

Background:

During the February Public Policy Committee meeting, the Committee discussed future projects to implement the Council's State Plan Implementation related to Goal 3. For your reference, Goal 3 states:

Conduct ongoing educational campaigns in collaboration with community leaders, organizations, and businesses to enable them to better support, include, and/or provide culturally responsive services to people with developmental disabilities by 9/30/2016.

The Committee asked staff to further research the topic of accessible parking to determine if any public awareness campaigns have transpired and/or if any are planned. That information was reviewed with the Committee during the May 2012 meeting during which the Council approved the Committee's recommendation to focus the educational campaign on the topic of accessible parking. Staff will review the enclosed executive summary with members that proposes a project to implement that campaign.

Public Policy Committee**Agenda Item 9.****Expected Action:**

The Committee will review the proposed Executive Summary and may recommend for Council approval of an Accessible Parking Awareness Campaign project.

Council Meeting**Agenda Item 10. A.****Expected Action:**

The Council will consider for recommendations from the Public Policy Committee for an Accessible Parking Awareness Campaign and determine final action.

Future Funding Proposal
Executive Summary
Accessible Parking Public Awareness Campaign

Background

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) FY 2012-2016 State Plan prioritizes funding to collaborate with others to develop, implement, and evaluate targeted educational campaigns to increase awareness of specific issues. During Council discussions about this initiative, Council members reported that accessible parking violations make their communities less accessible. Violations sometimes even force people with valid accessible parking placards and license plates to be unable to access businesses or services because the no accessible parking spaces are available. Council members' experiences reflected concerns expressed by other organizations that are working to decrease accessible parking violations.

Texas law provides that a vehicle may be parked for an unlimited time in a parking space that is designated specifically for persons with disabilities if the vehicle is being operated by or for a person with a disability, and if the vehicle displays the appropriate plate or placard. Texas law allows parking placards to be removed and displayed in any vehicle used to transport a person with a disability. People with disabilities can apply for placards even if they do not own a car.

According to Austin-based nonprofit Access Empowerment, 18 percent of the Austin population has legitimate, accessible parking permits, but less than 4 percent of all spaces are set aside for accessible parking. In inclement weather and peak shopping times, up to 75 percent of those spaces are taken by vehicles without an accessible parking permit that are parking illegally. On any given day, up to 25 percent of accessible parking spaces are used by those without permits.

Since 1995, the City of Austin Travis County Constable Precinct 5 office has issued more than 1,000 tickets each year for accessible parking violations. The majority of tickets are written for vehicles parked in accessible parking spaces that do not have accessible license plates or placards that hang from the rearview mirror. Tickets were also written for vehicles that were parked on diagonal stripes designated for van unloading and vehicles blocking curb cuts. About 20 percent of tickets are written for misuse and the unauthorized use of placards.

According to the Constable's office, despite the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Texas Legislature's efforts to increase enforcement of state accessible parking statutes, violations throughout Travis County continue to be as prevalent as ever. More people are using placards that do not belong to them, and some placards are even being altered and illegally sold. These violations make it more difficult for people with disabilities to access public places.

The TCDD Public Policy Committee agreed to focus a TCDD educational awareness activity on accessible parking to educate the public about the impact parking violations have on people with accessible parking placards and license plates, and will help decrease accessible parking violations.

Working collaboratively with other organizations, including a marketing firm, to develop and evaluate the results of a targeted educational campaign will also build TCDD's capacity to implement successful educational campaigns in the future.

TCDD staff have identified a number of potential community partners interested in accessible parking awareness and enforcement. For example, just in the Central Texas area:

- In 1993, the **Austin City Council** authorized the appointing of qualified and trained persons, acting under the title of "disabled-parking enforcement volunteers," to enforce the accessible parking laws in Austin and to issue citations for violations of the law. The program continues today.
- The **Travis County Constable Precinct 5** Disabled Parking Enforcement Program was established in 1995. It is a staff and citizen volunteer ticket writing program that requires four hours of state-mandated training. The program continues today.
- The **Austin Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities** created two Public Service Announcements around the issue:
 - Accessible Parking (July 2010) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABO3hGnRRGM>
 - Illegal Parking in Accessible Parking (August 2011) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5D0c6_6E-Cg
- In September 2012, **Hays County Commissioners Court** signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Austin nonprofit **Access Empowerment** to deter unlawful use of parking spaces reserved for persons with disabilities.

Although the information and research in this Executive Summary is specific to the Austin-area, this Executive Summary proposes that TCDD not intend to limit the project scope to a specific geographic region.

TCDD has not funded projects related to accessible parking awareness in the past. However, transportation is a priority in the current State Plan and TCDD anticipates funding a grant related to transportation issues in 2013.

State Plan Goal

Goal 3: Conduct ongoing educational campaigns in collaboration with community leaders, organizations, and businesses to enable them to better support, include, and/or provide culturally responsive services to people with developmental disabilities by 9/30/2016.

Objective 1: Develop, implement, and evaluate at least two targeted educational campaigns to increase awareness of specific issues and/or to reduce stigma that may negatively impact the life of a person who has a developmental disability, by 9/30/2014.

Expected Outcomes

- TCDD will gain a better understanding of the activities and information necessary to conduct a successful educational campaign.
- TCDD will demonstrate that an ongoing educational campaign about accessible parking can help decrease accessible parking violations.

Project Description

Staff proposes implementation of a public education awareness campaign about accessible parking. The campaign will educate drivers about the impact parking violations have on people with accessible parking placards and license plates. The campaign will also aim to decrease the number of accessible parking violations.

The project will be implemented in two separate phases. During Phase 1, TCDD will issue an RFP and award one or two grants to organizations to develop ideas and proposed strategies for consideration by the Council. During Phase 2, TCDD will issue an RFP for a project to implement those ideas / activities approved from Phase 1 recommendations.

Phase 1

In Phase 1, one or two applicants will be selected to:

- collaborate with other organizations and a marketing entity (if the grantee is not a marketing entity) to conduct research and develop the proposed scope and specific goal of an educational campaign;
- recommend specific strategies to implement the proposed campaign;
- identify the resources needed to implement the proposed campaign; and
- define the measures that will be used to evaluate success.

The recipient of each grant will be responsible for identifying and collaborating with partner organizations, self-advocates and family members; developing a strategic plan for an educational campaign; and complying with TCDD's grant monitoring and reporting processes. Other organizations or individuals participating in the effort will be responsible for participating actively in the process.

Phase 1 is expected to take no longer than 12 months, but may be completed sooner.

At the completion of Phase 1, each grantee will submit their completed strategic plan to TCDD. TCDD will review each plan and determine if either or both plans should be implemented.

Phase 2

TCDD may issue an RFP to implement either or both of the education campaigns developed during Phase 1, or the Council may choose to fund the proposer organization to implement the project. Implementation of the strategic plan(s) for education campaigns focusing on accessible parking occurs in Phase 2. The funding amount and the duration of any project developed to implement the education

campaign will be determined by the Council after the information gathered through Phase 1 has been reviewed and the Council has determined the scope of the project.

Proposed Funding Amount

Phase 1: TCDD has made available up to \$25,000 per project, for up to two projects, for 12 months.

Phase 2: The funding amount and the duration will be determined after the information gathered through Phase 1 has been reviewed and the Council has defined the scope of the project.

Proposed Duration

Phase 1: Up to 12 months

Phase 2: To be determined.

Other Considerations

A nonfederal matching contribution of at least 25 percent of the total project costs will be required each year for project activities not located in counties that are designated federal poverty areas. Project activities located in counties that are designated federal poverty areas require a minimum of 10 percent matching resources.