

Background:

Planning Coordinator Joanna Cordry will review the progress made on the State Plan Goals and Objectives and facilitate a discussion to prioritize and plan specific activities to be taken in the next 3-6 months. The discussion will include possible activities that would build on the successes of the Council’s Outreach and Development Projects; and how the Council will select the measures that will be used to show progress made on the Council’s Education Goal. The State Plan Goals and Objectives can be found behind this Tab. You may also wish to review the following material to better prepare for the discussion:

- Continuation Grant Awards (Tab 5)
- Consideration of New Grant Awards (Tab 6)
- Grants and Project Reports (Tab 9)
- Future Funding Priorities (Tab 12)
- Public Input to the Council (Tab 13)
- Public Policy Issues (Tab 14)
- Public Information Report (Tab 15)

Also behind this Tab are Executive Summaries for possible future Grant Projects. These will be discussed by the Project Development Committee and may be recommended for consideration by Council.

Project Development Committee

Agenda Item 7.

Expected Action:

The Project Development Committee will discuss specific activities to be taken in the next 3-6 months to implement the State Plan. The Committee may recommend funding activities to the Council for consideration.

Public Policy Committee

Agenda Item 10.

Expected Action:

The Public Policy Committee will discuss specific activities to be taken in the next 3-6 months to implement the State Plan. The Committee may recommend activities to the Council for consideration.

Council

Agenda Item 9.

Expected Action:

The Council will consider recommendations from the Project Development and Public Policy Committees and determine appropriate action.

Future Funding Proposal

Executive Summary

Proposed Transportation Project

Issue:

Texans with developmental disabilities and their families continue to experience barriers to full inclusion in their communities that are due to insufficient access to the transportation they need to participate. Among other problems, public transit frequently is too limited in availability, does not meet the needs of individuals, and/or is difficult to navigate.

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities' (TCDD) Five Year State Plan places a high priority on improving transportation for Texans with disabilities. TCDD has demonstrated that establishing and building the capacity of local transportation alliances that include people with developmental disabilities and their allies is an effective and sustainable method to create systems change in transportation systems in both urban and rural areas in Texas.

TCDD's previous project coordinated and assisted with community recruitment, training, and organizing, and provided the initial funding and technical assistance to facilitate the self-sufficiency of each alliance. In addition, the project linked the alliances together and developed commitments from a wide range of partners who might positively influence transportation planning at the state level. Last, but not least, the project included a targeted public awareness component. The project was able to develop active alliances that enabled people with disabilities to influence transportation planning in San Antonio, Fort Worth, East Texas, Houston, and El Paso. Some of these alliances continue to be active and have been able to secure additional funding to support ongoing work.

State Plan Goal and Objective:

Goal 4: In at least one Health and Human Service (HHS) region, increase the percent of people with developmental disabilities surveyed who report they have access to the transportation they need to participate in their community in the manner they wish, by 9/30/2016.

***Objective 1:** Partner with disability advocacy groups, public transportation advocacy groups, and/or leadership and advocacy training programs to increase the number of individuals with disabilities who serve on transportation planning entities and are active in transportation planning by 9/30/2015.*

***Objective 2:** Build the capacity of at least four local organizations in that Region to provide transportation training to people with developmental disabilities by 9/30/2016.*

Proposed Project Description:

TCDD intends to fund up to 2 projects to address transportation issues and include the following activities:

- Identify a single HHSC region that demonstrates a high need for transportation planning (to be defined by the potential grantee);
- Develop new transportation alliances that are actively working on transportation issues and demonstrating positive results in at least 60% of the counties in that region;
- Train, mentor, and/or provide other supports to ensure that all alliances include people with disabilities;
- Ensure that local alliances receive technical assistance and/or training as is needed;
- Pursue non-traditional partnerships and coordinate outreach activities to recruit individuals to be involved in project activities and local alliances;
- Coordinate with other transportation alliances/networks, advocates, and/or other TCDD grantees to inform advocacy work, share information, and maximize available resources when possible;
- Implement marketing and public awareness activities to increase understanding of transportation issues of people with developmental disabilities;
- Train local organizations to provide effective travel training to individuals with developmental disabilities; and
- Develop and coordinate an evaluation plan that will yield the necessary data for TCDD.

Expected Grant Outcome(s):

There will be an increase in the percent of people with developmental disabilities living in a single Health and Human Services Commission Region who report they have access to the transportation they need to participate in their community.

Proposed Measures of Success:

The grantee must report the following data by September 15, 2016:

- Report once during the grant on the percent of people with developmental disabilities living or working in the selected region who report they have access to the transportation they need to participate in their community *prior to implementation of project activities*.
- Report once during the grant on the percent of people with developmental disabilities living or working in the selected region who report they have access to the transportation they need to participate in their community *after 3 years of implementation of project activities*.
- Report quarterly on the total dollars leveraged through project activities, in any region.
- Report quarterly on number of individuals with disabilities who attain membership on transportation planning entities and are active in transportation planning within the selected region.
- Report quarterly on number of local organizations that begin to provide travel training to individuals with developmental disabilities; and

- Report quarterly on number of individuals with disabilities receiving travel training from local organizations as a result of this grant.

Proposed Funding Amount:

Up to \$400,000 per year for up to five years, for up to two projects.

Proposed Amount of Required Match:

Matching funds of at least 25% of the total project costs are required except for activities conducted in designated poverty areas of the state.

Proposed Duration:

Up to five years.

Other Considerations:

None.

Future Funding Proposal

Executive Summary

Proposed Project: Project SEARCH

Issue:

Texans with developmental disabilities continue to experience higher unemployment rates than Texans who do not have disabilities. Parents of youth who have developmental disabilities also report that the transition from high school to a career is a particularly difficult, involved, and confusing process. Project SEARCH, a business-led school-to-work transition model, has demonstrated success in developing internships for students with developmental disabilities that lead to integrated employment that pays the prevailing wage for a given job. Since it started in Cincinnati in 1996, Project SEARCH has approved over 150 programs in 42 states and 4 countries. Sites in various stages of implementation are currently located in Austin, El Paso, and Fort Worth; individuals and businesses in other areas have indicated a strong interest in establishing more approved sites.

The Project SEARCH model requires a partnership between multiple state agencies (representing education, vocational rehabilitation, the long-term support agency, and a community rehabilitation provider) as well as businesses and families. The Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), in addition to participating at the local level in the sites, has actively supported the development of Project SEARCH sites across Texas for over a year. DARS staff maintains contact with the Project SEARCH national office and provides technical assistance to Texas businesses. Through this effort, DARS can gather information about emerging barriers and identify possible opportunities for sites to share resources and/or coordinate activities. However, as the number of sites expands, it will be difficult for DARS to continue in this role. It may also be preferable for the agency/organization that supports and coordinates work between all the sites not be one of the agencies involved in project implementation.

Developmental Disabilities Councils have played key roles in supporting the successful initiation and/or growth of Project SEARCH in multiple states. The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities could also facilitate the expansion and the evaluation of Project SEARCH in Texas by providing funding to an organization to:

- facilitate the development of new sites across the state;
- coordinate activities of existing sites and collaborate with DARS to ensure that all available resources are used effectively and efficiently;
- evaluate the factors that influence the degree of success of any specific program and share this information broadly;
- explore, with the approval and assistance of the Project SEARCH national office, adapted models through which a wider range of businesses might successfully implement Project SEARCH; and

- gather information about barriers and work with the appropriate agency or organization to remove these barriers.

TCDD and DARS staff met to discuss what types of activities might be helpful. The project outlined below draws on those discussions and supports collaboration between DARS, the Project SEARCH national office, and Project SEARCH sites (existing and future) in Texas to facilitate the establishment of as many successful, sustainable Project SEARCH sites in Texas as possible. The grantee would serve in a supportive role, ensuring that each business has “ownership” of their site, and would agree not to use the Project SEARCH model or brand in any way that is not fully supported by the Project SEARCH national office. Additionally, the selected grantee would not be a partner involved in implementing a specific Project SEARCH site and nor could the grantee be a state agency.

State Plan Goal and Objective:

Goal 2: Establish at least two programs that assist Texans with developmental disabilities to gain competitive employment and/or to increase their personal income and assets, and that continue to operate after the completion of a maximum of 3-5 years of TCDD funding, by 9/30/2016.

Objective 3: Partner with other organizations to expand and evaluate the impact of Project SEARCH in Texas, by 9/30/2016.

Proposed Project Description:

TCDD intends to fund one (1) project to expand and evaluate the impact of Project SEARCH in Texas by implementing the following activities:

- Support coordination between the Project SEARCH national office, Project SEARCH sites in Texas, DARS, and other state agencies that become involved.
- Identify barriers that sites and/or other partners encounter (for example, ensuring that families have access to benefits counseling as a part of their participating in Project SEARCH) and seek to resolve those barriers in a collaborative manner with participating agencies.
- Conduct outreach/marketing activities to create additional interest in Project SEARCH sites across Texas.
- Provide technical assistance to organizations interested in establishing Project SEARCH sites in Texas.
- With the approval of and guidance from the Project SEARCH national office, explore adaptation and/or expansion of the model to other types of business and/or to non-students.
- Support an annual site visit from the Project Search national office or their approved national TA provider.
- Prepare a final evaluation for TCDD as outlined below.

Expected Grant Outcome(s):

1. At least 10 new sites in Texas will be approved by Project Search by the end of year 4.

2. A final evaluation report will be provided to TCDD that includes information regarding:
 - Savings achieved by businesses implementing Project SEARCH;
 - The employment outcomes of the students who participated in Project SEARCH, analyzed by type of disability, socio-economic background, and ethnicity; and
 - Information about barriers encountered.

Proposed Measures of Success:

- The grantee will report the number of Project SEARCH sites established, and the number of students who obtain jobs at each site.
- Staff from participating sites, DARS, the Project SEARCH national office, and others participating in the collaborative effort will be surveyed to determine grantee effectiveness.

Proposed Funding Amount:

Up to \$175,000 per year for up to five years, for one project.

Proposed Amount of Required Match:

Matching funds of at least 25% of the total project costs are required except for activities conducted in designated poverty areas of the state.

Proposed Duration:

Up to five years.

Other Considerations:

None.