

A.S.I.

McAllen, Texas

“ Thanks to the UTRGV SBDC, we are expanding our services.”

Sonia Quintero, Owner



THE UNIVERSITY
OF TEXAS
RIO GRANDE VALLEY

The University of Texas
Rio Grande Valley

A Pillar of Success

The Situation: Advocates Searching for Independence (A.S.I.), LLC is a business committed to empowering individuals with disabilities to discover or create meaningful opportunities for full community inclusion. Founded and operated by Sonia Quintero in McAllen, Texas, the organization stays true to its mission by employing 60-70 percent of individuals with disabilities in part-time roles. Mrs. Quintero's dedication to this cause earned her the "We Hire in the State of Texas" award from Texas Workforce Solutions.

A.S.I. offers a range of benefits through a flexible and accessible curriculum designed for students aged 14 to 22 with disabilities, including counseling on post-secondary training opportunities, career exploration, work readiness training (which includes social skills development), self-advocacy training, and work-based learning experiences. Following a thorough assessment, participants receive instruction in both one-on-one and group settings, utilizing carefully chosen tactics and strategies to foster independence.

SBDC Assistance: Sonia Quintero, the owner of Advocates Searching for Independence, LLC, sought guidance from the UTRGV Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in 2017. Since then, she has collaborated closely with the center to enhance various aspects of her business, including operations, start-up planning, and overcoming challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thanks to this ongoing support, she is now concentrating on growth opportunities in new markets and has experienced a remarkable increase in sales. She states, "We Open Doors! Our services are designed to prepare students to become confident, independent, and job-ready young adults. Thanks to the UTRGV SBDC, we are expanding our services: now we provide summer trainings, an ASI Life Skills Academy, and an Imagine Your Future Business Incubator."

IMPACT: Expansion

\$180,000
SALES

2 FT; 14 PT
JOBS

State of Texas
AWARD

Learn more about the UTRGV SBDC at utrgv.edu/sbdc

