



Valley Initiative for Development & Advancement

IMPACTING
SUSTAINABLE
ECONOMIC
GROWTH
IN THE
REGION...
ONE **VIDA**
AT A TIME



2015
ANNUAL REPORT



A message from the **Chairman of the Board**

The Rio Grande Valley is poised for the greatest growth in its history!

UTRGV, our new university created through the merger of UT-Pan American and UT-Brownsville, is now the second largest Hispanic Serving Institution in the country! Without question, this will redirect the focus of higher education to our region.

The creation of our hard fought and long awaited medical school will change the face of our region for generations to come. Not only will this provide quality education for local residents, it will also serve as a lure for faculty and students from across the globe. It will allow a residency program to flourish and, hopefully, attend to some of the more rural pockets of our area.

Space X has catapulted Cameron County and with it, the Valley to a whole new realm of possibilities. A regional economic development focus for the growth of advanced manufacturing has never been more achievable. It is happening...this is our time!

As we celebrate the region's accomplishments and bask in a sea of possibilities, we cannot lose sight of the reality that more than 35% of the population in the Rio Grande Valley still lives in poverty. That these extraordinary opportunities in the region should be available to everyone and that the great expectations of these recent announcements will not develop in full capacity unless we invest in our human capital. The direct correlation between poverty and educational attainment is perfectly clear.

On behalf of Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement's Board of Directors and Staff, I wish to thank all of our funding partners as we work tirelessly to break the cycle of poverty and directly and perpetually impact the economic base of the communities we serve. We are proud of the alliances we have forged with local and state leaders, employers, and institutions of higher education and of the impact that our collaborative efforts have made in narrowing the gap and empowering individuals to effectively compete for family sustaining careers. The Rio Grande Valley is on the cusp of historical change. Let us continue to make self-sufficiency and the development of an abundant, educated and skilled workforce our priority.

Mr. Eduardo Anaya



Chairman of the Board

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Sister Mignonne Konecny-IAF



Philosophy

Our philosophy is very simple. Well-trained, well-educated people will not only be ready for tomorrow's jobs, but they will also be able to live more prosperous, healthy, and happy lives. The ultimate goal is job retention, not just job placement. Long-term employment will develop strong citizens who can support their families and who are taxpayers who generate a clear return on investment of federal, state, local and private funding. Our graduates not only help the families they support and the businesses that now employ them, but their ability to successfully rise from the ranks of the low-income helps us all. Their increased earnings enhance their contribution to our tax system and reduces their dependence on public assistance. VIDA has demonstrated a model for success by graduating participants into high-skilled, high-wage in-demand occupations that normally were jobs unfilled or filled at a very high cost by people outside of our community.

History & Services

Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA) is a community based, non-profit 501 (c) (3) agency. Created in 1995, VIDA was the result of a local effort led by community leaders of Valley Interfaith and private industry business leaders. The impetus was the need to empower the underserved residents of our region with the tools, education and training to become self-sufficient while fueling the growth of the existing employers and increasing the recruitment of new investment to the area by developing a highly skilled workforce. Since its inception, VIDA's mission remains constant, 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. VIDA works closely with the business sector, training providers, and community based organizations to develop a skilled workforce that will meet the demands of employers in the Rio Grande Valley.

Impacting Sustainable Economic Growth in the Region...One **VIDA** at a time.

Annual Summary FY 2014-2015

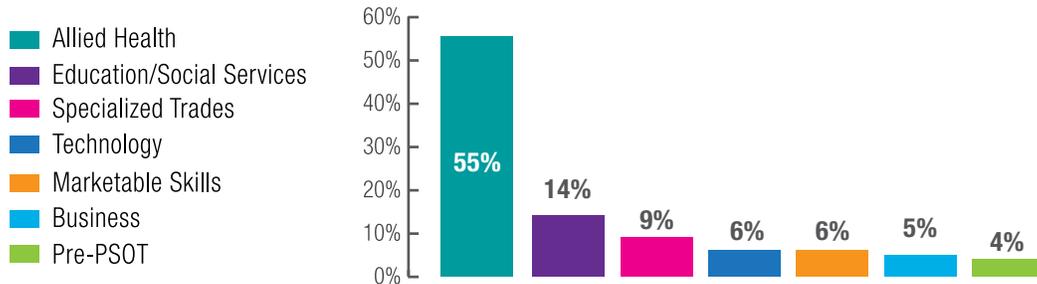
FY 2014 - 2015 AT A GLANCE

- > 56% Between the Ages of 25-50
- > 64% Female
- > 92% Public Assistance or Unemployed
- > 37% Single Parents
- > 46% Two Dependent Children or more in Household

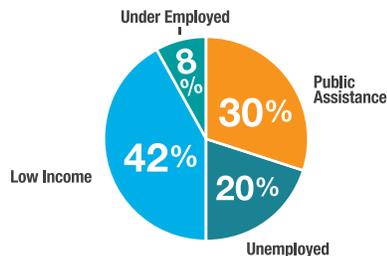
754 Economically Disadvantaged Adults Served
Average Salary Reported for 2014-2015 Graduates
\$36,088.00

GRADUATES COMPLETERS	ASSOCIATES 53%	BACHELORS 4%	CERTIFICATE 26%	MARKETABLE SKILLS 10%	PRE-PSOT 7%	
POVERTY LEVELS	UNITED STATES 14.8%	TEXAS 17.2%	CAMERON 34.5%	HIDALGO 33.5%	STARR 35.4%	WILLACY 38.8%

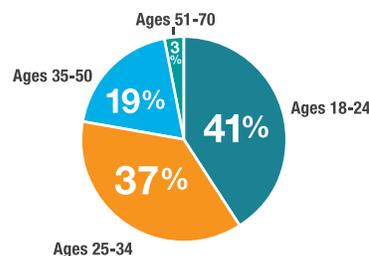
POST SECONDARY CREDENTIALING BY INDUSTRY



FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY



PARTICIPANT AGE



*Some participants meet more than one eligibility factor

***For every one dollar invested in the program,
there is a return of \$12.12 to the communities we serve.***

Economic Impact Study 2015 - University of Texas Pan American, Data & Information Systems Center (DISC)

Funding Partners

VIDA REVENUE SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 30, 2015

Alamo EDC	McAllen EDC	Weslaco EDC	Austin Community College District	Abt Associates Inc.
Brownsville EDC	City of Mercedes	Hidalgo County	Texas Veterans Commission	American Communities Trust
Edinburg EDC	Pharr EDC	Willacy County	Laura & John Arnold Foundation	Project Grow
City of La Feria				



THE KRESGE FOUNDATION KRESGE PEER LEARNING CONFERENCE

On February 26, 2015 VIDA hosted an all-day “VIDA Peer and Community Learning Exchange Conference” sponsored by the Kresge Foundation at the University of Texas – Pan American. VIDA’s Peer Learning Conference was designed to develop and structure a referral and cross support system between organizations that serve those most vulnerable of our population, the underserved adult population interested in changing their lives and that of their families. Llano Grande facilitated a series of interactive processes through which attendees engaged in introspective exercises designed to share and give depth to their own stories within the context of their VIDA experience. Participants were assisted in building a gracious space where together we openly examined individual and organizational opportunities, respectfully exchanged successful approaches and experiences, and became familiar with tools that can drive positive organizational and community change. We had a total of 28 organizations from throughout the Rio Grande Valley in attendance.



Juan Carlos Aguirre, Dean of Continuing, Professional and Workforce Education, leads a group session at the Kresge Peer Learning Conference.

SUCCESS STORY

Nancy Villafranca

As a single parent, Brownsville resident Nancy Villafranca always believed the key to succeeding in life was through education. Nancy earned a certificate as a medical assistant and worked in the Valley for two years until the doctor’s office she worked in closed. Looking for a new start, Nancy moved to San Antonio and found work as a medical assistant. Everything was going well until, due to a difficult pregnancy, she lost her job. Nancy returned to

Brownsville and decided she needed a better paying job, especially now as a mother of a young baby boy. She enrolled at Texas State Technical College (TSTC) and graduated earning an Associate’s degree in Architectural Drawing. Today she is employed and earning \$33,280 per year with full benefits.

OUTCOMES FROM PEER LEARNING CONFERENCE:

- (1) Building a Reflective Community: The Community Learning Exchange brought VIDA alumni, current students, staff and community partners together through a deep introspective reflection and sharing process by using a series of proven strategies and pedagogies that challenged participants to imagine and act together for the public good;
- (2) Chronicling Stories of Impact: The Community Learning Exchange demonstrated the impact of VIDA over the last 20 years in the lives of its alumni and its current students by documenting and sharing a series of stories and testimonials.
- (3) Leveraging Community Value: The Community Learning Exchange sought to maximize the continuum of care, collaboration and services amongst VIDA and its program partners through a facilitated process of listening and sharing, continuing the work to build the capacity of community wealth. VIDA also unveiled a revamped referral system.

Funding Partners

\$30,139

Average Salary for Veterans upon Graduation

80

Total Veterans Served

100%

Persistence Rate for Veterans

FUND FOR VETERANS' ASSISTANCE GRANT SERIES 16A CLOSING

We are excited that we were able support our vets!

VIDA for Veterans was funded through the Fund for Veterans' Assistance Program. Veterans were assisted with comprehensive wraparound support services that provided career pathway choices to underserved, unemployed, and underemployed Texas veterans, their surviving spouses and dependents of the Rio Grande Valley. Upon transition from military to civilian life or while unemployed, VIDA assisted 80 vets and their family members with support services including education and job training; intensive case management services; short-term financial assistance such as housing and emergency costs, transportation and childcare costs; and for those veterans who have exhausted their educational benefits, tuition and book costs. As a result, our veterans are becoming a part of a highly skilled workforce in high-demand occupations that are crucial to economic advancement and future sustained employment.

The project addressed barriers and service gaps that our veterans and their family members were experiencing that were hindering their efforts to become employable as civilians. For example, our region has been struggling to provide a centralized, coordinated system to access veterans' service providers and their programs. There was also a lack of short-term job training programs for veterans to earn industry recognized credentials and certifications. Finally, we were able to provide job readiness and professional development training for veteran career entry, which has been very limited in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

VIDA for Veterans addressed these barriers and service gaps through assessment, referrals, financial assistance, support services and training. We were able to help veterans and their family members become more competitive in the workforce so that they could enter high demand, high wage occupations where they could earn a living wage.



Sgt David Facundo, VIDA Veteran Outreach Coordinator reviews VIDA web page and enrollment process with veterans

The TVC program is supported by a grant from the Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance.

The Fund for Veterans' Assistance provides grants to organizations serving veterans and their families.



SUCCESS STORIES



Air Force veteran Elisa Hernandez, a single parent of one, was unemployed when she became a VIDA participant. Today Elisa is an RN earning \$58,240 per year. Congratulations Elisa and thank you for your service!



Zenia Lares

Zenia Lares, a dedicated mom, worked as a home health provider but still needed to rely on public assistance to help support her daughter. Zenia longed to be a school teacher. VIDA helped her register for classes at the University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA), and her journey for a better life began. In the Spring of 2015, Zenia graduated from UTPA with a degree in Bi-lingual education. Today she is employed with the Edcouch-Elsa School District as a teacher earning \$41,995.20 a year with benefits. Her days on public assistance are now over!



GREATER TEXAS FOUNDATION



Rebecca Garcia was unemployed with two children when she became a VIDA participant. Today Rebecca is working as an accountant earning \$24,960 per year!

As a direct result of the success of VIDA's College Prep Academy (CPA), The Greater Texas Foundation (GTF) awarded VIDA a grant to sponsor a cohort of 20 students. This grant supported the transition of Pre-PSOT (VIDA's CPA) to post secondary occupational training.

This grant was the first of its kind made by the GTF to a non-institute of higher learning.

The GTF supports efforts to ensure all Texas students are prepared for, have access to, persist in, and complete postsecondary education. GTF puts particular focus on helping underserved and disadvantaged populations. They pursue their mission by forming partnerships, supporting research, sharing knowledge, and making grants. GTF knows that an educated workforce is essential for our dynamic economy, particularly as Texas businesses continue to expand and new companies relocate to our state. VIDA combines financial assistance with wrap around support services — including an intensive single-semester developmental education sequence in partnership with South Texas College — for the underserved

adults who are motivated to attend college. With the funds received from the GTF, VIDA participants were able to receive need-based financial support including tuition, fees, books, childcare, transportation and emergency assistance as determined through an individual assessment of need.



Sandra Perez, a single parent of two was unemployed when she became a VIDA participant. Today Sandra is an RN earning \$57, 928 per year!

GTF BY THE NUMBERS

(Grant Period: August 1, 2011 to July 31, 2014)

\$38,461

Average Salary for GTF Graduates/Completers

20

Total Served

14

Total Graduated

3

Continued on with their education

2

Active Students

80%

Persistence Rate



We are grateful to have received a grant from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation. The Foundation works to develop and support initiatives that encourage governments and nonprofit organizations to help build the evidence base for social interventions and to consider reliable evidence as one of the primary factors in their decisions. The goal is to ensure that limited resources are spent

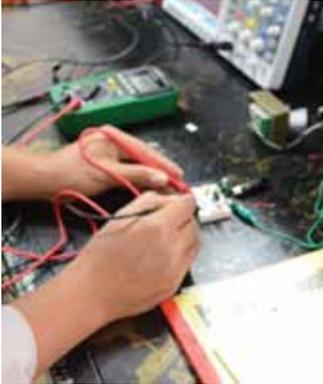
wisely on programs that produce meaningful, lasting improvements in people's lives. They fund rigorous evaluations to determine whether programs are effective and work to incentivize the widespread adoption of approaches that have been shown to make a difference. In addition, the foundation is bringing policy makers, researchers, and data experts from the public and private sectors together to strengthen the infrastructure and processes needed to support evidence-based decision making. They promote new government and philanthropic funding models that emphasize the use of evidence. They also facilitate strategic partnerships to accelerate progress and support efforts to expand access to privacy-protected data.



VIDA Career Counselor/Case Manager, Norberto Garcia, reviews documents at a placement session.

Success Stories

SUCCESS STORIES



Edwardo Leos

When Edwardo Leos goes to work each morning, it reminds him of his days as a student at Texas State Technical College (TSTC) in Harlingen. Edwardo combined his interests of electronics and the health industry and enrolled at TSTC where he earned an Associate's degree in Biomedical Equipment Technology. Today Edward works at his alma mater as a Lab Tech Assistant earning \$31,491 per year. He is proud to support his family without public assistance!



Casandra Trevino

At age 15 Casandra Trevino knew her life would change forever when she gave birth to her little girl. She knew the road ahead would be a trying one and that raising a child at that age would be difficult. Casandra needed to take control of her life, especially now that she had a daughter.

While in high school, Casandra earned a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certificate and upon graduation she quickly began working. Casandra later married and began raising her child together with her husband, but after a few years she found herself divorced and raising her child alone.

As a CNA she simply could not support herself and her daughter. She decided she needed a better paying job and the only way to do that was to get an education. Casandra decided to enroll at South Texas College (STC) and study to become a nurse, but she struggled to fund her education—she simply couldn't afford tuition, child care costs, paying her bills, and putting food on the table while she was in school. She heard about VIDA from her classmates and registered and was approved for assistance. Casandra still struggled with going to school full-time and juggling life as a single parent, but she didn't have to worry about how to pay for her education.

In December 2015, Casandra walked across the stage at STC and accepted her associate's degree in Nursing. Today, Casandra is working at PSA Healthcare earning \$47,840 Per year as a Registered Nurse!



Michelle Campbell

Although she was definitely parenting completely alone, this single mother knew that VIDA was in her corner. Michelle attributes her ability to juggle, struggle, and still cross the finish line strong thanks to the guidance, support and financial assistance from VIDA. Today, Michelle Campbell works at South Texas Community Living as a registered nurse earning \$66,997 a year. (Associates Degree in Nursing – South Texas College)



Eliset Garza

Providing for her three year old son was Eliset's main priority in life. Unfortunately, Eliset was a single parent that was laid off from her job at a call center. Due to the lack of a formal education, she found it difficult to find a job that would allow her to support her family. With help from VIDA, she enrolled at Texas Southmost College (TSC) and began working towards earning an Associates in Respiratory Therapy. Eliset graduated in May 2015 from TSC and is now employed as a Respiratory Therapist at Valley Baptist Hospital in Brownsville, earning \$42,994 per year with benefits.

For every one dollar invested in the program, there is a return of \$12.12 to the communities we serve.

Economic Impact Study 2015 - University of Texas Pan American, Data & Information Systems Center (DISC)

Funding Partners



The Texas Innovative Adult Career Education

The Texas Innovative Adult Career Education (ACE) has partnered with VIDA to change the lives of low resource individuals in our region. The ACE grant program was established by the 83rd Texas Legislature when it was awarded \$5 million for the next biennium. The program provides grants to eligible nonprofit workforce intermediary and job training organizations. The organizations in turn develop, support, or expand programs that prepare low-income students to enter careers in high-demand and significantly higher-earning occupations. ACE funding enables VIDA to serve hundreds of Valley students pursuing a degree or licensed certification in high demand occupations in the Rio Grande Valley.



Executive Director, Myra C Garcia introduces dignitaries at ACE Grant press conference.



Texas State Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa addresses audience at ACE Press Conference



Eduardo Anaya, VIDA Board Chair explains ACE Grant.

JPMORGAN CHASE & Co.

JPMorgan Chase believes they have a fundamental responsibility to help their clients and their communities navigate a complex global economy and address their economic and social challenges. In 2014, the firm and its Foundation gave more than \$200 million to thousands of nonprofit organizations across all 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and 44 countries. JPMorgan Chase works with community partners, such as VIDA, to create pathways to opportunity by supporting workforce development and financial capability. It believes that addressing the skills gap can be one of the most powerful tools for reducing unemployment and expanding economic opportunity.

The Trull Foundation

We were pleased that the Trull Foundation invested in people who were struggling to find high-wage jobs in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Since 1948, the Trull Foundation has been actively interested in various educational, religious, cultural and social programs with a priority to projects in Texas and rural Texas communities, the Trull Foundation is concerned with people, with improving the quality of life, especially in low resource communities.

For every one dollar invested in the program, there is a return of \$12.12 to the communities we serve.

Economic Impact Study 2015 - University of Texas Pan American, Data & Information Systems Center (DISC)

Community Service



VIDA students at CASA Fun Run



Another group photo before a cleanup event



VIDA students in action

Cities and counties from across the Valley have been investing in VIDA's participants since 1995. They have been, and continue to be, unwavering in their commitment to education and job training because they understand how these can act as a catalyst for empowerment and positive change. They are improving quality of life of families, breaking the cycle of poverty, and are making a solid investment in economic development in the region. Their support of VIDA's participants is changing the lives of people who are struggling to make ends meet.

Our supporters are committed to success. That's why VIDA participants are required to commit as well. They commit to going

to school full-time, to making the grade, to attending classes, and to participating in the weekly counseling sessions with VIDA Career Counselors/Case Managers. And finally, VIDA participants commit to community service so they can give back to the community that has given them new possibilities.

VIDA is changing the way participants view community service. When many enter our program they think of community service as a chore to complete as part of their commitment to VIDA. But it doesn't take long for them to realize that is not the case. Participants quickly learn that community service is a chance to give back to the communities that invest in them.



VIDA students pose for a picture before City of Pharr event

CITIZENS IN ACTION
**VALLEY
INTERFAITH**
CIUDADANOS EN ACCION

Valley Interfaith is a non-partisan, broad-based organization of 45 churches and public schools throughout the Rio Grande Valley. Valley Interfaith was formed to give a voice to the people who are usually excluded from the major decisions that affect their lives and offers people the opportunity to develop the leadership skills necessary to be full participants in society. Through Valley Interfaith 60,000 families join together to develop community leaders who participate in the economic and political decision of public life. VIDA was the result of a local effort led by community leaders of Valley Interfaith and private industry business leaders. We continue to partner and empower the underserved residents of our region with the tools, education and training to become self-sufficient while fueling the growth of the existing employers and increasing the recruitment of new investment to the area by developing a highly skilled workforce.

Regional Collaborations



Workforce Solutions, under the direction of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), is one of 28 local workforce development boards located throughout the state. This workforce development board serves Starr, Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy counties through a network of partners. The primary goal of TWC and the 28 local workforce development boards is to

respond to the needs of Texas employers and workers through locally designed market-driven workforce development initiatives. WFS assists VIDA in recruiting participants, identifying demands in the workforce and whenever possible we leverage resources to best meet the needs of the program participants.

www.wfsolutions.org



In the Rio Grande Valley, Educate Texas launched RGV Focus, bringing together superintendents, higher education presidents, philanthropic

partners, and business and community leaders across four counties, including Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr and Willacy. This effort focuses

on more than 410,000 students — of which 90% or more are Hispanic and 86% are economically disadvantaged. RGV Focus supports the region by identifying opportunities to enable all learners to achieve a degree or credential which, ultimately, leads to a meaningful career.

www.edtx.org/collective-impact/initiatives

The North American Advanced Manufacturing Research & Education Initiative (NAAMREI)

The North American Advanced Manufacturing Research & Education Initiative is devoted to developing a world-class advanced manufacturing industry in the Rio South Texas Region. NAAMREI combines the innovation, talents and strategy of more than 100 partners in business, education, economic development,

industry, finance and government to offer manufactures across North America, and the globe, access to proprietary, world-class advanced manufacturing and rapid response manufacturing.



The Bi-National Economic Development (BiNED)

The Bi-National Economic Development (BiNED) a United Brownsville initiative has invested in VIDA's participants as part of their strategic work in our region. The Initiative is a first-of-its-kind regional economic development effort among four U.S. cities, two Mexican cities, Cameron and Hidalgo counties and the federal governments of two nations. BiNED is intended to unite Cameron and Hidalgo counties with Matamoros and Reynosa to

create a coordinated economic engine to create jobs and attract investment on both sides of the border. It was founded to allow the communities to capitalize on both their individual and joint strengths and to overcome any disadvantages resulting from competing among and against themselves, rather than joining forces to compete with others across the hemisphere and the globe.



VIDA Staff

Executive Staff

Myra Caridad García
Interim Executive Director

Irma Garcia
Deputy Director/Compliance
Officer

Daniel Mena
Director of Finance

Priscilla Dinn Alvarez
Director of Community
Engagement

Bernie Saenz
Director of Program Services

Laura Lopez
Senior Career Counselor/
Program Manager

Sylvia Quinones
Resource Development
Manager

Ashley Bowie
Career Counselor-Case
Manager

Ruben Garcia
Career Counselor-Case Manager

Norberto Garcia
Career Counselor-Case Manager

Cruz Villarreal
Executive Secretary

Martha Morales
Receptionist

Jessica Tristan
Accounting Support Specialist

Cristina Yanes
Case Aide



Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement

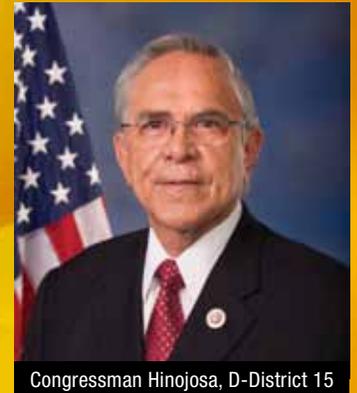
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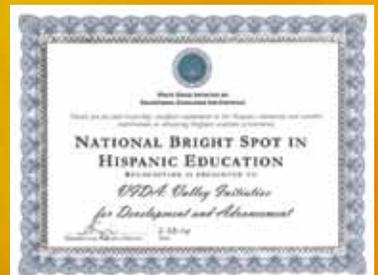
Bright Spots in Hispanic Education



Congressman Hinojosa, D-District 15

Thousands of Valley residents have improved their lives and the lives of their family as a direct result of the dedication of Congressman Rubén Hinojosa. He is regarded as a champion for the disadvantaged and distinguished himself as a strong advocate for education, health care, information technology, infrastructure, energy, and economic development.

Congressman Hinojosa was honored by the Hispanic Heritage Foundation with the prestigious Hispanic Heritage Award for his long-standing commitment to strengthening STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) education pipeline for Latinas and Latinos. His primary goal in Congress was to reduce the chronic unemployment rate in regions of the district. By focusing on developing a highly educated, well-trained workforce, modernizing the local infrastructure, including roads and highways, and creating new job opportunities. It should come as no surprise his commitment to the Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA). Together, Congressman Hinojosa and VIDA have made a difference and thanks to the foundation that he helped create, VIDA continues to changes lives.





Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement

www.vidacareers.org

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McAllen Satellite Office

STC Nursing Allied Health Building
1101 E. Vermont #131 • McAllen, TX

McAllen Library

4001 N. 23rd St. • McAllen, TX

Harlingen Satellite Office

TSTC • 1902 North Loop 499
Building "K" Room 111 • Harlingen, TX

Brownsville Satellite Office

UTB / TSC • 80 Fort Brown
Student Service Building • Brownsville, TX