# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Talent Search, which began operating in 1967, is one of the oldest of the federal programs designed to complement and encourage participation in the federal aid program for postsecondary education. At the time this report was prepared, 360 Talent Search projects throughout the country served about 320,000 participants. This report presents descriptive information on program implementation from Phase I of the ongoing National Evaluation of Talent Search. It is the first national study of the program sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) since the early 1970s and the first to include the possibility of a rigorous study of the program's effects on participants. Phase II, currently underway, will use project, state, and federal administrative records to compare outcomes for recent participants and a similar group of nonparticipants in up to five states. The National Evaluation is a response to congressional direction to evaluate the federal TRIO programs.[1]

## REPORT OVERVIEW

Chapter 1 provides a more detailed introduction to the Talent Search program and this report. Chapter 2 provides a historical review of Talent Search, including program growth and legislative and regulatory changes, to put the current program in the context of its initiation and development over time. Chapters 3 through 7 present a profile of Talent Search at the end of the 1990s, addressing the following questions:

- What types of institutions/organizations had Talent Search grants? What were the characteristics of the target schools served? What proportion of eligible students were being served by Talent Search? (chapter 3)

- How were projects staffed and organized? How did Talent Search staff members spend their time? What were the relationships between the Talent Search staff and target school staff? How were Talent Search staff perceived in comparison with regular school counselors? (chapter 4)

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[1]"TRIO programs" refers to several programs operated by ED to help disadvantaged students prepare for and succeed in postsecondary education. The first three programs (thus "TRIO") were Upward Bound, Talent Search, and Student Support Services. Other programs created later included Upward Bound Math/Science, the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program, and the Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) program. The evaluation also involved a survey of EOCs; see appendix D.

- Who was being served by Talent Search? What was the targeting and recruitment process? To what extent was Talent Search serving the intended population? (chapter 5)

- What services were Talent Search projects providing? How much service did participants receive? What issues arose in service provision? To what extent did services vary between and within projects? (chapter 6)

- What outcome objectives were projects trying to accomplish? To what extent were projects meeting their goals? What were projects' record-keeping and evaluation practices? (chapter 7)

To answer these research question, this report draws primarily on information from the following data sources:

- A survey sent to all Talent Search projects operating in the 1998–1999 program year, with a 93 percent response rate

- Case studies conducted in 14 sites (8 projects randomly selected and 6 selected because of their emphasis on one or more of three areas: middle school services, academic support services, and use of technology)

- Program performance reports submitted annually to ED's Office of Federal TRIO programs

- Data from major ED surveys such as the Common Core of Data (CCD) and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

## MAJOR FINDINGS

### CHAPTER 2: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM, 1965–2000

Chapter 2 focuses primarily on how Talent Search has changed since its inception in terms of both its scope and operations.

***More projects and participants.*** The program began with 45 experimental projects. By 1980, the program extended to about 170 projects, with just over 200 in 1990 and 360 today. Nationwide, the number of participants grew from about 50,000 to over 320,000. The average number served per project has ranged from a high of about 1,200 in 1970 to a low of about 890 in 2000.

***More funding.*** The initial Talent Search appropriation was $2 million; today, the program receives over $100 million. In constant 2000 dollars, average funding per project started at about $210,000, dropped to about $167,000 in 1990, and increased to about $279,000 in 2000.

***Low-intensity program.*** Consideration of both numbers served and funding levels reveals that Talent Search has always been a relatively low-intensity program. In constant 2000 dollars, average funds per participant totaled $190 in 1967, dropped to $173 in 1990, and rose to $313 in 2000.[2] (In comparison, Upward Bound spent about $4,400 per student in 2000 and Student Support Services about $1,000.)

***More specific eligibility requirements.*** Before 1980, Talent Search eligibility criteria were not very specific, and different projects defined "disadvantaged" in different ways. In 1981, the eligibility requirements were standardized. Two-thirds of participants in each project must be both low-income (defined as 150 percent of poverty) and potential first-generation college students (defined as neither parent holding a bachelor's degree). However, unlike the other TRIO programs, the other one-third of participants need not meet the low-income or first-generation criterion.

***Serving younger students.*** Originally, participants had to be at least 14 years of age. In 1980, the minimum age was lowered to 12 and subsequently to 11 in an effort to make middle school students eligible for the program. Thus, the program has increased its focus on early intervention.

***Coordinating services and longer grants.*** Reauthorization legislation in 1992 aimed to improve coordination with other services, specifically by stating that grants should not be denied because organizations had similar programs and by allowing for part-time project directors. Now it is not uncommon for one person to oversee both a Talent Search project and another program, such as Upward Bound, Student Support Services, or an EOC. The 1992 legislation also increased the funding cycle from three to four years.

***Greater accountability.*** The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 resulted in a greater focus on tracking participant outcomes. Projects must set specific objectives related to Talent Search goals and then report annually on the extent to which they met their goals. Projects with a good record receive extra points on grant applications, affording them an advantage over new applicants and thus promoting project stability.

### CHAPTER 3: PROJECT HOSTS AND TARGET SCHOOLS

Chapter 3 focuses on the characteristics of Talent Search projects' host institutions and target schools. It also estimates the percentage of eligible students served by Talent Search.

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[2]The information in this paragraph and the preceding two paragraphs corresponds to the time period of our study and was the most current information available at the time this report was initially drafted. Since that time, the Talent Search program has grown. ED's website reports that during FY 2002 there were 475 projects serving a total of 389,454 participants. Total program funding was about $143.5 million, averaging $302,117 per project and $368 per participant.

***Postsecondary institution hosts.*** Colleges and universities accounted for about 40 percent of host institutions in 1973-74; today they account for about 80 percent. Among postsecondary institutions, public colleges and universities are much more likely than private institutions to be Talent Search grantees. In addition, large research-oriented and doctorate-granting institutions are more likely to host Talent Search projects than are other types of postsecondary institutions.

***Minority-serving college hosts.*** Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) comprise 2 percent of degree-granting institutions and 8 percent of Talent Search educational institution hosts. Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) comprise 4 percent of degree-granting institutions and 9 percent of Talent Search educational institution hosts. Of 27 tribal colleges in 1999, three were Talent Search grantees.

***Number and type of target schools.*** Talent Search projects served almost 5,000 target schools across the nation; the median number per project was 14; within projects, high schools typically outnumbered middle schools. About one-third of target schools served grades 6 through 8 and about half served grades 9 through 12. The program served about 11 to 13 percent of the approximately 41,600 secondary schools in the United States, 15 to 16 percent of high schools, and 8 to 11 percent of middle schools.

***Target school characteristics.*** Over half of the students enrolled in target schools were racial/ethnic minorities compared with 33 percent in nontarget schools. About 40 percent of students enrolled in target schools were eligible for the federal free-lunch program compared with 25 percent nationwide.

***Percent of eligible students served.*** Analyses indicate that Talent Search serves a relatively small percentage of students nationwide who, based on their family income, may be eligible for the program. Overall, the number of Talent Search participants is equal to about 21 percent of the number of students eligible for free lunch (not over 130 percent of poverty) in target schools and about 6 percent of that population in all schools serving grade 7 or higher.

## CHAPTER 4: PROJECT STAFF AND ORGANIZATION

Chapter 4 provides information on project longevity; the number and types of Talent Search staff; staff duties, characteristics, and salaries; project budgets; several staffing issues, including turnover and relations with participants; and how staff compare with school counselors in terms of providing precollege information and advice.

***Continuity of operations.*** Many Talent Search projects are long-lived. Projects averaged 13 years of operation in 2001. Slightly more than half of the projects began operating between 1975 and 1984, and 16 percent began in 1974 or earlier.

***Number and types of staff.***  Nationwide, Talent Search projects employed about 2,500 full- and part-time staff—an average of 7.1 individuals and 5.3 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff per project and one staff member for every 125 participants.  In addition, 68 percent of projects used volunteers (although typically not extensively), and 56 percent used work-study students.  Overall, about 26 percent of FTE staff were project directors or coordinators and associate/assistant directors and coordinators.  Counselors and advisors accounted for just over one-third of FTE staff, about 15 percent were support staff, and 1 percent were data and information specialists.

***Staff demographics.***  In 1999–2000, three-fourths of all Talent Search staff members and about 70 percent of project directors and coordinators were female.  Forty-three percent of Talent Search staff were white, 36 percent were black, 13 percent were Hispanic, 3 percent were American Indian, and Asians and Pacific Islanders each accounted for 2 percent.

***Staff education and salary.***  About 43 percent of all Talent Search staff had advanced degrees (beyond a bachelor's), including 71 percent of project directors and coordinators and 68 percent of associate or assistant directors and coordinators.  Project directors' and coordinators' salaries (from all sources) averaged about $40,000, associate or assistant directors and coordinators earned an average of about $36,000, and counselors and advisors received an average of about $27,000.

***Staff time allocation and responsibilities.***  Line staff, such as counselors and advisors, reportedly spent most of their time—often four days a week—in the field, visiting target schools.  The project survey indicated that staff spent, on average, about 46 percent of their time in direct service, including counseling; 24 percent on record keeping, reporting, and administration; and 14 percent on participant recruitment.  In 2000, just over one-third of all project directors and coordinators also served as directors or administrators of other student programs at their host institutions.

***Project budgets.***  On average, Talent Search grant funds accounted for 96 percent of projects' total operating funds.  Foundation and corporate funds averaged about $17,000 per project.  On average, Talent Search projects allocated two-thirds of their budgets to staff salaries.

***Staff turnover.***  Staff turnover could make it hard for participants to develop close relationships with their Talent Search advisors or counselors.  Among the 14 mature programs we visited, turnover of line staff did not appear to be a problem, and four of the directors had been in place for over 20 years.  Nationwide, almost half (46 percent) of all directors and coordinators had served in those positions for six or more years.

***Talent Search and school counselors.*** Much of what Talent Search staff do for students could theoretically be done by school counselors. Case study interviews revealed, however, that participants (1) typically had difficulty gaining access to school counselors due to the counselors' heavy caseloads and (2) often felt their Talent Search advisors provided better assistance. Participants could relate better to their advisors than to their school counselors.

## CHAPTER 5: PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Chapter 5 examines participant characteristics and projects' targeting and recruitment practices.

***Participant demographics and background.*** About 60 percent of Talent Search participants were female, a proportion similar to that in other TRIO programs. Two-thirds of participants were racial/ethnic minorities: 37 percent were black, 22 percent were Hispanic, 4 percent were American Indian, 4 percent were Asian, and 1 percent were Pacific Islanders. About 5 percent of participants had limited English proficiency. About 70 percent of participants were in the traditional age range for high school students—14 to 18 years. Just less than one-fourth of participants were in the 12th grade. High school dropouts and other unenrolled adults account for a small proportion of participants; staff saw these groups as difficult to serve and preferred to stress dropout prevention by working with students. Key factors in some student's backgrounds included poverty, poor school quality, geographic isolation, and low self-esteem.

***Students' aspirations.*** Case study interviews revealed that Talent Search participants often had college aspirations before joining the program. Thus, projects mainly aimed to give participants the confidence that they could go to college and assisted them in taking the necessary steps to prepare and apply for college rather than working to convince students that college was a good idea. Indeed, helping participants to achieve pre-existing college aspirations has always been a major focus of Talent Search.

***Participant eligibility status.*** Overall, almost three-fourths of Talent Search participants were reported to be both from low-income families and potential first-generation college students, 14 percent were potential first-generation college students only, and 7 percent were low-income only. About 5 percent were neither low-income nor first-generation.

***Participant turnover.***[3] Projects reported that about half of all participants served in 1998–99 were new to the program. Since about one-fourth of all participants each year are seniors (as mentioned above) who would be leaving the program upon completing high school, this indicates that almost one-fourth of participants in lower grades also leave each year (do not come back the next year).

***Participant targeting and recruitment.*** Talent Search projects report that overall about 80 percent of the number of targeted individuals apply and that about 90 percent of those who apply become participants. Staff typically described the target group as students "in the middle" with regard to academic performance. Very low-achieving students were often seen as too difficult to serve with the

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[3]We use the term "turnover" simply to describe the phenomenon of participants entering and leaving the program; it is not meant to imply the phenomenon is negative or problematic.

available resources.  The most frequent means of recruitment were recommendations of school guidance staff or teachers, class presentations, referrals from current participants, and informal networking.

### CHAPTER 6:  TALENT SEARCH SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Chapter 6 presents information on the many types of services offered and projects' approaches to service delivery.[4]

***Academic and personal/career development services.***  From 82 to 98 percent of Talent Search projects offered test-taking and study skills development, academic advising/course selection, and tutoring while 61 percent offered assisted (computer) labs.  Compared with a decade earlier, more projects appear to be providing academic support services such as tutoring, and to a higher percentage of participants.  Over 90 percent of projects offered college orientation activities, college campus visits, cultural activities, referrals, and counseling, whereas 65 percent offered mentoring and 80 percent sponsored family activities.  During 1998–99, on average, projects served at least one parent/guardian for about 30 percent of their student participants.

***Financial aid services and fee waivers.***  Large majorities (71 to 98 percent) of projects provided individual financial aid counseling for participants and/or parents, financial aid workshops for participants and/or parents, assistance with federal financial aid forms in the hard-copy and/or the Internet-based version, and scholarship searches.  Just over 80 percent of projects provided some participants with waivers to cover the cost of SAT/ACT registration fees, and 78 percent provided waivers for college application fees.

***Technology integration.***  Talent Search projects have integrated computer technology in their services and communications to varying degrees.  For example, 71 percent used computerized career guidance programs, 45 percent used e-mail to communicate with target schools, and 11 percent offered interactive distance-learning activities.

***Serving nonparticipants.***  It was common for the case study projects to provide limited, recurring services, such as career and college information sessions, to students who were not program participants.  Staff saw this practice as a way to maintain good relations with target schools and did not think it diluted services to regular participants.

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[4]The report also includes two appendices on Talent Search services.  Appendix A uses information from the case studies to provide in-depth information on three service areas of particular interest:  serving middle school students, academic support services, and using technology in program services.  Appendix C presents a small amount of additional information on other services, drawing from both the survey and performance reports.  Some of the findings from these appendices are mentioned herein.

***Limited amounts of service.***  Many services were not offered very frequently, did not last very long, and were optional for participants.  On average, 38 percent of middle school students and 48 percent of high school students reportedly spent less than 10 hours in program activities during the 1998–99 program year.

***Resource limitations.***  Limited resources sometimes prevented projects from serving as many students as they would have liked or from serving all participants who requested a given service.  For example, nearly half of all projects were unable to provide tutoring to all students who requested it.

***Students served at school.***  At the case study projects, a common service delivery approach involved pulling students out of their regular classes for meetings or workshops lasting up to an hour.

***Diversity of services between and within projects.***  There is considerable diversity in services both between and within projects.  Projects may differ substantially on the following dimensions: specific services offered, delivery methods, target groups, and timing.  Services may also vary substantially even for students in the same grade level but at two different target schools served by the same project.  Some key factors behind inter- and intraproject service diversity were the size of the target area, target school receptivity and preferences, perceptions of different groups' needs, resource availability, and the initiative and creativity of project staff.

### CHAPTER 7:  PROJECT OBJECTIVES, OUTCOMES, AND DATA

Chapter 7 first describes projects' outcome objectives and then presents quantitative and qualitative (subjective) information on projects' reported success in meeting their goals and on how participants may benefit from the programs.  It next goes on to discuss projects' data-collection and evaluation practices.

***Goals for student outcomes.***  Each Talent Search project must set goals for the percentage of participant subgroups that will achieve certain outcomes.  The main goal for middle school students concerns grade level promotion.  The average goals for high school students or dropouts in 1998–99 were as follows:  89 percent of students in 11th grade or lower would stay in school the following year; 88 percent of high school seniors and equivalency students would graduate or receive an equivalency certificate; 75 percent of graduates and equivalency recipients would enroll in a postsecondary program; 64 percent of secondary dropouts would return to school; and 65 percent of postsecondary stopouts would re-enter a postsecondary program.

***Extent to which projects met their goals.***  Across all projects, 71 percent of graduating seniors reportedly enrolled in a postsecondary institution, slightly below projects' average goal for this major program objective (75 percent).  Individual projects, however, demonstrated varying degrees of success in meeting

their goals.  For example, 87 percent of projects met their goal for secondary school graduation while 53 percent met their goal for postsecondary admissions (another 18 percent of projects came within 5 percentage points of meeting this goal), and just 38 percent met their goal for postsecondary re-entry.

*Postsecondary enrollment by host type.*  Among Talent Search projects hosted by postsecondary institutions, participants had a pronounced tendency to go on to an institution of the same type.  For example, 20 percent of graduates at projects hosted by private 4-year colleges reportedly enrolled at a private 4-year college compared with 11 percent of graduates across all Talent Search projects.  Even if host institutions abide by the guideline that they not use the program as a recruitment mechanism, it appears that students' familiarity with their host institutions may lead them to seek out similar types of colleges when they complete high school.

*Opinions on program helpfulness.*  Although anecdotes, especially those offered by current or past participants, are not hard evidence of program effectiveness, it is useful to know how students and alumni perceived that the program helped them.  Reported benefits included more knowledge about college and financial aid, better access to and more choice of colleges, improved academic performance, and increased confidence and motivation.

*Data and record keeping.*  More than 95 percent of projects reported that they tracked or monitored data on the key participant outcomes of high school graduation, progression through high school, enrollment in college, and completion of college applications.  Substantially lower percentages of projects had tried to measure or were collecting data on other outcomes such as grades, self-esteem, SAT/ACT scores, and financial aid awareness.  Staff at case study sites cited resource limitations as a major factor behind their data-collection and analysis practices.

*Project evaluation.*  Most projects rely on internal evaluations.  More than 90 percent of projects reported using an ongoing assessment of program operation and success, and about 63 percent reported using a comprehensive year-end study.  The two types of information most commonly used in project evaluations were school retention or graduation rates and students' written evaluations of services.  The two types of information least commonly used were comparisons of standardized test scores of participants and nonparticipants and comparisons of participants' and nonparticipants' course completion rates.

## CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS AND ISSUES

The implementation study brought to the surface a variety of issues that may merit reflection and consideration on the part of policymakers and practitioners alike.

*Selecting target schools and participants*.  Projects find the vast majority of their participants by first identifying schools with a reasonable number of students who are eligible (based on family income and parents' education) and in need of supplemental services and then pursuing applications from interested students (either through direct appeals or referrals).  For some projects, target schools are spread over very large areas.  In such cases, there may be a question about efficiency.  Specifically, given projects' resource constraints, would it make sense (and would it be possible) for some projects to pursue more concentrated targeting—that is, choose fewer target schools, perhaps spread over a small area, but serve more students in each one?  This may be a strategy that some projects might want to consider.

*Relations with target schools.*  In general, staff in the case study sites had established positive relationships with their target schools.  Good relations typically centered on reciprocation—for example, school staff assisted program staff in recruitment and granted limited use of school facilities and equipment while Talent Search staff provided critical assistance to guidance staff by delivering precollege services to students who might otherwise have been underserved.  Occasionally, however, projects found relations to be more challenging, such as when key school staff left, requiring project staff to introduce the program all over again to new school officials, or especially when policy changes at the school or district level required Talent Search staff to modify their service approaches.

*Talent Search as a nonintensive program.*  Despite recent modest increases in average funding per participant, Talent Search remains a generally nonintensive program.  For the most part, participation in program services is optional; basic services might be offered biweekly or even just once a month; and many students spend less than 10 hours in program activities over the course of a year.  Overall, the program still adheres to the original assumption that small amounts of service, delivered at crucial times, can make a difference in students' decisions concerning college preparation and enrollment.  However, there is no solid evidence on which to judge whether the light-touch program model is effective overall or for various subgroups.  It is also unclear what would happen to program enrollments if services were to become more intensive; some participants might currently be drawn to the program because of its lack of demands on their time.

*Diverse service plans.*  Projects typically provided many diverse activities rather than focusing on just a few types of services.  Service delivery approaches varied, too, by type of service, time, place, target group, and providers.  Some projects we visited had developed a well-defined, coordinated set of services and materials for students at various grade levels, with services delivered in accordance with a detailed calendar of events prepared well in advance.  Others had looser, less specific plans.  Service plans reflected several factors, including the context of the target area, participants' perceived needs, and the creativity and initiative of key

staff. The diversity of offerings between and within projects seems appropriate given the wide range of individuals served and their various needs and interests.

***Providing academic services.*** In exploring this topic, we detected two distinct schools of thought among project directors: some feel that resources are too meager to provide effective academic support; others feel that academic needs are too crucial to be ignored. Approaches used by case study projects included daily tutoring services, Saturday test preparation sessions, subject area instruction, and summer enrichment programs. If supplemental funds cannot be obtained, however, the expense of providing academic support services—which are inherently more intensive than one-shot workshops—can mean fewer services in other areas (a general issue we discuss below). It will be interesting to see if increased high-stakes testing and generally rising educational expectations will lead to a continued increase in the provision of academic services by Talent Search projects nationwide.

***Serving middle school students.*** Though typically serving far more high school students than middle school students, most Talent Search projects appear to have committed to the idea of serving the younger age group. Some of the case study projects had developed curricula specifically for the middle school age group. Two interesting approaches called for offering short-term but more intensive services over the summer and serving the younger students in their regular classrooms. But questions may still exist about effective topics and methods for middle school services. Examining services more closely and comparing them to experts' ideas about this age group's developmental needs may be an issue for the future.

***Integrating computer technology.*** Computers have the potential to make services more interesting to participants and possibly more efficient. Many Talent Search projects have begun integrating computer technology into project services, communications, and program management. But projects vary greatly in the extent to which they have done so. If various types of hardware and software are not already available to projects from other sources, such as host institutions or target schools, projects will obviously require resources to take advantage of various technological resources. Finding the funds and expert staff may be challenging for many Talent Search projects. Using college students to assist with computer technology could be an option worth exploring.

***The pull-out approach to service provision.*** The pull-out model of delivering services during the regular school day has the advantage of not requiring students to attend service sessions after school or on weekends. But the case studies suggested that some projects are finding it increasingly difficult to pursue their traditional pull-out approach, in part because of increased pressure on schools to improve academic performance; teachers were sometimes reluctant to release students, and the students themselves sometimes did not want to miss their classes. Some projects tried to minimize the impact of pull-out services by

alternating service times, and others tried to make their services look more educationally credible. But Talent Search staff often felt that solutions to the service provision problem were elusive. The pull-out method of service delivery will continue to pose a challenge for projects.

*Generating parent involvement*. Although most projects offered some services or activities for parents, such as financial aid workshops and orientation meetings, the offerings were limited, and generating parent involvement in program activities was a common challenge. Case study staff typically said they were trying but that their efforts rarely attracted many parents and that they were interested in learning about successful approaches. More information on how to get parents involved could be useful, along with an empirically based explanation of why parent involvement in a program like Talent Search matters.

*Participant turnover.* Annual performance reports strongly suggest that many students stay in Talent Search a relatively short time—and not just those who join toward the end of high school. The estimated 14 percent of staff time (roughly equivalent to one out of every seven work days) spent on recruitment activities seems somewhat high and might be more productively turned toward direct services—if participant turnover were lower. While some project staff may not see participant turnover as a problem, this is an issue on which more information would be helpful. For example, what are the causes of turnover? Is longer involvement in a low-intensity program associated with better outcomes? And, if so, are there good strategies to increase participant retention?

*Resource constraints and tradeoffs.* Not surprisingly, the issue of resource constraints came up often in both the survey and case studies. Project staff could not do all they wanted to for all their participants. And some students, parents, and school staff expressed an interest in more and/or more intensive services. In some cases, however, staff might be able to do more with existing levels of funding per participant. One strategy would be to make greater use of volunteers and interns. Another option, mentioned above, would be more concentrated targeting—serving a smaller area and/or fewer schools but more students per school. Absent a funding increase, the alternative to stretching resources further is to make tough choices about service tradeoffs—downplaying some in order to emphasize others. Clearly, though, any such tradeoffs would require careful consideration.

*Integration/coordination with other programs.* Over the past three decades, various public and private organizations have established more and more precollege programs for disadvantaged students, sometimes modeled after Talent Search and other TRIO programs. Although almost unique when it started, Talent Search is now part of a sizable constellation of such programs. The project survey revealed that many host institutions have other programs for students, sometimes also headed by the Talent Search project director. The federal government already took steps to encourage service coordination and efficiencies,

but as more programs come into existence, questions may arise about potentially overlapping or duplicative services and/or the need to coordinate or integrate Talent Search activities with those sponsored by other programs.

***Staff salaries and turnover.*** Observers might expect that modest salaries would make it difficult to recruit new staff and retain experienced staff. On one hand, given that current and former participants we interviewed often had strong, fond memories of particular staff members, it could be important to keep staff for several years to help foster close relations between participants and staff. On the other hand, for a nonintensive program in which half of all participants each year are new, staff retention may not be particularly important. Overall, the project survey and case studies did not identify staff turnover as a major issue or concern, but turnover probably does become a problem occasionally for some projects and therefore may be an issue worth monitoring.

***Project self-evaluation.*** Talent Search projects could potentially benefit from collecting and analyzing more data on student outcomes. In light of resource constraints (both in funds and expertise), one approach worth considering may be for projects to draw on the resources of host colleges or other nearby postsecondary institutions. Undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and certain administrative staff, such as institutional research units or minority affairs offices, may be willing to undertake research projects on the benefits of Talent Search participation. Conducting such studies could serve as an applied learning experience for college students, and for college administrators it could illuminate effective ways to reach out to a disadvantaged group of potential applicants.