



**WOODY AND GAYLE HUNT
FAMILY FOUNDATION**



For Immediate Distribution

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**WOODY AND GAYLE HUNT FAMILY FOUNDATION, EL PASO COUNTY,
EPISO/BORDER INTERFAITH EXPAND COVID RELIEF EFFORTS WITH NEW
\$600K FUND FOR FAMILIES**

The El Paso County Recovery Fund is providing 245 families impacted by the pandemic with \$2,400 and support by national anti-poverty group UpTogether

El Paso, TX -- Today, the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation, in partnership with El Paso County, EPISO/Border Interfaith and UpTogether (formerly the Family Independence Initiative) announced that they are working with families in El Paso County that were financially impacted by COVID-19 through a new recovery fund. The El Paso County Recovery Fund is providing 245 eligible families in El Paso County with an upfront payment of \$1,200, followed by five monthly cash payments of \$240 from October to February 2022. Families will also have access to UpTogether's online platform, the UpTogether Community, where families can connect with each other to craft solutions and work together to build pathways out of poverty.

"Unfortunately, COVID-19 is still here. I am grateful that El Paso County, the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation, and UpTogether are as well," said Father Pablo Matta of EPISO/Border Interfaith. "Even as our region regains jobs, schools reopen and food insecurity lessens, we need to continue to help families, as thousands in El Paso are still trying to get back on their feet. More public and private investment in this effort would help even more families without other aid stay housed and fed."

Over the past 20 years, UpTogether has invested more than \$135M in over 200,000 households facing or experiencing poverty. The national nonprofit organization highlights, invests in, and accelerates the initiatives that people in historically under- communities are taking to improve their lives and move up, together. This strength-based approach recognizes that people living with low incomes are already taking actions to improve their lives. UpTogether simply invests in their initiatives with unrestricted dollars and provides a platform where they can connect with others to accelerate their efforts.

"More than 18 percent of the population of El Paso County live at or below the poverty rate," said Ricardo Samaniego, El Paso County Judge. "When your entire paycheck is dedicated to paying rent and utilities or putting food on the table, there is no room for error. The El Paso County Recovery Fund will allow us to work closely with families in need of a helping hand by giving them innovative tools to change their lives for the better."

This is a joint endeavor. The County of El Paso has committed \$300,000 to the fund, the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation is contributing \$100,000, and UpTogether is adding another \$200,000 from private philanthropy. EPISO/Border Interfaith connected families in the rural and unincorporated parts of the county who may struggle to find work, pay rent, buy food, and access reliable transportation to the El Paso County Recovery Fund.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is still affecting the economic livelihood of so many El Pasoans and their quality of life. That is why we are proud to partner with El Paso County and UpTogether in investing in the resilience and ingenuity of El Paso families,” said Woody L. Hunt, chairman of the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation. “With the right financial and social support, these families will be able to not only deal with the financial impact of the pandemic but also, we hope, find long-term economic prosperity.”

This fund is the second poverty relief effort since 2020, when the Foundation announced a half million dollar investment over the next five years to help local families struggling with poverty achieve economic prosperity and independence.

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About the County of El Paso:

Delivering sound and exceptional public services to the people of El Paso County through judicious, efficient, and responsive government, and the conscientious development of ideas that produce compassionate solutions to our community’s obligations, challenges, and ever changing demands.

About the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation:

The Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation is one of the Borderplex region’s preeminent private family foundations focused on creating a globally competitive region. Since 1987, it has made grants and commitments of more than \$111 million in individuals and institutions working to transform education, improve healthcare, advance regional economic and cultural development, and create a greater quality of life for all Borderplex residents.

About UpTogether:

UpTogether is a national nonprofit that highlights, accelerates and invests in the initiative people in financially under-resourced communities are taking to improve their lives and move up, together. Through its signature online platform, the UpTogether Community, individuals and families can build resources, strengthen their social networks, and access unrestricted capital, so they, their friends, family and neighbors can support each other while reaching their financial and personal goals. Together, with its partners, UpTogether is championing a community-led movement to boost long-term economic and social mobility in communities that have been undervalued for far too long. To learn more, visit UpTogether.org.

About the El Paso Interreligious Sponsoring Organization (EPISO)/Border Interfaith:

The El Paso Interreligious Sponsoring Organization (EPISO) / Border Interfaith is a broad-based organization affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation that has developed local leadership to address quality of life issues for nearly 40 years. It works across religious, racial, ethnic, economic, generational and neighborhood lines and has successfully leveraged hundreds of millions of dollars for colonia infrastructure, education reform and parental engagement, neighborhood improvements, immigration, wage theft and payday lending protection, and workforce training for the good of the whole community. EPISO/Border Interfaith builds relational power to strengthen our communities and bring about a more just society.