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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Cambridge College Receives \$25,000 from Verizon Foundation
for Ladder to Language Program**

CAMBRIDGE— Cambridge College is improving literacy skills in Massachusetts with help from the Verizon Foundation. Verizon has awarded the college a \$25,000 grant to build upon the successful Ladder to Language Program, an English as a Second Language (ESL) training program which aids in the education of adult English language learners. Verizon will present the check to Cambridge College during the Ladder to Language Graduation on **Tuesday, August 21st at 6:30 p.m. at the Cambridge College Lawrence Regional Center, 60 Island Street, Lawrence.**

The Verizon grant will enable the college to expand the Ladder to Language program to offer pre-college computer education and literacy services for adult English Language Learners (ELL) in the City of Lawrence and the greater Merrimack Valley. Sandy Blanes, Director of the Center for ELL Support Services at Cambridge College's Lawrence Regional Center, said, "The Center's new state of the art Language Lab will allow for more accelerated, individualized learning. Ladder to Language will now be able to help more ELL adults to reach specific goals such as accent reduction, test preparation, reading and comprehension skills through the latest innovative software in the Lab."

"Cambridge College is honored to work with our community partners and funders in transforming the lives of so many ELL adults who are advancing in their personal and career goals through the Ladder to Language Program," said Dolores Calaf, Director of the Cambridge College Lawrence Regional Center. "We are part of a community that is in desperate need of more advanced ESL programs, and Ladder to Language has become an oasis for the city and the region. Three years ago we started with an idea, and today we have a model that has opened doors to launching the first Center for ELL Support Services at Cambridge College."

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Stephanie Lee, Verizon Regional Director of Public Affairs, said, “Literacy provides the key to opportunity. Verizon is proud to partner with Cambridge College to provide individuals from diverse backgrounds the ESL training necessary to build happy and productive lives here.”

Ladder to Language began as a pilot program at the Cambridge College Lawrence Regional Center in October 2004. It is a three-semester ESL and job skills training program developed by Cambridge College in collaboration with Lawrence Community Works, Lawrence Literacy Works and Andover Bread Loaf. The program’s aim is to boost students’ economic mobility by providing them with English language proficiency. Successful completion of the program prepares students to enter college and advance in their chosen fields.

The Verizon Foundation has donated a total of \$150,000 in ESL technology grants to seven nonprofit organizations to foster innovative literacy programs that expand their reach into diverse communities through the use of broadband and video technologies. In addition to Cambridge College, Verizon also awarded grants to the Boston Adult Literacy Fund, Framingham Adult ESL Plus, Massachusetts Career Development Institute, Northern Essex Community College, United Neighbors of Cleghorn, and the Worcester Public Library. The Verizon Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Verizon Communications, is committed to improving literacy and K-12 education; fostering awareness and prevention of domestic violence; and promoting the use of technology in health-care delivery. For more information, visit www.verizon.com/foundation.

Founded in 1971, Cambridge College is a private, non-profit institution dedicated to providing academically excellent, time-efficient, and cost-effective higher education for a diverse population of working adults for whom those opportunities may have been limited or denied. Cambridge College has sites in Cambridge, Springfield, and Lawrence, MA; Chesapeake and South Boston, VA; Augusta, GA; Ontario, CA; and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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