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### **HARLINGEN EDC REAUTHORIZES \$100,000 GOAL LINE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WITH TSTC**

**HARLINGEN, TEXAS** (OCT. 29, 2020) – On Tuesday, Oct. 27, the Harlingen EDC Board of Directors approved an additional \$100,000 for TSTC Foundation’s Goal Line Assistance Program.

The HEDC first assisted the [TSTC Foundation in January](#) when Richard Mesquias, TSTC Foundation, requested \$75,000. The monies are used to help students in their last year of studies who are facing economic hurdles, to complete their education.

Moved by the impact the money would have on students, the board approved a total of \$100,000 in January. Since then, that money has helped 110 students and a total of \$94, 117.81 has been disbursed since, averaging about \$855 per student.

On Tuesday, Mesquias once again presented and asked the HEDC to restore the Goal Line Assistance Program and after some discussion, the HEDC Board approved an additional \$100,000.

“The Harlingen EDC has helped 63 students to reach their goal and graduate in May and August of this year,” Mesquias said. “There are 47 more on track to graduate in December (2020), May and August of 2021.”

Mesquias explained that this year came with additional hurdles and many students found themselves out of a job as COVID-19 took an economic toll. Students were struggling to keep their jobs, and for some, they became unemployed. This led to students very close to completion, now facing the very real possibility of having to put their education on hold.

“When we looked at those students who couldn’t get transportation, housing, food, we thought, *how can we help them?* And immediately this fund, because it had just started in January, we were able to launch that.”

Mesquias shared a student’s personal story about how the program will help them continue their education after their full-time job hours were cut: “*My working hours*

*have been cut from being full-time to barely working during COVID. I've looked for other jobs to continue my education at TSTC, money has been very tight since this started. This money would help with books, uniforms, tuition – it would be taking a tremendous amount of stress off my plate, allowing me to focus on my studies again. This fund would help me make payments and let me focus and complete my education.”*

The TSTC Foundation tracks the progress of their graduates and has found that 43 of those graduates from May and August, are also working in Harlingen.

“TSTC has excellent programs and training and together with the help of this program and others like it, we are accomplishing student and community success,” Raudel Garza, Harlingen EDC CEO, said.

Mesquias added that it will be possible for students who already received funding via the program to receive additional funds. Because of the pandemic, many of those same students are still unable to find work and still want to meet their goal and finish, this would allow them to receive more money if they still meet the criteria outlined by the TSTC Foundation.

Program criteria includes:

1. Enrolled full-time (12 or more credit hours), or part-time (3-11 credit hours)
2. Enrolled in any TSTC program
3. Must have a minimum 2.0 GPA and be in good standing
4. Traditional and non-traditional students
5. Must be in their final three semesters of study

TSTC Enrollment Services will select students who are in need of assistance. Once students are found eligible, they can use the award money towards tuition, materials, uniforms, tolls, testing fees, and TSTC campus housing.

In January after the TSTC Foundation initially received funding, Cledia Hernandez, TSTC-Harlingen Provost said, “The Harlingen EDC has been a constant supporter of TSTC, and this strong collaboration has a tremendous impact on the economic growth of our region.”

“We are honored that Harlingen EDC continues to partner with us and believes in us to place more Texans in great paying jobs.”

The Harlingen EDC will hold a check presentation to the TSTC Foundation on Friday, Oct. 30 at 1 p.m. at the University Center, 2424 Boxwood Street, Harlingen.