

# 2022 Annual Report



TEXAS COUNCIL for  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES

Inclusive. Innovative. Impactful.

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## Executive Summary

An estimated 600,000 Texans have developmental disabilities (DD). The goals of these children and adults do not differ from the aspirations of all Texans — to be self-sufficient, work and earn a living, practice their faith; interact with peers, and be involved in their community.

In the 2022 fiscal year, TCDD showed progress in connecting self-advocates at state and local levels to share information and resources, develop policy skills, and train other self-advocates to better engage in communities. Our focus this year has been on building peer-to-peer support networks, skills training for our next generation of young self-advocate leaders, and the inclusion of self-advocates in rural areas.

TCDD has also worked this year to improve the ability of our systems to provide needed support to individuals with DD. Our projects have identified promising practices that include provider and teacher training, family education, and resource sharing to expand access to services and supports in our state. Efforts this year have focused on protecting individuals with DD from financial exploitation and sexual assault, improving the adequacy of health care, and strengthening our informal community support networks to include families of aging parents and siblings, and faith entities.

Our progress is evident in the steady rise in the number of individuals and stakeholders who participated in the 70 active grant projects and Council activities across Texas in 2022. We experienced higher numbers of those who connect with our Council resources through social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn), websites, newsletters, fact sheets, blog posts, and press releases. This year, TCDD exceeded its targets for program engagement with over 17,000 individuals with DD, family members, and professionals in TCDD project activities. As a result, Texans with DD, family members, and decision-makers are better informed and engaged in efforts to improve our systems and build capacity.

This annual report summarizes activities of the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities conducted between Oct. 1, 2021, and Sept. 30, 2022.

# Mission & Purpose

**Our mission is to create change so that all people with disabilities are fully included in their communities and exercise control over their own lives.**

TCDD helps people with DD achieve their potential for independence, productivity, and integration into their communities through the development of a comprehensive system of services and supports. TCDD is one of 56 state councils on DD in the U.S. and its territories created through the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act).

**To achieve the vision of the DD Act, state DD Councils use federal funding to:**



## What are Developmental Disabilities?

Developmental disabilities are severe, chronic disabilities that begin at birth or during childhood and young adulthood and are likely to continue throughout one's life. Examples include intellectual disabilities, autism, and cerebral palsy.

The DD Act defines a developmental disability as a severe chronic disability that:

- attributes to a mental and physical impairment or both;
- manifests before a person turns 22;
- will likely continue indefinitely;
- results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, economic self-sufficiency; and
- reflects a person's need for individually planned and coordinated services, supports, or other forms of assistance that are lifelong or for an extended duration.

TCDD uses the DD Act's definition to guide its work. However, our programs and policy activities also have a positive impact on the broader disability community.

## Council Members

Mary Durham, Spring (Chair)  
Kimberly Torres, Houston (Vice Chair)  
Ronald "Ronnie" Browning, Spring  
Deborah "Debbie" Carlisle, San Antonio  
William "Bill" Coorsh, Houston  
Gladys Cortez, McAllen  
Kyle Cox, College Station  
Maverick Crawford III, San Antonio  
Andrew "Andy" Crim, Fort Worth  
Juan Carlos Lopez, Edinburg

Scott McAvoy, Cedar Park  
Amanda Miles, Alvin  
Angela "Angie" Panzica, Houston  
Michael Peace, Poteet  
Robert Schier III, Elgin  
Eric Shahid, Somerville  
Meridith Silcox, Splendora  
Lora Taylor, Houston  
Jamie Thomas, Abilene

### Agency Representatives & Alternates

Disability Rights Texas: Sean Jackson, Patty Anderson; Texas Center for Disability Studies at The University of Texas at Austin: Dr. Sandra Magaña, Dr. Nina Zuna; Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University: Dr. Dan Zhang, Dr. Meagan Orsag; Texas Education Agency Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: Dr. Justin Porter, Elizabeth Danner; Texas Health and Human Services Commission Title XIX Medicaid: Erica Brown, Kate Layman; Texas Health and Human Services Commission Older Americans Act: Holly Riley, Chimere Clemons; Texas Workforce Commission Rehabilitation Act: Jonas Schwartz, Sara Kendall; Texas Department of State Health Services Title V Maternal & Child Health: Audrey Young, Ivy Goldstein

TCDD is governed by a 27-member board that consists of:

- people with DD;
- family members or guardians of people with DD;
- representatives from state agencies that provide DD services and support;
- representatives from the university centers for excellence in DD;
- a representative from the state's protection and advocacy system; and
- a member representing local, non-government organizations.

The Texas governor appoints Council members in accordance with the DD Act. Governor-appointed members serve six-year staggered terms and may serve no more than two consecutive six-year terms. The governor also designates a member of the Council to serve as chair. By federal law, at least 60% of Council members must be people with DD, their parents or guardians, or other immediate relatives. Also, at least one Council member must be someone who has lived in an institutional facility or a family member of a person who has lived in an institutional facility. Council members serve without salary. As allowed by the Texas Legislature, members can be reimbursed for expenses from approved activities.

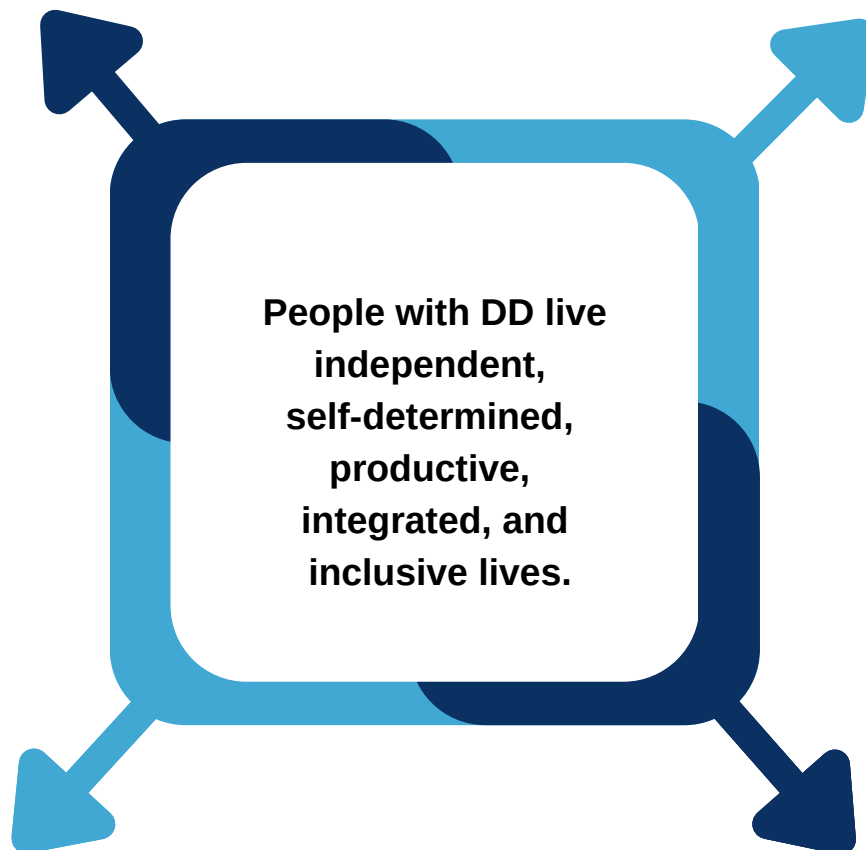
# Statewide Goals

## Self-Advocacy & Family Support

Increase opportunities for self-advocates and families to network with peers, receive information and resources, and develop skills to engage in state and local issues and say what they want and need.

## Collaboration & Engagement

Facilitate knowledge exchange opportunities amongst the public and experts in the field on lived experience of people with DD. Foster partnerships with state decision-makers and other key stakeholders. Establish subject matter expert groups to guide emerging priorities and needs.



## Best & Promising Practices

Improve ability to reduce barriers, enhance supports, and address key issues facing people with DD and their families. Increase service providers' knowledge of evidence-based strategies to better support the needs of people with DD and families.

## Public Policy

Assess emerging policy needs and trends. Summarize evidence-based policy strategies and outcomes. Increase Texas decision-makers' knowledge to perform their roles and fulfill their required responsibilities.

Learn more about our statewide strategic plan at [tcdd.texas.gov/about-us/state-plan](https://tcdd.texas.gov/about-us/state-plan).

# Self-Advocacy & Family Support

Increase opportunities for self-advocates and families to network with peers, receive information and resources, and develop skills to engage in state and local issues and say what they want and need.



## By the Numbers

**1,126** self-advocates **700** family members, professionals, and allies  
**200** young self-advocates **356** people supported by peers **2** disability fellows  
**126** people supported by peers in institutions **70** advanced leaders  
**125** people in 12 book clubs **117** people learning to read





Texas Advocates Next Chapter Book Clubs

Jordan has enjoyed becoming a peer support specialist from Burleson, Texas: "I get to do what I love for a living, which is supporting other people. This project will help self-advocates to develop and improve skills to speak up for what they want." He has worked with his state senator on a DD peer support bill.

A peer mentee has a significant speech impediment and often felt ignored and disregarded in medical appointments. As a result of her training, she gained the self-confidence to advocate that they stop and listen to her.

The workforce interviewing group in the Reading For All program meet each week to learn more about how it will be out in the workforce. They work diligently on common interview questions and writing down answers to practice interview questions and completing applications.



Educational Programs Inspiring Communities  
Youth Leadership Development

# Public Policy

**Assess emerging policy needs and trends. Summarize evidence-based policy strategies and outcomes. Increase Texas decision-makers' knowledge to perform their roles and fulfill their required responsibilities.**

As a resource for DD in our state, our Council shares information with multiple stakeholders on policy topics important in the lives of individuals and families. In this year's mid-term elections, voters with disabilities in Texas faced new rules related to assistance and accommodation. TCDD provided education about voting rights to individual voters and poll workers in partnership with our protection and advocacy organization.

Through individual policy fellowships, trainees can take a "deep dive" into disability topics and benefit from expert mentors and leaders. Our fellows this year have studied early childhood interventions, education systems, mental health, and transitions from pediatric to adult medicine.

Professionals working in the DD service field have opportunities to participate in comprehensive training on disability issues. Formal capstone-type projects led to real changes to services within their current place of employment. Examples have included enhanced information and referral, hubs for direct support professionals, tools for law enforcement, and building alliances of advocates on postsecondary campuses. Professionals in these programs have been appointed to state boards and commissions to continue their advocacy efforts and share expertise. As a result, TCDD sees a growing network of DD professionals and graduates remain connected to sustain improvements.



TCDD Council members and staff

A state organization that sent staff to the advanced disability leadership program for professionals (a partnership between TCDD and The Arc of Texas) said: "This was a great way to attack our staffing issues. I believe that it helped us step out of our 'traditional' ways of doing business. I appreciate the great speakers and sharing from others in our field from across the state!"



## Public Policy Priorities

Prior to Texas legislative sessions, the Council releases Public Policy Priorities that guide TCDD's policy advocacy and include recommendations for legislators on disability-specific topics. Our current priorities include the following topics:

- **Personal and Civil Rights:** abuse, neglect, and exploitation; sexual assault; guardianship; voting; restraint and seclusion
- **Accessibility:** accessible parking; accessible transportation; home modifications; city planning and development; inclusive meetings
- **Early Childhood and Inclusive Education:** early childhood intervention services; early pickups; special education services; transition planning
- **Employment:** employment first; subminimum wage; Medicaid waiver income limits; day habilitation
- **Health and Safety:** Medicaid; complex mental health needs; emergency preparedness; plain language
- **Funding for Services**
- **Attendant Wages and Training**

Learn more at [tcdd.texas.gov/policy/public-policy-priorities](https://tcdd.texas.gov/policy/public-policy-priorities).

## Legislative Advocacy

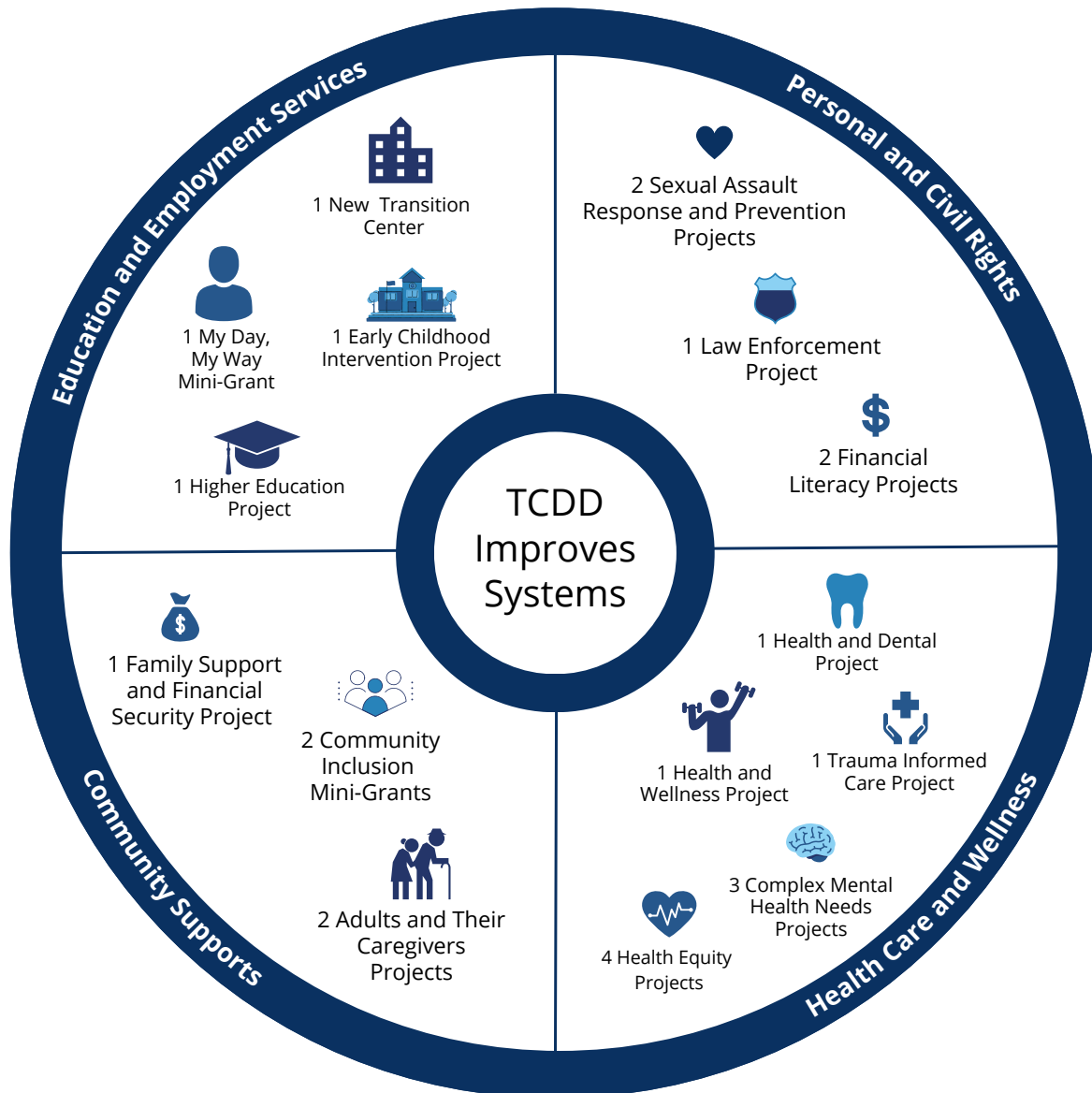
Texas did not have a legislative session this year. In the interim, our Council worked to build relationships locally with those who represent them. We also engaged in policy discussions, input sessions, reviews of agency rules and regulations, and other opportunities to provide input in the policymaking process.

The following of our interim charge recommendations were picked up by the Texas House and Senate, either verbatim or with modified language:

- Reviewing progress toward the goals of the 60x30TX higher education plan
- Increasing access to community services
- Community attendant workforce
- Studying the effectiveness of new poll watcher training
- Inclusive child care
- Alternatives to guardianship
- Implementation of supplemental special education services program

# Best & Promising Practices

Improve ability to reduce barriers, enhance supports, and address key issues facing people with DD and their families. Increase service providers' knowledge of evidence-based strategies to better support the needs of people with DD and families.



## By the Numbers

**4,400** people, teachers, providers in health education and services

**300** trained on sexual assault response and prevention **76** non-sedative dental exams

**450** received resources and training on transition from K-12

**75** people trained on financial literacy **1,100** teachers trained on mental health

**300** downloads of video on voting with a disability

**300** families and providers improve knowledge about aging with DD and caregiving

In our financial and future family planning project, a parent used a "trajectory tool" she learned about during a Charting the Life Course training session to help develop an IEP for her son who is almost 18. Through this process, her son was able to share his desire to go to college. The parent said the training has helped her actively think about her son living a full and happy life in the career field of his choice.

Addressing sexual assault prevention and response is a difficult topic. However, those who have participated report feeling "empowered to learn more and to provide abuse prevention work with the people they care about or serve." A participant said they realized they may have experienced a sexual assault earlier and didn't process and come to terms with what happened to them.

## Spotlight on Health Systems

This year, TCDD engaged in activities to promote greater access to DD-informed health care. Specific efforts included increasing access to vaccines; building capacity of teachers and clinical providers to recognize signs of co-occurring mental health symptoms; increasing supports in transition to adult medicine; exploring methods to obtain dental examinations without sedation; using telemedicine strategies to increase access and quality of care for those aging with DD and their caregivers; and promoting healthy relationships. TCDD builds on these lessons learned to address health equity and reduce disparities.

A person with autism participated in a health and wellness project to improve medical, dental, and behavioral health professional training to provide more patient centered health care for persons with DD. Her previous dental experience required restraint, anesthesia, and IV sedation. With new provider strategies, the individual was able to complete a dental exam and have teeth brushed for the first time in many months.

A nurse quality monitor for HHSC in West Texas reached out to the telehealth project team to bring a National Task Group workshop on dementia and IDD to her area, explaining the magnitude of need in the 350-mile-wide area from El Paso to Big Spring. The nurse reported she often finds misinformed care providers and many adults with DD in need of better support and services.

# Collaboration & Engagement

**Facilitate knowledge exchange opportunities amongst the public and experts in the field on lived experience of people with DD. Foster partnerships with state decision-makers and other key stakeholders. Establish subject matter expert groups to guide emerging priorities and needs.**

TCDD engaged in communications activities throughout the year to engage people with disabilities to impact the service system, keep advocates informed about advocacy opportunities, and collaborate with other organizations to raise awareness about disability issues. Community engagement includes sharing information as well as listening to input from Texans with DD and their families.

This year, TCDD distributed two public surveys to gather information from people with lived experiences related to TCDD's public policy priorities and sibling experiences. Through the surveys, we collected a total of 255 public responses and impact stories.

The Council is attentive to the challenges of a large and diverse state and has identified multiple strategies to provide locally-based outreach, education, and collaboration with partners that are culturally and regionally appropriate to individuals with DD and families in every community.

## Regional Community Outreach Coordinators

TCDD partnered with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (AgriLife) to develop a regional coordinator initiative so people with disabilities and others around the state have access to region-specific information, resources, and events. Regional coordinators provide information; collect and share resources; promote educational training sessions; host events; make connections with individuals and organizations; and foster a broad network of disability advocates and experts.

Our partnership with AgriLife to place regional community outreach coordinators in five locations around the state provides a direct connection in all 254 Texas counties resulting in engagement with over 1,300 stakeholders and almost 2,000 program participants seeking education, training, and support. This year, our regional outreach efforts led to a new connection with refugee populations.

Community-based education included the following initiatives:

- Inclusion Program Checklist
- Gardening
- Disability Employment Awareness
- Aging with DD and Caregiving
- Breast Cancer Screening
- Special Education
- Early Childhood Intervention



Inclusive Gardening Project

This year, our regional coordinators received certification on inclusive design to provide information to extension agents, schools, employers, and others on how to ensure programs, vaccine clinics, and other community settings are more accessible to individuals with DD.

The team created an inclusion checklist for extension agents or others providing family and community education programs such as nutrition, caregiving, and inclusive gardening.

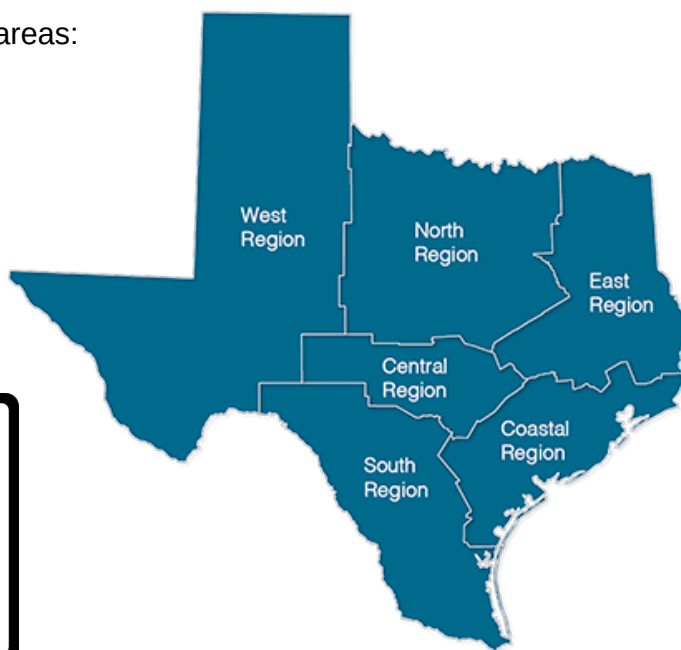
The gardening and inclusive playground advocacy led our regional coordinators to be instrumental in the passage of a local “Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights” in South Texas to articulate the vision for outdoor experiences and opportunities for all children.

## Connect with Your Regional Outreach Coordinator

Regional coordinators serve the following areas:

- West Region
- North Region
- East Region
- Central Region
- Coastal Region
- South Region

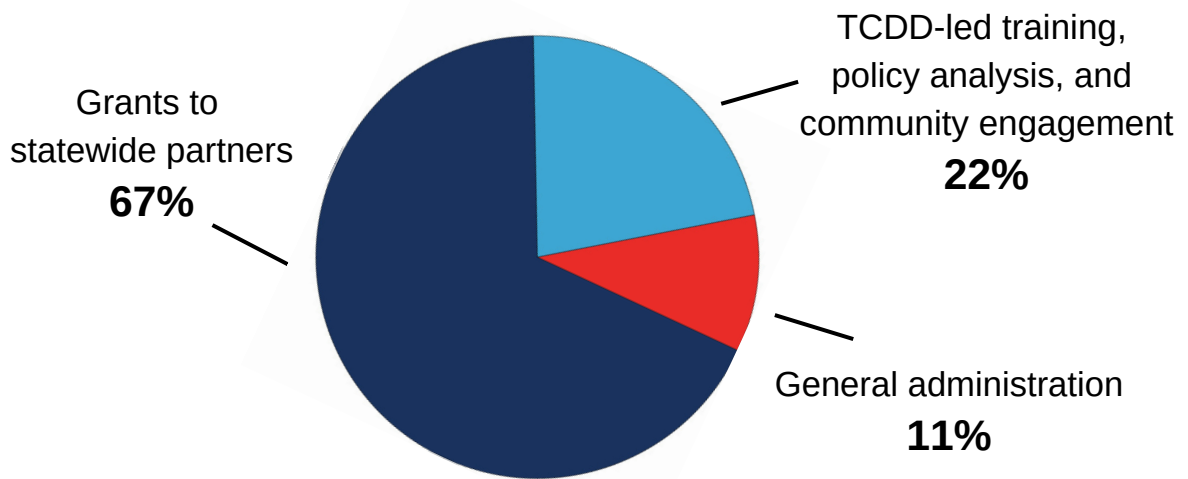
Learn more by scanning this code with your smartphone, tablet, or other device:





# Funding Breakdown

Total federal funding award for 2022: \$5.9 million



This work is supported by a grant from the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Washington, D.C. 20201 with a 100% federal funding award totaling \$5,907,507. Council efforts are those of the grantee and do not necessarily represent the official views of nor are endorsed by ACL, HHS, or the U.S. government.

## Supported Organizations

Adapt-Able Foundation  
Alamo Area Council of Governments  
Autism Society of El Paso  
Baylor College of Medicine  
Blessed Be Hope For Three  
Children's Disabilities Information Coalition  
Chrysalis Spectrum  
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities  
DeafBlind Camp of Texas  
Down Syndrome Association of Central Texas  
Educational Programs Inspiring Communities  
Epilepsy Foundation of Central and South Texas  
Family to Family Network  
Imagine Art  
Jewish Family Services of Houston  
Literacy United  
Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute  
Mounting Horizons  
NAMI Texas  
Paso del Norte Children's Development Center

Project Amistad  
Rio Grande Valley Down Syndrome Association  
SAFE Alliance  
Special Olympics Texas  
Texas Advocates  
Texas A&M University  
Texas Parent to Parent  
Texas State Independent Living Council  
Texas State University  
Texas Tech University  
The Arc of Greater Houston  
The Arc of the Gulf Coast  
The Arc of Texas  
The University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School  
The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston  
West Central Texas Council of Governments  
West Central Texas Regional Foundation

# Recognition

Three projects were invited to present at the National Association of Councils for Developmental Disabilities and the national Arc annual conferences.

Four projects submitted papers to peer-reviewed academic journals to contribute to evidence-based research.

TCDD and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension published an article on their statewide regional partnership in the peer-reviewed "Journal of Extension." The article had been downloaded 220 times as of last May.

Received Texas A&M University Interfaith Action ACE Award for support of Texas Faith and Disability Network. The TCDD-AgriLife Extension project was nominated for the Texas A&M University AgriLife Superior Service Award.

The American Board of Internal Medicine and the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry are exploring national Fellowships based on Texas models.

## How to Get Involved with TCDD

TCDD provides important information of interest to people with DD, family members, and anyone who works with people with disabilities or is involved in disability issues. Visit [tcdd.texas.gov](http://tcdd.texas.gov) to find out how to apply for funding, connect with our regional coordinators, participate in quarterly Council meetings, become a grant review panel member, and even apply to join the Council. You can also sign up to receive our email newsletters and connect with us on social media to stay up to date on advocacy opportunities, legislative updates, upcoming events, new publications, and grant announcements.

TCDD encourages you to impact your community through disability advocacy! We offer multiple leadership and advocacy training opportunities for people with disabilities and their family members. This includes Texas Partners in Policymaking, a leadership advocacy training program for people with disabilities and their family members. You can learn more about the program and how to apply for it at [TxPartners.org](http://TxPartners.org).

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