TRIO programs, highlighting key HEOA and regulatory changes. A concluding section presents the key findings and results of recent program evaluations and assessments.

PIPELINE OF TRIO PROGRAMS

The federal TRIO programs provide support services and some financial assistance primarily to low-income, first-generation college students to help them succeed academically and encourage them to advance through much of the educational pipeline. The TRIO programs work together to provide a pipeline of support services from secondary school through undergraduate and graduate education.

Each of the TRIO programs is designed to serve a different target population of participants through a different level of education. The following subsections describe the purpose, eligible recipients, program participants, program intensity and activities, and outcome criteria of each of the TRIO programs and are ordered according to their sequence in the educational pipeline:

- UB primarily supports the college preparation of secondary students,
- TS primarily supports the postsecondary enrollment of secondary students,
- EOC primarily supports the postsecondary enrollment of adult students,
- SSS primarily supports the completion of undergraduate education,
- McNair primarily supports graduate school preparation, and
- Training supports TRIO staff development.

For a comparison of eligible grant recipients, program participant requirements, and required program activities, see *Table 1*, *Table 2*, and *Table 3*, respectively.

TRIO Upward Bound (UB) Program⁴

The UB program is intended to provide intensive preparation and encouragement toward success in education beyond secondary school. UB has three types of projects: Regular UB to prepare secondary school students for programs of postsecondary education, UB Math and Science Centers (UBMS) to prepare high school students for postsecondary education programs that lead to careers in the fields of math and science, and Veterans UB (VUB) to assist military veterans to prepare for a program of postsecondary education. Compared to Regular UB projects, UBMS projects typically serve more students in their junior or senior years, serve students with stronger math and science skills, and emphasize the summer component more.

Eligible Recipients

Grants or contracts are available to institutions of higher education (IHEs); public and private agencies and organizations, including community-based organizations (CBOs) with experience in serving disadvantaged youth;⁵ secondary schools;⁶ and combinations of such institutions, agencies, and organizations.

Program Participants

All participants must have completed eight years of elementary education or be at least 13 years of age but not more than 19 years of age, unless the age and grade limitation defeats the purpose of the program. In addition, all participants must be in need of academic support to pursue education beyond secondary school successfully. At least two-thirds of the program participants must be low-income, first-generation college students. The remaining one-third of Regular UB and VUB participants must be low-income, first-generation, or at-risk of academic failure.⁷ The remaining one-third of UBMS participants must be low-income or first-generation. The program defines a Regular UB participant who has a high risk for academic failure as an individual who is not at the proficient level on state assessments in reading or language arts; is not at the proficient level on state assessments in math; has not successfully completed pre-algebra or algebra by the beginning of the 10th grade; or has a grade point average of 2.5 or less (on a 4.0 scale) for the most recent school year. The program defines a military veteran who has a high risk for academic failure as an individual who has been out of high school or dropped out of a program of postsecondary education for five or more years; has scored on standardized tests below the level that demonstrates a likelihood

of success in a program of postsecondary education; or meets the definition of an individual with a disability.

Program Intensity and Activities

Historically, UB has been a relatively high-intensity program. In FY2011 on average, Regular UB, UBMS, and VUB projects expended \$4,697, \$4,836, and \$2,280 per participant, respectively.⁸ The Regular UB and UBMS per-participant spending is, on average, at least 10 times more than TS and EOC projects, which may also serve secondary school students.

The HEA requires each grantee to provide the following seven services:

- instruction in mathematics through precalculus, laboratory science, foreign language, composition, and literature, as part of the core curriculum in the third and succeeding years;⁹
- academic tutoring to enable students to complete secondary or postsecondary courses;
- secondary and postsecondary course selection advice and assistance;
- assistance in preparing for college entrance examinations and assistance in completing college admission applications;
- information on student financial aid opportunities and assistance in completing financial aid applications;
- guidance on and assistance in methods for achieving a secondary school diploma or an equivalent or postsecondary education; and
- education or counseling services designed to improve financial and economic literacy.

Per regulations, Regular UB and UBMS grantees must provide a summer instructional component. Regulations also require UBMS grantees to provide participants with opportunities to learn from mathematicians and scientists who are engaged in research and teaching and opportunities with graduate and undergraduate science and mathematics majors.

Program statute lists permissible activities such as exposure to cultural events, academic programs not usually available to disadvantaged students and mentoring programs, and programs and activities designed specifically for special populations.¹⁰ Program regulations allow UB grantees, under certain conditions, to pay tuition for courses that will allow participants to complete a rigorous secondary school program of study and room and board for a residential summer instructional component.

Regular UB and UBMS grantees may also provide such services as cultural or academic field trips, mentoring, work-study, or stipends. The Regular UB and UBMS stipends may not exceed \$40 per month for the academic year component and may not exceed \$60 per month for the three-month summer recess, except that youth participating in work-study may be paid \$300 per month during the summer recess. Regular UB and UBMS stipends are for full-time, *satisfactory* participants only.¹¹

VUB grantees may provide such services as short-term remedial or refresher courses, stipends, and assistance accessing veteran support services. The VUB stipend may not exceed \$40 per month and is for full-time, *satisfactory* participants only.

Outcome Criteria

All UB projects must annually report the extent to which they meet or exceed the goals approved in their application for the following outcome criteria:

- the number of participants served;
- participant school performance, as measured by the percentage of participants with a specified cumulative grade point average (inapplicable to VUB grantees); participant academic performance, as measured by the percentage of participants scoring at or above the proficient level on state standardized tests in reading/language arts and math, or, in the case of VUB, receiving a better score on a standardized test after completing the program;
- secondary school retention and graduation of participants, as measured by the percentage of participants re-enrolling at the next grade level or graduating with a regular high school diploma or, in the case of VUB, program retention or completion;
- completion of a rigorous secondary school curriculum (see box below), as measured by the percentage of current and prior participants expected to graduate who actually graduate with a regular high school diploma and complete a rigorous secondary school curriculum (inapplicable to VUB grantees);
- postsecondary enrollment of participants, as measured by the percentage of current and prior participants expected to graduate or, in the case of VUB, who have completed the VUB program and enrolled in an IHE within a specified timeframe; and

- completion of a postsecondary degree, as measured by the percentage of prior participants enrolled in an IHE within a specified timeframe who graduate with a degree within a specified period or, in the case of VUB, completion of postsecondary education.

Rigorous Secondary School Program of Study

A rigorous secondary school program of study is defined in regulations as a program of study that is

- recognized as such for the no-longer-funded Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) Program (HEA section 401A);
- an advanced or honors program established by the state;
- any program in which a student successfully completes at least four years of English; three years of mathematics, including algebra I and a higher-level class; three years of science, including one year each of at least two of the following courses: biology, chemistry, and physics; three years of social studies; and one year of a language other than English;
- a program identified by a state-level partnership that is recognized by the no-longer-funded State Scholars Initiative;
- any program for a student who completes at least two courses from an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program and receives a score of a “4” or higher on the examinations for at least two of those courses; or
- any program for a student who completes at least two Advanced Placement (AP) courses and receives a score of “3” or higher on the AP exams for at least two of those courses.

TRIO Talent Search (TS) Program¹²

The TS program also has the aim of high school completion and postsecondary enrollment.

It encourages students to complete high school and enroll in postsecondary education; helps students apply for student financial assistance; and encourages older individuals who have not completed secondary or postsecondary education to enter, or re-enter, and complete such programs.

Eligible Recipients

Grants or contracts are available to institutions of higher education (IHEs); public and private agencies and organizations, including community-based organizations (CBOs) with experience in serving disadvantaged youth;¹³ secondary schools;¹⁴ and combinations of such institutions, agencies, and organizations.

Program Participants

All participants must have completed five years of elementary education or be at least 11 years of age but not more than 27 years of age, unless the age and grade limitation defeats the purpose of the program. Individuals over 27 may participate if they cannot be served by an area Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) grantee. At least two-thirds of the program participants must be low-income, first-generation college students. For each new grant competition after 2010, the secretary identifies the minimum number of participants and the minimum and maximum grant award amounts in the *Federal Register* notice inviting applications.¹⁵

Program Intensity and Activities

Grantees must provide course selection advice and assistance, assistance in preparing for college entrance examinations, assistance in completing college admission applications, information on student financial aid opportunities, assistance in completing financial aid applications, and guidance on and assistance in methods for achieving a secondary school diploma or an equivalent or postsecondary education. Because TS is a less intensive program than UB, grantees need only provide connections to tutoring and connections to services designed to improve financial and economic literacy. The list of required services, as amended by the HEOA, requires TS grantees to provide a fuller range of services and more intensive services than prior to the HEOA. The average cost per TS participant increased from about \$393 in FY2008–FY2010 to \$434 in FY2011, the first year of a new grant cycle under the HEOA. Examples of permissible activities are exposure to cultural events, academic programs not usually available to disadvantaged students, mentoring programs, tutoring, counseling, exposure to careers or higher education, and related programs and activities designed specifically for special populations.¹⁶ Program regulations permit grantees to pay for tuition, transportation, meals, and, if necessary, lodging, for participants and staff in limited situations because TS is designed as a low cost per participant program. Under limited circumstances, program regulations allow the TS grantees to pay participant