

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Cecelia Hartley](#)
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Wednesday, November 05, 2014 4:29:02 PM

-----Original Message-----

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Wednesday, November 05, 2014 2:28 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Wednesday, November 5, 2014 - 14:27

Agency: TEXAS COUNCIL PURCHASING PEOPLE DISABILITIES TCPD

First Name: David

Last Name: Dodson

Title: President, EXPANCO, INC.

Organization you are affiliated with: EXPANCO INC as President; The Arc of Greater Tarrant County as Board Treasurer; TIBH as Advisory Director

Email: david.dodson@expanco.com

City: Fort Worth

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed:

Dear Sunset Commission Members:

EXPANCO, Inc. is a successful, fully integrated, Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) entering its 35th Year of operations. While the majority of the work done by EXPANCO's Special Workers is for commercial customers, a large percentage of its contracts have been generated through the Works Wonder State Use Program (WW Program). Over the past 35 years, EXPANCO has been very pleased with the support and direction given by the Texas Council on Purchasing from People with Disabilities (The Council).

As President of EXPANCO and as an Advisory Director of TIBH, I want to strongly urge the Sunset Commission Members to listen to the response of The Council with respect to the Sunset Advisory Commission's Staff Report. Like The Council, EXPANCO does not agree with the Staff Report that recommends eliminating The Council and moving the oversight of the WW Program under the Office of the Comptroller of Public Account (OCPA).

Below I will mention some concerns should these Staff recommendations take effect. I also look forward to personally meeting you next week at the open session on November 13, 2014 to more fully explaining my reasons for disagreeing with the Staff Report and its recommendations.

But I would like to first give you a brief description of EXPANCO and the services it provides to the Fort Worth community. Please stop by any time you are in the Fort Worth area to visit our facilities to see personally the quality of services and work that is available to our Special Workers every day.

Don't be influenced by all the negative horror stories that the "so called" advocates like to espouse about "Sheltered Workshops". While EXPANCO does not like to be called by that type of description, primarily due to the negativity of the term, it does not hide behind any veil. EXPANCO is very open about the services and opportunities that it allows for the very dedicated disabled workers that CHOOSE to participate.

"EXPANCO's mission is to provide services and opportunities for individuals with disabilities to help them maximize their independence, earnings potential and appropriate social skills." It goes about this mission with a very dedicated staff and a great group of workers.

EXPANCO employees an average of 133 severely disabled workers every day at its two locations in south Fort Worth. The vast majority of these Special Workers has a productivity capacity of well below 50%. The jobs provided are unique, brisk and very engaging. There is very little down time as the work provided represents steady and challenging tasks on a daily basis. Some of EXPANCO's commercial customers include Lockheed Martin, International Paper, Carris Reels, Cantex Manufacturing, Harris Packaging, several smaller local entities, as well as several state agencies.

EXPANCO's Secure Document Destruction facility employs an additional 9 severely disabled workers. This unit now has eight trucks running daily within a two hour radius of DFW. Some of its customers include the IRS, the Social Security Admin, all DFW Wells Fargo Banks, and most HHSC state agencies in the DFW vicinity.

EXPANCO prides itself for the opportunities that it creates for this population of incredible workers. And yes, one of the key components to providing these opportunities is the ability to pay wages at a commensurate or piece rate. If EXPANCO ever lost the ability to pay wages at sub-minimum wages, based on someone's productivity, then it would cease to exist. It is worth pointing out that EXPANCO's "minimum" wages on all jobs are based off of the Prevailing Wage Rates in this area. These Prevailing Wages start at \$11 per hour and up.

As well as sheltered employment, EXPANCO also has a very aggressive outplacement unit called EXPANCO Employment Connection. In the past two months alone this unit has found community jobs for over 51 disabled individuals here in the DFW area.

I wanted to give you a sense of EXPANCO's operations because it is important to remind you of a couple of key components of our successful operations that continues to be attacked by the "So Called" disability advocates lobby. These advocates, and the positions they promote, all sound wonderful. These include statements like..... every disabled worker should have a job in an integrated setting.....and everyone deserves a livable wage and should be paid at least minimum wage. They always say that they are in favor of Client Choice, but this attitude never matches up with the policies that they promote.

On such organization here in Texas, Employment First, is a very good example of this type of lobby. Their recent report to the state, as part of S. B. 216 recommends that all workers on state contracts should be paid at least minimum wages by fiscal year 2016. This would be a huge mistake. Over 90% of our special workers have less than a 50% productivity capacity on most jobs. If sub-minimum wage options were taken away, then EXPANCO could not compete with commercial companies. Prices to our customers would have to be raised to and most, if not all, of these jobs would soon go away.

If opportunities and facilities like EXPANCO were to cease, then where would all these special workers end up? They would be displaced to nonproductive day habilitation facilities or back to their homes. So much for Client Choice.

EXPANCO truly is an "Integrated" organization that not only says it stands for Client Choice, but it practices this every day. One of our mottos over the years has become "Thank God it's Monday!" Thank God that our clients have a choice that they choose, as opposed to some well-intentioned group, who thinks they can choose for them.

To say that the OCPA has greater expertise and experience in understand the complexities of The WW Program is not true. The Council members bring a wide array of backgrounds in both the purchasing and the disability community. The Council, with both the

purchasing and the programmatic backgrounds, is the best entity to oversee the program. If The Council were to go away, I believe that EXPANCO and other CRPs would lose a valued voice in the way business through the WW Program is conducted.

CRPs are concerned that the focus of the WW Program would lose a valued resource of The Council. Policies and contracts would be put in place under the management of the OCPA that would be at risk to not take into account the unique aspects of our workers. This could lead to a material erosion of opportunities for our Special Workers. I don't want to see that happen.

If it ain't broke then don't fix it. The Council has a great track record administering the WW Program over the past 35 years. I feel like the Staff's point that the sheer number of jobs has not grown is a bad barometer. CRPs and other supported employment operations have done better at placing disabled workers into community jobs. A better barometer for measurement is the increase in average hourly wages paid to these workers. These wages have gone up dramatically.

Again, myself, EXPANCO, other CRPs and other interested individuals and parents urge you to listen to The Council's responses to this Staff Report and weigh the consequence.

Thank you for listening and please do stop by for a visit to EXPANCO anytime you are coming up I-35 toward Fort Worth. We are located about 2 miles east of the intersection of I-35 and I-20 in Fort Worth. I look forward to meeting you next week.

Sincerely,

David Dodson
President
EXPANCO, Inc.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency: I do agree with the Staff Report to study the cost to the State on continuing to administer the WW Program as outlined by The Council's response.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree