

**Background:**

TCDD has been invited to join an advocacy coalition, *Texas Forward*, which focuses on budget and revenue issues impacting state-funded services and supports. TCDD has not taken a position on these specific topics recently. Staff will share information about the coalition and its principles. Additional information is provided in meeting materials.

**Public Policy Committee**

**Agenda Item 6. D.**

**Expected Action:**

The Committee will receive an update regarding the Texas revenue coalition and provide guidance as needed. The Committee may also recommend a Council position on state revenue issues related to participating as a member of *Texas Forward*.

**Council**

**Agenda Item 8. B.**

**Expected Action:**

The Council will review any recommendation from the Public Policy Committee concerning state revenue issues related to participation as a member of *Texas Forward* and determine final action.

## ***Texas Forward***

*Texas Forward* is a single-issue advocacy coalition focused on state revenue and budgeting issues. The coalition currently includes 21 groups, organizations or coalitions who endorse the coalition's principles. [www.TXForward.org](http://www.TXForward.org)

### ***Texas Forward Principles***

1. A truly balanced budget funds today's needed public services and prepares Texas for future demands caused by changing demographics, technology, and economic competition.
2. A truly balanced budget is supported by revenue that is raised equitably from families of different income levels and businesses in different sectors.
3. A truly balanced budget relies on revenue generated from sources that will grow along with the growth in need for public services.
4. A truly balanced budget does not conceal the true need for more state resources by moving insufficient money among under-funded programs or shifting the cost of public services off the state budget.
5. A truly balanced budget is developed in an open and transparent process.

### **Current Members**

Center for Public Policy Priorities  
Christian Life Commission Baptist General  
Convention of Texas  
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities  
Gray Panthers  
Intercultural Development Research Association  
(IDRA)  
La Fe Policy Research and Education Center  
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational  
Fund  
National Association of Social Workers - Texas  
Chapter  
Prevent Child Abuse Texas

San Antonio Nonprofit Council  
Texans Care for Children  
Texans Together Education Fund  
Texas AFL-CIO  
Texas AFT  
Texas Association of School Boards  
Texas Criminal Justice Coalition  
Texas Impact  
Texas League of Conservation Voters Education  
Fund  
Texas State Employees Union, Communication  
Workers of America local 6186, AFL-CIO  
Texas State Teacher's Association (TSTA)  
Winners Circle Peer Support Network of Texas

### **Coalition Structure**

#### *Supporters*

Any individual, group, or organization can be a **Supporter** of the *Texas Forward* regardless of affiliation or IRS tax status. Supporters are not required to endorse the *Texas Forward's* principles but are invited to join the general coalition listserv. Supporters do not have voting privileges within the coalition and may not act as ambassadors or speak on behalf of the coalition.

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## *Members*

**Members** of *Texas Forward* are groups, organizations or coalitions who endorse *Texas Forward's* principles. By endorsing the principles, **Members** agree to be publicly associated with the coalition and can:

- Participate in open coalition meetings (quarterly)
- Participate in decision-making and voting (one vote per organization)
- Subscribe to the general *Texas Forward* listserv
- Participate in member-only discussion forums

Additionally, coalition **Members** may be asked to participate in the following activities according to their organizational capacity:

- Educate members about the work of the coalition through e-mail alerts or other communication
- Host a presentation about *Texas Forward*
- Participate in legislative visits
- Conduct strategic outreach and membership recruitment on behalf of the coalition
- Speak on behalf of and act as an ambassador for the coalition at media and other public events

## *Steering Committee*

The **Steering Committee** is comprised of coalition members and is tasked with ensuring that the coalition moves forward with its objectives and agenda. In addition to the responsibilities of all members, the **Steering Committee**:

- Provides thought leadership for coalition initiatives and will put forth specific legislative ideas based on the coalition's adopted principles and legislative agenda.
- With input from the general membership, makes the high-level, strategic coalition decisions
- Works with staff member to make day-to-day decisions necessary for carrying the coalition forward
- Acts as the face and the first point of contact to the coalition for media and the general public
- Commits to providing support to the coalition such as: staff time; meeting space; printing; e-communications; teleconference hosting; etc.
- Meets in person on a monthly basis

Currently the Steering Committee is comprised of an ad hoc group of organizations who expressed interest in getting the coalition up and running.

## *Staff*

Currently *Texas Forward* receives staff support from the Center for Public Policy Priorities. The staff member is responsible for convening the steering committee, providing logistical and administrative support for the coalition at-large, and communicating with national partners that work on state revenue issues.

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## Decision-Making Process

Recognizing the importance of developing an inclusive and representative collective body, the *Texas Forward* will make its best effort solicit input from supporters and members in order to make strategic decisions about legislative and organizing initiatives.

To the extent that it is possible, large-scale decisions will be discussed by participants at open quarterly meetings of the coalition. Members and supporters will be given an opportunity to discuss and provide input into such decisions. All coalition members (i.e. those organizations who have endorsed the coalition's principles) will be allowed one vote to affect the outcome of the decision. The passage or failure of a proposal will be determined by a two-thirds majority *of those who choose to vote* (e.g. If 18 out of 20 members vote, at least 12 must vote the same way).

Because *Texas Forward* strives to be a statewide coalition, the coalition will work to accommodate those who cannot physically be in the room by providing teleconference or webinar capabilities *and* an ability to submit votes by email. Specific instructions on how to vote via these avenues will be provided with each decision item.

Inevitably there will be decisions items that will need to be addressed by the coalition Steering Committee, such those that are time sensitive or which concern the everyday workings of the coalition. However, the goal will always be to solicit and include the will of the coalition in all decision-making processes where appropriate.