

## **Day 7: The 12 Days of TRIO** **Participant File Checklists for Every TRIO Program**

Today's gift is a workhorse, not a show pony, and honestly, every TRIO Project should be using it year-round. These **Participant File Review Checklists**, one for each TRIO program, are the same tools NEC uses when we conduct our **Virtual Compliance Assessments**.

And yes, they are different from the **Day 2 gifts**.

- **Day 2** gave you the ***Order of Forms*** for building and organizing paper or digital participant files.
- **Day 7** gives you the ***checklist we use to audit those files*** to determine whether the content is compliant, complete, and easy to locate.

In other words, Day 2 helps you **set up the house**, and Day 7 helps you **inspect the foundation**.

If you want to stay ready for internal or external compliance assessments, site visits, or unexpected "can you pull that for me?" requests from leadership, the upcoming new year is the time to tighten things up. A TRIO Project should be able to find every required document in each Participant file within seconds, not minutes.

### **Why these checklists matter**

These are the same checklists we use when assessing files for:

- [EOC](#)
- [McNair](#)
- [SSS](#)
- [Talent Search](#)
- [UB/UBMS](#)
- [VUB](#)

Each one walks through eligibility, annual services, objective documentation, and any federal-program overlap. If something is missing, these checklists uncover it fast.

### **What each TRIO Project should do**

Set aside half a day and run a **5 to 10 percent self-audit** of your Participant files, using the checklist for your TRIO Project. Do this whether your files are paper, digital, or somewhere in the "we're trying our best" zone. If you cannot locate a required document quickly, that is your warning sign.

This is exactly why Day 2 and Day 7 were paired together:

Day 2 organizes the files.

Day 7 tests whether they hold up.

A Project that runs these quick spot audits every quarter rarely faces surprises.

### **Want help?**

You can absolutely use these checklists on your own and strengthen your internal documentation practices. Or, if you'd prefer an outside eye, NEC can audit just your Participant files or conduct a full **Virtual Compliance Assessment** covering your administrative, programmatic, fiscal, and evaluation operations.

Details are here:

<https://www.nosotro.edu.org/compliance-assessments>

As we head toward a new year, this is one of the quickest ways to boost your Project's readiness. A solid Participant file is still the backbone of TRIO compliance, no matter how many years go by. And doing this work now will save you headaches later, trust me.