



TCC Foundation *Eliminating Barriers Fund*

Many middle-skill level jobs await a community college graduate with the correct training/skill level. Community colleges enroll more than 40% of the undergraduate population, and graduate thousands each year who enter the workforce. But success does not come to all who enroll - less than 40% of community college students obtain a degree within six years, and students from low income families are even more likely to drop out. Given that community college students tend to be financially independent and older (typically about 26 years of age for TCC students), financial and family issues frequently arise and pose challenges to staying in school. These problems include balancing work and school, finding appropriate and affordable day care, and dealing with unexpected setbacks that occur during the school year. The impact of college completion is positively felt not only by the individual and his/her family, but by the greater community as well. In his book *Triumph of the City*, Harvard economist Edward Glaeser cites that as the share of the population with college degrees increases 10 percent, per-capita gross metropolitan product rises 22 percent (Glaeser 2017). **The entire region benefits from an increase among college students who complete.**

To help mitigate the drop-out rate, Tarrant County College Foundation, in collaboration with the Vice Presidents of Student Development on each TCC campus, has created the *Eliminating Barriers Fund* – established to help address financial needs students face that may cause them to ‘stop-out’ of their current TCC coursework or job skills training, or drop-out altogether. Any number of one-time ‘catastrophes’ -- burst water pipes, balding car tires that do not pass inspection, a medical need, a refrigerator or washing machine that ceases to function – can cause a significant financial strain on a community college student’s budget. The financial need may cause the student to take on more hours at work, or even a second part-time job to address the problem. And when a student runs out of hours in the day to get it all done, college coursework will be the first thing to go, impairing the opportunity to complete a degree or certification program.

Tarrant County College and TCC Foundation desire to assist students who find themselves facing *urgent, unforeseen* and *non-recurring* situations that threaten to derail them from their collegiate course.

Student application requests for financial support through the *Eliminating Barriers Fund* are reviewed, vetted and approved at the campus level. If a situation impedes a student’s ability/capacity to continue to attend classes, TCC wants to help keep the student in school by providing some financial assistance to address the problem. *Staying in school and completing designated degree/certification plans* are important keys to a student securing a wage-sustaining job that results in a satisfying career. Students who receive support from the *Eliminating Barriers Fund* will have a required follow-up appointment with a TCC professional to ascertain any potential ‘deeper’ problems facing the student, and work to help mitigate.