

JOE MANCHIN III  
WEST VIRGINIA

SUITE 306  
HART BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510  
(202) 224-3954

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

COMMITTEES  
APPROPRIATIONS  
ARMED SERVICES  
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

May 19, 2022

The Honorable Miguel Cardona  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Secretary Cardona,

I write today to express my serious concerns regarding the delay in announcing the grant slate for Upward Bound (UB) awards this year. We are now twelve days out from the expiration of current funding. UB is one of eight Federal TRIO Programs managed by the Department of Education and provides critical academic support to students during the school year and over the summer to help prepare them for postsecondary education. It is unacceptable that programs in West Virginia are facing so much uncertainty that they may be cancelled altogether.

UB programs in West Virginia provide both educational and living options for students during the summer. For example, the West Virginia University (WVU) Institute of Technology has students live on campus for six weeks over the summer, where they can participate in classes and activities to prepare them for the next school year and build the skills they need to succeed in higher education. These experiences are invaluable for students who are interested in pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees, especially because Federal TRIO Programs are designed to support students who are low-income or come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Federal TRIO programs provide many students across the nation with the opportunity to pursue their dreams of going to college. In West Virginia, these programs are a lifeline for students who want to succeed in higher education, but may not have the opportunity to do so on their own. The Department of Education and the Office of Management and Budget should be doing their part to ensure these dreams can become a reality for students by judiciously announcing the award slate. This delay is causing significant harm not only to the programs, but the students who attend them. Current delays in getting these award notices out to potential awardees in West Virginia is incredibly problematic because current funding is set to end on May 31<sup>st</sup>, meaning these programs may not have the funds they need to provide services to students or pay instructors.

This not only provides uncertainty to these programs and employees, but creates additional stress and anxiety for students and families. At a time when youth mental health is at an all time low, stability and programs, such as the WVU Institute of Technology UB, provide the much-needed support students need. The United States Surgeon General released a report on youth mental

health citing that “one in three high school students and half of female students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, an overall increase of 40% from 2009.”<sup>1</sup> UB programs help provide hope for these students, and this continued uncertainty is causing untold harm to our students.

Delays like this harm students who rely on these programs, who already come from disadvantaged backgrounds. It is unacceptable that programs have come to accept these delays as part of the process and have become accustomed to warning students as early as April that the program they are planning their whole summer around may not happen after all. Applicants and awardees have done their part to get their applications in on time as required. Now, it is time for the Department of Education, in conjunction with the Office of Management and Budget, to do their part by sharing this highly anticipated announcement with programs nationwide.

I implore you to rapidly announce this funding and provide the certainty these students and programs deserve. I look forward to working with you to ensure that the Department of Education and Office of Management and Budget can do their part to support students in West Virginia who rely on Federal TRIO programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

---

Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator

CC: Shalanda Young, Director, Office of Management and Budget

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-youth-mental-health-advisory.pdf>