

Future Activities for State Plan Implementation

Tab 12

Background:

Behind this tab is a draft Executive Summary of a project to provide support to students partnering with individuals who have developmental disabilities to conduct research on certain disability-related topics.

If you have any questions or thoughts related to this Executive Summary, please contact Joanna Cordry, Planning Coordinator, at (512) 437-5410 or Joanna.Cordry@tcdd.texas.gov.

The Committee will also discuss other ideas that might enhance the impact of current TCDD activities, such as next steps for current projects, additional ways to encourage the development of advanced leadership and advocacy skills, and a potential partnership with the Center for Elimination of Disparities and Disproportionality.

**Project Development
Committee
Agenda Item 7.**

Expected Action:

The Committee will discuss the Executive Summary and may make recommendations to the Council.

**Council
Agenda Item 10. A.**

Expected Action:

The Council will consider recommendations from the Project Development Committee.

Executive Summary

Support for Expenses for Research on Disability-related Topics

Project Goal

State Plan Goal 7, Objective 2, Activity 3: Support the Council to develop and fund projects to explore innovative ideas and/or provide timely solutions to emerging needs, as funds allow.

Proposed Funding Amount

Up to \$25,000 per year per proposed research project for research-related expenses, accommodations for self-advocates, and stipends for self-advocates or stakeholders who could not otherwise participate, for up to 3 projects.

Proposed Duration

Up to five years per project.

Background

TCDD's FY 2012-2016 State Plan notes that additional, as-yet-unavailable data may be needed to better understand complex issues, to develop innovative solutions to existing problems, and to enable TCDD to evaluate the degree to which its activities result in improving the lives of people with developmental disabilities. For example:

- The state does not routinely gather specific data regarding individuals who have developmental disabilities and are not receiving the services and supports they need to be included in their community. In 2010, TCDD surveyed a sample of individuals who were on the interest list for CLASS, HCS, or both. Survey responses were received from 1,922 people. Responders provided some demographic information and answered questions regarding what services they were receiving, what prompted them to sign up on an interest list, which service from a list of available services they would want first if offered, and when they expected their service needs to change. The data informed the TCDD 2010 Biennial Disability Report and recommendations. Additional data regarding needs can benefit TCDD in both capacity building and advocacy efforts.
- TCDD is aware that people who are ethnic and racial minorities and people living in rural areas are generally more likely to be unserved or underserved. Through the Outreach and Development grants and other outreach efforts, TCDD is more aware of some of the attitudinal and practice barriers preventing some individuals who strongly identify with an ethnic or racial minority group from receiving appropriate services. However, to fully understand how widely these barriers are experienced and whether or not the barriers are being addressed effectively, TCDD would need data collected from across the state.
- Younger individuals with developmental disabilities who grew up attending their neighborhood schools and being included in their communities may have had significantly different experiences than older individuals who generally had less support. However, TCDD rarely receives input from individuals in their teens and twenties. Having better information about the experiences and world views of this younger group could help TCDD to effectively reach out to

and attract young self-advocates to be involved in advocacy activities. It would also enable TCDD to better foresee and plan for the types of opportunities that adults will want in the future.

- The evaluation of certain activities in the State Plan would be best performed by independent researchers. Examples include an evaluation of Higher Education programs that prepare individuals with developmental disabilities for careers (Activity 3 under Objective 2.1); activities to evaluate TCDD's leadership and advocacy programs (Goal 6); and possibly activities to respond to the recommendation of the Sunset Commission staff to conduct ongoing evaluation of grant projects for 3-5 years after completion of funding from TCDD.

These types of data collection activities are generally beyond TCDD's existing staff resources, as is independent research that could result in the development of new, innovative models for providing services and supports.

At the May 2014 Project Development Committee meeting, Committee members expressed interest in providing funds to support research-related expenses for students working on disability related topics if that research would further inform the Council's Goals and Objectives. The Committee felt that various data collection activities would be useful. The Committee also noted that supporting students who are interested in disability-related topics might encourage new researchers to focus on disability issues in their future careers. TCDD staff have developed this idea further, taking into account some barriers that would make the activity, as originally envisioned, unwieldy:

- "Grants" cannot be awarded to individuals.
- TCDD can contract with individuals. However, contracts are reimbursed after expenses are incurred (no advancing of funds) which likely would be difficult for students on limited budgets.
- Awarding a grant to an organization that is not closely connected to the student's school to disburse funding to individuals for research might result in insufficient technical oversight of student research.

TCDD staff recommend awarding TCDD grant funds to academic programs that are willing to support faculty advisors to provide oversight of student work. That support would be considered a "matching contribution," although TCDD may not be able to capture the support as "match." TCDD funds could be used for research-related expenses, stipends or accommodations for a self-advocate to serve as an advisor or colleague to work with the students, and stipends to support the participation of other stakeholders who tend to be underrepresented in the type of research being done, if stipends are necessary to allow that involvement.

Expected Outcome

Products expected from the project include a final report that provides a thorough explanation of the background, methodology, conclusions, and limitations of the research.

In addition to the products, the primary outcome of these particular projects would be increased knowledge of at least one specific issue of importance to the Council, resulting in improved decision-making.

Other potential outcomes would include potential changes to students' perceptions of the benefits of collaborating with individuals who have developmental disabilities on research projects.

Project staff would be expected to report on the following Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Performance Measure:

SA01 People trained in area related to goal/objective.

Project Description

TCDD funds will support at least one university, college, technical school, or professional school located in Texas to oversee research projects related to TCDD State Plan Goals and Objectives. Each project must include at least two researchers, one of whom must be a student and one of whom must be an individual with a developmental disability. There would be no upper limit on the number of researchers who may be involved in the project, and preference would be given to projects that will involve a number of students in a group project, as this would enable a larger number of students to be exposed to work that supports the Council's mission and might result in encouraging several students to consider further work or employment that benefits people with developmental disabilities.

Research must be directly related to an existing State Plan Goal and Objective, be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the mission and positions of the Council, and adequately address and/or identify disparities or disproportionalities. It must also provide TCDD with new information about:

- best practices in providing services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities, including best practices in promoting self-advocacy, leadership and self-determination;
- the needs of Texans with developmental disabilities and their families;
- the direct experiences of individuals who have developmental disabilities; or
- TCDD's success or failure to create systems change.

If approval by an Institutional Review Board is required, the program receiving the grant funds and the faculty providing oversight would be responsible for obtaining approval. Funding for activities may be withheld if approval is not obtained.

TCDD would allow funds to be used to support stipends for researchers who are also stakeholders if needed; accommodations for individuals with developmental disabilities (including expenses for an attendant); transportation, meals, and lodging for research-related travel; equipment and materials to support implementation of surveys, interviews, or focus groups; expenses related to processing and analysis of data; or indirect costs of the sponsoring organization per TCDD policies. Other expenses may be approved if required for project activities.

Other Considerations

TCDD may either stipulate what the topic of the research might be or allow researchers to propose topics.