

**Background:**

**Higher Education Project:**

A Request for Proposals (RFP) for one “Higher Education for People with Developmental Disabilities” project was released on 12/11/09. The RFP closed on March 3, 2010, and no applications were received. Planning Coordinator Joanna Cordry solicited feedback from organizations that had been interested in applying to determine why they chose not to submit applications. They all indicated that they felt the amount of funding was not adequate for the required outcomes. The Executive Summary for this project is attached for review. The Project Development Committee will discuss the project and feedback received in order to provide additional direction to staff.

**Cultural Outreach Activities:**

In 2004, the Council approved an Executive Summary for Outreach Consultation Activities. The Project Development Committee will review this Executive Summary (attached) and provide additional direction to staff regarding this activity.

The summary describes activities that might help TCDD make sure more individuals who are African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and/or living in rural areas are involved in TCDD activities. When the Summary was approved, the Council expected staff to provide information for discussion as various activities related to the Summary were undertaken. Staff have developed an application for funds to be awarded to small organizations, as is described under the “Proposed Project Description” in the attached Summary and are now ready to assist groups to apply.

Other activities that have been implemented to advance the Council’s desire to conduct outreach include:

- Staff gather information in an ongoing effort to better understand how various different groups and communities might have different needs and preferences.
- Some staff have received training and have met with individuals and groups related to cultural diversity.
- Grants staff require grantees to make sure that their Project Advisory Committees (PAC) are diverse and to state how they will make sure they serve diverse groups of people.
- Each quarter, grants staff provide the Council a list of trainings that are conducted in Spanish.
- The Council’s Leadership and Advocacy Skills Training Request for Proposals (RFP) specifically set aside money for trainings that would target people who are African American, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American.
- The Council added four objectives to the State Plan for activities emphasizing the need to include or focus on the needs of minority communities.
- The Council approved a project to replicate the Central Texas African American Family Support Conference in another area of the state. An RFP was recently released.
- The Council approved funding of an “Inclusive Faith-based Communities Symposium.”

**Project Development Committee**

**Agenda Item 6.**

**Expected Action:**

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

**Council Meeting**

**Agenda Item 9. D.**

**Expected Action:**

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

# **Future Funding Proposal**

## **Executive Summary**

### **College Education Program Proposal**

**Issue:**

Many young adults with developmental disabilities have fewer choices for postsecondary education opportunities than do their peers who do not have developmental disabilities. Community College programs targeting the needs of people with developmental disabilities exist and provide benefits for the people participating in them. However, they are not all necessarily accessible to people who have severe disabilities and may provide only a certificate that states the individual has completed a certain number of hours or years of study but does not indicate the individual has achieved a certain level of skill or expertise. In addition, existing programs frequently are not as inclusive as one might hope, as they consist of separate classes that take place on a college or university campus, rather than arranging support for individuals with severe disabilities to attend “regular” college classes. This is similar to the way many schools serving students in grades K-12 offer separate special education classes on a public school campus.

Past efforts by the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities to address related issues include:

- Providing a three-year grant to Richardson Independent School District to develop a reproducible vocational program that provides classes at a community college for students with disabilities who are between the ages of 18-22. This program continues to operate.
- Providing stipends for individuals to attend VOCAT (Vocational: Communication, Academics, Technology) at Austin Community College. VOCAT continues to operate and offers a community college program for any adult with moderate to severe disabilities. Participants pay approximately \$8.50 per classroom hour. Courses include instruction in basic computer use, workplace communication skills, teamwork, reading, writing, and mathematics.

At the August Council meeting, the Project Development Committee reviewed and requested more information to evaluate the possibility of developing a project that would be similar to an unsolicited proposal submitted by Texas Tech University. The Texas Tech proposal was a request for funding to develop a demonstration program, the “LIFE Program,” to provide individuals with developmental disabilities with the opportunity to complete a community college certificate program successfully. According to the submitted proposal, the project would also provide referrals to other post-secondary opportunities as appropriate (i.e., vocational, life skills) and guide the development of a full program. The Committee did not approve funding for the presented program due to concerns about (a) what process would be used to select students for admission; (b) the lack of assurances that the student would obtain employment upon completing the program; and (c) the small number of students (4-6 in the first semester; 10 every year after that) who would be served.

The LIFE Program, as described by Texas Tech, would offer a 4-year certificate program for up to 10 individuals per year. All participants would be adults who have developmental disabilities and are between the ages of 18-25. The course would run concurrently with the University's Spring and Fall semesters, and would last from 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. each day. Like the other programs, students would receive instruction in reading, math, job readiness, independent life skills, conflict resolution, self-determination, leadership, and advocacy. However, unlike other programs, each student would have a comprehensive individual assessment to facilitate the development of a curriculum designed to meet his or her specific needs, and the program would take a wrap-around approach to providing education. Each student would work with a team in place to help ensure that the curriculum is appropriate, effective, and completed.

The addition of a mandatory "apprenticeship" would address most of the Committee's concerns. This would require the students who are participating to have a sponsoring business (or other potential employer or entity) commit to assisting the individual obtain on-the-job training or experience in their field of study. The sponsor would also help the student to obtain an appropriate job when they have completed their program. The student's team will assume the majority of the responsibility for ensuring that appropriate supports exist and are available. However, the sponsoring individual/organization would commit to being involved in the educational planning process; to providing real-world job experience and mentoring; and to assisting the individual to find transportation.

**Corresponding State Plan Goal and Objective:**

State Plan Goal 3: Students with developmental disabilities have educational opportunities and outcomes similar to those of their peers without developmental disabilities.

Objective 3: Collaborate with other organizations and agencies to promote opportunities for students with developmental disabilities to obtain post-secondary education by September 30, 2011.

**Expected Outcome(s):**

1. TCDD will create and demonstrate the benefits of a junior college certificate program that provides individuals with developmental disabilities with the individualized education and experience they need to meet their educational/employment goals.
2. At least five entities per year will participate in partnerships or coalitions to assist in the development and implementation of the college certificate program.
3. Once the junior college certificate program is implemented, at least 10-15 individuals per year will reach their educational goals through attendance in the program.
4. At least 5 other academic institutions will receive information to encourage replication. The information may be packaged as a final report, "How To" manual, or other type of descriptive and instructional material that includes case studies or profiles of individual students to illustrate the outcomes achieved and the lessons learned.
5. At least one post-secondary institution will fully support the developed program for at least 5 years after TCDD funding ends.

6. At least 80% of students attending the program for two or more years will move into jobs related to their desired careers within 6 months of completing the program.

Notes on Possible Informal Outcomes:

1. Any new books and materials developed could be disseminated to other Universities that are trying to include more students with severe disabilities in their student population.
2. Collaboration with instructors from other disciplines, representatives from the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DARS), and businesses or other community entities likely will result in a wide range of people altering their expectations of what students with severe disabilities can and do achieve.

**Project Description:**

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, in keeping with its mission statement, could promote a more inclusive model of post-secondary education by developing a program that provides supports for students with severe disabilities to succeed in college programs that were originally designed for college students without disabilities. Students would enroll in a program designed to help them improve their academic skills (studying language, math, science, and/or liberal arts) and/or to learn the skills that would enable them to succeed in a chosen career path. Merging this with an apprenticeship model, in which a business or other qualified entity “sponsors” a student and is active throughout their educational process, would increase the probability of program completion and successful employment upon graduation.

Acceptance into the program would depend upon the individual having a sponsor. This would demonstrate community support for the student to reach his or her goal(s) and increase the chances of the program becoming sustainable. In addition, if the student wishes to complete a specific certification program – either an academic program or an existing career program (such as welding, animal caretaking, carpentry, etc.) – they must be able to obtain admission to that program within the first year. Students would participate in a “wrap-around” process to ensure that they receive whatever specific supports they might need to enable them to complete their program. These might include, but would not be limited to, supports that address academic, financial, social, or emotional needs of the student as well as any identified needs related to living independently and practicing self-determination. The wrap-around process would include the active participation of the student, a facilitator, a representative from the program in which the student is enrolled, the sponsor, and whomever else the student selects. The majority of the coursework would be in “regular” classes. In most cases, it is expected that the program would lead to employment by the sponsor. However, if the sponsor is unable to do this or if the individual’s employment goals have changed, the student’s wrap-around team would assist the participant to develop a resume that would include those “real world” job experiences provided by the sponsor. In this case, the school would conduct job placement efforts for the student, with support as needed and as available from the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS).

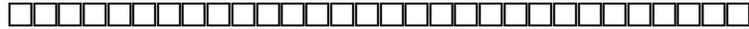
Data will be kept throughout the program and will be included in a final report and/or “How To” manual that will enable other colleges to replicate the program.

**Proposed Funding Amount:**

Up to \$75,000 per year for up to 5 years for one project. This amount assumes the grantee will obtain a significant level of participation in project activities from partners. A minimum of 25% match funds is required except of projects in federally designated poverty areas.

**Proposed Project Duration:**

Up to 5 years.



**Date Summary Proposed: 11/2/2006**  
**Council/Committee Discussion:**

**Approved: (yes/no/yes with considerations)**

# **Future Funding Proposal**

## **Executive Summary**

### **Outreach Consultation Activities**

**Issue:**

Council membership and TCDD grant projects have had disproportionately low representation and participation by people of color and people living in rural areas. The Project Development Committee has recognized the need to increase and promote outreach in order to hear from people with more diverse backgrounds, and the Committee is reviewing information from organizations that can provide training to increase the understanding and awareness of Council members and staff regarding the diversity that exists in Texas. These activities will develop in Council members and staff a better grasp of “what we know we don’t know,” which is an important starting point. In addition, these activities should help Council members and staff to gain a basic level of knowledge regarding specific cultural issues that might affect how projects are developed and implemented. However, a one-time training most likely will be insufficient to create lasting change.

To gain legitimacy in some communities or cultures, the Council must ensure that activities are responsive to the needs, preferences, values, and communication styles that are common in targeted cultures. This would most likely require ongoing consultation with individuals and/or organizations that can provide input into specific situations. It is also necessary, in order to reach and be well received in some communities or groups, to create partnerships with individuals and/or organizations that are already recognized and trusted within that community and that can introduce the Council and its activities to members of that community.

Council staff have spoken with representatives from organizations that frequently serve as “gatekeepers” to minority communities. These representatives have agreed that creating formal partnerships would be the most effective approach to increasing the diversity of individuals who apply to be on the Council and who provide input into and participate in Council activities, grants, advocacy training programs, and review panels. However, for an organization to conduct outreach and provide consultation to the Council on an ongoing basis would require some Council financial support.

**Related to State Plan Goal 13:**

Reduce barriers and create community-based systems of support and services that increase community participation, integration, and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities.

**Related to Long Range Goal 8:**

Implement the Council’s goals and objectives in accordance with the Mission Statement and the Guiding Principles.

Outreach Consultation

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**Strategy:**

*Improve the ability of Council staff and Council members to meet the needs of a very diverse state by:*

- Pursuing Spanish language training for at least one staff member in grants and one in public policy (in progress);
- Investigating the feasibility of providing discrimination awareness training for the full Council and staff (see Outreach Training Activities);
- *Investigating the diversity of cultures and needs in Texas and developing a list of identified unmet needs; and*
- *Developing resources and contacts to improve outreach to under-represented groups of people*

**Proposed Project Description:**

The Council would contract with or provide a grant to organizations that are able to connect with and increase effective representation in Council activities by individuals who are African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, and/or living in rural areas. Each organization receiving funds would be responsible to coordinate outreach efforts to one of these populations and would provide the Council with:

- Coordination of quarterly stakeholders meetings that focus on cultural values, beliefs, and preferences as they relate to the lives of people with disabilities, the services and supports they receive, and their unmet needs;
- Written summaries of the stakeholder meetings and recommendations to the Council and Council staff;
- Provision of input as requested on Requests for Proposals, materials to be distributed by the Council, the development of the State Plan, and grantee activities;
- Attendance and/or presentation at Council meetings as requested; and
- Assistance with outreach for specific projects, as requested by Council staff.

**Proposed Project Outcome(s):**

The Council will develop and incorporate activities to increase involvement in Council related activities from individuals who more accurately reflect the diversity that exists in Texas.

**Proposed Measure of Success:**

TCDD will better identify and meet the needs of Texans with disabilities, and the diversity of people who participate in TCDD activities will more accurately reflect the diversity of the state.

**Proposed Funding Amount:**

Funding estimates are at best estimates only at this time until the Committee has further discussion about specific activities and deliverables desired. From current information, estimates are that \$50,000 - \$100,000 per organization for up to five organizations might be required, for up to two years total for all project activities. ***Grantees will meet clearly defined outreach goals and outcomes*** developed with TCDD staff.

Outreach Consultation

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