

**Alejandra Cardoso**

TRIO

Being a first generation Mexican-American college student, I have faced and overcome numerous challenges throughout my college education. Transitioning from a community college to a university was quite difficult for me. Right away, I sought help from the staff of the TRIO SSS program. They provided a tutor when I was struggling with one of my courses. They also encouraged, guided and mentored me. With their help and my hard work, I was able to conquer my challenges and graduate. Being part of the TRIO SSS program also exposed me to a variety of opportunities. It exposed me to learn more about graduate schools and their programs. I became intrigued as I learned more and led me to apply for a graduate program. I learned that the staff of the TRIO SSS program cared for my success, as long as I did. From that moment forward, I knew I could depend on the staff of the TRIO SSS program and conquer anything else in my path.

Being raised in a domestic Mexican culture, I believed women should stay at home, cook, clean, and raise children. However, my beliefs changed as I grew older. One day, my mother told me to never depend on a man and be independent. Till this day, I follow the concept she imprinted on me. So, as I became a young single mother I wanted to do something more with my life and decided to further my education and break my traditional cultural values. Thru my struggles and success, I have learned so much. I will take any opportunity to inspire others to pursue their dreams to the fullest because it is possible to achieve dreams. Our society is in need of our services and together we can make a difference to make positive contributions to our communities. Not only do I want to inspire others, but I also want to continue to be inspired by others, learn as much possible, and experience new things.

TRIO Projects

The Federal TRIO Programs (TRIO) are Federal outreach and student services programs designed to identify and provide services for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO includes eight programs targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to postbaccalaureate programs. TRIO also includes a training program for directors and staff of TRIO projects.

The recipients of the grants, depending on the specific program, are institutions of higher education, public and private agencies and organizations including community-based organizations with experience in serving disadvantaged youth and secondary schools. Combinations of such institutions, agencies, and organizations may also apply for grants. These entities plan, develop and carry out the services for students. While individual students are served by these entities, they may not apply for grants under these programs. Additionally, in order to be served by one of these programs, a student must be eligible to receive services and be accepted into a funded project that serves the institution or school that student is attending or the area in which the student lives.

TRIO