



# GRANT BEST PRACTICES

## IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, TCDD grantees connected with their audiences in new ways and developed new approaches to deliver impact. Most projects shifted all in-person activities to virtual settings.

### WHAT WENT VIRTUAL?

- Training classes
- Reading groups
- Job training
- Book clubs
- Peer support
- Art groups
- Medical and dental visits (kits sent to homes)
- School fitness

Texas Advocates Book Club members at their Little Library Grand Opening



### CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

Grantees developed creative solutions and new practices to keep their programs engaging and effective. Some examples of this include:

- A tech library was established at a State Supported Living Center. Now, residents don't rely on staff to communicate with friends and family through devices.
- Many projects incorporated COVID-19 safety in their curriculum to reduce health risks.
- Universities in other states watched live streams of a grantee's dental visits with plans to replicate the grantee program in their state.

### BENEFITS

- ✓ Increased access to project activities
- ✓ Reduced cost to individuals
- ✓ Allowed funds to be used in new ways
- ✓ Demonstrated that people with DD can effectively use technology
- ✓ Creativity and innovation

### BARRIERS

- ✗ Difficulty acquiring access to devices and internet
- ✗ Program match is typically volunteer time, travel and office space, making grant requirements more difficult
- ✗ New partnerships were more difficult to cultivate



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### PROGRAM REACH AND PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

As grantees shift their programs to a hybrid of virtual and in-person settings, there has also been a shift in program reach and the experiences of program participants. Grantees are now able to expand their reach from local to nationwide while aiming to maintain personalized relationships with members. Examples of this newly expanded reach include:

- Projects can expand to underserved counties
- Projects can expand from a single school district to statewide outreach
- Advocacy programs can increase connection with lawmakers who attend more sessions now that meeting virtually is possible

Photos: (Top Right) Special Olympics Healthy LEAP athletic program  
(Bottom Right) Imagine Art participants during an online drawing class

### BENEFITS

- ✓ Expanded audiences from local to statewide and national reach
- ✓ Increased participation
  - Flexible access to programs
  - Reduced transportation barriers
- ✓ Expanded access to remote delivery resources
- ✓ Helped reduce social isolation
- ✓ Involved families in youth programs

### BARRIERS

- ✗ Difficult to build community capacity with no community
- ✗ Program closures reduced connection with individuals (SSLCs, Independent Living Centers, Schools, Community Centers, etc.)

