

Pima Community College is the most important workforce development agency in Southern Arizona, providing education and skills training across 90 programs at five campuses and multiple centers throughout the region. As an open access institution, PCC accepts learners regardless of their academic background or ability to pay. 70% of the students served are eligible for need-based financial aid, are from populations traditionally underrepresented in post-secondary education and most are first generation college students who are working to keep food on the table and a roof over their head.

In Tucson, the cost of rent has increased by 30% since March 2020; since March 2021, rents have skyrocketed 21% ([Real Estate Daily News](#)). This alarming statistic has created a critical mass of individuals and families experiencing housing and food insecurity and who are outside of the safety net of health insurance.

To address these issues, **Pima Community College** has partnered with the Gospel Rescue Mission's **Center of Opportunity** through a unique arrangement. The agreement provides guests of the Center with access to training opportunities in a variety of programs designed to provide a direct-to-employment career path in five focus areas: 1) Building & Construction Technology; 2) Culinary Arts; 3) Health & Safety; 4) Information Technology; and 5) Logistics / Truck Driving.

The goal of the partnership is to provide a pathway out of poverty for those who are struggling to earn a sustainable living wage. Both organizations strive to transform lives for the betterment of the individual, the community and the economic vitality of the region. One of PCC's objectives is to create a national model based upon this partnership that can be replicated in other communities across the country.

Learners participating in the training programs have costs covered for tuition, faculty salaries, fees, books, supplies and uniforms (if required). This partnership anticipates serving approximately 100 students in the first year at an approximate average cost of \$1,400 per student. At capacity, with only the current programs in place, costs to administer the trainings would rise to \$187,000 annually (an average of ~\$1,100 per student with a minimum of 168 learners enrolled). Student enrollments are anticipated to grow to upward of 300 per year moving forward.

As programmatic offerings are added, costs will rise to fund the tuition, faculty, books and supplies needed to provide new industry-focused trainings. PCC is investing in the build-out of spaces required to deliver "hands-on" teaching labs at the Center, adding significantly to the quality of instruction to be offered on site.

An investment by the **Rotary Club of Tucson Foundation** will allow the partnership to add capacity and increase programmatic offerings to ensure that many more men and women are able to improve their financial situation. Funding received up to \$100,000 would ensure training programs are able to continue. Should we be the main beneficiary with funding over \$100,000, we would expand offerings to add skills-based training programs in high-demand areas. Additionally, Pima Community College welcomes the support of Rotary member businesses that are interested in offering meaningful employment opportunities to individuals who complete trainings at the Center.

Meet Tamara, a learner enrolled in the general education development (GED) program at Pima Community College, who learned about Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (IBEST) in the Building & Construction Technology program while studying for her high school equivalency diploma. During fall semester 2021, Tamara faced eviction, yet she continued her enrollment in IBEST with the goal of improving her financial situation to provide a better life for herself and her children. This is but one example of how Pima Community College transforms lives...we expect the partnership with the Center of Opportunity to create countless success stories similar to that of Tamara's.