



UPWARD BOUND
HANDBOOK FOR
2025-2026

(09/01/2025-08/31/2026)

Dear TRiO Upward Bound Participants & Parents,



It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to participate in Gulf Coast State College's TRiO Upward Bound (UB) program! Since the 1960s, UB has helped young men and women achieve their goals of completing high school, accessing higher education, and obtaining rewarding careers. With your help and involvement, we'll continue our rich tradition of success this schol year and for many more in the future.

We've prepared this handbook to provide information on how you can take advantage of the resources and opportunities available through our program. Participating in UB is a privilege, so we hope you're dedicated and committed toward everything we're planning this year to help you develop academically, socially, and personally!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kris Hatcher", is positioned above the printed name.

Kris Hatcher EdD
Director of TRiO

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- (2) We may not require you to attend or participate in any explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) that may be offered by our organization, and any participation by you in such activities must be purely voluntary.
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- (4) You may report violations of these protection, including any denials of services or benefits by an organization, by filing a written complaint with the U.S. Department of Education at BeneficiaryNoticeComplaints@ed.gov.

What is the TRiO Upward Bound (UB) Program?



UB is a federally funded TRiO program provided to GCSC by the U.S. Department of Education. Our UB program is specifically geared toward serving first-generation and limited-income rising 9th through graduating 12th graders at Bay High School, Rutherford High School, and Deane Bozeman School. Our services—which are provided free-of-charge to eligible students—help participants explore college and career opportunities, thereby preparing them to enter a higher education institution of their choice upon graduation from high school. Each academic year, UB participants attend mandatory monthly Saturday sessions where they are provided with information about colleges/universities, careers, study skills, admissions, financial aid, economic/financial literacy, and test preparation. We also provide cultural activities, academic advising, tutorial support, and interpersonal counseling. Each summer, UB hosts a six-week institute at GCSC's Panama City campus so participants can explore the college-going experience.

Please note: GCSC was awarded a Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Upward Bound (UB) grant by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) on June 8th, 2022. That award (P047A220200) runs from 09/01/2022 till 08/31/2027 and is budgeted to receive approximately \$297,601.00 annually. UB's program costs are 100% financed by federal money and all services are provided free-of-charge.

Services & Activities

UB provides a variety of services and activities, including:

- Tutoring
- Individualized academic counseling (e.g., course selection)
- Career and college exploration
- Help with entrance exam registration and preparation
- Educational field trips
- Tours of colleges and universities
- College/University admissions
- Assistance with financial aid applications
- Scholarship guidance
- Hands-on labs and workshops

Academic Year Component

During the school year, participants attend sessions at GCSC's Panama City campus at least one Saturday per month to receive supplemental instruction and tutorial activities in mathematics, science, language arts, foreign language, and study skills. Seminars on postsecondary educational opportunities, advising, mentoring, economic enrichment, and financial literacy are also provided throughout each academic year. In addition, UB contracts with faculty at Bay, Rutherford, Deane Bozeman so participants can receive academic advising services during school hours.

Summer Component

Each summer, UB hosts a six-week institute designed to expose participants to a variety of educational, cultural, and social experiences. Participants who attend the summer institute benefit from coursework, presentations, and lessons ranging from composition and literature, to mathematics, science, foreign language, and study skills. Mentoring, enrichment, and social skill activities are also offered throughout the institute. Interactive labs, seminars, and career guidance are provided in collaboration with GCSC faculty/staff as well.



Field Trips

UB field trips are off-campus learning experiences that enrich existing curriculum. Active UB participation is required from students to attend and supervision is provided by TRiO staff/chaperones. Informed consent and medical release forms must be submitted prior to departure. Participants who don't have required forms on file will not be allowed to travel. TRiO field trips are intended for program participants only, i.e., non-enrolled participants such as family or friends are not permitted to accompany or meet our group at any time during trips.

Stipends

Actively participating UB participants may be eligible to earn a monetary stipend at various points throughout the school year. Stipends will be issued according to parameters set forth by federal regulations and GCSC's Business Office.

For the academic year component, participants are eligible to earn a maximum of \$40 per month if they meet UB staff participation expectations. Participants are eligible to earn a stipend if they actively attend weekly afterschool tutoring or Saturday sessions, maintain required Grade Point Averages (GPA), arrive on-time for activities, and sign into attendance sheets.

For the summer component, participants are eligible to earn a maximum of \$15 per week if they proactively attend the Summer Institute.

Once stipend checks are issued and distributed, there will NOT be a second check issued if the original is lost. Please be responsible and do not lose your check!

Please note that UB's ability to provide stipends is based upon budgetary considerations. UB subsequently reserves the right to pause or withhold stipend issuance if our program does not have enough funding available.

Program Rules & Regulations

Attendance

1. UB Participants are expected to attend all of their high school classes every day, unless Bay District Schools excuses their absence. Failure to do so could result in Participant Warning, Suspension, or Dismissal status (see page 6).
2. UB Participants must attend at least one tutoring session if their GPA falls below a 2.70.
3. UB Participants must attend at least four Saturday sessions or weeknight workshops each year.
4. UB participants are **REQUIRED TO SIGN IN & OUT** of TRiO events or activities.
 - a. Absences will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the Director. Unexcused absences may result in participants not receiving their stipend. Excessive absences could result in dismissal from the program.
 - b. Reasons for absences must be reported to UB Staff prior to or immediately following a missed event or activity.
 - c. If you sign up for a program trip or activity, you are expected to attend. Emergencies that prevent attendance should be communicated to UB staff as soon as possible.



Behavior/Attitude

1. UB participants are expected to behave as mature and responsible young adults during all of our program's activities or events.
2. Disrespectful behavior towards TRiO staff, volunteers, GCSC employees, or other students is not allowed.
3. Fighting will not be tolerated and will result in immediate dismissal from the program.
4. Electronic devices (i.e. cell phone, iPod, laptop, camera, tablet, headphones, etc.) are not to be used unless specified by TRiO staff or an instructor.

Participant Progress

It is critical for UB participants to keep UB staff updated with their academic progress. Accordingly, participants may be asked to provide report cards, test scores, and notices of academic difficulties or concerns. TRiO staff should also be advised when students make academic strides or show improvement in their studies so we can celebrate such achievements!

Academic Status

Participant academic success is the measure by which TRiO staff are evaluated by the U.S. Department of Education. We subsequently expect our participants to earn no less than a 2.70 GPA each grading period. An overview of academic status categories and descriptions follow.

Academic Status Categories

| Grading Period GPA | Status in Program |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| ≥ 2.70 | Academic Success |
| 2.70 – 2.00 | Academic Notice |
| < 2.00 | Academic Probation |

Academic Success

Participants earning a 2.70 GPA or above are successfully meeting UB expectations and are considered to be in academic success status. Such participants are eligible to participate in all UB events and activities.

Academic Notice

Participants earning between a 2.70 and 2.00 GPA are placed on academic notice status. Such participants' GPA must improve in order to avoid slipping into academic probation status. Participants on academic notice are eligible to participate in UB events and activities at the Director's discretion.

Academic Probation

Earning less than a 2.00 GPA places a participant on academic probation, meaning they will not earn a stipend and may lose privileges (e.g., attending trips). Participants on academic probation are required to meet with UB staff to develop a plan for increasing their GPA the following grading period. A participant remaining on academic probation for two consecutive grading periods will have limited access to UB services.



Disciplinary Actions

Whenever necessary, TRiO staff will handle routine discipline issues by reinforcing behavior expectations—i.e., UB participants would be encouraged to not repeat their mistakes and turn such situations into learning experiences. However, any behavior, action, or activity that threatens directly or indirectly the physical or emotional safety, interests, and rights of an individual or group will never be tolerated under any circumstances. Such occurrences will result in disciplinary action, which may include suspension or dismissal from TRiO's UB program.

Participant Warning

If a participant does not comply with attendance or behavioral policies, they may be placed on warning. The Director will determine whether a student placed on warning is eligible for stipends or is allowed to participate in field trips and activities. If the problem in question persists or is severe, UB staff may take further action such as suspension or dismissal.

Participant Suspension

A participant may be temporarily suspended from participating with UB based upon the severity of their offense(s). Participants suspended from UB cannot receive stipends and are ineligible for activities, trips, or other privileges.

Non-exhaustive list of actions which may result in Suspension:

- Disrespectful conduct
- Misuse of electronics (i.e. cell phone, iPod, laptop, camera, tablet, including headphones, etc.)
- Use or possession of illegal substances / unlawful products
- Excessive tardiness
- Unexcused absences
- Non-compliance with staff instructions

Participant Dismissal

A participant will be dismissed from UB when the Director deems them unsuitable for program services due to lack of participation or commitment, unsatisfactory effort, disrespect, incorrigible offenses, or insubordination. Participants who are dismissed are ineligible for readmission into UB.

Non-exhaustive list of actions which may result in Dismissal:

- Fighting
- Harassment
- Stealing
- Indecent behavior (e.g., public display of affection or sexual behavior)
- Leaving campus or TRiO site without UB staff permission

Participant Safety

UB staff always keep participants' safety as our utmost priority. However, it is important to note the following safety information just in case:

- FSU Police Department = (850) 774-2705
- Panama City Police Department = (850) 872-3112
- Port St. Joe Police Department = (850) 227-9670
- Gulf County Sheriff's Office = (850) 227-1115
- Bay County Sheriff's Office = (850) 747-4700