

# VITA OCS

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2021 - Current

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## Background

The Virtual Interactive Training Agent (VITA) is an interview practice system using embodied conversational AI agents (virtual humans) and is designed to build competency in finding employment. The core technology is based on 15 years+ of research at ICT into anxiety and experiential learning. In 2021, USC partnered with ICF and the Office of Community Services (OCS) at the United States Department of Health and Human Services to distribute VITA to low-income communities. As part of the national Community Economic Development (CED) program, local organizations are able to utilize VITA to provide interview training for their constituents.

## Objectives

The goal of VITA OCS is to help people find employment by practicing interview skills and mitigating their fears around the process. The virtual human interviewers are tireless — and can run through the different styles of interviews, with specific questions, time and time again, until the candidate has a sense of ease and confidence in their ability to find work.

## Results

The ICT developed and deployed VITA to six Community Economic Development grantees across the country: Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc., the Pacific Gateway Center, the Kentucky Highlands Community Development Corporation, Coastal Enterprises, Inc., the Economic and Community Development Institute, and the Northwest Side Community Development Corporation. Participants in previous applications of VITA successfully improved their ability to identify personal strengths, advocate for themselves and answer situational interview questions.

## Next Steps

The ICT hopes to bring VITA to every single organization under the Community Economic Development umbrella, broadening its scope to lift up low-income citizens across the United States.

Published academic research papers are available from <https://ict.usc.edu/research/publications>

(Search engine keyword: USC ICT Publications)

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