

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



2019 Annual Report



A message from the Chairman of the Board

Dear Funders, Partners, Friends, VIDA Students, and VIDA Graduates,

In the words of Nelson Mandela, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." At VIDA, we have seen just how true those words are. At VIDA, we provide our students with the tools they need—both literally and figuratively—to rise out of poverty and to change their own lives, the lives of their family members, and the lives of people in the communities where they live.

As you know, two years ago, VIDA was one of only nine promising career-pathways programs in the nation to be selected for a rigorous evaluation, Pathways for Advancing Careers & Education (PACE), on their effectiveness for improving the skills and economic conditions of low-wage workers. PACE uses a "gold-standard" methodology to assess a program's impact on educational impact and career progress.

In March, we received our 36-month PACE evaluation, and it calls for celebration. One thousand VIDA applicants were selected for the study, 500 in the control group and the other 500 in the "treatment group," which received VIDA services. PACE results showed a 6.9 percent increase in the treatment group's total number of college credits, with a 1.0 percent increase considered "significant." The results also showed a 13.0 percent increase in the number of treatment students enrolled in college full time, again with a 1.0 percent increase considered "significant." And in the final measure, PACE evaluated the number of college credits earned in the 36-month period, and VIDA's treatment group earned 15.8 percent more college credits than the control group, with 1.0 percent considered "significant." I am sure you will agree that those numbers are SIGNIFICANT!

And there's more! Please join me in welcoming three new VIDA partners: The Moody Foundation, United Way of Southern Cameron County, and Union Pacific. Every VIDA partner plays a significant role in our success, and we can never thank all of you enough.

To our funders, partners, and friends: Our work would not be possible without your generosity, your assistance, and your unwavering support. To our VIDA students and graduates: You are living proof of our ability to change the world through education and community service. Continue to inspire.

Tony Aguirre

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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 enjoy more prosperous, healthy, and happy lives. The ultimate goal is job retention, not job placement. After all, job retention results in strong citizens who are self-sufficient taxpayers, providing a clear return on investment for federal, state, local, and private funders. Our graduates have not only helped the families they support and the businesses that employ them, but their determination to successfully move out of poverty has helped us all. VIDA graduates' increased earnings have also enhanced their contributions to our tax system and reduced their dependence on welfare. VIDA has demonstrated a model of success by graduating participants into high-demand occupations that were, traditionally, unfilled or filled by people outside of our community.

History and Services

Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement (VIDA) is a community based, nonprofit 501(c)(3) agency. VIDA was created in 1995 through the relentless efforts of community leaders from Valley Interfaith and private-industry leaders. The impetus for the creation of VIDA was the need to empower underserved residents of our region with the tools, education, and training they needed to become self-sufficient while fueling the growth of existing employers and enticing new companies to our area by developing a highly skilled workforce. Since its inception, VIDA's mission has remained 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. 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.

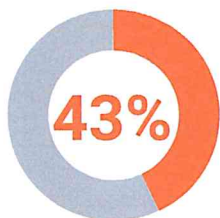
VIDA Annual Summary FY 2018 - 2019

501

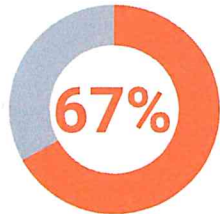
Economically
Disadvantaged Adults
Served



Unemployed, Low Income, and/or on Public Assistance



Have Two or More Dependent Children in Household



Females



Received Intensive Case Management/Counseling Services

Average Annual Salary

\$41,808

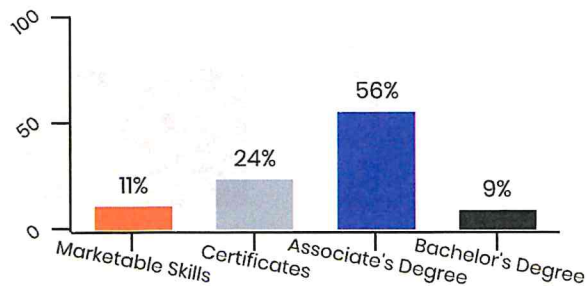
Average Wage

\$20.10

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

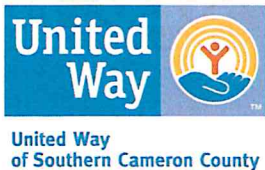
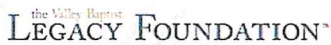
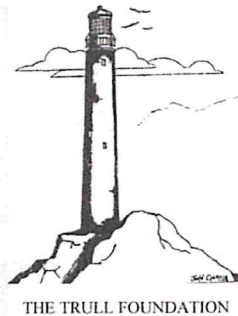
(Economic Impact Study 2015-University of Texas-Pan American, Data & Information Systems Center)

160 Degrees & Certificates Earned



2018 - 2019 Human Capital Investors

With the help of generous donors and partners, we are able to provide the support services, education, and training needed to change lives through mentorship.



SUCCESS STORIES

Marisela Torres - Social Work



Marisela Torres was a single, unemployed mother of two children, dependent on public assistance.

Marisela and her children lived in a one-bedroom mobile home in the small town of Penitas, Texas. She was struggling to maintain her household on the little she received from child support. Marisela often depended on her mom to help her financially. Future success seemed impossible most of the time.

Marisela learned about the VIDA program through a friend and social media. Seeing this as the opportunity she longed for, she immediately applied and was accepted into the program. Marisela knew she had to continue with her education to improve not only her life but her children's lives.

In the spring of 2018, Marisela walked across the stage to accept her diploma. She had earned an associate's degree in social work.

Marisela is currently employed at Workforce Solutions as a childcare specialist, earning over \$30,000 a year, plus benefits.



Alejandra Barrios - ADN



Alejandra, too, was a single mother with two children, unemployed and on public assistance. She and her children lived with her mother and disabled father, and the children's child support served as their only source of income.

Alejandra developed an interest in nursing when her grandfather was diagnosed with lung cancer. She earned her licensed vocational nurse (LVN) certificate in 2015 and later decided to further her career. It was then that she decided to pursue an associate's degree in nursing (ADN). Alejandra learned about the VIDA program while at South Texas College. She was accepted into the program, and the assistance she received helped her achieve her goal.

Alejandra is now a registered nurse, earning over \$50,000 a year, with benefits.

*When you stand and share your story in an empowering way,
your story will heal you and your story will heal somebody else.*

Iyanla Vanzant

SUCCESS STORIES



Alexia Huerta **Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN)**

Alexia decided to pursue nursing after she went on a missionary trip to South Africa with her church. She was accepted into the ADN program at South Texas College, but at the time, she was going through health issues and was suffering due to the loss of her grandmother. Though struggling, Alexia applied to VIDA.

At the time, Alexia lived with her mom and her sister. Both Alexia and her mom were unemployed because her mother stopped working to care for her during her illness. Alexia persevered, transferring to the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

She applied and was accepted into UTRGV's BSN program, graduating in the spring of 2018.

Alexia is currently employed as a registered nurse at South Texas Health Care, earning over \$45,000 a year.



Eylin Deantes **LVN - ADN Transition**

A single mother, Eylin was unemployed and on public assistance. She and her child had already moved into her parents' home. They only had child support to provide for their needs, making it difficult for her to stay in the ADN program. Eylin heard VIDA may be able to help, so she immediately applied and was accepted.

Eylin credits VIDA for helping her when she had nowhere else to turn. VIDA provided her with critical financial assistance, but more importantly, her VIDA case manager offered her continuous support that kept her motivated to complete the ADN program.

With her credentials in hand, Eylin found a job at Valley Baptist Medical Center as a registered nurse and now earns over \$50,000 a year, plus benefits. She no longer struggles to provide for her family.

*We do not need magic to change the world; we carry all the power
we need inside ourselves already; we have the power to imagine
better.*

~ JK Rowling

Community Service



Without community service, we would not have a strong quality of life. It's important to the person who serves as well as the recipient. It's the way in which we ourselves grow and develop.

~Dorothy Height



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

Our supporters are committed to success. That is 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 weekly sessions with VIDA career counselors/case managers.

Finally--and so importantly--VIDA participants commit to community service. VIDA is changing the way our students view community service. When they enter our program, many of them think of community service as a chore to check off as part of their commitment to VIDA. But it doesn't take long for them to realize community service is much more than that. VIDA participants quickly learn that community service allows them to give back to the community that has invested in them, a community that has provided them with so many new--and often previously unimaginable--possibilities.



Valley Interfaith is an organization of institutions dedicated to developing power and leadership among citizens in order to strengthen democracy.

Valley Interfaith was formed to give a voice to people who are usually excluded from major decisions that affect their lives and to offer them the opportunity to develop the leadership skills necessary to be full participants in society. Through Valley Interfaith, families join together to develop community leaders who participate in the economic and political decisions of public life. Valley Interfaith is part of the Industrial Areas Foundation.



Outreach

Speaker Series

VIDA staff takes part in community and university events to educate the public about our program and services.



Weekly, numerous hours are spent on campuses--South Texas College, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, and Texas Southmost College--distributing information about VIDA to recruit students who are struggling to pay for their education.



Monthly, VIDA staff also invests time in attending community events that will allow them to educate the public about our programs. It is our goal to educate and recruit those who have stopped going to school or who have never thought of going due to their financial situation.



BBVA Compass and VIDA have partnered up to provide Financial Education Workshops to current VIDA students.

Workshops are held on the third Saturday of the month in Cameron and Hidalgo counties, providing all VIDA participants and their families with the opportunity to become financially literate.



Financial Education Modules

Personal Finance

- Banking Basics
- Budgeting
- Credit Scores & Reports
- Identity Theft & Fraud
- Retirement



Home Ownership

- Considering Home Ownership
- Understanding Mortgages
- Mortgage Modifications



Small Business

- Developing a Business Plan
- Business Banking Services



It isn't where you come from; it's where you're going that counts.
-Ella Fitzgerald

Success is best when it's shared.
- Howard Schultz

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2018-2019



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..... *We rise by lifting others.*

Robert Ingersol



Valley Initiative for Development and Advancement

Are you ready to invest in human capital?

Visit our website at vidacareers.org or
mail a check or money order to:

VIDA/DONATION

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