



Helios Education Foundation supports Achieve60AZ with \$100K grant *Funding will strengthen Alliance & support Arizona's postsecondary education goals*

(January 19, 2017) Phoenix, AZ - Achieve60AZ is pleased to announce its receipt of a grant of \$100,000 from Helios Education Foundation. These funds will be directed toward capacity building, fundraising and other efforts that will help support the alliance in its mission to boost postsecondary attainment and workforce training among Arizonans.

Endorsed by Governor Doug Ducey in September at a joint press conference, Achieve60AZ is a grassroots initiative supported by a statewide coalition of more than 60 community, business, philanthropic, education and other organizations. Achieve60AZ establishes a new statewide goal that at least 60 percent of Arizonans achieve a college degree or certificate by 2030. Currently, just 42 percent of Arizonans complete their education after high school, a rate lower than the national average. The urgency to address this problem is only expected to grow, as more than two-thirds of future jobs are expected to require education beyond high school.

"We can't claim opportunity for all unless all Arizona kids have access to a quality education," said Governor Ducey. "Every child in our state deserves a shot at success, and preparing them to be part of an innovative workforce is key to unlocking their success, especially for our kids in low-income neighborhoods. Achieve60AZ has set a critical goal for our state to increase educational attainment, and I am proud of the generosity of Helios to fund this forward-thinking initiative."

"The most important thing our state can do to secure its economic future is to increase the number of Arizonans with a postsecondary education," said Helios President and CEO Paul J. Luna. "Helios is proud to support this statewide goal of increasing the percentage of adults with a professional certificate or college degree to 60 percent by 2030. It will take all of us working together to achieve this ambitious goal, but I'm confident we're up to the task."

As part of the grant, Helios Education Foundation has named fiduciary directors for Achieve60AZ. Part of their responsibilities include expanding community outreach and working with stakeholders to write a long term strategic plan to boost statewide educational attainment. Directors are Rich Nickel, College Success Arizona president and CEO; Eileen Klein, Arizona Board of Regents president; Maria Harper-Marinick, Maricopa Community Colleges chancellor; and Vince Yanez, Helios Education Foundation vice president, Arizona Latino Student Success Initiatives.

"Recent College Success Arizona research shows that if educational attainment rates align with the future labor needs of Arizona, we will generate economic growth that is double our current rate. The generous initial support of Helios and other community partners lets us purposefully design the

Achieve60AZ initiative and facilitates our pursuit to help all Arizonans enjoy the tremendous social and economic benefits associated with a more highly educated state,” Nickel said.

While Achieve60AZ is just one of many efforts in Arizona aimed at advancing education, it is unique in its broad, grassroots and holistic approach – underscoring the strong connections between commerce and education, growth and equity. Studies show that a more educated workforce, with training and credentials past high school, is a critical indicator of a state’s economic health and long-term viability. If 60 percent of Arizonans aged 25-64 obtain a degree or credential past high school, the state could see an additional \$3.5 billion added to its economy; improve business-recruitment efforts by providing a better workforce; increase per-capita earnings; and reduce poverty among Arizonans

“If we’re serious about closing the skills gap to help Arizonans compete for good jobs, we can’t wait,” said Eileen Klein, President of the Arizona Board of Regents. “With this crucial assistance from Helios Education Foundation, we are in the process of developing strategies that will help more Arizonans learn new skills and continue their education beyond high school so they can be successful. This work is truly an investment in the future of Arizona. We thank Helios and are proud to work with them, Governor Ducey, and our community, education, business and other partners as part of this critical Achieve60AZ effort.”

To learn more about the initiative, visit <http://achieve60az.com/>.

About Helios Education Foundation

Helios Education Foundation is dedicated to creating opportunities for individuals in Arizona and Florida to achieve a postsecondary education. Our work is driven by our four fundamental beliefs in Community, Equity, Investment and Partnership, and we invest in initiatives across the full education continuum.

In Arizona, where Latino students comprise the largest percentage of the K-12 public school population, the Foundation is implementing its Arizona Latino Student Success initiative focused on preparing all students — especially students in high poverty, underserved Latino communities — for success. Through our Florida Regional Student Success Initiative, Helios is helping underserved, minority, first-generation students from the state’s large population centers in Miami, Orlando and Tampa achieve a postsecondary education.

Since 2006, the Foundation has invested over \$185 million in education programs and initiatives in both states. To learn more about our efforts, visit us online at www.helios.org.