

Background:

TCDD has provided funds for the past six biennia (twelve years) to support travel expenses of individuals with disabilities and/or family members who serve on state level advisory committees when those individuals do not have other organization sponsorship. TCDD has approved funds for agency advisory committees that focus primarily on disability issues or on committees that focus on broader issues where the inclusion of people with disabilities and/or family members will bring disability issues to the discussion of the committee. TCDD has required that these advisory committees are established by statute; members are approved by the agency’s governing board, or approval of the agency chief when the agency does not have a board; and has provided funds only when the sponsor agency does not have legislative authorization to reimburse travel of public members of that advisory body. TCDD has worked with agencies to request approval for travel reimbursement where appropriate. Given the challenging budget constraints facing agencies prior to the recent Legislative Session, Council Chair Coleman-Beattie has approved funds for this activity for the 2012-2013 biennium so that agencies could focus their efforts on more important aspects of the budget discussions.

Additional information about the advisory committees for which TCDD funding support has been provided during the FY 2010-2011 is included in meeting materials.

Council

Agenda Item 12. E.

Expected Action:

The Council will review information and may provide guidance to staff as appropriate.

Financial Support of Advisory Committees

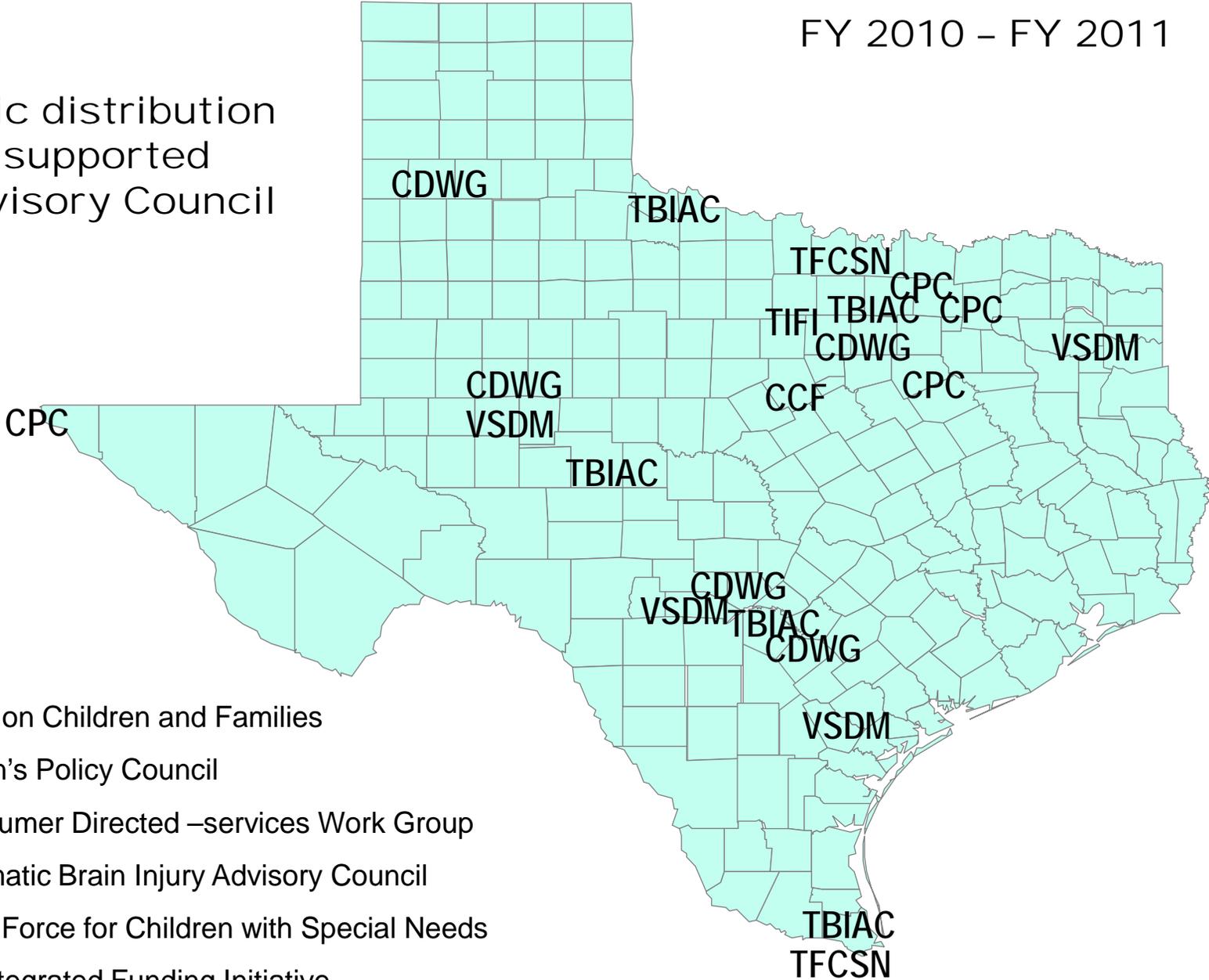
From **August 2009** to **May 2011**, the Council has expensed approximately **\$30,822** in financial support travel expenses for public members of various advisory committees. These funds support travel expenses of individuals with disabilities and/or family members who serve on state level advisory committees when those individuals do not have other organization sponsorship.

Funds were provided to 21 individuals who serve on the following committees:

- Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Committee
- Children's Policy Council
- Texas Integrated Funding Initiative
- Consumer Directed Services Workgroup
- Council on Children and Families
- Task Force for Children with Special Needs
- HB 1454 Supported Decision-making Pilot Advisory Committee

FY 2010 – FY 2011

Geographic distribution of TCDD – supported Public Advisory Council members



- CCF – Council on Children and Families
- CPC – Children’s Policy Council
- CDWG – Consumer Directed –services Work Group
- TBIAC – Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council
- TFCSN – Task Force for Children with Special Needs
- TIFI – Texas Integrated Funding Initiative
- VSDM – Volunteer Supported Decision Making Pilot



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Brenda Coleman-Beattie, Chair
Mary Durham, Vice Chair
Roger A. Webb, Executive Director

July 28, 2010

Tom Suehs, Executive Commissioner
Texas Health and Human Services Commission
4900 North Lamar
Austin, Texas 78751

Dear Commissioner Suehs:

On behalf of the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD), I want to thank you for your continued commitment regarding the importance of obtaining input from individuals with disabilities and their families on public policy decisions. Since my last correspondence, further discussion and consideration has been given to the TCDD practice of reimbursing public members for their travel costs to participate as members of various advisory bodies that provide input to the Commission. In accordance with TCDD policy, Council Chair Brenda Coleman-Beattie has authorized continued TCDD funding for these travel costs through FY 2012-2013. She will advise the TCDD Executive Committee and Council of that decision at our upcoming meetings in early August.

TCDD is well aware that the state's fiscal outlook has changed considerably over the last few months. In recognition of the current fiscal challenges and the anticipated impact on services for people with disabilities, TCDD believes it is imperative that advocacy by and for people with disabilities is supported at this time. Further, as we continue to work with HHSC staff that provide coordination for these advisory bodies, we realize that some of the information necessary to support an appropriations request at this time may not be readily available. Therefore, we ask that HHSC defer the request for legislative authority for these travel expenses until at least the following session.

TCDD previously approved funding to support travel costs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members on various advisory bodies to HHSC for the current biennium (FY 2010-11). Although my previous correspondence was not intended to suggest that TCDD has made any decision concerning funding of this activity beyond that time, we understand that HHSC may have understood that to be the intent. Therefore, Council Chair Coleman-Beattie has authorized TCDD funding to continue for these travel costs for the FY 2012-13 biennium, within available resources. During the interim period (i.e., the next two years), TCDD will work with HHSC staff and the administrative agent for these funds to more fully and accurately ascertain the cost for each of the advisory bodies to support the development of information that will facilitate our prospective discussions about this matter.

Again, thanks for your commitment and that of HHSC staff regarding the importance of obtaining input from individuals with disabilities and their families on public policy decisions. The Council looks forward to continuing its work with HHSC on this matter and welcomes your thoughts, suggestions, or questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Roger Webb", written in a cursive style.

Roger A. Webb
Executive Director

copy: Brenda Coleman-Beattie, Chair
Terry Beattie, HHSC
Larry Swift, HHSC
Bettie Beckworth, HHSC