



**STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**  
**STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
**2024-2025**



# CONTACTS

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### **Address:**

TRiO at Gulf Coast State College  
5230 West Highway 98  
Panama City, FL 32401  
**Student Union West, 1st Floor**

### **TRiO Hours:**

Monday & Wednesday 8:00am – 7:00pm  
Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday 8:00am – 4:00pm



Dear Student,

**Welcome to TRIO Student Support Services!** We are absolutely thrilled to have you join our community. As the Associate Director of TRIO SSS, I'm genuinely excited to be part of your academic journey and to support you every step of the way.

TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) is here to provide comprehensive support to first-generation college students, low-income students, and students with disabilities. Our mission is to help you succeed academically and grow personally and professionally. We offer a variety of services to meet your needs, including academic advising and tutoring, financial literacy and assistance, career and transfer school preparation, personal and social development, and cultural enrichment and campus engagement.

Our dedicated staff and tutors are ready to help you with your coursework, develop effective study habits, and stay on track for graduation. We also offer workshops and one-on-one counseling to guide you through financial aid processes, manage your budget, and find scholarships. Additionally, we're here to help you with career exploration, resume writing, interview skills, and preparing for graduate school.

We believe in your potential and are committed to providing the resources and support you need to thrive. We encourage you to take full advantage of the services we offer and to reach out to us with any questions or for additional support. We're here to make sure this is a successful and rewarding year for you.

Welcome to TRIO Student Support Services! We can't wait to see what you accomplish.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kendra Kizziah". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Associate Director of TRIO Student Support Services  
Gulf Coast State College  
kkizziah@gulfcoast.edu 850.913.2937

# What is the TRiO Student Support Services Program?



TRiO Student Support Services (SSS) is dedicated to empowering students to achieve their academic and personal goals. Our comprehensive program offers personalized academic support, including tutoring and study skills workshops, as well as financial aid assistance to help navigate funding opportunities. We provide personal and career counseling to guide students through challenges and plan their futures. Through cultural enrichment activities and mentoring, SSS fosters a supportive community that inspires success and ensures that every student has the resources and encouragement needed to thrive in college and beyond.

## Academic Services

TRiO SSS provides a variety of FREE academic services, including:

- Tutoring
- Individualized academic counseling
- Access to the TRiO scholarships
- Career and college exploration
- Assistance with college entrance exam registration and preparation
- Educational/Cultural field trips
- Tours of colleges and universities
- Assistance with University admissions applications
- Assistance with financial aid applications
- Assistance with scholarship applications
- Access to the SSS Textbook Lending Library

## Academic Success Plan & Advice on Course Selection

During the fall and spring semesters, All SSS participants will fill out an Academic Success Plan (ASP). This plan is a personalized strategy designed to help students achieve their educational goals and overcome any academic challenges that students may face. TRiO SSS will provide students with advice and assistance in postsecondary course selection and address any unmet academic need. Our knowledgeable staff can assist with planning your academic map from the time you start until you finish your degree with the goal of saving you time and money.

## Filling out the FAFSA

It is TRiO SSS's goal to have 100% of our students fill out the Federal Financial Aid application. It is important that students do not miss out on possible federal and state financial assistance simply because they do not apply. Our staff is trained to guide students through the application process and provide support as needed. Additionally, TRiO SSS offers assistance in finding and applying for both public and private scholarships to help make college more affordable.

## Financial Literacy

TRiO will offer 4 financial literacy workshops throughout the academic year that will cover topics such as money management, paying for college, credit and debt management, and financial planning. Each student should attend one workshop a semester for the first 4 semesters that you are here at the college. These workshops are geared to assist TRiO SSS participants to promote economic stability, prevent future financial problems, empower financial decision-making, and enhance one's quality of life.



## Tutoring

College tutoring is essential for academic success, providing personalized support to help you master challenging subjects and improve your study skills. Visiting the TRIO tutoring lab offers access to knowledgeable tutors who can explain difficult concepts, assist with homework, and prepare you for exams. This dedicated space fosters a productive learning environment where you can receive the guidance you need to excel in your courses. Regular use of the TRIO tutoring lab can boost your confidence, enhance your understanding, and contribute significantly to your academic achievements.

Our tutoring lab is open from 8:00am-7:00pm Monday and Wednesday and 8:00am-4:00pm Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday to assist students with their tutoring needs.

## Transfer Assistance

TRIO staff are dedicated to assisting students in transferring to a 4-year university. They offer comprehensive support in filling out applications, ensuring you meet all requirements and deadlines. Additionally, they help you find and apply for scholarships to ease the financial burden. TRIO staff also organize campus visits, giving you a firsthand experience of potential universities and helping you make an informed decision. With their guidance, the transfer process becomes smoother and more manageable, setting you up for success in your continued education.

## Transfer Trips

Transfer trips are a unique way for TRIO Student Support Services to expose students to different college experiences. This is a free services to our students who wish to walk the campus and experience the unique culture of the surrounding area. These trips are only for active TRiO SSS participants who have a completed ASP on file. Emergency medical release forms MUST BE SIGNED AND ON FILE prior to departure from campus. Students must have a G.P.A of 2.0 or above and have the approval of the Dean of Student Life to travel with TRIO SSS. Non-enrolled participants who are friends or relatives are not permitted to accompany or meet the group at any time during the trip.

## TRIO Leadership Society

Joining the TRIO SSS Leadership Society can be a transformative experience for a college student. You'll develop essential skills like leadership, communication, and teamwork through workshops and real-world projects, and you'll have the chance to network with peers and professionals, opening doors to internships and job opportunities. Membership also boosts your resume, showcasing your commitment to growth, and grants you access to exclusive events and guest speakers. Participate in meaningful service projects that impact your community, build your confidence, and prepare for future leadership roles. Investing in a Leadership Society is an investment in your future—unlock your full potential today!

## Career and College Majors

TRIO staff provide invaluable support through career counseling and assistance in selecting a college major. They help you explore various career paths, understand the job market, and align your interests and strengths with potential careers. Additionally, they guide you in choosing a major that fits your career goals, ensuring that your academic journey is purposeful and fulfilling. With personalized advice and resources, TRIO staff empower you to make informed decisions about your education and future career.





## Acceptance into the Program

To join SSS, students must submit an application so we can determine eligibility and academic needs. Students who apply will then be notified of our acceptance decision (admitted, wait-listed, or ineligible) by phone and email within 3 business days of submission. Ineligible students will be referred to GCSC's Educational Opportunity Center for further assistance.

Admitted and wait-listed students will be scheduled for an in-person orientation with SSS staff to complete an Academic Success Plan, review our program's requirements, and discuss the services we provide. To maintain active status with SSS, students must engage in at least two services during each fall and spring semester. Admitted students who fail to adequately participate will be placed on our waitlist until they demonstrate satisfactory engagement. Wait-listed students who lack sufficient participation will be deemed ineligible for SSS services. **We only have 196 spots, so it is critical to actively take advantage of our services!**

## Active SSS Students

Participants are required to keep the TRiO staff informed of their academic progress regularly. This may include providing documentation such as financial aid verification, admissions applications, and notices regarding any academic challenges or concerns. Additionally, TRiO staff should be notified of any academic achievements and improvements in your studies. If you plan to withdraw or transfer from Gulf Coast State College, we ask that you inform us so that we can update your records accordingly.

To remain an active participant in TRiO Student Support Services, students must complete the following requirements:

1. Financial Aid Application
  - Submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) annually by March 1st. The application can be found at [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov).
2. Financial Literacy Workshop
  - Complete the four-part Financial Literacy Online Workshop, which is accessible through your TRiO Community Group portal in Canvas. Submission of all four evaluations is required as proof of completion. This is typically expected within the first year of enrollment in TRiO Student Support Services.
3. Academic Advising Sessions
  - Attend two academic advising sessions with TRiO each fall and spring semester:
    - First Session: Complete your Academic Success Plan with TRiO Student Support Services staff.
    - Second Session: Meet with TRiO staff for academic advising, career counseling, financial aid inquiries, financial literacy guidance, or transfer advising, or attend academic tutoring.
  - Additional Engagement
    - Meeting with Student Support Services staff for academic advising, career counseling, financial aid questions, financial literacy concerns, transfer advising.
    - Academic tutoring
    - Attend transfer trips to area 4-year universities
    - Participate in workshops
    - Join TRiO Society
    - Attend cultural trips with TRiO Student Support Services
    - Attend TRiO Student Support Services sponsored events like TRiO Family Movie Night or Break for Breakfast

*Please note: These are the minimum participation requirements to maintain eligibility in TRiO Student Support Services. We encourage more frequent engagement so that we can better support your academic and personal development.*

# Educational Release Form



*This form grants permission for the release of educational records and information between Bay Education Foundation's Take Stock in Children (TSIC) and the TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) Program at Gulf Coast State College. The information will be used to support the student's educational and personal development.*

## Student Information:

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Information to be Released:

The following types of information may be shared between TSIC and SSS:

1. Student Identification Information (excluding Social Security Numbers)
2. Academic Records
3. Program Participation
4. Financial Information
5. Support Services
6. Student Progress

## Duration of Release:

This authorization is effective from the date of signature until graduation at GCSC. The student or parent/guardian may revoke this authorization at any time by providing written notice to both TSIC and SSS.

## Confidentiality:

All information shared will be handled with the highest level of confidentiality and used solely for the purpose stated above. Both parties agree to comply with all applicable laws and regulations regarding the privacy and protection of student information, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

## Consent:

**I, the undersigned, authorize Bay Education Foundation's Take Stock in Children and the TRIO Student Support Services Program at GCSC to share the specified educational records and information. I understand that this consent is voluntary and can be revoked at any time with written notice.**

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(if student is under 18)

## Contact Information:

Bay Education Foundation  
Take Stock in Children  
1311 Balboa Ave  
Panama City, FL 32401  
850-757-4111  
BayEdFoundation@Bay.K12.FL.us

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# **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES** **HANDBOOK FOR** **PARTICIPANTS** **2024-2025**