



2025 NEOCA ANNUAL CONFERENCE



Sept. 6, 2025 | 10AM | Chicago, IL



President's Welcome

Dear NEOCA Members,

We are delighted to invite you to the 2025 NEOCA Annual Conference in the dynamic city of Chicago. As President of NEOCA, I am honored to host this year's conference and look forward to an unforgettable gathering of industry professionals.

The conference promises to be a highlight of the year, featuring insightful discussions, valuable networking opportunities, and the latest advancements in our field. Please join me in applauding Vice President Ashley Childs and her dedicated planning committee for their exceptional work in organizing this event. I would also like to recognize Treasurer Melissa Rosa for her significant contributions to increasing membership and attendance.

In Chicago, we will have the unique opportunity to:

- **Connect with industry leaders:** Network with colleagues from across the region and beyond.
- **Learn from experts:** Attend thought-provoking sessions and workshops led by industry experts.
- **Explore new innovations:** Discover the latest trends and technologies shaping our field.
- **Experience the best of Chicago:** Enjoy the city's iconic landmarks, diverse cuisine, and vibrant culture.

We have carefully crafted a conference program that caters to the diverse interests and needs of our membership. Whether you are a seasoned professional or just starting your career, there will be something for everyone.

We look forward to welcoming you to Chicago and sharing this exciting event together.

Sincerely,

Matthew Donovan





Purpose:

The National Educational Opportunity Centers Association supports Educational Opportunity Centers and similar programs that aid low-income, first-generation secondary and postsecondary students to achieve a better life and quality education by:

- Reviewing, evaluating, and recommending legislation affecting the development of educational opportunities to our program populations by acting as a liaison with the Department of Education.
- Providing opportunities to share information and network with other EOC and similar programs throughout the United States by building a supportive relationship with those programs.

Conference Planning Committee:

Ashley Childs, Chair
Texarkana College

Rico Drakes
The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Melody Lawrence
The University of Kansas

Melissa Rosa
Seminole State University

Isaiah Hagwood
Cuyahoga Community College

Patty Fugitt
The University Kansas

Scholarship Committee:

Ashley Childs, Chair
Texarkana College

Melissa Rosa
Seminole State University

Melody Lawrence
The University of Kansas

Andrea Cummings
Florida State College at Jacksonville

Dejuan Mills
College of Central Florida

Kristen Miller
Opportunity Resource Services Dallas County

Conference Sponsors:

COE - Council for Opportunities in Education

Compansol - Blumen Online

NOSOTROS Education Center

Academic Tutoring and Test Prep



NOSOTROS Education Center

Est. 2003



Serving TRIO Projects Since 2003

CONSULTING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

EOC PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

- Proposal Development & Technical Reviews
- Proposal Writing Workshops
 - On-Demand Recording
 - **New! Self-paced Online Course**
- FREE Lunch 'n Learn Webinar every Monday

EOC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Private & Customized Trainings
- Live Public Webinars
- On-Demand Recording
- **New! Online Course**

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

- APR Technical Assistance
- Database Customization & Training
- **New! Budget Management**
- Compliance Assessments
- Policies & Procedures Manuals

ABOUT US

For over 20 years, NEC has assisted TRIO Projects with comprehensive supportive services to get funded AND remain funded.

NEC has secured over \$876 million in federal funding for institutions and agencies, with an overall success rate of 92%.

Join the hundreds of nationwide colleges, agencies, and TRIO Projects that have benefited from NEC's expertise!

CONTACT US

info@nosotrosecdu.org



NOSOTROSEDU.ORG



Executive Board



President
Matthew Donovan
Morehead State University
Morehead, KY



Vice President
Ashley Childs
Texarkana College
Texarkana, TX



Treasurer
Melissa Rosa
Seminole State College
Sanford, FL



Past President
Lee Williams III
Texarkana College
Texarkana, TX



Conference Agenda

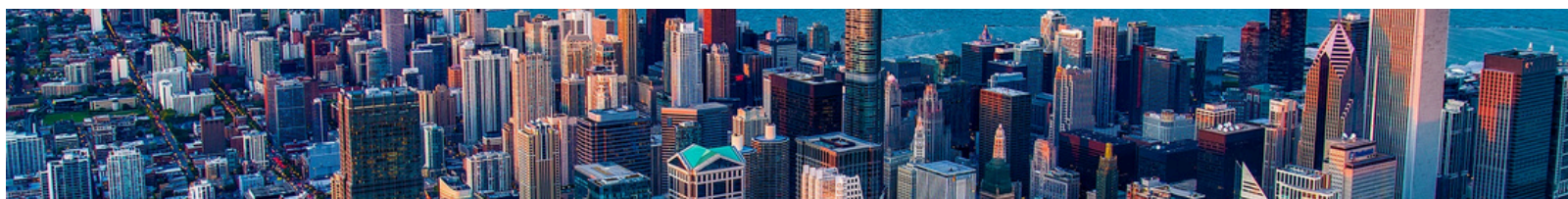
Hyatt Regency Chicago
151 East Wacker Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Saturday, September 6, 2025
10:00 am (CST) *11:00 (EST) *9:00 (MST) *8:00 (PST)

Breakfast on your own

Michigan 1, Concourse Level East Tower

- 9:00 a.m. **Registration Opens - Outside of Michigan 1**
- 9:15 am **Virtual Conference Room Opens/Mix and Mingle**
- 9:20 am **Vendor Spotlight**
- 10:00 am **Introductions and Opening Remarks**
Presenter: Matthew Donovan, NEOCA President
- 10:10 am **Keynote Speaker**
Presenter: Dr. Arnold Mitchem, COE President Emeritus
- 11:20 am **Roundtable Discussion**
Presenters: Rico Drakes & Melody Lawrence
- 12:30 pm **Lunch On Your Own - Paid for by NEOCA**
- 2:15 pm **Department of Education Debrief & Member Input Session**
- 2:40 pm **NEOCA Awards Presentation**
Presenter: Ashley Childs, NEOCA Vice-President
- 3:00 pm **NEOCA Business Meeting & Election**
Presenter: Matthew Donovan, NEOCA President
- 3:45 pm **Scholarship Presentation**
Presenter: Ashley Childs, NEOCA Vice-President
- 4:00 pm **COE Update**
Presenter: Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) Representatives
- 4:30 pm **Closing Remarks**
Presenter: Matthew Donovan, NEOCA President





Keynote Speaker

Dr. Arnold Mitchem

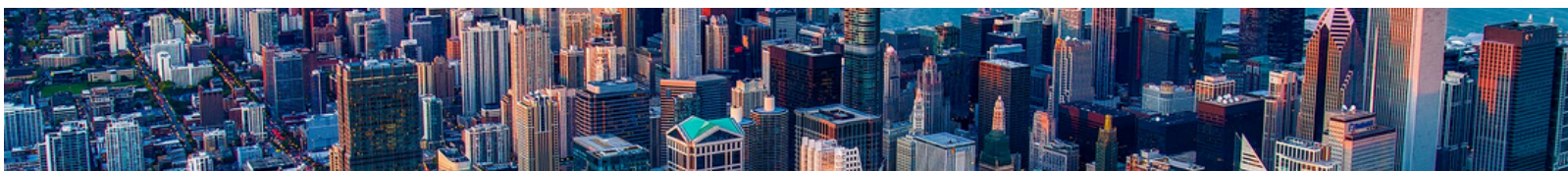
COE President Emeritus



Arnold Mitchem, President Emeritus of the Council for Opportunity in Education, has been a voice for low-income, first-generation students and individuals with disabilities his entire career. Thanks to his work, the federally funded TRIO Programs have expanded by nearly 400% and now serve more than 872,000 students at 1,200 colleges and universities.

He began his career on the History faculty at Marquette University in Milwaukee and was named the Director of the Educational Opportunity Program in 1969. He relocated to Washington, D.C. in 1986 to serve as President of the Council for Opportunity in Education until October 2013.

Mitchem has been awarded Honorary Doctorates from eleven universities: CUNY-Lehman College in New York; DePaul University; University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana; University of Liverpool, England, Marquette University; Marycrest College; University of Massachusetts at Boston; Lewis University; St. Joseph University in Philadelphia; St. Louis University; and SUNY Buffalo State.





DEDICATED TO **TRIO** FOR 33 YEARS



BOT FORMS

Convert all your physical forms (application, survey etc.) into online BOT forms for prospective & existing students. Capture digital signatures; enable adding of new students with collected data.

Request for multi-lingual forms.

TWO-WAY BULK SMS

Send Bulk SMS & receive replies from students back in BOT. BOT allows to track delivery status of all sent messages. Text messages are sent via anonymous numbers so your personal phone number stays personal.

DATA SECURITY

SOC-2 Compliant. Backed with Microsoft's SQL, your data is secure and tunneled via end-to-end SSL technology. The data is protected with additional hardware firewalls including Intrusion Detection System.

APR & PE POINTS

Use multiple error-checking tools for accurate and stress-free APR submission. PE Points can analyze your grant objectives at any time.

CHANGING LIVES. ONE STUDENT AT A TIME.

SCAN ME



BEST SCHOLARSHIP

Bringing Education and Success Together

\$15,000

Giving back to the TRIO community since 1992. Available to all TRIO Staff and Students.

Visit our website or scan the QR code for more details on how to apply for the BEST Scholarship.

www.compansol.com/scholarship.php



Scholarship Winners

High School Equivalency to Postsecondary Enrollment

Jacob Coulter

Southcentral Kentucky Community & Technical College

Harley Diehl

University of Kansas DSW

Brandon Mendoza

Texarkana College

Postsecondary Enrollment

Haniyh Saadatmand

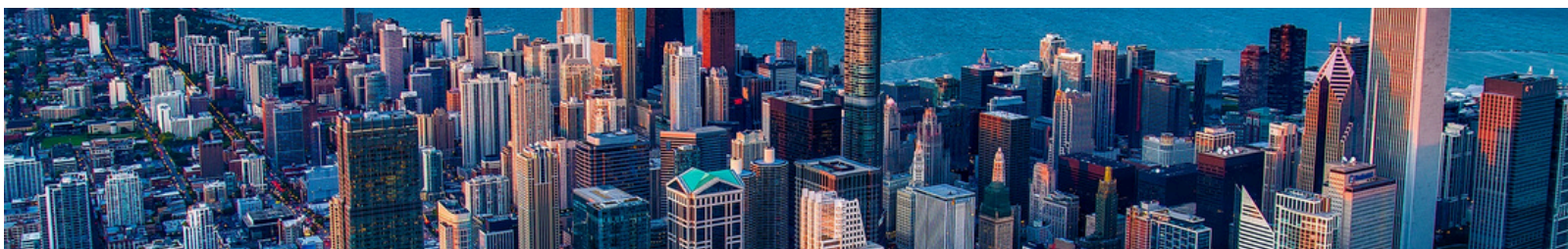
Metropolitan Development Council

Nadia Allen-Penn

Opportunity Resource Services

Tamia Young

Florida State College of Jacksonville





Business Meeting

3:00 pm

Meeting Called into Session

Meeting Call to Order - Matthew Donovan, NEOCA President

Roll Call - Melissa Rosa, NEOCA Treasurer

Approval of the Minutes from 2024 - Matthew Donovan, NEOCA President

Report of Officers

President's Report - Matthew Donovan, NEOCA President

Vice President's Report - Ashley Childs, NEOCA Vice President

Treasurer Report - Melissa Rosa, NEOCA Treasurer

Past President's Report - Lee Williams III, NEOCA Past President

3:15 pm

Old Business

New Business

NEOCA Budget 2025-2026

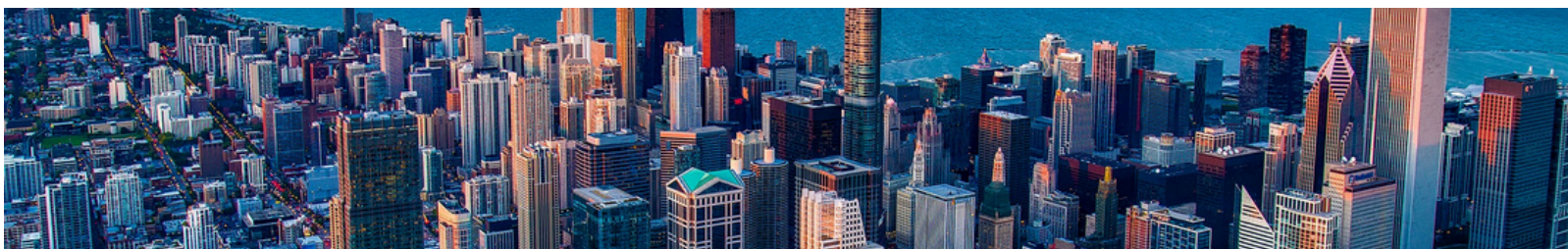
Officer Elections

3:45 pm

NEOCA Scholarship Presentation

4:00 pm

COE Update





Officer Reports

Matthew Donovan, President's Report

Worked with COE to keep NEOCA updated on climate of TRIO and future expectations

Assisted Treasurer Rosa with membership and conference registration forms

Provided VP Childs with updates on items for 2025 NEOCA Conference

Participated in NEOCA executive meeting ZOOM calls

Attended 2025 Policy Seminar

Co-hosted NEOCA webinars

Ashley Childs, Vice President's Report

Participated in NEOCA executive meeting ZOOM calls

Attended 2025 Policy Seminar

Chaired 2025 NEOCA Conference Committee

Chaired 2025 NEOCA Scholarship Committee

Co-hosted NEOCA webinars

Prepared and communicated out all email correspondence with NEOCA listserv

Proposed session accepted for COE conference

Melissa Rosa, Treasurer's Report

Participated in NEOCA executive meeting ZOOM calls

Attended 2025 Policy Seminar

Attended NEOCA webinars

Participated in planning of 2025 NEOCA Conference

Served on 2025 NEOCA scholarship committee

Maintained NEOCA accounts and invoices

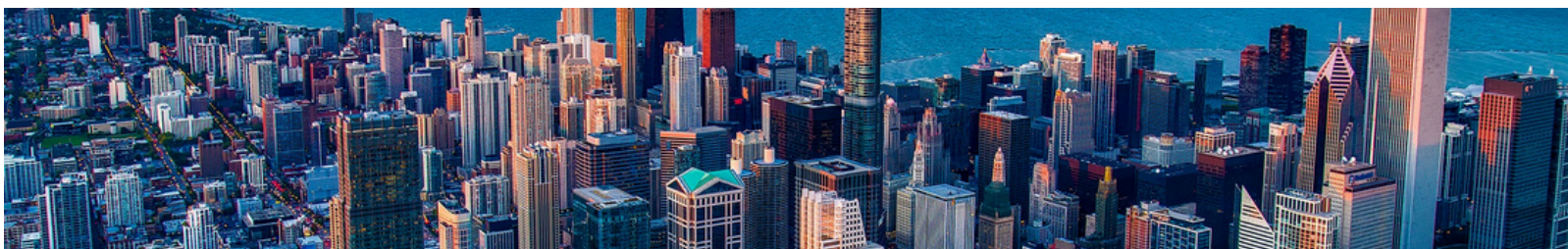
Lee Williams III, Past President's Report

Chaired 2025 NEOCA Executive Board Elections

Participated in NEOCA executive meeting ZOOM calls

Attended 2025 Policy Seminar

Attended NEOCA webinars





THANK YOU!

A Message from the VP

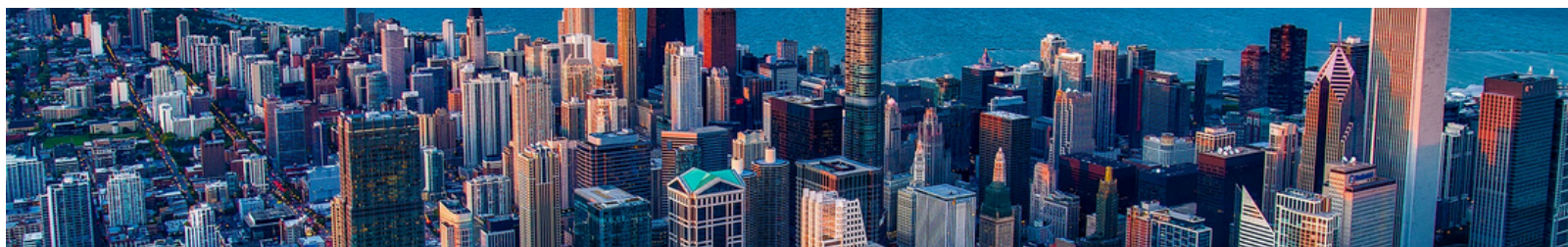
As we close this year's NEOCA Conference, I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude. My journey with NEOCA began in 2021, before I ever served on the board, and from the very beginning, this community welcomed me and gave me a place to learn, contribute, and grow.

When I stepped into my role with EOC, I was brand new to this work, but the encouragement and support I received from so many of you made all the difference. Serving on the NEOCA Board has been both an honor and a privilege, and I'm incredibly thankful for the friendships, collaborations, and shared commitment to serving our participants that I've experienced along the way.

Although I will no longer be serving on the board by the close of this year, please know that I remain committed to this community. If there is ever a way I can support you or your program, I am only a message away.

Thank you for attending this year's conference, for the important work you do every day, and for allowing me the chance to serve alongside you.

With gratitude,
Ashley Childs





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www.neoca.us