



2026 RAISE Texas VITA Conference

Engaging Community Colleges in VITA



Kenneth Bankston, Business Information Systems Academic Program Specialist & VITA Coordinator, St. Philip's College



Karen Serna, PHD, Director, Student Financial Wellness and Financial Aid Outreach, Austin Community College



Adria Vasquez, Assistant Professor of Accounting, Del Mar College



DEL MAR COLLEGE VITA PROGRAM



PRESENTER: ADRIA PALACIOS VASQUEZ, CPA
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ACCOUNTING

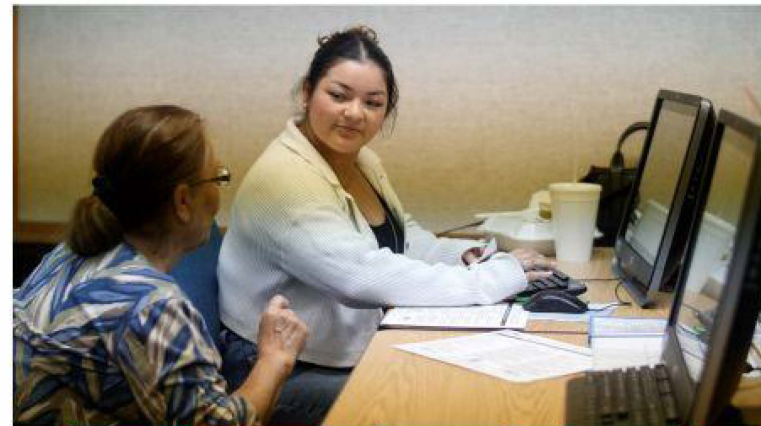


INCORPORATING THE PROGRAM IN THE CLASSROOM

GRADING
COMPONENT

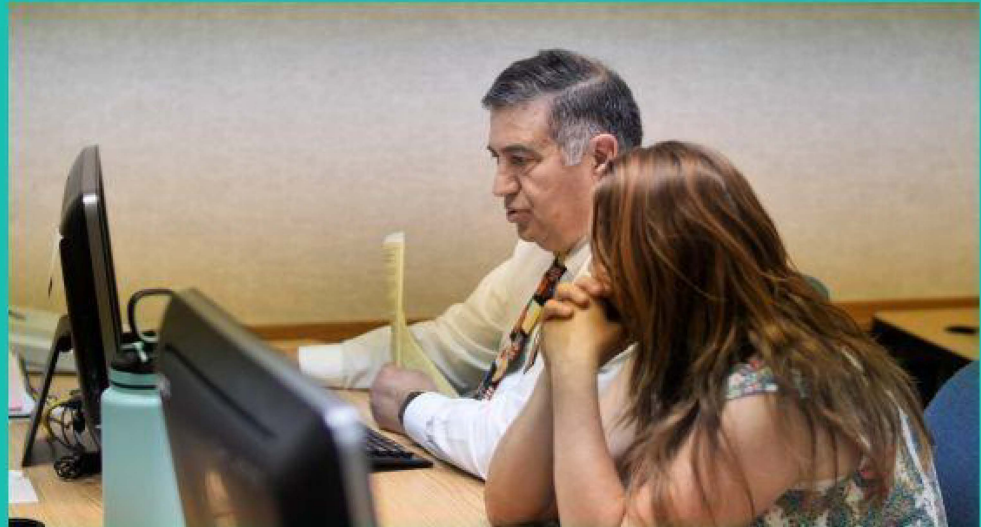
TESTING

MINIMUM NUMBER OF
HOURS TO VOLUNTEER



COMMUNITY SERVED

- DEL MAR COLLEGE SITE:
WALK-INS
- SERVING COASTAL BEND
COMMUNITY
- TUESDAY/THURSDAY
2:00-6:00 P.M.



STUDENT INCENTIVES

RESUME
BUILDING

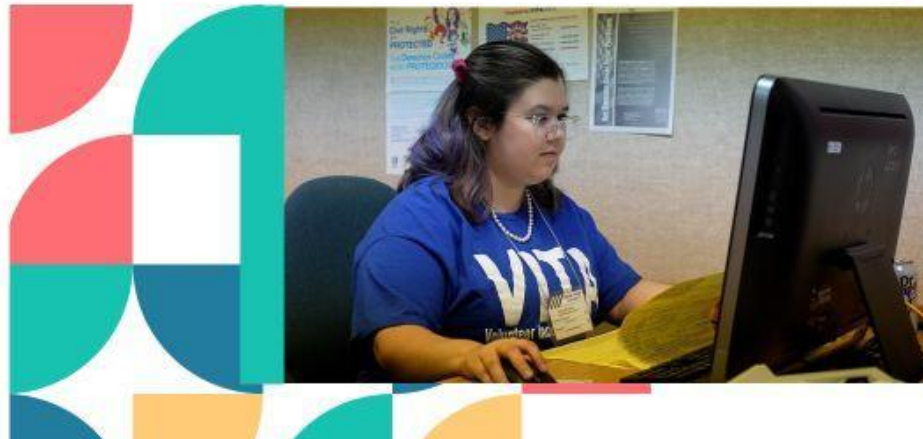
MEALS

GAS
CARDS

STIPENDS

IRS
AWARD

RECOGNITION
EVENTS



FUNDING

CORPORATE SPONSORS
Arcelor Mittal

GRANTS
Internal Revenue Service
Perkins

**DEL MAR COLLEGE
FOUNDATION**
VITA Fund

Prosper Tax Help @ ACC Highland ACCelerator



SAVE MONEY.



DON'T STRESS.



FILE FOR FREE.



Karen Serna, PhD

Director, Financial Literacy & Financial Aid Outreach

Austin Community College

karen.serna@austincc.edu



austincc.edu/taxhelp

Tax Season	# student staff	# returns
2024	12	414
2025	7	368
2026	7	275
2027	12	500

- Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, 9:30 - 4:30
- First week in February - April 15
- Closed Spring Break

Project Leadership and Operations

	Lead entity/department	Core responsibilities
Project management	Project manager @ ACC	Timeline tracking/milestone management; partner coordination; funding
Core delivery	Foundation Communities 	Candidate selection; tax training; tax site management/operations
Staffing and funding	Student employment program @ ACC & Financial Aid Office @ACC	Student onboarding; work-study eligibility/administration; time and payroll management
Academic pipeline	School of Business @ACC	Student candidate sourcing; faculty volunteer mentoring; internship credit
Infrastructure and marketing	ACCelerator & Office of College Relations & Marketing	Computer lab pod allocation; hardware/equipment set up; promotional materials

Student Run Site

- Recruiting students
- \$23/hour
- Funding: Federal Work-Study + Institutional funds

Job Description

Certified Tax Preparer & Site Coordinator



shorturl.at/JEZxm



The GREAT!

- Amazing paid experience for students that provides real-world experience aligned with their major
- Great pay rate
- Quality tax prep, for free

The Challenges

- On campus...but
- Student schedules are complicated, and they change
- Limitations of hourly employees and Work-Study funds
- Faculty engagement and full institutional buy in
- College closures
- So. Many. Systems. And processes.

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ST. PHILIP'S COLLEGE

KENNETH BANKSTON

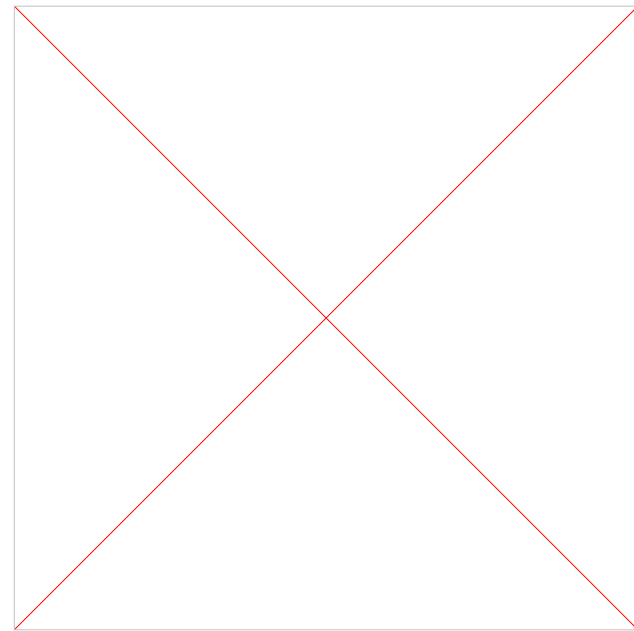
ACADEMIC PROGRAM SPECIALIST

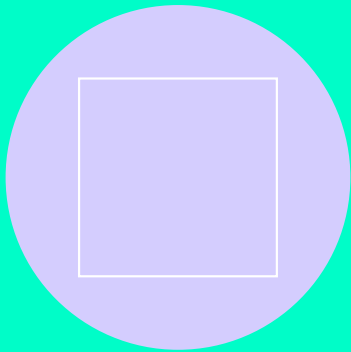
VITA COORDINATOR



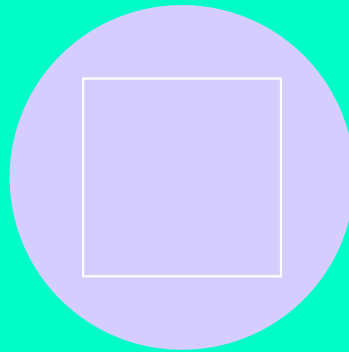
TAX YEAR *2025*
6,052 RETURNS
ACCEPTED

- WE RECRUIT STUDENTS FROM
- THE ACCOUNTING CLASSES
- INTERNSHIP CLASSES
- FLYERS
- PUBLIC RELATIONS ON CAMPUS

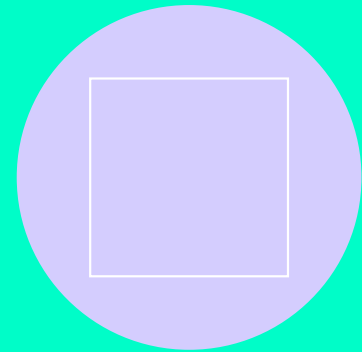




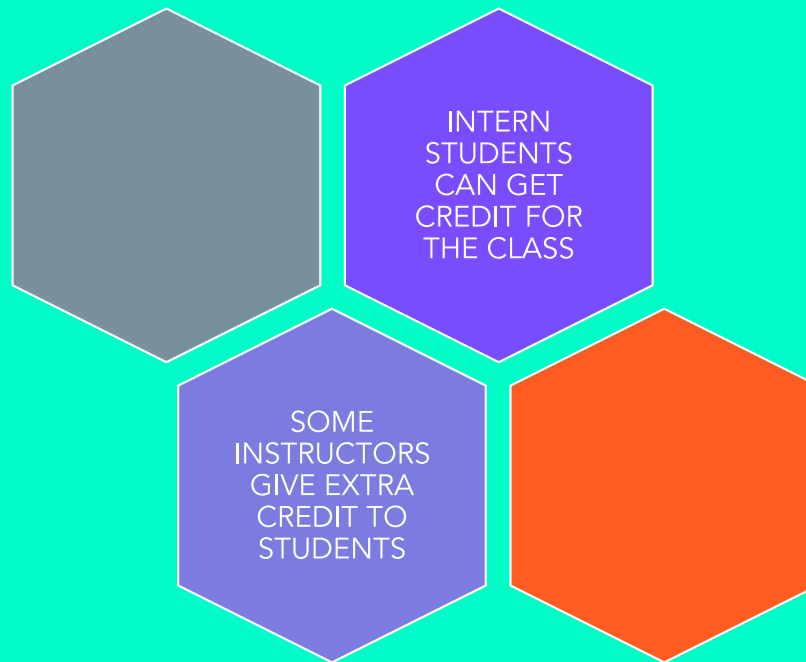
TRAINING IS STARTED IN
DECEMBER AFTER THE FINALS



ALL THE MONTH OF JANUARY
BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS

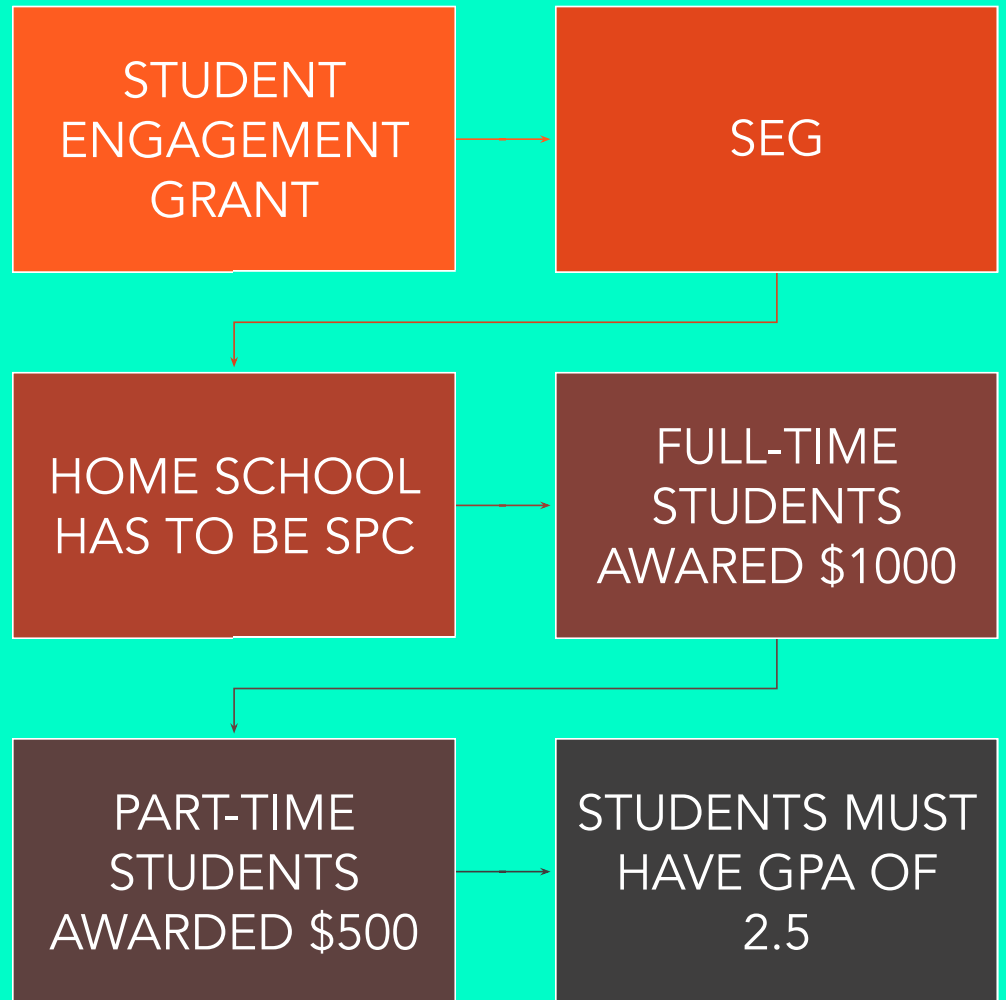


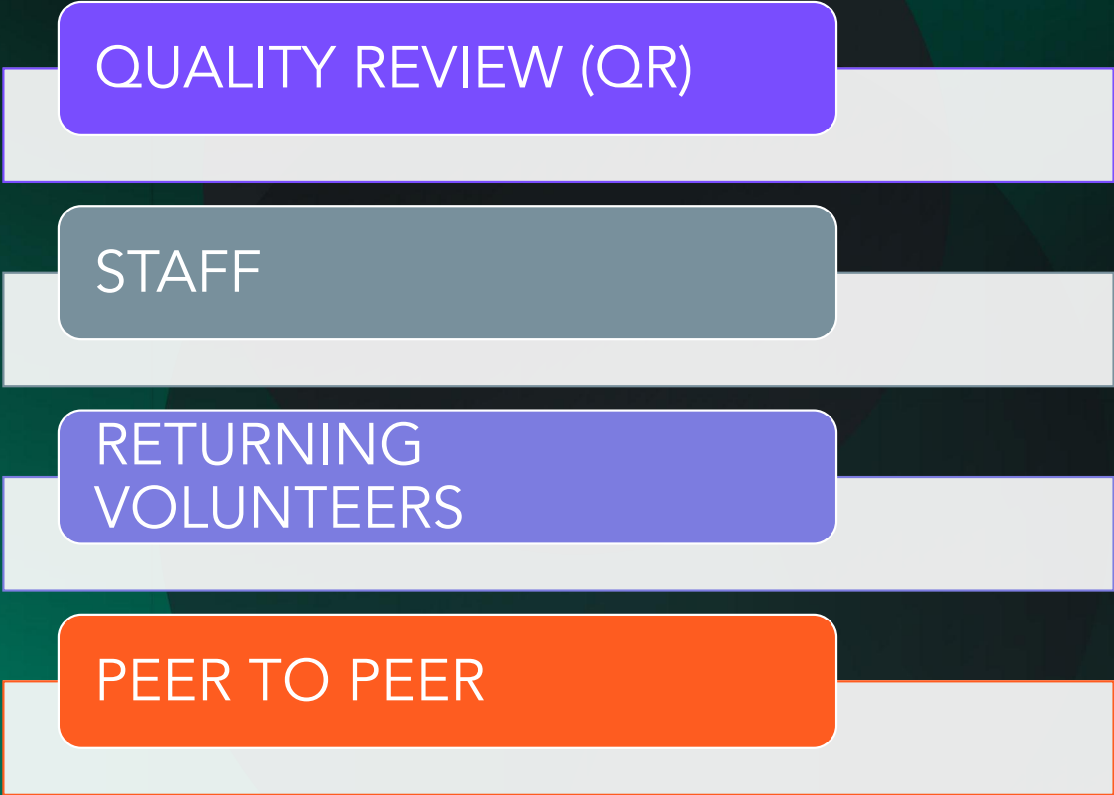
EVERYONE IS TRAINED ON
ADVANCE LEVEL





- TARGET AUDIENCE
- BOTH PUBLIC AND STUDENTS





QUALITY REVIEW (QR)

STAFF

RETURNING
VOLUNTEERS

PEER TO PEER



- CHALLENGES
- RECRUITING
- WAITING AREA FOR TAXPAYERS

STARTING A VITA SITE
ON COLLEGES HAS
CHALLENGES

- LOCATION
- SPACE
- RECRUTING
- SUPPLIES
- COMPUTERS
- PARKING

WITH THE SUPPORT
OF COLLEGE
PRESIDENT,VP,DEANS

CHAIRS, FACULTY
AND STAFF IT WILL
WORK