



## **Day 5 of the 12 Days of TRIO: Fiscal Friday**

It's Fiscal Friday, friends, and if there was ever a day to pour a strong coffee and steady your nerves, this is the one. The Department of Education (ED) has recently asked many TRIO Directors and fiscal teams to update or justify their budgets, so today's gifts are meant to save you from guesswork and gray hairs. And trust me, nothing says "holiday spirit" like a clean budget spreadsheet and a compliant Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) calculation.

Yesterday, on Day 4, we focused on *foundational* ED financial training. Today, we build on that foundation with practical, immediately usable resources you can open right now and share with your fiscal office. These are the essentials every TRIO project should keep within reach, especially as you prepare budget revisions, no-cost extensions, or carryover requests.

Here are your **Fiscal Friday Gifts**:

### **Gift 1: OMB Quick Reference Sheet**

A one-stop refresher on the Uniform Guidance sections you rely on most, including internal controls, revision of budgets, prior approval, allowability rules, and cost principles. If your fiscal team is unsure what 2 CFR 200 says, this sheet keeps the conversation grounded.

### **Gift 2: ED's Key Financial Management Requirements (GAN Enclosure 1)**

This is the big one. ED now includes this in your GAN to spotlight the areas where grantees make the most mistakes, including internal controls, personnel documentation, and procurement. It is *not* a new regulation, but ED is sending a clear message: fiscal stewardship is non-negotiable.

### **Gift 3: TRIO-Specific Quick Reference for Directors**

A simplified breakdown of the new GAN enclosure, written specifically for TRIO. It's perfect to forward to your team when you need everyone on the same page about allowability, drawdown timing, indirect costs, or procurement standards.

### **Gift 4: Direct vs. Indirect Costs Guidance for TRIO**

This resource clears up the confusion between what belongs in your direct cost lines and what belongs in indirect. It includes excellent TRIO-specific examples for personnel, travel, supplies, participant support, evaluation, and administrative costs.

#### **Gift 5: MTDC and the 8% Training Rate Explainer**

If your fiscal team still thinks TRIO uses your Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA), bless their hearts. This explainer explains precisely how the 8% MTDC rule works and why TRIO always uses MTDC as defined in 2 CFR §200.68, regardless of your NICRA.

#### **Gift 6: Participant Support Costs, Travel, and Transportation Rules**

This is one Directors should bookmark. It clarifies what student transportation costs can be charged as participant support, what cannot, and what documentation ED expects.

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### **Why Fiscal Friday Matters**

If there is one thing TRIO history has taught us, it is this: strong fiscal management protects your Project, your staff, and your Participants. Compliance is not glamorous, but it is absolutely part of the backbone of a well-run TRIO program.

And in the spirit of “telling it like it is,” I’ll say this plainly, Lisa-style, with a smile:

**Most ED findings come from budgeting, drawdowns, internal controls, and misclassified costs.** These resources will help you stay ahead of issues before they ever appear in a site visit report.

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### **Thinking Ahead to the New Year**

If you want your fiscal house in order before the new year picks up speed, this is the perfect moment to tighten up your internal processes, clear out any lingering budget questions, and make sure your documentation tells the same story your numbers do. A little preparation now saves a whole lot of stress later.

If you need additional support, that’s exactly why we offer our **Budget Management Technical Assistance Services**, designed to guide you through the more detailed fiscal areas in a way that strengthens your team’s confidence rather than adding stress.

Learn more or schedule a consult here:

**<https://www.nosotroedu.org/budget-management-technical-assistance>**