

**Background:**

Staff have compiled a report of recent staff public information activities for the committee’s review.

**Public Policy Committee**

**Agenda Item 7.**

**Expected Action:**

The Committee will receive an update regarding recent public information activities and provide guidance as appropriate. No action is anticipated.

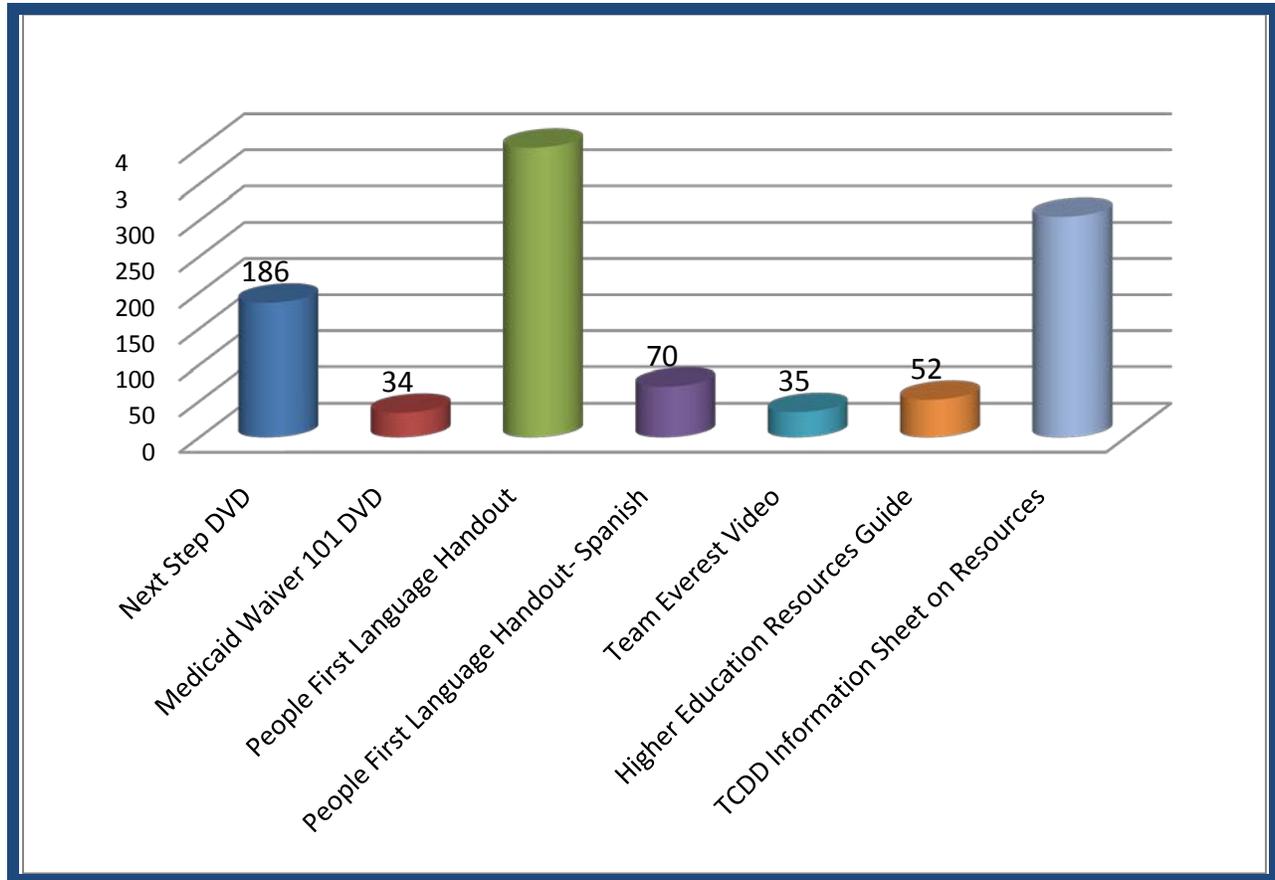
**Council**

**Agenda Item 16. B.**

**Expected Action:**

The Council will receive an update from the Committee on public information activities. No action is anticipated.

## Materials Distributed and Information Update



### Social Media Update

TCDD uses its Facebook Fan page and Twitter account on a daily basis to share and learn about pertinent news stories, resources, or policy information. The social media activity helps make connections with individuals, organizations, members of the media, politicians and others who are involved with or impact the disability community. Social media enhances TCDD's communication and is a great tool for sharing information as well as receiving it.

### TCDD Social Media Statistics

#### Twitter

<http://twitter.com/txcdd>

- 141 tweets
- 470 followers; following 409

#### Facebook

[www.facebook.com/txcdd](http://www.facebook.com/txcdd)

- 514 fans
- 149 posts

Note: Data from January 1, 2011 until April 1, 2011

### TCDD Email Update

*TCDD's email software allows staff to track the number of recipients who open or forward an email announcement; the number of recipients who access the information contained in the email (i.e. hyperlinks and downloads); and whether the recipients are from state agencies, council members, grantees, etc.*

## Materials Distributed and Information Update

---

- As of April 2011, there are 1,226 recipients signed up to receive TCDD emails.
- As of April 2011, there are 730 electronic FYI recipients; the remaining subscribers opt to receive specific information, such as TCDD News and Events. In addition, 47 individuals request the quarterly printed FYI newsletter.

### Outreach Update

- TCDD received requests to use information from the People First Language Handout for the following purposes: Dr. Jerry Bakken, Chair of the Department of Special Education at the University of Illinois for a book he is authoring on inclusion; the NWW Committee for Community Living in Newton, Massachusetts, for the organization's website; and the Workplace Inclusion & Sustainable Employment project at the University of North Texas to create posters on campus.
- TCDD has been issuing news releases on new grant projects and coordinated with Senator Kirk Watson (Austin) to issue a news release on the new Public Policy Collaboration/Statewide Advocacy grant project on March 16, 2011. News releases were also sent on three new Minority Outreach grant projects, including one for which Senator Bob Duncan (Lubbock) contributed a quote. News releases on two more grant projects: Meaningful Relationships and Guardianship Alternatives are also forthcoming.
- Melissa Rosser responded to 48 requests for Information and Referral (I&R) in January through March 2011. Lucy Walker responded to 39 requests for I&R for the same period. Other staff also handled I&R calls.
- On Monday, February 7, and Tuesday, February 8, Melissa Loe and Melissa Rosser represented TCDD at the Texas Transition Conference, hosted by the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University. Conference attendees included school district and agency employees involved in transition planning. TCDD distributed resources on transition planning and higher education and spoke with approximately 200 attendees.
- On Sunday, February 27, and Monday, February 28, Melissa Rosser and Melissa Loe represented TCDD at the Texas Advanced Leadership & Advocacy Conference hosted by the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University and funded through a TCDD grant. TCDD distributed resources and connected with approximately 100 conference attendees from across the state. Roger Webb provided a welcome to participants from the Council.
- TCDD's State Plan workgroup has been meeting via teleconference to develop suggested FY2011–FY2016 State Plan Goals and Objectives. Joanna Cordry has also been gathering additional public input from individuals and groups in other areas of the state to provide the Council with the information needed to develop the strategies to implement these goals. She held a focus group with self-advocates in Fort Worth; met with members of the IDD Needs Council of Tarrant County; attended the MHMRA of Harris County Picnic in the Park (an IDD Awareness Fair); and developed, distributed, and posted two surveys online.

In February 2010, the Council directed staff to begin developing a Strategic Communications Plan that would a) create connections and b) increase awareness. TCDD's efforts in this area have been thoughtful and purposeful. The following information outlines and evaluates those efforts, and includes suggested areas of consideration for strengthening current initiatives and launching new endeavors.

Current activities, as well as any new initiatives, will support the goals and objectives as outlined in the draft FY 2012-2016 State Plan. As a result of these planning efforts, goals and objectives related to strategic communications are included for Council consideration in the draft State Plan. Specifically, draft Objective 5 under Goal 7 (administrative support) addresses the implementation of outreach and strategic communication activities to reach specific goals.

#### **Strategic Communications Outline**

- ✓ Phase 1: Ongoing efforts
- ✓ Phase 2: Data Collection and Evaluation of Efforts
- ✓ Phase 3: Strengthen Current Efforts

#### **NOW:** Phase 4: Identify & Launch New Initiatives

- Phase 5: Ongoing Evaluation of Efforts

*Data collection and evaluation is for the time period of January 2010 through March 2011. This document includes highlights of that data. TCDD's website vendor did not have data available for the time period of January 2010 – mid-October 2010.*

---

#### **E-mail Announcements**

E-mail announcements are used to share specific information with subscribers regarding legislative issues, public hearings and opportunities for input, TCDD-related announcements and other messages as deemed appropriate by staff.

- 99 emails sent
- Average number of recipients: 716
- Average number of emails opened: 172 (19%)

The data shows that:

- Subscriber growth is stagnant
- TCDD tends to send several emails to the same subscribers in bursts (sometimes 3x/day)
- TCDD does not utilize all of the subscriber categories

Methods to strengthen e-mail announcement outcomes:

- Grow subscriber list by prioritizing e-mail capture at grantee, other events
- Redefine subscriber categories to better target messages to more appropriate audiences
- Refine internal guidelines for e-mail content and review process
- Consider weekly or biweekly announcements to bundle information and help prevent overwhelming subscribers

#### **TCDD website**

Data for TCDD website visits is available from October 20, 2010, through March 25, 2011. TCDD IP addresses were blocked when mining this data, so these statistics do not include internal staff visits to the site. It does, however, include Council member visits to the site.

The data shows that:

- There have been 37,299 website visits (average 7,460/month). 31,361 were absolute unique visitors.
  - 73% of visitors are referred by search engines (Google, Yahoo!, etc)
  - 14% of visitors come by other referring sources (ie, emails, other circulating information and links, other websites such as texas.gov and facebook.com)
  - 13% is direct traffic (ie, bookmarked pages)
- Visitors spend an average of 1.5 minutes on the website, and view an average of 1.95 pages/visit.
- A spike in visitors occurred in January, coinciding with the legislative session.
- The top five visited pages are:
  - Texas Legislature ([http://www.txddc.state.tx.us/public\\_policy/txlegis.asp](http://www.txddc.state.tx.us/public_policy/txlegis.asp))
    - 14,228 visits (19.59% page views)
  - Home page (<http://www.txddc.state.tx.us/>)
    - 5,592 visits (7.7% page views)
  - People First (<http://www.txddc.state.tx.us/resources/publications/pfanguage.asp>)
    - 5,000 visits (6.88% page views)
  - College Resources (<http://www.txddc.state.tx.us/resources/publications/college.asp>)
    - 2,266 visits (3.12% page views)
  - 82<sup>nd</sup> Legislative Session ([http://www.txddc.state.tx.us/public\\_policy/82ndsession.asp](http://www.txddc.state.tx.us/public_policy/82ndsession.asp))
    - 1,938 visits (2.67% page views)

#### Methods to strengthen website:

- Audit website for possible redesign and content value
- Engage with professional website designer, writer to begin redesign and redevelopment
- Update homepage regularly (at least weekly), including a live feed of social media posts
- Research and pursue as applicable, other features/plug-ins to enhance value (RSS feed, social bookmarks, etc)

#### **FYI Newsletter**

The newsletter is TCDD's means of communicating information that falls into these major categories: Texas Update & Opportunities for Input; Federal Update; Council News; and Resources. *(This data relates to the e-mail announcement; there are separate website traffic statistics that are specific to the newsletter)*

- Average number of e-subscribers: 822
- Average number of emails opened: 222 (26%)
- Average number of links clicked within email: 51 (6%)

#### The data shows that:

- Subscriber growth is stagnant
- The Events List is the most clicked on link (avg. 18/issue), followed by the Texas Update (avg. 11/issue) and Internet Resources (8/issue).
- The least-clicked sections of the newsletter are the Federal Update, Council News and Resources (all avg. 5/issue).

#### Methods to strengthen newsletter:

- Determine target audience (individuals, organizations, etc)
- Create editorial calendar (deadlines, featured topics, etc)
- Refine content
- Format content for primarily web publication

**Facebook**

TCDD uses Facebook to share and gather information, and to connect with organizations, media outlets, politicians and other individuals.

- The number of Fans grows steadily each month
- TCDD posts approximately 35 times/month
- Each post is viewed an average of 332 times

The data shows that:

- 74% of TCDD's Fans are female
- 85% of TCDD's Fans are between the ages of 25 and 54
- The fastest-growing segment on Facebook is 55-65 year-old females

Methods to strengthen Facebook presence:

- Personalize posts/be conversational (best practices)
- Implement internal guidelines for what content is posted, shared
- Research value of using specific features: Photos, Videos, Events, other applications
- Determine value (if any), purpose of multiple TCDD-related accounts (ie, agency, Council member and staff accounts) and create training, other guidelines if necessary
- Explore ways to methodically grow our fans

**Twitter**

TCDD uses Twitter to share and gather information, and to connect with organizations, media outlets, politicians and other individuals.

- The number of followers grows steadily each month
- The number TCDD follows grows steadily each month
- There is not a formal tracking mechanism to determine the reach of posted information

Methods to strengthen Twitter presence:

- Personalize posts/be conversational (best practices)
- Implement guidelines for what content is posted, retweeted
- Determine value (if any), purpose of multiple TCDD-related accounts (ie, agency, Council member and staff accounts) and create training, other guidelines if necessary

**Stakeholder Groups/List Serves**

TCDD is connected to a variety of disability-related groups via list serves (Yahoo! groups, e-mail lists and other electronic means outside of Twitter and Facebook). We use the lists to gather and share information, and regularly post messages for distribution.

- TCDD participates in 45 different e-groups
- TCDD messages are regularly forwarded and reposted by others
- TCDD gathers information for reposting and distribution

Methods to strengthen participation with list serves:

- Consider activity, reach of each group to determine value
- Do a benefit analysis of participation

**Materials**

TCDD has an inventory of TCDD and grantee products that are available to requestors at no charge. We have a listing/order form on the TCDD website; there is no proactive marketing of materials, with the exception of TCDD staff members distributing information at events (conferences, fairs, etc).

The data shows that:

- The People First (English) handout is the most distributed handout (1,247 in 15 months)
- The Next Step DVD is the second-most distributed item (1,114 in 15 months)
- The Council brochure, People First (Spanish) and Medicaid Waiver 101 DVD are distributed in bursts. Other materials are not widely distributed
- Current materials are not focused; the information is not strategic
- Grantee materials are not consistently received in a reproducible format and when they are received they are not used by TCDD or requested by external audiences

These numbers do not reflect when materials are downloaded for printing and/or viewing for free on the TCDD website.

Methods to strengthen materials:

- Create direct marketing plan for current materials and information sources (define target audience, create awareness of existing materials)
  - 211
  - TAMU's Wiki
  - Advocacy "U"
  - Resource Guide
  - TCDD Internet Resources Web page
  - TCDD's internal one-pager for phone calls/I&R (modify for Web)
  - Expand Q&A on TCDD website
  - FYI and/or E-mail announcements regarding resources
- Require future grantees to ensure TCDD receives copies, final versions sufficient for marketing in large quantities and reproducing
- Reconsider design and delivery of required materials (Biennial Report, Annual Report) to reach a broader audience, serve additional purposes / or scale back to redirect staff resources
- Strategically design flyers, brochures and other templates to be easily updated and used for other purposes (ie, exhibitor fairs, NACDD requests, etc)
- Strengthen partnerships with grantees, request assistance in distributing information
- Create TCDD brochure/info kit (adaptable for different audiences)
  - Legislative offices
  - Media
  - Other events/organizations/meetings
- Create items that may be printed in-house (for ease of modifying/updating)
- Include Spanish translation with each material (two-sided if possible)
- Create guidelines for determining TCDD representation at fairs, conferences, etc as an exhibitor
- Attend forums, fairs, conferences to network/connect
  - Picnic in the Park (Houston), Founder's Forum (Winnsboro)
  - Round Rock ISD/Region 13 Resource Fair

### **Summary**

TCDD performs numerous public information activities that need to be strategic and focused. Limited staff resources require reconsideration of current efforts, innovative use of technology and emerging social media tools, partnerships and information sharing with other organizations, carefully defined target audiences and messages, and strategic initiatives that support the State Plan.

Implementation of internal guidelines, templates, best practices and purposeful activities will support TCDD in its mission and goals.