

# Trellis Foundation 2024 Annual Report

## TRELLIS FOUNDATION 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



## A Message from Trellis Foundation

Dear Friends, Partners & Colleagues:

We at Trellis Foundation are proud to share this annual report that showcases our work during fiscal year 2024. Working in collaboration with our grantee partners in Texas the theme of shared learning and connection was prominent. In addition, the opportunity for increased giving impacted the work with our grantee partners, which lead to strategic and planned operational growth for the Trellis Foundation.

Helping to amplify the work and learning from our grantee partners, Trellis Foundation hosted two significant convenings this year. In March, more than 200 attendees gathered in Austin to hear from higher education leaders, researchers, and policymakers about the connections between

student mental wellbeing and postsecondary success at Trellis Foundation's [2024 Higher Education Policy Summit](#). The following month, the Foundation co-hosted [a statewide convening](#) that brought together stakeholders working to expand access to higher education in prison. One of the most exciting things we get to experience in our work is the exposure and expansion we can facilitate – elevating the practices and strategies that work best for students and that help transform systems.

In our continuing evolution from a grantmaking public charity to a private foundation, the Trellis Foundation awarded \$11 million in grants for FY 2024, an increase of \$7 million over the prior year. These additional resources allowed for greater support across all of the Foundation's [priority areas](#) as well as launching a general operating support initiative serving 26 nonprofit grantee partners, 18 of whom were new to the Foundation.

Finally, our staff grew from three to seven employees, reflecting the commitment of our Board to support grantmaking that values the learning that happens in relationship with our grantee partners. Our best work happens in community with those who believe our destinies are bound together. To that end, we couldn't be more proud to share the reflections in this report with you and to continue our commitment to stay the course for the students and families we all serve together.



**Dora Ann Verde, Chair**

Trellis Foundation Board of Directors



**Kristin J. Boyer**

Trellis Foundation President & CEO

# Grantmaking Overview

Total giving for Trellis Foundation's 2024 fiscal year was **\$11 million**.

Active Grants

Average & Most Common Grant Award Size

Awarded As General Operating Support

Multi-Year (24 Or More Months)

First-Time Grantees

## Grants by Focus Area



### Holistic Student Supports

89 Active Grants;  
\$6.3 million



### Streamlined Student Pathways

41 Active Grants;  
\$1.2 million



### Reconnection for Returning Learners

34 Active Grants;  
\$2.2 million



### Cross-Focus Commitments

25 Active Grants;  
\$1.3 million



Meet Our Leadership and Staff

## Holistic Student Support



In 2022, Trellis Foundation announced the selection of 10 higher education institutions across Texas to join its [Postsecondary Mental Health and Wellbeing Learning Community](#). These institutions received grant funding to implement unique programs to support student mental health. Over the life of this two-year project, the learning community engaged in curated learning experiences and collaborated to address common challenges. The Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute facilitated the community's activities with support from three national technical assistance providers: the JED Foundation, the Steve Fund, and Active Minds.

The learning community celebrated the culmination of their efforts in April 2024 during a convening held in conjunction with the [Trellis Foundation's 2024 Higher Education Policy Summit](#) in Austin, TX. This event was attended by 240 higher education leaders, practitioners, and policymakers.

While this learning community has ended, the work supporting postsecondary mental health as a student success strategy continues with a new partnership between the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute and the Texas Success Center at the Texas Association of Community Colleges. The [Minding College Minds initiative](#) is supported jointly by Trellis Foundation, Greater Texas Foundation, Texas Pioneer Foundation, Ascendium, and ECMC Foundation.









## Learning Community Members



ALAMO  
COLLEGES  
DISTRICT



SAN JACINTO<sup>SM</sup>  
COLLEGE



VICTORIA  
COLLEGE  
Est. 1925

PAUL QUINN



AUSTIN  
COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE  
DISTRICT

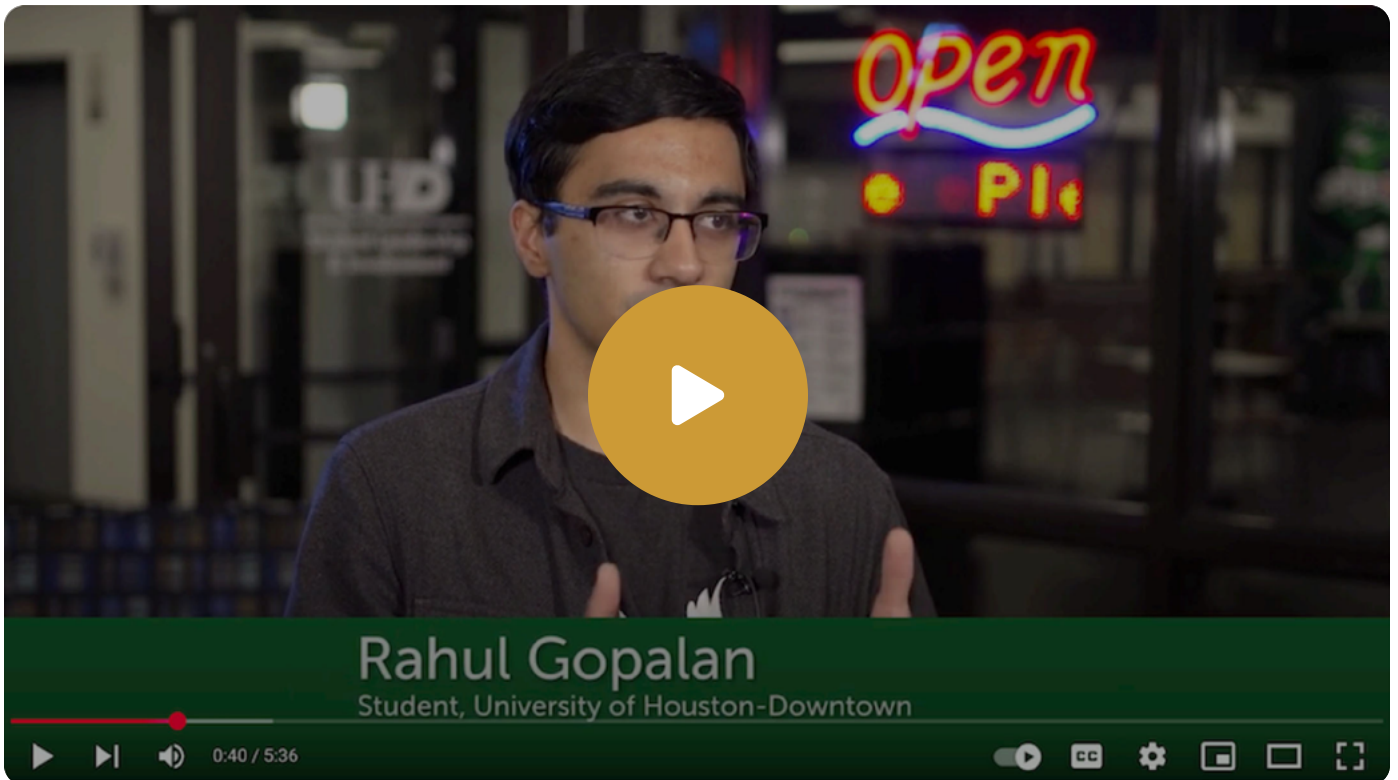


Sam Houston  
State University



University of Houston  
DOWNTOWN

The University of Texas  
Rio Grande Valley



[Navigating the Mental Health Provider Shortage in Higher Education](#)

[Supporting Postsecondary Mental Health and Wellbeing Through Partnership: Three Key Themes](#)

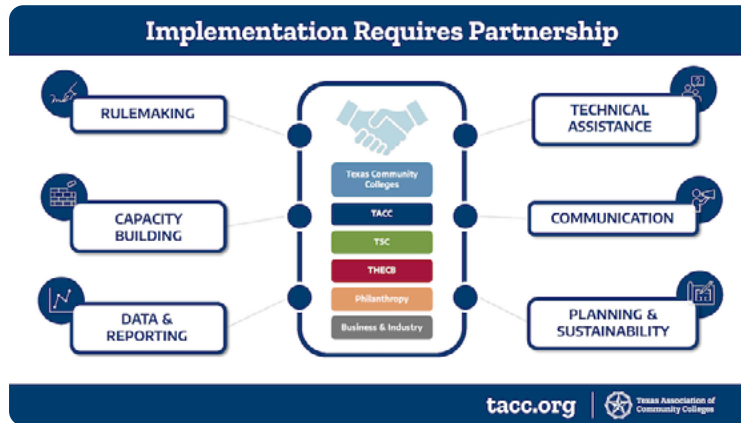
[Key Learnings from the Postsecondary Mental Health and Wellbeing Learning Community](#)

[Postsecondary Mental Health and Wellbeing Learning Community](#)

[Trellis Foundation's 2024 Higher Education Policy Summit](#)

[Minding College Minds Initiative](#)

# Streamlined Student Pathways



Over the past several years, the Trellis Foundation has supported the Texas Association of Community Colleges (TACC) in advocating for the unique and critical needs of rural communities in Texas. With this support, TACC has influenced the Commission on Community College Finance discussions, developed policy recommendations, and championed transformational reforms to community college funding in Texas, resulting in the passage of [HB 8](#) by the Texas Legislature during the 88<sup>th</sup> regular session.

The Trellis Foundation has continued this partnership with TACC to assist in implementing this historic and transformative community college funding model. This collaboration includes providing technical assistance to colleges and executing a comprehensive communication plan, “[Building the Next-Generation Workforce](#).” This plan aims to enhance the impact of Texas community colleges by emphasizing their vital roles in academic progression, workforce development, and economic growth.

## Trellis Foundation Support for HB 8 Implementation:

# \$250,000

## Leveraged from National Funders:

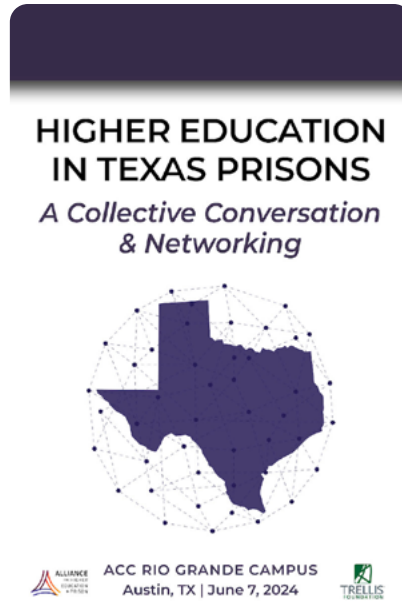
# \$1 MILLION

[What is HB 8?](#)

[Building A Next Generation Workforce | Texas Association of Community Colleges](#)

[TACC Presentation: House Bill 8: Overview of Policy and Implementation](#)

# Reconnection for Returning Learners



At Trellis Foundation, we are committed to making the promise of higher education a reality for all students. We recognize the overrepresentation of Black and Hispanic students in the justice system, which makes supporting educational opportunities for individuals who are currently or formerly incarcerated essential to our equity goals.

The reinstatement of access to federal Pell Grants for incarcerated students provides additional resources for both students and institutions. By combining increased access to federal financial aid with our state's commitment to a Talent Strong Texas, we can create a landscape of equitable access and options for incarcerated students across the state.



As Trellis Foundation expands our work in prison education programs and re-entry education supports, we understand the learning curve associated with working in the criminal justice and justice reform sectors. We were fortunate to have Alexa Garza join our team as a graduate fellow in 2023. Her lived experience and policy advocacy training significantly enhanced our knowledge and strategy. Alexa concluded her fellowship by developing a new resource for our sector: [“Supporting Reentry Programs: A Guide for Program Officers.”](#) This guide aims to share what we have learned and assist other program officers in their own learning journeys.

On June 7, 2024, Trellis Foundation was honored to partner with the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison to [gather stakeholders from across Texas](#) and colleagues from around the country to plan for the future of economic mobility and opportunities for incarcerated individuals in our state. We aim to do this with intentionality, creating pathways to success across both the units and the geography of Texas.

We extend special thanks to the planning committee members: Jenny Achilles (Trellis Foundation), Ved Price and Dr. Susie Bannon (Alliance for Higher Education in Prison), Alexa Garza (Ed Trust Texas); Dr. Mel Webb (University of Texas at San Antonio); and Dr. Donna Zuniga (Lee College Huntsville Center).

[A Program Officer’s Guide to Supporting Formerly Incarcerated Individuals](#)

[Lee College Awarded \\$750,000 to Launch Innovative Pathway Program for Incarcerated Students – Trellis Foundation](#)

[Unlocking Opportunities: Advancing Higher Education in Prison – Trellis Foundation](#)

[Statewide Convening for Higher Education in Texas Prisons](#)