



DECISION INFORMATION
RESOURCES, INC.

Description of Today's TRIO Programs and Proposing Options for Future Outcome Evaluations

Supporting Statement

Part B: Description of Statistical Methodology

July 2026

Content



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Part B. Description of Statistical Methodology..... 1

B.1 Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods..... 1

B.2 Procedures for Collection of Information..... 2

B.3 Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Address Nonresponse..... 3

B.4 Tests of Procedures and Methods..... 3

B.5 Individuals Responsible for Study Design and Performance..... 4

Part B Optional Exhibits..... 5

Exhibit

S

Exhibit B.1. Estimated Universe of TRIO Grantees (2024–25 Project Year)..... 1

Exhibit B.2. Organizations and Individuals Involved in the Study..... 4

Exhibit B.3. Planned Data Collection Schedule..... 5

Exhibit B.4. Summary of Respondent Contact and Follow-Up Procedures..... 5

Part B. Description of Statistical Methodology

The National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), within IES, is responsible for conducting evaluations to provide policymakers and practitioners with reliable evidence on the implementation and effectiveness of education programs. IES is authorized to collect data for research and evaluation purposes under the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA), Title I, Part E, Section 183 (20 U.S.C. §9573). A new data collection, the subject of this information collection request, will consist of a web-based survey collecting data from all grantees across seven TRIO programs. They will be asked about services provided; participation intensity and costs for each service; monitoring program implementation and interim progress; and screening and selection of participants and capacity constraints. The survey will be conducted in 2026 and repeated in 2028.

B.1 Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods

Describe (including a numerical estimate) the potential respondent universe and any sampling or other respondent selection method to be used. Data on the number of entities (e.g., establishments, State and local government units, households, or persons) in the universe covered by the collection and in the corresponding sample are to be provided in tabular form for the universe as a whole and for each of the strata in the proposed sample. Indicate expected response rates for the collection as a whole. If the collection had been conducted previously, include the actual response rate achieved during the last collection.

The respondent universe for each survey round is all current grantees operating one or more of the seven TRIO programs included in this study (Educational Opportunity Centers; Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement (McNair); Talent Search; Upward Bound; Upward Bound Math-Science; Veterans Upward Bound; and Student Support Services). Grantees are included in the sample if they are operating in the project year covered by the survey (2024-25 grant year for the 2026 survey and/or the most recent grant year for the 2028 survey). IES will obtain a list of project directors for each grant from the TRIO Office. The project director is the person who has the primary responsibility for overseeing the TRIO grant program. See Exhibit B.1 for estimated counts of TRIO grantees for Round 1 (2024-2025 project year). For current planning purposes, the estimated count of TRIO grantees for Round 2 (2027-2028 project year) will be similar to current counts, totaling approximately 3,400.

The grantee survey will be a census survey and therefore will not involve sampling.

Exhibit B.1. Estimated Universe of TRIO Grantees (2024–25 Project Year)

TRIO program	Estimated number of grantees
Talent Search (TS)	545
Upward Bound (UB)	1,026
Upward Bound Math-Science (UBMS)	251
Veterans Upward Bound (VUB)	68
Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC)	179
Student Support Services (SSS)	1,156
Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement (McNair)	216
Total (7 programs)	3,441

B.2 Procedures for Collection of Information

Describe the procedures for the collection of information including:

- *Statistical methodology for stratification and sample selection;*
- *Estimation procedure;*
- *Degree of accuracy needed for the purpose described in the justification;*
- *Unusual problems requiring specialized sampling procedures; and,*
- *Any use of periodic (less frequent than annual) data collection cycles to reduce burden.*

The grantee survey will be administered using a Web-only mode throughout the data collection period. The primary contact person will be the project director for each grant. The protocols for this data collection are as follows:

- Advance (or prenotification) email (grant project directors). We will begin data collection with a prenotification email sent from the TRIO office to all grant project directors. This email will explain the purpose of the study and notify them that the study team will be contacting them soon to complete a survey.
- E-mailed invitation. One week after the prenotification email is sent, we will e-mail survey invitations that include unique links to access the survey.
- E-mail reminders. The invitation will be followed by periodic e-mail reminders throughout the data collection period.
- Telephone reminders. Interviewing staff will call nonresponding grantees and will remind them to complete the survey. Telephone reminders will begin around week 8.

B.2.1 Sample Selection

The collection will invite all active TRIO grantees in the universe for each of the seven TRIO programs. Grantee project directors are the primary point of contact, and the survey is designed to allow collaboration or multiple respondents per grantee as needed.

B.2.2 Estimation Procedures

Analyses are planned to be descriptive, producing national- and program-level summaries of services offered, participation intensity and costs for each service, and monitoring program implementation and interim progress. Because a census approach is planned, estimates will generally be computed directly from respondent data.

B.2.3 Degree of Accuracy Needed for the Purpose Described

The purpose of this collection is to provide a comprehensive descriptive portrait of TRIO program operations. A census approach is intended to maximize the precision and utility of descriptive estimates for each TRIO program and for policy-relevant distinctions such as grantee type and target population.

B.2.4 Unusual Problems Requiring Specialized Sampling Procedures

No unusual sampling problems or specialized sampling procedures are anticipated because the collection is a census of grantees rather than a sample survey.

B.2.5 Use of Periodic (Less Frequent than Annual) Data Collection Cycles to Reduce Burden

The collection is administered twice (2026 and 2028) rather than annually to balance the need for updated information with respondent burden. To the extent possible for Round 2, the team plans to pre-populate responses from Round 1 for grantees whose items remain unchanged and ask them to confirm or update, reducing burden and facilitating longitudinal comparisons.

B.3 Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Address Nonresponse

Describe methods to maximize response rates and to deal with issues of non-response. The accuracy and reliability of information collected must be shown to be adequate for intended uses. For collections based on sampling, a special justification must be provided for any collection that will not yield "reliable" data that can be generalized to the universe studied.

B.3.1 Maximizing Response Rates

The data collection plan describes a multi-pronged strategy to maximize response rates, including:

- **Advance notification** to grantees sent by the TRIO Program Office to legitimize the effort.
- **Personalized email invitations** with individualized links to the web survey. The email addresses will be email addresses provided by the TRIO office for the points of contact for each grantee.
- **Email reminders:** reminder emails sent periodically to nonresponders and partial responders during the data collection period.
- **Telephone prompting** beginning after approximately 8 weeks.
- **Respondent support** via a study-specific online inquiry form linked in emails and available on survey screens. Respondents will also have access to a list of frequently asked questions and answers (FAQs) and a PDF version of the survey to assist them in compiling the necessary information to complete the survey. The links to these documents will be included in emails and on survey screens.
- **Incentive:** a \$50 electronic gift card upon completion

The programmed web instrument also incorporates web-survey design features intended to reduce breakoffs and missing data (e.g., save-and-return functionality and prompts that ask respondents to confirm intentional skips). The instrument is designed to allow multiple respondents if collaboration with others is needed. In addition, the web survey can be completed on a computer or mobile device, allowing respondents to complete at a time and method that is convenient for them.

B.3.2 Nonresponse

This data collection has a goal of 80% response rate among all grantees; however, given the general decline in survey response rates over time (Meyer, et al., 2015), we anticipate a response rate in the range of 50-60%. If the unit-level response rate falls below 80%, the study team will assess whether survey response rates vary systematically across key characteristics of TRIO grantees (e.g., program type, geographic region).

B.4 Tests of Procedures and Methods

Describe any tests of procedures or methods to be undertaken. Testing is encouraged as an effective means of refining collections of information to minimize burden and improve utility. Tests must be approved if they call for answers to identical questions from 10 or more respondents. A proposed test or set of tests may be submitted for approval separately or in combination with the main collection of information.

B.4.1 Expert Advisory Panel

In February 2026, we convened an expert advisory panel (EAP) of postsecondary education and TRIO researchers and practitioners. The EAP provided input on the data collection procedures and instruments under development for this study. The list of EAP members can be found in Part A, Exhibit A.2.

B.4.2 Testing of the Data Collection Instruments

During the 60-day public comment period, the study team conducted a focus group with two individuals and pre-tested the survey instrument with nine individuals, all of whom are representative of the respondent population (TRIO grantees). Feedback from the focus group was used to inform the presentation of the series of questions collecting information on costs of services, which was then applied to the version of the survey used for pre-testing. After pre-testing, the team reviewed the feedback and made revisions to clarify instructions; clarify survey item wording and response options; and update skip logic based on program type. The team also calculated the average response time needed for each section and updated the estimated burden accordingly.

B.5 Individuals Responsible for Study Design and Performance

Provide the name and telephone number of individuals consulted on statistical aspects of the design and the name of the agency unit, contractor(s), grantee(s), or other person(s) who will actually collect and/or analyze the information for the agency.

In February 2026, the study team convened an expert advisory panel (EAP) of postsecondary education and TRIO researchers and practitioners. The team has also engaged a subject matter expert (SME), Eric Bettinger. The EAP and SME provided input on the data collection procedures and instruments under development for this study. The list of EAP members can be found in Part A, Exhibit A.2. No individuals outside of the contractor were consulted on statistical aspects of the design.

Decision Information Resources, Inc. (DIR) is the contractor for IES, and Mathematica is subcontractor to DIR. Contact information for the contractor that will collect and analyze the survey information is:

Decision Information Resources
24 Greenway Plaza, Suite 1050
Houston, Texas 77046
Phone: 713-650-1425

The structure of key staff is detailed in Exhibit B.2.

Exhibit B.2. Organizations and Individuals Involved in the Study

Responsibility	Organization	Contact name	Telephone Number
Contracting Officer's Representative	IES	Diana Epstein	(202) 245-8117
Project Director	DIR	Carol Pistorino	(408) 230-6513
Project Manager	DIR	Nicole Machata	(314) 323-9541
Data & Analytics Lead	DIR	Joy Kang	(281) 387-0167
Principal Investigator	Mathematica	Jill Constantine	(609) 716-4391
Study Lead	Mathematica	Whitney Kozakowski	(202) 838-3722

Part B Optional Exhibits

The exhibits below summarize key elements of the data collection design described in Part B. Consistent with prior IES information collection requests, these exhibits do not introduce new data collection activities and are intended to present selected information in a concise, tabular format.

Exhibit B.3. Planned Data Collection Schedule

This exhibit summarizes the timing, frequency, and reference periods for the two planned survey administrations.

Survey round	Planned administration year	Reference period	Respondent universe	Data collection mode
Round 1	2026	Program year 2024-25	All active TRIO grantees operating one or more of the seven TRIO programs	Web-based survey
Round 2	2028	Most recently completed TRIO project/grant year at the time of administration	Returning Round 1 grantees and any newly funded TRIO grantees awarded between survey rounds	Web-based survey

Note: To the extent possible for the second administration, responses from Round 1 may be pre-populated for grantees whose circumstances have not changed, with respondents asked to review and update information as needed. This approach is intended to reduce respondent burden and support longitudinal consistency.

Exhibit B.4. Summary of Respondent Contact and Follow-Up Procedures

This exhibit provides a high-level overview of the planned contact, reminder, and follow-up procedures that will be used to support participation in this census survey of TRIO grantees.

Contact activity	Description
Advance notification	Advance communication informing grantees of the upcoming survey, its purpose, and its importance for ED and IES, ideally distributed by the TRIO Program Office
Survey invitation	Personalized email invitation containing a unique link to the web-based survey
Email reminders	Periodic reminder emails to nonrespondents and partial respondents during the field period
Telephone follow-up	Telephone prompting of nonrespondents later in the data collection period, when contact information is available
Respondent assistance	Study online inquiry form available throughout the field period to address questions or technical issues. Respondents will also have access to a list of frequently asked questions and answers (FAQs) and a PDF version of the survey to assist them in compiling the necessary information to complete the survey.
Incentive	\$50 electronic gift card provided upon survey completion

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References

Meyer, B., Mok, W., and Sullivan, J. (2015). Household Surveys in Crisis. *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 29 (4): 199–226. DOI: 10.1257/jep.29.4.199