

# FISCAL YEAR 2013 ANNUAL REPORT

OCT. 1, 2012 — SEPT. 30, 2013



TEXAS COUNCIL *for*  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES

# COUNCIL

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Council as of Sept. 30, 2013. For current Council members, or for information on applying to serve on the Council, visit [tcdd.texas.gov/about/council-members](http://tcdd.texas.gov/about/council-members).

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TCDD staff as of Sept. 30, 2013. For current staff, visit the TCDD website, at [tcdd.texas.gov/about/staff](http://tcdd.texas.gov/about/staff).

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# INTRODUCTION

## TCDD Works to Increase Opportunities for Texans with Disabilities

### THE TEXAS COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

TCDD is governed by a 27-member board appointed by the Texas Governor. At least 60 percent of the members must be persons with developmental disabilities, their parents or guardians, or other immediate relatives. The Council also includes representatives from the major state agencies that serve people with developmental disabilities; a representative from the state's two university centers for excellence in developmental disabilities; a representative from the state's protection and advocacy system; and a member representing local, non-government organizations.

### TCDD MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities is to create change so that all people with disabilities are fully included in their communities and exercise control over their own lives.



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**T**HE TEXAS COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (TCDD) is established under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act to engage in advocacy, capacity building and systems change activities. These activities assist individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in participating in designing and accessing coordinated, person-centered services in the community, individualized supports, and other assistance that enables people with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination and be independent, productive and involved in all facets of community life.

TCDD funded 50 projects and activities during fiscal year 2013 that are featured in this report. They address employment, education, health and fitness, alternatives to guardianship, cultural competency, building better communities, positive behavioral interventions and supports, leadership development, local advocacy networks and other topics important to individuals with developmental disabilities.

This report features Project SAVE, which is training self-advocates to speak up for themselves and create change, as well as a leadership project that provides training, peer mentoring, and guidance in setting goals to help youth transition to adult life. Four additional projects are featured that help faith-based organizations include people with disabilities.

TCDD is also involved in a variety of advocacy and public information activities. For example, in January 2013, TCDD launched a new website and converted our monthly newsletter to an ongoing News and Features page. The website was accessed about 47,000 times during the fiscal year, by more than 36,000 visitors. Additionally, 900 individuals have signed up for TCDD's email announcements, and TCDD has about 1,190 fans on Facebook and 1,040 followers on Twitter.

We hope you find this report interesting and informative.



Individuals in the El Paso Del Norte YLF prepare for The Color Run, an annual un-timed, five-kilometer race that brings the local community together to promote health and happiness.

## Youth Leadership Forum Prepares Students for Adult Life

Far West Texas Youth Leadership and Advocacy Expansion Project, Region 19  
Education Service Center

**T**HE EL PASO DEL NORTE YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM provides training each year for about 50 high school students with various disabilities from El Paso and Hudspeth counties. This includes leadership and advocacy training, peer mentoring, goal setting and planning for the transition to adult life for people who are 16 to 22 years old. Individuals who complete the program can volunteer as YLF mentors, facilitators and support staff. This provides them with an opportunity to expand their leadership skills while helping other students with disabilities.

“The first day I attended the YLF, I wasn’t quite sure what to expect,” Michael Ornelas recalled. “I was shy and quiet, but that didn’t last long. Before I knew it, I was learning tips on how to survive in the world of work, how to improve my life, and how to build upon my social circle. I learned how to make a resume, how to sell myself in an interview, and how to register to vote. I take pride in voting.”

The training begins with a three-day weekend where students learn from each other and adults with disabilities who are recognized leaders and role models. Thirty-five student delegates, five mentors and 10 facilitators participated in the annual kickoff Nov 2 – 4, 2012, with monthly follow-up trainings for the rest of the school year. The students also attended the Border Conference on Special Education, volunteered at the Global Youth Service Day Kickoff, and went to other events such as one on college and careers.

“Each meeting had information I apply daily,” said Nathan Coleman, a YLF graduate who obtained a bachelor’s degree in journalism from The University of Texas at El Paso in 2010. “Disability Advocacy comes near and dear to my heart, not only because I’m an individual with a physical disability, but because I strongly believe in paving the way for many others.”

In addition to sharing their experiences, participants learn about disability history, assistive technology, student-led education plans, adaptive recreation and other topics, as well as exploring personal leadership and career plans. They also participate in climbing a rock wall, pulling a fire engine and other team building activities, plus a talent show and dance.

“I have been involved with the El Paso Del Norte Youth Leadership Forum since October of 2011,” Elisa Haydee Cortez said. “I have been able to learn so much about myself and what an impact I can make in my own community as a leader. I enjoy attending the monthly meetings and seeing the students grow throughout the year. It is amazing to see the inspiration, empowerment, trust and confidence grow in each student with each meeting.”

The Youth Leadership Forum program started in 2002 and received a five-year grant from TCDD in 2006 to expand the program and provide year-round activities. A two-year expansion project was approved in 2011 to provide advanced leadership and advocacy training plus peer-to-peer mentoring to help young people with disabilities develop the skills and self-confidence needed to participate in school and community organizations.

While TCDD funding ended on Aug. 31, 2013, the Region 19 ESC continues to operate the program, working with the Division for Rehabilitation Services and the Division for Blind Services at the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, as well as the Volar Center for Independent Living and other community agencies.

“Our ultimate goal is to create a self-sustaining nonprofit organization that will be managed by current YLF leaders, including mentors and facilitators who have benefitted from the YLF experience,” said Project Director Rick Razo. “Another goal is to share this model with individuals across the state to encourage the development of more local youth leadership forums.”



Stephanie Gonzalez, Alina Arredondo and Susie Santillan participate in a Medicaid rally at the State Capitol. Arredondo, who was born without arms, returned to YLF as a youth leader and mentor for two years after completing the forum.



Paul Nathan and Mike Sanchez join in The Color Run, along with thousands of other participants who are splashed with different colors at each kilometer.



A group of youth leadership forum participants work together to pull a fire engine.

## PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES FUNDED IN FISCAL YEAR 2013

TCDD FUNDED 50 PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES during fiscal year 2013 (Oct. 1, 2012 – Sept. 31, 2013), including 13 new projects and 11 whose TCDD funding ended. These projects are based on goals and objectives included in the TCDD State Plan, which guides staff and grant activities. For more information on TCDD's projects and activities, see [tcdd.texas.gov/grants-rfps](http://tcdd.texas.gov/grants-rfps).

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## IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT, INCOME AND ASSETS

SEVEN TCDD PROJECTS are increasing competitive employment, personal income and assets for Texans with developmental disabilities.

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### Project SEARCH, Texas Tech University

Techworks for Texas is a five-year project by the Burkhart Center at Texas Tech University that is working with the national Project SEARCH® office to establish business-led, school-to-work programs across the state. These sites provide one-year internships that lead to integrated employment, while also providing training in employability and independent living skills. Three sites were established in the Dallas/Fort Worth area this year. Garland Independent School District is

partnering with a manufacturing company, Fort Worth ISD is partnering with a local private college campus and Lewisville ISD is partnering with a public hospital. These projects also partner with the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services to provide services and supports to each student.

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### Regional Self-Employment Project, Community Healthcore

More than 350 people with disabilities, their families and local agencies in East Texas learned how to develop individualized self-employment through this five-year project, whose TCDD grant support concluded on Nov. 30, 2012. Individuals received assistance in developing a customized business plan and securing funding to become self-employed, including training on natural supports. A video shares the story of three individuals who completed the training and started their own business.

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### Education to Work: Attending Higher Education to Obtain Careers

Three projects help students with developmental disabilities succeed in college or a technical school to reach their employment goals. The



Blake Prentice checks parts to be used in testing and changing drilling rig equipment. The Project SEARCH® intern looks for product flaws and organizes inventory at Atlas Copco Drilling Solutions.

five-year projects are demonstrating new ways to support individuals in higher education, ages 18 – 25 years. Each project provides individualized supports to students, as well as work experience through on-the-job training with local businesses.



Ashley Franklin recently graduated from Texas Tech University where she participated in Project CASE, which helps students with disabilities prepare for a career.

### **Project CASE (Connections for Academic Success and Employment), Texas Tech University**

Twenty-three students have enrolled in Project CASE since it started in October 2011. About half attend Texas Tech University and the rest are at South Plains (Community) College campuses. Two graduated this year and another transferred to a technical school. The project provides a wide array of supports and services, including wrap-around team meetings that identify needed supports and internships. Some students have full or part-time jobs in their fields or summer internships. The Burkhart Center for Autism Education and Research, the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, and local businesses participate in this rural partnership.

### **Bridge to Career in Human Services, Texas A&M University**

Nine students graduated in May 2013 from this one-year training program at the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University that prepares students with intellectual and developmental disabilities for a career as a

certified direct support professional. Another 18 students completed the five-week college prep at Texas A&M University last summer, which included independent living and study skills, self-determination, disability and development, and professionalism. Students also attend one semester of classes at the university and a semester of supervised, paid work experience in the community. The project provides comprehensive supports for students and helps them secure jobs after graduation.



Nine students graduated as direct support professionals from the first Bridge to Career in Human Services class at Texas A&M University, in May 2013.

### **Project HIRE (Helping Individuals Reach Employment), Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services**

Project HIRE provides college and employment readiness, educational coaches, and individual and family support to help students with developmental disabilities succeed at South Texas College, in job training and ultimately in employment. Twelve participants started classes in the fall of 2012, and 15 more started in 2013. The students take 2 – 3 classes per semester and major in certificate programs such as office management, construction supervision, computer maintenance, childcare, mechanics and business management. They also attend college prep in the summer, visit local worksites and meet with local business mentors. The DARS Division for Rehabilitation Services supplements its Vocational Rehabilitation Program with wrap-around services for these students, who receive support in each class.



DARS Project HIRE participants visit ERO Architects as part of their career exploration. The students learned about the processes and technology used to design facilities.



Members of the Strategic Education Solutions Project Advisory Committee discuss employment needs of adults with autism, including adults with limited English proficiency.

## Enabling Technology

### **Virtual Job Coach, Strategic Education Solutions, LLC**

Strategic Education Solutions is working with Social Motion Skills (a program of Easter Seals Houston) and Trinity Education Group to develop a virtual job coach application in the Houston area. The web-based application will provide training on how to search for and apply for a job, career planning, and workplace skills and social skills. The application is mainly for adults with autism spectrum disorders, but materials will also benefit other people with and without disabilities. Fourteen students will explore the product's impact on preparing students for work before or during transition from high school.

### **Working with HEART, Educational Programs Inspiring Communities, Inc.**

This project is creating an interactive mobile application to promote competitive employment opportunities in inventory, requisitions, and shipping and receiving, as well as similar jobs for adults with developmental disabilities. It is a collaboration between the HEART program, which trains and employs adults with developmental disabilities, and the Blue Lance Group technology firm. Various modules have been completed, and pilot participants are being trained to test the application.

## IMPROVING EDUCATION

### **Family Involvement in Schools, Region 17 Education Service Center**

This project focuses on improving educational success for students by increasing family involvement.

This five-year project started in June 2013 to increase family involvement and satisfaction with local schools by providing training, individualized coaching, technical assistance and resources for families and schools in the 20 counties served by Region 17. It also addresses barriers to family involvement, such as transportation and childcare. The project focused on South East Lubbock County Shared Service Arrangement and the Roosevelt, Slaton, Wilson and Southland school districts this year.

## LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY SKILLS TRAINING

SEVENTEEN TCDD PROJECTS and activities increased the number of leadership development and advocacy training programs that provide culturally appropriate training for people with developmental disabilities, their families, and their allies.

### Stipends and Leadership

#### TCDD Events Stipends

Stipends for 16 events enabled more than 1,175 individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members to attend conferences, workshops, meetings and other events in Texas. This support promoted consumer empowerment and involvement in activities that enhance independence, productivity and community integration for people with developmental disabilities.

#### Travel Support for Public Members of Advisory Committees, The Center for Disability Studies at The University of Texas at Austin

In order to increase public input on disability issues, TCDD worked with the Center for Disability Studies at The University of Texas at Austin to support travel for about 25 people with developmental disabilities and their family members who serve on state advisory committees.

#### Specialized Advocacy Training Project: Statewide Advocacy Network, Texas Parent to Parent

The Texas Parent to Parent Advocacy Network continues to develop a statewide advocacy network. It recruits parents of children with developmental disabilities, young self-advocates and siblings to advocate on community-based issues in health and human services, accessible transportation and housing, meaningful employment, and appropriate education for people with disabilities. The project also facilitates weekly conference calls to discuss legislation, public policy issues and advocacy opportunities. Texas Parent to Parent trained 18 self-advocates, 89 parents and 15 others this year. Volunteers across the state provide information on disability issues to a legislator or legislative staff.

#### Statewide Advanced Leadership and Public Policy Advocacy Training, Texas A&M University

The annual three-day Texas Advanced Leadership and Advocacy Conference (TALAC) in Austin was attended by 193 people in March 2013. Participants also attended a rally at the State Capitol and talked with their legislators. About 45 individuals attended other training provided before and after the legislative session. TCDD funding ended Oct. 31, 2013.

#### West Texas Youth Leadership and Advocacy Expansion Project, Imagine Enterprises

Selected graduates of the youth leadership and advocacy project, which covers 14 counties around Abilene, were trained to be peer-to-peer mentors and trainers. They learned how to make presentations and instructed other youth in peer-to-peer supports, leadership, advocacy, community living, education and employment. They also spoke at local high schools and community organizations and recruited new participants. While TCDD funding ends in December 2013, three mentors plan to keep working with Disability in Action, which partnered with Imagine Enterprises on the project, to continue the leadership training and mentoring project.

### Promoting Self-Advocates as Speakers

Two projects started in May 2013 to increase the number of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are speakers or facilitators at conferences in Texas. The projects provide training and supports for self-advocates and will help coordinate speaking opportunities. Each project plans to train at least 50 self-advocates over four years.

### **Opening Minds, Opening Doors, VSA Texas**

This project started its first 6-week workshop in Austin on storytelling, using a microphone and interview practice in September 2013. Self-advocates learn how to write and deliver their personal stories with power and emotion, unleash their creativity through free-writing and performance exercises, and develop their own unique voices. VSA Texas also plans to provide training on how to use slideshows, videos and other technology. Training is planned in Hays, Travis and Williamson counties during the project's first year, before expanding into Bexar, El Paso and Harris counties.



VSA Texas is training Jessica and Dave, as well as other individuals with developmental disabilities, on public speaking. The self-advocates will make presentations on disability issues at conferences and other events.

### **Project SPEAK (Sharing Personal Experiences and Knowledge), Imagine Enterprises**

This statewide project plans to work with three teams of five speakers during its first year, with Dickinson Independent School District, Texas Advocates, and the Family to Family Network. Training materials are being developed with sessions starting in January 2014. Nine more teams will be trained over the next three years. Imagine Enterprises will also support self-advocates in making presentations at local and statewide meetings, conferences and trainings.

### **Leadership Development and Advocacy Skills Training**

Six projects to establish or strengthen self-advocacy programs and training for individuals with developmental disabilities are in their second or three years.

#### **Texas A&M University**

This leadership and advocacy program for youth with and without disabilities and their parents is located in Brazos County. It works with students in special education programs and classrooms structured for youth at risk for dropping out of high school. Students also complete leadership projects at school and in the community, and parents learn how to promote leadership and advocacy skills for children with disabilities. This year, 61 students participated in classroom training, engaged in advocacy and self-determination in the community, and learned about their options after high school.

#### **National Alliance on Mental Illness of Texas**

This project holds two-day leadership and advocacy, train-the-trainer conferences to increase local advocacy on behalf of people with mental illness. Participants advocate in their own communities and develop regional affiliate councils. They also provide local advocacy and leadership training to other individuals with disabilities, family members, friends and representatives from organizations that serve people with developmental disabilities. One Consumer Advocate Conference was held Nov. 1 – 2, 2012, and a second conference was in September 2013. Local trainings were held in Dallas and Sugarland.

#### **Advocacy for Choice and Change North Texas, The Arc of Dallas**

Working to improve public policy and increase supports and opportunities for people with disabilities living in the community, this project provided training to individuals with disabilities, their families, and others in Collin, Dallas and Rockwall counties. Seventy-seven participants graduated from eight leadership classes this

year at the Autism Treatment Center, Metrocrest Services, Notre Dame School in Dallas, the Association for Independent Living, and Arc Days Adult Day Habilitation centers in Richardson and Garland.

and personal networking. Stipends for 60 people helped cover the cost of attending the “Connected to Independent Living” conference in Austin March 3 – 5, 2013. Another conference is planned in Corpus Christi in 2014.



Patrick Eagan learns about using the Internet safely during a leadership class by The Arc of Dallas, as teacher’s aide Jenny Portillo watches.

**Project MOVE, The Arc of Texas**

The Arc of Texas partnered with local Arc chapters and other groups to develop training and ongoing support to Mobilize and Organize self-advocates, families and allies to use their Voices to Empower (MOVE) communities and create meaningful change. Project MOVE is training people in Amarillo, Austin, Rio Grande Valley, San Angelo and San Antonio, plus other communities upon request.

**Project SAVE, Texas Advocates**

Project SAVE is training individuals with developmental disabilities who live in four state supported living centers and the surrounding communities about how to speak up for themselves and create change in their own lives and their community. (See feature on page 11 for more details.)

**Texas State Independent Living Council**

This project enhances advocacy training at an annual statewide, cross-disability conference focused on independent living, developing peer relationships through collaborative learning



Senator Wendy Davis accepts the Texas SILC’s 2013 Legislator of the Year award from conference emcees Mariah Kilbourne, Ms. Wheelchair America 2013, and Spruce Dickerson, Ms. Plus America Elite 2011.

### Expanding Leadership Development and Advocacy Skills Training

Three projects that expanded previous leadership development and advocacy skills training projects ended funding from TCDD last year.

#### **SER — Jobs for Progress of the Texas Gulf Coast, Inc.**

SER used a train-the-trainer approach to its leadership and advocacy skills program to provide workshops, online training videos and other materials. The project ended on Nov. 30, 2012, after completing an advocacy and leadership training session for 16 students at Austin High School in Fort Bend school district.

#### **Parent Alliance for Learning and Support Program, Brighton Center**

The PALS program provided training for about 213 parents of children with disabilities on advocacy in its last year; 121 young adults with disabilities on self-advocacy; and 127 professionals and community members on general advocacy and individualized support regarding education to 273 families and professionals. Training was provided in English and Spanish. While the TCDD grant ended on Sept. 30, 2013, the PALS program is now funded through a private foundation, by charging for some individual support services and other resources. Additionally, the Hector Garza Treatment Center will provide ongoing training to young adults.

#### **Paso Del Norte Children's Development Center**

The center provided a parent-to-parent mentoring component to its Leadership Academy for Families program, increased the number of participants and improved its training, which is primarily provided in Spanish. Over the two-year Parent to Parent Mentor Project, 18 parents became mentors and provided 792 mentoring sessions for other parents. Five mentors lead three support groups. The mentors also taught 26 leadership academy classes and participated in numerous local events. Sixty-six trainings were offered to parents and mentors. While TCDD funding ended on Sept. 30, 2013, the Parent to Parent Mentor Project continues to provide support and guidance for parents, focusing on special education, transition and advocacy.



Individuals with Paso Del Norte's leadership project dressed in blue to show support for Autism Awareness Day on April 2.



Seven self-advocates from Austin attend training presented by the Institute for Person-Centered Practices.

## Project SAVE Trains Self-Advocates to Speak Up for Themselves

Project SAVE (Self-Advocates Voices Engaged), Leadership Development and Advocacy Skills Training, Texas Advocates

**P**ROJECT SAVE is training individuals with developmental disabilities who live in four state supported living centers and the surrounding communities about how to speak up for themselves and create change in their own lives and their community. “Project SAVE is about learning to make choices,” said Shaun Bickley, a self-advocate who coordinates the project. “People with developmental disabilities are institutionally trained not to make choices and to let others make them for us. Project SAVE is about helping people learn how to make those decisions again.”

The project also pairs residents from the four SSLCs with self-advocates living in the community. “This allows people who live in SSLCs a chance to interact with peers in more community-based settings,” Bickley explained. “It’s not possible

to show someone what life is like in the community without them living it, but they can learn enough about it to make the choice. It also lets people who live in different settings learn more about people who might have been like them, and make alliances and connections.”

Project SAVE focused on the Austin and San Antonio SSLCs, plus the Rio Grande State Center in Harlingen last year, with plans to expand into the Richmond SSLC in Fort Bend County in 2014. “What gets me is that people with disabilities want to live in the community, but their family and friends don’t believe they can do it,” said Ricky Broussard, a self-advocate who leads some of the training. “With the right supports, people can do anything!”

The three-year project started in March 2012, providing training on disability history, self-advocacy, self-determination, voting rights, goals

and dreams, healthy relationships, employment and community living. The training also included strategies to obtain needed resources, activities to promote partnerships and peer support, and other self-advocacy issues such as transition and legislative advocacy.

This project worked with self-advocates, families and allies in Bexar, Cameron, Hidalgo, Travis and Williamson counties last year. Activities began in Austin with a series of six training sessions for eight SSLC residents and nine community members who graduated in March 2013. Six more trainings were held in San Antonio for 17 self-advocates, and five trainings were held in Harlingen for 19 individuals.

Two self-advocates in Austin also served as train-the-trainers and provide ongoing support for other participants. They also coordinated a resource fair and another community event. Several public events were held in the four communities, as well as San Angelo, Lubbock, Sugar Land and Wichita Falls. Additionally, Project SAVE advocates presented at numerous conferences and other events, and testified before Texas legislators.

Self-advocate Nathan Williams testified on several bills after he received training from Project SAVE. He also became the president and secretary of Austin Advocates. “I learned to speak up for myself,” Williams said. “I learned how to testify at the Capitol and how to be part of Austin Advocates.” In addition to providing input at the Capitol five times, he set up an appointment and met with his Representative. “I want other people to learn to speak out for themselves too,” Williams stated.

“Self-advocacy is absolutely vital because lawmakers need to see we exist,” Bickley said. “They will never know our needs without hearing our voices.”



Susan Shankles lists a positive quality about another self-advocate.



Chris Botello (left) helps Bill Seargent read an assignment on People Planning Together.



Tanashia Stanton holds her training certificate, which was presented by Project SAVE Coordinator Shaun Bickley.

## BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

FOURTEEN PROJECTS DEMONSTRATED ways to prevent unnecessary admissions to institutions and to increase a community's ability to provide services and support individuals with developmental disabilities. The projects also aimed to improve people's health and access to needed health care, behavior supports and respite.

### Building Community Capacity Projects

#### **Alternatives to Guardianship: Volunteer Supported Decision Making, The Arc of San Angelo**

Based on a bill passed by the Texas Legislature, this pilot project provides supported decision-making assistance to persons with intellectual, developmental, cognitive or other disabilities as an alternative to guardianship. Volunteers work directly with individuals so they can assert individual choice regarding decisions such as where to live, employment, medical procedures and finances. The three-year project in Tom Green County has trained volunteers to assist in decision making based on the principles of self-determination, matched them with individuals with disabilities with shared interests, and provided support to the volunteers. It has also diverted several court-initiated guardianships.

#### **Gulf Coast African American Family Support Conference, Helpful Interventions**

This project established an annual conference in Houston modeled after the Central Texas African American Family Support Conference hosted by Austin Travis County Integral Care. The conference uses culturally sensitive education, supports and partnerships to strengthen family and individual awareness of available behavioral and physical health care services. The project also works to reduce stigma and eliminate health disparities. The first conference was attended by more than 300 people on Nov. 1, 2013, with free admission for people with disabilities and their families. A pre-conference, faith-based summit on mental health, spirituality and the African American community was attended by 60 people on Aug. 14, 2013.

#### **Meaningful Relationships, SafePlace**

Individuals with developmental disabilities increased their ability to build lasting relationships that are safe and supportive, based on shared interests with other people in the Austin area and Seguin. SafePlace provided peer support meetings and small group workshops about social and recreational interests, relationship barriers and solutions, healthy relationships with family and friends, and safety. Participants attend various activities in the community based on their personal interests. Some individuals became mentors for new participants. SafePlace partnered with Draco Services, Inc., and MOSAIC South Central Texas.

#### **Texas Microboard Collaboration, The Arc of Texas**

This five-year project that helped develop microboards across the state concluded funding support from TCDD on Sept. 30, 2013. Microboards are small groups of family members, friends and others who create a nonprofit organization that helps an individual with disabilities obtain services and supports for a self-determined life. Each microboard creates a person-directed life plan called a PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope). The project also provided many PATH facilitator trainings throughout Texas and worked with nonprofit agencies, local intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) authorities, and school districts to increase use of the PATH. Project staff worked with the Department of Aging and Disability Services to amend the Texas Administrative Code to accommodate persons who use microboards.

**Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Head Start Project, Region 17 Education Service Center**

This project improved the behavior intervention skills of staff in preschool, child care, Head Start and other settings that serve children with disabilities, ages 2 to 5. Training focused on relationship building, classroom management and organization, social emotional development and individual behavior interventions. Over a five-year period, training and support were provided at 18 early childhood centers and impacted over 1,200 children. Project outcomes include better childcare programs and policies, as well as addressing challenging behaviors. TCDD funding ended on May 31, 2013.

**Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Impacting Disproportionality Project, Region 17 Education Service Center**

This project worked with at least 21 school districts and several charter schools over a five-year period to increase cultural competency skills and reduce disciplinary referrals, suspension and expulsion of children who are ethnic minorities. This resulted in more campuses using positive behavioral interventions and supports and more students in both general and special education benefiting from a comprehensive approach to prevention and early intervention of inappropriate behavior. TCDD funding ended on May 31, 2013.

**Building Community Capacity through Collaboration**

TCDD awarded grants to five organizations in January and February 2013 to develop strategic plans over 12 – 18 months to improve community-based services for people with disabilities and their families. Each plan must include target issue(s) and approaches to increase high quality, culturally appropriate services that are person or family centered, such as healthcare, behavior supports, respite and other supports and help individuals avoid the need for institutional care. Once an

organization completes its plan, it can request more funding from TCDD for up to five years to carry out the plan.

**Building Community Capacity, A Circle of Ten, Inc.**

A Circle of Ten worked with 12 partners to set priorities, recruit new partners and develop a strategic plan to improve services for people with disabilities and their families in seven Gulf Coast counties. People who live, work and play in this area provided input at community-wide priority setting meetings. New Network Partners benefited from C10’s 3-day capacity-building seminars, program/grant teams and grants to address the priorities. The project focused on Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty and Waller counties.



Individuals with the Light and Salt Association participate in a three-day seminar by A Circle of 10. The organizations are working with other partners on a strategic plan to improve disability services on the Gulf Coast.

**Building Community Capacity, Volar Center for Independent Living**

Volar brought together a diverse group of organizations and individuals to form a Community Support Network and develop a strategic plan to improve services and supports for all individuals with disabilities in El Paso County. Eight high priority elements were identified, which are health services, intellectual and developmental disabilities training/education, enrichment activities, independent living, employment, housing, mental health/behavioral and respite.

**Building Community Capacity,  
Burkhart Center for Autism Education and  
Research at Texas Tech University**

The Burkhart Center partnered with High Point Village and the HALI Project to form the West Texas Community Network and developed a strategic plan to improve services in 21 counties in the Panhandle and West Texas. Meetings and networking were held with diverse individuals, leaders and organizations to discuss programs and services offered, along with ways to increase opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in their local communities.

**Building Community Capacity,  
East Texas Center for Independent Living**

The East Texas Disability Services Network worked to formulate a strategic plan that will enhance and expand community supports for people with disabilities. A community-wide workshop in March 2013 revealed that the overarching priority is the development of independent living skills and socialization, vocational/education, and transitional housing and transportation. The plan will focus on Athens, Canton, Henderson, Jacksonville, Mineola, Tyler and the surrounding rural communities.

**Building Community Capacity,  
Community Healthcare**

Community Healthcare and the East Texas Aging and Disability Resource Center worked together to strengthen a network of diverse organizations in East Texas, focusing on Gregg County first, then on Harrison, Marion, Panola and Upshur. They used a community-building model that focuses on discovering and mobilizing existing assets. They plan to have a special emphasis in the local strategic plan on respite services, culturally appropriate individual- and family-friendly health care, and behavioral supports.

**Health and Fitness for People with  
Developmental Disabilities**

Three TCDD projects to improve the health and fitness of people with disabilities are in the second of five years.

**Any Body Can Wellness Program,  
Any Baby Can of San Antonio, Inc.**

This project promotes the health, physical fitness and inclusion of children and youth with developmental disabilities in San Antonio and Bexar County through recreational and fitness activities. Since the project began in March 2012, 25 families have completed the program and 12 more are in the final stages. Eleven families joined the project in its second year. A University of Texas-San Antonio graduate intern is offering counseling services to families in the program. The project also provided community training to the YMCA and San Antonio Parks and Recreation staff about working with individuals with developmental disabilities. It also obtained additional funding from the Silver and Black Foundation to provide adapted group exercises to the community.

**Get FIT Texas Project,  
Epilepsy Foundation Texas**

The goal of the project is to establish a healthy lifestyle program for individuals with developmental disabilities, epilepsy and their



East Texas Disabilities Services Network members gain skills in leadership, networking, grassroots community organizing, innovative program development, and grant research and writing at A Circle of Ten seminar in Edom, Texas. It was held July 16 – 18, 2013.

caregivers in rural Texas communities. The project adapted the Get FIT (Fitness, Integration, Training) program and individualized it for rural use and to improve outcomes specific to epilepsy. Partners include residential facilities, private gyms and YMCAs. Activities started in the Houston and San Antonio areas, with expansion planned in rural counties around Amarillo, Austin, Beaumont, Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, Galveston, Grapevine, Harlingen, Laredo, Lubbock, Lufkin and McAllen. This includes rural areas served by the Epilepsy Foundation’s 14 specialized medical care clinics.

**Health and Fitness, Texas State Independent Living Council**

The Texas SILC partnered with three independent living centers to create model programs that promote health, access to fitness activities, and awareness of the importance of health and fitness programs for people with developmental disabilities. The Brazos Valley center in Bryan and College Station and LIFE/RUN in Lubbock have running programs, as well as activities such as healthy cooking classes, exercise classes, and ongoing education regarding nutrition, exercise, stress management and overall health. SILC has started working with the Volar center in El Paso, and plans to expand into other parts of the state. In the past two years, about 300 individuals with disabilities and 30 community organizations participated in the program.



Get FIT Specialist Janie Sibson works with Jessica Rosales to teach her how to improve her physical fitness.



Individuals at the Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living participate in a class on healthy cooking.



A fitness program developed by the Texas Statewide Independent Living Center and the Brazos Valley Center teaches people with disabilities how to improve their health.

## CULTURAL OUTREACH AND DEVELOPMENT

TO BETTER UNDERSTAND the effect of cultural issues on services, help local communities provide culturally competent support to people with disabilities, and build relationships with organizations that are working to improve the lives of individuals from ethnic minority cultures, TCDD funded five projects for one year to organizations that include mostly black, Hispanic, Asian or Native American communities.

### Cultural Outreach & Development Projects

#### **The Sower Foundation (Humble)**

The project worked with 117 families and 32 disability service providers in local black and Hispanic communities before it ended in August 2013. It helped providers understand how culture affects decisions and access to health care and disability services. People with disabilities expressed their need for more culturally competent services at two community meetings and shared information with service providers to address this gap in service.

#### **Centro de Mi Salud (Dallas)**

This project worked with families and assisted disability service providers and teachers in understanding the Latino cultures and their effects on health care, including cultural barriers, myths and stigmas. Family workshops explained different diagnoses and how to access medical and mental health services. The project provided outreach to 160 educational groups and 26 community programs before TCDD funding ended in August 2013.

#### **Abundant Rain Christian Fellowship (Elgin)**

ARCF Community Services provides a voice for African-American participants regarding their specific needs and values. It also connects individuals with developmental disabilities and helps them be included in their rural community while obtaining resources needed to live independently. The project, which started in July 2013, plans to sponsor a family resource fair and community meetings.

#### **REACH Families (Reaching East African Children and Families) (Irving)**

The project is supporting East African American families that have children with special needs, as well as their parents and siblings of Ethiopian, Eritrean and Somali descent who live in Dallas, Tarrant and Collin counties. REACH Families will increase community awareness of disabilities by holding a resource fair with presentations and materials in Somali, Amharic and Tigrinya. The project started on Sept. 1, 2013.

#### **Advocacy for Living in Mainstream America (Austin)**

In its first six months, this project held six trainings for 20 parents in Travis, Williamson and Bastrop counties, and a parent leadership conference was planned for the fall. The project started in January 2013.



REACH Families holds monthly meetings and provides other supports for East African American families that have children with special needs.



A video by the Faith Inclusion Network of Dallas reveals the importance of including people with disabilities in all aspects of their faith. When children are fully included in spiritual and educational aspects of faith, it helps them understand and connect to their culture and community.

## Inclusive Faith-Based Projects Welcome People with Disabilities

MORE THAN 15 MILLION TEXANS belong to a faith-based group. While churches, other houses of worship and religious organizations want to welcome everyone, many do not know how to reach out and create comfortable environments for people with disabilities. Four TCDD projects hold annual symposiums and work to create inclusive faith-based communities. The three-year projects, created in 2012, bring together religious leaders to compare experiences, share resources and learn how to support people with disabilities in their communities. Symposium participants also develop action plans to improve inclusion in their own faith community.

### **Austin Interfaith Inclusion Network Serving Travis County, Onestar Foundation**

Onestar Foundation collaborated with Jewish Family Services and the Texas A&M University

Center on Disability and Development to create the Austin Interfaith Inclusion Network, which includes 25 faith-based organizations. They represent Catholic, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, interfaith, Muslim, Protestant and Evangelical congregations. About 100 people from local faith and disability communities attended symposia in October 2012 and 2013. The network also developed various resources for faith-based leaders, such as a video, *Central Texas Stories of Faith and Inclusion*, as well as links to blogs, audio clips and sermons. Additionally, OneStar produced *Every Member Matters: An Information and Resource Kit* for faith-based communities. It includes tips for engaging people with disabilities, suggestions from family members, and information on community supports, physical and attitudinal accessibility and religious education.

### **Faith Inclusion Network of Dallas (FIND) Serving the Greater Dallas Area, Jewish Family Service of Dallas**

This project built a collaborative group in Dallas, Collin, Denton and Rockwall counties, called

the Faith Inclusion Network of Dallas. FIND is working with 19 faith-based communities, 42 community service agencies and 10 advocacy organizations to share strategies on building community awareness and inclusion. More than 150 people attended the first Greater Dallas area symposium on Feb. 25, 2013. Parent advocates and professional service providers shared, learned and connected with spiritual and lay leaders on topics such as how to welcome and include individuals and families with special needs, developing effective youth and young-adult ministries, and creating more opportunities for interfaith collaboration. More than half of the respondents in a community survey said their faith community does little to accommodate people with disabilities, although the project found that many resources already exist. FIND also created a video about the project, which is working to increase opportunities for people with disabilities and their families to be fully engaged socially, emotionally, academically and spiritually.

**Inclusive Faith-Based Communities Symposium Project Serving Callahan, Jones and Taylor Counties, West Central Texas Regional Foundation**

This project created a self-evaluation that faith-based organizations can use to determine if their programs and buildings are accessible for persons with developmental disabilities. Its first symposium was held in Abilene on April 13, 2013, which focused on best practices and dispelling misperceptions about disabilities. Topics included ministering to individuals with disabilities, different types of disabilities and experiences, tips for parents and caregivers on obtaining needed supports, behavior intervention, and resources to help adults with special needs achieve their full potential in a Christian environment. Faith-based leaders also worked on an action plan to improve the inclusiveness at faith communities. Several small events are being held this year, along with the second symposium in 2014, to increase participation across the rural region and metropolitan area to ensure active participation within faith-based communities for all. Community and faith-based organizations were invited to set

up booths and reach out to people at a fall festival for people with disabilities and their families in October 2013.

**Inclusive Faith-Based Communities Symposium Project Serving Tarrant County, The Arc of Greater Tarrant County (IDD Needs Council of Tarrant County)**

A three-day symposium to facilitate the full inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities was attended by about 40 people in May 2013. It included topics such as People First language, transportation, inclusiveness, bullying and respite. Participants returned to their community with a plan to increase inclusion and a charge to assist other groups in duplicating their efforts and creating more welcoming atmospheres in places of worship. The project is also developing a toolkit for faith-based organizations about including and ministering to individuals with developmental disabilities, which includes information about communication and sensory differences, as well as a guide to navigating services and local resources. Four focus groups are reviewing nationwide best practices and potential speakers for the next symposium on transportation, respite, aging and disability ministries.



Judith Sokolow and Suzanne Potts display a resource kit for faith-based communities created by the Austin Interfaith Inclusion Network.

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

THESE PROJECTS FOCUS on educational campaigns that work with community leaders, organizations and businesses to enable them to better support, include or provide services to people with developmental disabilities.

### **Nonprofit Capacity-Building, A Circle of Ten, Inc., Network for Collaboration**

Leadership and capacity-building workshops for nonprofits help some TCDD projects and other groups explore ways to increase their funding and community organizing so they can address the needs of people with developmental disabilities. Trainings include capacity building, grant writing, and partnerships and community-organizing. The project worked with 16 TCDD leadership and advocacy projects in its first year and seven projects in its second year. A Circle of 10 is also helping groups in developing grant applications for a variety of funding sources, and eight applications were submitted last year.

### **Stipends to Support Disability-Related Presentations**

TCDD provided one stipend in fiscal year 2013 under a new initiative to provide support for disability-related presentations at conferences, workshops or seminars in Texas. The stipends are only available to organizations which host the events. The goal is to increase public awareness on best practices in providing services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities or to promote self-advocacy and self-determination.

## Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities Staff Activities

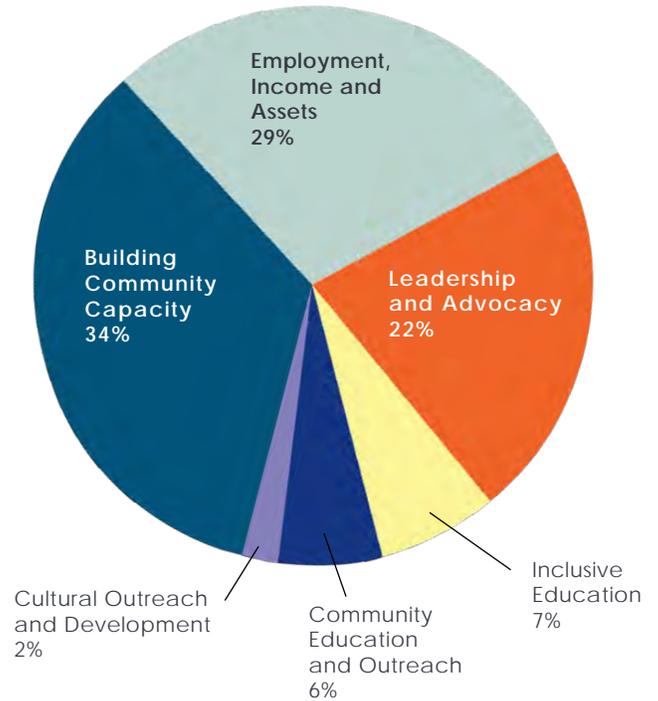
TCDD staff members provide support for all of the Council's activities. In fiscal year 2013, staff:

- Monitored public policy and provided input to Texas legislators, state agencies, members of Congress and other policymakers on issues affecting people with disabilities;
- Developed and coordinated public information activities and products—including a new TCDD website, News and Features, social media postings and other materials;
- Responded to more than 285 inquiries about the Council and disability issues;
- Worked to implement the TCDD State Plan;
- Released two Requests for Proposals for new projects;
- Monitored grant projects and provided technical assistance to 50 projects and activities;
- Provided administrative support for Council and staff activities; and
- Coordinated quarterly meetings of the Council, Project Development Committee, Public Policy Committee and Executive Committee, plus one meeting of the Audit Committee.

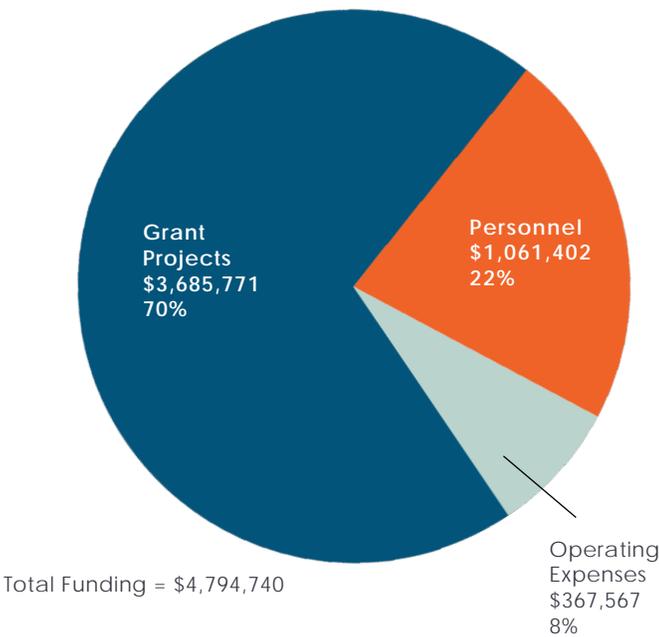
2013 Investments in Grant Projects

Goal Area	Federal Funds	Non-Federal Funds	Total Funds
Building Community Capacity	\$1,485,844	\$418,123	\$1,903,967
Employment, Income and Assets	\$1,280,912	\$337,211	\$1,618,123
Leadership and Advocacy	\$951,338	\$551,227	\$1,498,465
Inclusive Education	\$305,161	\$119,384	\$424,545
Community Education and Outreach	\$260,631	\$90,046	\$350,677
Cultural Outreach and Development	\$71,853	\$4,973	\$76,826
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$4,355,739</b>	<b>\$1,520,964</b>	<b>\$5,876,702</b>

NOTE: Investments in Grant Projects during fiscal year 2013 may include expenditures of prior year funds.

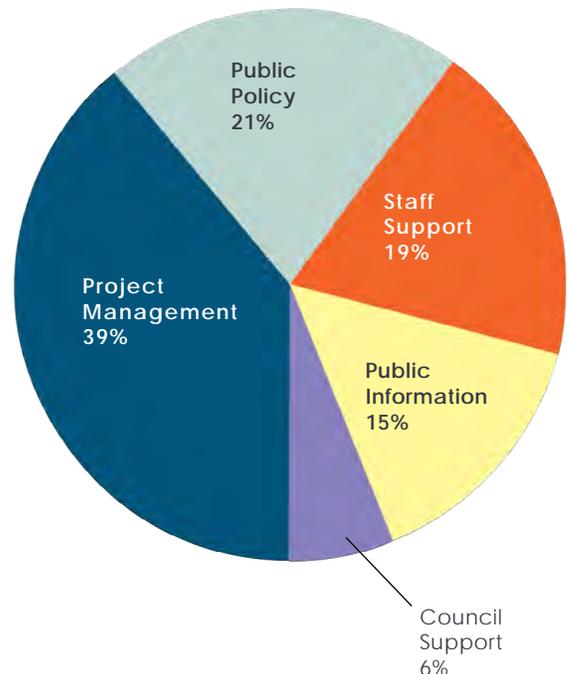


Fiscal Year 2013 TCDD Budget



NOTE: Federal DD funds may be expended over three fiscal years.

2013 Operating and Personnel Expenses Allocation



NOTE: 85% of Operating and Personnel Expenses are allocated to support implementation of State Plan activities.



## WHAT IS A DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY?

The Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Act defines a developmental disability as a severe chronic disability of an individual that:

- Is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments.
- Is manifested before the individual attains age 22.
- Is likely to 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; and economic self-sufficiency.
- Reflects the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

An individual from birth to age nine, who has a substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired condition, may be considered to have a developmental disability without meeting three or more of the criteria described above if the individual, without services and supports, has a high probability of meeting those criteria later in life.

