

Future Funding Activities

Tab 14

Background:

Staff will provide information and updates related to possible future funding activities:

Summary of Interagency Transition Activities:

Staff will provide a summary of interagency transition activities and information about transition-related resources that are currently in existence and available to parents for Committee review and discussion of possible future actions they may wish to explore.

Meaningful Relationships Project Executive Summary:

At the November 2009 meeting, the Project Development Committee reviewed suggestions received in response to TCDD's "Request for Ideas: Meaningful Relationships" and requested that TCDD staff incorporate several of these ideas into an Executive Summary for a possible project to be funded. The "Meaningful Relationships" Executive Summary is provided for discussion and possible action by the committee.

Youth Leadership Projects: Next Steps:

The Committee will review the accomplishments of the Youth Leadership projects ending in 2011 and discuss possible future actions in order to provide staff with direction.

Project Development Committee

Agenda Item VI.

Expected Action:

The Committee may determine to recommend funding activities to the Council for consideration.

Council Meeting

Agenda Item IX. B. & D.

Expected Action:

The Council will consider recommendations from the Project Development Committee and determine final action.

Future Funding Proposal Executive Summary Meaningful Relationships

Background:

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) exists to create change so that all people with developmental disabilities are fully included in their communities and exercise control over their own lives. TCDD's numerous grant projects have sought to remove barriers related to the education, housing, employment, transportation, healthcare, and recreation needs of people with disabilities, striving with all projects to improve quality of life for Texans with developmental disabilities. Numerous studies have indicated that close, meaningful relationships and other types of supportive relationships can significantly improve one's perception of quality of life, have a positive effect on one's health, and increase one's ability to withstand the effects of stress. In addition, it has been hypothesized that individuals with severe disabilities may be less likely to experience abuse and/or neglect if they have meaningful personal relationships with others. Unfortunately, anecdotal data indicates that many people with severe disabilities experience an absence of support for meaningful personal relationships.

Many of the identified barriers to building meaningful relationships are related to a lack of sufficient support to overcome such logistical problems such as geographical isolation, transportation problems, and/or financial hardship that does not allow participation in many of the types of activities through which people typically form relationships with others outside of their family. However, attitudinal barriers - including active discouragement (or prohibition) of romantic relationships by administrators of congregate facilities and/or group homes, and/or by family members – also prevent many people with developmental disabilities from even having the opportunity to experience close, healthy relationships with people outside of their families and/or care givers.

Effective programs to introduce people to each other and to provide supports to facilitate healthy friendships, romantic relationships, and marriages have been demonstrated in other states and countries. Partnerships between organizations that are concerned mainly with “disability issues” and more generic community service agencies (such as Planned Parenthood) also have been successful in providing support to individuals with developmental disabilities in their relationships.

In FY 2009, TCDD issued a “Request for Ideas” for projects that might demonstrate or establish supports in Texas to assist individuals to form the kinds of meaningful relationships that they desire. In November of 2009, TCDD's Project Development Committee reviewed 8 project ideas and expressed interest in funding a project that would blend concepts from many of the ideas submitted. In particular, the Committee was interested in seeing:

1. Demonstrations of how service clubs and volunteer organizations can, if necessary, alter their culture and activities to support full and equal participation by individuals with developmental disabilities in a way that will promote the development of relationships based on common interests and shared values.

2. Demonstrations of how a facilitated process may assist people with developmental disabilities to identify and express relationship-related needs and preferences and to explore strategies for meeting and establishing relationships with others, so that they have the skills to develop meaningful personal relationships for themselves.
3. Demonstrations of how individuals who provide support for people with developmental disabilities can encourage and support those whom they support to develop and maintain close, respectful, long-term relationships. This may include providing policy change recommendations to agencies that are paid to provide such services.

State Plan Goal and Objective:

Goal 5: People with developmental disabilities receive quality care for mental and physical health and have access to wellness support in their communities.

Objective 4: Explore and consider funding activities to demonstrate the effectiveness of providing supports for individuals with developmental disabilities to form and maintain healthy, meaningful long-term relationships, by September 30, 2011.

Expected Outcome:

1. A model program will be established with the result that, over the first three years, at least 60 people with developmental disabilities (or their designee) will report increased satisfaction with their personal relationships after receiving individualized supports to enable them to meet others and develop relationships that they consider meaningful.
2. At least 3 organizations will implement policy and/or procedural change(s) in order to actively improve their ability to facilitate the development and maintenance of meaningful relationships for people with developmental disabilities.

Project Description:

One organization will be funded to implement activities in at least one site. If multiple applications are determined to be fundable and are of comparable quality, preference will be given to organizations expressing the will and the ability to implement project activities in more than one site, particularly if one of the chosen sites is a rural area.

The organization funded through this grant will work with other organizations to demonstrate:

1. How to provide *individualized* supports to people with developmental disabilities to assist them to determine their goals in relationships, to meet others, and to develop meaningful, healthy, long-term relationships with others.
2. How to provide training and/or technical assistance to enable organizations that provide services to people with developmental disabilities to improve how they encourage and support their clients to develop and maintain meaningful relationships.
3. How to provide training and/or technical assistance to enable service clubs and volunteer organizations to, if necessary, alter their culture and activities, to support full and equal participation by individuals with developmental disabilities in a way that will promote the development of relationships based on common interests, shared values, and respect.

Involvement by people with developmental disabilities in planning activities:

The organization implementing this project must assure that the development and implementation of all activities is driven by direct input from people with developmental disabilities. Project leadership and staff must include people who have disabilities, although people who do not have disabilities who have demonstrated technical expertise related to project activities may also hold leadership and staff roles. Organization(s) implementing this project would be encouraged to identify actual barriers to relationships that have been experienced by individuals with developmental disabilities and to vet strategies that might be used to achieve project goals by using focus groups of people with developmental disabilities, led by people with developmental disabilities, or through a similar activity. *Focus group information should be summarized to inform the development and implementation of the project, but specific personal information or personal situations described in focus groups may only be shared as group participants allow.*

Cultural Competency and Diversity:

Development and implementation of project activities must demonstrate an understanding of cultural competency. The grantee must include activities in the project workplan to identify specifically how ethnicity may influence the values, lifestyle, and goals of individual participants and how project activities may be adapted to successfully recruit and/or address specific needs and/or preferences of people who belong to minority ethnic groups.

Proposed Funding Amount:

Up to \$125,000 per year for one project related to this Executive Summary.

Proposed Duration:

Up to three years per project for all projects related to this Executive Summary.

Other Considerations: Activities conducted under this project will be very closely monitored by TCDD staff and may be discontinued at any time if they are deemed harmful or inappropriate.

1. Any project proposing to use online social networking technology will be required to explore safety issues with TCDD prior to obtaining approval for funding. In addition, TCDD might require the project to incorporate specific advice or cautions offered by organizations that are recognized for their expertise and work related to promoting safety in online behavior, such the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; organizations that advocate for the civil rights of people with developmental disabilities; and organizations that exist to prevent domestic violence and other abuses that may occur in close relationships.
2. Toolkits, websites, curriculum, videos, or other products developed with the use of TCDD funds must be reviewed and approved in writing by TCDD before being made public.
3. Upon successful completion of the project activities and achievement of stated outcomes, the grantee may apply for funds for one additional year to promote any products, make presentations, and conduct other activities as appropriate to encourage replication of the program in other regions of the state.