

# TEXAS COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

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## Council at a Glance

To receive federal funding through the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, states must establish and maintain a state council for developmental disabilities. In Texas, the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD) serves in this role. The federal government funds TCDD — about \$5 million annually — to engage in advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change activities that promote self-determination for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

TCDD's mission is to create change so that all people with developmental disabilities are fully included in their communities and exercise control over their own lives. Although TCDD does not provide any direct services, it carries out the following key activities to achieve its mission.

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*TCDD does not track outcomes of its grant-funded projects.*

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- Developing Texas' federally approved state plan that guides TCDD's advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change activities.
- Awarding and monitoring grants to state agencies, universities, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit businesses for projects that meet the TCDD State Plan goals.
- Providing input and recommendations to state agencies and legislators about ways to improve the services available to people with developmental disabilities.

The 27-member council governs TCDD and its 14 staff. The federal Act allows the State to designate an agency to provide administrative support to TCDD, but it cannot be an agency that directly provides or pays for services to people with developmental disabilities. As a result, TCDD is administratively attached to the Texas Education Agency.

## Summary

Beginning in the 1960s, the federal government and, soon thereafter, state governments recognized that people with disabilities faced exclusion from many areas of public and private life because services at that time were predominantly oriented towards institutionalization. The federal government established state councils for developmental disabilities to explore a broader range of services

beyond institutionalization, and to provide people with disabilities and their families access to the decision-making process on these services. Today, Texas, like every U.S. state and territory, has a state council for developmental disabilities.

While Texas continues to need a state council for developmental disabilities to receive certain federal funds, the Sunset Commission found TCDD needs to set clear expectations for and better track the long-term outcomes of its grant-funded projects after grant funding ends. Without this information, whether grants have been effective and the overall impact of TCDD's work is unclear. The following material summarizes the Sunset Commission's recommendations on TCDD.

## Issue and Recommendations

### *Issue 1*

#### **The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities Should Be Continued, but Should Better Track the Outcomes of Its \$4 Million Grant Program.**

Texas needs a state council on developmental disabilities to continue to receive federal funds to identify the most pressing needs of Texans with developmental disabilities and advance public policy and systems change to allow them to gain more control over their lives. TCDD's primary activity is awarding grants for projects intended to foster innovation in services provided to people with developmental disabilities and expand state capacity within these services. However, TCDD does not set clear expectations for or track the sustainability and ongoing impact of grant projects designed to continue beyond the funding period.

## Recommendations

### *Change in Statute*

#### **1.1 Continue the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities for 12 years.**

### *Management Action – Nonstatutory*

#### **1.2 Direct TCDD to track the five-year outcomes of grant projects designed to continue beyond the TCDD funding period and compare actual outcomes to intended outcomes.**

Under this recommendation, TCDD should determine the desired outcomes for each funded grant project, including any outcomes beyond the end of grant funding, and track these outcomes five years after project completion. TCDD could require grantees to submit data to TCDD after grant funding has ended as part of the grant contract. For grant projects intended to continue, TCDD should compile information on their status and annually report this information.

## Fiscal Implication Summary

These recommendations would not have a fiscal impact to the State.