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PRESS RELEASE

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West-MEC receives \$84K grant from the Tohono O’odham Nation

Glendale, Ariz. (February, 2022) -- Recently, West-MEC, a career and technical education public school district received a generous grant of \$84,081.70 from the Tohono O’odham Nation. The funds will provide financial assistance toward the costs associated with industry-related credentials and testing for West-MEC students across all four campuses.

West-MEC applied to the Nation’s twelve percent gaming distribution fund for industry-recognized certification tests that bridge student learning and career opportunities. The City of Tolleson supported the school as its fiscal partner as funds are paid to the City before being transferred to West-MEC. The cost of credentials ranges from \$7.95 (Maricopa Food Handlers card) to \$945 (FAA Aviation Mechanic).

Elaborating on the city-school partnership, City Manager of Tolleson, Mr. Reyes Medrano said, “The more diverse pathways we can offer tomorrow’s leaders the more likely we see the enhancement of the quality of life – and West-MEC offers this diversity.”

West-MEC Director of Business Development and Government Affairs, Dr. Spencer Isom who spearheaded the grant said, “I worked with the Tohono O’odham Nation since my days as a west valley city manager and continue to view the Nation as unwavering community supporters, especially related to career and technical education and initiatives supporting our youth.” He added, “West-MEC appreciates the Tohono O’odham Nation for their interest in CTE students as they test and prepare to contribute in very meaningful ways to Arizona’s economy.”

Touching on the impact of the grant, Medrano said, “Historically, 50% of the families served by the City of Tolleson are low to moderate income. Any assistance, whether it is covering this type of credentialing or tuition or offering more affordable education options, only enhances the probability that a student will find success in whatever profession they choose.”

Jessica Putton, the career services director at West-MEC who worked on the grant said, “The grant will allow Career Services to continue removing financial barriers for student certification attainment, specifically in programs not covered by the Arizona Industry Credentials Incentive Grant.”

In the previous semester alone, students at West-MEC earned 1,173 industry credentials. Credentials that are required or preferred by industry are pre-paid for or reimbursed by West-MEC.

About West-MEC:

West-MEC is a career technical education public school district that focuses solely on innovative career and technical education (CTE) programs that prepare students to enter the workforce and pursue continuing education. West-MEC CTE programs provide students opportunities to earn college credit and industry credentials. West-MEC serves more than 37,000 students from 48 high schools, across 3,600 square miles in the northern and western cities of the Phoenix Metropolitan area. West-MEC now also offers adult education programs. Visit www.west-mec.edu for more information about West-MEC's career-driven education opportunities or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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