

NACAC Opposes President's Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Request

NACAC's [vision](#) is that the transformative power of postsecondary education is available to all who seek it. To get there, we need leaders and policymakers who recognize [higher education as the public good](#) that it is.

The FY 2026 President's [topline budget request](#) is devastating for students who rely on federal financial aid to pursue their higher education goals. By proposing the elimination or drastic reduction of programs like TRIO, GEAR UP, Federal Work-Study, SEOG, and CCAMPIS, this budget disregards the barriers faced by low-income, first-generation, parenting, and migrant students — many of whom depend on these resources not just to attend college, but to succeed once there.

The president's budget request sends a clear and troubling message: that supporting students from historically underserved communities is no longer a federal priority. Education is not a private luxury; it is a public good that benefits us all. Investing in students means investing in stronger communities, a resilient economy, and a more equitable society.

Disinvestment in financial aid and student support programs does not just harm individuals — it undermines our collective future. The return on public investment in education extends far beyond the classroom.

Overview of the FY 2026 Proposal

On May 2, 2025, the White House Office of Management and Budget released its topline “skinny budget” for fiscal year 2026. The proposal reflects a significant realignment of federal education funding, with a \$12 billion (15.3 percent) cut to the U.S. Department of Education, reducing its overall discretionary budget to \$66.7 billion. The stated intent is to reduce the federal role in education, return decision-making to the states, and eliminate programs the administration claims are outdated or ideologically driven.

Several federal programs designed to support college access, affordability, and student success are proposed for elimination or significant reductions:

TRIO and GEAR UP — Cut by \$1.579 billion and eliminated.

Federal Work-Study (FWS) — Cut by \$980 million.

Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG): Cut by \$910 million and eliminated.

Migrant Education Programs: Cut by \$428 million and eliminated.

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) and Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need: Cut by \$195 million.

Strengthening Institutions Program: Cut by \$112 million.

Teacher Quality Partnerships: Cut by \$70 million and eliminated.

Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS): Cut by \$75 million and eliminated.

Howard University: Cut by \$64 million.

The budget also eliminates Title III (English Language Acquisition), criticizes college access programs as unnecessary, and frames many federal supports as drivers of ideological or divisive content.

Implications for NACAC Members

If enacted, this budget would significantly undermine federal support for programs that promote college access, readiness, and affordability — particularly for historically underserved students, including low-income, first-generation, multilingual, and parenting students. These proposals represent not only a funding cut but a fundamental departure from longstanding commitments to educational equity.

NACAC will continue to advocate for federal investments that uphold the promise of higher education for all students. We urge policymakers to reject this disinvestment and affirm that expanding opportunity remains a national priority.