



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UTRGV Market Lab Partnership Expands Resources for Local Entrepreneurs

Program offers Marketing Skills, Coaching, Research, and Strategic Planning

The City of McAllen has partnered with The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley's Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship to bring the *UTRGV Market Lab* to the McAllen Main Library, expanding access to free business development resources for local entrepreneurs and small business owners.

The six-week program will provide the first 30 accepted businesses with personalized coaching, market research, branding support, and strategic planning at no cost. Participants will also be paired with UTRGV student consulting teams for semester-long projects focused on market research, business strategy, financial analysis, and marketing.

"We're excited to bring the UTRGV Market Lab to McAllen and provide our local entrepreneurs with access to resources that can help them grow and succeed," said City Manager Isaac J. Tawil. "Small businesses are the backbone of our local economy, and we're grateful to partner with UTRGV to offer this exceptional opportunity to the business community. By investing in our entrepreneurs, we're investing in the future of McAllen."

The program combines classroom learning with real-world business consulting, allowing students to apply their knowledge while helping businesses make data-driven decisions and strengthen their long-term growth.

Dr. Giorgio Gotti, dean of the Robert C. Vackar College of Business and Entrepreneurship, said the Market Lab program reflects UTRGV's commitment to experiential learning. "One of the best ways to prepare students for successful careers is to give them opportunities to solve real business challenges before they graduate," Gotti said. "Through Market Lab, students work alongside local businesses, applying their knowledge, developing professional skills and making a meaningful impact on our community. This collaboration benefits our students, our business partners, and the continued growth of the Rio Grande Valley."

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Hosted at the McAllen Main Library, the program is open to entrepreneurs, startups, innovators, and small business owners looking to launch or expand their businesses. Through coaching, mentorship, and hands-on consulting, participants will develop practical strategies tailored to their unique business goals.

Since its inception, Market Lab has served more than 70 businesses, with 92 percent of participants reporting increased market clarity and confidence in their business direction.

Applications for the Fall 2026 cohort are now being accepted. For additional information or to apply, visit <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=pjYEmd-HHEmRJr6kfiIJw04M0otkuJDoY7DWhlh3ZpUQUNGUk5KTjM0M0IQOFVINUpLMUNLSEdJWi4u&route=shorturl>

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About the City of McAllen

Founded in 1904 and incorporated in 1911, the City of McAllen has grown from a small agricultural community into one of the most vibrant and fastest-growing cities along the U.S.–Mexico border. Known as the “City of Palms,” McAllen serves as a hub for international trade, retail, tourism, and culture in the Rio Grande Valley. Today, the city employs more than 2,600 dedicated public servants across 41 departments, delivering essential services to a community of more than 150,000 residents. McAllen city leaders remain committed to transparent governance, fiscal responsibility, and enhancing quality of life through innovation, infrastructure, and community engagement. For more information, visit www.mcallen.net and follow us on social media @cityofmcallen