



## Taco Bell Foundation for Teens and “Graduate to Go” Fact Sheet

Despite overall progress when it comes to improving teen graduation rates, the sobering fact remains that three out of every 10 students in U.S. public schools still fail to finish high school with a diploma. That amounts to 1.3 million students lost from the graduation pipeline every year, or almost 7,200 students lost every day.<sup>1</sup> Although the reasons for dropping out vary among teens, the obligation of getting a job to support themselves or their family is the biggest obstacle teen’s face when it comes to graduating from high school.<sup>2</sup>

### Mission:

The Taco Bell Foundation for Teens (TBFT) is committed to inspiring America’s Teens to graduate from high school and become caring, educated and productive adults. We fulfill this mission by providing at-risk youth with mentors and real-world experiences that will motivate them to stay in school and achieve more in life.

### Vision:

Led by our **Graduate To Go** national campaign, the Foundation combines Taco Bell’s passion, creativity and relentlessness to the graduation crisis through the mobilization of customers, partners, franchisees and employees to support organizations that are crucial to helping end the teen graduation crisis. The ultimate goal is to reach 100,000 teen annually through real-world experiences and help cut the high school dropout rate in half by 2018.

### About Graduate to Go:

**Graduate To Go** is a multi-year campaign led by the Taco Bell Foundation for Teens to shine a spotlight on the high school dropout crisis and encourage teens to get their diploma. Actor/Producer Mark Wahlberg serves as the national **Graduate to Go** ambassador.

The initiative also serves to fund real-world experiences, such as job training and college preparation, proven to motivate teens to stay in school. Already this year the Foundation is distributing \$1.8 million in local grants to nearly 300 organizations to support programs designed to provide teens with an experience of life after high school.

### How the Foundation Works:

- **Direct funding** – Historically, the Foundation funds grants to schools and youth organizations. TBFT is the largest teen program donor to Boys & Girls Clubs of America, giving more than \$28 million to support teen programming since 1995. In addition, TBFT provides grants to other worthy programs that are designed to help teens stay in school and on the path to graduation.
- **Convener of Solutions** – The Foundation collaborates with national organizations like the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation and Boys & Girls Clubs of America to join together and form an even stronger alliance to tackle the teen drop-outs in our communities.

### How to Support the Campaign:

- **Donate \$1.00** – Taco Bell’s 2010 national fundraiser to support the **Graduate To Go** initiative will take place in participating Taco Bell restaurants nationwide from June 3-June 15, 2010. During that period, Taco Bell will invite customers to donate \$1.00 in exchange for a free taco coupon.
- **Log on** – Log on to [www.graduatetogo.com](http://www.graduatetogo.com) to learn more about the teen graduation epidemic, Foundation initiatives, and what you can do to get involved and make a difference.

<sup>1</sup> “Diplomas Count 2009: Broader Horizons - The Challenge of College Readiness for All Students,” Education Week and the Editorial Projects in Education (EPE) Research Center (June 9, 2009)

<sup>2</sup> Teen Graduation Crisis Survey” – Taco Bell Foundation for Teens (March 2009)