



# Interagency Coordinating Group

## 2024 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

PREPARED BY

**The Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG)**

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SUBMITTED TO

**Office of the Lieutenant Governor**

**Office of the Speaker of the House**

**House Committee on Public Health**

**Senate Health and Human Services Committee**

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# I. Executive Summary

## Background

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In 2009 through House Bill (H.B.) 492, 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature, Regular Session, Texas became the first state in the country to pass legislation specifically to improve the relationship between the state government and faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs) seeking to partner with the state to help meet health and human service needs. Subsequent legislation passed in the 82nd Legislature, Regular Session, expanded this initiative through House Bill (H.B.) 1965 by adding additional state agencies in its charge. Both Acts directed the chief administrative officer of the named state agencies to appoint, in consultation with the Governor, a faith and community liaison in each agency. These liaisons serve on the Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG) chaired by the CEO of the State Commission on National and Community Service (OneStar), also a named member of the ICG.

The first bill, H.B. 492, directed agency liaisons to work within their respective agencies to:

- identify and remove unnecessary barriers to partnerships between the state agency the liaison represents and faith-based and community organizations;
- provide information and training, if necessary, for employees of the state agency the liaison represents regarding equal opportunity standards for faith-based and community organizations seeking to partner with state government;
- facilitate the identification of practices with demonstrated effectiveness for faith-based and community organizations that partner with the state agency the liaison represents; and
- work with the appropriate departments and programs of the state agency the liaison represents to conduct outreach efforts to inform and welcome faith-based and community organizations that have not traditionally formed partnerships with the agency.

Subsequently, H.B. 1965 directed agency liaisons to:

- develop and implement a plan for improving contracting relationships between state agencies and faith-based and community organizations;
- develop best practices for cooperating and collaborating with faith-based and community organizations;
- identify and address duplication of services provided by the state and faith-based and community organizations; and
- identify and address gaps in state services that faith-based and community organizations could fill.

## 2024 Interagency Coordinating Group Activities

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The Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG) met in June, August, and October. Additionally, ICG members were invited to participate in a joint network meeting hosted by OneStar in January at Texas A&M and to serve on the host committee for the 2025 Texas Nonprofit Summit that will be held in Austin on February 24-26, 2025. The joint network meeting was an opportunity to have in-depth discussions, connect, and share insights and knowledge with other network members, including the Academic Affinity Group, Nonprofit Management Alliance of Texas, Texas Association of Volunteer Centers, Texas Rural Nonprofit Network, and Texas Nonprofit Council.

ICG meetings allow members to share upcoming events, activities, success stories, and challenges. Meetings also include ongoing updates throughout the year on the Texas Nonprofit Council, OneStar (Texas State Commission on National and Community Service) initiatives – AmeriCorps Texas, Together Texas, Volunteer Texas, and Rebuild Texas; and Texas

Nonprofit Strong, a collaborative initiative led by OneStar and United Ways of Texas to strengthen connections within the Texas nonprofit sector.

- In June, the Texas Nonprofit Council chair, Phillipa Williams, attended the meeting to provide a Council update and overview of legislative recommendations for consideration. Another highlight of the June meeting was a special presentation about the [Texas Association of Regional Councils \(TARC\)](#), presented by TNC member Virginia “Ginny” Lewis Ford, who serves as TARC’s Executive Director.
- In August, the **Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)** was featured in the agency spotlight, and an agency presentation was given focusing on its [Grant Development Center \(GDC\)](#). The GDC provides grants, education, and health-related funding information for State of Texas residents. It replaces the Funding Information Center (1990 to 2022) and is part of the Department of State Health Services Center for Public Health Policy and Practice.
- In October, the **Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)** was the featured agency spotlight, and information was shared that highlighted TVC’s Veterans Mental Health Department (VMHD) programs and services available to veterans and their families. VMHD focuses on addressing veteran mental health needs at the state and local levels and on reducing service member and veteran suicide across Texas.

As presiding officer of the Interagency Coordinating Group, I respectfully submit this year’s report on the ICG’s goals, activities, and progress from January through December 2024. Previous reports submitted outline specific actions taken since the passage of the initial legislation in 2009. These reports and additional information about the ICG can be found on the OneStar website at [onestarfoundation.org](https://onestarfoundation.org).

## II. Duties & Responsibilities

### Duties & Responsibilities (see Appendix A)

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- Sec. 535.053. (c)(1) — Meet periodically at the call of the presiding officer.
- Sec. 535.053. (c)(2) — Work across state agencies and with the State Commission on National and Community Service to facilitate the removal of unnecessary interagency barriers to partnerships between state agencies and faith and community-based organizations.
- Sec. 535.053. (c)(3) — Operate in a manner that promotes effective partnerships between those agencies and organizations to serve residents of this state who need assistance.

### Additional Duties & Responsibilities (see Appendix B)

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- Sec. 535.055. (c) — In addition to the Interagency Coordinating Group’s other duties, the Interagency Coordinating Group, in coordination with the Texas Nonprofit Council (per S.B. 993 83R) shall:
  - Develop and implement a plan for improving contracting relationships between state agencies and faith and community-based organizations;
  - Develop best practices for cooperating and collaborating with faith and community-based organizations;
  - Identify and address duplication of services provided by the state and faith and community-based organizations; and
  - Identify and address gaps in state services that faith and community-based organizations could fill.

### Reporting Duties

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- Sec. 535.054. (a) — No later than December 1 of each year, the Interagency Coordinating Group shall submit a report to the legislature that describes in detail the activities, goals, and progress of the Interagency Coordinating Group.
- Sec. 535.054. (b) — The report made under Subsection (a) must be made available to the public through posting on the Office of the Governor’s website.

### III. Goals, Activities & Progress (January-December 2023)

**Goal 1:** Continue implementation of the plan for improving contracting relationships between state agencies and faith-based and community organizations.

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#### **ACTIVITY & PROGRESS**

The Texas Nonprofit Council (TNC) met with representatives from the Comptroller's Office in 2022 for an in-depth overview of current portals and systems for state contracts/bids and how to provide nonprofits with access. In 2023, TNC provided an update to ICG members. Discussions will continue to eliminate barriers nonprofits face to access opportunities to furnish materials, equipment, supplies, and services to the state of Texas.

In 2012, the ICG finalized an RFP Template for Client Services Procurements. The template provides a standardized format for the requested information. Several ICG member agencies use this template, which is available on the Comptroller's website. ICG reviewed this template in 2020 and made no changes to it. ICG continues to gather feedback from within their respective agencies to assess the template's pertinence and usage rate.

**Goal 2:** Develop best practices for cooperating and collaborating with faith-based and community organizations.

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#### **ACTIVITY & PROGRESS**

The following pages provide a snapshot of state agency activities relating to cooperation and collaboration with faith-based and community organizations. Submissions were cleared through each agency's internal review process and compiled by OneStar, chair of the ICG.

## Office of the Secretary of State (SOS)

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The Office of the Secretary of State continues to publicize information regarding nonprofits located [here](#). Other useful links include:

- [Corporations Section Forms](#)
- [Business and Nonprofit Forms](#)
- [Nonprofits FAQs](#)
- [Texas Business Organizations Code: Doing Business with the SOS on and after January 1, 2010: A Guide for Texas Nonprofit Corporations \(PDF\)](#)
- [Forming a Nonprofit Tax-Exempt Corporation in Texas](#) (2018 Texas C-BAR publication)
- [Search for Charities on the IRS Web Site](#)

### TAX ISSUES FOR NONPROFITS

*Neither a nonprofit corporation nor an unincorporated nonprofit association is automatically exempt from federal or state taxes.* To become exempt, a nonprofit must meet certain requirements and apply with both the Internal Revenue Service and the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.

#### Federal Taxes

To attain a federal tax exemption as a charitable organization, your certificate of formation must contain a required purpose clause and a dissolution of assets provision.

- [IRS Charities & Nonprofits page](#)
- [IRS Stay Exempt](#): tax information for 501(c)(3) organizations
- [IRS Publication 557](#), Tax Exempt Status for our Organization
- [Life Cycle of a Public Charity](#): sample organizational documents and IRS filings
- [IRS Form 1023 \(PDF\)](#) Application for Recognition of Exemption and [Instructions \(PDF\)](#)
- [Information about Form 990-N reporting requirements](#) for small tax-exempt organizations

Questions about federal tax-exempt status? Contact the IRS Exempt Organizations Section at 877-829-5500.

#### State Taxes

- [Comptroller of Public Accounts Tax Exemptions for Qualified Organizations](#)
- [Comptroller Guidelines to Texas Tax Exemptions](#)
- [Texas Applications for Tax Exemption \(forms\)](#)

Questions about state tax-exempt status? Review the comptroller's [FAQs](#) or contact the comptroller's Exempt Organizations Section by phone at (800) 531-5441 or (512) 463-4600 or by email at [exempt.orgs@cpa.texas.gov](mailto:exempt.orgs@cpa.texas.gov).

### TEXAS NONPROFIT RESOURCES

- [Proceedings Involving a Charitable Trust](#): Section of the Office of the Attorney General
- [Texas CBAR](#): Texas Community Building with Attorney Resources provides free legal assistance to Texas nonprofits
- [OneStar](#): OneStar promotes service and volunteerism, forges effective public and private partnerships, and works to increase the performance of nonprofits

## Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT)

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The Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) continues to look for innovative ways to assist Texas customers in navigating the complex issues in the areas of electricity, telecommunications, and water.

For 2024, the PUCT division known as the Office of Public Engagement has expanded its purpose to provide a point of contact for customers to address their issues and concerns while providing a level of customer education and greater interaction out in the communities, attending meetings and town hall-style events.

The PUCT also typically participates in events by providing area residents with resource information regarding electric choice, energy conservation, and customer assistance programs. Numerous police departments, senior activity centers, and faith and community-based organizations contacted the PUCT throughout the year to request the agency's durable brochure-on-a-stick (hand fan) that provides customers energy conservation tips. The PUCT looks forward to continuing our partnerships with faith and community-based organizations in the next year.

## Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)

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### **FOOD AND NUTRITION**

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) administers 12 federal nutrition programs that provide balanced nutrition and promote healthy habits in communities across the Lone Star State. TDA extends the beneficial impact of these programs through partnerships with state agencies, community organizations, and local nonprofits. These relationships are vital to achieving the TDA Food and Nutrition Division mission – To advance compliant U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition programs through effective partnerships and educational resources. The following examples illustrate how TDA increases the effectiveness of federal nutrition programs through collaboration.

#### **Partnerships Make a Difference**

TDA has collaborated with food banks to expand the reach of The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) using more than \$8 million in grant funding from USDA. The initiative's key objective is to expand TEFAP's reach into remote, rural, and/or low-income areas that are underserved by the program. The funds have facilitated food banks' purchases of resources for transporting and storing nutritious food and enabled TDA and the food banks to launch training and promotional campaigns.

TDA also collaborated with Feeding Texas, a network of Texas food banks, to inform families of the Summer Meals programs and support the expansion of summer meal locations.

TDA has developed a strong relationship with the Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) network and its affiliate in Texas, Texas Action for Healthy Kids (TAHK). The Texas affiliate promotes TDA's Summer Meal Programs in its newsletters and hosted a booth for program partners at the 2024 TDA MegaCon conference. TDA staff moderated a "How Local Foods Can Improve Your Program" session at TAHK's virtual summit in 2024. A TDA representative serves on the TAHK steering committee.

Nationally, AFHK's cooperative agreement with USDA provides other opportunities to enhance TDA efforts in Texas through USDA's Healthy Meals Incentives. TDA is collaborating with AFHK and USDA to provide Healthy Meals Incentives awards that recognize SFAs that have significantly improved the nutritional quality of their school meals. Nine Texas school food authorities (SFAs) have received awards and were invited to a national Healthy Meals Incentives conference.

TDA is partnering with Texas A&M AgriLife in a three-year USDA program to train approximately 150 student MyPlate Ambassadors to promote MyPlate messaging and curricula. The ambassadors will encourage healthy eating habits for school-aged children, parents/caregivers, and school staff by coordinating and implementing MyPlate nutrition education connected to the nutritious meals and snacks offered through USDA Child Nutrition Programs. The MyPlate Ambassadors will also promote understanding of Local Wellness Policies. TAHK has five training sessions planned during the next two years to educate schools on how Local Wellness Policies work.



TDA collaborated with No Kid Hungry, a national campaign run by the nonprofit Share Our Strength, to increase awareness of reduced-price school breakfasts becoming free in Texas. No Kid Hungry used social media to encourage schools to take advantage of the program and contacted local officials to ensure they were aware of the availability of this benefit. The group's website maintains a page with information about the free breakfasts.

TDA received a USDA Team Nutrition Training Grant for Meal Pattern Modernization. TDA will use the funds to partner with the Culinary Institute of America to enhance school nutrition professionals' skills and knowledge through in-person classes and development of a comprehensive library of sharable digital resources.

TDA continued its longstanding partnership with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in 2024 to offer the Summer Meal Programs at 38 WIC offices through a limited USDA pilot program. TDA collaborates with all WIC offices by encouraging them to promote the Summer Meal Programs and directing them to TDA resources at SquareMeals.org. TDA also shares and promotes SNAP-funded WIC materials during Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Week and at CACFP conferences.

Other TDA efforts to improve the health of our youngest Texans include participating in Outdoor Living Environment (OLE!), a statewide initiative from the Texas Education Agency that promotes healthy, nature-based outdoor spaces at early childcare and education programs. TDA's work with the Baylor Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty (BCHP) includes sharing information about TDA Food and Nutrition initiatives and promoting the BCHP support available to meal program operations.

TDA communicates with local elected leaders through TDA's Healthy Community Network (HCN). A newsletter keeps HCN participants apprised of the impact federal nutrition programs have on their communities.

TDA offers a range of resources that partners and stakeholders can use to advertise the availability of good nutrition and education through federal nutrition programs. The value of these resources goes up exponentially when used locally and promoted by a trusted advocate for community health. TDA will continue implementing various tactics to increase the effectiveness of these partnerships.

### **Growing Relationships for Nutrition**

To promote opportunities in school nutrition, TDA is participating in an educational session at Viva Fresh, the annual conference for the Texas Produce Association. The session will offer producers and distributors tips for collaborating with schools to provide them with fresh produce.

TDA produces the monthly E-Harvest newsletter for subscribers interested in receiving news and information designed to increase the availability of fresh and local foods in nutrition programs and for all Texans. It highlights available TDA resources and relevant stakeholder initiatives and resources.

TDA continues exploring opportunities for collaboration that cultivate stronger local and regional food systems and support the purchase of local and minimally processed foods for nutrition programs.

### **TRADE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

The Trade & Business Development division houses the Grant Office which works directly with FBCOs on the Texans Feeding Texans Home Delivered Meal grant (Program). The Program was established to help supplement and extend current home-delivered meal program for seniors and/or disabled Texans. Governmental and nonprofit agencies are eligible for this grant program. There are several FBCOs that utilize this program to help feed more seniors in their community. In fiscal year 2024, TDA awarded more than \$9.1M to nonprofit feeding organizations across the state.

The Grants office is in the second year of operating the Texas Local Purchasing Food Assistance program (TxLFPA) with the support of funding from USDA. The purpose of the program is to maintain and improve Texas' food and agricultural supply chain resiliency. The goal of this program is to foster in-state, long-term relationships and build sustainable

market opportunities for State of Texas producers, with an emphasis on supporting local or regional and socially disadvantaged producers to increase the amount of products distributed to underserved communities in the State of Texas. In addition, TDA aims to tailor food distribution for unique local challenges to serve the State's population and feeding programs, including food banks and other organizations that target underserved communities. TxLFPA program supports food banks and nonprofits to secure feeding sites, which may include the potential of FBCOs to distribute food procured through this process.

Grant Recipients have purchased food from 127 different farmers and producers and distributed this food to more than 3,000 partner agency distributions and mobile pantries throughout the state.

In the summer of 2023, TDA received funding for the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI). The purpose of the RFSI program is to build resilience across the middle of the state's food supply chain for food crops. For this program, "middle of the food supply chain" refers to activities and operations that occur between post-harvesting of food crops and before food goods are sold at a store or market, excluding the marketing of food products or services.

The RFSI program accepted applications for two grant types, "Equipment-Only" and "Infrastructure" grants, to eligible entities to support the expanded capacity for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of locally and regionally produced food products, including specialty crops, dairy, grains for human consumption, aquaculture, and other food products, excluding meat and poultry.

Eligible entities include:

- Agricultural producers or processors or groups of producers/processors
- Nonprofits operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities
- Local government entities operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities
- Tribal government entities operating middle-of-the-supply-chain activities
- Institutions such as schools, universities, or hospitals bringing producers together to establish cooperative or shared infrastructure or invest in equipment that will benefit multiple producers.

TDA is currently waiting on final approval by the US Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Marketing Service to award grant funds. A second round of funding may be offered.

## **TEXAS STATE FOOD SECURITY AND RESILIENCY PLANNING COUNCIL**

During the 88th Regular Session, HB 3323 established the Food Security and Resiliency Planning Council (Council) within the Texas Department of Agriculture. The Council is made up of appointees from the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Speaker, Commissioner of Agriculture, Texas A&M AgriLife, and the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission. Appointees may come from a variety of organizations involved in agriculture and food security, including nonprofits. The Council is responsible for developing the State Food System Security Plan. The rules for the council have been adopted, and the council has met several times over the past year to begin grappling with the broad directive of food security and resiliency. Workgroups are in the process of being formed to focus on specific issues, and this may be an opportunity for nonprofits to participate.

## **Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ)**

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The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) partners with faith-based and community organizations to provide individuals, whether incarcerated or serving their sentence in the community, with a variety of resources that support successful reentry and reducing recidivism. TDCJ is committed to utilizing and partnering with approved volunteers to assist and facilitate services vital to the rehabilitation process. These volunteers represent a broad spectrum of faith-based and community organizations that administer programs that help strengthen the ties between individuals, their

families, and their communities. The life skills gained in these programs help prevent recidivism and promote successful reentry and reintegration into communities as productive citizens.

For incarcerated individuals, TDCJ utilizes approved volunteers to assist and facilitate services and key programs. As of August 31, 2024, there were 27,932 approved volunteers. During Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, these volunteers made 52,775 volunteer visits for a total of 179,693 hours spent supporting inmates. A total of 8,741 volunteers were trained or retrained online this fiscal year. In addition, 614 individuals attended in-person training. In January 2022, the volunteer application was converted to online submission. During FY 2024, the agency received 11,160 volunteer applications, and 10,543 of those were submitted online.

These volunteers represent a broad spectrum of faith-based and community organizations that administer programs that teach valuable skills to the inmate population to help reduce recidivism. Life Changes Curriculum is utilized in Specialized Programs (i.e., Mentor Programs, Family Programs, Rehabilitation Programs, Reentry Programs, Spiritual Growth Programs, and Non-Religious Programs). The efforts of these volunteers are recognized each year during the Governor's Criminal Justice Volunteer Service Awards Ceremony.

Programs such as the Prison Fellowship Academy and the Field Ministry Program offer restorative justice values and illustrate the strong partnerships between the TDCJ and faith-based organizations. The Field Ministry Program is designed to support an inmate's religious faith and develop their potential for religious leadership. There are 245 active male field ministers in 43 units. These field ministers serve to boost the morale of the incarcerated individual by offering inspirational correspondence, prayer sharing, and one-on-one encouragement to impact inmate behavior and promote positive change. As of August 31, 2024, the field ministers received 198,749 prayer and correspondence requests.

### **The Heart of Texas Foundation College of Ministry**

The Heart of Texas Foundation College of Ministry located at the Hobby Unit (female) began in August 2021. As of August 31, 2024, there were 23 female students enrolled in the program. The Heart of Texas Foundation College of Ministry offers a four-and-a-half-year program for participants to receive a Bachelor of Arts in Applied Ministry degree at no expense to the inmates. The purpose of this program is to promote moral rehabilitation and ministry to other inmates.

### **Prison Fellowship Academy**

Prison Fellowship Academy offers a 12- to 14-month non-parole voted program to help men and women in prison become good citizens in the communities they live in today and the communities they will return to tomorrow. The Academy achieves this goal by focusing on its six core values: productivity, responsibility, integrity, community, affirmation, and restoration, and by offering program participants the opportunity to apply the skills they have learned. As they live out the core values, Academy participants and graduates have a prosocial influence on their peers and communities, resulting in positive social impacts and enhanced community safety. Graduates of the Academy who remain incarcerated can continue to practice these values by participating in the Prison Fellowship's graduate component, where they practice peer leadership skills by exhibiting the six core values and making positive contributions to their current community. Graduates who are released have the tools and experience to make positive life decisions that are beneficial to themselves, their families, and their communities as they reenter society.

In addition, Prison Fellowship offers other resources such as résumé writing, mock interviews; the Story Book Project, where volunteers/staff use digital recording devices to record mothers and fathers reading to their children, and the recordings are delivered on CDs; and Crosswalk Center, which helps the inmate reenter into society. Prison Fellowship is located on the Clements, Crain, Polunsky, and Vance units, with a total capacity of 342 beds. Since September 1, 2017, there have been 1,730 inmates enrolled in the program and over 1,276 successful program completions.

## GO KIDS Initiative

The GO KIDS initiative was established to identify resources that offer basic, fundamental services to inmates and their children. Recognizing that solid family ties impact the success of individuals under criminal justice supervision, various units offer family-inclusive programs and/or programs focused on strengthening parenting and relational skills. These programs help inmates maintain constructive focus during their incarceration, allow families to remain connected, and positively impact the future of their children.

Numerous volunteer organizations sponsor and facilitate Day with Dad/Day with Mom events to provide a unique family bonding experience for inmates and their children to reconnect. The events often include a meal for the inmate and their children to share together and a day of family activities such as games, arts and crafts, and face painting. Additionally, volunteer organizations provide Marriage Seminars to help inmates maintain their relationships with their spouses while incarcerated. Marriage Seminar events typically include a shared meal and group counseling.

## The Sisterhood of RUTH

The Sisterhood of RUTH (Restoration, Unity, and Transformation through the Holy Spirit) is a volunteer-provided program managed through collaboration between the Prison Fellowship Ministries, TDCJ-Rehabilitation Programs Division, and the Carole Young Medical Facility. RUTH offers academic, emotional, cultural, social, and spiritual enrichment to the female inmates, as well as their families.

## Truth-be-Told (TBT)

Truth-be-Told (TBT) offers female inmates the opportunity to provide an honest recount of the events that led them to prison to an attentive and respectful audience of invited guests. Before sharing their story with an audience, the inmate must participate in an eight-week series of classes in which they share their story with their peers. TBT is a unique program staffed by volunteers who have experienced both literal and metaphorical “prisons” in their own lives and are willing and able to learn and grow alongside the women they serve. TBT provides opportunities for personal growth and healing from past trauma through sharing in safe communities.

## Houston reVision

Houston reVision works with every youth (age 14-17) in the state of Texas who has been certified to stand trial as an adult or is currently serving an adult prison sentence in the TDCJ. The youth are matched with mentors who write them letters and send them birthday cards. On the first Friday of every month, Houston reVision provides the youthful inmates lunch and connects through art, music, and dance projects. Houston reVision has hundreds of volunteers whose mission is to see the inherent potential of disconnected youth and to empower them to revise, create, and choose hopeful pathways.

## Celebrate Recovery

Celebrate Recovery is a program designed to deal with the hurts, habits, and hang-ups that adversely affect inmates’ lives and are a roadblock to developing good relationships. Volunteers bring the good news of the gospel to the inmates through those who have walked the road and can relate to their condition and feelings. Celebrate Recovery also gets inmates involved in ongoing Christ-based 12-step groups when they leave prison and integrate into society.

Prison ministry programs such as Kairos, Jubilee, and Kolbe are provided by volunteer groups. The volunteers host a three-and-a-half-day weekend consisting of talks, discussions, and Chapel meditations so inmates learn they are worthy of God’s love, light, and grace. No matter who they are or what they have done, God forgives them. The volunteer groups follow up with weekly Prayer and Share sessions to continue to keep the inmates involved in continuing ministry.

## STRIVE Reentry Center

The Strength Through Restoration, Independence, Vision, and Empowerment (STRIVE) Reentry Center was launched in August 2019 at the O’Daniel Unit. Spanning 12 weeks, the program integrates a trauma-informed care methodology to

address a range of issues. These encompass domestic violence, sexual assault, traumas from both childhood and adulthood, gender socialization, parenting, and substance abuse. Through the knowledge and skill-building activities offered, participants can embark on a journey of self-discovery, enlightenment, and empowerment. The diverse STRIVE curriculum is centered on themes related to trauma and abuse. The Windham School District offers educational programming that encompasses goal setting, wellness, financial literacy, employment skills, and the chance to obtain recognized certifications such as Southwest Airlines Professional Communications, ServSafe, OSHA-10, and forklift training. Volunteer group Discipleship Unlimited, a faith-based organization, provides services such as financial classes, relationship classes to include trauma-based programming, and life skills classes. Trae Kendrick, women's ministry director and mission coordinator with the First Baptist Church of Crawford, works as a volunteer mentor for the participants focusing on overcoming trauma. Each participant, drawing from both previous and TDCJ work experiences, crafts a résumé. This résumé is utilized during career expositions where participants, dressed in professional attire, interact with potential employers aligned with STRIVE. These in-person and virtual interviews often result in job offers before participants are released. If not selected immediately, participants are assured another interview opportunity. Since its commencement in August 2019, STRIVE has successfully graduated 709 participants, with 171 participants completing the program successfully in FY2024.

### **Veteran Services**

The TDCJ Veterans Coordinator collaborates with multiple agencies and organizations to provide services for incarcerated veterans. The agency's services for veterans include volunteer-provided unit programming and housing dedicated to veterans, assistance with veterans benefit applications, access to education benefits, and continuity of care coordination with veteran peer groups for post-release assistance. Volunteer program Animum Irae Militum (AIMVETS), a veteran-specific ministry focused on recovery, provides Moral Recognition Therapy (MRT) at units across the state. Currently, there are four veteran program dorms statewide: the Success Through Restoration, Independence, Perseverance, Excellence and Service (STRIPES) dorm for males, the Service Through Action Reveals Strength (STARS) dorm for females, and the state-legislated Travis State Jail Veteran dorms. Veteran dorms provide a peer support program designed to equip veterans with the necessary tools to enhance their well-being and reintegration into society. As part of veteran programming, peer specialist training in the Veteran X and Veteran Hope models are made available to empower veterans to take an active role in choosing recovery goals and finding solutions to mental, physical, or social problems.

### **ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

With community partner Via Hope, peer training opportunities as a Reentry Peer Support Specialist and Certified Mental Health Peer Specialist have bolstered reentry programming statewide. The trainings provide employable skills upon release and have enhanced peer-led supportive reentry services. The training programs allow individuals who participate in and complete training to seek further certification and employment within the community.

TDCJ maintains contact with our volunteers via the Volunteer Services Newsletter and email services. These channels provide beneficial information for volunteers and volunteer groups. The Volunteer Services Newsletter is used to recognize volunteers for their time, recruit volunteers, churches, and organizations, and communicate important changes or reminders on volunteer guidelines. The GovDelivery Email system is utilized to notify subscribers of unit lockdowns, distribute the Volunteer Newsletter, recruit volunteers for programming at specific units, provide important updates or reminders, and volunteer approval, training, and retraining requirements.

To benefit those individuals reentering their communities or releasing to parole supervision, TDCJ has built relationships and partnerships with local Workforce Solutions, faith-based organizations, and community-based organizations, such as Goodwill of Central Texas, Kingdom Towers, Sharing Hope Ministries, 7More, One Man's Treasure, City of Houston Community Reentry Network Program, Austin Community College, and Unlocking DOORS. These organizations assist in a variety of ways including co-hosting second chance job fairs, providing education and job skills training, offering cognitive and peer support groups, providing professional sets of clothing, coordinating supportive engagement at the

bus station, and educating the public and employers on the impact community collaboration has in reducing recidivism. Parole regional chaplains and Reentry Employment Coordinators assist in establishing resources for clients for things such as food, clothing, and shelter. The chaplains also assist in recruiting and maintaining information for volunteers. Volunteers within the regions facilitate various classes for the clients to assist in successful reintegration which includes recovery support programs such as Overcomers and Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous.

The TDCJ-Reentry and Integration Division (TDCJ-RID) has agreements with the Social Security Administration, Texas Health and Human Services-Vital Statistics, and the Department of Public Safety to request, process, and provide valid forms of identification to individuals upon release, thereby paving a smoother road to successful reentry. The Texas Correctional Office for Offenders with Medical and Mental Impairments (TCOOMMI) holds contracts with the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and all the Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs) across the state. The DSHS contract provides services to persons living with HIV who are released from custody by engaging them with the Texas HIV Medication Program, local community AIDS Service Organizations, and community clinics. Contracts with all LMHAs provide a network of mental health continuity of care providers for adults and juveniles releasing from custody to community supervision. Additionally, Human Service Specialists work together with community providers and resources to build successful reentry plans and linkages for continuity of care for those releasing with special needs.

For those individuals sentenced to probation, there are 122 community supervision and corrections departments (CSCDs) which directly supervise individuals on community supervision across the state. TDCJ acts as an oversight entity for the CSCDs in Texas' decentralized system, providing funding distribution, standards, auditing, statewide data, training, program evaluation, and fiscal monitoring. Providing day-to-day supervision, CSCD programs and services vary according to the resources available in each corresponding community. CSCDs rely on local community and faith-based organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and local churches to assist in providing services that facilitate positive change in probationer behavior. All local programs have the goal of enhancing outcomes and reducing recidivism, but each program is individually developed based on the relationships, resources, and unique needs of the communities they serve.

Additionally, TDCJ has collaborated with the Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV) for over 20 years, including working with Battering Intervention and Prevention Programs (BIPPs) and CSCDs on issues relating to domestic violence. TDCJ has granted probationary accreditation or accredited 133 BIPPs, of which TCFV provides technical assistance, program evaluation, and training to the providers to ensure they are equipped to educate batterers. TDCJ provides 26 grants to qualified BIPPs to support their local community programs. TDCJ and TCFV continue to support community initiatives across the state that promote victim safety.

## Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

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The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) collaborates with faith communities to help meet the needs and improve outcomes for children, families, and vulnerable adults and to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

### **FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DIVISION (FBCE)**

The Faith-Based and Community Engagement Division (FBCE) engages faith-based community partners and individuals to assist vulnerable children, adults, and families. FBCE has five overarching objectives:

- Foster key partnerships
- Promote community awareness
- Strengthen volunteer and intern engagement
- Effectively manage resources

■ Develop and maintain the Faith-Based and Community Engagement workforce

FBCE staff support partnership efforts with Child Protective Investigations, Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, Statewide Intake, and the Youth and Parent Helpline. FBCE partners with faith communities, foundations, advocates, and volunteers to improve service delivery for children, families, and vulnerable adults.

DFPS encourages each faith community to develop supportive services for their local children, vulnerable adults, and families based on the needs of the community and how they choose to serve. Congregations assist in many ways such as providing meals and respite care for kinship and foster families, holding donation drives to support DFPS' resource rooms, and showing appreciation and support for the DFPS workforce. Faith partners have also developed specific ministries, such as bed ministries, to provide beds and other home necessities for families in need.

### **ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES (APS)**

June is Elder Abuse Awareness month and each year staff around the state collaborate with faith partners to increase awareness about abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults. Faith partners host seminars for community members to learn about abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation, as well as engage with their community and local officials to raise awareness about APS services.

The Purple Sunday Day of Prayer serves as a call to action across the state of Texas to raise awareness about elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation and this year, Purple Sunday was observed on June 9th. APS staff joined forces with faith partners and local nonprofit boards to acknowledge the significance of elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue. Purple Sunday originated in 2012 in East Texas and has grown into a statewide event.

APS collaborates with faith and community partners to help stock resource rooms with necessities for clients, such as hygiene items, non-perishable food, clothing, and household goods. In the summer months, faith-based organizations host fan drives and, in the winter months, blanket drives to distribute to elderly and vulnerable adults.

### **CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATIONS AND CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPI/CPS)**

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, and faith partners collaborate with staff and community agencies to promote child abuse prevention. This year, Sunday, April 28, was designated as Blue Sunday, a day of prayer for abused children and those who help them.

Texas is home to the Blue Sunday Child Abuse Prevention Initiative ([bluesunday.org](http://bluesunday.org)), a 501c3 nonprofit that raises awareness among faith communities through its Blue Ribbon Church program and the annual National Blue Sunday Day of Prayer, which is held annually on the last Sunday of April. The Blue Sunday nonprofit partners with other community organizations to sponsor the Forensic Science Seminar, which brings together speakers from across the state to train DFPS staff, law enforcement, and other stakeholders on how to help children and families involved in the child welfare system. Blue Sunday also assists DFPS by meeting the needs of abused children living in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV). Each Christmas, Blue Sunday provides gift cards for every teen across all stages of services in the RGV. Additionally, Blue Sunday partners with local businesses and HEB to give a \$100 HEB gift card and holiday meal items to every kinship caregiver in the RGV. This year, 120 families will receive this donation.

KJIC Country Christian Radio Station in Houston is an advocate for DFPS and promotes educational and public awareness of child abuse prevention events. They also interview DFPS staff throughout the year to promote donation drives for the regional resource rooms.

Isaiah 117 House ([www.isaiah117house.com](http://www.isaiah117house.com)) provides physical and emotional support in a safe and loving home for children awaiting placement. Isaiah 117 House began in Tennessee when a couple training to become foster parents learned that when children are removed from their homes, they often go to a government office to wait for placement. Isaiah 117 provides a safe place, clothes, toys, food, and other comforts for kids while DFPS staff work to find the safest,

most appropriate placement. Isaiah 117 currently has two homes open in Texas, one in Dallas and the other in Waco. On Sunday, November 10, the organization hosted a groundbreaking ceremony in Georgetown for a home that will open in 2025. Two additional homes are scheduled to open in 2025 in the Houston metro area.

Harvest Family Life Ministries was founded by Bishop Aaron Blake, Sr., in Brownwood in 2004. At that time, Bishop Blake was a bi-vocational pastor of Greater Faith Church and an at-risk counselor at Brownwood High School. In 2001, Bishop Blake met a high school student in foster care and after learning more about this student, Bishop and his wife became licensed foster parents and fostered this student plus five additional youth. Bishop Blake asked his congregation to join him in helping care for children in foster care and that day led to an annual event known as Stand Sunday. Stand Sunday is a day of prayer and call to action for faith congregations in Texas and around the nation to stand together to support youth and families involved in the child welfare system. This year, Stand Sunday will be observed on November 10 ([standsunday.com](https://standsunday.com)).

### **OFFICE FOR ADDRESSING DISPROPORTIONALITIES AND DISPARITIES (OADD)**

The Office for Addressing Disproportionality and Disparities (OADD) engages faith-based community partners and individuals to examine and address disproportionality in the Texas child welfare system and increase targeted recruitment efforts for foster and adoptive families who can meet the needs of children and youth who are waiting for permanent homes; and develop collaborative partnerships with community groups, agencies, faith-based organizations, and other community organizations to provide culturally competent services to children and families of every race and ethnicity.

Additionally, OADD provides consultation to the Advisory Committee for Promoting Adoption of Minority Children (ACPAMC), which works locally and at the state level to raise awareness of the needs of minority children in all stages of service. The ACPAMC provides stakeholders with an opportunity to give input on agency policy focusing on enhancements to the systems that will promote the adoption of and provision of services to minority children. The ACPAMC membership includes ordained members of the clergy that allow for the committee to better engage faith organizations that historically are the bedrock within communities.

### **HUMAN TRAFFICKING DIVISION (HT)**

For the children and youth served by DFPS, the Human Trafficking (HT) Division serves all 254 counties and all child welfare stages to improve DFPS's capacity to identify, report, recover, and support victims of trafficking in their restoration journey. To accomplish this work, DFPS fosters a collaborative multidisciplinary approach to the prevention of human trafficking in concert with our partners and has well-functioning ties to law enforcement, local city and county governments, state agencies, advocacy agencies, and faith-based organizations to leverage resources and coordinate efforts.

### **GOVERNOR'S RESPONSE AGAINST CHILD EXPLOITATION (GRACE)**

DFPS continues to partner with the Governor's Response Against Child Exploitation (GRACE). GRACE is collaboration between the Office of the Texas First Lady, Office of the Texas Governor Child Sex Trafficking Team, DFPS, and a diverse group of faith leaders across Texas that work together to develop effective strategies to end human trafficking. GRACE empowers communities of faith to improve awareness and increase service capacity and prevention efforts across Texas.

### **2024 Human Trafficking Prevention Month – Faith-Based Efforts**

The *2024 Week of Prayer to End Human Trafficking*, a GRACE initiative, occurred January 8<sup>th</sup> through January 14<sup>th</sup> which coincided with Human Trafficking Prevention Month in the state of Texas. The Week of Prayer served as a call to action to the faith-based community to unite in prayer, learn more about human trafficking, and discern opportunities to prevent exploitation and support survivors. The virtual interfaith launch event on January 8<sup>th</sup> included remarks from First Lady Cecilia Abbott, DFPS Commissioner Stephanie Muth, Child Sex Trafficking Team Administrator Janet Kasper, DFPS



Human Trafficking Director Blanca Denise Lance, survivor-leader and advocate Karla Solomon, and a prayer intention led by Dr. Mia K. Wright, Co-Pastor of Fountain of Praise Church in Houston. Texans used the hashtag #TXPraysToEndHT on social media to show their support.

DFPS released the third annual *Light the Way End Human Trafficking – Human Trafficking Prevention Month Participation Guide* (Guide). The Guide was disseminated to over 102,186 stakeholders, of which over 2,000 were faith-based partners. The Guide provided a variety of activities hosted by DFPS and highlights efforts and information from the Governor’s Office and the Office of the Attorney General, as well as the Blue Campaign to support anyone’s participation. The Guide invited faith and secular communities to stand with Texas to help eradicate human trafficking in the state.

DFPS hosted the 2024 *Light the Way End Human Trafficking Virtual Learning Series* weekly webinars with subject matter experts during the lunch hour to speak about various human trafficking intersections and topics. All faith-based partners and the community at large were invited to join DFPS staff and anti-trafficking partners for these opportunities.

### **Light The Way to End Human Trafficking – Faith IN Action**

Faith IN Action continues to partner with Shared Hope International to marry the DFPS Light the Way End Human Trafficking campaign with Shared Hope's Faith IN Action toolkits. The toolkits are designed to equip faith leaders with tools to educate men, women, youth, and help protect children in communities everywhere from the threat of trafficking. This comprehensive training tool is equipped with videos, discussion questions, Human Trafficking Fact Sheets, and a 30-Day Prayer booklet. In partnership, HT Division’s goal is to create survivor-informed congregations committed to combatting human trafficking in their communities and offers the Faith IN Action Kit to any ministry or congregation seeking to initiate its use.

### **Human Trafficking Intersections for Faith-Based Partners**

In 2024 (Spring and Summer), the Human Trafficking and Faith-Based and Community Engagement Divisions developed a new approach to help elevate DFPS’s Faith-based partners’ protective capacities and prevention approaches. Each quarter, the HT Division will facilitate the development of content for the FBCE newsletter followed by a corresponding webinar in the subsequent quarter. Content was designed to foster an understanding of topics related to the prevention and/or response to human trafficking or associated themes. The inaugural topic was developed by HT Division partner One More Child on *Faith Leaders as First Responders to Crisis*. One More Child identified ways faith leaders are often undesignated first responders in crises and how trauma-informed care and victim-centered responses were integral components to understand and integrate into their response. The inaugural webinar was very interactive with DFPS Faith-based partners expressing a desire to further educate themselves in these core concepts. A resource listing was subsequently developed and shared.

### **COMMUNITY BASED CARE (CBC)**

Community-Based Care (CBC) is the new Texas foster care model. It allows local communities to meet children’s and their families’ unique and individual needs by tapping into the strengths and resources of each community. The goal is to expand CBC to all of Texas by 2029. Most Child Protective Services’ duties will transition to local service networks, each operated by a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC). The SSCC is responsible for finding foster homes or other living arrangements for children in state care and providing a full range of services, including case management. The SSCC’s also build relationships with faith and community partners to help meet the needs of the families they serve.

### **St. Francis, Single Source Continuum Contractor in the Panhandle Community Area**

St. Francis works closely with the faith-based community and partners with 14 churches in the Panhandle to host supervised visitation at their spaces. Three of these visitation spaces are houses/parsonages which provide more of a homelike setting for children and families where they can play outside in the backyard, have a meal together, or play

games in a family-like setting. Central Church of Christ graciously provided a second cottage house for St. Francis' use this year.

Many of the churches continue to support St. Francis foster homes, kinship placements, and families moving toward reunification. Churches such as Monterey Church of Christ, Broadway Church of Christ, Southcrest Baptist Church, Church on the Rock, Catholic Charities, and many others provide essentials such as clothing, toiletries, school supplies, food boxes, and furniture.

St. Francis continues to have a strong relationship with the Lubbock church coalition, "One Heart," which is comprised of a network of local churches, organizations, and foster-adoptive agencies within the community.

Faith-based organizations continue to support and meet the needs of children and families served by St. Francis. Two local churches, First Baptist Church of Amarillo and Highland Baptist of Lubbock, have a bed ministry to provide beds for our families in need. For a third year, St. Francis participated in the Trunk or Treat at the Washington Avenue Church of Amarillo this year.

Saint Francis is pursuing a new initiative, the Adopt-A-Caseworker Program. This program encourages local churches to adopt a caseworker and help meet the needs of children on their caseloads as they arise.

### **2INgage, Single Source Continuum Contractor in the Big County and Texoma Community Area**

2INgage continues to partner with local churches on a regular basis to hold Foster Forums in different counties throughout the Region. These Foster Forums provide 2INgage a platform to discuss the ongoing needs of the children and families from the area that are experiencing foster care and provide opportunities to engage with the community to fill these gaps.

Heart Gallery of Northwest Texas hosted the first gallery in the region at Oak Street Baptist Church in Graham, Texas. Heart Gallery and 2INgage continue to collaborate with numerous churches throughout the region to house exhibits during Stand Sunday.

2INgage also collaborated with Harvest Family Ministries and CarePortal to successfully launch the CarePortal in the Brown County community as another resource for children and families experiencing foster care.

Grace Fellowship in Scurry County partnered with 2INgage to provide Christmas presents for all 56 children currently being served within the county. The church has also hosted 2INgage for Foster Forums and is a wonderful source of support for 2INgage families.

Foster325, from the vision of elders at Beltway Baptist Church, continues to be a vessel of support to the entire community. The mission of Foster325 is to equip local churches to support a foster family within their congregation. In September 2024, Foster325, along with their eight partner churches, hosted an "Explore Foster Care" city-wide event for individuals and families to explore foster care and the needs within the community in a no-pressure setting with current and experienced foster families available to answer questions. Foster325 also hosted a city-wide agency fair in October, where individuals and families met with the different child-placing agencies in the community.

### **EMPOWER, Single Source Continuum Contractor in the Metroplex East Community Area**

#### **Strengthening Community Bonds: EMPOWER's Partnerships with Faith-Based Organizations**

As the Community-Based Care (CBC) contractor for Metroplex East, EMPOWER is dedicated to supporting children and families across nine counties, including Dallas, Grayson, Fannin, Collin, Hunt, Rockwall, Kaufman, Ellis, and Navarro. Since assuming case management responsibilities from DFPS on March 1, 2024, EMPOWER has made efforts to partner with faith-based organizations to serve our communities with compassion and dedication.

### **Recent Highlights in EMPOWER's Faith-Based Initiatives**

In 2024, EMPOWER launched the *EMPOWER Dreams, Foster Futures* campaign to address the critical shortage of foster homes in local communities. Through this initiative, the EMPOWER community engagement team has built connections with numerous local churches, engaging in open discussions about foster care ministries and the need for local support. By collaborating closely with these churches, EMPOWER is working to expand foster parent recruitment, build community capacity, and provide more resources to meet the needs of children across the Metroplex East region.

### **Partnership with Isaiah 117 House in Grand Prairie**

EMPOWER is thrilled to partner with Isaiah 117 House, which offers children a comforting and safe environment following removal from their homes. This welcoming space, supported by dedicated volunteers, provides essentials like clean clothing, toys, and warm meals to help reduce the trauma these children may experience. The mission of Isaiah 117 House aligns with our goals of easing children's transitions, supporting child welfare staff, and helping foster families prepare for new placements. EMPOWER looks forward to utilizing Isaiah 117 House to provide a sense of security and compassion for children awaiting placement.

### **Collaborative Forums at Watermark Community Church**

Through the generosity of Watermark Community Church in Dallas, EMPOWER has held regular forums, known as Provider Meetings, which bring together Child-Placing Agencies (CPAs), General Residential Operations (GROs), and other youth service providers. These gatherings provide an invaluable platform for service providers to collaborate, share resources, and develop unified approaches to better meet the unique needs of children in our care. The collaborative spirit fostered by these forums allows us to address challenges more effectively and focus on holistic solutions for the community.

### **Partnership with Embrace in Collin County**

EMPOWER's ongoing relationship with Embrace, a faith-based organization, has been instrumental in supporting foster families throughout North Texas. Embrace has hosted impactful match events, like one in June that featured over 30 children, and another scheduled for November, in hopes of connecting children with their forever families. Additionally, Embrace's Collin House has generously offered to EMPOWER a safe, homelike setting for children awaiting placement, reducing the stress and trauma of these transitions. Embrace also organizes meal trains, seasonal angel trees, family outings, and graduation celebrations for teens, providing both tangible and emotional support to the foster community.

### **Hunt County Resource Fair with DFPS and Hunt County Kids**

In September 2024, EMPOWER partnered with DFPS and Hunt County Kids for a resource fair hosted at Authentic Life Fellowship. This event connected case management staff with various community resources, empowering them with valuable information and tools to better support children and families. By facilitating these resource connections, EMPOWER is strengthening the local support network and enhancing our team's ability to address individual needs.

As they look to the future, EMPOWER remains committed to building and nurturing these relationships with faith-based partners who share our mission of enriching the lives of children and families in Region 3E communities.

### **Our Community Our Kids (OCOK), Single Source Continuum Contractor in the Metroplex West Community Area**

OCOK has planned a series of foster parent recruitment events in partnership with local churches in the counties served. Additionally, OCOK partners with Hope Local, a close faith-based partner to help host BRAVE events which help prospective families learn more about fostering and how they can best contribute. With both OCOK-led and BRAVE events, churches partner to help with promotion of the event, physically hosting and working with their congregations for success.

OCOK works with Care Portal to support caregivers and successful reunification through the provision of tangible items that contribute to the wellbeing of the child/ren in their care.

OCOK is partnering with local churches to fulfill holiday wishes for youth in care through their Angel Tree program.

Also partnering with Hope Local, OCOK advocates for legally free youth through the Hope Now program. Hope Now creates quality videos of youth, representing their true personality. Videos are shown at churches at the beginning of the month, and children are advocated for throughout the month with the hopes of finding adoptive placements.

Planning has begun for "Sponsor a Senior" where church members from various churches in the region will be asked to provide for a high school senior's needs throughout the year as well as graduation/college readiness items.

#### **4Kids4Families, Single Source Continuum Contractor in the Piney Woods Community Area**

In 2024, Soma Church generously donated school supplies for foster youth in Smith County and adjacent counties, ensuring that around 150 children had the necessary tools for their education.

4Kids4Families partnered with 14 churches in region 4 to provide visitation spaces for biological parents and foster youth. Several of these churches also offered office space to 4Kids4Families Permanency Specialists, whose work involves frequent travel and remote tasks, providing them with more suitable workspaces than their vehicles.

4Kids4Families also engaged with multiple church congregations and presented "A Child for Every Family" to facilitate foster home recruitment and increase bed capacity. This presentation included a call to action, encouraging congregants to connect with child-placing agencies, become advocates with their local CASA, participate in their county's child welfare board, or obtain babysitter certification.

Additionally, 4Kids4Families distributed "Pastoral Tool Kits" to several churches, equipping pastors with the necessary information and resources to effectively communicate the urgent need for foster families in Region 4, particularly for children aged seven and older. The toolkit includes:

- Background information on the foster care system in Region 4, including statistics on bed capacity issues and the number of children placed outside the region.
- Guidance for engaging and educating congregations about the critical need for foster families, emphasizing the importance of community support.
- Practical tips and strategies for recruiting new foster families across the 23 counties in region 4, utilizing resources from The Fostering Collective.
- Information about children who are ready for adoption through the East Texas Heart Gallery, and how pastors can inspire their congregations to consider adoption.

Several churches, including Soma Church and Pollard Methodist Church, have graciously opened their doors for 4Kids4Families events. These spaces have been used for foster youth events, employee appreciation celebrations, and case assignable graduations, fostering a sense of community and support.

First Methodist Church in Athens donated 250 stuffed animals for youth in foster care, providing comfort and support to children experiencing the foster care system.

4Kids4Families partnered with The Fostering Collective on the "*Be the Light*" campaign, which recruits new foster families. As part of the campaign, they present at various churches in Region 4 to raise awareness and invite families to attend a *Be The Light* event, where they are matched with a child-placing agency. Over the past calendar year, The Fostering Collective has collaborated with over 50 churches across Region 4. The 4Kids4Families team also attends these events to raise awareness about Community-Based Care and the critical role it plays in supporting foster children, families, and caregivers. This campaign takes place twice a year. [www.thefosteringcollective.org/bethelight2024/](http://www.thefosteringcollective.org/bethelight2024/)

#### **Texas Family Care Network (TFCN), Single Source Continuum Contractor in the Deep East Community Area**

Texas Family Care Network (TFCN) established partnerships with faith and community partners in Deep East Texas prior to the transition to Community-Based Care in Region 5. TFCN has worked closely with its network of faith and

community partners to utilize graciously donated space and other resources throughout the transition. Southside Baptist Church in Lufkin hosted several town hall meetings before and during Stage I of the transition. St. Cyprian's Episcopal Church in Lufkin has hosted several town hall and provider meetings through Stages I and II that have allowed TFCN to educate the community and connect with child placing agencies.

First United Methodist Church in Beaumont hosted several town hall meetings before and during Stage 1 of the transition, as well as meetings and trainings during Stage 2. First Baptist Church in Center has provided meeting space for TFCN staff and visitation space for families, and First Methodist Church of Shelbyville hosted an information meeting to educate congregants on the transition to Community-Based Care. Timberland Drive Church of Christ in Lufkin has been a faithful partner from the beginning, providing monthly donations to the Sunshine Room emergency resource center for children and families served by TFCN. Timberland Drive Church of Christ also provides Thanksgiving food baskets for families, as well as Christmas gifts for children served by TFCN.

Texas Family Care Network also manages the Heart Gallery of Southeast Texas and has had the opportunity to educate faith and community partners about Community-Based Care and children looking for adoptive homes during the Baptist Pastor's Collaboration Meeting in Beaumont. Harmony Hill Baptist Church in Lufkin is a Heart Gallery of Southeast Texas host partner to recruit foster and adoptive families. Harmony Hill Baptist Church has provided donations and resources to TFCN families effected by disasters. First Christian Church in Lufkin is also a Heart Gallery of Southeast Texas host partner to recruit foster and adoptive families, and they have provided pumpkins for children to decorate at the Fall Family Fun Day match event and adoption celebration at First Baptist Church in Nacogdoches.

Gospel Center Church is hosting the TFCN Gospel Brunch to reach foster/adoptive families in the Jefferson/Orange County area in November. Timber Creek church campuses in Lufkin and Nacogdoches are helping to provide Christmas gifts to children served by TFCN as well. The Heart Gallery of Southeast Texas is rotating portrait exhibits at various churches across Deep East Texas. Texas Family Care Network continues to expand their reach, growing and establishing relationships amongst faith and community partners throughout Deep East Texas and beyond.

### **Belong, Single Source Continuum Contractor in the South-Central Hill Country Community Area**

Belong works with faith-based partners to connect them to the mission of caring for those who have taken on the role of foster or kinship caregivers through their partnership with the Alliance Prevention Network. Belong hosted a showing of the Sound of Hope movie in the region with attendance from local community members in Bexar County. From this event, Belong had the opportunity to facilitate a few action-based follow ups that contribute to churches building out a foster care mission within their congregation.

Belong also hosted a Blue Breakfast focusing on the partnerships within the faith-based community to answer the needs from within the child and family wellbeing system. One of the most significant ways the faith-based community supports the vision of Belong is by allowing their facilities to be used as shared workspaces for parent-child visits, office space, and hosting larger meetings. Finally, we continue to sponsor the United Hearts Music Festival, uniting hearts across the community in support of a larger cause.

Over the next year, Belong will develop a system to track the level of contribution for each faith-based partner to determine how the organization can continue to grow in collaboration and find opportunities to strengthen the partnership while developing new faith-based connections. In addition, this new tracking platform will increase efficiency in the partnerships Belong has with community partners and help share these relationships with others within the child and family wellbeing system.

Additionally, Belong looks to advance the current joint collaborations such as the Comal County Child and Family Wellbeing collation and the Golden Crescent Children's Project by structuring the way the faith-based community is informed on trends within the foster care system and have concrete ways on how they can support the larger vision of Community-Based Care.

## Best Practices

- Highlighting success stories across the region with community and faith-based partners to illustrate the positive impact their efforts have made in the lives of our children and families.
- Hosting recognition events to honor partners' contributions to foster care and family well-being, offering public acknowledgment and appreciation.
- Facilitating Follow-Up Opportunities after events like Sound of Hope, Blue Sunday, Stand Sunday, Foster Care Informational Meetings, Big Give, or Blue Breakfast, etc. By providing actionable next steps for attendees, including ways they can engage with and support the foster care mission.
- Offering training and education on foster care trends by hosting informational sessions on topics like trauma-informed care, support for caregivers, TBRI principals, and understanding the Community-Based Care model, providing faith-based partners and community partners with the tools to serve effectively.
- Practice open communication and transparency by sharing organizational updates and data, with partners. Also providing opportunities via surveys for partners to provide feedback, ask questions, and share concerns.

## Collaborative Examples

- Belong had the opportunity to present to the Gillespie County Ministerial Alliance, gathering over 25 pastors in a shared mission.
- Belong hosted numerous screenings of "Sound of Hope" throughout their 27 counties.
- Belong team members have done radio shows, news interviews, and podcasts to discuss the faith-based communities' vital role in addressing the foster care crisis.
- Belong is partnering with several churches for the upcoming holiday season to provide gifts for families. Collaborative efforts like these can make a significant difference in the lives of those in need, especially during the holidays. Partnering with Place for Life, Victory Worship Center, The Rock SA, True Vine, Kingdom Life Christian Ministry, and Family Life International Ministries shows a strong commitment to helping the community and spreading holiday cheer.
- Belong partners with the South Texas Alliance for Orphans. A part of their mission is to create stronger support networks for our foster, adoptive, and kinship families. The Alliance host Pastors Gatherings, Babysitting Collaboratives, and they mobilize churches and congregation to play their piece, by assigning each congregation a church engagement specialist. The involvement looks different for everyone, but everyone can get involved. This year, approximately 150 churches have become involved.
- Belong's partnership with the Christ Coalition organization is a commendable initiative that aims to bring together various sectors including state, church, and community to enhance the collective capacity and support those involved in the child welfare space. By providing networking opportunities, resources, cross-collaboration training, and team building, they are effectively fostering a collaborative and supportive environment.
- Belong collaborated with church partners and community partners to offer summer camps for our youth in Region 4 as well as providing back to school supplies for families.
- Belong collaborated with 19:10 church for shared workspace and supervised visitation site for family visits.
- Val Verde County within the region secured the Del Rio Fleet through Belong's partnership with Living Stone Worship Center.
- Belong is collaborating with Ministerial Alliances across the regions to collaborate on Diaper and wipe drives, Christmas gifts, and Stand Sunday acknowledgements and activities.

## Goals Achieved

- Belong has increased awareness of Community-Based Care and our organizational mission and vision across the Hill Country and South Texas regions.
- Belong has established partnerships and collaborations within the region with community and congregational partners.

- Belong is making connections and developing champion churches to further service children and families within the child and family wellbeing space in Region 4.
- Belong volunteers throughout the region with church and community partners, working together in unity with activities and events that are geared towards their mission and vision as well as Belongs.

## PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION (PEI)

The Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Division of DFPS was transferred to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and renamed the Family Support Services Division effective September 1, 2024. The work included in this report was done while PEI was at DFPS. PEI assists communities in identifying, developing, and delivering high quality family support programs. These programs promote opportunities for partnerships with families that capitalize on the strengths of parents and children together to build healthy families and resilient communities upstream from crisis and the need for intensive interventions.

During Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24), PEI continued to provide leadership and support to the Early Childhood Interagency Work Group. This collaboration of Texas state agencies works together to identify, coordinate, and implement cross-sector initiatives for young children.

Additionally, beginning in FY23, the federal government awarded the state of Texas \$16 million a year for the Preschool Development Grant Birth Through 5 (PDG B-5). The funds are from January 2023 through December 2025. As part of this grant, PEI was awarded \$5.5 Million to support efforts related to Early Childhood Systems Building. To receive funding, PEI grantees had to agree to become a Help Me Grow (HMG) affiliate or engage in HMG-aligned activities, family engagement and systems building. Help me Grow helps states and communities, including faith communities, leverage existing resources. The model is made up of four core components that work together to promote optimal child development.

PEI also continued its efforts in promoting early childhood systems building. A total of 29 PEI awardees across the state accepted Early Childhood Systems Building (ECSB) funding. Awardees submitted their unique ECSB plans detailing their primary goals and activities in their communities and have been working on unique systems building initiatives across Texas. The following are the ECSB supported activities and number of grantees engaged in each:

- Help Me Grow Affiliation and Implementation
- Creating & Expanding Family Resource Centers
- Adopting and implementing National Family Support Network Standards of Quality framework
- Developing and supporting a Parent Advisory Committee
- Implementing Parent Cafés
- Conducting family and community outreach and education
- Establishing or enhancing centralized access, including a central intake and referral system in the community
- Engaging child healthcare providers
- Performing data collection and analysis regarding systems development, access, opportunity for enhancement, and community impact
- Early childhood coalition coordination

Further, PEI developed a new series of videos on [GetParentingTips.com](https://www.getparentingtips.com) to showcase PEI programming. These videos feature parents that have successfully participated in programming and lets them tell the story of how the programming supported them along their parenting journey. Parents and community members, including faith communities, are encouraged to watch and share these videos to help connect parents in their community with available resources. For more, visit [GetParentingTips.com](https://www.getparentingtips.com) and visit our [program locator](#) for more resources.

## Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)

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The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) is committed to expanding fair housing choice and opportunities for Texans through the administration and funding of affordable housing and homeownership opportunities, weatherization, and community-based services with the help of for-profits, nonprofits, and local governments. Many of TDHCA's programs rely heavily on nonprofits as sub-recipients such as the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG), Community Service Block Grants (CSBG), Comprehensive Energy Assistance and Low Income Home Energy Assistance programs' subrecipients (CEAP and LIHEAP). Through education, outreach, training, program administration, monitoring, and rule provision, TDHCA works to ensure that its housing and assistance programs are compliant with HUD's requirements and regulations regarding fair housing. TDHCA staff also offers webinar training opportunities throughout the year and more tailored training upon request to help ensure equal access to TDHCA programs.

TDHCA's Fair Housing team was awarded a Fair Housing Education Outreach and Initiative (FHEOI) grant in 2023. The purpose of the grant was to expand the reach and visibility of Fair Housing materials generated by a 2020 FHEOI grant. Activities of the 2023 grant were intended to develop and bolster capacity for outreach and education to developers, apartment owners, apartment managers, relevant trade and advocacy organizations, potential homeowners and tenants of programs and properties that TDHCA operates and manages. This outreach and education will allow stakeholders to be more informed of their responsibilities and rights when it comes to fair housing in the State of Texas. TDHCA completed the activities of the grant; three, high quality, highly reusable short-form webinars were produced that are intended to engage all Texans. The webinars provide high level information about fair housing topics as well as information on how to file a fair housing complaint in Texas.

## Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR)

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The mission of the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) is to serve the Texas government by leading the state's technology strategy, protecting state technology infrastructure, and offering innovative and cost-effective solutions for all levels of government.

DIR is the cornerstone of public-sector technology in Texas and collaborates with industry partners to deliver services to other public sector organizations throughout the state. DIR helps these organizations access the secure, innovative, and cost-effective technology they need to fulfill their missions.

DIR supports faith- and community-based organizations by providing access to competitive technology procurement for eligible organizations, serving as a resource for technology best practices and guidance, and encouraging DIR staff to give back to the community.

### **TECHNOLOGY PROCUREMENT**

DIR's Cooperative Contracts program makes technology products (such as laptops and software) and services (such as network connectivity and training) available at bargain prices to eligible customers, including state agencies, institutions of higher education, K-12 independent school districts, quasi-government organizations, counties, municipalities, and assistance organizations registered with the Texas Facilities Commission or the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. DIR offers Texas entities technology goods and services at discounted prices and with favorable contract terms to ensure that they can focus on their mission of serving Texans.

[Texas Government Code Section 2054.0565](#) authorizes assistance organizations (including faith- and community-based organizations) to use DIR's Cooperative Contracts, enabling them to leverage the state's buying power to obtain the best value for technology products and services. DIR actively promotes the Cooperative Contracts program through newsletters, webinars, and social media to eligible customers—including faith- and community-based organizations—to



raise awareness of procurements, contracting updates, and purchasing opportunities.

In Fiscal Year 2024, 41 faith-and community-based organizations from across the state purchased approximately \$10 million in technology commodity items through DIR’s Cooperative Contracts program, marking an increase of more than double the purchases in Fiscal Year 2023.

## TECHNOLOGY BEST PRACTICES AND GUIDANCE

DIR guides the Texas government with technology policy, planning, and standards that help promote the effective and efficient use and management of technology statewide. Additionally, DIR protects the state’s technology infrastructure and Texans’ private data from cyberattacks by promoting cybersecurity best practices, providing guidance and consultation on technology issues, and offering immediate assistance to government entities during a cybersecurity event.

Faith- and community-based organizations, like other public entities, can use DIR as a resource for their technology policy and planning needs by accessing technology-related reports, policies, standards, and guidelines on the [DIR website](#) and by calling 1-855-ASK-DIR1 (1-855-275-3471) for assistance.

## DIR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

DIR serves as a resource for technology procurements and guidance and actively supports faith- and community-based organizations through fundraising and community service initiative participation by its employees. Every year, DIR encourages staff to contribute to the State Employee Charitable Campaign. DIR staff raised approximately \$42,083 during the 2023 campaign, an 18 percent increase compared to 2022 contributions. Additionally, DIR employees contribute to the community by organizing holiday food and toy drives and participating in community service efforts throughout the year. DIR is committed to supporting faith- and community-based organizations through these initiatives in the years ahead.

See [Government Code Section 2054.0525](#) for customers eligible for department services.

See [Government Code Section 2175.001](#) for the definition of assistance organization.

Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS)

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## SOCIAL MEDIA: PUBLIC SAFETY MESSAGING OUTREACH

### January

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 01/10/2024       | <b>Spotlight on DPS’ Human Trafficking Program</b><br>Shared information about how this program works to combat this crime in Texas, as well as information about how to report signs of human trafficking.   |
| 01/11/2024       | <b>National Human Trafficking Awareness Day:</b> Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery, and the reality is it happens every day. National Human Trafficking Awareness Day is a chance to shed light on and bring awareness to this crime. There are victims of human trafficking right here in Texas.<br><br>Every day, DPS works to combat this crime and take predators off our streets, along with providing resources and support for the victims of human trafficking. |
| 01/12/2024       | <b>Winter Weather Safety Message</b>  |
| 01/22/2024       | <b>Weather Safety Tips: Flooding</b>  |
| 01/23-01/26/2024 | <b>Recognizing Indicators of Human Trafficking</b><br>Human trafficking has devastating impacts on victims and our communities. DPS shared tips to help the community recognize possible indicators of human trafficking.   |

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|------------|--|
| 01/25/2024 | <b>Weather Safety Tips:</b> From rain to flooding, ice to fog, DPS shared safety tips for Texans for all types of weather in mind. |
| 01/26/2024 | <b>Road Rage Safety Tips Video</b>   |

### Human Trafficking Awareness Month

January is National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, and throughout the month, DPS worked to raise awareness about this heinous crime and how Texans can recognize the indicators that an individual may be the victim of human trafficking.

Public awareness is an important component of preventing and combating this crime. To that end, DPS also shared the many ways individuals can report this crime — from iWatchTexas to the National Human Trafficking Hotline. Additionally, DPS shared a series of tips to help the public recognize possible indicators of human trafficking.

### One Pill Kills

Every week, DPS shares messages related to the *One Pill Kills* campaign and raising awareness about the dangers of fentanyl. This has occurred throughout 2024. Our messaging highlights the dangers of fentanyl and resources to help spread awareness to save the lives of Texans. DPS also maintains a *One Pill Kills* page on our website to further promote this messaging and educate Texas. You can find this page at [www.dps.texas.gov/onepillkills](http://www.dps.texas.gov/onepillkills).

### Safe Gun Storage Awareness Campaign

DPS continues to promote the importance of safe gun storage for everyone who owns a firearm. This awareness campaign promotes the 1-2-3s of safe gun storage, facts about how to safely store a firearm, what safe storage options are available, how to talk to family, friends and children about safe storage and guns, and so much more. Each month, DPS features safe gun storage-related safety messages on our social media channels.

- 01/09/2024: Make safe gun storage your new year’s resolution
- 01/16/2024: Talk to your children about safe gun storage
- 01/24/2024: Only about half of gun owners practice safe storage

## February

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| 02/2024    | <b>Friday Safe Driving Tips:</b> Shared safe driving messages on Fridays throughout the month to remind Texans to buckle up, eliminate distractions, move over or slow down and don’t drink and drive. |
| 02/09/2024 | <b>Mardi Gras Safety Tips</b>  |
| 02/11/2024 | <b>Super Bowl Safety Tips</b>  |
| 02/14/2024 | <b>School Bus Safety Tips</b>  |
| 02/28/2024 | <b>Shared Wildfire Safety Tips</b> to help prevent the spread and start of new wildfires; encouraged Texans to be safe with the fires that burned in the Panhandle of Texas in February.               |

### Safe Gun Storage Awareness Campaign

- 02/02/2024: Because you don’t want your guns getting into the wrong hands
- 02/09/2024: Protect your family from preventable injuries
- 02/15/2024: What is a biometric device?
- 02/20/2024: In 2022, firearm injuries were the leading cause of death among children and teens.

## March

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 03/09-03/15/2024 | <b>THP Annual Spring Break Traffic Enforcement:</b> Shared information about DPS’ annual traffic enforcement campaign, as well as safety tips, including safety videos, to help Texans enjoy a safe spring break. |
| 03/22/2024       | <b>Bluebonnet, Spring Wildflower Safety Tips</b>  |
| 03/26/2024       | <b>Wildfire Safety Tips</b>   |
| 03/28/2024       | <b>Move Over, Slow Down Safety Video</b>  |

### Safe Gun Storage Awareness Campaign

- 03/19/2024: Spring into safety and prioritize safe gun storage
- 03/27/2024: Make sure eggs are the only things your kids find this Easter

### April

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|------------------|--|
| 04/01/2024       | <b>April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month:</b> Throughout the month, DPS worked to raise awareness about the prevention of child abuse and protecting Texas children and shared the ways DPS is doing just that. Additionally for the entire month, MCO changed the profile images on our social media channels to a specially created logo for National Child Abuse Prevention Month. |
| 04/05/2024       | <b>LATEST NEWS: DPS Urges Texans, Visitors to Follow Safety Guidelines Ahead of Historic Solar Eclipse</b>   |
| 04/06-04/08/2024 | <b>Solar Eclipse Safety Tips</b>   |
| 04/08/2024       | <b>Severe Weather Safety Tips</b>  |
| 04/12/2024       | <b>National Distracted Driving Awareness Month</b>   |
| 04/12/2024       | <b>iWatchTexas, Suspicious Activity Reporting Reminder</b>   |
| 04/15-04/17/2024 | <b>National Workzone Awareness Week:</b> Shared Kickoff Event with TxDOT, as well as safety tips and a reminder to Move Over, Slow Down  |
| 04/19/2024       | <b>Move Over, Slow Down Safety Reminder,</b> as part of National Work Zone Awareness Week  |

### Safe Gun Storage Awareness Campaign

- 04/02/2024: Spring cleaning includes safe gun storage
- 04/09/2024: Learn the 1-2-3s of safe gun storage
- 04/16/2024: Safety doesn't have to slow you down

### May

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 05/03/2024       | <b>Texas Highway Patrol Annual Cinco De Mayo Traffic Enforcement Campaign:</b> Shared key safety tips   |
| 05/07/2024       | <b>National Fentanyl Awareness Day:</b> DPS featured posts throughout the day highlighting the dangers of fentanyl and marking this national awareness day of recognition |
| 05/14/2024       | <b>National Bicycle Safety Month</b>  |
| 05/15-05/30/2024 | <b>Click It Or Ticket Statewide Events:</b> Shared important messages to encourage Texans to buckle up and always wear their seat belts                                   |
| 05/20/2024       | <b>LATEST NEWS: DPS Increases Memorial Day Traffic Enforcement (May 20-27, 2024)</b>  |

### Safe Gun Storage Awareness Campaign

- 05/06/2024: A child's curiosity can put them at risk
- 05/10/2024: Securing your guns helps to safeguard their future
- 05/31/2024: Practice safe gun storage this summer break

### June

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 06/10/2024       | <b>LATEST NEWS: DPS Reminds Texans to Plan Now for Hurricane Season</b>  |
| 06/12-06/26/2024 | <b>Hurricane Season Safety Tips:</b> As hurricane season got underway, DPS shared key safety tips to help Texans prepare, should a storm impact Texas. |
| 06/24/2024       | <b>LATEST NEWS: DPS Offers Summer Safety Tips</b>  |
| 06/24-06/29/2024 | <b>Heat Safety Tips Series:</b> DPS shared a series of tips to help Texans stay safe in the summer heat across all platforms.                          |

### Summer Safety

Summer is a busy time for sharing vital safety messages across our social media platforms. From heat safety to hurricane safety to traffic enforcement and road safety, DPS continues to share vital public safety messages to encourage Texans to make safety their top priority.

### Safe Gun Storage Awareness Campaign

- 06/05/2024: Out of sight is not out of reach
- 06/10/2024: New Homeowner? Childproof your home with safe gun storage
- 06/18/2024: Stolen firearms
- 06/25/2024: Safely store guns even when on-the-go

### July

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 07/02-07/12/2024 | <b>Vehicle Safety Inspection Program Changes:</b> Kicked-off a public awareness series about the changes coming to the state’s vehicle safety inspection program   |
| 07/03/2024       | <b>LATEST NEWS: DPS Reminds Texans to Put Safety First During Fourth of July Holiday</b>   |
| 07/04/2024       | <b>iWatchTexas: Suspicious Activity Reporting   Fourth of July Tie:</b> Reminder to all Texans to report suspicious activity using iWatchTexas, also provided the various methods to submit a report using iWatchTexas |
| 07/03-07/24/2024 | <b>Hurricane Safety Tips</b>   |
| 07/16/2024       | <b>Be Safe. Drive Smart. Enforcement Campaign with TxDOT</b>   |
| 07/17/2024       | <b>Summer Heat Safety PSA</b>  |
| 07/19/2024       | <b>Operation Slowdown:</b> Traffic enforcement initiative focusing on slowing motorists down; shared important reminder about the Move Over, Slow Down law   |

### Vehicle Safety Inspection Program

July 1 marked six-months to go until the implementation of changes to the state’s Vehicle Safety Inspection Program. These changes will directly impact Texas drivers, with the elimination of a vehicle safety inspection prior to registration for non-commercial vehicles. DPS created a series of graphics to share across our social media platforms to educate Texans on how these changes will impact them in 2025. DPS continues to share this important messaging and will do so into early 2025.

### Hurricane Beryl

In early July, Hurricane Beryl made landfall in Texas, impacting many coastal Texas communities. DPS worked alongside partner agencies to share vital safety messages to help keep Texans safe, as well as important information related to storm response and recovery efforts.

### Safe Gun Storage Awareness Campaign

- 07/18/2024: Secure guns using a safe storage device
- 07/25/2024: Video featuring the story of Susan Nelson
- 07/30/2024: Safe gun storage mini checklist

### August

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 08/01/2024       | <b>REMINDER: Five Months To Go: Changes Coming to Texas’ Vehicle Safety Inspection Program</b>   |
| 08/02/2024       | <b>LATEST NEWS: DPS Announces SafeDRIVE Enforcement</b><br>Throughout the week, DPS continued to share reminders about this enforcement initiative and safety tips.                                      |
| 08/05/2024       | <b>LATEST NEWS: DPS Issues Safety Reminders Ahead of New School Year</b>   |
| 08/05-08/08/2024 | <b>Back to School Safety Videos:</b> DPS shared a back-to-school PSA video with tips for a safe school year. These vital safety messages are important to share year-after-year to remind drivers of the |

|            |   |
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|            | importance of slowing down and avoiding distractions while driving, particularly during this time of year.  |
| 08/09/2024 | <b>iWatchTexas Suspicious Activity Reporting:</b> Back-to-school safety tie, with reminder to stay vigilant and report suspicious activity to law enforcement |
| 08/12/2024 | <b>Move Over, Slow Down Safety Video,</b> reminding and encouraging motorists to follow the law to save lives   |
| 08/29/2024 | <b>Labor Day Safety Video, featuring DPS Regional Director Jeremy Sherrod</b>   |
| 08/30/2024 | <b>DPS' Annual Labor Day Traffic Enforcement Initiative</b>   |

### Safe Gun Storage Awareness Campaign

- 08/13/2024: Relax knowing your guns are safely stored
- 08/28/2024: Safe gun storage is for vehicles too

### September

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 09/09/2024       | <b>Safety Messages, Tropical Storm Francine</b>  |
| 09/11/2024       | <b>Rainy Weather Safety Video</b>  |
| 09/13/2024       | <b>iWatchTexas, Suspicious Activity Reporting Reminder:</b> Shared important safety message about reporting suspicious activity, particularly with recent school safety threats across Texas   |
| 09/16/2024       | <b>LATEST NEWS: DPS Issues Reminders for Child Passenger Safety Week</b>   |
| 09/16-09/18/2024 | <b>Child Passenger Safety Week:</b> Shared posts daily, featuring safety tips related to child passenger safety, including a child passenger safety tip video. Sharing these vital safety tips helps ensure the safety of our youngest passengers on the road.   |
| 09/23-09/28/2024 | <b>Suspicious Activity Reporting Week:</b> Throughout the week, and in conjunction with “If You See Something, Say Something®” Awareness Day on Wednesday, Sept. 25, DPS shared information about iWatchTexas, the importance of suspicious activity reporting and how you can help make your community safer. Additionally, DPS shared information about downloading the iWatchTexas mobile app, as well as tips and examples on the types of behaviors and activities to report. |

### Safe Gun Storage Awareness Campaign

- 09/17/2024: Brush up on your safe gun storage knowledge

### October

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 10/01/2024       | <b>October is Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness Month:</b> DPS highlighted Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness Month throughout October, as part of Governor Abbott’s initiative to raise awareness about the dangers of fentanyl. |
| 10/11/2024       | <b>Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness Month PSA:</b> Governor Abbott teamed up with Texas college football coaches to bring awareness about the dangers of fentanyl  |
| 10/18/2024       | <b>Move Over, Slow Down PSA</b>  |
| 10/21-10/25/2024 | <b>National School Bus Safety Week</b>   |
| 10/22/2024       | <b>iWatchTexas Suspicious Activity Reporting:</b> Download the iWatchTexas Mobile App for easy suspicious activity reporting   |
| 10/25/2024       | <b>Move Over, Slow Down Safe Driving Tip</b>   |
| 10/28/2024       | <b>DPS Offers Halloween Safety Tips</b>  |
| 10/29-10/31/2024 | <b>Halloween Safety Tips, Video Series:</b> DPS shared a series of videos featuring tips to keep kids safe while trick-or-treating, as well as tips related to driver and roadway safety.                              |

### Safe Gun Storage Awareness Campaign

- 10/07/2024: Prevent gun theft by storing your gun safely (Crime Prevention Month)
- 10/11/2024: Make your home a safe place by storing guns safely

- 10/16/2024: Have the safe gun storage talk
- 10/29/2024: Keep guns safely stored this Halloween and every day

## PRESS RELEASES: PUBLIC SAFETY MESSAGING OUTREACH TO MEDIA, COMMUNITY PARTNERS

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| 02/01/2024 | <p><a href="#"><b>DPS Launches Violent Offender Database</b></a></p> <p>The Texas Department of Public Safety is pleased to announce that the Violent Offender Database is now available. This new database launched on December 29, 2023 — officially going live ahead of its required Jan. 1, 2024, deadline.</p>   |
| 04/05/2024 | <p><a href="#"><b>DPS Urges Texans, Visitors to Follow Safety Guidelines Ahead of Historic Solar Eclipse</b></a></p> <p>AUSTIN – The Texas Department of Public Safety today urged Texans and those visiting the state to prepare accordingly and follow safety tips ahead of the historic total solar eclipse expected to impact dozens of communities next week. Those in the path of totality will see the effects from roughly 1:30 PM to 1:50 PM on Monday, April 8.</p>   |
| 04/07/2024 | <p><a href="#"><b>Emergency Declaration: 2024 Solar Eclipse</b></a></p> <p>The Texas Department of Public Safety issued an Emergency Declaration for the 2024 Solar Eclipse.</p>  |
| 05/20/2024 | <p><a href="#"><b>DPS Increases Memorial Day Traffic Enforcement</b></a></p> <p>The Texas Department of Public Safety is encouraging Texas motorists to heed driver safety tips and prepare for enhanced Memorial Day enforcement efforts, including the annual Click It or Ticket and Operation Crash Awareness Reduction Effort (CARE) campaigns, starting today, May 20, through Memorial Day, May 27.</p>   |
| 06/10/2024 | <p><a href="#"><b>DPS Reminds Texans to Plan Now for Hurricane Season</b></a></p> <p>In support of hurricane preparedness efforts across the state, the Texas Department of Public Safety reminds Texans to make an emergency plan as hurricane season gets underway. The 2024 Atlantic Hurricane Season runs June 1 through November 30.</p>   |
| 06/24/2024 | <p><a href="#"><b>DPS Offers Summer Safety Tips</b></a></p> <p>As the heat continues across Texas, the Texas Department of Public Safety urges everyone to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves and their loved ones from the dangers of extreme heat in order to have a safe, healthy summer.</p>  |
| 07/01/2024 | <p><a href="#"><b>DPS Reminds Texans of Vehicle Safety Inspection Changes</b></a></p> <p>The Texas Department of Public Safety reminds Texans of upcoming changes to the state’s Vehicle Safety Inspection Program that will eliminate most vehicle safety inspections. House Bill 3297, which was passed by the 88th Legislature and signed into law by Governor Greg Abbott in 2023, abolishes the Vehicle Safety Inspection Program for non-commercial vehicles.</p>   |
| 07/03/2024 | <p><a href="#"><b>DPS Reminds Texans to Put Safety First During Fourth of July Holiday</b></a></p> <p>The Texas Department of Public Safety is stepping up enforcement efforts for the Fourth of July holiday to keep everyone safe on the roads, including Operation Crash Awareness Reduction Effort (CARE), which runs July 3-7.</p>   |
| 08/02/2024 | <p><a href="#"><b>DPS Announces SafeDRIVE Enforcement</b></a></p> <p>The Texas Department of Public Safety’s Texas Highway Patrol is increasing enforcement efforts — along with fellow law enforcement partners in bordering states — as part of the Distracted Reckless Impaired Visibility Enforcement or SafeDRIVE initiative. This concentrated highway enforcement will run Aug. 6-8, 2024, on Interstates 10, 20, 35, 40 and 45.</p>   |
| 08/05/2024 | <p><a href="#"><b>DPS Issues Safety Reminders Ahead of New School Year</b></a></p> <p>As students begin heading back to school, the Texas Department of Public Safety reminds all Texans to exercise heightened caution and adhere to safety measures implemented to protect students, staff and fellow drivers this school year. This includes tips on how to safely drop off and pick up your child from school, drive cautiously through school zones and talk to your family and loved ones about staying safe this school year and beyond.</p> |
| 08/29/2024 | <p><a href="#"><b>DPS Increases Enforcement for Labor Day Holiday</b></a></p>   |

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|            | As part of an effort to keep drivers safe this Labor Day weekend, the Texas Department of Public Safety is increasing enforcement efforts, including Operation Crash Awareness Reduction Effort (CARE) Aug. 30 through Sept. 2, statewide.   |
| 09/16/2024 | <b><a href="#">DPS Issues Reminders for Child Passenger Safety Week</a></b><br>In recognition of Child Passenger Safety Week, which runs Sept. 15-20, the Texas Department of Public Safety is reminding drivers to educate themselves on the best child safety seat practices to keep our state’s youngest passengers safe on the road.   |
| 09/23/2024 | <b><a href="#">DPS Highlights iWatchTexas Program Ahead of “If You See Something, Say Something” Awareness Day</a></b><br>The Texas Department of Public Safety is reminding Texans this week of the iWatchTexas program — a critical resource the public can use to report suspicious activity or behavior in their schools and communities — ahead of National “If You See Something, Say Something” Awareness Day on Sept. 25.  |
| 09/23/2024 | <b><a href="#">DPS Bolsters One Pill Kills Campaign During Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness Month</a></b><br>Beginning today, the Texas Department of Public Safety is increasing its <i>One Pill Kills</i> public awareness efforts as part of Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness Month. Signed into law by Governor Greg Abbott last year, House Bill 3144 established the month of October as Fentanyl Poisoning Awareness Month — a statewide effort to bring awareness and education to the public about the dangers of fentanyl and the life-saving power of opioid poisoning reversal medication. |
| 10/02/2024 | <b><a href="#">ICYMI: Vehicle Safety Inspection Changes Take Effect January 2025</a></b><br>The Texas Department of Public Safety reminds Texans that changes to the state’s Vehicle Safety Inspection Program – which eliminate most vehicle safety inspections – begin on Jan. 1, 2025. These changes are due to House Bill 3297. The bill was passed by the 88th Legislature and signed into law by Governor Greg Abbott in 2023, abolishing the Vehicle Safety Inspection Program for non-commercial vehicles.   |
| 10/28/2024 | <b><a href="#">DPS Offers Halloween Safety Tips</a></b><br>As Halloween approaches, the Texas Department of Public Safety would like to remind all Texans to prioritize safety while enjoying the festivities. Whether you are trick-or-treating, attending a Halloween event or traveling the roads, staying alert and taking precautions is essential.   |
| 10/28/2024 | <b><a href="#">iWatchTexas Receives Record Number of School Safety Reports in September</a></b><br>The Texas Department of Public Safety’s iWatchTexas program received a record number of school safety related reports during the month of September – more than double previous years. For the month of September 2024, the program recorded a total of 204 school safety related reports, a majority of them involving concerning behaviors such as threats or the possibility of planned attacks centered around school campuses.   |

## Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) participates in numerous activities and programs with faith -and community-based organizations with the focus to promote a healthy Texas. This report highlights major initiatives for fiscal year (FY) 2024. While this listing is not exhaustive, it provides a high-level description of DSHS initiatives with faith and community-based organizations.

### CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH POLICY AND PRACTICE (CPHPP)

DSHS works to strengthen the public health system to improve the health of Texans by linking policy, academia, and workforce to public health practice.

The DSHS Medical & Research Library (MRL) maintained the webpage of the [Health Ministry Faith Community Nursing Bibliography](#) for many years for the **Texas Health Ministries Network (THMN)**. In 2022, MRL discontinued maintaining the THMN webpage because THMN launched its own [website](#). While MRL no longer maintains the THMN website, it continues to highlight trainings and bibliographic information for faith-based ministries on its [webpage](#).

In June 2021, DSHS received a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to address health disparities highlighted by COVID-19. Through this grant, DSHS has funded dozens of Texas partners to conduct Community Conversations on Health (CCOH) in rural and underserved communities across the state. CCOH's primary goals are to listen, learn, and develop community-driven plans that leverage the community's strengths while addressing their needs. The aim is to lay the foundation to strengthen community capacity and resiliency to face future public health emergencies.

As of August 2024, our funded partners reported 175 unique partnerships with faith-based organizations (FBOs) and 259 unique partnerships with community-based or civic organizations (CBOs) in the CCOH Partnership Directory.

## **COMMUNITY HEALTH IMPROVEMENT (CHI)**

DSHS promotes improved Texas community health outcomes through various initiatives focusing on maternal and child health, child safety, chronic disease prevention, tobacco use prevention, and epidemiological surveillance. DSHS partners with a variety of stakeholders to make a positive health impact, including collaboration with faith and community-based organizations.

The **Healthy Texas Mothers and Babies (HTMB)** initiative helps Texas communities decrease maternal and infant mortality. HTMB collaborates with community coalitions to create a network of local systems that focus on improving maternal and infant mortality and maternal, perinatal, and infant health. These nine coalitions bring together health professionals, local health departments (LHDs), hospitals, community-based organizations (CBOs), and stakeholders to create a collaborative partner network to lend local communities resources and expertise. Coalitions convene periodically, coordinate health assessments, and conduct training and outreach activities.

Additionally, HTMB engages CBOs and employers to promote maternal and child health and breastfeeding initiatives. The program uses stakeholder input to identify service gaps and local community opportunities for improving breastfeeding support. This work includes the support of the **Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite** program which partners with employers to develop best practices to support nursing mothers. There were 3,597 Mother-Friendly Worksites in FY2024.

**Help Me Grow Texas** is a statewide network of communities that strives to strengthen early childhood systems to promote healthy development. The network enhances early developmental detection capacity and connects those in need of community resources, services, and supports to families with young children. In FY2024, Help Me Grow Texas supported twelve CBOs by convening state and local early childhood stakeholders, coordinating a cohort learning experience for regional communities, and identifying sustainable best practices for a high impact early childhood system.

The **Children with Special Health Care Needs - Systems Development Group (CSHCN SDG)** worked with 22 CBOs to provide case management, family support, and community resources to over 6,000 Texas children and youth with special health care needs and their families during FY2024. This group provides information regarding upcoming initiatives, training opportunities, and special interest events for professionals to share with CSHCN families.

The **Safe Riders Child Passenger Safety Program** collaborates with CBOs to provide resources and support to parents, child passenger safety technicians, and safety advocates. The program works with 58 CBOs providing child safety seats, seat inspections, and seat checkups for families in need at 82 partner sites. Staff also completed child passenger safety presentations for multiple community organizations and coalition groups. Safe Riders collaborated with CBOs to conduct the National Child Passenger Safety Technician Certification trainings. The Safe Riders Child Passenger Safety program distributed 4,826 child safety seats from October 2023 through July 2024.

The **Child Fatality Review Team (CFRT) Program** works with CBOs within local CFRTs consisting of community partner groups who review child deaths from a public health perspective. Local CFRTs provide help, direction, and coordinate



child death investigations; promote agency collaboration in responding to child fatalities; try to understand the causes and incidences of child deaths in their county or counties; recommend changes to policy or procedures to reduce preventable deaths; and suggest changes to law, policy, or practice.

The **Obesity Prevention Program** works with Feeding Texas, food banks, FBOs, and local health entities (LHEs). This program encourages partners to promote healthy eating and implement healthy food policies. It also operates to increase the availability of healthy food selections at food pantries and mobile food distribution sites. While partnering with 9 Texas food distribution sites, the program enhances access to healthy food options in target communities and provides prompts and assistance to food pantries when ordering food from participating food banks. This project has served over 15,000 Texans in 2024.

The **Tobacco Prevention and Control Program** connects with CBOs to implement comprehensive tobacco prevention and control efforts. These partnerships aim to reduce the toll of tobacco on the health, safety, and well-being of Texans. The DSHS-funded Tobacco Prevention and Control Coalitions' purpose is to prevent and reduce harmful tobacco product use, particularly among youth. Coalitions, which include parents, teachers, youth, law enforcement, businesses, religious leaders, health care providers, and other community members, work at the local level to make their communities safer, healthier, and tobacco-free. In FY 2024, Tobacco Coalitions provided education on tobacco use dangers to over 3,853 youth and adult Texans.

### **INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION (IDP)**

DSHS improves the health of Texans by using strategies to control emerging and ongoing disease threats. DSHS encourages contracted partners such as Public Health Regions (PHRs) and local health departments (LHDs) to establish and manage immunization coalitions to improve immunization rates by promoting the importance of childhood, adolescent, and adult immunizations.

The DSHS Immunizations Section and the CDC both promote local-level immunization coalitions run by LHDs. These coalitions often partner with community-based organizations (CBOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs), and health care providers enrolled in the **Texas Vaccines for Children** and **Adult Safety Net** programs to host vaccination clinics and administer vaccinations to community health fair participants. For the current grant cycle, DSHS has committed to working with five FBOs. DSHS has reached out to 11 FBOs this year and are working with them to increase vaccination rates in Texas. One current partnership is working with the **Well Church Initiative**, a program through AgriLife extension, that works with churches in rural areas to increase awareness of overall health including vaccination. DSHS works with Texas Health Resources, a faith-based nonprofit health system based in North Dallas.

Because both programs offer free vaccines to uninsured individuals and FBOs are already in communication with this population group, FBOs are an ideal partner with LHDs to promote vaccinations. The Immunizations Section provides funding to PHRs which supports their efforts in regional initiatives. When LHDs and responsible entities (REs) partner with FBOs, it fulfills multiple CDC grant objectives to form coalitions and build partnerships to improve vaccination rates in their communities.

The DSHS **Tuberculosis (TB) and Hansen's Disease** Unit provides guidance to local and regional TB programs to conduct targeted testing when an epidemiologic assessment determines the selected facility is considered medium-to-high-risk for TB. Targeted testing is a reasonable response to prevent a recurrence of TB disease transmission. Considering the principle, local and regional TB programs conduct targeted testing or distribute testing supplies to CBOs and FBOs serving medium-to-high-risk populations. These sites include homeless shelters, residential facilities, churches, drug rehabilitation facilities, and others. In 2023, local and regional TB programs partnered with 44 CBOs to conduct targeted testing in 21 facilities and distribute testing supplies to 23 CBOs. The TB Unit also partnered with Texas Association of Community Health Centers (TACHC) to establish linkage to care for people diagnosed with latent TB infection.

DSHS works to monitor, prevent, test, treat, or link patients diagnosed with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD), or Hepatitis C, to treatment. Long-standing partnerships with CBOs and FBOs have helped link people to community-based and clinical HIV/STD services.

The **HIV Care Services** Program contracts with six Texas administrative agencies, who partner directly with CBOs and FBOs. Partnerships promote HIV/STD awareness, provide resources for community HIV/STD prevention and care education, and develop local health promotion initiatives in respective regions. The six administrative agencies established regional HIV Planning Councils and other advisory planning groups comprised of local FBO community leaders and stakeholders. They work directly with CBOs and FBOs to develop integrated HIV prevention and care plans, and host and participate in community health fairs to provide HIV/STD screening and testing.

There are currently three FBOs contracted to deliver HIV medical care and other support services, including housing, in Texas:

- Baptist Hospital of Southeast Texas in Beaumont, Texas;
- Project Vida located in El Paso, Texas; and
- The Salvation Army in Fort Worth, Texas.

### Regional and Local Health Operations (RLHO)

DSHS serves the public health needs of Texas through direct provision of essential public health services, support to local public health agencies, and leadership and coordination for public health emergency preparedness and response.

The core functions of RLHO are to coordinate public health services at the local, regional, and state level, promote public health programs and operations partnerships, and to provide core public health services responsive to local needs across the state.

### Public Health Regions (PHR)

DSHS administers many of its public health programs and services through its eight **Public Health Regions (PHRs)**. All regions partner with faith and community-based organizations to improve and enhance public and population health. PHRs collaborate with local community coalitions, FBOs, community leaders, and school districts to promote injury prevention messages and participate in activities that are focused on suicide prevention, infant safe sleep education, childhood obesity prevention, and water, car, and bicycle safety. PHRs partner with faith and community-based groups to host back-to-school immunization events and health fairs that provide vision and hearing exams and emergency preparedness information.

PHRs participate with local school health advisory councils to conduct tobacco awareness presentations and with community health worker associations to provide train-the-trainer classes on tobacco cessation resources. PHRs partner with public housing authorities to train staff and tenants on secondhand smoke and cessation resources.

PHRs collaborate with FBOs, rape crisis centers, law enforcement, and other victim services to educate and inform the public about human trafficking and outreach to possible victims.

*Table 1: Number of Activities in Public Health Regions (PHRs), September 2023 – September 2024*

| Quarter/Calendar Year to-Date   | Public Health Fairs | Human Trafficking Education Participants | Community Meetings |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|--|--------------------|
| CY 2023<br>Q1: Sept. – Nov.     | 156                 | 359                                      | 888                |
| CY 2023/2024<br>Q2: Dec. – Feb. | 298                 | 746                                      | 939                |

|                              |            |             |             |
|------------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| CY 2024<br>Q3: March – May   | 340        | 191         | 999         |
| CY 2024<br>Q4: June - August | 170        | 92          | 1176        |
| <b>2024 total to-date</b>    | <b>964</b> | <b>1388</b> | <b>4002</b> |

### Texas Center for Infectious Disease (TCID)

TCID is the DSHS public health hospital for in-patient and out-patient treatment of Tuberculosis and Hansen’s disease. Several church organizations provide spiritual support, discussions, and bible study opportunities to TCID patients. TCID also partners with the San Antonio Public Library, which teaches classes to patients, and other organizations like Dress for Success, which helps with job searching for patients. Additionally, a CBO provides animal-assisted therapy. In 2023, there were eight churches from the community and five volunteer community groups providing support to patients. TCID hosted a Public Health Fair that was open to the community, yielding new community contacts and partnerships.

Table 2: Number of Events in Texas Center for Infectious Diseases (TCID), September 2023 – September 2024

| Quarter/FY to Date           | Events with Community-Based Organizations   | Activities   |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| 2023<br>Q1: Sept. – Nov.     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 8 community churches</li> <li>■ 3 community partners</li> <li>■ 1 public health fair</li> <li>■ 1 TWC/DSHS career fair</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ VIA Transit learning opportunities, resources, and community board opportunities</li> <li>■ San Antonio Public Library (SAPL) resume building and education sessions, Lions Club fundraising event</li> <li>■ Representatives at two fairs for DSHS/HHSC/TCID</li> </ul>  |
| 2023/2024<br>Q2: Dec. – Feb. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 8 community churches</li> <li>■ 3 community partners</li> <li>■ volunteer groups</li> <li>■ 2 Community Campus Tours</li> <li>■ 1 animal-assisted therapy</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Catholic Charities Ask-a-Lawyer event for TCID patients</li> <li>■ San Antonio Public Library (SAPL) resume building</li> <li>■ Lions Club Christmas season volunteers</li> <li>■ Students of Service patient support/ welcome bags</li> <li>■ AmeriCorps volunteers patient support/ birthday bags</li> <li>■ University of Incarnate Word volunteer recruitment fair</li> <li>■ University of Texas (UT) School of Public Health (PH) campus tours</li> <li>■ San Antonio State Hospital (SASH) Client Rights tour</li> </ul> |
| 2024<br>Q3: March – May      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 11 community churches</li> <li>■ 1 community partner</li> <li>■ Events open to the community totaling 40 new community contacts</li> <li>■ 10 community campus tours</li> <li>■ Three public speaking opportunities in the community</li> <li>■ 1 animal assisted therapy</li> <li>■ 5 individual volunteers</li> <li>■ 1 volunteer group</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ SAPL resume building</li> <li>■ World TB Day</li> <li>■ Public Health Fair</li> <li>■ Intern tours</li> <li>■ Goodwill Industries student tours</li> <li>■ University of Texas San Antonio (UTSA) tour</li> <li>■ Individual volunteers</li> <li>■ Ecumenical Center Diversity Training (Food Bank)</li> <li>■ Public Health Fellowship graduation speaker</li> <li>■ UTSA guest speaker</li> <li>■ UTSA PH fair table</li> <li>■ Talk About it Texas new partnership</li> </ul>  |
| 2024<br>Q4: June - August    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 12 community churches</li> <li>■ 1 animal assisted therapy</li> <li>■ 1 community partner</li> <li>■ 5 volunteers</li> <li>■ 3 speaking opportunities</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lions Club</li> <li>■ Carelink Services</li> <li>■ Project Quest</li> <li>■ CDC Roundtable</li> <li>■ Colorado Public Health</li> <li>■ Methodist Health System</li> </ul>  |

|                           |   |                          |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------------|
|                           |   | ■ Auxiliary presentation |
| <b>2024 total to-date</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 12 community churches</li> <li>■ 1 animal assisted therapy</li> <li>■ 3 volunteer groups</li> <li>■ 10 individual volunteers</li> <li>■ 7 community partners</li> <li>■ 86 community contacts</li> <li>■ 6 speaking opportunities</li> </ul> |                          |

### Office of Border Public Health (OBPH)

OBPH partners with faith and community-based organizations in communities with poor health outcomes to improve the population’s health and well-being. In collaboration with these organizations, OBPH holds events and activities that focus on health promotion and health education. These events include health fairs, community health worker (CHW) trainings, and health professional trainings. OBPH partnered with CHW training centers, area health education centers, regional hospitals, community health clinics, nonprofits, border collaboratives, and the eight Binational Health Councils. The Binational Health Councils, which exist along the Texas-Mexico borders, work to develop work plans and sustainability goals to promote unity and collaboration between health officials of sister cities.

In 2023, OBPH worked to increase its CHW capacity across the three border PHRs and in its central office. CHW staff were trained and developed various new public health-themed curriculums. CHWs are currently delivering these updated and new trainings and conducting fieldwork and technical support for disease surveillance and management in the border PHRs.

Table 3: Number of Community Health Workers (CHWs) Trained, September 2023 – September 2024

| Quarter/Calendar Year to Date   | CHWs Trained | New Trainings Offered  |
|---------------------------------|--------------|--|
| CY 2023<br>Q1: Sept. – Nov.     | 454          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ CHWs Educating and Promoting Pediatric and Adult Immunizations (English &amp; Spanish)</li> <li>■ CHWs Educating and Promoting Pediatric and Adult Immunizations-Fieldwork/Outreach</li> <li>■ Smiles for Moms and Babies - Oral Health Training</li> <li>■ Disaster Preparedness: People with Disabilities and Their Families</li> <li>■ Liver Health- A CHWs Guide to Understand Liver Function and Diseases (English &amp; Spanish)</li> <li>■ Liver Health- A CHWs Guide to Understand Liver Function and Diseases – Fieldwork/Outreach</li> <li>■ Parkinson’s 101 (Spanish)</li> <li>■ Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)-ADULT</li> </ul> |
| CY 2023/2024<br>Q2: Dec. – Feb. | 356          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Smiles for Moms and Babies - Oral Health Training (English &amp; Spanish)</li> <li>■ Liver Health - A CHWs Guide to Understand Liver Function and Diseases – Fieldwork/ Outreach</li> <li>■ Sexually transmitted infections (STIs): A Guide for CHWs (English &amp; Spanish)</li> <li>■ Human Trafficking (Spanish)</li> <li>■ Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)-ADULT</li> </ul>  |
| CY 2024<br>Q3: March – May      | 707          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Tuberculosis (Spanish)</li> <li>■ Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)-ADULT</li> <li>■ Substance Use Disorder and Opioid Use Disorder Prevention</li> <li>■ Sexually transmitted infections (STIs): A Guide for CHWs – Fieldwork/Outreach</li> </ul>   |

|                              |              |  |
|------------------------------|--------------|--|
|                              |              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Healthy Minds: Building Resilience at Home</li> <li>■ School Based Sex Ed in Texas</li> <li>■ Sextortion Prevention</li> <li>■ Laughing Yoga</li> <li>■ Navigating Mental Health</li> <li>■ Congenital Syphilis (English &amp; Spanish)</li> <li>■ Parkinson’s 101 (Spanish)</li> </ul> |
| CY 2024<br>Q4: June - August | 63           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sexually transmitted infections (STIs): A Guide for CHWs – Fieldwork/Outreach</li> <li>■ Substance Use Disorder and Opioid Use Disorder Prevention</li> <li>■ Parkinson’s 101 (Spanish)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>2024 total to-date:</b>   | <b>1,580</b> | Please see above for a comprehensive list.   |

### Center for Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (CHEPR)

CHEPR, along with preparedness staff in each PHR, engages with faith and community-based organizations to help meet health and human service needs before, during, and after a disaster or emergency event. Staff attend meetings with community coalitions and faith-based ministry initiatives to coordinate with local emergency management, the Red Cross, and similar organizations.

Additionally, the **TexasReady** program engages organizations across the state to provide education regarding personal disaster preparedness, including making and practicing an emergency plan and building an emergency kit. TexasReady provides education and outreach to families and individuals through faith-based groups, childcare facilities, and community organizations.

*Table 4: Number of Activities for Health Emergency Preparedness, September 2022 – September 2023*

| Quarter/Calendar Year to Date   | Coordination Meetings | TexasReady Education Participants |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| CY 2022<br>Q1: Sept. – Nov.     | 1                     | 21                                |
| CY 2022/2023<br>Q2: Dec. – Feb. | 1                     | 23                                |
| CY 2023<br>Q3: March – May      | 1                     | 26                                |
| CY 2023<br>Q4: June - August    | 0                     | 31                                |
| <b>2023 total to-date:</b>      | <b>3</b>              | <b>101</b>                        |

### Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM)

The Texas Division of Emergency Management and Incident Support Task Force (formally known as the Disaster Recovery Task Force) is dedicated to the mission of protecting lives and property through communication, coordination, and collaboration. TDEM acknowledges the vital role that Texas’ faith-based and community organizations play within our communities before, during, and after disasters. Emergency management and government at all levels should continue to collaborate with faith-based and community organizations, including disaster nonprofits and voluntary organizations active in disaster (VOAD) member organizations, to better prepare for disasters, build local networks for recovery, and strengthen resiliency within Texas communities.

## WHOLE COMMUNITY APPROACH

TDEM fosters collaboration among partners and sectors to tackle the complexities of incident response through a whole community approach to emergency management. This approach extends effective communication and coordination beyond local Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) to include community response and recovery partners.

Key collaborators include:

- Local Government Personnel
- Emergency Management
- Volunteers
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Community and Civic Groups
- Representatives of Disability and Vulnerable Populations
- Private Sector Partners
- State and Federal Agencies

The Whole Community Approach emphasizes collaboration among all levels of government and local organizations, particularly faith-based nonprofits and community groups. This strategy fosters community engagement and recognizes the vital roles that residents play. By working together, communities can better understand available resources, identify specific needs, and strengthen their capabilities and resilience in emergencies.

Through regular training exercises, workshops, and public engagement initiatives, TDEM and its partners equip faith-based and community organizations and residents with the knowledge and skills necessary to respond to emergencies confidently. These efforts are complemented by tailored emergency plans that reflect each community's unique needs, ensuring efficient resource allocation and robust support systems for the most vulnerable during long-term recovery.

## VOLUNTARY AGENCY LIAISONS (VAL)

TDEM has Voluntary Agency Liaisons (VALs) and specialized personnel across the state dedicated to building and nurturing relationships between government agencies, faith-based organizations, voluntary organizations, and community partners. This support is vital for empowering community stakeholders and ensuring they are integrated within the broader emergency management framework.

The Voluntary Agency Liaison (VAL) Program now includes eight full-time regional positions, complementing the existing State VAL at TDEM Headquarters in Austin. These positions strategically focus on community response and recovery initiatives, strengthening local partnering networks, long-term recovery efforts, and promoting faith-based and community engagement.

## TEXAS COMMUNITY RECOVERY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

TDEM has made significant progress in developing the Texas Community Recovery Management System (TCR). This innovative cloud-based system is designed to empower communities in Texas to effectively manage disaster response and enhance collaboration among key stakeholders—such as volunteers, donors, disaster case managers, emergency management officials, and faith-based community partners. It allows partners to operate in a coordinated manner on a shared platform during response and transition into long-term recovery, benefiting disaster survivors.

TCR currently offers four modules through a suite of online tools that can be deployed upon request during disasters or incidents. Each module can be independently activated and tailored to support the specific size and scope of the incident.

## ONGOING INITIATIVES

### Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)

Texas VOAD is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, membership-based association that brings together more than 50 voluntary organizations that respond to disasters as a part of their overall mission. Their mission is to serve as a convening and supportive body for membership, which is comprised of Texas organizations and local representatives of National organizations, all of whom adhere to the 4 Cs: Cooperation, Communication, Coordination, and Collaboration. Texas VOAD is a member of the Texas Emergency Management Council and serves as the Texas affiliate of National VOAD.

TDEM is proud to be represented as an ex officio board member and offer valuable guidance to local communities and governments on how to effectively engage and collaborate with VOAD Chapters and affiliated member organizations throughout the state.

### VOAD Engagement

TDEM remains committed to enhancing coordination, communication, and engagement with VOAD, faith-based, and community partners. This includes serving as a liaison between VOAD and government officials and advocating for voluntary assistance from local, state, and national VOAD members for disaster-impacted areas.

It is a common misconception that FEMA Assistance will fully restore a household to its pre-disaster condition. This assistance is not intended to cover all losses or make a household whole. To address the unmet needs beyond what government assistance and insurance provide, VOAD, faith-based, and community partners play a crucial role. These organizations offer additional support and resources, helping families and individuals recover more comprehensively from disasters.

Through partnerships and coordination, a wide range of essential services become possible, including:

- Emergency sheltering
- Mass feeding
- Disaster cleanup
- Emotional and Spiritual Care
- Heavy equipment operation
- Chainsaw work
- Distribution of supplies
- Shower and laundry facilities
- Home repairs and rebuilding

### Development, promotion, and mentorship of Long-Term Recovery Groups

*A Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG) is the money, manpower, and materials needed to help a community recover from a disaster. It is a cooperative network that is made up of representatives from faith-based, nonprofit, government, business, and other organizations working together within a community.*

In the aftermath of a disaster, immediate life safety and rescue operations are, understandably, the primary focus. However, the journey towards recovery extends far beyond the critical first hours and initial response phase. It involves rebuilding not just homes and infrastructure but also lives, livelihoods, and the spirit of the impacted community.

Through donated resources and voluntary assistance, the work of an LTRG may range from rebuilding homes and providing financial assistance to offering emotional support and helping survivors navigate the complex recovery process. A strong, well-organized LTRG empowers residents to not only recover but to emerge from the experience stronger and more resilient than ever before.

Over the past year, TDEM has provided long-term recovery development support and ongoing mentorship for the following incidents:

- Panhandle Flooding – 2023
- Perryton/Ochiltree Tornado - 2023
- Rio Grande Valley Severe Weather – 2023
- Panhandle Wildfires – 2024
- DR-4781 Severe Weather and Flooding – 2024
- DR-4798 Hurricane Beryl – 2024
- DR-4827 North Carolina Tropical Storm Helene - 2024

### Long-Term Recovery (LTR) Peer Network

Recognizing the high-pressure environment in which LTR Leaders operate, TDEM has collaborated with local leaders to develop a peer network. TDEM continues to facilitate the Long-Term Recovery Peer Network, a statewide community of practice for disaster recovery leaders.

Current members have benefited significantly from a well-established network of colleagues, gaining access to critical resources that support ongoing recovery efforts. Additionally, the network has fostered a welcoming environment for new community recovery leaders, allowing them to connect, share their experiences, and build relationships with peers who are equally committed to rebuilding and promoting resilience.

Highlight Activities:

- The **Texas Panhandle VOAD** is a coalition of voluntary organizations that operate in the 26 northernmost counties in the Texas Panhandle, providing disaster assistance to individuals and communities impacted by disasters. In 2023, the Texas Panhandle experienced numerous compounding disasters. Early in 2024, a series of devastating wildfires struck the region, with the most significant being the Smokehouse Creek Fire. This fire became the largest in Texas history, burning over 1 million acres and causing widespread destruction.
  - The Texas Panhandle VOAD with great support from the **United Way of Amarillo and Canyon, Amarillo Area Foundation**, and **Panhandle Regional Planning Commission** worked closely with TDEM and ISTF personnel to coordinate mass delivery of donated resources and voluntary assistance for both agriculture and residential immediate needs and developed networks and systems for long-term recovery.
- Based on lessons learned, TDEM is actively collaborating with lead VOAD chapters in the **Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex** to include Tarrant, Dallas, Denton, Collin, and Ellis Counties to support regional VOAD workshops and networking events. These workshops bring together local emergency management officials, faith-based organizations, and community partners from across the region to strengthen relationships, train, develop communication pathways, and prepare together for future disasters that may impact the region.
- The mission of the **Deep East Texas Disaster Readiness and Recovery Team (DETDRT)** is to provide and coordinate relief and recovery resources to individuals and families of San Jacinto County impacted by disaster. During the response to DR-4781, TDEM personnel collaborated with local officials and DETDRT partner organizations to coordinate relief efforts. This collaboration was crucial in reaching vulnerable populations, distributing supplies and information, and initiating discussions for long-term recovery. Coordination is ongoing for the development of the **San Jacinto Long-Term Recovery Group**.
- The **Disaster Readiness & Resilience Clinic** held in May 2024 was a comprehensive workshop aimed at enhancing disaster preparedness and resilience. Hosted by the Disability Access and Functional Needs Workgroup, this event brought together a coalition of regional jurisdictions and community representatives, including people with



disabilities, access, and functional needs to promote readiness through planning and consultation with support and service representatives such as local emergency managers and TDEM.

- The **Texas Multi-Agency Feeding Task Force**, comprised of organizations such as The Salvation Army, American Red Cross, Feeding Texas, Texans on Mission, Southern Baptist Texas Convention, Operation BBQ Relief, Mercy Chefs, HEB, and more, plans and coordinates community and first responder feeding before, during, and after disasters. It is estimated that in response to DR-4781 and DR-4798 (Hurricane Beryl), the Multi-Agency Feeding Task Force, coordinated by TDEM, distributed over 3.5 million meals across more than 60 counties in Texas. This coordinated effort ensured that both disaster survivors and first responders received essential nourishment during critical times.
- TDEM staff have partnered to offer and host a workshop focused on **Emergency Support Function (ESF) 6 Mass Care** (sheltering and feeding) for communities across the **Rio Grande Valley**. This workshop aims to enhance local jurisdictions' understanding of ESF 6 and strengthen partner planning and response capabilities.

During the workshop, representatives from partner organizations, including 211, the American Red Cross, and Local Food Banks or pantries, can provide updates on their mass care services and capabilities to better establish roles and set realistic expectations prior to an incident.

- Following DR-4781 and DR-4798, TDEM collaborated with the **Blanco River Regional Recovery Team** located in central Texas to address disaster-related unmet needs. This collaboration involved coordinating support through VOAD and establishing connections with FEMA to enhance recovery efforts.
- TDEM is actively collaborating with the **United Way of El Paso** to reinstate the El Paso VOAD Chapter. This initiative aims to establish a robust mechanism and network for communication, collaboration, and coordination amongst local stakeholders prior to future incidents.

The Texas Division of Emergency Management is committed to building stronger and more resilient communities by fostering genuine partnerships between disaster nonprofits, government entities, and faith-based and community organizations. Together, we are not just preparing for and responding to disasters and emergencies; we are building a Texas that can better withstand and recover from disasters.

## Texas Education Agency (TEA)

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The Texas Education Agency (TEA) continues to work closely with nonprofit and community-based organizations with a focus on providing parents and community members with information and resources that can lead to improved outcomes for all students. Some examples of this work in 2024 include:

### COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS (CIS)

- The mission of Communities in Schools (CIS) in Texas is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.
- CIS works in collaboration with school personnel to develop and provide a comprehensive Integrated Student Support (ISS) program uniquely tailored to address unmet academic and non-academic barriers to student success.
- The agency awards grants to CIS affiliate nonprofits across the state to help run the CIS programs in their community.

### EARLY LEARNING

- The agency works with private nonprofit childcare providers and helps them partner with school districts to share funding and expand access for parents.

- The agency works with early childhood advocacy groups, including Texans Care for Children, United Ways of Texas, PBS of Texas, Children at-Risk, Child-Care Associates, and Children’s Learning Institute.
- The agency works to develop family engagement activities to support home visiting programs and decrease the school readiness gap.

## **21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS (CCLC)/TEXAS AFTERSCHOOL CENTERS ON EDUCATION (ACE)**

- Texas ACE programs aim to improve student school-day attendance, engagement, and academic performance in reading and math in a safe learning environment when school is not in session. These grant-funded programs provide high-quality enrichment, academic, college and career, and family engagement activities that support school-day learning. Programs are encouraged to deliver activities in creative, hands-on, and exploratory ways.
- Texas ACE currently funds 94 grants that include partnerships with more than 100 nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and foundations providing meals, physical fitness, leadership, mentoring, learning materials, career training, arts programs, basic needs, and a wide variety of enrichment programs. Most funds are granted to local education agencies or educational service centers. 15 grants are funded to nonprofits including local subsidiaries of national nonprofits such as the Boys and Girls Clubs, Communities in Schools, as well as local and regional organizations like Clayton Youth Enrichment Services, and Greater San Antonio After-School All Stars. These organizations partner with the school districts to achieve their common goal of increasing student academic success.
- Texas ACE is currently working with TEA’s Mental and Behavioral Health, and College and Technical Educations teams to support Stronger OST, which aims to strengthen work-based learning and mental health support for secondary students attending Texas ACE programs.

## **MENTAL HEALTH AND T-CHAT**

- The agency coordinates with the Texas Child Mental Health Consortium and its Child Health Access Through Telemedicine (TCHAT) program to expand school district partnerships for access to TCHAT service providers to support student mental health and wellness. Service providers are located in 12 Texas university-based health research institutions (HRIs). Through TCHAT, families and students can receive no-cost mental health care via telehealth at school with parent consent and engagement.
- After initial TCHAT referral, parent consent, assessment, and services, which are typically short-term services, families and students may be connected with community services providers to continue receiving mental health and wellness support.
- As of August 31, 2024, a total of 871 school districts are “active” TCHAT participants with an agreement between the school system and designated HRI. Participation includes onboarding training for each school offering TCHAT service access. Access to TCHAT services is available in 6,770 public schools and 4,228,125 students can access TCHAT mental health services at school when referred to the service by the school with parent consent.
- TCHAT mental health services are funded by the Texas Legislature and are offered to all Texas public schools.
- As of August 31, 2024, an additional 415 schools are listed in onboarding status and are planning to implement TCHAT.
- The public may access a map of the TCHAT roll-out status information by regional education service center, public school system, and school [here](#).

## **OTHER MENTAL HEALTH COORDINATION**

- The agency was awarded Project AWARE Texas (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) grants from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to place mental health professionals in high-need school systems and to help the agency build statewide infrastructure to support school systems with mental health best practices and programs through September 2026.

- The agency coordinates with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and Regional Education Service Centers (ESCs) to identify and publish research-based programs and evidence-based practices for schools pursuant to Texas Education Code (TEC) 38.351 [here](#).
- The agency coordinates with a list of statewide agencies and organizations pursuant to TEC 38.351-353 to identify regional and statewide mental health resources that are available to school districts. The agency and ESCs publish the resources identified for school districts [here](#).
- The agency is implementing a Statewide Plan for Student Mental Health pursuant to TEC 38.254 [here](#). The agency’s plan is designed to support the Safe and Supportive School Program.
- The agency serves on the Texas Statewide Behavioral Health Coordinating Council with 22 state agencies to develop and implement the Texas Behavioral Health Strategic Plan. In 2023, the agency is collaborating to develop the Texas Statewide Plan for Children’s Mental Health. Both initiatives are facilitated by HHSC. This coordination scope includes a statutory MOU for Community Resource Coordination Groups and Texas System of Care. Resources related to the Coordinating Council are maintained by HHSC [here](#).

The agency supports the Collaborative Task Force for Public School Mental Health Services pursuant to TEC 38.301-312. Reports of the Task Force to the legislature are [here](#).

The public may access a map of the T-CHAT roll-out status information by regional education service center, public school system, and school [here](#).

## Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)

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### COMMUNITY PARTNER PROGRAM (CPP)

The Community Partner Program (CPP) is a collaboration between the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and a statewide network of over 644 community and faith-based organizations. Because some of these partners have multiple locations, there is a total of 1,754 access points throughout the state.

The Community Partner Program (CPP) establishes partnerships with community- and faith-based organizations that promote self-service and self-sufficiency by helping individuals apply for and manage their Medicaid, CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance Program), TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits through YourTexasBenefits.com and the Your Texas Benefits mobile app.

Organizations interested in participating in the program sign a nonfinancial memorandum of understanding (MOU) with HHSC and agree to adhere to program requirements. Once the MOU is finalized, CPP staff connect with the organization to provide ongoing support. CPP support includes in-person/virtual visits, training, certification, and presentations.

HHSC is proud of CPP’s continuous efforts in supporting Texas families and their commitment to helping and providing resources to those who rely on essential services. As part of this ongoing commitment, CPP aims to ensure that partners have access to comprehensive reporting to support their respective initiatives, reinforcing the strength of our collaborative efforts in the community.

### Community Partner by Type

| Type                   | Examples   | Percent |
|------------------------|--|---------|
| Nonprofits             | Social services, food pantries, shelters   | 49.14%  |
| Government             | Housing authorities, health departments, council of governments                        | 10.02%  |
| Medical                | Community Health Centers, federally qualified health clinics, hospitals, mental health | 21.75%  |
| Education and Literacy | School districts, libraries, head starts, colleges, universities                       | 10.64%  |

|   |                                   |       |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Faith-Based                             | Churches, religious organizations | 5.63% |
| Case Assistance Affiliate Program (CAA) | MCO/DC organizations              | 2.82% |

In fiscal year 2024, the CPP participated in over 68 statewide events and facilitated 12 monthly webinar trainings to 3,962 participants. These webinars included HHS benefit and policy updates, CPP updates, pilot program trainings, YourTexasBenefits.com changes, Forums, Public Health Emergency (PHE) winddown, and general partner information. CPP hosted 3 Community Partner Education and Information Virtual events, attended by 1,248 participants. Also during this past fiscal year, 2,261 Virtual and In-person site visits were conducted by Regional Staff, providing ongoing support with best-in-class customer service statewide.

The Community Partner Program (CPP) has also been at the forefront of organizing a series of applications assistance events across Texas, totaling five in number this past year. All of these initiatives are a testament to our unwavering dedication to assisting families in need during these challenging times.

The CPP State Office is dedicated to leading impactful projects that empower community partners. They are excited to introduce Direct Application Support (DAS) service, which officially launched on August 26. With DAS, our partners can provide remote application support through YourBenefitsTexas.com, eliminating physical proximity constraints.

In 2024, CPP also introduced Listen and Learn Sessions to offer our partners a platform to voice their concerns and contribute ideas for improvement. CPP also launched Open House Events to expand community involvement and connect with nonprofit organizations.

The Case Assistance Affiliates (CAA) Program operates through a contractual agreement with the Health and Human Services Commission to provide essential services within Texas's Medicaid and CHIP programs. It focuses on assisting individuals who utilize YourTexasBenefits.com to manage their benefits cases. The Community Partner Program (CPP) supports the CAA program by providing essential training, technical support, and system assistance.

Statistics worth highlighting:

- **Number of people served:** Over 865 attendees participated in CPP hosted events.
- **The total number of attendees:** CPP Monthly Webinars during Fiscal Year 24 from Sept 1, 2023 – Aug 31, 2024: 12 webinars, 3,962 attendees

To learn more about our Community Partner Program, visit us at <https://www.texascommunitypartnerprogram.com>.

## SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EDUCATION (SNAP-ED)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) works with partners to provide food and nutrition education to eligible individuals that promote healthy food choices and physical activity consistent with the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). SNAP-Ed carries out such efforts to improve the likelihood that eligible persons will make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles that support obesity prevention and reduced diet-related chronic disease. SNAP-Ed's vision is to collaboratively empower eligible individuals by connecting them with vital nutrition education, as well as intervention resources and services that will support positive, healthy lifestyle change throughout the state of Texas. SNAP-Ed serves SNAP participants, individuals eligible to receive SNAP benefits or other means-tested Federal assistance programs, and individuals residing in communities with a significant population with low income.

In 2024, Texas SNAP-Ed launched its GoodFoodGoodMove social marketing campaign, designed to encourage SNAP-Ed eligible Texans to eat more frozen fruits and vegetables, by utilizing a variety of platforms to reach its audience. A [newly designed website](#), social media videos, and placements on platforms like Smart TVs, [YouTube](#), and grocery stores helped spread the message. The campaign also promoted [walking as an easy way to increase physical activity](#).

Additionally, Healthy Texan Week was held from June 10-16, reaching all public health regions in the state. The event exceeded expectations, providing resources like educational materials, recipes, and games to communities across Texas. Supported by a proclamation from Governor Abbott, this event successfully raised awareness of nutrition and physical activity, engaging numerous organizations and individuals statewide. Over 90 events were held across Texas by 67 registered hosts with a reach of over 18,000 households.

Through the service delivery of our partners, also known as Implementing Agencies, over 2 million individuals were impacted in FY24 through policy and environmental changes, and nearly 205,000 people participated in direct education classes across 1,466 unique sites in 430 cities.

The SNAP-Ed Program partners with 16 Implementing Agencies:

| Texas SNAP-Ed Implementing Agencies   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| Texas Center for Local Food: A Fresh Look at Your Farmers' Market   | Texas A&M AgriLife: Better Living for Texans  | UT Health Brownsville: Tu Salud Si Cuenta                      | MHP Salud: Familias Saludables   |
| University of Texas Rio Grande Valley: South Texas Early Prevention Study (STEPS)   | Early Childhood Intervention: Family Focused Nutrition Initiative                       | Office of Border Public Health: Healthy Communities Initiative | University of North Texas: Head Start to Healthy Lifestyles with SNAP-Ed |
| Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention: Community and Clinical Health Bridge Project Expansion   | Texas International Institute of Health Care Professionals: Heath Care Priority Project | It's Time Texas: Building and Living Healthier Initiatives     | Prairie View University: Smart Eating Active Living (SEAL)               |
| HHSC: Texercise   |   | Brighter Bites   |  |
| Feeding Texas: 1. Food Bank Nutrition Education; 2. Supporting Health Includes Nutrition Education (SHINE); 3. Nutrition Education for Veterans; 4. Healthy Corner Stores; 5. Farmers Market Nutrition Guides |   |  |  |
| Women Infant Children: 1. Nutrition Education Initiative; 2. Breastfeeding Initiative   |   |  |  |

### SNAP Outreach

The Texas SNAP Outreach Program's overall goal is to reach Texas communities to bring awareness about the SNAP program and provide potentially eligible individuals assistance when applying for benefits. The SNAP Outreach Program partners with community organizations to perform outreach activities to inform low-income households about the availability, eligibility requirements, and application procedures for SNAP benefits, focusing on increasing the utilization of self-service tools. The mission is to create opportunities to inform low-income households about SNAP's eligibility requirements, application procedures, and benefits. The vision is to establish a statewide network of community organizations supporting Texans in pursuing economic and personal self-sufficiency.

Community connections are the key to ensuring Texans in all 254 counties receive outreach services. The Texas SNAP Outreach Team accomplishes the mission through two integrated systems of community connections: The SNAP Outreach Program partnership with the Feeding Texas Network and Texas Health and Human Services Commission's (HHSC's) Community Partner Program.

One goal of the SNAP Outreach program is to assist SNAP applicants in all 254 Texas counties with comprehensive application guidance, program information, and resources. The objective is to ensure the successful submission of "process-ready" online applications and encourage individuals to use HHSC's self-service portals effectively.

From October 2023 through June 2024, the combined effort of all community partners assisted with 90,027 applications and redeterminations. Of this total, Feeding Texas submitted 42,496 applications or 47.2% of all applications and redeterminations submitted for the program.

SNAP Outreach also administers the Referral Partner Program (RPP) which seeks to assist applicants in progressing toward economic and personal self-sufficiency by connecting SNAP applicants with supplemental services to address needs other than food security. These services include health, housing, childcare, and transportation assistance.

- Clients enrolled in the RPP have received a total of 100,688 referrals to partnering organizations.
- Approximately 4,440 community organizations have partnered with the RPP to offer comprehensive services to clients as of June 2024.

| Organization Type          | # of partnering organizations | % of partnering organizations |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Food/Nutrition services    | 1227                          | 27.6%                         |
| Health Care                | 760                           | 17.1%                         |
| Housing/Shelter            | 678                           | 15.3%                         |
| Income/Expenses            | 305                           | 6.9%                          |
| Childcare/Education        | 267                           | 6.0%                          |
| Employment                 | 240                           | 5.4%                          |
| Crisis Emergency           | 160                           | 3.6%                          |
| Aging/Disability           | 154                           | 3.5%                          |
| Legal Aid/Victims Services | 128                           | 2.9%                          |
| Veterans Benefits          | 61                            | 1.4%                          |
| Criminal Justice           | 18                            | 0.4%                          |
| Other services             | 224                           | 10.0%                         |

## TEXAS WORKS PATHS TO SUCCESS (TWPS)

The Texas Works Paths to Success (TWPS) program empowers Texans by providing the skills needed to start a career with Texas Health and Human Services. The program aims to reduce poverty while increasing economic well-being, educational opportunities, and housing stability.

In collaboration with strategically selected community organizations, TWPS offers a unique training experience that provides the knowledge and skill set needed to become a Texas Works Advisor (TWA) I at HHSC. This position is responsible for determining eligibility for social services programs. Upon completing the program, individuals are guaranteed job placement in a local benefits office where they can begin a career with HHSC and learn invaluable skills to improve their lives.

### TWPS Year 4 Highlights

In 2024, in addition to continuing the partnership with the Houston Independent School District (HISD), and Harris County (The HAY Center), HHSC collaborated with a new partner, the Rio Grande City Independent School District (RGCISD). This addition marks the program's first partnership outside of the Houston area. HHSC conducted three SNAP basic skills training cohorts, resulting in 19 graduates who secured employment within HHSC at Regional Operations offices in Houston, Rio Grande City, and Elsa, Texas. During training, TWPS participants had the opportunity to visit a local operations office to gain an understanding of the day-to-day responsibilities of a Texas Works Advisor I. The experience gave them a glimpse of what their workdays would be like after graduating from the program.

The successes extended beyond the class of 2024 TWPS graduates; 14 alumni from the previous years were promoted to TWA II's. Four TWPS graduates upgraded/purchased their vehicle, two paid off a vehicle, and 14 have made significant improvements to their living & financial situations, and one purchased a new home. With the successful expansion to Rio Grande City, HHSC received approval to extend its reach further and begin discussions to form a new partnership in central Texas in FY25.

In 2024, TWPS attended the Texas Workforce Commission 2024 Foster Youth Conference, set up an exhibitor table at the Sterling High School Career & Technology Education Expo, joined the Houston Independent School District CTE Business Advisory Council, and volunteered at the Garden of Hope Foster Center, American Legion Post 573, Blue Santa Initiative, and the Angel Tree Project. Community immersion has allowed the program to gain even more visibility and has provided a broader understanding of how TWPS can make strategic impacts in the areas we serve.

### **2-1-1 TEXAS INFORMATION AND REFERRAL NETWORK (TIRN)**

The 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network (2-1-1 TIRN) connects Texans with services they need through comprehensive information and referral services. 2-1-1 TIRN collects, organizes and maintains information on over 28,000 state and local agencies and their services. Governmental and community service information is provided to the public by phone, online and via web-based chat at 211Texas.org and by phone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

2-1-1 TIRN maintained information on the top caller needs throughout fiscal year 2024, including Electric Service Payment Assistance, Rent Payment Assistance, Food Pantries, Low Income/Subsidized Private Rental Housing, Homeless Shelter, Water Service Payment Assistance, Gas Service Payment Assistance, Housing Authorities, Food Stamps/SNAP Applications, and Area Agencies on Aging. HHSC administers 2-1-1 TIRN through 25 Area Information Centers, which include United Way agencies, councils of government, community action networks, and a municipality.

During fiscal year 2024, 2-1-1 TIRN answered approximately 1,946,609 calls, conducted 29,129 web-based chat sessions, and had 1,335,001 website page views at 211Texas.org.

TIRN also accomplished the following, while enhancing its partnerships with Faith-Based and Community Organization:

- Developed the State Office Onsite Committee (internal 2-1-1 Programmatic and AES stakeholder support teams), which was formed to enhance the partnerships and collaborations with the Area Information Centers in January 2024.
- Collaborated with State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for the program to conduct an overview training for the AIC Resource Managers (April 2024)
- Created an Application Programming Interface (API) for the University of Texas Connector, a database for resource data sharing as contingency for resource database. An (API) allows platforms to share with each other automatically, which reduces manual workload needed for data sharing and allows for access to regularly updated data at any time.
- Collaborated with Family Clinical Services to improve 211Texas.org searching for organization/public and the program provided an overview of their programs to the AIC Resource managers (July 2024).
- Implemented the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System Closed-Loop Referral Enhancement (August 2024) to support further collaboration with organizations regarding referrals. Pilots will be conducted in FY25.
- Approved and initiated the Special Project for the Alamo AIC – United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County to register homebound individuals for Thanksgiving meals (September 2024).
- Approved and initiated a Special Project for Alamo AIC – United Way of San Antonio and Bexar County to share resource data in the Alamo region. The data will be shared with Alamo Area Community Network (AACN), an alliance of community organizations in and around San Antonio, Bexar, and surrounding counties that have joined to improve services for people in the community with a client-centered approach. Alamo AIC plans to work with AACN

to provide services for the community and improve community outcomes such as well-being, health, and community health equality. (September 2024).

- Presented an overview of 2-1-1's TIRN objective, goals, and structure to Community Partners at the September 2024 Community Partner Program monthly webinar. The goal of presenting to Community Partners is to provide awareness and education about 2-1-1 TIRN versus 2-1-1 Eligibility Services, and education on connecting with 2-1-1 TIRN to add/update their listing in the 2-1-1 database.

## **HHSC, COMMUNITY SERVICES**

### **Area Agencies on Aging**

HHSC contracts with Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to provide services that help older adults remain in their homes and communities. AAAs are designated by statute and are housed within community-based, nonprofits and local governments. While AAAs contract with for-profit vendors for certain services, such as congregate and home-delivered meals and transportation, they provide most services through partnerships with nonprofit and faith-based organizations.

During federal fiscal year 2023 (October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023), 116,515 people received 12,798,214 meals through the congregate and home-delivered meals programs.

The transportation service programs provided 558,631 trips to 7,914 people.

HHSC also contracts with the nonprofit vendor, Texas Legal Services Center, to support AAAs in providing legal assistance services to older adults and their caregivers. These legal assistance services create public awareness of the legal and Medicare issues that can impact older Texans. They also assist these adults and their caregivers with legal services related to public entitlements, healthcare, individual rights, planning options, housing, and consumer needs.

Over 7,040 individuals benefited from legal assistance services in federal fiscal year 2023.

### **Aging and Disability Resource Centers**

Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) support the Texas "No Wrong Door" system by serving as a key access point to person-centered, long-term services and supports needed to live independently in the community.

The 28 ADRCs collaborate with area agencies on aging, affordable housing coalitions, local service providers, food pantries, and other community-based organizations to provide information and referral services. In addition to information and referral services, ADRCs often subcontract with faith-and community-based organizations to provide respite care to family caregivers. ADRCs also ensure that faith-and community-based organizations are represented on their local advisory groups.

In State Fiscal Year 2023, the ADRCs conducted 149,012 client interactions and provided 22,280 hours of respite services to 403 caregivers.

### **Foster Grandparent Program**

The Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) offers income-eligible adults, ages 55 and older, meaningful volunteer opportunities providing one-on-one emotional support, mentoring, and tutoring to children with exceptional needs in ten HHS service areas. FGP volunteers are matched with a volunteer site, which may be a public agency, faith- or community-based nonprofit, or health care organization. In grant year 2023-2024, program staff supported and encouraged 275 FGP volunteers who served 301,472 hours mentoring and tutoring 21,697 children and youth.



The University of Texas at Austin continues to partner with community organizations at the local, state, national, and international levels. As the mission of the institution states, “the University preserves and promotes the arts, benefits the state’s economy, serves the citizens through public programs and provides other public service.” Much of this benefit to the state takes place in partnership with the state’s nonprofits and faith-based organizations, and activities are undertaken across many campus units. While, as a matter of the University’s mission, service is integrated in a deep and pervasive way across the campus, this brief report seeks to give an overview of representative activities.

Nonprofit and faith-based organization engagement is well-represented in the Office of the Dean of Students at the University. The home for student-community partnership is the Volunteer and Service Learning (VSL) unit of the Office of the Dean of Students. This year, VSL hosted The Project, UT’s student-led community-building initiative and largest day of service, in the Dove Springs neighborhood of Austin. During the March event, The Project partnered with 21 nonprofit community partners, including First Independent Baptist Church, Dove Springs Recreation Center, The American Red Cross, MAS Cultura, the Austin Independent School District, Go Austin/Vamos Austin, and the Austin Public Library. Over 800 student volunteers joined community volunteers to contribute 3,529 volunteer hours at 10 neighborhood sites in Dove Springs.

VSL’s student-led Alternative Breaks program partnered with nonprofits in and out of state. In New Orleans, Alternative Breaks students worked with Lantern Light NOLA, a daytime shelter for the unhoused; Operation Restoration, which focuses on restoring lives of formerly incarcerated women; Unity of Greater New Orleans, a nonprofit dedicated to providing housing to unhoused New Orleanians; and Ms. Gloria’s Garden, a community garden in the Tremé neighborhood of New Orleans. During the South Texas Alternative Break trip, students partnered with Proyecto Azteca to learn more about the current state of the border as well as immigration in the border town. They worked with the Catholic Charities Respite Center, beautifying the grounds, assisting with childcare, and more.

The University of Texas at Austin currently has 268 active service-based and 75 faith- and religion-identified Registered Student Organizations, many of them advised by staff in the Office of the Dean of Students. They host a range of events—from Holi to community-wide events like Longhorn Halloween. The Student Activities unit in the Office of the Dean of Students reviews their events to ensure support for service organizations and interfaith groups have fair and equal opportunities on campus.

Sorority and Fraternity Life, also in the Office of the Dean of Students, have been associated with organizations with a faith connection, including the Jewish interest organizations, Alpha Epsilon Phi, Alpha Epsilon Pi, Sigma Alpha Mu, Zeta Beta Tau; the Muslim interest organization Mu Delta Alpha; and the Christian interest organization Beta Upsilon Chi.

In collaboration with the VSL, the inaugural Texas Greek Day of Service hosted more than 300 volunteers across three elementary schools in the Dove Springs neighborhood of Austin in Fall 2024.

Service and philanthropy data from the Sorority and Fraternity Life community, self-reported data by Sorority and Fraternity Life organizations, reflects their efforts and contributions at the chapter level for their varying non-profit relationships in Austin and beyond. In 2023, these organizations reported \$988,864 philanthropy dollars raised.

Students also serve on the executive committees of Nueces Mosque, the Texas Hillel, and the University Catholic Center.

The University of Texas-University Charter School System (UT-UCS) is affiliated with the College of Education at the University. Since its founding in 1998, UT-UCS has educated children most in need of stability as they enter intensive treatment and residential programs – including medical and psychiatric hospitals, foster care centers, substance abuse recovery programs, and others. UT-UCS currently partners with facilities across Texas, with clusters in Austin, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Houston and San Antonio. School campuses are located on-site at partner facilities, bringing education directly to

students in need. These partnerships ensure that vulnerable children don't have to choose between accessing treatment and pursuing their education.

The UT-UCS's 25 campuses partner with 21 community-based partners around the state, including nonprofit entities like Basepoint Mental Health Treatment Center, Boysville, Cedar Crest Hospital, Clearfork Academy, Dell Children's Medical Center, Georgetown Behavioral Health Center, Helping Hand Home for Children, High Point, Laurel Ridge, Methodist Children's Home, Pathfinders Camp, Safe Haven Youth Ranch, Settlement Home, and SJRC Texas.

The UT High School, also affiliated with the College of Education, offers online courses for a single class or full-time virtual academy for high school students and partners with 21 schools across Texas.

According to its mission, the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health seeks to "transform how communities promote mental health in everyday life." Since 2015, the foundation has awarded more than 800 grants to a range of nonprofit organizations, including health- and education-related organizations, civic organizations, and schools and universities. The Texas Grants Resource Center (TGRC) in the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health seeks to connect grantmakers with grantseekers, many of which are Central Texas nonprofits. In this past year, the TGRC worked with partners including Austin Discovery School, Austin Film Society, Austin Pets Alive!, Blum Organization, Caritas of Austin, Engineers Without Borders - Greater Austin Chapter, La Secretaría de Medio Ambiente de Nuevo León, Mobile Loaves & Fishes, Open Austin, Project Transitions, PS Foundation for the Arts, Smithville Little League, Studio Preparatory, Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services, Texas Harm Reduction Alliance, The Amala Foundation, The Church Lab. THE NICE PROJECT, The Williamson County Institute for Excellence in Nonprofits, United Way for Greater Austin, and VentureLab. The TGRC also regularly offers networking and training opportunities that are free and open to community members.

Along with these initiatives, University faculty teach academic-service learning classes through which students undertake community service as a means of gaining real-world experience and enhancing their coursework. Faculty across the University's 19 colleges and schools lead community-based research projects for which they recruit graduate and undergraduate student researchers.

Whether through the direct service of University-affiliated individuals or collaborative partnerships, The University of Texas at Austin seeks to deliver upon its public service mission.

## Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD)

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Within any of Texas' seven juvenile probation regions, a region's juvenile probation departments provide various community programs and services, operated by the departments or through service provider contracts. Community programs or services vary greatly within departments and regions and may include specialized treatment for substance use disorder treatment, mental health treatment, and sexual behavior treatment, and programs for female offenders, violent offenders, and various psychoeducational and skills building services for general offenders.

To keep youth closer to their home communities, juvenile probation departments have been charged with the task of pairing youth with appropriate community-based resources, services, and programming. In fiscal year 2023, juvenile probation departments offered 1,291 community-based programs to youth under their jurisdiction, at-risk youth, and the families of these youth. Programs offered by juvenile probation departments are designed to meet the needs of a wide array of youth. Of program participants in fiscal year 2023, 36% participated in a treatment-based program, 34% participated in a skill-building/activity-based program, and 30% participated in a surveillance-based program. The source of this information is the Annual Rider Report to the Governor and LBB located [here](#).

TJJD has also established formal partnerships for re-entry, counseling, residential, education, and model training services with the following faith and community-based organizations and nonprofits.

- K16 Ready Society, Inc. (dba Texas Initiative Program)
- Lena Pope Counseling Services +
- Pegasus Schools
- Southwest Key Program
- 3Strands Global Foundation
- Casa Garcia dba Trinity Charter School
- CLC Inc.

For youth committed to the state by local courts, TJJJ also procures and provides services via volunteers.

Here are statistics related to TJJJ secure facilities, halfway houses, and parole district offices for FY 2023-24:

## FY 2023

**Number of Active Volunteers: 339**

**Total Volunteer Hours: 17,602**

- Chaplaincy Hours:
  - *General Chaplaincy Services: 1,407 hours*
  - *Epiphany Ministry of Texas: 2,895 hours*
  - *Kairos of Texas: 2,307 hours*
- Holiday & Birthday Celebrations: 605 hours
- Mentoring Hours:
  - *Mentors (Basic): 549 hours*
  - *Mentors (Faith-Based): 2,158 hours*
- *(New Program!)* Power of Harmony (Gainesville State School): 68 hours
- Professional Services & Special Projects: 393 hours
- Volunteer Training: 328 hours
- Other (Misc.): 185 hours

**Number of Interns: 30**

- Intern Total Hours: 6,167 hours

## FY 2024

**Number of Active Volunteers: 305**

**Total Volunteer Hours: 13,387**

- Chaplaincy Hours:
  - *General Chaplaincy Services: 843 hours*
  - *Epiphany Ministry of Texas: 3,440 hours*
  - *Kairos of Texas: 1,226 hours*
- Holiday & Birthday Celebrations: 523 hours
- Mentoring Hours:
  - *Mentors (Basic): 328 hours*
  - *Mentors (Faith-Based): 1,930 hours*
- *(New Program!)* BARK Program (Gainesville State School): 240 hours
- Power of Harmony (Gainesville State School): 155 hours
- Professional Services & Special Projects: 233 hours
- Volunteer Training: 389 hours
- Other (Misc.): 37 hours

**Number of Interns: 21**

- Intern Total Hours: 3,594 hours

## Texas State Commission on National and Community Service (OneStar)

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2024 marks an extraordinary year for OneStar as we celebrate several significant milestones that illustrate our enduring legacy of engaging Texans to take action in their local communities.

OneStar was created by the Office of the Governor to support the State of Texas by strengthening the nonprofit sector, encouraging civic engagement through service and volunteering, promoting innovative strategies to address local issues, and facilitating public-private partnerships to expand the sector's reach.

Our roots stretch back **50 years** to 1974 when Texas Governor Dolph Briscoe recognized the power and value of volunteers and created the **Texas Center for Volunteer Action**—the precursor to OneStar—to “channel, coordinate, and mobilize the vigor, idealism, and vision” of volunteer organizations. This set a vital precedent of state-supported service and volunteerism, which continues to this day through OneStar.

Established by Governor Mark White in the 1980s, the **Governor’s Volunteer Awards** have shone a statewide spotlight on inspiring stories of how volunteers can transform local communities. The prestigious awards, now administered by OneStar, garner bipartisan support and have been hosted annually by every Texas governor for the last **40 years**.

In 1994, **30 years** ago, President Bill Clinton launched **AmeriCorps** as a service-driven solution to our nation’s most pressing social challenges. Over 20,000 Americans took the first AmeriCorps pledge at the White House and in states nationwide. Today, as the state-appointed national service commission, we serve as champions and conduits for AmeriCorps's power to reach Texas communities.

**Twenty years ago**, in 2004, **OneStar** was established as a united home merging diverse initiatives across Texas centered on furthering volunteerism and community service. Today, we serve the community through four pillars of work: *AmeriCorps Texas, Volunteer Texas, Rebuild Texas, and Together Texas*.

- **AmeriCorps Texas** | Administers AmeriCorps funding throughout Texas and advances national service as an effective solution to our state’s toughest social challenges.
- **Volunteer Texas** | Strengthens the statewide volunteer infrastructure, making it easy and accessible for all Texans to take action and make a difference in their communities.
- **Rebuild Texas** | Equips Texas communities with expertise, resources, and tools to be more resilient during all phases of disaster.
- **Together Texas** | Builds a strong nonprofit sector to ensure organizations have the knowledge, resources, and networks to address priority issues for local communities effectively.

OneStar believes we are One Texas, united in building resilient and thriving communities. OneStar will continue strengthening Texas communities by creating pathways for individuals and organizations to engage, connect, and accelerate their impact.

The highlights listed below reflect significant milestones and accomplishments:

### AMERICORPS

As the Texas State Service Commission, OneStar is charged with advancing and supporting AmeriCorps throughout Texas. OneStar administers federal AmeriCorps grant funds to address systemic challenges and engage Texans through the power of service. AmeriCorps members commit to serving with nonprofits, government agencies, and faith and community-based organizations to tackle some of our state’s toughest challenges with hands-on solutions. OneStar administers a portfolio of AmeriCorps Texas programs operating solely in Texas as part of the [AmeriCorps State and National](#) program.

The 2024-2025 portfolio comprises 35 AmeriCorps programs supporting over 3,200 members, totaling **\$32.7 million in federal funding**. The full press release, which includes the 35 sites, can be found [here](#).

This year, OneStar launched the **Youth Mental Health Corps in Texas**. The innovative and youth-led solution addresses barriers many young people face when accessing mental health care while also creating pathways to careers in the behavioral health workforce. In the fall, participants started serving with local Communities In Schools programs to offer case management through weekly one-on-one or small group sessions to economically disadvantaged students. This new program was created by Pinterest and the Schultz Family Foundation in partnership with AmeriCorps and America Forward to develop on-ramps to behavioral health careers for young people nationwide. Texas was one of four states selected for a \$450,000 2.5-year implementation grant.

OneStar again partnered with the Center for Nonprofits and Philanthropy at The Bush School at Texas A&M University to offer a **Nonprofit Career Development Certificate**. The virtual 10-week program ran from February 14 to April 23. Enrollment in the program was open exclusively to currently serving AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps alumni. AmeriCorps alumni could use their earned education award to pay for the course as the Certificate is an eligible educational expense of the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award. Scholarships were also available to individuals between the ages of 17 and 25 who served in Texas or currently reside in Texas. Scholarships were made possible with the support of the National Philanthropic Trust, as the Schultz Family Foundation recommended.

More than 100 individuals attended the **2024 AmeriCorps Texas Grantee Meeting**, held March 5-6 in Austin. In recognition of AmeriCorps' 30th anniversary, the theme *Celebrate the Moment/Strengthen the Movement* provided a unique opportunity to leverage the wisdom of the past while embracing innovative approaches to drive even greater impact across Texas. AmeriCorps CEO Michael Smith facilitated an AmeriCorps alumni panel, and AmeriCorps OIG Acting Inspector General Stephen Ravas led a session. In addition to presentations from national service leaders, several OneStar staff and peers from AmeriCorps programs also shared their expertise. The event also featured our first-ever AmeriCorps Texas Awards. We were excited to celebrate the following programs:

- **Stellar First Year:** Boys & Girls Club of Pharr - San Juan
- **Member Experience Shining Star:** CitySquare
- **Member Development Guiding Star:** Austin Achieve Public Schools
- **Collaborative Partnership Constellation:** Communities In Schools of San Antonio
- **Stewardship Superstar:** Equal Heart
- **Community Impact Supernova:** Literacy First

## AMERICORPS VISTA

[AmeriCorps VISTA \(Volunteers in Service to America\)](#) is a national service program designed to build capacity and infrastructure within organizations to fight poverty. OneStar sponsors AmeriCorps VISTA, placing AmeriCorps VISTA members with host site organizations throughout Texas. Managing an AmeriCorps VISTA Project allows OneStar to leverage additional AmeriCorps resources to create pathways for individuals to engage and support organizations in accelerating their impact.

Some highlights of our AmeriCorps VISTA members from the last year:

- AmeriCorps VISTA members recruited and/or managed **749 community volunteers**
- Those community volunteers **served 2,547 hours**
- AmeriCorps VISTA members leveraged **\$38,616 in cash resources** for their service sites
- AmeriCorps VISTA members leveraged **\$8,260 in in-kind resources** for their service sites
- **14 service sites** increased their capacity based on their VISTA members' service

- **Three VISTA members** were hired into **permanent staff positions** upon completing their term of service!

## GOVERNOR'S VOLUNTEER AWARDS

For 40 years, the Governor's Volunteer Awards have celebrated the remarkable contributions of individuals and organizations in Texas that make significant differences in their communities through service and volunteering. In conjunction with Texas Governor Greg Abbott and First Lady Cecilia Abbott, OneStar prepares and administers the Governor's Volunteer Awards each year.

During Global Volunteer Month on April 17, OneStar organized a special awards ceremony at the Texas Governor's Mansion to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Governor's Volunteer Awards and formally recognize the exceptional efforts of this year's awardees. The 15 awardees and their respective categories are as follows:

- **Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award:** Ann Hammond (Houston)
- **Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award:** Kenton & Priscilla Pate (Midway)
- **Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award:** Wayne Rhoden (Georgetown)
- **First Lady's Rising Star Award:** Riz Khan (Pearland)
- **First Lady's Rising Star Award:** Rahul Vijayan (Dallas)
- **Volunteer of the Year Award:** Jana Anderson (San Angelo)
- **Volunteer of the Year Award:** Joan Ulsher (Helotes)
- **Volunteer Family of the Year Award:** LiMei, Christina, Ishaan & Avi Cheng (Allen)
- **Corporate Champion Award:** McCoy's Building Supply (San Marcos)
- **Community Champion Award:** Academy 4 (Midland)
- **Community Champion Award:** City of Longview Partners in Prevention (Longview)
- **Education Champion Award:** Arlington Classics Academy (Arlington)
- **Rebuild Texas Disaster Impact Award:** Orange County Disaster Rebuild (Orange)
- **AmeriCorps Legacy of Service Award:** Joe Carreón (Dallas)
- **AmeriCorps Legacy of Service Award:** Katrina Huffman (Brady)

OneStar received over 110 nominations for the 41st Annual Governor's Volunteer Awards (GVA) across nine different award categories. The Review Committee is currently evaluating nominations to determine finalists. Honorary Chair First Lady Cecilia Abbott will host awardees at a ceremony held at the Governor's Mansion in April 2025.

## TEXAS NONPROFIT STRONG

In partnership with OneStar and United Ways of Texas, Texas Nonprofit Strong is an initiative created to elevate the power and impact of Texas nonprofits, including their benefit to local communities, value to the state's economy, and critical role in civil society. Texas Nonprofit Strong is focused on building a more collaborative, connected, and unified nonprofit sector.

This summer, a webinar was held to examine **The State of the Texas Nonprofit Sector** and to identify meaningful ways to take action to support communities better. Nicole Collier with the Center for Nonprofits and Philanthropy at the Bush School at Texas A&M did a deep dive into data insights from the latest [report](#), *Built for Texas: Creating a More Connected & Resourced Future for our Nonprofit Sector*. The webinar featured a panel of diverse sector voices who shared opportunities and challenges from the front lines: Veronda Durden, Any Baby Can; Dr. Kelty Garbee, Texas Rural Funders; and Colton C. Strawser, Ph.D., CFRE, BCC, Colton Strawser Consulting. The webinar [recording](#) is available to learn how you can be an advocate for Texas nonprofits.

## 2025 TEXAS NONPROFIT SUMMIT

The Texas Nonprofit Summit is a premier event where OneStar brings nonprofit changemakers of all backgrounds to learn, network, and collaborate with others across the state. OneStar plans to host the 2025 Texas Nonprofit Summit in

Austin on February 24-26. As we face an evolving landscape of unprecedented changes and challenges, the theme of Navigating New Horizons Together is designed to inspire community leaders to chart a unified path forward.

An insightful lineup of speakers has been assembled from more than 200 proposals for the 2025 event. We have also confirmed three keynote speakers, including Ann Mei Chang, CEO of Candid, who will deliver a keynote on “Future Proofing Your Nonprofit.” WyKisha Thomas-McKinney, owner of The Mission Mentor Group, will present “Rivals to Allies: Harnessing the Power of Collaboration to Conquer Common Threats.” Additionally, Sonal Shah, CEO of the Texas Tribune, will discuss “Advocacy in Action: Our Mission Moment” in preparation for the final day of the Summit, Texas Nonprofit Strong Day at the Capitol. For more, visit [texasnonprofitsummit.org](https://texasnonprofitsummit.org).

## REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS & CAPACITY BUILDING

To enhance participation and support network partners, OneStar provided funding and other support to the following regional events:

- The Center for Nonprofits & Philanthropy at Texas A&M University hosted the inaugural **Nonprofit BRIDGE Conference** on February 26-27 in College Station. The conference was designed for nonprofit, academic, and community leaders across Texas to Build Relationships, Innovate, Discover, and Get Engaged. It showcased collaborations between nonprofits and university scholars on applied projects in their communities. OneStar President & CEO Chris Bugbee provided opening remarks and participated in a feature panel highlighting our collaboration with Texas A&M University to develop a Nonprofit Career Development Certificate for AmeriCorps members and alums.
  - In partnership with the Nonprofit BRIDGE Conference, OneStar hosted a Joint Network Meeting as a pre-conference session on February 26 at the Bush School. Members of the Academic Affinity Group, Nonprofit Management Alliance of Texas, Texas Association of Volunteer Centers, Texas Rural Nonprofit Network, Texas Nonprofit Council, and ICG were invited to have in-depth discussions, connect, and share insights and knowledge with other network members. During the meeting, network members heard from special guests Peggi Goss from the United Way of Brazos Valley and Carol Miller from the Greater Texas Foundation. Additionally, Monica Cruz, Ph.D., from the Texas Demographic Center, presented demographic trends in Texas and the pivotal role of data in meeting community needs.
- VolunteerNow hosted the **Texas Volunteer Management Conference (TVMC)** on October 10-11 at the University of Texas at Dallas. TVMC is a premier educational event for volunteer management professionals worldwide. This marked the conference's return to an in-person format for the first time in three years, alongside offering virtual sessions. OneStar partnered with VolunteerNow to support the conference, including providing scholarships.
- The **2024 East Texas Nonprofit Summit**, hosted by the East Texas Center for Nonprofits and United Way of Smith County was held at the University of Texas at Tyler on October 11. More than 100 people attended the conference's second year, and plans are underway for next year. OneStar provided support for scholarships and speakers.
- The **2024 RGV Nonprofit Summit**, co-hosted by the UTRGV Nonprofit Resource Center and OneStar, was held on October 30 in Harlingen. More than 200 people attended the conference, designed to equip participants with capacity-building strategies and foster meaningful partnerships within the RGV nonprofit community. OneStar's President/CEO, Chris Bugbee, was the luncheon keynote speaker.

## REBUILD TEXAS FUND

OneStar serves as the organization designated by the Office of the Governor to receive private donations following a disaster. Through the Rebuild Texas Fund, OneStar strategically collects and distributes funding and additional resources to eligible organizations in impacted areas to build resilience. Working with local leaders to identify community-driven

priorities, unmet needs, and funding gaps in affected regions, OneStar provides local leaders and organizations with the financial and technical expertise needed to recover stronger than before.

In the fall of 2023, OneStar was awarded a grant from Texas Mutual to fund program overhead and develop new disaster philanthropy programming to meet the rapidly evolving needs of impacted Texas communities. The funding is a significant investment in the program, ensuring that 100% of raised dollars are re-invested in Texas communities. Additionally, all Rebuild Texas fundraising, grantmaking, and donor management processes have been fully integrated with OneStar's Salesforce CRM to improve overall efficiency, internal information sharing, and delivery of critical funds in times of disaster.

The Rebuild Texas Fund's activation process has been revamped to meet Texas disasters' increasingly complex and unknown nature, providing customized procedures for small/medium-sized disasters, large disasters, and mass casualty incidents. By creating activation processes for each disaster type, Rebuild Texas will be able to respond quicker to events while providing tailored service options to impacted communities, providing critical support and capacity to community organizations and local government.

### **BEFOREDURINGAFTER PLATFORM**

In partnership with Texas Mutual Insurance Company, Texas State University, the Federal Reserve, and OneStar, **BeforeDuringAfter.com** was launched as an online resource for small businesses and nonprofits. This platform provides road maps, event information, and step-by-step plans to support companies and nonprofits in all disaster phases. The platform was introduced in July to an audience of private sector, government, and nonprofit leaders at the Federal Reserve Bank of Houston.

### **RESPONSE TO HURRICANE BERYL**

Hurricane Beryl landed as a Category 1 storm on July 8, 2024, causing power outages and wind damage. Rebuild Texas swiftly connected with partners and state officials in the impact zone to identify local disaster funds and amplify fundraising efforts through social media channels.

Following Hurricane Beryl, Harris County and the City of Houston faced a significant volunteer shortage. Volunteer Houston, a partner of Volunteer Texas, was tasked with managing volunteer opportunities. Rebuild Texas collaborated with Volunteer Texas to provide a filtered list of Volunteer Houston disaster opportunities on the VolunteerTX.org homepage and social media channels.

## **Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)**

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**The Veterans Mental Health Department (VMHD)** of the Texas Veterans Commission ensures access to competent mental health services for service members, veterans, and their families. VMHD accomplishes this by resource connection, training, certification, and technical assistance across Texas. Beyond connecting veterans in need directly to local services, VMHD also collaborates with partners at the national, state, and local levels to address veteran-specific issues, including suicide prevention/intervention/postvention, veteran homelessness, peer support services, military-related traumas (Posttraumatic Stress/PTSD, Moral Injury, Military Sexual Trauma, Traumatic Brain Injury, etc.), the specific needs of women and rural veterans, and justice-involved veterans. Across all programming, VMHD is fortunate to have the broadest definition of veteran regardless of discharge status, branch of service, or longevity of military service. All program services, including training, technical assistance, and direct services, are offered at no cost to all who are in need.

The Veterans Mental Health Department is made up of the Veteran Suicide Prevention Program, Military Veteran Peer Network, Justice involved Veteran Program, Homeless Veteran program, Provider Training & Rural Veteran Counselor Pilot Program, and the Rural Community & Faith-Based Partnerships.



## **VETERAN SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM**

VMHD focuses on reducing veteran suicide through training and technical assistance specific to veteran mental health needs, with a focus on screening/assessment, gatekeeper training, safe messaging, intervention/crisis management, safety planning, postvention, and promoting evidence-based practices. VMHD also partners with national, statewide, and local stakeholders on initiatives and efforts to reduce veteran suicide, local coalition building, and contributing to reports and recommendations for the State Legislature. Outreach efforts also include stewardship of the Texans Ask: “Did Y’all Serve?” Campaign, Central Texas Mayor’s Challenge, and legislatively mandated strategies such as [www.veteransmentalhealth.texas.gov](http://www.veteransmentalhealth.texas.gov) (HB671), Buddy Check Day (SB460), and the Veteran Caregiver Guide (SB63).

## **MILITARY VETERAN PEER NETWORK (MVPN)**

The MVPN is comprised of TVC-Certified Peer Service Coordinators and peer volunteers strategically placed within local mental health authorities across Texas, creating a peer-to-peer network for any service member, veteran, or family member. The MVPN provides direct peer-to-peer support, training on suicide prevention and military cultural competency, coordination of mental health first aid, and warm hand-off to local trusted resources based on the individual needs of veterans and their families.

## **JUSTICE INVOLVED VETERAN (JIV) PROGRAM**

VMHD aims to improve veteran services across the entire criminal justice continuum by providing technical assistance and training to all Veteran Treatment Courts across Texas; partnering with the local and state law enforcement to deliver training to peace officers on trauma-affected veterans and crisis intervention strategies; and by working with local jails and the state prison system to better ensure that incarcerated veterans have access to veteran-specific services, programming, and reentry efforts. VMHD is tasked with providing a legislative report on the outcomes of Veteran Treatment Courts annually.

## **HOMELESS VETERAN PROGRAM**

VMHD aims to reduce veteran homelessness in both urban and rural settings across Texas. Homeless Veteran Coordinators work with statewide and local partners to help veteran families experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness find and access local, state, and federal resources.

## **PROVIDER TRAINING & RURAL VETERAN COUNSELOR PILOT PROGRAM**

VMHD offers mental health professionals and veteran stakeholders at no-cost training, technical assistance, and continuing education to promote military cultural competency. This Program tailors all services to the unique needs of the audience as it relates to military-informed care, military traumas, veteran suicide prevention, and evidence-based practices. Additionally, VMHD oversees a team of licensed Rural Veteran Counselors focused on providing evidence-based treatments to trauma-affected veterans and their families living in rural areas across Texas.

## **RURAL COMMUNITY & FAITH-BASED PARTNERSHIPS**

VMHD focuses on involving stakeholders and faiths of all denominations to develop and implement practical strategies to support the well-being of veterans and their families at the local level. This is of crucial importance in rural areas where access to mental health services and veteran-specific services is extremely limited. In addition to offering community stakeholders training and technical assistance, VMHD works with partners to utilize the Faith & Allegiance Initiative, the “*Texans Ask: Did Y’all Serve?*” Campaign, and the Buddy Check Day Initiative. Additionally, VMHD offers a multitude of state and local resources at [www.veteransmentalhealth.texas.gov](http://www.veteransmentalhealth.texas.gov)

By fostering local and statewide collaborations, VMHD aims to improve community outreach and the mental health support available to veterans. An essential aspect of collaboration is resource sharing. In 2024, through the Central Texas Challenge, VMHD collaborated with community stakeholders to develop a toolkit for promoting the *Texans Ask: “Did Y’all Serve?”* aimed at identifying potentially at-risk veterans across Texas who often go unrecognized for a variety of reasons, including lack of awareness about available services, past military trauma, or discharge status. By focusing on

these barriers, we can proactively support veterans who may be at elevated risk of suicide, homelessness, justice involvement, and other barriers to optimal functioning.

The Texans Ask initiative is particularly vital as it encourages individuals and organizations to engage in conversations with veterans about their experiences and then ensure that support is made readily available. Additionally, VMHD provides training on Texans Ask to nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and government agencies, equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary to effectively implement the initiative. This training empowers organizations to connect veterans with essential resources, ultimately working toward reducing the risk of suicide among the veteran population.

Recognizing the importance of connecting veterans with faith-based organizations, VMHD is also enhancing its "Faith Champion" initiative which aims to create bridges between veterans and their faith communities, facilitating support that aligns with their spiritual needs. These community led efforts are crucial in more rural areas of Texas where access to other forms of support and mental health services can be sparse and difficult to access. In 2025, VMHD will continue to prioritize training MVPN Volunteers to serve as Faith Champions, equipping them to provide direct peer support as well as access to training in military cultural competency and suicide prevention. As part of the MVPN, these Faith Champions can ensure that resources and specialized support are readily available to veterans and their families who are seeking help.

## **FY2024 IMPACT BY TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION'S VETERANS MENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT (VMHD)**

### **FY2024 Trainings Provided to Community Stakeholders**

| <b>Training Type</b>         | <b>Trainings Provided</b> | <b>People Trained</b> |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Military Cultural Competency | 135                       | 3,479                 |
| Suicide Prevention           | 35                        | 855                   |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>170</b>                | <b>4,334</b>          |

### **FY2024 Trainings Provided to Community Stakeholders**

| <b>VMHD Service to Rural Community &amp; Faith-Based Stakeholders</b>         | <b>Occurrences</b> |
|---|--------------------|
| Connections to SMVF   | 1,267              |
| Training on how to better serve Service Members, Veterans, and their Families | 1,086              |
| Technical assistance  | 611                |
| Interagency collaborations, initiatives, & coalitions                         | 1,293              |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>4,257</b>       |

**Goal 3:** Identify and address duplication of services provided by the state and faith-based and community organizations.

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**Goal 4:** Identify and address gaps in state services that faith-based and community organizations could fill.

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**ACTIVITY & PROGRESS FOR GOALS 3 & 4**

The ICG began discussions on activities it could engage in to further progress in achieving these goals and partnership with the Texas Nonprofit Council (TNC). In 2023, TNC hosted a stakeholder meeting for 40 sector leaders from across the state, including ICG members. In June 2024, the Texas Nonprofit Council provided ICG members with an overview and update report. In 2025, the ICG will work with the TNC on implementing legislative recommendations released in its 2024 report.

In 2021, OneStar completed the full transfer of agreements and assets related to the Texas Connector mapping tool to the University of Texas. State agency access to the tool continued throughout the transition. The tool continues to provide information that helps identify gaps and duplication of services across the state. It can be accessed at [texasconnects.com](https://texasconnects.com).

## IV. Next Steps for 2025

In accordance with the recommendations from the Texas Nonprofit Council, 2025 is slated to be an active year for the ICG to improve state agency partnerships with faith-based and community organizations in Texas. The Texas Nonprofit Council released its 2024 report that included legislative recommendations. ICG is reestablishing relationships with the Council to implement recommendations, and work will focus on aligning efforts to make renewed progress toward goals for the benefit of Texas communities.

Important activities planned for 2025 include:

- The ICG will
  - Review progress and advance activities to continue the movement toward achieving all ICG goals.
  - Continue to work within respective agencies to improve cooperation with faith-based and community organizations.
  - Ensure agency information and resources on the OneStar website are accurate and up to date.
  - Support and collaborate with the Texas Nonprofit Council as it engages in related activities.
  
- OneStar will
  - Audit ICG resources on the OneStar website and recommend enhancements that will support the ICG and Council efforts.
  - Support and facilitate ICG meetings and other key activities.
  - Support and facilitate ICG and Texas Nonprofit Council collaboration.

For questions related to this report or to obtain more information on the work of the Interagency Coordinating Group, please contact Chris Bugbee, President/CEO of OneStar, at (512) 287-2018 or [chris@onestarfoundation.org](mailto:chris@onestarfoundation.org).

# V. Appendices

## Appendix A: House Bill No. 492

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### AN ACT

relating to the expansion of faith- and community-based health and human services and social services initiatives.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. (a) Subtitle I, Title 4, Government Code, is amended by adding Chapter 535 to read as follows:

#### CHAPTER 535. PROVISION OF HUMAN SERVICES AND OTHER

#### SOCIAL SERVICES THROUGH FAITH AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

#### SUBCHAPTER A. GENERAL PROVISIONS

Sec. 535.001. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter:

(1) "Community-based initiative" includes a social, health, human services, or volunteer income tax assistance initiative operated by a community-based organization.

(2) "Community-based organization" means a nonprofit corporation or association that is located in close proximity to the population the organization serves.

(3) "Faith-based initiative" means a social, health, or human services initiative operated by a faith-based organization.

(4) "Faith-based organization" means a nonprofit corporation or association that:

(A) is operated through a religious or denominational organization, including an organization that is operated for religious, educational, or charitable purposes and that is operated, supervised, or controlled, wholly or partly, by or in connection with a religious organization; or

(B) clearly demonstrates through the organization's mission statement, policies, or practices that the organization is guided or motivated by religion.

(5) "State Commission on National and Community Service" means the entity used as authorized by 42 U.S.C. Section 12638(a) to carry out the duties of a state commission under the National and Community Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. Section 12501 et seq.).

Sec. 535.002. PURPOSE. The purpose of this chapter is to strengthen the capacity of faith- and community-based organizations and to forge stronger partnerships between those organizations and state government for the legitimate public purpose of providing charitable and social services to persons in this state.

Sec. 535.003. CONSTRUCTION. This chapter may not be construed to:

(1) exempt a faith or community-based organization from any applicable state or federal law; or

(2) be an endorsement or sponsorship by this state of the religious character, expression, beliefs, doctrines, or practices of a faith-based organization.

Sec. 535.004. APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN FEDERAL LAW. A power authorized or duty imposed under this chapter must be performed in a manner that is consistent with 42 U.S.C. Section 604a.

[Sections 535.005-535.050 reserved for expansion]

SUBCHAPTER B. GOVERNMENTAL LIAISONS FOR FAITH- AND  
COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Sec. 535.051. DESIGNATION OF FAITH AND COMMUNITY-BASED LIAISONS. (a) The executive commissioner, in consultation with the governor, shall designate one employee from the commission and from each health and human services agency to serve as a liaison for faith and community-based organizations.

(b) The chief administrative officer of each of the following state agencies, in consultation with the governor, shall designate one employee from the agency to serve as a liaison for faith- and community-based organizations:

- (1) the Office of Rural Community Affairs;
- (2) the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality;
- (3) the Texas Department of Criminal Justice;
- (4) the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs;
- (5) the Texas Education Agency;
- (6) the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission;
- (7) the Texas Veterans Commission;
- (8) the Texas Workforce Commission;
- (9) the Texas Youth Commission; and
- (10) other state agencies as determined by the governor.

Sec. 535.052. GENERAL DUTIES OF LIAISONS. (a) A faith and community-based liaison designated under Section 535.051 shall:

- (1) identify and remove unnecessary barriers to partnerships between the state agency the liaison represents and faith and community-based organizations;
- (2) provide information and training, if necessary, for employees of the state agency the liaison represents regarding equal opportunity standards for faith and community-based organizations seeking to partner with state government;
- (3) facilitate the identification of practices with demonstrated effectiveness for faith- and community-based organizations that partner with the state agency the liaison represents;
- (4) work with the appropriate departments and programs of the state agency the liaison represents to conduct outreach efforts to inform and welcome faith- and community-based organizations that have not traditionally formed partnerships with the agency;
- (5) coordinate all efforts with the governor's office of faith-based and community initiatives and provide information, support, and assistance to that office as requested to the extent permitted by law and as feasible; and
- (6) attend conferences sponsored by federal agencies and offices and other relevant entities to become and remain informed of issues and developments regarding faith and community-based initiatives.

(b) A faith and community-based liaison designated under Section 535.051 may coordinate and interact with statewide organizations that represent faith or community-based organizations as necessary to accomplish the purposes of this chapter.

Sec. 535.053. INTERAGENCY COORDINATING GROUP. (a) The interagency coordinating group for faith and community-based initiatives is composed of each faith and community-based liaison designated under Section 535.051 and a liaison from the State Commission on National and Community Service.

(b) The commission employee designated as a liaison under Section 535.051 is the presiding officer of the interagency coordinating group.

(c) The interagency coordinating group shall:

(1) meet periodically at the call of the presiding officer;

(2) work across state agencies and with the State Commission on National and Community Service to facilitate the removal of unnecessary interagency barriers to partnerships between state agencies and faith- and community-based organizations; and

(3) operate in a manner that promotes effective partnerships between those agencies and organizations to serve residents of this state who need assistance.

Sec. 535.054. REPORTS. (a) A liaison designated under Section 535.051 shall:

(1) provide periodic reports to the executive commissioner or other chief executive officer who designated the liaison, as applicable, on a schedule determined by the person who designated the liaison; and

(2) report annually to the governor's office of faith and community-based initiatives and as necessary to the State Commission on National and Community Service regarding the liaison's efforts to comply with the duties imposed under Sections 535.052 and 535.053.

(b) Each report made under Subsection (a)(2) must be made available to the public through posting on the office of the governor's Internet website, and the reports may be aggregated into a single report for that purpose.

Sections 535.055-535.100 reserved for expansion]

#### SUBCHAPTER C. RENEWING OUR COMMUNITIES ACCOUNT

Sec. 535.101. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "account" means the renewing of our communities account.

Sec. 535.102. PURPOSES OF SUBCHAPTER. Recognizing that faith and community-based organizations provide a range of vital charitable services to persons in this state, the purposes of this subchapter are to:

(1) increase the impact and effectiveness of those organizations;

(2) forge stronger partnerships between those organizations and state government so that communities are empowered to serve persons in need and community capacity for providing services is strengthened; and

(3) create a funding mechanism that builds on the established efforts of those organizations and operates to create new partnerships in local communities for the benefit of this state.

Sec. 535.103. RENEWING OUR COMMUNITIES ACCOUNT. (a) The renewing our communities account is an account in the general revenue fund that may be appropriated only to the commission for the purposes and activities authorized by this subchapter and for reasonable administrative expenses under this subchapter.

b) The account consists of:

- (1) all money appropriated for the purposes of this subchapter;
- (2) any gifts, grants, or donations received for the purposes of this subchapter; and
- (3) interest earned on money in the account.

(c) The account is exempt from the application of Section 403.095.

(d) The purposes of the account are to:

- (1) increase the capacity of faith and community-based organizations to provide charitable services and to manage human resources and funds;
- (2) assist local governmental entities in establishing local offices to promote faith- and community-based initiatives; and
- (3) foster better partnerships between state government and faith- and community-based organizations.

Sec. 535.104. POWERS AND DUTIES REGARDING ACCOUNT. (a) The commission shall:

(1) contract with the State Commission on National and Community Service to administer funds appropriated from the account in a manner that:

(A) consolidates the capacity of and strengthens national service and community and faith- and community-based initiatives; and

(B) leverages public and private funds to benefit this state;

(2) develop a competitive process to be used in awarding grants from account funds that is consistent with state law and includes objective selection criteria;

(3) oversee the delivery of training and other assistance activities under this subchapter;

(4) develop criteria limiting awards of grants under Section 535.105(1)(A) to small and medium-sized faith- and community-based organizations that provide charitable services to persons in this state;

(5) establish general state priorities for the account;

(6) establish and monitor performance and outcome measures for persons to whom grants are awarded under this subchapter; and

(7) establish policies and procedures to ensure that any money appropriated from the account to the commission that is allocated to build the capacity of a faith-based organization or for a faith-based initiative, including money allocated for the establishment of the advisory subgroup under Section 535.108, is not used to advance a sectarian purpose or to engage in any form of proselytization.

(b) Instead of contracting with the State Commission on National and Community Service under Subsection (a)(1), the commission may award account funds appropriated to the commission to the State Commission on National and Community Service in the form of a grant.

(c) Any funds awarded to the State Commission on National and Community Service under a contract or through a grant under this section must be administered in the manner required by this subchapter, including Subsection (a)(1).

(d) The commission or the State Commission on National and Community Service, in accordance with the terms of the contract or grant, as applicable, may:



(1) directly, or through agreements with one or more entities that serve faith- and community-based organizations that provide charitable services to persons in this state:

(A) assist faith- and community-based organizations with:

(i) writing or managing grants through workshops or other forms of guidance;

(ii) obtaining legal assistance related to forming a corporation or obtaining an exemption from taxation under the Internal Revenue Code; and

(iii) obtaining information about or

referrals to entities that provide expertise in accounting, legal, or tax issues, program development matters, or other organizational topics;

(B) provide information or assistance to faith- and community-based organizations related to building the organizations' capacity for providing services;

(C) facilitate the formation of networks, the coordination of services, and the sharing of resources among faith- and community-based organizations;

(D) in cooperation with existing efforts, if possible, conduct needs assessments to identify gaps in services in a community that present a need for developing or expanding services;

(E) work with faith- and community-based organizations to identify the organizations' needs for improvements in their internal capacity for providing services;

(F) provide faith- and community-based organizations with information on and assistance in identifying or using practices with demonstrated effectiveness for delivering charitable services to persons, families, and communities and in replicating charitable services programs that have demonstrated effectiveness; and

(G) encourage research into the impact of

organizational capacity on program delivery for faith and community-based organizations;

(2) assist a local governmental entity in creating a better partnership between government and faith and community-based organizations to provide charitable services to persons in this state; and

(3) use funds appropriated from the account to provide matching money for federal or private grant programs that further the purposes of the account as described by Section 535.103(d).

(e) The commission shall monitor the use of the funds administered by the State Commission on National and Community Service under a contract or through a grant under this section to ensure that the funds are used in a manner consistent with the requirements of this subchapter.

Records relating to the award of a contract or grant to the State Commission on National and Community Service, or to grants awarded by that entity, and records relating to other uses of the funds are public information subject to Chapter 552.

(f) If the commission contracts with or awards a grant to the State Commission on National and Community Service under this section, this subchapter may not be construed to:

(1) release that entity from any regulations or reporting or other requirements applicable to a contractor or grantee of the commission;

(2) impose regulations or reporting or other requirements on that entity that do not apply to other contractors or grantees of the commission solely because of the entity's status;

(3) alter the nonprofit status of that entity or the requirements for maintaining that status; or

(4) convert that entity into a governmental entity because of the receipt of account funds through the contract or grant.

Sec. 535.105. ADMINISTRATION OF ACCOUNT FUNDS. If under Section 535.104 the commission contracts with or awards a grant to the State Commission on National and Community Service, that entity:

(1) may award grants from funds appropriated from the account to:

(A) faith and community-based organizations that provide charitable services to persons in this state for capacity-building purposes; and

(B) local governmental entities to provide seed money for local offices for faith- and community-based initiatives; and

(2) shall monitor performance and outcome measures for persons to whom that entity awards grants using the measures established by the commission under Section 535.104(a)(6).

Sec. 535.106. REPORTS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION. (a) The commission shall provide a link on the commission's Internet website to the Internet website of the State Commission on National and Community Service if the commission contracts with or awards a grant to that entity under Section 535.104. The entity's Internet website must provide:

(1) a list of the names of each person to whom the entity awarded a grant from money appropriated from the account and the amount and purpose of the grant; and

(2) information regarding the methods by which the public may request information about those grants.

(b) If awarded a contract or grant under Section 535.104, the State Commission on National and Community Service must provide to the commission periodic reports on a schedule determined by the executive commissioner. The schedule of periodic reports must include an annual report that includes:

(1) a specific accounting with respect to the use by that entity of money appropriated from the account, including the names of persons to whom grants have been awarded and the purposes of those grants; and

(2) a summary of the efforts of the faith- and

community-based liaisons designated under Section 535.051 to comply with the duties imposed by and the purposes of Sections 535.052 and 535.053.

(c) The commission shall post the annual report made under Subsection (b) on the commission's Internet website and shall provide copies of the report to the governor, the lieutenant governor, and the members of the legislature.

Sec. 535.107. TASK FORCE ON STRENGTHENING NONPROFIT CAPACITY. (a) The executive commissioner, in consultation with the governor, shall establish a task force to make recommendations for strengthening the capacity of faith and community-based organizations for managing human resources and funds and providing services. The members of the task force must include:

(1) representatives from state agencies, nonprofits, the academic community, and the foundation community; and

(2) other individuals who have expertise that would be valuable to the task force.

(b) Using money appropriated from the account, the task force shall hold at least three public hearings in various geographic areas of this state, at least one of which must be outside of Central Texas. The task force shall hear testimony

at the hearings regarding strengthening the capacity of faith- and community-based organizations to manage human resources and funds and provide services.

(c) The task force is not required to hold a public hearing if the remaining money appropriated from the account to the commission for the state fiscal biennium is

insufficient for the performance of the duties or activities under this subchapter.

(d) The task force shall present a report and legislative recommendations to the House Subgroup on Human Services or its successor, the House Subgroup on Public Health or its successor, and the Senate Health and Human Services Subgroup or its successor not later than September 1, 2010, regarding its recommendations.

(e) This section expires September 1, 2011.

Sec. 535.108. RENEWING OUR COMMUNITIES ACCOUNT ADVISORY SUBGROUP. (a) The executive commissioner shall appoint leaders of faith- and community-based organizations in this state to serve on the renewing our communities account advisory subgroup. The advisory subgroup members must be representative of the religious, cultural, and geographic diversity of this state and the diversity of organization types and sizes in this state.

(b) The advisory subgroup shall make recommendations to the executive commissioner regarding the powers and duties with respect to the account as described by Section 535.104.

(c) Except as otherwise provided by this subsection, the advisory subgroup shall meet at least twice each calendar year. The advisory subgroup is not required to meet if the remaining amount appropriated from the account to the commission for the state fiscal biennium is insufficient for the performance of any duties or activities under this subchapter.

(d) Chapter 2110 does not apply to the advisory subgroup.

(e) The advisory subgroup is subject to Chapter 551.

(b) The executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission and the chief executive officers of the Office of Rural Community Affairs, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, the Texas Veterans Commission, the Texas Workforce Commission, the Texas Youth Commission, and any other state agency as determined by the governor shall designate the liaisons for faith- and community-based initiatives as required under Section 535.051, Government Code, as added by this section, not later than December 1, 2009.

(c) The interagency coordinating group established under Section 535.053, Government Code, as added by this section, shall hold its first meeting not later than February 1, 2010.

SECTION 2. This Act does not make an appropriation. A provision in this Act that creates a new governmental program, creates a new entitlement, or imposes a new duty on a governmental entity is not mandatory during a fiscal period for which the legislature has not made a specific appropriation to implement the provision.

SECTION 3. If before implementing any provision of this Act a state agency determines that a waiver or authorization from a federal agency is necessary for implementation of that provision, the agency affected by the provision shall request the waiver or authorization and may delay implementing that provision until the waiver or authorization is granted.

SECTION 4. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2009.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 492 was passed by the House on April 24, 2009, by the following vote: Yeas 119, Nays 15, 1 present, not voting; and that the House concurred in Senate amendments to H.B. No. 492 on May 18, 2009, by the following vote: Yeas 139, Nays 2, 2 present, not voting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 492 was passed by the Senate, with amendments, on May 14, 2009, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Governor

## Appendix B: House Bill No. 1965

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### AN ACT

relating to the expansion of faith- and community-based health and human services initiatives.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 535.051, Government Code, is amended by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsection (c) to read as follows:

(b) The Chief Administrative Officer of each of the following state agencies, in consultation with the governor, shall designate one employee from the agency to serve as a liaison for faith- and community-based organizations:

- (1) the Texas Department [Office] of Rural [Community] Affairs;
- (2) the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality;
- (3) the Texas Department of Criminal Justice;
- (4) the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs;
- (5) the Texas Education Agency;
- (6) the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission;
- (7) the Texas Veterans Commission;
- (8) the Texas Workforce Commission;
- (9) the Texas Youth Commission;
- (10) the office of the governor;
- (11) the Department of Public Safety;
- (12) the Texas Department of Insurance;
- (13) the Public Utility Commission of Texas;
- (14) the office of the attorney general;
- (15) the Department of Agriculture;
- (16) the office of the comptroller;
- (17) the Department of Information Resources;
- (18) the Office of State-Federal Relations;
- (19) the office of the secretary of state; and
- (20) [(10)] other state agencies as determined by the governor.

(c) The commissioner of higher education, in consultation with the presiding officer of the interagency coordinating group, shall designate one employee from an institution of higher education, as that term is defined under Section 61.003, Education Code, to serve as a liaison for faith- and community-based organizations.

SECTION 2. Sections 535.053(a) and (b), Government Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a) The interagency coordinating group for faith- and community-based initiatives is composed of each faith- and community-based liaison designated under Section 535.051 and a liaison from the State Commission on National and Community Service. The commission shall provide administrative support to the interagency coordinating group.

(b) The liaison from the State Commission on National and Community Service [commission employee designated as a liaison under Section 535.051] is the presiding officer of the interagency coordinating group. If the State Commission on National and Community Service is abolished, the liaison from the governor's office is the presiding officer of the interagency coordinating group.

SECTION 3. Section 535.054, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 535.054. REPORT [REPORTS]. (a) Not later than December 1 of each year, the interagency coordinating group shall submit a report to the legislature that describes in detail the activities, goals, and progress of the

interagency coordinating group. [A liaison designated under Section 535.051 shall:

[(1) provide periodic reports to the executive commissioner or other chief executive officer who designated the liaison, as applicable, on a schedule determined by the person who designated the liaison; and

[(2) report annually to the governor's office of faith- and community-based initiatives and as necessary to the State Commission on National and Community Service regarding the liaison's efforts to comply with the duties imposed under Sections 535.052 and 535.053.]

(b) The [Each] report made under Subsection (a) [(a)(2)] must be made available to the public through posting on the office of the governor's Internet website [and the reports may be aggregated into a single report for that purpose].

SECTION 4. Subchapter B, Chapter 535, Government Code, is amended by adding Section 535.055 to read as follows:

Sec. 535.055. TASK FORCE ON IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH NONPROFITS. (a) The interagency coordinating group task force is established to help direct the interagency coordinating group in carrying out the group's duties under this section. The commission shall provide administrative support to the task force.

(b) The executive commissioner, in consultation with the presiding officer of the interagency coordinating group, shall appoint as members of the task force one representative from each of the following groups and entities:

- (1) a statewide nonprofit;
- (2) local governments;
- (3) faith-based groups;
- (4) community-based groups;
- (5) consultants to nonprofit corporations;
- (6) experts in grant writing; and
- (7) a statewide association of nonprofits.

(c) In addition to the interagency coordinating group's other duties, the interagency coordinating group, in coordination with the task force, shall:

- (1) develop and implement a plan for improving contracting relationships between state agencies and faith- and community-based organizations;
- (2) develop best practices for cooperating and collaborating with faith- and community-based organizations;

(3) identify and address duplication of services provided by the state and faith- and community-based organizations; and

(4) identify and address gaps in state services that faith- and community-based organizations could fill.

(d) The task force shall prepare a report describing actions taken or not taken by the interagency coordinating group under this section and include in the report any recommendations relating to legislation necessary to address an issue identified by the group under this section. The task force shall present the report to the House Subgroup on Human Services or its successor, the House Subgroup on Public Health or its successor, and the Senate Health and Human Services Subgroup or its successor not later than September 1, 2012.

(e) This section expires September 1, 2013.

SECTION 5. Not later than October 1, 2011, the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission shall appoint members to the interagency

coordinating group task force in accordance with Section 535.055, Government Code, as added by this Act.

SECTION 6. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2011.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the Senate

\_\_\_\_\_  
Speaker of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1965 was passed by the House on April 19, 2011, by the following vote: Yeas 144, Nays 0, 2 present, not voting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Clerk of the House

I certify that H.B. No. 1965 was passed by the Senate on May 19, 2011, by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary of the Senate

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Governor

## Appendix C: Proposed RFP Template for Client Services Procurement\*

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### Interagency Coordinating Group Subcommittee: Improving Contracting Relationships March 2012

#### Section I: General

- A. Scope
- B. Terms and Conditions
- C. Compensation
- D. Schedule of Events
- E. Agency Point of Contact
- F. Definitions

#### Section II: Statement of Work

- A. Service Requirements
- B. Subcontractors
- C. Performance Tracking

#### Section III: Proposal Information

- A. Revision to Schedule
- B. Pre-Proposal Conference
- C. Proposal Requirements
- D. Inquiries
- E. Proposal Submission
- F. Delivery of Proposals
- G. Proposal Opening
- H. Proposal Evaluation and Award

#### Section IV: Historically Underutilized Business Participation

#### Section V: Contract Information Section

#### Section VI: Attachments

*(Additional components may be added as needed)*

\*Client Services Procurement is defined as the purchase of goods or services that benefit the clients or recipients of a state agency.



## Appendix D: ICG Member Agencies

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- Institution of Higher Education (The University of Texas at Austin)
- Office of the Texas Attorney General
- Office of the Texas Comptroller
- Office of the Texas Governor
- Office of the Texas Secretary of State
- Public Utility Commission of Texas
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Texas Department of Agriculture
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
- Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs
- Texas Department of Information Resources
- Texas Department of Insurance
- Texas Department of Public Safety
- Texas Department of State Health Services
- Texas Division of Emergency Management
- Texas Education Agency
- Texas Health and Human Services Commission
- Texas Juvenile Justice Department
- Texas Office of State-Federal Relations
- Texas State Commission on National and Community Service (OneStar Foundation)
- Texas Veterans Commission
- Texas Workforce Commission