

Developmental Disability Policy Fellowships**Tab 12****Background:**

Enclosed for Committee discussion and possible action is an Executive Summary for a proposed Developmental Disability Policy Fellows project as discussed last quarter. The Committees will discuss this potential project and may make recommendations to the Council for future funding.

Public Policy Committee**Agenda Item 7. A.****Expected Action:**

The Project Development Committee will discuss the Policy Fellowship executive summary and may make recommendations to the Council.

Project Development Committee**Agenda Item 7. B.****Expected Action:**

The Project Development Committee will discuss the Policy Fellowship executive summary and may make recommendations to the Council.

Council**Agenda Item 11. A.****Expected Action:**

The Council will consider recommendations from the Project Development and Public Policy Committees.

Funding Proposal

Executive Summary

Developmental Disabilities Policy Fellows Program

Background

Much has been written about the graying government workforce. The same loss of institutional knowledge and tremendous talent is occurring not only in Texas' state health and human services agencies, but also the state's advocacy organizations. Very frequently there are only a handful of bureaucrats and advocates who have the technical expertise to analyze the potential impact of public policy, a deep understanding of the history of the disability advocacy movement, and recognition of the importance of self-determination and self-advocacy. Many current advocates had the opportunity to learn directly from and alongside those who have shaped the disability advocacy movement. Those more seasoned, long-time advocates have a great deal to share with individuals who are just now preparing for careers in public policy. TCDD invests a significant amount of funding in general, broad-based advocacy and leadership training for Texans with developmental disabilities so they can advocate for their right to be fully included in the communities where they live and can exercise control over their own lives. It is important to continue these efforts, as they are widely needed; however, it is equally important to consider simultaneously providing training to younger policy-focused professionals so that they will be able to effectively work together with self-advocates to draft the policies and procedures of the future. This could be done by providing fellowships to graduates of policy programs.

State Plan Goal

Goal 6: Work with others to double the number of identified leadership development and advocacy training programs that are able to provide culturally appropriate training for people with developmental disabilities without ongoing grant funding from TCDD, by 9/30/2016.

Objective 4: Each year of the plan, support individuals who have developmental disabilities, their family members, and their allies to improve their skills related to self-advocacy, public advocacy, and leadership.

Activity 8: As funding allows, support public policy activities conducted in collaboration with people who have developmental disabilities, their family members, and their allies.

Expected Outcome

Policy fellows will develop their effectiveness at working within the policy-making processes at the state and community levels. Fellows will apply a theoretical framework to analyzing public policy and will gain a deep level of understanding of policy issues important to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities to inform their analysis. By the end of their fellowship, they will be able to work at the national, state and community levels and identify the major social, economic, and health conditions facing persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Fellows will collaborate with persons with intellectual disabilities to develop cultural competence while they develop the ability to review current policies and programs; assess opportunities and challenges associated with current policies and note implications and issues for development of future policies. They will develop knowledge and skills relating to persons' intellectual and developmental disabilities and public policy issues as they pertain to diverse, unique needs of marginalized populations. Fellows will develop an understanding of national approaches to addressing public policy issues

Project Description

TCDD will launch an initiative to increase the capacity of individuals and nonprofit organizations in Texas to engage effectively in developmental disability policy advocacy. Texas nonprofit advocacy organizations would be eligible to receive a grant to hire and train a developmental disability policy fellow for up to two years. It is anticipated that the fellows would be recent graduates of law, social work, public policy or other related graduate programs. The high value placed on real-world personal experiences means that self-advocates, parents and siblings of persons with disabilities who have demonstrated skills in public policy advocacy would be strongly encouraged to apply. The fellows would learn about the many ways that public policy can influence systems change, including statutory, and regulatory actions and organizational practice with a foundation in the Council's values.

Public Policy Fellows will also be expected to contribute meaningfully to the missions of the organizations for whom they work, and they may also provide training to other advocates across the state through presentations or webinars.

This Developmental Disabilities Public Policy Fellows Program would result in growing the ranks of those who are respected for their understanding of policy and who will also continue to promote self-determination and self-advocacy in their policy work. The program will develop a pool of persons with the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities to begin to replenish the developmental disability policy workforce.

TCDD would award up to (2) two-year Public Policy Fellowships each year, for up to three years. This would result in two fellows in year one; four fellows in year two; and two fellows in year three. The first year and third years also include state legislative sessions (2015 & 2017).

Proposed Funding Amount

Up to \$135,000 for year 1; \$270,000 for year two; and up to \$135,000 for year three. TCDD match requirements will apply.

Proposed Duration

Up to three years.