

Employment First Task Force

The Texas Employment First Task Force, established by Senate Bill 1226 (83R), met for the first time on April 23, 2014. The purpose of the Task Force is to promote competitive employment opportunities that provide a living wage for individuals with disabilities. The Task Force and its activities are expected to continue at least until September 1, 2017.

Membership

26 individuals were appointed to the Task Force by HHSC Executive Commissioner Kyle Janek. Janek also named TCDD Executive Director Roger Webb as Task Force Chair Carline Geiger, Operations Director for Programs at the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), as Vice-Chair. Among the members of the Task Force are individuals with disabilities, family members of individuals with disabilities, advocates, and representatives of Texas state agencies involved in employment and disability services. A full [membership roster](#) can be found online.

The Task Force hopes to embody the principle of “nothing about us, without us,” by law, at least one-third of all Task Force members must be individuals with disabilities or family members of individuals with disabilities. It was clear at the first meeting that most people on the Task Force have powerful personal connections to the subject of employment for people with disabilities.

Responsibilities

The task must will:

- 1) design an education and outreach process aimed at raising expectations of the success of people with disabilities in integrated, competitive employment;
- 2) develop recommendations for policy, procedure, and rule changes; and
- 3) submit a report every two years to the Governor, Legislature, and state agency leaders with recommendations.



Going Forward

The Task Force’s first report is due to the Governor, Legislature, and state agency leaders on September 1, 2014. Task Force members will be hard at work over the coming months, compiling data and crafting recommendations designed to improve employment rates and outcomes.

The Task Force plans to meet monthly with upcoming meetings scheduled for Tuesday, May 20th and Tuesday, June 17th in Austin. [Details about the meetings](#) are also available online. Public comment is invited at these meetings.

For More Information

The Task Force website includes meeting details and the membership roster. It is available at: <http://www.dads.state.tx.us/providers/supportedemployment/pi/index.html>