



The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities 2011 Accomplishments and Activities

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) is a state agency established by state and federal law to support and promote community inclusion and integration of people with developmental disabilities. TCDD is governed by a 27-member Council appointed by the Governor. At least 60 percent of the council members are individuals with developmental disabilities, parents of young children with developmental disabilities or family members of people with developmental disabilities who are unable to represent themselves. The Council uses information about the service system, people's needs and disability-related community resources and issues to develop projects and activities that focus on filling the gaps and barriers in services and supports that help the estimated 452,620 Texans with disabilities live in, work in and contribute to their communities. These activities, designed to have impact on the entire state, are developed in close collaboration with consumers, parents, advocates, state agencies, service providers and policymakers.

Employment

TCDD's employment projects are designed to develop and demonstrate innovative ways to help people with developmental disabilities improve their employability or become entrepreneurs.

Art Works: Creative Industries Statewide Self-Employment Project, VSA Texas. To assist artists with disabilities develop micro-enterprises and become self employed, business, arts and disability service providers trained 100 artists in three different skill areas — applied and fine arts, marketing and financial management, and professional development and career readiness. A mentor program resulted in one individual finishing and releasing a music CD and three visual artists exhibiting work at the Texas Capitol, Access Gallery and Inclusion Works Conference. In addition, a new art gallery was opened in Austin and six regional artist groups are being established as self-sustaining organizations.



Students from Art Works New Media Arts Camp.

Texas Customized Self-Employment Project, Community Healthcare, Longview. More than 25 new businesses have been created as a result of this project, which trains individuals with disabilities, family members, advocates and providers in nine counties how to support individuals in creating and managing a small business.

Project CASE: Connections for Academic Success and Employment. With services beginning in spring 2012, Project CASE — a collaboration of the Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research at Texas Tech University, South Plains (Community) College, the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, and local business partners — will offer a wider array of coordinated supports and services than typically provided in higher education for students with disabilities. The project will focus on identifying, recruiting and retaining students (ages 18-25) with developmental disabilities who are interested in earning an academic degree or technical certification and pursuing competitive employment opportunities..

A Bridge to Career in Human Service Education

Program. The Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University is developing an inclusive post-secondary education program that will have the necessary supports to help ensure the successful participation by individuals with developmental disabilities. The program, which will include a supervised field-based practicum, will provide one year of training for people with disabilities who wish to earn a certificate that offers them opportunities for a career path in human services.

Project HIRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment)

This initiative helps individuals with developmental disabilities complete post-secondary education at South Texas College in McAllen. The Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services provides valuable assistance to participants, such as educational coaches, individual and family support, and college and employment readiness. These services help participants succeed in post-secondary education and obtaining employment.

ASSET (Active Service Solutions for Economic Transition) AmeriCorps.

ASSET AmeriCorps, a statewide program administered by Easter Seals Central Texas, hired and trained 29 volunteers (some with disabilities) to be ASSET Navigators. Navigators help people with disabilities be more independent by providing assistance with money management, obtaining appropriate assistive technology, and/or finding affordable, accessible housing. In 2011, Navigators conducted 13 training sessions and mentored more than 800 people.

Education

Project IDEAL (Informing and Designing Education for All Learners).

Designed to help prepare prospective general-education teachers work with students who have disabilities, Texas Tech University's Project IDEAL provides user-friendly resources to stimulate and challenge general educators about the critical nature of their role in working with students who receive special education services. At the broadest level, Project IDEAL is about systems change to help bridge the divide between the preparation of special and general educators so they can work more effectively with all learners. At its narrowest focus, Project IDEAL is about helping general education teachers make a positive difference in the lives of students with disabilities.

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)

Head Start Project. Implemented by Region 17 Education Service Center in Lubbock, this project takes a systematic approach to changing student behavior in classroom settings by providing training to staff employed by Head Start programs, early childhood settings, child care settings and pre-school settings that serve children, ages two to five, with disabilities. In 2011, more than 5,100 educators, students, and agency and community members attended training provided, facilitated or collaboratively sponsored by the project.



Students from the Texas Youth Leadership Forum at the Texas State Capitol.

Future Activities

TCDD plans to implement projects related to the following:

Project SEARCH. Parents of youth who have developmental disabilities report that the transition from high school to a career is a difficult, involved and confusing process. Project SEARCH, a business-led school-to-work transition model, developed successful internships for students with developmental disabilities that lead to integrated employment that pays the prevailing wage for a given job.

Transportation. TCDD's Five Year State Plan places a high priority on improving transportation for Texans with disabilities. In a previous project, TCDD demonstrated that establishing and building the capacity of local transportation alliances that include people with developmental disabilities and their allies is an effective and sustainable way to create systems change in urban and rural transportation systems. In addition to providing the initial funding and technical assistance to facilitate the self-sufficiency of each alliance, the project included a targeted public awareness component, as well as community recruitment, training and organizing. These alliances enabled people with disabilities to influence transportation planning in San Antonio, Fort Worth, East Texas, Houston and El Paso. Some of these alliances continue to be active and have secured additional funding to support ongoing work.



**TEXAS COUNCIL for
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