

The Hog Call



Figure 1. Texas A&M University- Kingsville/Office of Employee Services Logo

Employee Spotlight!



Figure 2. Light shining down



Figure 3. Headshot of Mia Jaramillo

Mia Jaramillo - Human Resources Specialist II

How long have you been with Texas A&M University-Kingsville?

I've been with the University for a year and four months. I started as a Graduate Assistant in the College of Business for eleven months before stepping into my current role as a Human Resources Specialist II.

Where did you graduate from?

I'm a proud TAMUK alum! I earned both my Bachelor's degree in Business Management and my Master's degree in Business Administration from Texas A&M University-Kingsville, along with a certificate in Human Resources.

What do you enjoy most about your role?

One of my favorite parts of my role is connecting with people across campus. I meet so many individuals each day, and it's rewarding to help someone find what they need or answer a question that makes their day a little easier.

What is your fondest memory at TAMUK?

My fondest memory is seeing campus come back to life each semester. Watching students, faculty, and staff return brings so much energy and excitement. It's inspiring to see people learning, growing, and starting new journeys, whether they're brand new or have been here for years.

If you could switch roles with another employee for a day, which role would you choose and why?

If I could switch roles for a day, I'd love to be the Volleyball Coach! I've always had a passion for volleyball, and it would be exciting to experience what goes into preparing a team for the season.



Figure 4. Employee Development

Employee Development Spotlight: Introducing ELEVATE

We are excited to announce the launch of **ELEVATE**, a comprehensive Employee Development Program designed to support growth, collaboration, and leadership across our organization.

What Is ELEVATE?

ELEVATE is a structured, multi-phase development program focused on building essential skills for personal and professional success. Through interactive activities, engaging workshops, and practical applications, participants will gain tools to thrive in today's evolving workplace.

Program Phases Include:

- **Personal Foundations (February 5 & February 24, 2026):** Building self-awareness, humility, and a growth mindset
- **Interpersonal Skills (March 2026):** Strengthening communication and emotional intelligence
- **Collaboration & Team Dynamics (April/May 2026):** Enhancing trust, accountability, and teamwork
- **Strategic Thinking & Change Leadership (September/October 2026):** Developing adaptability, critical thinking, and change leadership skills

Why Participate?

ELEVATE helps employees:

- Improve self-awareness and emotional intelligence
 - Build stronger relationships and teamwork
- Strengthen leadership and strategic thinking skills
 - Adapt to change and support innovation

What's Next?

Supervisors are encouraged to support team participation, and employees should watch for session invitations beginning in February.

If you would like to sign up for the February sessions, you can do so by clicking the link below:

[Empathy in the Workplace Sign-up – Fill out form](#)

For more information, please review the **[ELEVATE Program Guide](#)** or contact:

Eric Nykanen – eric.nykanen@tamuk.edu

Olivia Galindo – olivia.galindo@tamuk.edu

Together, let's **ELEVATE** our potential and continue building a culture of growth and development.

Annual Performance Evaluations Launching Soon in Workday

Performance evaluations for non-faculty staff are just around the corner! In alignment with **Texas A&M University System Policy 33.99.03**, the 2026 Performance Evaluation cycle will officially **launch in Workday on March 2**.

Performance evaluations are a valuable opportunity for employees and supervisors to pause, reflect, and connect. These conversations focus on reviewing accomplishments from the past year, discussing core competencies, addressing any areas for growth, and setting expectations moving forward.

Who will participate?

Non-faculty employees hired on or before **September 1, 2025**, and who have worked at the university for more than six months, will receive an annual evaluation in Workday. Employees who transferred departments during the evaluation period will be evaluated by their current supervisor if they have been in the role for five or more months.

Evaluation period:

March 1, 2025 – February 28, 2026

Evaluation window:

March 2, 2026 – April 10, 2026

Evaluations are due on April 10, 2026

To support you throughout the process, helpful job aids are available for both employees and managers, and guidance will be provided at each step within Workday.

Need help or have questions?

Email olivia.galindo@tamuk.edu for assistance.

We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to supporting a smooth and successful evaluation cycle for everyone!



2026 Performance Evaluation Timetable
Rating period: March 1, 2025, February 28, 2026

Annual Performance Evaluations Launch in Workday	March 2, 2026
Manager adds Additional Reviewer/Manager (If applicable)	March 6, 2026
Employee completes self-evaluation	March 13, 2026
Manager drafts performance evaluation	March 25, 2026
Manager & Employee discuss performance evaluation	April 2, 2026
Manager submits evaluation	April 6, 2026
Manager & employee submit acknowledgment/ All performance evaluations completed	April 10, 2026

*Failure to complete annual performance evaluations by the scheduled deadline may affect merit eligibility, if approved, for both the employee and supervisor.

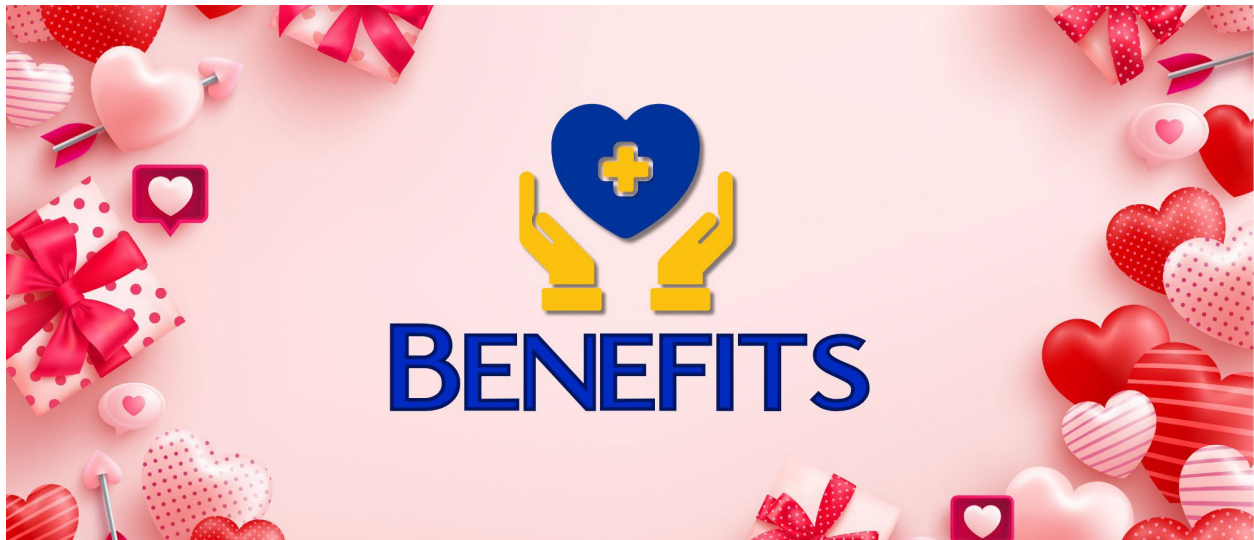


Figure 5. Benefits

February Is Heart Health Month

February is all about taking care of your heart! As a reminder, a **blood pressure cuff is available on the first floor of the Library** and is accessible to all employees. We encourage everyone to take a few minutes to check their blood pressure and stay proactive about heart health.

In addition to on-campus resources, employees have access to heart-healthy tools through our benefits, including programs that support monitoring, healthy habits, and overall well-being.

GuidanceResources®: Support When You Need It

As we move into 2026, your **ComPsych GuidanceResources®** program is available to support you through everyday life and workplace challenges. This confidential benefit provides access to resources for **mental and emotional health, financial planning, legal guidance, and work-life support**—all in one place.

How to Access Your Benefits

Active Employees: 866.301.9623

Retirees: 833.306.0105

Qatar: 00800.100.071

Visit the **GuidanceResources® website**

Download the **GuidanceNow app** (iOS or Android)

Web ID: TAMU

Tips for Tax Season

Tax season doesn't have to be stressful. Planning ahead can make a big difference. Take time to gather your documents, review changes for the year, and explore the tax preparation resources available through GuidanceResources®, including discounts and expert information to help you file with confidence.

Building Resilience & Everyday Well-Being

Resilience helps us turn challenges into opportunities. By strengthening resilience skills, employees can stay productive and focused—even during times of change.

Available resources include:

Tips for rising to everyday challenges

A **Resiliency Resources Toolkit** to support mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility

Self-Care Videos, including:

- [Coping with stress in your life](#)
- [For managers: Building workplace resilience](#)

Be sure to turn on closed captioning and select your preferred language when viewing videos.

Walk Across Texas! 2026 — Get Moving This Spring

Ready to get active and have some fun?

Walk Across Texas! (W.A.T.) is a **free, 8-week online wellness program** designed for **all fitness levels**—and every step counts!

Program Dates:

February 16 – April 12, 2026

Registration Opens: February 2, 2026

Why Join Walk Across Texas?

- Improve heart health, stamina, and overall fitness
 - Boost energy and reduce stress
- Support mental wellness and build healthy habits
- Stay motivated by working toward a shared team goal

How It Works

Create a team of 8 (Team Captains will join a league and create their teams)

Log your activity weekly—walking, gardening, swimming, and more all count

Track your miles and compete with other teams while staying active

How to Register

Register through **Howdy Health**: [Howdyhealth.tamu.edu](https://howdyhealth.tamu.edu)



Choose your league and enter the code below:

TAMUK League Code: watL-260113-23800


TAMU ILRCOP League Code: watL-260114-68171

Learn more at [WalkAcrossTexas.tamu.edu](https://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu)

Let's get moving and make wellness a team effort this spring!


 ComPsych |  GuidanceResources®

Tax prep 2026




Tax filing tips

Start early. Gather your financial documents early to ensure a smooth filing process. Consider electronic filing (e-filing) for a quick and secure method. For those who need assistance, tax professionals can help you navigate updated tax laws and prepare for the filing season well in advance.




Educate yourself.

Stay informed about the latest tax laws to maximize deductions, exemptions, and credits. Check your filing status to determine your standard deduction and credit eligibility. Your status may have changed if you had life changes, like getting married or divorced. Consider hiring a CPA, financial planner, or tax attorney if you need help filing a complex return.



Request an extension if needed.

While an extension lets you push back your filing date, any tax due is still required to be paid by April 15th. Further to the extent you have not paid your full tax bill by the initial due date, interest and penalty will apply.



Key changes for 2025 (filed in 2026)

Standard deduction increased: The OBBB legislation includes inflation-adjusted standard deduction amounts for 2025.


New senior deduction: Through 2028, taxpayers aged 65 and older are eligible for an additional \$6,000 deduction (\$12,000 for married couples if both qualify), subject to income phaseouts.

Increased child tax credit: The credit increases from \$2,000 to \$2,200 per qualifying child for eligible taxpayers. A Social Security Number is required for both the child and the taxpayer.


Partial refundability for adoption credit: The adoption tax credit is now partially refundable up to \$5,000 and is adjusted for inflation.

Tip and overtime income deduction: Some workers may be able to deduct up to \$25,000 in tip income and up to \$12,500 in overtime income for the 2025 tax year, subject to income phaseouts.

Electric Vehicle (EV) credit ended: The EV tax credit expired on September 30, 2025.





Your Employee Assistance Program has partnered with WorkingAdvantage to offer a discount on TurboTax tax preparation software. To get started, log on to GuidanceResources® Online, click the Discounts icon, and follow the instructions posted under Save on TurboTax. Or, access WorkingAdvantage directly and log in or create a new account using access code 653935339.

 24/7 Live Assistance

Call: App: GuidanceNow® Online: guidanceresources.com

TRS: Dial 711 Web ID: guidanceresources.com

 Scan for more resources



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Figure 6. Tax Prep 2026 Flyer

Tax Preparation and Filing Tips for 2026

Overview

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP), through **GuidanceResources®**, has partnered with **Working Advantage** to offer employees a discount on **TurboTax® tax preparation software**. Information is provided for educational purposes only.

How to Access TurboTax Discounts

- Log in to **GuidanceResources® Online**
- Select **Discounts** and choose **Save on TurboTax**
- Or log in to **Working Advantage** using **Access Code: 653935339**

Filing Tips

- **Start early:** Gather financial documents ahead of time.
- **E-file:** Electronic filing is faster and more secure.
- **Get help if needed:** Tax professionals can assist with complex returns.
- **Extensions:** Filing extensions allow more time, but **taxes owed must be paid by April 15** to avoid penalties.

Key Tax Changes for 2025 (Filed in 2026)

- **Standard Deduction:** Increased and adjusted for inflation.
- **Senior Deduction:** Additional \$6,000 for individuals age 65+, \$12,000 for qualifying married couples (through 2028).
- **Child Tax Credit:** Increased to \$2,200 per qualifying child; Social Security numbers required.
- **Adoption Credit:** Partially refundable up to \$5,000.
- **Tip & Overtime Deductions:** Up to \$25,000 in tip income and \$12,500 in overtime income may be deductible.
- **EV Credit:** Federal electric vehicle tax credit expired September 30, 2025.

Help & Resources

- **Website:** guidanceresources.com
- **App:** GuidanceNowSM
- **Phone:** 24/7 Live Assistance
- **TRS:** Dial 711

Hello Heart FAQs

What is Hello Heart?

The Hello Heart app lets you track your blood pressure and easily manage your heart health all in one place.

This benefit is offered at no cost to eligible members and includes a **free Hello Heart monitor** that pairs directly with your smartphone.

What's great about Hello Heart?

Along with blood pressure, you can also track cholesterol, weight, and activity to better understand how daily habits may affect your heart health. Plus, you can choose to share private reports with your doctor.

What do you get with Hello Heart?

- A **free Hello Heart blood pressure monitor** that is FDA-cleared and easily connects to your phone.
- An **app to help you track** blood pressure, cholesterol, medication, and more.
- **Clear explanations** of what your numbers mean.
- **Personalized tips** that make it simple to maintain a healthy heart.
- **Progress reports** that are easy to review or share with your physician.
- **Assistance from our support team** via phone or email.

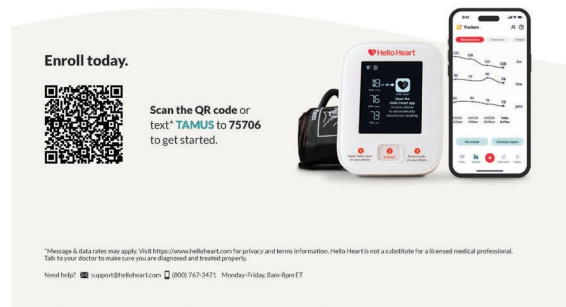


Figure 7. Hello Heart FAQs Flyer

Hello Heart FAQs

What is Hello Heart?

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This benefit is offered at no cost to eligible members and includes a free Hello Heart monitor that pairs directly with your smartphone.


What do you get with Hello Heart?

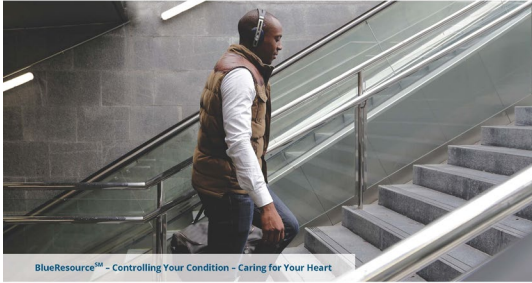
- A free Hello Heart blood pressure monitor that is FDA-cleared and easily connects to your phone.
- An app to help you track blood pressure, cholesterol, medication, and more.
- Clear explanations of what your numbers mean.
- Personalized tips that make it simple to maintain a healthy heart.
- Progress reports that are easy to review or share with your physician.
- Assistance from our support team via phone or email.



Scan the QR code or
text* **TAMUS** to 75706
to get started.

 BlueCross BlueShield of Texas





BlueResource™ - Controlling Your Condition - Caring for Your Heart

Ways to Love Your Heart


Heart disease cuts too many lives short. But here's the good news: There are simple steps you can take to nurture and protect your heart every day.

Tip the scales in your favor. Maintain a healthy weight to help your heart pump more efficiently. A 10-pound weight loss can lower blood pressure and reduce strain on your heart.

Nosh on the good stuff. Reach for fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and skinless poultry and fish first. They reduce plaque that clogs arteries and blood vessels.

Move more. Add 30 minutes of moderate aerobic activity at least five days a week to help your heart beat strong. Plus, it lowers stress and keeps the extra pounds off.

Keep your numbers in check. Take steps to lower your blood pressure and cholesterol levels if they are high. This will also reduce your risk for heart disease, heart attack and stroke.

 Protect your heart so you can spend more time with people you love.

Source: Keep Your Heart Healthy. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 2010.
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas, a Division of Health Care Service Corporation,
a Mutual Legal Reserve Company, an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

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Figure 8. Ways to Love Your Heart Flyer

Ways to Love Your Heart

Heart disease cuts too many lives short. The good news is that there are simple steps you can take every day to nurture and protect your heart.

Healthy Heart Tips

- Maintain a healthy weight. Even a 10-pound weight loss can help lower blood pressure and reduce strain on your heart.
- Choose nutritious foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean proteins like skinless poultry and fish.
- Be physically active. Aim for at least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic activity five days a week to strengthen your heart and reduce stress.

- Monitor your health numbers. Keep your blood pressure and cholesterol levels in check to lower your risk of heart disease, heart attack, and stroke.

Additional Support

BlueResourceSM – Controlling Your Condition – Caring for Your Heart provides tools and support to help you manage your heart health.

Protect your heart so you can spend more time with the people you love.



Figure 9. Walk Across Texas Flyer

Walk Across Texas! (W.A.T.) – TAMUK 2026

Program Overview

Walk Across Texas! (W.A.T.) is a free, 8-week online physical activity program designed for **all fitness levels**. Every step counts, and participants can log a wide variety of activities including walking, gardening, and swimming.

Important Dates

- **Registration Opens:** February 2, 2026
- **Program Dates:** February 16 – April 12, 2026

Why Join Walk Across Texas?

- Improve heart health, stamina, and overall strength
- Increase energy and reduce fatigue
- Support mental wellness by relieving stress and improving mood
- Build healthy, sustainable activity habits

How the Program Works

1. **Create Teams of 8**
Team captains join their league (TAMUK or TAMU ILRCOP) and create a team.
2. **Log Your Activity**
Track walking and other activities using a pedometer, fitness app, or the activity conversion chart. Honesty and accuracy matter.
3. **Move More**
Log miles weekly and compete with other teams.

Registration Information

Register online through **Howdy Health** and enter the appropriate league code:

- **TAMUK Walk Across Texas 2026**
League Code: **watL-260113-23800**
- **TAMU ILRCOP Walk Across Texas 2026**
League Code: **watL-260114-68171**



Figure 10. Employment Support

Level Up Your Workday Skills

Looking to sharpen your Workday knowledge or catch up on the latest updates? TAMUS is offering a variety of **Workday trainings and webinars** designed to help you navigate the system with confidence. Whether you're new to Workday or just need a refresher, there's something for everyone.

View upcoming Workday trainings and webinars here:

<https://it.tamus.edu/workdayservices/news-and-updates/upcoming-training/>

Immigration Update

On January 27, 2026, Governor Abbott directed all Texas state agencies and public universities to **pause the filing of new H-1B petitions**, unless a written exception is approved by the Texas Workforce Commission. At this time, we are awaiting further guidance regarding potential exceptions and timelines. We'll continue to share updates as more information becomes available.

Calling All Hiring Managers: Student Hire Training Is Here!

If you manage student employees, this one's for you. Our **Hiring Manager Training** focuses specifically on the **student hire process** and walks you through everything you need to know to hire smoothly and confidently.

Whether you're brand new to the process or just want a refresher, this training is the **perfect opportunity** to ask questions, learn best practices, and stay up to date. If students are part of your team, we strongly encourage you to take advantage of this training!

Upcoming Training Dates (9:00–10:00 a.m.):

- February 3 & February 17
- March 3 & March 17

Ready to register?

Sign up using the link: [Hiring Manager Training](#)



Figure 11. February Tip of the Month

February is often associated with Valentine’s Day, a time to celebrate care, connection, and appreciation. This month, we encourage everyone to spread love and kindness in simple, meaningful ways across our campus. A kind word, a moment of patience, or taking time to check in with a colleague can make a lasting difference.

Being part of a caring campus means showing respect, empathy, and support not only to students but also to one another. When employees feel valued and supported, that care carries forward into the student experience. Small acts of kindness help create a positive environment where everyone feels welcomed and supported.

This February, challenge yourself to intentionally practice kindness each day. Together, we can continue building a campus culture rooted in care, compassion, and connection.



Figure 12. Javelina Fact Attack!

Did you know?

On February 14, 1986, Texas A&M University–Kingsville unveiled the “*Leaders of the Pack*” statue as part of the Texas Sesquicentennial celebration and a Connor Museum exhibit. Created by alumnus Armando Hinojosa and funded by more than \$70,000 raised by the Alumni Association, the statue stands as a lasting symbol of unity, pride, and Javelina spirit.



Figure 13. "Leaders of the Pack" Statue