

Attachment 1

Funding Proposal Executive Summary

Culturally Competent Family Supports Executive Summary

Background

In the last two years, the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) has successfully established relationships with a number of groups that are focused on providing and promoting culturally-competent family supports for families of people with developmental disabilities.

As of October 1, 2012, the Council has approved funding for:

- Reproduction of the successful Central Texas African American Family Support Conference. Funding for this project was approved by the Council in February 2012 with up to \$35,000 available for years one and two, and \$15,000 for year three. A grant to Helpful Foundations was approved in May pending negotiations. Helpful Interventions plans to hold the Gulf Coast of Texas African American Family Support Conference in 2013.
- Grant awards for up to ten “Outreach and Development” grants of up to \$10,000 each, for up to one year. Thus far, grants have been awarded to:
 - The Apalachicola Band of Creek Indians
 - The Barbara Jordan Endeavors Foundation
 - Centro de Mi Salud
 - Friends and Families of Asians with Special Needs (FFASN)
 - Light and Salt
 - Parents as Partners in Special Education
 - The Sower Foundation

The grants enable these groups to expand on their ability to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities who strongly identify with an ethnic minority culture. The work conducted by grantees also provided TCDD with more in-depth knowledge of barriers that may prevent many Texans with developmental disabilities from receiving the full benefit of existing services and supports.

The Outreach and Development grantees that have completed their projects (The Apalachicola Band of Creek Indians; the Barbara Jordan Endeavors Foundation; FFASN; Light and Salt; and Parents as Partners in Special Education) were expected to provide recommendations based on their experiences. The recommendations and final reports pointed to some commonalities:

- Diversity exists within ethnic communities and impacts how change may be achieved. The following are quotes taken from final reports or presentations:

- “Understand that not all people have access to the internet”
- “Respect the diverse educational levels of this population (Hispanic families), and that sometimes, information must be presented and explained orally (not written).”
- (We learned that) “Rural areas are less open to change... Success means leveraging existing systems and convincing funding sources that rural change may cost more.”
- Despite diversity within ethnic communities, many people who identify strongly with an ethnic minority culture may be more comfortable in environments with others who they see as similar to them. Individual grantees recommended:
 - “Be mindful that assimilation is not a minority culture goal.”
 - “Develop culturally-based work and social environments for Asians with special needs.” (Survey findings indicated that about 2/3 of the Asian families surveyed stated they preferred taking their children to social activities with others from the same cultural background)
- There is a pressing need for information to be provided in people’s native language or in ways consistent with specific culturally-influence learning styles or that are culturally sensitive.
- In some cultures, the family – rather than the individual – is the basic social structure. This impacts how services may be received, and means that the concept of self-advocacy is not strongly emphasized. Grantees recommended:
 - “Understand the cultural issues that impact the family.”
 - “Identify supports needed for Asian families to keep their family members with special needs at home for as long as they wish.” In addition, FFASN reported that over half of the people they surveyed chose foster care with a relative as the preferred living arrangement for their child with a disability if the family could not support that child at home.

The main focus of the Council’s work thus far has been to improve understanding of the different values, cultures, and customs that exist in Texas and how these may influence what is a best practice in service delivery and how supports may best be provided. This work is best viewed as a beginning step towards TCDD’s mission to create change so that all people with disabilities are fully included in their communities.

To guide the Council on this path, an Outreach and Development Workgroup was formed. The workgroup - consisting of Council members Gladys Cortez, Andy Crim, John Morris, and Cindy Swain - built on information provided by grantees and other sources and drafted “Recommendations for Next Steps,” which was reviewed by the Project Development Committee in February, 2012.

The workgroup's first recommendation was to "Increase the participation of individuals from diverse backgrounds in Council activities and take steps to get input from diverse groups of people into the Council's planning processes, grant projects, policy discussions, and other activities." The group recommended soliciting the input and involvement of Outreach and Development grantees in Council efforts in the future.

The Outreach and Development grants have demonstrated the benefits of partnerships with groups that are a part of, and provide services and supports to, ethnic minority communities:

- They have been able to successfully provide culturally-competent supports to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families;
- Most have provided valuable insight into the strengths, needs and preferences of the communities they serve;
- All have been willing to provide input and recommendations to TCDD as requested and to provide presentations at Council meetings; and
- TCDD has gained a fuller understanding of some of the barriers that exist for small groups that directly serve specific communities but receive no consistent funding support.

However, one "lesson learned" since the workgroups made their recommendation is that the majority of the Outreach and Development grantees relied a great deal on volunteers to implement activities. They do not have the capacity to become actively involved in many non-core activities. For those who do have paid staff, the staff time is fully occupied by providing direct services and assistance to families who are dependent on them for supports that aren't available elsewhere. Additionally, paying for items that others might consider necessary "infra-structure" – such as a fax machine - may be a financial burden.

These challenges limit the extent to which smaller, grassroots organizations can participate in policy or systems-change work. Several grantees also pointed out in their final report that the impressive outcomes achieved by committed volunteers provided with these small, time-limited grants would not be sustainable over time without funding to develop and maintain some infrastructure. As Light and Salt noted in their final report, "... although volunteers, including parents, have made significant contributions to the growth and success of SNCC, many of them have full time jobs in addition to raising a child with DD, which could be another full time job to them. Thus, a full time paid staff is needed to coordinate and manage the daily operations of the programs and services and to develop strategies to leverage additional resources from the community and other collaborating partners."

State Plan Goal

Goal 5: Demonstrate how to prevent unnecessary admissions to State Supported Living Centers (SSLC) by supporting community organizations in at least 1 HHS Region to increase their capacity to provide community-based services that support people with developmental disabilities to improve and maintain their health and to have access as needed to necessary healthcare, behavior supports, and/or respite, by 9/30/2016.

Expected Outcome

At least five organizations will have the opportunity to significantly improve the availability of culturally-competent supports for families of people with developmental disabilities who strongly identify with a specific ethnic community. Additionally, an increased number of these families and individuals will become active advocates or self-advocates.

Project Description

TCDD will collaborate with other organizations to support specific capacity-building and information-sharing activities lead by an organization that has received funding through TCDD's Outreach and Development grants or that can demonstrate active involvement in the planning and implementation of the 2011 Gulf Coast of Texas African American Family Support Conference. Project activities are focused on building cultural competence and understanding within the organization's broader community.

Funds may be used:

- to support at least one part-time or full-time staff to coordinate culturally appropriate activities and to build the infrastructure of the lead organization so that the organization may continue to exist after the grant period;
- to support culturally appropriate training conducted by a self-advocate or self-advocates to increase understanding of self-advocacy or to develop self-advocacy skills; and
- to translate materials into other languages or accessible formats.

Each project funded must:

- host local or regional culturally-competent conferences, mini-conferences, or regular public meetings to provide information and support to at least 100 families and individuals per year;
- support families and providers to help each other understand how cultural issues may impact service provision;
- support families and individuals to take active roles in guiding service delivery;

- support at least 3 families or individuals to assume leadership roles – or increase the impact of their leadership role - in advocating for high-quality, culturally competent public service systems;
- share information with individuals who have developmental disabilities and their families about opportunities to learn about and engage in self-advocacy;
- assist TCDD to hold an open forum to solicit public input at least once during the life of the grant;
- assist TCDD to develop and disseminate culturally-sensitive information to promote opportunities for individuals to serve on state-level boards and committees, including the Council for Developmental Disabilities.

Proposed Funding Amount

Up to \$75,000 per year, per project, for up to 5 projects. Grantees will be expected to provide match as per TCDD guidelines.

Proposed Duration

Up to 4 years

Other Considerations

1. The Outreach and Development grants are currently funded as activities related to:

Goal 7, Objective 2: Each year of the State Plan, coordinate the Council’s planning, project development, evaluation, and reporting processes, with special attention to strategies to address issues related to the diversity of ethnicity, age, income, and geographic areas of Texas.

The types of activities funded through Outreach and Development grants were intended to inform the Council’s activities in general. However, given the insight gained through the projects funded and the increasing importance of developing the capacity for communities to provide culturally-competent supports, staff recommend Council consideration of a State Plan amendment to reflect these activities more specifically.

2. TCDD expects to fund three additional Outreach and Development grants for a total of ten grants over 2-3 years. TCDD staff recommend Council consideration of funds for up to five projects per year for the remainder of the TCDD five year plan (years 3-5).