

## Day 8: The TRIO Onboarding Foundation Every New Staff Member Needs

Before a new TRIO staff member learns the database, sees their first caseload, or dives into advising or recruitment, they need a clear understanding of the federal framework they are entering. Strong onboarding begins with giving staff the right documents from day one, not months after they start. These three universal documents should be included in every TRIO onboarding plan, regardless of the program a staff member supports. These are the first tools every TRIO employee should receive.

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### **1. TRIO Program Regulations**

These are the official federal regulations that govern each TRIO program. They define the purpose of the program, participant eligibility, required services, prohibited activities, allowable costs, and the expectations ED uses to evaluate your project.

Every staff member needs to understand what the law requires. Directors rely on these rules daily, but advisors, coordinators, and tutors also make program-impacting decisions. When staff understand the regulations, they make better decisions, understand why specific procedures matter, and help protect the project from unnecessary risk.

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### **2. TRIO Definitions and Acronyms**

TRIO has its own language. From APR to EDGAR to continuation funding and institutional match, this definitions guide introduces new staff to the vocabulary and core concepts used across all TRIO programs.

This resource helps staff understand conversations, policies, and compliance requirements without confusion. It shortens their learning curve and gives them confidence as they begin supporting participants and documenting services.

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### **3. Statutory Definitions of Low-Income and First-Generation College Student Status**

Eligibility is one of the most critical compliance areas in TRIO. These statutory definitions explain exactly how low-income status and first-generation college student status must be determined and documented under federal law.

New staff need these definitions early. They shape intake, documentation, advising, and internal file reviews. When your team understands the law, you avoid misclassifying participants and ensure every file withstands monitoring or audit review.

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**You can absolutely use these tools on your own.**

Sharing these three documents with your new hires is the simplest way to strengthen your onboarding immediately. If you already have a new staff member, it is not too late. Review these together and add them to your internal onboarding folder.

**And if you want help building a complete onboarding system, NEC is here when you need us.**

We can help create a complete onboarding package for your TRIO Project, train your staff, or walk your team through any of these federal requirements.

More onboarding resources will be available on **Day 9 and Day 10**, so stay tuned. We are building this toolkit step by step, so you end the year ready for a strong start.

If you need support now, you can learn more about our TRIO professional development services here:

<https://www.nosotrosedu.org/professional-development> or email us at [info@nosotrosedu.org](mailto:info@nosotrosedu.org)