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THECB PARTNERS WITH THE TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION TO FUND ACCELERATED CAREER TRAINING FOR UNEMPLOYED WORKERS

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has designated four Texas public community colleges as recipients for funding to support the *Accelerate Texas* program which is designed to give unemployed adults the education and skill training required for career-path employment in high-demand fields. The colleges will share $1M provided by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to expand the program to more students in areas of the state with high unemployment.

"Too many unemployed adults lack the academic and work skills necessary to compete for jobs, and we need new models of postsecondary education to serve this population more effectively," explained Higher Education Commissioner Raymund Paredes. "We are pleased to partner with the Texas Workforce Commission and our community colleges to expand a new model for adult basic education specifically engineered to accelerate students along the pathway to meaningful employment."

Since 2010, THECB and TWC have partnered with 21 colleges throughout Texas to establish and support the *Accelerate Texas* initiative. *Accelerate Texas* is a program model that couples adult basic education with vocation-specific training. The TWC's Workforce Development Boards assist participating colleges in determining the job skills and credentials needed for high-demand, employer-driven career fields in their communities. The programs specifically target unemployed adults to provide a pathway to meaningful employment opportunities. In the program's first two years, 71% of program participants obtained employment, while 12% continued enrollment in postsecondary education.

"We are pleased to partner with The Higher Education Coordinating Board and local community colleges on this important job training program," said TWC Chairman Andres Alcantar. "Equipping individuals with the skills in demand by employers in their region gives them the opportunity to find employment and build their lives.

The TWC was recently awarded a grant from the Department of Labor National Emergency Grant (NEG) program to support the expansion of *Accelerate Texas* to retrain dislocated workers in areas of the state with particularly high unemployment rates. These funds will be used to expand program offerings at four community colleges in Texas: Hill College (Hillsboro, Cleburne), Tarrant County Community College (Fort Worth), Amarillo College, and South Texas College (McAllen). Through April 2013, these four programs combined have served more than 1,100 students and awarded more than 700 workforce certificates. Students served under the grant will not be charged tuition for their education and training.

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About The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board provides leadership and coordination for the Texas higher education system. Since being created by the Texas Legislature in 1965, the Board has worked to achieve excellence for the college education of Texas students. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's mission is to work closely with policymakers and education stakeholders to develop and implement a higher education framework focused on initiatives to dramatically increase the number of postsecondary completions; keep college affordable and accessible for all Texans; and align higher education outcomes with current and future workforce needs.

About the Texas Workforce Commission
The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is the state agency charged with overseeing and providing workforce development services to employers and job seekers of Texas. TWC strengthens the Texas economy by providing the workforce development component of the Governor's economic development strategy. By focusing on the needs of employers, TWC gives Texas the competitive edge necessary to draw business here. TWC's mission is to promote and support an effective workforce system that offers employers, individuals and communities the opportunity to achieve and sustain economic prosperity.

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