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FOR RELEASE

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**LUMINA FOUNDATION DESIGNATES CORPUS CHRISTI AS
TALENT HUB**

**Corpus Christi granted \$275,000 to support local efforts to increase education
beyond high school**

CORPUS CHRISTI (May 30, 2018) – Lumina Foundation, in partnership with the Kresge Foundation, has announced the designation of Corpus Christi and six other communities across the country as Talent Hubs. These cities, along with 17 others selected in 2017, earned this designation by meeting rigorous standards for creating environments that attract, retain, and cultivate talent, particularly among today's students, many of whom are people of color, the first in their families to go to college, and from low-income households.

Each Talent Hub focuses intensively on one of three populations that is critical to raising the nation's overall post-high school attainment level to 60 percent of working-age adults by 2025: 18-to-22-year-old students; older adults with college experience who stopped before finishing their studies; or adults with no formal education beyond high school. Talent Hub cities are committed to eliminating deep disparities in educational outcomes among African-Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians, who fare poorly in contrast with white and Asian students.

The Corpus Christi project will focus on increasing the postsecondary attainment of individuals with some college and no degree as a means of addressing workforce challenges. Citizens for Educational Excellence is working in partnership with Del Mar College, Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend, the United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce, and other local education institutions to implement strategies to help adults continue their education. Strategies include the development of additional *Fast Track* programs at Del Mar College, implementation of guided education pathways, personally connecting individuals with a caring adult, working strategically to re-engage those who have left college, and working with community employers to increase paid internship and apprenticeship opportunities.

“We are very fortunate and thrilled that Lumina Foundation has selected Corpus Christi as a Talent Hub. Business and industry continue to grow in the Coastal Bend making post-secondary and job attainment high priorities for Corpus Christi. Growing our workforce and ensuring that our citizens have the education and skills necessary for the region's jobs is critical to our community's economic prosperity,” said Dr. Janet Cunningham, executive director of Citizens for Educational Excellence.

The seven new communities designated as Talent Hubs are: Corpus Christi, Texas; Detroit; Elkhart County, Ind.; Las Vegas; Mobile, Ala.; Rio Grande Valley, Texas; and St. Louis. They join 17 other Talent Hubs: Albuquerque, N.M.; Austin, Texas; Boston; Cincinnati; Columbus, Ind.; Dayton, Ohio; Denver; Fresno, Calif.; Los Angeles; Louisville, Ky.; Nashville, Tenn.; New

York; Philadelphia; Racine, Wis.; Richmond, Va.; Shasta County, Calif.; and Tulsa, Okla. To date, Talent Hub investments by Lumina and Kresge total just over \$10 million.

“We have added to the growing roster of top-flight cities committed to meeting the demands for an educated workforce,” said Jamie Merisotis, president and CEO of Lumina Foundation. “The Talent Hub designation serves both as an aspirational target for other cities and a foundation from which cities designated as Talent Hubs can build.”

Each community designated as a Talent Hub receive \$275,000 in grant funding over 31 months. Grant funding will support local efforts to educate more people, allowing community and education leaders to better meet the specific needs of residents. Lumina will provide these funds in partnership with Kresge. Kresge’s support of Talent Hubs comes from its national education program, which includes a focus on aligning and strengthening urban higher education ecosystems to help more low-income, underrepresented, and students of color gain access to—and succeed in—higher education.

Talent Hubs are one outgrowth of Lumina’s Community Partnerships for Attainment, which represented more than \$10 million of grants to 75 cities across the country. This partnership, which began in 2013, continues to work directly with communities to expand educational opportunities beyond high school.

“With our partners at Kresge, Lumina’s Talent Hubs designation aims to deepen the impact of cross-sector, place-based efforts to increase higher education attainment in communities and cities across the country,” said Danette Howard, Lumina’s senior vice president and chief strategy officer. “Talent Hubs work closely with Lumina and national thought leaders to develop a customized action plan tailored to the needs of their specific communities, with a focus on increasing the percentage of post-high school credentials residents have earned. This effort is directly connected to Lumina’s mission of helping the nation ensure that 60 percent of working-age Americans have quality credentials by 2025.”

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Lumina Foundation is an independent, private foundation in Indianapolis that is committed to making opportunities for learning beyond high school available to all. Lumina envisions a system that is easy to navigate, delivers fair results, and meets the nation’s need for talent through a broad range of credentials. The Foundation’s goal is to prepare people for informed citizenship and for success in a global economy.

The **Kresge Foundation** was founded in 1924 to promote human progress. Today, Kresge fulfills that mission by building and strengthening pathways to opportunity for low-income people in American cities, seeking to dismantle structural and systemic barriers to equality and justice. Using a full array of grant, loan, and other investment tools, Kresge invests more than \$160 million annually to foster economic and social change. For more information visit Kresge.org.

Established in 2003, **Citizens for Educational Excellence (CEE)** is a local non-profit community organization that brings together people, information, and resources to increase postsecondary and job attainment. CEE serves as the city’s designee on education issues and leads two main initiatives: *Coastal Compass Education and Career Resource Center* and *Education to Employment Partners Regional P-16 Council*. For more information visit EdExcellence.org.

As a Talent Hub, Corpus Christi to train locals for skilled jobs



Announcing Corpus Christi's designation as a Talent Hub at a news conference Tuesday, June 5, were three representatives of the organizations that will be using a \$275,000 grant to train workers for coming Corpus Christi jobs: Leonard Rivera (left), dean of continuing education and off-campus programs at Del Mar College; Dr. Janet Cunningham, executive director of Citizens for Educational Excellence; and Ken Trevino, president and CEO of Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend. Courtesy photos

By Suzanne Freeman

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Corpus Christi is now a Talent Hub for job training and recruitment — one of seven cities in the nation being recognized with grant money for creating environments that attract, retain, and cultivate job talent, especially among low-income families and individuals who have some college credits but no degree. The designation, which was

announced Tuesday, June 5, at Staples Career Center in Corpus Christi, came from a partnership between the Lumina and Kresge foundations.

Lumina Foundation is a private foundation based in Indianapolis with a mission to create learning opportunities for everyone. The Kresge Foundation builds opportunities for low-income families. Together, they are giving three Corpus Christi organizations \$275,000 to train workers and place them in skilled jobs. Other T

Talent Hub cities are committed to eliminating disparities in educational outcomes among minorities and low-income populations. The goal is to raise the nation's overall post-high school attainment level to 60 percent of working-age adults by 2025. That includes 18- to 22-year-old students, older adults with college experience who stopped before finishing their studies, and adults with no formal education beyond high school

Close working relationships between organizations in the city created this opportunity for Corpus Christi, said Ken Trevino, president and CEO of Workforce Solutions of the Coastal Bend, when making the announcement. Workforce Solutions is working with Citizens for Educational Excellence and Del Mar College on the Talent Hub program.

The money will target the city's population that has some college but no degrees. That happens to be one-fourth of the city's residents.

"We have employers who are begging for educated and skilled workers," said Dr. Janet Cunningham, executive director of Citizens for Educational Excellence. "Those people can come from Corpus Christi. This money can be used to set them on the pathway."

The jobs for which people will be trained are high-paying, careers that can bring a family out of poverty and solidly into the middle class, said Corpus Christi City Council member Greg Smith.

“These are jobs you can raise a family with and go on to the next level and have a good life,” Smith said at the news conference. “Right now, in Corpus Christi, we have a huge opportunity. It is fantastic to get this grant.”

Newly appointed City Council member Everett Roy was also on hand to share his personal life experience, which speaks to the Talent Hub issue.

“When I was in college, I didn’t have a clue about what I wanted to do in life,” he said. “I had to go into the workforce for a while. I came back to finish my education later. This is a tremendous opportunity for our community and young people.”

Leonard Rivera, dean of continuing education and off-campus programs at Del Mar College, said the school would be working with high school students and adults who have some college but no degrees. Many of the training programs are fast-tracked, including eight-week carpentry and pipeline classes.

“We are going to work tirelessly with this group to get them trained and upscaled to realize the dreams they have,” Rivera said. “One of the reasons why Lumina bestowed this upon us, they see us as innovators, movers, and shakers. They see us making things happen.”

From Del Mar College classes, students will turn to Workforce Solutions for job placement.

“We have all these jobs being added in Corpus Christi and the Coastal Bend,” Trevino said. “We have the challenge of meeting that demand. Our community deserves this grant. The jobs in our community belong to us. The kids in our schools right now should have the first shot at these jobs. We are going to do everything in our power to make that happen.”