



Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement



VIDA helps low-income, unemployed and underemployed Valley residents get the skills they need to secure a high-skilled, high-wage job.

# 2007 Annual Report

**VIDA's mission is to formulate new institutional relationships in the Rio Grande Valley that simultaneously address employers' needs for skilled workers and link the area's unemployed and underemployed with high-skilled, high-wage jobs identified in the region.**

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS



- **Chair David Oliveira, Attorney Roerig, Oliveira & Fisher**
- **Vice-Chair Estela Soza Garza, Lecturer University of Texas-Pan American**
- **Secretary Monsignor Bert Diaz, St. Luke's Catholic Church**
- **Treasurer Eduardo Anaya, Attorney Law Offices of Eduardo Anaya**
- **Tony Aguirre, Owner Broadway Hardware**
- **Cleve Breedlove, Owner LaChaChaLaca Inn**
- **Father John Lasseigne, St. John the Baptist**
- **Carmen Limas, Ex-Participant**
- **Linda McKenna, VP Government Affairs Valley Baptist Health Systems**
- **Elizabeth Valdez, Lead Organizer Valley Interfaith (Ex-Officio)**

Dear Valued Partner,

The 2007-2008 Program Year marks a very special period for both myself and the organization. Most notably, it will be my last as VIDA's Executive Director. As I prepare to embark on to other professional challenges, the Board and Staff are continuing to serve the needs of the Rio Grande Valley businesses and residents with the same level of passion and commitment as ever.

It should go without saying that this was not an easy decision to make but I leave feeling proud of the things we've been able to accomplish with your help. Thanks to you we've brought VIDA closer to assisting nearly 4,000 participants, secured an additional \$20 million in funding, expanded the number of cities funding the agency from one to eleven and received numerous accolades including the Texas Workforce Commission's Transitional Workforce Award (2005) and the Society of Human Resource Managers Best Place to Work in Hidalgo County (2005). VIDA was also named among the finalist for the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Agency's Best Practice Award (2004 & 2006), U.S. Department of Labor's Recognition Excellence Award (2007) and Texas Department of Economic Development's Best Practice Award (2002).

As you are undoubtedly aware, VIDA has an impressive and committed board and a knowledge and dedicated staff. I am comforted in knowing that the agency is well positioned to continue on this upward track despite a change in leadership. I want to thank each of you for your ongoing and continued support of the organization. I also want to thank you for having played a key role in helping VIDA become such an important part of addressing the workforce and economic development needs in South Texas.

Again, I have greatly enjoyed our working relationship and look forward to continuing to work with you in helping to make the Rio Grande Valley a better place to live and work.

Humbly yours,

**Dominique Halaby, D.P.A.**  
*Executive Director*



In 1993, various members of the Southwest Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) began working with local business leadership, to establish a new model (QUEST) for economic development. People were placed at the center of this model and a system was developed to educate them for high-skilled, high-wage jobs.

It was from this model that the Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA) was founded in September of 1995 by a group of Valley Interfaith leaders committed to increasing economic opportunities for area residents. Valley Interfaith, a faith-based grassroots organization dedicated to advocating for the needs of area residents, partnered with key business leaders to create an independent organization to serve as a labor market intermediary that would simultaneously increase employment opportunities to area residents and meet area employers' needs for quality, skilled labor.

VIDA was created to develop and implement:

- A market driven approach to provide workforce services that contribute to sustained economic growth for the local area and provides access to quality jobs paying a living wage for the population served;
- An enhanced set of workforce services that lead to significantly better jobs and earnings for the targeted population residing in the Valley's Empowerment Zone than is possible under current workforce service strategies; and
- An integrated approach to providing participant services based on a one-stop model that offers easy access, maximum flexibility and services tailored to the needs of those seeking assistance.

Since its inception, the organization has helped over 3,800 Valley residents get the skills they need to become self-sufficient. Completers of the program in 2006 went on to earn a starting average wage of \$13.37 per hour.



VIDA seeks to achieve its organizational purpose by creating a market-driven workforce system that will make the Lower Rio Grande Valley more competitive in the global economy and provide access to quality jobs.

In pursuit of this purpose, VIDA is committed to:

***Developing quality job training programs;***

***Collaborating with public and private partners;***

***Developing a strong community outreach network;***

***Fostering a strong sense of civic responsibility;***

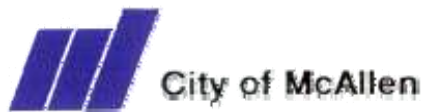
***Creating a supportive work environment; and***

***Providing compassionate service.***

## *VIDA STAFF*

**Dominique Halaby, D.P.A.,  
Executive Director**  
**Brenda Alaniz, Senior Case  
Manager Assistant**  
**Priscilla Alvarez, Director of  
Community and Philanthropic  
Affairs**  
**Juan Baldivia, Finance Manager**  
**Onieda Castillo, Case Manager**  
**Raymundo Castillo, Case  
Manager**  
**Belinda Garcia, Bookkeeper**  
**Irma Garcia, Operations  
Manager**  
**Laura Garcia-Lopez, Program  
Manager**  
**Norberto Garcia, Case Manager**  
**Elizabeth Gutierrez, Program  
Manager**  
**Eva Hernandez, Case Manager**  
**Celina Leal, Case Manager  
Assistant**  
**Karla Montoya, Case Manager**  
**Martha Morales, Receptionist**  
**Lionel Quiroga, MIS**  
**Isidro Ramos, Director of  
Special Projects**  
**Denise Reyna, Case Manager**  
**Sister Maria Sanchez, ESL  
Consultant**  
**Cruz Villarreal, Operations  
Assistant**

A key contributor to VIDA’s success has been the support it receives from the local community. This funding is primarily through the cities’ economic development entities and is a key factor to enhancing the economic opportunities for area residents.



An increasing number of relatively high skill/ high wage employment opportunities requiring occupation – specific skills are ever presently developing in South Texas. Rather than having these jobs filled by skilled workers from other states and/or regions, or to lose these jobs altogether due to the low number of skilled workers in this area, VIDA employs a sectoral strategy focusing on nursing and allied health, education and social services and manufacturing and technology. Working with community partners, South Texas College, Texas State Technical College, the University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College, the University of Texas–Pan American and Region One Education Service Center, VIDA has developed a three-tiered

community-based workforce system to better serve the residents and employers of the Rio Grande Valley.

The three-tiered system includes: Basic Skills Training, Customized Training and Post Secondary Occupational Training.

**Tier I: Workforce Academy (Basic Skills)** – This component is primarily funded as part of the McAllen Self-Sufficiency Project. It encompasses GED services performed through Region One Educational Services with Region One receiving payment directly from the City of McAllen. Also included are two annual THEA (Texas Higher Education Assessment) study courses conducted

In 2007, VIDA held orientations in conjunction with 13 area churches operating as community outreach centers for residents interested in job training programs.

- St. Joseph the Worker Church
- St. Pius X Church
- Holy Spirit Catholic Parish
- St. Mary’s Church
- St. Eugene de Mazenod
- Good Shepherd
- Our Lady of Guadalupe
- St. Teresa Catholic Church
- Our Lady of Lourdes
- Our Heavenly Father
- Christ the King
- Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Our Lady Star of the Sea
- Our Lady of Assumption
- St. Joseph’s Catholic Church
- Combes Community Center
- Holy Family
- Laguna Madre Learning Center
- St. John the Baptist



either through Region One or South Texas College (STC).

**Tier II: Customized Training** – This tier includes programs developed specifically for employers such as emergency medical technicians and bank tellers. Programs range from as little as two weeks to as much as nine months.

**Tier III: Post-Secondary Occupational Training** – Generally thought of as long-term training programs, these programs range from one to two years and include such occupations such as nurses, automotive technicians, social workers and teachers. Given the length of time required to achieve certification in these programs, the entry-wage tends

to be much higher than that of the customized programs.

Each selected applicant agrees to meet with their VIDA case manager at least once per week, to discuss their progress and identify and resolve barriers as they arise. VIDA provides participants with tuition assistance, support services, counseling/case management, financial planning, career planning, job placement and follow-up services (See Flow Chart).

VIDA’s performance has resulted in a post-secondary retention/graduation rate of over 90 percent and an employment rate that exceeds 95 percent.



In an effort to better assist employers find employees with right set of soft skills VIDA created the General Jobs Skills Training Program. The program empowers the job seeker with the work place skills needed to succeed. It teaches knowledge and understanding about work place expectations with an emphasis on soft skills concepts. The training curriculum was designed both from national and local resources culminating into 10 Units and 48hrs of instruction.



Whether preparing for a temporary employment, while attending college or a long term career pathway with a company, students will be able to transfer learned concepts into any job setting and into day to day life circumstances. Most importantly The training prepares students to approach employment sustainability, career forward mobility and long term planning.

VIDA helped me to succeed as a student. Four years ago I started the school road by preparing myself to get my GED diploma, VIDA was there, giving me gas allowance, childcare, and tutoring at Region One. That was just the beginning, after I passed all the five tests; I got the approval from Vida to start my THEA preparation, I received my books, notebooks, calculator, also pens and pencils along to gas allowance and childcare. There were no excuses to stay at home, every day I went to take my classes. That year (2004) I passed my THEA exams. I was ready for the South Texas College. In January 2005, I started my education at STC, VIDA was supporting me with gas allowance, money for school supplies, tuition, advisement, again, being a strong arm next to me. VIDA gave me the materials to achieve my goals at STC, and also they gave me something very important, the advisement, emotional support, friendship, and the feeling of belonging to a big family. I remember the trust, the understanding, from the people who work for the program, to me. They constructed the basis for me to start my bachelors in Mathematics and Spanish at the University of Texas Pan-American. Now, I am working as a Math Tutor at the UTPA and I am completing my Junior year. I hope I will finish my bachelors next December 2009. After that, I am planning to continue with graduate school by pursuing my Masters in Mathematics. For all of the above, VIDA has been fundamental in my life, I am very grateful to the people of VIDA. Thanks a lot!

*Carmen Gurreola*

VIDA Graduate



2007  
By the Numbers

933 total served

\$31,886

average annual salary upon graduation

508 total graduates

208 total employers hiring VIDA graduates

881 number attending VIDA orientation

457 number on waiting list

32 average age

4 weeks to 3.5 years range of length in program

20 to 61 years, age range

22 average number of months in program

# Employers



VIDA employs a market-driven approach to provide workforce services that contribute to sustained economic growth for the local area and provides access to quality jobs paying a living wage for the population served. In order to do so VIDA works closely with area employers to monitor their employment needs. Here are some employers that hired VIDA graduates in 2007.

- AB PLUMBING
- ADVANCED THERAPY SOLUTION
- ALL ABOUT KIDS PEDIATRIC HOME HEALTH
- AMIGO HOME HEALTH
- BAYVIEW DETENTION CENTER
- BELLAMAR HOME HEALTH
- BIO-MAT USA
- BOGGUS FORD
- BROWNSVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DIST.
- BROWNSVILLE NURSING REHAB
- CAMERON COUNTY JUVENILE
- CARING FOR YOU HOME HEALTH
- CATHOLIC DIOCESE
- CHARLES CLARK CHEVROLET
- CINEMARK THEATERS
- CITY OF MCALLEN
- COCA COLA
- CONVERGYS
- CORNERSTONE HOSPITAL
- COUNTY OF HIDALGO
- CRITERION HEALTHCARE
- DENNY'S
- DE ORO HOME HEALTH
- EDCOUCH-ELSA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DIST.
- EDINBURG CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL
- EDINBURG REGIONAL HOSPITAL
- FANTASTIC DENTAL
- FMC DIALYSIS
- FRIENDS HOME HEALTH
- GE
- GIBBS-TEXAS DIE CASTING
- GOD'S LITTLE ANGELS
- GOOD SAMARITIAN CENTER
- HACIENDA FORD
- HARLINGEN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
- HEADSTART
- HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
- HIDALGO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
- HIDALGO TRUCKS
- HOME CARE UNLIMITED
- HOMELAND SECURITY
- IDEA ACADEMY
- IPH HOME HEALTH
- KENT BIEL CHEVROLET
- KIDDING AROUND
- KID'S CORNER PEDIATRICS
- KNAPP MEDICAL CENTER
- LOGICORPS
- MCALLEN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
- MCALLEN MEDICAL CENTER
- MCALLEN NURISNG HOME
- MCALLEN NURSING & REHAB
- MIDWAY AUTO AND TRUCK
- MISSION REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
- MY SWEET HOME HEALTH
- NATIONAL GUARD
- PALM VALLEY HOME HEALTH
- PANASONIC
- PEDATRIC HEALTH CONCEPTS
- REMAX
- RENAISSANCE HOSPITAL
- RETAMA MANOR
- RIO GRANDE REGIONAL HOSPITAL
- RGV MOBILE X-RAY
- RIO HOME HEALTH
- ST. ANTHONYS HOME HEALTH
- SATURN OF MCALLEN
- SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE
- SPANISH MEADOWS
- STARR COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
- T.M. EXPRESS
- TAYLOR HOME HEALTH
- TECH WORLD COMP SOLUTIONS
- TEX AIR
- TEXAS MIGRANT COUNCIL
- TEXAS STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE
- THANK YOU NURSES HOME HEALTH
- THERAPIST THAT CARE HOME HEALTH
- TICKET MASTER
- TRW
- U.S. INTERMEX
- UNITECH
- UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL
- UNIVISION
- VALLEY BAPTIST HEALTH SYSTEMS
- VALLEY GRANDE MANOR
- VALLEY HOME HEALTH
- VALLEY REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
- VETERANS NURSING HOME
- WERNER EXPRESS
- WESLACO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
- WILLAMETTE FALLS HOSPITAL
- ZACHARY CONSTRUCTION

Since 1995, VIDA has received over \$30 million in funding from federal, state and local agencies, as well as corporations and private foundations. These direct funds have allowed the organization to assist over 3,900 area residents in getting the skills they need to become self-sufficient and has enabled VIDA to leverage an additional \$20 million in training funds for the Rio Grande Valley.

REVENUE	2007
<i>U.S. Department of Labor (HGJTI)</i>	\$ 690,675
<i>Development Corp. of McAllen</i>	679,840
<i>Harlingen Economic Development Corp.</i>	175,000
<i>U.S. Department of Labor (Earmark)</i>	171,334
<i>City of Brownsville</i>	126,918
<i>TGSL Corp. Grant</i>	118,500
<i>Other</i>	455,790
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 2,418,057</b>

EXPENDITURES	2007
<i>Administrative (8%)</i>	\$ 209,459
<i>Program Services</i>	763,419
<i>Participant Training Expenses</i>	1,165,456
<i>Participant Support Services</i>	163,245
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$ 2,511,038</b>

VIDA undergoes annual independent audits by an external firm. Every annual audit to date has resulted in an unqualified opinion. In other words, VIDA's financial records had no major discrepancies or findings and complied with all cost principles and guidelines for non-profit organizations.



## VisIon Determines Achievement

VIDA participant Mark Black created this slogan to best capture the spirit of the agency and our participants. His slogan was selected from nearly 100 entries.

Over \$9,000 were raised from the sale of bracelets bearing this slogan. These funds were used to help increase opportunities for Valley residents and to advance the mission of the agency.

*For additional information, please contact:*

**VIDA**

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*956.447.0600*

*[www.vidacareers.org](http://www.vidacareers.org)*