

A Word About Advocacy

Important Notes on Advocacy

- The Bill of Rights guarantees the right to free speech.
- Simply providing information to legislators about your students and program is NOT lobbying and, therefore, is permissible.
 - Remember, “lobbying” is advocating for a certain position on a piece of legislation.
- Be sure to use personal resources – and not TRIO grant funds – in lobbying or political activity.

First Amendment

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to *petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*”



Nine Commandments of TRIO Advocacy

1. Providing information (as opposed to advocating for a specific position) is not lobbying and is not prohibited. You can and should send information to your elected representatives on your TRIO program, students and graduates on a regular basis.

2. Continue to exercise those rights of free speech which are guaranteed to you as an American citizen by our Bill of Rights.

3. However, be careful not to use any federal funds to advocate on behalf of TRIO or any other government program.

4. You may write to your Senator or Representatives on your program's stationary -- since the cost is very small.

5. If you are writing to encourage others to act on behalf of TRIO, you should not use program stationary. Many advocates have found it helpful to have organized groups (student groups, alumni, parent organizations) send letters encouraging action on behalf of TRIO. Their stationary should be printed with non-federal funds. Postage should also be paid for with non-federal funds.

6. You may encourage students and parents to write to a Member of Congress but do not make writing such a letter a mandatory assignment. Moreover, you cannot condition the receipt of services on an individual's participation in letter writing or other advocacy activity.

7. If your salary is wholly supported by federal funds, you should be certain not to engage in advocacy while you are being paid. Do so only on days for which you have requested leave, after regular working hours, during your lunch hour, etc. Institutional time sheets should reflect this allocation.

8. If you use a phone to contact an elected representative's Washington office, or send faxes to that office, be sure that those long-distance charges are not charged to your federal grant. Charge them to a personal phone or credit card or reimburse your institutional account for these charges.

9. You can make political contributions to friends of TRIO and other friends of education. Such contributions must come from your personal funds. Every contribution of \$100 or more should be by check.