

INCLUSIVE.
INNOVATIVE.
IMPACTFUL.

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



TEXAS COUNCIL for
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES

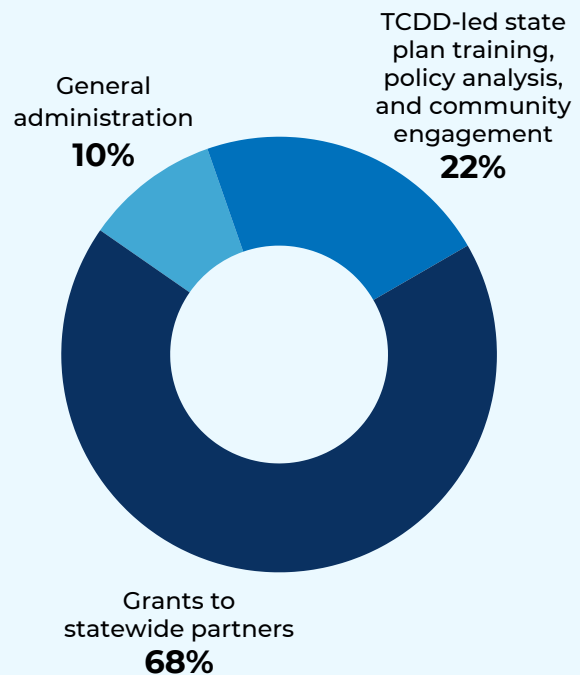
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WHO WE ARE

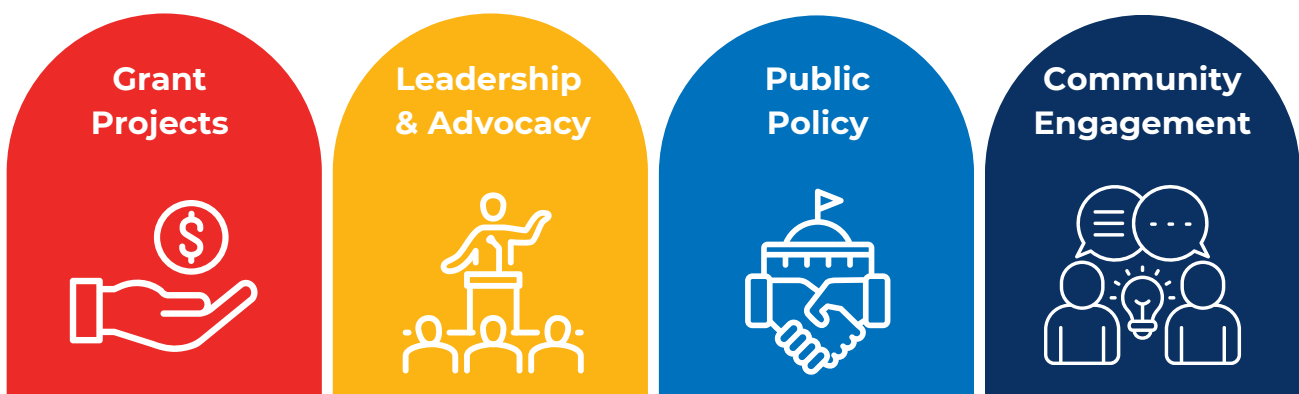
Our mission is to create change so that all people with disabilities are fully included in their communities and exercise control over their own lives. TCDD helps people with developmental disabilities (DD) achieve their goals for independence, productivity, and integration into their communities through 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) (PL 106-402).

FUNDING



2023 Award: \$6.1 million

HOW WE WORK



THE COUNCIL

TCDD is led by a 27-member, governor-appointed Council that includes people with DD, family members of people with DD, and representatives from agencies and organizations that provide DD services and supports. Council members accomplish directives outlined in the DD Act while serving as a resource for Texas decision-makers and community leaders on issues that impact all aspects of daily life for people with DD.

“The Council does a lot for people with DD such as advocacy, education, policies, and projects used to create change and opportunities with state elected officials to protect and improve the overall quality of life for those living with DD.”

— Maverick Crawford, Council member

“I applied to be a Council member because I wanted to be involved with a collective of individuals with a like-mindedness to make changes in policy and develop avenues for people with DD, and intellectual disabilities specifically, and have a voice and a vote to move the needle toward a better, brighter future for them.”

- Debbie Carlisle, Council member

Join Our Council

The Texas governor appoints Council members per the DD Act. Appointments happen when there is a vacant position on the Council. If you are interested in serving as a Council member and advocating for Texans with DD, visit our website to learn more and apply at tcdd.texas.gov/stay-connected/join-our-council.

Council Members

Mary Durham, Chair, Tomball
Kimberly Torres, Vice Chair, Houston
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, Katy
Jamie Thomas, Abilene

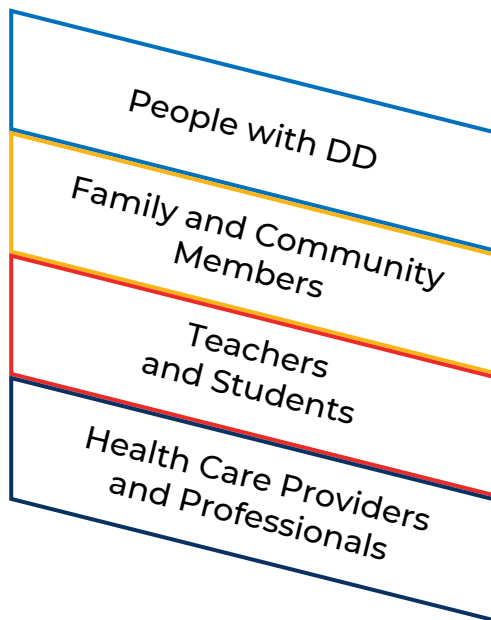
Agency Representatives

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, Lauren Chenoweth; Texas Department of State Health Services (Title V Maternal and Child Health): Audrey Young, Ivy Goldstein



INCLUSION FOR EVERYONE

Our goal is to increase opportunities for people with DD, families, professionals, and other partners to network with each other, receive information and resources, and develop policy skills to engage in state and local issues. This year, we engaged with over 25,000 participants in more than 50 TCDD-funded projects.



ACCESSIBILITY

People have tools needed to participate in daily life.

BELONGING

INCLUSION

People have the opportunity to engage in life according to their personal choices.

People are supported by a culture where everyone feels accepted.

"People with disabilities do not have the same opportunities and acceptance in their communities. For example, I can't take my 9-year-old daughter to the park because of the lack of inclusivity and accessibility in the structures. People with disabilities are a part of the community, too, and shouldn't be made to feel left behind." — *Texas parent of a child with DD*

TCDD State Plan

Every five years, TCDD develops a state plan with goals and objectives that outline activities to implement each year. We develop the plan with public input and guidance from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) to meet the requirements of the DD Act. You can read our state plan at tcdd.texas.gov/about-us/state-plan.



LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY

Key Outcomes

Our progress this year boosted the capacity of early childhood support providers and parents to connect and find support in the transition from grade school to adult life. Texas is more informed about program delivery and best practices to support young adults with DD. Texas State University joined other universities in enrolling students with DD in college. Collaborations in South Texas — including an accessible adaptation of the state's food handler certification — have increased training, employment, and entrepreneurship among people with DD across the state.

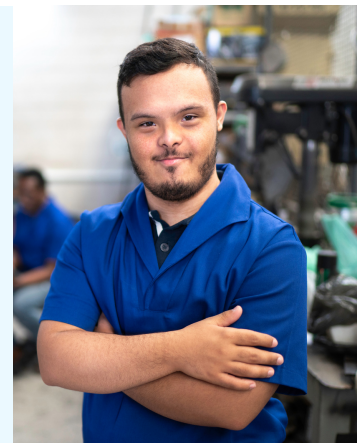
Funded Projects

- Early Childhood Intervention: Partnership with Help Me Grow El Paso and Paso Del Norte Children's Development Center
- Center for Transition from K-12: Texas Parent to Parent
- Landscape Analysis of 18+ Programs in Texas: Texas Education Agency
- Bobcat RISE (Resilience, Independence, Self-Determination, and Empowerment) Inclusive Postsecondary Education: Texas State University
- Disability Employment Awareness Workshops: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Texas A&M University
- Food Handler Certification and Training: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Texas A&M University

REAL PROGRESS FOR REAL PEOPLE

After completing their food handler certification through a TCDD-supported business incubator training project, one entrepreneur with DD was hired on the spot at a local sushi restaurant.

Another training participant completed her food handler certification, which helped her receive a pay raise at her job in a local pizza restaurant.



MAINTAIN HEALTH AND SAFETY

Key Outcomes

TCDD prioritized activities to promote greater self-determination in making healthy decisions and having better access to a DD-informed health care system. This year, projects built capacity for teachers and clinical providers to identify and share resources related to co-occurring mental health conditions; increase supports in the transition to adult medicine; use telemedicine to increase access and quality of care for those aging with DD; and educate those treating substance-use disorders. TCDD advanced oral health care and promoted ways for people with DD to receive dental exams without sedation while raising awareness of policy barriers that reduce access to health care.

Funded Projects

- Healthy LEAP (Lifestyle, Education, And Practice): Special Olympics of Texas
- Patient-Centered Medical Homes: Baylor College of Medicine
- Whole Person Mental Health: The Arc of Texas
- Project TEDD (Training Educators in Dual Diagnosis): Texas Tech University
- Complex Mental Health Resources: University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School (UMass Medical School)
- Building Strength in Loss: Rice University
- Trauma-Informed Care for Transition-Age Youth: Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute
- Education and Practice Guidelines for Substance-Use Disorders: The University of North Texas Health Science Center
- Sexual Assault Response and Prevention: West Central Texas Council of Governments, UMass Medical School, and the SAFE Alliance
- Collaborative Oral Health Care: The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
- Inter-professional Education for Health Care Excellence in DD: Baylor College of Medicine
- Building Capacity for Inclusive Care Among Health Care Professionals: University of Houston-Clear Lake
- Reducing Language Barriers to Improve Health Equity: Texas A&M University Health Science Center
- Expanding the Public Health Workforce: U.S. Administration for Community Living

SHIFTING PERSPECTIVES

This reflection from a medical student resonated most with our Council members as a measure of a successful shift in values:

“At the start of this rotation, I hoped to be a better clinician. But I leave this rotation hoping to be better to the people around me — to approach people without expectation, be willing to meet people where they are, appreciate the uniqueness of each individual, and recognize the beauty in every person.”

PROVIDE NEEDED COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORTS

Key Outcomes

TCDD made progress in informing and supporting families to better care for people with DD in their homes and communities. Family caregivers are more aware of resources in their communities and are more connected with organizations that meet their cultural needs. Participants in TCDD-supported financial literacy training programs enhanced their skills in making purchases and managing money, both of which led to greater independence in their communities. Overall, community-based programs are more inclusive, not only through greater physical accessibility but with programmatic features in the way education is provided. We have also increased knowledge among community leaders on ways to include people with DD in community planning, activities, and access to infrastructure.

Funded Projects

- Partnering with Law Enforcement for Inclusion and Support: The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
- Planning Ahead for Family Support and Financial Security: Family to Family Network
- Project AIMS (Acquiring Independent Money Skills) Financial Literacy: Texas Tech University
- Money Basics Financial Literacy: Project Amistad
- Support for Older Adults with DD and Caregivers: Alamo Area Council of Governments
- Interdisciplinary Tele-Enabled Health Homes for Aging Adults with DD: The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

**REAL PROGRESS
FOR REAL PEOPLE**



A high school student with DD participated in TCDD-supported Money Basics classes to learn how to reduce the money she spent going out to restaurants for lunch. During the classes, the student learned ways to budget her money wisely by distinguishing her needs from her wants. She also learned ways to handle the social pressure she felt to go to restaurants more often than she could afford.

TCDD connects Texans with DD with decision-makers to elevate voices and foster leaders to include the needs of self-advocates and families in all aspects of state business. Over 1,700 program participants with DD reported positive shifts in their self-perception, envisioning greater independence and broadening their goals for living and working in the community. Self-advocates are more engaged in the policymaking process with increases in advocacy activity and appointments to local and statewide boards and commissions.

Funded Projects

- Next Chapter Book Club: Texas Advocates
- Reading for All: Literacy United
- Partners in Youth Leadership: Paso del Norte Children's Development Center
- Future Leaders Training: Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
- Self-Advocacy Capacity Building: The Arc of the Gulf Coast and Imagine Art
- Civic Engagement for People with Disabilities: Children's Disabilities Information Coalition
- Peer Support for Home and Community Support: Baylor College of Medicine and UMass Medical School
- Peer Support in Institutions: Texas Advocates, Texas State Independent Living Council, and Project Amistad
- Leadership and Advocacy in Rural Areas: West Central Texas Regional Foundation
- Project Leadership Challenge for Professionals: Texas Tech University
- Self Advocates Leading in Texas: Texas Advocates
- Participatory Action Research: Strategic Education Solutions and disABILITYsa
- Texas Partners in Policymaking

One training participant advocated for a more inclusive work environment at her organization, saying: "At work, we have some antiquated programs and practices, including coworkers referring to disabled consumers as 'kids' and an inability to embrace person-centered planning and supported decision-making. It has been difficult to get people on board with change. I will continue to be a squeaky wheel until inclusion and integration are more than aspirations."

IMPACTING COMMUNITIES THROUGH ADVOCACY

One self-advocate was featured in a radio interview about his role as a peer outreach specialist. During the interview, he promoted his Texas Partners in Policymaking capstone project and recruited others to join his peer-support group for people who are blind or visually impaired.

EXPLORE RESOURCES AND TRAININGS

[tcdd.texas.gov/
learn-and-advocate](https://tcdd.texas.gov/learn-and-advocate)



PUBLIC POLICY

During the 88th Texas legislative session, TCDD amplified its interaction with legislative offices. This session saw an increased number of disability-related bills filed by lawmakers, and TCDD provided comments in 66 legislative hearings. Decision-makers responded to concerns from TCDD and our partners by making revisions or blocking legislation that would negatively impact the rights of people with DD.



The 88th Texas Legislature invested in early childhood intervention and passed laws to reduce seclusion and restraint in schools. Lawmakers began this year's session with a \$33 billion surplus and another \$27 billion in a state “rainy day” fund. However, lawmakers funded only 1,831 additional community-based Medicaid waivers — about 160,000 Texans are on the state interest list for waivers — and only a modest raise in attendant wages, which increased from \$8.11 to \$10.60 per hour. The Legislature did fund a wage increase for staff working in state-supported living centers, boosting their pay from \$17 to \$25 per hour.

Policy
Analysis

Understanding
Constituents with
Disabilities

Policy Fellowships

Before 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

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



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Sharing important information about innovative projects to strengthen community supports, promote advocacy opportunities, provide policy updates, and address our state plan priorities.	Detailing pivotal legislation and policy updates that matter to people with disabilities through our Texas Legislative News and TCDD Bill of the Week features.
Cultivating partnerships with federal and state agencies, disability organizations, and other people impacted by our work to inform Council activities and collaborate on topics such as inclusive access, youth leadership, faith and disability, and more.	Using our website, email newsletter, and social media to promote funding opportunities, leadership and advocacy training, disability awareness initiatives, and the vital work of our grantees across Texas.

TCDD continued its regional coordinator initiative in partnership with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (AgriLife) to connect with people with DD and family members through AgriLife's existing network of county extension agents and other professionals in all 254 counties in Texas. The partnership's goals are to better understand the diverse needs of people with DD in our geographically diverse state and to better connect with local communities. TCDD's regional coordinators led community events on topics such as employment, aging, gardening, and health care while also developing guidelines for inclusive programming and activities. This year, our regional coordinators engaged with about 3,000 participants, made about 1,700 contacts with community organizations, and maintained more than 300 local partnerships.

CONNECT WITH YOUR REGIONAL COORDINATOR



[tcdd.texas.gov/
stay-connected/
regional-coordinators](https://tcdd.texas.gov/stay-connected/regional-coordinators)



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