

Background:

TCDD provides grants of up to \$10,000 for Outreach and Development Projects to groups that are composed of individuals and families of individuals who have developmental disabilities and strongly identify with an ethnic minority group. Funds are available for up to five of these projects per year, with no more than five funded at any one time.

One (1) proposal was received this quarter from the Center for Accommodations and Support Services. The summary and recommendation from the staff review panel is included.

Executive Committee**Agenda Item 7.****Expected Action:**

The Executive Committee will consider this information and make final decisions on the Outreach and Development project proposal.

Council**Agenda Item 8. B.****Expected Action:**

The Council will receive a report of Executive Committee decisions.

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TO: TCDD Executive Committee

FROM: Cynthia Ellison, Senior Grants Specialist
Jessica Ramos, Public Policy Director
Joanna Cordry, Planning Coordinator

SUBJECT: Summary of Outreach and Development Proposal

DATE: May 6, 2015

TCDD's staff review panel reviewed 1 Outreach and Development proposal received this quarter.

Background

The Council offers grants of up to \$10,000 each for up to 18 months to groups made up of people who are black or African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, or Native American that are working to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities from ethnic minority cultures. TCDD expects these grants to be an avenue through which TCDD can partner with and learn from individuals who are typically unserved and/or underserved.

TCDD's Goals in Funding These Grants

1. Develop partnerships to increase TCDD's understanding of different values, cultures, and customs that exist in Texas, and how cultural issues may impact how services should be provided; and
2. Support activities that the group has determined will help members of their community who have disabilities to receive support that is culturally appropriate.

Criteria for Evaluation of Proposals

The TCDD staff review panel use the following criteria to evaluate if funding the proposal is consistent with the goals above:

- The group is made up of people who identify with a specific ethnic/cultural minority group who are working to increase access to culturally appropriate supports and services for individuals with disabilities of a similar cultural background.
- Working together will deepen TCDD's understanding of the cultural values and customs.

When proposals meet the criteria noted above, staff will recommend them for consideration for funding. If funded, TCDD grants staff ensure that all activities conducted are allowable under law and TCDD policies. Staff also provide technical assistance to assist the grantee to meet TCDD's expectations. *If proposed activities and budget items are both allowable and reasonable and will result in the intended outcomes, proposals are not expected to meet additional requirements.*

Recommendations:

TCDD staff recommend the Committee review and discuss the applications and fund those that best meet TCDD's goals. The complete proposals, 5-9 pages in length, will be available at the Executive Committee meeting.

Applicant	The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS), The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP)	Length of time in existence: UTEP was founded in 1914; CASS was created in 1996
Group Size	6 staff; Student group will have 15 students	Geographic Location: El Paso
Amount Requested	\$10,000	Meeting Frequency: office is open daily; student group will meet at least twice a month
Ethnic/Cultural Group Served	Hispanic/Latino, per proposal	
Organization Mission	The mission of the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) is to provide students with accommodations, resources, advocacy, and outreach to enhance and support academic and occupational success.	
Planned Activities	Per the proposal, CASS will train and support 15 Hispanic students with disabilities, including developmental disabilities, to receive culturally-appropriate leadership and advocacy training through a Photovoice project. Photovoice enables members of a marginalized communities – such as people with disabilities, people of color, and people from impoverished backgrounds - to use photography for communication, self-expression and self-advocacy. CASS describes Photovoice as a method in which participants who are often silenced in the political sphere are given cameras to capture images that convey their feelings, beliefs, and experiences and narrate their everyday experiences in their own perspective. The expected outcome is that students will engage as more active members of the campus community and benefit from participation in an inclusive and supportive environment.	
TCDD Staff Comments:	<p>CASS is a department of UTEP, a Hispanic-Serving Institution. Although 70% of the students served by CASS are Hispanic, the mission of the department is not “working to increase access to culturally appropriate supports and services.” They have worked with 5-6 students per year using Photovoice since 2012. The three staff on this project are Hispanic, Native American, and Asian. All three are bilingual; one also is fluent in ASL.</p> <p>Funding is requested for professionals to provide leadership and advocacy training using Photovoice for a group of students who have communication barriers and or are otherwise disempowered. It appears this may be the culture being addressed, rather than the Hispanic culture. Though providing culturally appropriate supports to persons with communication barriers is a worthy goal, this is not one of the groups targeted by this RFP. Additionally, if the culture being addressed is that of people who have communication barriers, this is not a situation in which people with communication barriers provide training to other people who have communication barriers.</p> <p>If approved for the funds, some items in the budget are questionable and some are not allowable with federal funds. This would need to be corrected.</p>	