



BILL HASLAM
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HASLAM ANNOUNCES DRIVE TO 55 CAPACITY FUND GRANTS
Funds Will Help Provide Opportunity and Growth to College Students across Tennessee

NASHVILLE – Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam today announced the recipients of the Drive to 55 Capacity Fund, an initiative designed to support colleges and universities as enrollment increases since the launch of Tennessee Promise.

“Tennessee has seen unprecedented numbers of students enrolling in college for the first time. As Tennessee Promise has made college a reality for so many of our students, we are committed to providing our institutions with the resources to support them,” Haslam said. “The Drive to 55 Capacity Fund assists our campuses in getting these students to and through college so we can continue to close the skills gap in Tennessee’s workforce.”

The fund awarded a total of \$24.3 million to ten colleges and universities. The projects funded include a new TCAT training facility in Anderson County through the Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) Knoxville, an advanced robotics training facility for Motlow State Community College, and an expansion of the nursing program at Dyersburg State Community College.

First-time freshman enrollment at Tennessee’s colleges and universities grew by 10 percent in 2015, including a 25 percent increase at community colleges and a 20 percent increase at TCATs. Tennessee also saw a historic year-over-year growth in the state’s college-going rate in 2015, increasing 4.6 percentage points in just one year.

“As we have expanded access to higher education through the Drive to 55, it is crucial that we ensure colleges and universities have the resources to prepare students for the workforce,” Mike Krause, executive director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, said. “The process of awarding these funds was very competitive and each funded program will provide opportunity and growth to students across our state.”

A total of 44 proposals were submitted, requesting a combined \$120.9 million for construction or renovation or for program expansion. All projects seeking funding were required to demonstrate need for building capacity to respond to student enrollment and statewide workforce demands.

Proposals were reviewed by a team of readers from across state government, including the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Tennessee Board of Regents, and the University of Tennessee



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system. Based on reader scores and final approval from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, projects were selected for funding.

List of Funded Projects

| Institution | Project | Award Amount |
|------------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Dyersburg State Community College | Building Capacity for Nursing Program | \$1,075,000 |
| East Tennessee State University | Sevierville Program Expansion | \$818,000 |
| Motlow State Community College | Advanced Robotics Training Center | \$5,500,000 |
| TCAT Crump | Chester County Welding Program Expansion | \$114,380 |
| TCAT Harriman | Loudon County Instructional Service Center Allied Health Academy | \$264,000 |
| TCAT Knoxville | TCAT Training Facility in Anderson County | \$5,700,000 |
| TCAT Memphis | Bartlett Satellite Campus | \$4,000,000 |
| TCAT Pulaski | Campus Expansion for Advanced Manufacturing, Industrial Maintenance, and Special Industry Training | \$3,171,350 |
| Tennessee Technological University | Tennessee Center for Poultry Science Excellence | \$2,070,000 |
| Volunteer State Community College | Warf Science Building Addition | \$1,560,000 |

About the Drive to 55

In 2013, Governor Haslam launched the Drive to 55 to increase the number of Tennesseans with a postsecondary degree or certificate to 55 percent by 2025. As a result, the Drive to 55 has established the Tennessee Promise program, the nation's first scholarship and mentorship program that provides high school graduates last-dollar scholarships to attend two years of community or technical college free of tuition and fees; reduced the number of college freshmen requiring remediation through the SAILS (Seamless Alignment and Integrated Learning Support) program; provided free technical college for adults through TCAT Reconnect Grants; created Tennessee Reconnect + Complete to help more adults return to college to complete unfinished degrees; developed a more comprehensive state approach to serving student veterans; and leveraged technology to enhance classroom instruction and college advising.

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