



## Helping Families in Need: Financial Lifeline for the Borderplex

**El Paso, Texas (December 18, 2024)** – One hundred and twenty families in El Paso are receiving a much-needed financial boost through the El Paso Family Stabilization Grant Fund. This six-month initiative, launched in October and running through March 2025, provides \$500 monthly to each participant to help stabilize households, create opportunities, and foster economic mobility. Funded by a \$300,000 investment from the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation and \$100,000 from an anonymous donor, the program was developed in partnership with UpTogether and EPiSO/Border Interfaith.

“This program empowers hardworking families in El Paso by giving them the financial flexibility to address urgent needs while working toward long-term goals,” said Woody L. Hunt, Chairman of the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation, which has contributed a total of \$500,000 to direct cash initiatives in El Paso. “By providing a financial lifeline, we’re not just stabilizing families—we’re investing in the future of our community.”

Participants were selected from El Paso County households with incomes below 80% of the area median. Surveys indicate that 61% of recipients have at least one child, nearly three-fourths live below the federal poverty line, one-quarter have a disability, and almost half are employed.

EPiSO/Border Interfaith played a vital role in making this initiative possible. Through their deep connections with El Paso communities and government institutions, they identified eligible participants from high-need areas across the city and county.

“This program shows the incredible impact that trust, collaboration, and direct investment in families can achieve,” said Dolores De Avila, Leader with EPiSO/Border Interfaith. “We are committed to continuing efforts like this to empower families and strengthen our community.”

This is the third direct cash initiative launched by UpTogether and EPiSO/Border Interfaith, collectively benefiting 1,400 families across El Paso.

### Real Stories, Real Impact

The program is already making a difference for participants like Yeraizaed Torrez, a 22-year-old retail worker caring for his younger sister. “This has been a blessing. I was able to fix my car, which is helping me explore better job opportunities and build a stable career,” said

Torrez. "The financial support is giving me the breathing room I need to create a better situation for myself and my family."

Housing stability and quality of life are also priorities for many recipients. Two-thirds of participants report spending at least 30% of their income on housing and 23% reported spending more than half of their income on the basic need. Through the El Paso Family Stabilization Grant Fund, one-third of participants prioritized improving their living situations.

"UpTogether has proven that direct cash investments are a powerful tool for empowering families to take control of their futures," said Ivanna Neri, Senior Director of Partnerships at UpTogether, a national systems change organization working to change how the U.S. addresses poverty. "This program shows that when families are trusted with resources, they make thoughtful decisions that benefit their households and their communities."

### Looking Ahead

UpTogether will continue collecting insights from participants to evaluate the program's impact on housing stability, employment opportunities, and overall well-being. These findings will guide future efforts to address poverty and promote economic mobility in El Paso and beyond.

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#### Contact:

Rachel Barnhart

Media Relations Director

UpTogether

rachelbarnhart@uptogether.org

585-755-8510

**About the Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation:** The Woody and Gayle Hunt Family Foundation is one of the Borderplex's private family foundations focused on creating a globally competitive region. Since 1987, it has made grants and commitments of over \$169.1 million to institutions working to transform education, improve healthcare, advance regional economic and cultural development, and create a greater quality of life for all Borderplex residents. Over 90% of the Foundation's total giving has supported organizations and initiatives in the Borderplex region.

**About EPISO/Border Interfaith:** El Paso Interreligious Sponsoring Organization (EPISO) / Border Interfaith is a broad-based community organization in El Paso, Texas, made up of faith and neighborhood institutions. Affiliated with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), we work across religious, racial, and economic lines to create opportunities for ordinary people to

make meaningful change, hold elected officials accountable, and build a more just, vibrant, bilingual border community.

**About UpTogether:** Founded in 2001 in Oakland, [UpTogether](#) is a national systems change organization working to disrupt the status quo approach to addressing poverty. Since 2020, UpTogether has distributed more than \$210 million to more than 200,000 individuals and families. We trust and invest in people.