

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 18, 2017

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-1510

Dear Secretary DeVos:

As members respectively of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, we write to request that the Department of Education expeditiously release TRIO Upward Bound grants to successful applicants.

As you know, for more than 50 years the Upward Bound program has helped low-income and potential first-generation college students to succeed in higher education and in their careers. Across the country, more than 2,800 programs, including two in New Hampshire, provide invaluable academic support, mentoring services, and counseling guidance free of charge to nearly 800,000 students from middle school through college graduation. Granite State students from disadvantaged backgrounds have since 1965 relied on federally-funded Upward Bound services to help them through college and into successful careers.

However, the Department's current unprecedented delay in releasing grant funding for the next five years puts Upward Bound programs at risk all across the country. In New Hampshire, as in many other states, Upward Bound summer programs begin on June 1, but current grant funding expires on May 31. Upward Bound programs are exclusively funded by federal TRIO program dollars, so without certainty from the Department that funding will continue beyond May, local programs cannot guarantee they will continue to have funds to pay employees and provide services to students. As a result, these important programs will be forced to close.

We have been informed that funding decisions were made weeks ago by the Department, so we do not understand why a long additional delay would be needed to notify awardees. Grant applications were submitted six months ago. For comparison, during the previous funding cycle, grants were awarded just three months after applications were submitted.

We are deeply concerned that continued delay in releasing these funds will cause significant damage to Upward Bound programs. Experienced staff members will be laid off and students will not be able to enroll.

The Department's failure to release these funds in a timely manner has created an unnecessary crisis that threatens the future of vulnerable students across the country. Fortunately, further

damage can be prevented if the Department releases Upward Bound grants to awardees promptly.

We will appreciate your urgent attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeanne Shaheen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Margaret Wood Hassan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senate