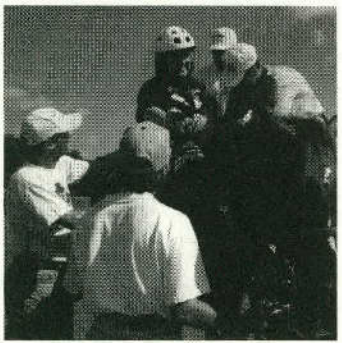
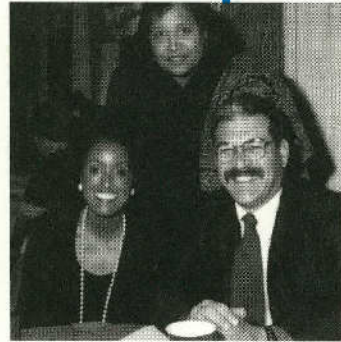
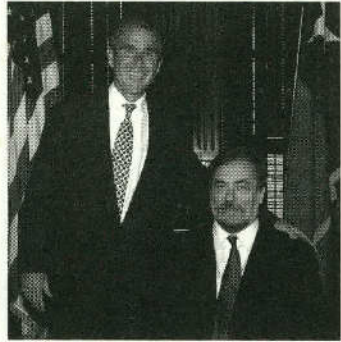
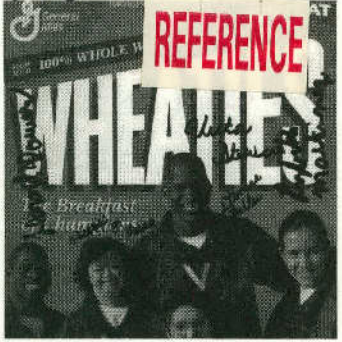


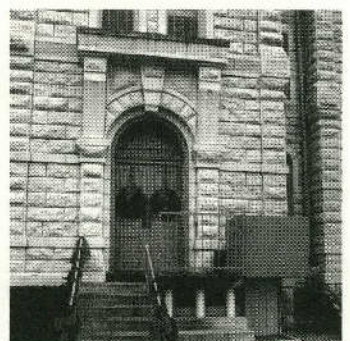
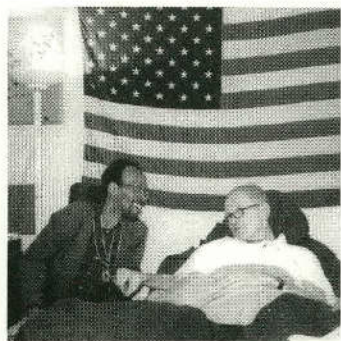
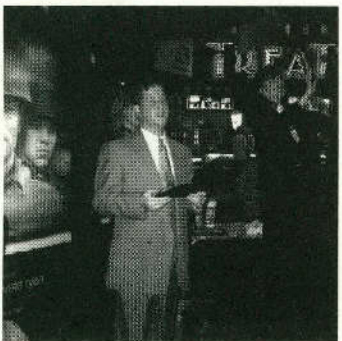
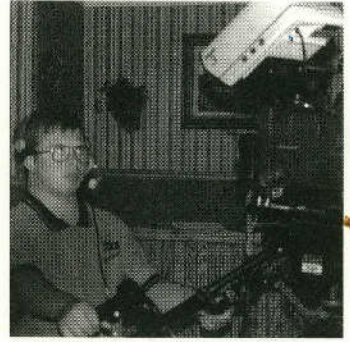
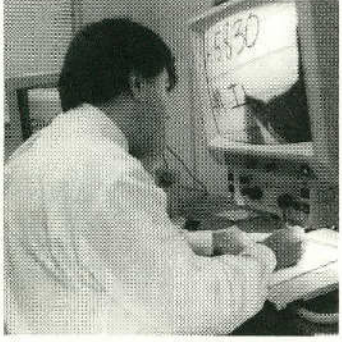
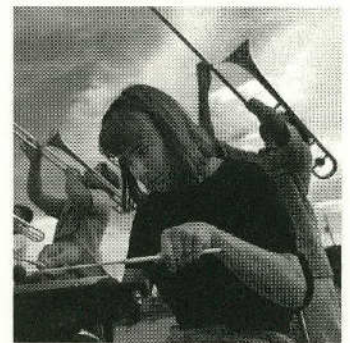
G1001.3
AN78
1998



8 Annual Report



CELEBRATING 50 YEARS 1949-1999



- ### What's Inside
- Introduction
 - Web Sites
 - Highlights
 - Local Volunteer Committee Accomplishments
 - Long-Range Plan Goals and Recommendations
 - Employment and Media Award Winners
 - Sign Language Interpreter Recommendations

Government Publications
Texas State Documents

NOV 22 1999

Depository
Dallas Public Library

PEOPLE PROGRESS PARTICIPATION

Cutlines for cover photos (clockwise from upper left):

In 1998, Special Olympics athletes were featured on Wheaties cereal box.

Governor George W. Bush is pictured with appointee James L. Caldwell who chairs the Governor's Committee and also serves on the Texas Science and Technology Task Force, Texas Commission for the Blind, and the Continuing Advisory Committee on Special Education.

Governor's Committee member Victoria Christman, and past member Kym Iris King attend the Barbara Jordon Media Awards event along with Roland Guzman, chairman of the Corpus Christi Mayor's Committee. The Fort Worth Mayor's Committee hosted the event.

Braille Lite. Photo courtesy of Carole Keeton Rylander, Comptroller of Public Accounts.

Robyn Miller, a student at Arlington High School, plays the xylophone during marching band practice. Photograph courtesy of J. Mark Kegans, *The Arlington Morning News*.

Lubbock student Skyler Boyd is operating the camera. George Campbell says "90 percent of the students are placed in jobs after they earn a certificate of completion from the Free Enterprise program. One former student is currently working in television, and this year we are actively recruiting radio and television stations to hire more."

A lift at the entrance to the Hood County Courthouse conserves space, but requires maintenance and sometimes assistance in operation. Photograph courtesy of Arthur Weinman Architects.

Lex Frieden, Senior Vice President TIRR (center), winner of the Henry B. Betts Award of \$50,000, receives honors at a Houston reception hosted by TIRR, Baylor College of Medicine and the Texas Medical Center. E. Ashley Smith, TIRR Systems' President and Chief Administrative Office (right), and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (left) congratulate Frieden.

Justin W. Dart, Jr. shares his Presidential Medal of Freedom with Greg Smith, Founder of On-A-Roll Radio.

At Hollywood Theater Jewel 16 GC Stewart Bigham, general manager, works with the Waco Mayor's Committee to show movies in an open-captioned format. Kelly Yarbrough provides interpretation for movies goes who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Ron Lucey. Photo courtesy of Carole Keeton Rylander, Comptroller of Public Accounts.

Elizabeth Santiago gears up to go horseback riding at the Peaceable Kingdom Retreat for Children. Photograph courtesy of Susan B. Chambless, Bell County Judge and Commissioner's Committee on People with Disabilities.

TEXAS GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Government Publications
010601
Dallas Public Library

Members

James L. Caldwell, Ph.D., **Chairman**, *Austin*
Mary Ann Board, *Bellaire*
Larry Chevallier, *Joinerville*
Victoria Christman, *Dallas*
Douglas F. Grady, Jr., *Fort Worth*
Peter Grojean, *San Antonio*
Thomas P. Justis, *Grapevine*
Kym Iris King, *Houston*
Debbie H. Morrill, *San Antonio*
James G. Olson, *Houston*
Shirley Smith Pacetti, *Houston*
Judy C. Scott, *Dallas*

Ex Officio Agency Members

Vernon M. Arrell, *Texas Rehabilitation Commission*
Diane Rath, *Texas Workforce Commission*
David W. Myers, *Texas Commission for the Deaf
and Hard of Hearing*
Terrell I. Murphy, *Texas Commission for the Blind*



Governor's Committee member Debbie Morrill reads an NDEAM proclamation from Governor George W. Bush at AccessAbility '98 held in San Antonio at Fort Sam Houston. Sharon Nodine interprets for participants who are deaf and hard of hearing. Photograph courtesy of Yolanda Hagberg, Fort Sam Houston Public Affairs Office.

Governor's Committee Staff

Pat Pound, *Executive Director* — ppound@governor.state.tx.us
Cindy Counts, *Community Outreach & Public Information Coordinator* — ccounts@governor.state.tx.us
Barbara S. Crosby, *Policy Analyst* — bcrosby@governor.state.tx.us
Curtis D. Edmonds, *ADA Technical Assistance Specialist* — cedmonds@governor.state.tx.us
Nancy Van Loan, *Technical Assistant* — nvanloan@governor.state.tx.us

Previous Staff

Scott Haynes
Luke Snyder
Craig W. Brown

Visit our website at http://www.governor.state.tx.us/Disabilities/disabilities_index.html

Mailing Address

P. O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711

Location

1100 San Jacinto
Austin, Texas 78701

Telephone Numbers

512-463-5739 (Voice)
512-463-5746 (TDD)
512-463-5745 (Fax)
Relay Texas, 1-800-relay-vv (for voice)
Relay Texas, 1-800-relay-tx (for TDD)

This document is available in the following accessible formats: Braille, large print, audio (cassette) tape, or computer disk.

The Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability.



VISION FOR TEXAS

Governor Bush's *Vision Texas* sets forth his vision for Texas as a foundation for strategic planning in Texas state government. His vision for Texas is:

"Together, we can make Texas a beacon state: a state where our children receive an excellent education so they have the knowledge and skills for the next century; a state where people feel safe in their communities and all people know the consequences of committing a crime are swift and sure; a state where our laws encourage jobs and justice; a state where each citizen accepts responsibility for his or her behavior; and a state where our greatest resource—our people—are free to achieve their highest potential. I envision a state where it continues to be true that what Texans can dream, Texans can do."

DISABILITY VISION FOR TEXAS

In support of that vision, the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities envisions a state where people with disabilities have the opportunity to enjoy full and equal access to lives of independence, productivity and self determination.





STATE OF TEXAS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GEORGE W. BUSH
GOVERNOR

COMMITTEE ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Dear Fellow Texans:

This year's theme of the report "People, Progress and Participation" of the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities is particularly appropriate on this our 50th year of service to Texans with disabilities. I am often asked whether I believe we are making progress toward true inclusion of people with disabilities in critical areas such as education, employment, housing, and transportation. Although sometimes seeming glacially slow, the answer is absolutely yes!

While I do not have a 50-year perspective, I can, from personal experience, look back over the past 37 years as a person with a disability. In 1962, seriously or multiply disabled citizens were routinely warehoused in state hospitals. For such people, employment and independent living was believed to be out of the question. A decade later, people with disabilities were often denied access to air transportation, accommodations, public education, and public facilities.

Since then, we have, of course, made great strides toward full inclusion. Nationally, the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and, closer to home, the adoption of the Texas Accessibility Standards has helped to level the playing field immeasurably. These landmark actions have propelled equality forward in giant steps. The real power is measured not only by the standards they set, but also, perhaps of even more importance, by the attitudes of the public toward the rightful place of people with disabilities in society.

Are we where we need to be? Absolutely not! But through the ongoing efforts of thousands of dedicated Texans with disabilities, public officials, professionals, and volunteers, I know in the next 50 years we will exceed our most extravagant hopes for accessibility and accommodation. Mountains can be moved one spade-full at a time. Until the day comes when disabilities are accepted as readily as race or religion as normal human variations, we must keep working toward equality and keep faith in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James L. Caldwell".

James L. Caldwell, Ph.D.
Chairman



As Secretary of State, Alberto R. Gonzales presents the Governor's Committee Employment Awards during a ceremony at the Presidential Conference Center. Participants also toured the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum in College Station as part of the event hosted by the Bryan-College Station Mayors' Committee. Pictured from left to right are Craig Brown, Alberto R. Gonzales, James L. Caldwell, and Pat Pound.

Post Office Box 12428 Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 463-5739 (Voice)/(512)463-5746 (TDD)/(512) 463-5745 (FAX)



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Pat Pound

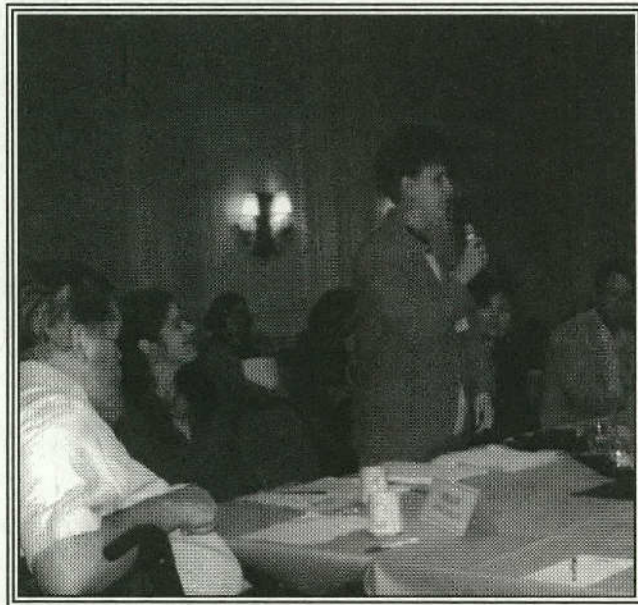
How our society views and responds to persons with disabilities radically changed during the last half century. Fifty years ago, disability awareness was limited and services sparse, mostly provided in institutions. Today, we view disabilities as a natural part of a normal lifespan. During this half-century we increasingly provided services in communities rather than in institutions. For a chronicle of progress through the decades see the chart on pages 2 and 3.

Talented, creative volunteers willing to dedicate their time to increasing opportunities for Texans with disabilities made the Committee what it is today. Representing persons with disabilities, businesses, service providers and families, they collaborated to increase the opportunities for full participation of all Texans, including Texans with disabilities. As a result, Texans with disabilities participate today as never before as parents, athletes, shoppers, leaders, students, and most of all as Texas citizens. Thus we celebrate: people, progress, and participation.

Each section of this report provides a brief comparison of our state then and now, this year's disability highlights, interesting web sites, local volunteer committee accomplishments, and recommendations to the Governor and 1999 Texas Legislature.

The Committee formed these recommendations by gathering input from 107 individuals through three public forums and a survey. With this information, Committee members developed a long-range disability vision, goals, objectives, and recommendations in the areas of education, employment, full participation and access, health, and independence.

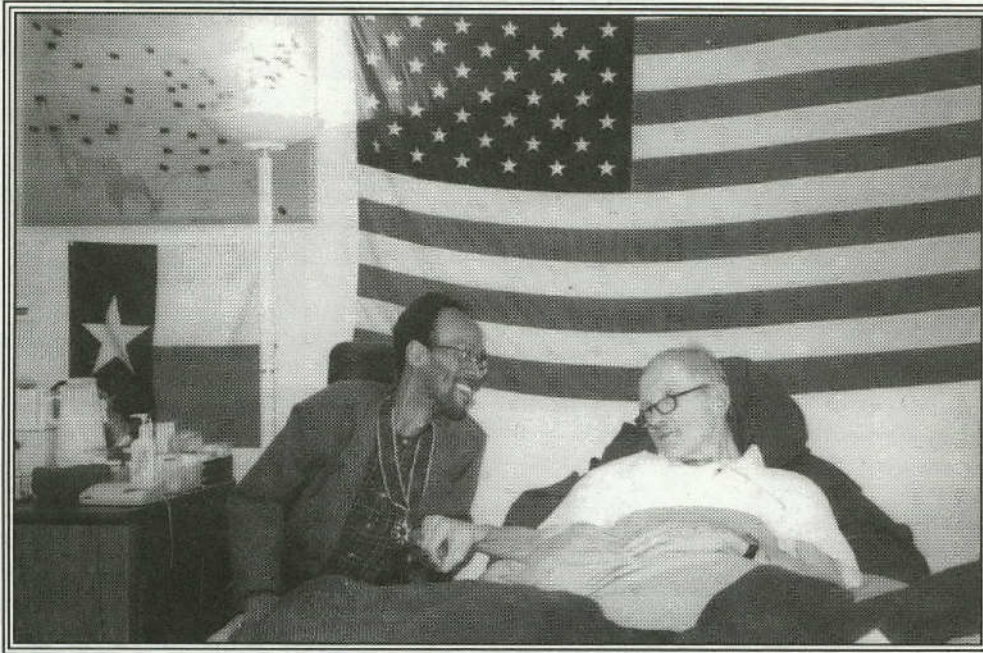
This year, the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission reviewed many state agencies affecting people with disabilities including all health and human services agencies, the Governor's Committee, and the Texas Commission on Human Rights. The 1999 Legislature will debate the recommendations from these reviews, and the resulting legislation can have a significant impact on persons with disabilities.



Pat Pound presents to the National Association of Governor's Committees about partnerships with local committees. Also shown (left to right) are Eugene Organ, Executive Director of the Oregon Disabilities Commission; Maria Romero, Staff Attorney with the Office of the Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities in Puerto Rico; Kathy Strong, chair of the Nacogdoches Mayor's Committee; and Paul Shankland who is on the staff at the Governor's Planning Council for People with Disabilities in Indiana.



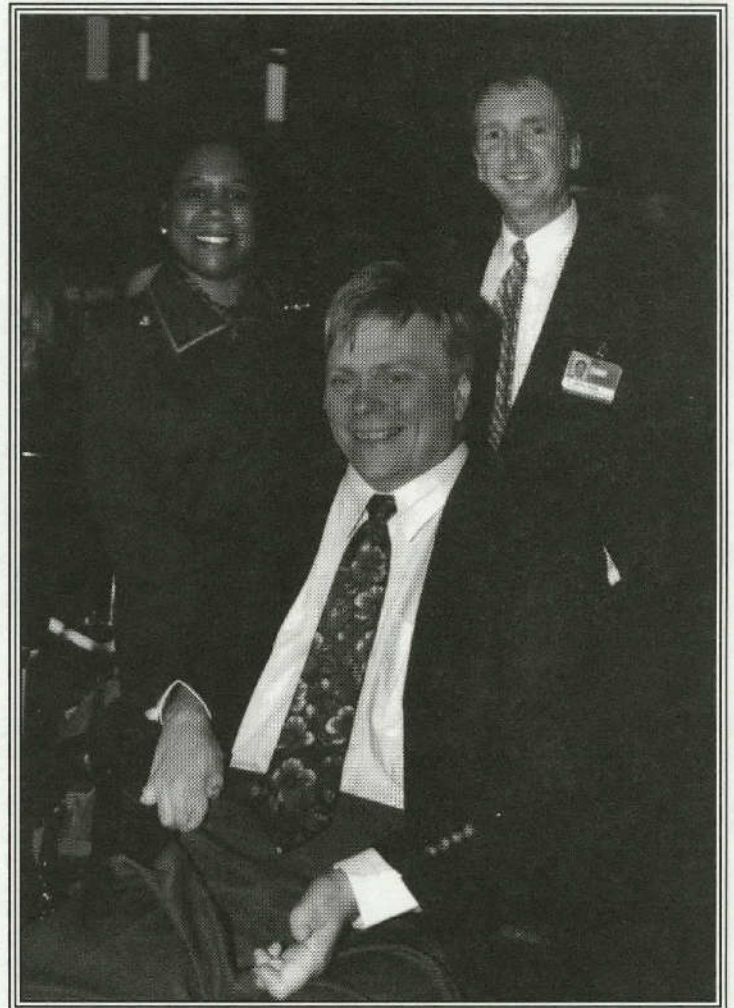
TEXANS HONORED



Justin W. Dart, Jr. shares his Presidential Medal of Freedom with Greg Smith, Founder of On-A-Roll Radio.

Justin Dart Jr., former chairman of the Governor's Committee and a longtime activist for the rights of people with disabilities, received the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in January 1998. At a White House ceremony, President Clinton praised Dart for his tireless efforts to promote the passage of the ADA, and for touring every state in the Union to discuss disability rights in public forums. Typical of Dart, he asked persons with disabilities in attendance to share the medal by putting it around their necks.

Lex Frieden, Senior Vice President at TIRR (The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research) in Houston's Texas Medical Center, Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Baylor College of Medicine, and Project Director for the Southwest Disability Business Technical Assistance Center, earned the honor of being the Henry B. Betts Award laureate for his instrumental role in the development of the ADA. Governor Bush congratulated Lex Frieden, stating, "I commend you for your vision, your energy, and your commitment to developing and promoting independent living. People like you help make Texas and America better places to live."



Lex Frieden, Senior Vice President TIRR (center), winner of the Henry B. Betts Award of \$50,000, receives honors at a Houston reception hosted by TIRR, Baylor College of Medicine and the Texas Medical Center. E. Ashley Smith, TIRR Systems' President and Chief Administrative Officer (right), and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (left) congratulate Frieden.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| People, Progress, and Participation through the Decades | 2 |
| Education | 4 |
| Employment | 11 |
| Full Participation, Access, and ADA | 20 |
| Health | 28 |
| Independence | 32 |

Insert

| | |
|--|--|
| Vision for Texas and Disability Vision for Texas | |
| Structure, Mission, History and Description of the Governor's Committee | |
| Summary of Long-Range State Plan for Texans with Disabilities | |
| 1998 Accomplishments of the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities | |

Appendices

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Selected Proclamations and Letters of Greeting about disability issues from Governor George W. Bush | 38 |
| Employment Award Winners | 40 |
| Barbara Jordan Award Winners | 41 |
| Governor's Committee Sign Language Interpreter Recommendations | 42 |
| Texas Local Committees on People with Disabilities | inside back cover |



PEOPLE, PROGRESS, AND PARTICIPATION THROUGH THE DECADES

| | US | Texas | Texas Disability | Governor's Committee Local Committees |
|--------|---|---|---|--|
| 1950's | post war prosperity; pace-maker invented; first heart/lung machine; polio vaccine; first commercial computer used by Census; Supreme Court ended segregation of public schools; air conditioning; <i>Peanuts</i> comic strip; 10,000,000 TVs in American homes; <i>Twilight Zone</i> ; Elvis and Hoola Hoops | oil boom; women allowed to serve as jurors; semiconductor industry; college desegregation began; Dwight Eisenhower elected president | parent advocacy: The Association for Retarded Children of Texas, United Cerebral Palsy of Texas; Criss Cole served in Texas House of Representatives; medical research increased; Kerrville State Hospital opened; Texas State Library added talking book service for children who are blind | Governor's Committee: veteran and awareness focus; Lawrence Melton, an amputee, continued involvement with the DAV and the President's Committee as well as the Governor's Committee Chair Members were originally appointed by the Chairman pending approval of the Governor. The primary function of the Committee was to promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the state. |
| 1960's | civil rights; Vietnam War; Peace Corps established; first moon walk; Cuban Missile Crisis; President Kennedy assassinated; Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated; first black person appointed to US Supreme Court; drug Thalidomide is found to cause birth defects; Medicaid and Medicare; Woodstock; Bob Dylan songs and Andy Warhol prints popular; mini skirts | prosperity from cotton and oil; poll tax repealed; aerospace growth; LBJ became president and re-elected; Barbara Jordan was first black woman in Texas Senate; Astrodome — first covered stadium | service expansion; first access law; Criss Cole served in Texas Senate; Texas Dept. of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (MHMR) began, 17 MHMR centers and 5 state schools opened; Architectural Barriers Act passed; Learning Disabilities Association of Texas formed | Governor's Committee: continued public awareness and connection with the President's Committee; staff support through Texas Employment Commission |
| 1970's | first disability civil rights; Congress passed the Education for all Children Act; first AIDS case reported; first outbreak of Legionnaire's disease in Philadelphia; first Apple computer marketed in US; <i>Roots</i> published; movie <i>Patton</i> | strong economy due to oil industry; William Clements elected first Republican Governor since Reconstruction; Dallas Cowboys won 2 Super Bowls; Earl Campbell received Heisman Trophy | service expansion; first independent living centers; Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center for the Blind opened; American Sign Language recognized as a language that may be taught in public schools; handicapped stickers for license plates; Lynden Olsen, an amputee, served in the Texas House of Representatives; Austin special transit begins; local advocacy groups increased; Advocacy, Inc. started; Coalition of Texans with Disabilities formed | Governor's Committee: increased awareness through essay contests and Employment Awards |



| | US | Texas | Texas Disability | Governor's Committee Local Committees |
|--------|--|---|---|--|
| 1980's | <p>end of Communism; Fall of Berlin Wall; first woman appointed to US Supreme Court; MTV and CNN; Congress passed Air Carrier Access Act, Fair Housing Act; AIDS; Marlee Matlin won an Oscar for her performance in <i>Children of A Lesser God</i>; compact discs introduced; <i>Batman</i>; <i>On Golden Pond</i>; <i>Jaws</i></p> | <p>began diversifying economy; Andrew Foster, founder of the Negro Baseball League, was inducted to the Baseball Hall of Fame; Houstonian George Bush elected President</p> | <p>increased advocacy and independent living centers; first interpreter certification program; employment discrimination is prohibited; access to polls guaranteed by law and other access laws; Legislature established Relay Texas to provide telephone access for persons deaf, hard-of-hearing, or speech-impaired; Victor Galloway became first deaf superintendent at the Texas School for the Deaf; Legislature created Texas Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities; Todd Freeland competed in the Oita International Wheelchair marathon in Japan</p> | <p>Governor's Committee: began Barbara Jordan Media Awards; supported 15+ Local Committees; <i>Time</i> magazine published a letter from the Committee to Gallaudet University students; published a report of a Transportation Barriers questionnaire</p> <p>Local Committees: first volunteer parking enforcement program started by Beaumont Mayor's Committee; Dallas Mayor's Committee awarded first scholarship for students with disabilities</p> |
| 1990's | <p>information technology; the Internet; ADA signed; Desert Storm; NAFTA; Magic Johnson was NBA MVP; Michael Jordan retired; Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa; Oklahoma City bombing; stock market reaches 10,000; swing dance returns; <i>Jurassic Park</i>; <i>Beauty and the Beast</i>; <i>Titanic</i></p> | <p>Ann Richards first woman elected Governor in her own right; Kay Bailey Hutchison first woman US Senator from Texas; Greg Abbott appointed to the Texas Supreme Court; George W. Bush first Governor elected to consecutive four year terms; floods and tornadoes; Ricky Williams broke NCAA all-time rushing record and received Heisman Trophy; Dallas Cowboys won 3 Super Bowls; Houston Rockets won back-to-back NBA Championships; high tech boom; economic growth</p> | <p>advocacy groups increased; ADA compliance began; lottery outlets required to be accessible; first handicapped parking placard sold; Texas Accessibility Standards adopted; Braille translation of textbooks facilitated</p> | <p>Governor's Committee: created by law; moved into Governor's Office; Focused on policy recommendations and ADA implementation; supported 30+ local volunteer committees adding rural areas; hosted largest ever President's Committee national conference in Dallas; published first booklet describing key Texas laws affecting persons with disabilities and reported first data about State employees with disabilities; presented first entrepreneurship award</p> <p>Local Committees: Texas Association of Mayors' Committees formed</p> |



EDUCATION

Introduction

Fifty years ago, many Texans with disabilities did not attend school. Most of those who did received their education in residential schools. Few attended public schools or college. Colleges had no responsibilities for providing accommodations or services designed to assist them. Progress includes federal and state efforts to locate and begin serving children with disabilities in early childhood and public school programs and requirements to provide accommodations and services in schools and colleges.

People who responded to the Education section of the Committee's 1998 survey acknowledged the value of the legal requirements but they want the laws implemented. They chose increasing awareness of the laws (57.3%), increasing local accountability (56.6%), and improving services and accommodations under the law (56.1%) as the most effective ways to improve the education of Texans with disabilities.

At the Committee's three public forums and at legislative hearings, organizations and individuals reported

that school districts have not demonstrated understanding or commitment to implement the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). At the forums parents reported confusing and even hostile meetings with school officials and district tendencies to recommend separate rather than integrated settings and to evaluate the child with medical concepts rather than functional assessments. Parents reported that the districts behave as if they do not have to comply with IDEA.

Highlights

This section contains information about statistics, promising preschool programs, IDEA implementation, assessments and accountability, family resource, university recognition, sign language interpreters, technology, lawsuits and mediations.



STATISTICS

The number of students with disabilities who receive special education services sharply increased over the last two decades. The Department of Education statistics show that the nationwide number of students receiving federal assistance from 1977 to 1996 has jumped by 51%, from 3.7 to 5.6 million students with disabilities. Texas schools show a similar increase. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) reports that 472,627 Texas children were in special education programs during the last school year, compared to 315,108 students in 1979. However, these numbers only include students who are receiving special education services, and may not include all students with disabilities.

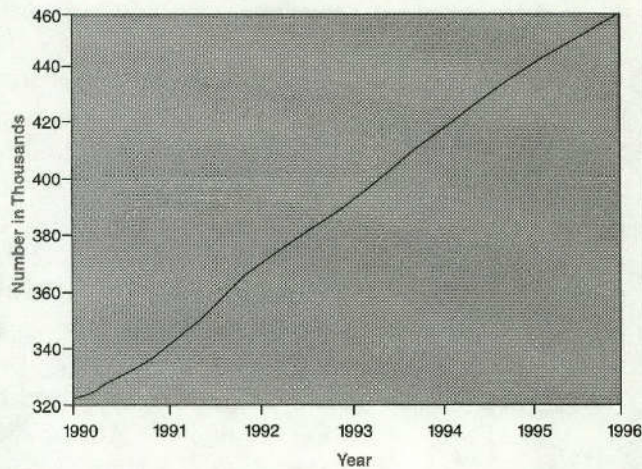
Over 56% of all Texas students with a disability have a learning disability. The number of children who have learning disabilities nationwide increased over 223% since 1977. Conversely, the number of children classified as having mental retardation dropped by 40% over that same time period. The increase in the number of children with disabilities and the decrease in the number of children considered to have mental retardation can partially be attributed to improved testing and diagnosis of childhood learning disabilities. Additionally, the number of preschool students with disabilities nationwide has increased by 50% since 1988,

Web sites of interest:

- <http://www.ncd.gov/youth/youthcartoon.html> . . . National Council on Disability, Youth Page
- <http://www.internships.com> . . . National Internships
- <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1998/nsf98144/nsf98144.htm> . . . National Science Foundation, Activities in Science, Engineering, and Mathematics for Persons With Disabilities
- <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/> . . . Texas Education Agency, Division of Special Education
- <http://www.ahead.org/> . . . Association of Higher Education And Disability
- <http://www.cec.sped.org/ericec.htm> . . . The Council on Exceptional Children, Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Children
- <http://www.hood.edu/seri/serihome.htm> . . . Special Education Resources
- <http://www.abledata.com/index.htm> . . . ABLEDATA (assistive technology) from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

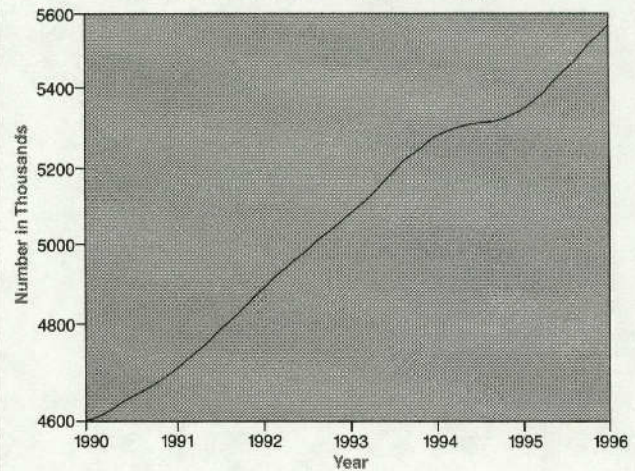


Students with Disabilities, Texas 1990–1996



Source: Texas Education Agency

Students with Disabilities, Nationwide 1990–1996



Source: U.S. Department of Education

when numbers were first available, indicating that disabilities are being diagnosed at an earlier age than previously

The National Organization on Disability's 1998 Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities reports half of adults with disabilities have completed some college — the same proportion as persons with no disability. This is a significant improvement from earlier statistics. Challenges remain as the survey also reports that one out of five adults with disabilities has not graduated from high school compared to only one out of ten adults with no disabilities. The more severely disabled, the more likely the person will not have completed high school.

PROMISING PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

The Texas Preschool Evaluation Project named eight programs to the Showcase of Promising Practices in Preschool Programs for Children with Disabilities. Each was cited for achievements in a particular area such as integration, assessment, teaching strategies and family involvement. The programs are in schools or districts in Deer Park, Gladewater, Houston, La Joya, Longview, Plano, San Antonio and Sweetwater.

IDEA IMPLEMENTATION

In 1997, the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) cited TEA for inadequate monitoring of district compliance with IDEA. OSEP required improvement in five other areas: complaint resolution,

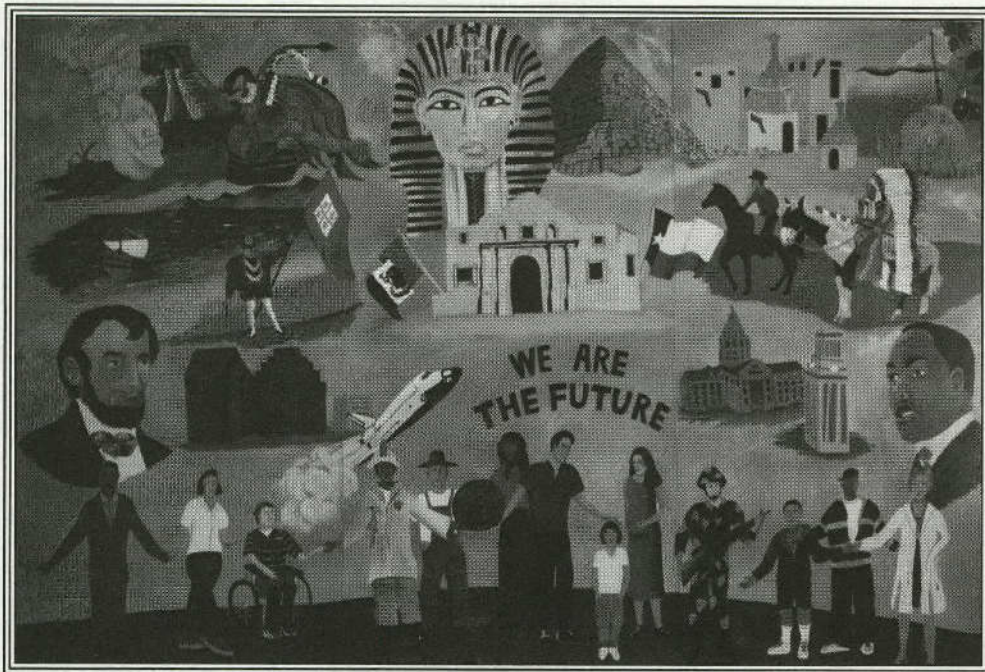
enforcing IDEA requirements for “the least restrictive environment,” timely initial evaluations, related services, and transition planning for 16 year old students. TEA submitted a corrective action plan that included developing an agency monitoring plan, developing a self-evaluation process for school districts, and training the districts on the use of the process. Districts must develop a special education plan of action as part of the district's improvement plan. During the 1998-1999 school year TEA will monitor districts for IDEA compliance. These activities will be completed by June of 1999.

TEA established eight special education workgroups to review and revise state laws and regulations for compliance with the federal 1997 amendments to IDEA. The amendments require more stringent compliance monitoring, teacher preparation and standards, and student assessment and performance. The amendments may require a change in the state's special education funding system and the state requirement to label students aged 3 to 9 by type of disability.

ASSESSMENTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The 1997 Texas Legislature passed HB 1800, which requires TEA to gradually include students with disabilities into the TAAS testing system or an alternative testing system, and then to include their scores in the state accountability school rating/ranking system. A Task Force is advising the agency as it develops alternative assessment tools. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education ruled that students with dis-





A mural created with student involvement at Mendez Middle School in Austin. Photograph courtesy of Rebecca McEntee, Austin American-Statesman.

UNIVERSITY RECOGNITION

New Mobility magazine ranked the nation's top 50 public universities and colleges on the quality of campus disability services. Texas A&M University at College Station ranked tenth. A&M has a full time disability resource office including staff with disabilities. Half of the dorms, 75% of off-campus housing, and both campus and public transits are accessible. The school offers scholarships, notetakers, readers, and scribes. Like all the schools evaluated, A&M tailors services to the individual needs of students with disabilities.

SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS

Teachers play an important and dynamic role in preparing children for the challenges that will face them in their lives. However, if a student cannot hear a teacher or understand what the teacher is saying, learning itself becomes a challenge. Students who are deaf and use sign language to communicate rely on sign language interpreters so that they can understand what their teachers are saying. Without an adequate supply of qualified, skilled sign language interpreters, Texas schools will not be able to teach their students who are deaf and will not meet their legal requirements.

The Texas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TCDHH) is responsible for licensing sign language interpreters in Texas. Currently, there are 1,360 individuals licensed as interpreters, with 69% of those licensed at the Level I, or beginner level. In comparison, there are approximately 41,000 Texans who are deaf that use sign language. The Governor's Committee issued a press release in 1998 to call attention to this imbalance and make recommendations on how to best address the need for interpreters. (Please note our Committee's full recommendations in the appendix section.) Additionally, the Committee held a public forum in January 1998, to hear recommendations from interpreters, state agency officials, and educators about how best to recruit and train more qualified interpreters.

TECHNOLOGY

To implement 1997 legislation regarding electronic textbooks accessibility for students with disabilities, TEA

abilities must be included in statewide and district-wide assessments of schoolchildren, such as standardized

U.S. Department of Education ruled that students with disabilities must be included in statewide and district-wide assessments of schoolchildren, such as standardized testing.

testing. Students with disabilities should have the opportunity to participate in standardized testing and to receive reasonable accommodations for their disabilities.

FAMILY RESOURCE

This year the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired introduced a new resource for families. Called The Family Discussion Room, and located on their Internet

site at <http://tsbvi.edu/family> it provides a place for families of children with visual impairments or deaf/blindness to connect with each other and to share information, issues, ideas, and resources. Families may share information about specific syndromes or eye conditions, personal stories, experiences, and insights about parenting a child or having a family member with visual impairments or deaf/blindness. Persons with visual impairments exchange information about school, technology, resources, and personal accomplishments and challenges.



initiated the development of accessible multimedia CD-ROM textbooks. TEA also made recommendations to the 1999 Texas Legislature regarding requirements for accessibility of electronic and world wide web-based textbooks adopted by the state as well as the accessibility of materials purchased by schools to prepare students to take standardized tests. Industry projections indicate that making a new electronic textbook accessible costs about 2.5% of production expense. For more information visit <http://www.tea.state.tx.us>. Another effort toward textbook accessibility, the Texas Text Exchange (TTE) at Texas A&M University maintains an online digital library of over 300 electronic textbooks for higher education, which are available to member colleges and universities. For more information, contact the TTE at <http://ats.tamu.edu/tte>.

Many Texas students with disabilities use assistive technology devices, such as voice output computers, to assist them in the classroom. The U.S. Department of Education ruled that such devices purchased by school districts for students with disabilities can be used by students to facilitate transition to other school districts or in the job market. Such seamless transitioning should allow students to take advantage of assistive technology outside the classroom.

The U.S. Department of Education settled a complaint against a California college over failure to provide appropriate textbooks, ruling that the college had a responsibility to provide communication to students with disabilities as effective as that provided to other students. The City College of San Francisco refused to provide a Braille version of an English textbook to a student who is blind. Although the college attempted to provide access through the use of audio tapes and personal readers, these efforts were judged not to be completely effective.

LAWSUITS AND MEDIATIONS

When disputes occur between parents and school districts, TEA can provide mediation and conduct due process hearings. Last year, TEA conducted 115 mediations and reached an agreement in 83 instances. TEA also conducted 55 due process hearings last year.

In 1997, Congress reauthorized and amended IDEA. One of the changes in the law allows school districts to provide educational or other services at private or parochial campuses. However, public schools are not required to reimburse parents for the cost of private education if a parent places their child in a private school without an appropriate referral from the public school system or if a free and appropriate public education is available at a public school.

Both the TEA and the federal court system have dealt with the interpretation of these amendments. In one case, a TEA hearing officer approved reimbursement of private school tuition by the Houston ISD after the district made an inappropriate referral of a student with behavioral problems to a non-mainstreamed class. A hearing officer ordered the Richardson ISD to pay the costs of a private summer program for a child who is dyslexic because the district did not provide a similar program. However, hearing officers denied reimbursement in other cases. TEA did not approve reimbursement for additional private tutoring for a child who is dyslexic when the school district was providing an appropriate level of services, and disapproved reimbursement of over \$37,000 for the placement of a child with multiple learning disabilities in an out-of-state private school where the local school district had agreed to provide the needed services. TEA also denied reimbursement for a preschool child with autism in a case where the parents failed to object to the district's proposed IEP, even though the district's proposal did not fully meet the child's needs.

In a Missouri federal court case, the parents of a child with an emotional disability transferred him to a private school after the first day of school. The 8th Circuit ruled that reimbursement was not appropriate because the parents had not worked with the public school to develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) before transferring their child. In a Kentucky case, the parents disagreed with the school district's proposed IEP for their child with a learning disability and enrolled him in a private school in Boston. The 6th Circuit upheld a lower court decision that the proposed IEP was appropriate and that the local school district was not responsible for the \$27,000 annual tuition. The

Last year, TEA conducted 115 mediations and reached an agreement in 83 instances.

PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY



Courtesy of the Austin Mayor's Committee and the Austin Ice Bats.



Scholarship Programs of Local Volunteer Committees on People with Disabilities

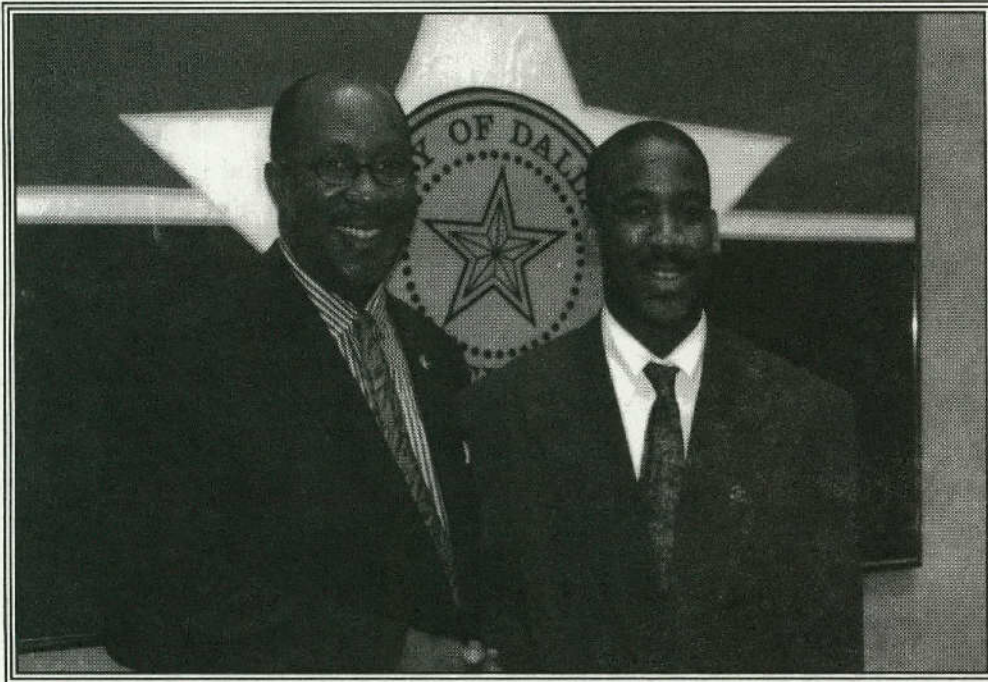
Austin, Beaumont, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Houston, and Orange County have collectively earmarked or awarded \$384,298 for approximately 283 scholarships to students with disabilities.

| City/ County Contact | Program Description | Dollar Amount and Number of Awards Given | | | |
|---|--|---|--|----------------------------|---|
| | | Prior to 1996 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 |
| Austin Ron Lucey 512-459-2577 | Student with a disability attending a university, vocational training school, community college or other post secondary training may apply to receive a scholarship. Generally distributes applications in early spring to local high school students and stops accepting applications in May. The goal is to provide assistance to students who would benefit most. | | | \$3,000 3 scholarships | \$2,000 2 scholarships |
| Beaumont Kyle Hayes 409-880-3708 | Student with disability attending Lamar University in Beaumont, per anonymous donor requirement, may apply to receive a scholarship. Amounts vary depending on student need and resources. | \$43,500 22 scholarships | \$5,000 5 scholarships | \$7,000 5 scholarships | \$8,500 7 scholarships |
| Corpus Christi Roland Guzman 361-852-5727 361-774-7263 | This is an endowment program and scholarship awards are paid from interest gained. The Southside Lions Club supports the program. | \$800 8 scholarships | \$1,500 6 scholarships | \$1,000 2 scholarships | \$15,700 scholarships yet to be given |
| Dallas Kim Bunting 972-307-3176 | Direct scholarships are awarded to individuals. | \$63,798 75 scholarships (since 1982) | \$6,000 3 scholarships | \$10,000 5 scholarships | \$100,000 20+ scholarships |
| Houston and Harris County Steve Martinez 713-837-2630 | Scholarships of \$1,000 to graduating high school seniors with a disability are awarded and renewed, if possible. | \$85,000 85 scholarships | \$15,000 19 scholarships (11 new; 8 renewals) | \$5,000 (10 renewals) | \$10,000 (9 new; 5 \$200 renewals) |
| Orange County Karen McKinney 409-886-5591 | The scholarship amount is based on student need and available resources. | | \$500 1 scholarship | | |

Notes:

- In 1998 **Houston** held a golf tournament and golf clinic for students with disabilities and proceeds benefited the scholarship program.
- In 1998 **Austin** promoted the scholarship program funding through the Taste of Austin, Hot Rock Concert, and an Ice Bats game. The Austin hockey team devoted \$1.00 for each advance ticket sold for the November 21 game to the scholarship program for students with disabilities. AMCPD raises funds for its scholarship endowment under its community partner organization, the Austin Mayor's Committee for Disabled Persons, Inc.
- In 1996 **Beaumont** Mayor David Moore established the Margaret Harmon Education Fund as a living tribute in recognition of her efforts to improve life quality for Texans with disabilities. Margaret Harmon died on December 23, 1995.
- In 1997 **Corpus Christi** provided a \$1,000 for a community-wide scholarship at Texas A&M University in Corpus Christi in memory of former Mayor Mary Rhodes.
- In 1997 **Dallas** was the first city to offer the NationsBank Abilities Scholarship Program. Winners were announced at the Dallas Mayor's Committee Gala on October 25, 1997. The program expanded for the 1998-1999 academic year and provided up to \$100,000 in scholarships.





Dallas Mayor Ron Kirk and Rodney Richardson, a student with a disability, participate in the "Mayor for a Day" program designed to educate youth in the area of government.

Long-Range Plan

The following is the Education section of the 1999 Long-Range State Plan for Texans with Disabilities. To see the entire Plan go to

http://www.governor.state.tx.us/Disabilities/disabilities_index.html

GOAL: Students with disabilities will have the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of education, including vocational and job training.

Objective 1 All Texas educational entities comply with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA),

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and state and federal transition and school-to-career legislation.

8th Circuit also ruled that public schools were not liable to pay for special education services for a private school student with mental retardation in Missouri or for paraprofessional services for a private school student with a brain lesion in Minnesota where such services were available in public schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Legislature and agencies continue efforts to modify activities which do not comply.
- Texas Education Agency monitor campus and off-site facilities to ensure services and programs are in compliance with ADA, including after school facilities.
- Texas Education Agency provide leadership to ensure programs, services, and extracurricular activities are implemented in accordance with IDEA as related to transitional planning.

Objective 2 Campus and district accountability evaluation systems incorporate appropriate accessible measuring tools for students with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATION

- Texas Education Agency continue implementation of House Bill 1800 (75th Legislature requirement to provide an assessment system for special education students). Additionally,

Local Committee Accomplishments

Published a college directory and conducted outreach to schools and universities (Austin)

Educated students in the Fort Worth Independent School District about disability issues by showing a video produced with an Amon Carter Grant (Fort Worth)

Developing a local resource directory for people with disabilities (Fort Worth)

Provided a local support network for people with disabilities and children with disabilities and assisted numerous parents with education issues (Gaines County)

Produced a directory profiling 43 colleges and universities in the Houston area to assist high school students and adults with disabilities interested in pursuing education at the postsecondary level (Houston)



that any accommodation and adaptive technology approved in the student's Individual Education Plan be made available and allowed for all testing, including standardized tests.

Objective 3 Educators and students with disabilities and their families collaborate to design the most effective learning accommodation for the student's individual needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Texas Education Agency, through professional development, complaint follow-up, and sanctions for non-compliance, help districts improve compliance with IDEA.
- Texas Education Agency encourage local efforts that provide parents with knowledge and skills necessary to negotiate Individual Education Plans with school districts.

Objective 4 Educational institutions ensure full participation of students with disabilities, to the extent that it meets their individual needs, by providing adequate support services administered by skilled personnel and appropriate external agencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- State agencies explore using remote interpreting/video conferencing, distance learning, and other approaches to provide sign language

interpreting for students who are deaf or hard of hearing and/or to train interpreters.

- Texas Education Agency maintain requirements for certification levels for sign language interpreters and promote the development of training to continually up-grade interpreter skills.
- Texas Education Agency inform school administrators about the critical impact quality interpreters have on language acquisition and communication skills development of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Legislature determine the need for sign language interpreters for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, address the need, and establish accountability for meeting the needs.
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board develop advanced interpreter training programs.
- Texas Education Agency require regional service centers, and other appropriate agencies provide adequate local training to ensure appropriate accommodations and adaptive technologies be available for students' use and that school administrators and teachers be adequately trained in their application and use.

Note: Please see the Committee's full recommendations about sign language interpreters in the appendix section of the report.



EMPLOYMENT

Introduction

Little is known about the employment rate of persons with disabilities in the 1950's. Employment services such as vocational rehabilitation focused heavily on World War II and Korean War veterans. Many persons with disabilities who did work, did so in sheltered settings usually performing manual tasks such as assembly, chair caning, or printing. Few laws dealt with employment of persons with disabilities.

Today progress includes expansion of vocational rehabilitation services, legislation protecting persons with disabilities against employment discrimination, and technological advances making many jobs feasible for persons with disabilities. Additionally, more people with disabilities attend college and gain work experience through school and vocational rehabilitation programs.

Texans who testified at the Committee's public forums cited two major barriers to working. First, people currently receiving Social Security benefits need but do not find employment that provides sufficient health insurance and personal assistance services to support their functioning well enough to continue to work. Second, growth industries with the greatest number of new jobs are locating on the outer edges of metropolitan areas where public transportation is sporadic or unavailable. Texans with disabilities expressed a need for accessible public transportation with routes and schedules that match employment and education, and medical service's locations and hours.

Texas businesses report a shortage of people with technology skills at all levels and people with skills specific to a variety of service occupations. Texas businesses ask vocational and job training programs to use current labor market projections and job skill analysis in program design.

Committee survey respondents chose tailoring jobs to the job market (61.4%), improving vocational rehabilitation services (56.1%), and increasing the use of



Saul Campillo of Laredo plants a tree as part of "Make a Difference Day." He received help from Saul Ramirez, Jr. Saul Campillo graduated and now works at the Laredo Public Library. Saul Ramirez, Jr. is currently the Deputy Secretary of the Department of HUD and is the former Mayor of Laredo.

adaptive technology (54.7%) as very effective ways to improve employment of Texans with disabilities.

Highlights

This section includes information about statistics, employment honors, business conference, local workforce development boards, state employees with disabilities, Job Accommodation Network, welfare reform, new federal initiatives, agriculture, lawsuits and enforcement, and Sunset review.



ADA Activities by Local Workforce Development Boards

| ADA Activities | Complete | In Progress |
|---|----------|-------------|
| Appointed an ADA Coordinator | 100% | 0% |
| Posted ADA Compliance Notices | 100% | 0% |
| Adopted a Non-Discrimination Policy | 100% | 0% |
| Required Contractors to Adopt Non-Discrimination Policy | 100% | 0% |
| Refer People with Disabilities to Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies | 100% | 0% |
| Representation of People with Disabilities or Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies on Board | 100% | 0% |
| Ensured Integrated Delivery of Services | 90% | 10% |
| Included a Statement of Accessibility in Public Information Notices | 90% | 10% |
| Adopted an ADA Grievance Procedure | 80% | 20% |
| Provided Sign Language Communication or Information in Alternate Formats | 80% | 10% |
| Inspected for Accessibility Compliance | 80% | 10% |
| Assured Accessibility and Effective Communication at Board Meetings | 70% | 30% |
| Trained Staff About ADA | 70% | 20% |
| Involved People with Disabilities in Planning | 70% | 10% |
| Trained Contractors about ADA | 70% | 10% |
| Trained Staff on Relay Texas and TDD | 50% | 40% |
| Trained Board Members about ADA | 40% | 20% |

Web sites of interest:

<http://www.ssa.gov/policy/womens.html> . . . Women and Retirement, National Economic Council Interagency Working Group on Social Security
<http://www.eeoc.gov/task/practice.html> . . . EEOC Best Practices Report
<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable.html> . . . Census Department, Disability Statistics
<http://www.pcepd.gov/joblinks.htm> . . . a direct link to employers
<http://www.warmsprings.org/WSRC> . . . Resourcenter for People With Disabilities (job search engines and Agrability)
<http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu> . . . Job Accommodation Network
<http://www.collegeboard.org/career/html/searchQues.html> . . . Career Questionnaire and Information
<http://www.twc.state.tx.us> . . . Texas Workforce Commission
<http://www.vjf.com> . . . Virtual Job Fair
<http://www.career.org> . . . Career College Association
<http://www.rehab.state.tx.us> . . . Texas Rehabilitation Commission
<http://www.tcb.state.tx.us> . . . Texas Commission the Blind
<http://www.nod.org> . . . National Organization on Disability (Harris Poll survey results)



STATISTICS

A U.S. Census Bureau report and a Harris Poll conducted by the National Organization on Disability sheds some new light on the barriers that still exist to the full employment of people with disabilities. The Bureau reports that the employment rate for persons from age 21 to 64 with severe disabilities is 26%, compared to an 82% employment rate for Americans without a disability. People with non-severe disabilities have an employment rate of 77%. The Harris Poll found that 72% of unemployed adults with disabilities say that they would rather be working than not, while two out of three adults with disabilities say that their disability has prevented or made it more difficult for them to get the kind of job they would like to have.

EMPLOYMENT HONORS

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued a "best practices" report, singling out businesses across the country for their innovative efforts to make accommodations and employ people with disabilities. Among those commended in the report was U.S. Long Distance Worldwide Communications (USLD) in San



State Agencies with Greatest Number of Employees with Disabilities

| Agency | Employees with Disabilities, 1997 | Employees with Disabilities, 1998 |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Texas Rehabilitation Commission | 465 | 578 |
| Texas Department of Transportation | not available | 302 |
| Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services | not available | 286 |
| Texas Department of Public Safety | 220 | 201 |
| Texas School for the Deaf | 153 | 145 |
| Texas Commission for the Blind | 92 | 98 |
| Texas Youth Commission | 35 | 75 |
| Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission | 80 | 73 |
| Office of the Attorney General | 37 | 52 |
| General Services Commission | 35 | 42 |

State Employees with Disabilities by Selected Job Category

| Job Category | 1998 State Employees | 1998 State Employees with Disabilities |
|------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Professionals | 36.7% | 41.5% |
| Paraprofessionals | 12.4% | 18.5% |
| Administrative Support | 13.6% | 14.0% |
| Technicians | 9.9% | 9.2% |
| Protective Service Workers | 10.0% | 5.7% |
| Officials and Administrators | 4.3% | 3.7% |
| Service & Maintenance | 3.1% | 2.3% |

Antonio, a winner of the 1997 Governor's Committee "Large Employer of the Year" award.

USLD, a long-distance telephone company, employs 13 people with visual disabilities as long distance operators. USLD provides Braille keyboards and modified computer screens to accommodate these employees, and works with the Texas Commission for the Blind, the San Antonio Lighthouse, and Easter Seals to recruit applicants.

BUSINESS CONFERENCE

The Dallas Mayor's Committee on People with Disabilities and The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities co-hosted a Business Leadership Network (BLN) conference in Dallas on October 16-17. Representatives from BLNs from nine states gathered to discuss barriers to the employment of people with disabilities and ways to

involve businesses in increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Participants presented their recommendations to former Representative Tony Coehlo, Chairman of the President's Committee.

SURVEY OF LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS



Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) are responsible for increasing opportunities for employment, education and job training for all Texans, including people with disabilities. LWDBs deliver community-based employment services through a network of workforce development centers. These centers address the individual needs of students and workers by assessing the needs and abilities of individuals and providing information about available job openings and education and training opportunities. When



Comparison of Salaries of State Employees and State Employees with Disabilities

| Employees | Under \$10,000 | \$10,000– \$15,000 | \$15,000– \$25,000 | \$25,000– \$35,000 | \$35,000– \$45,000 | \$45,000– \$55,000 | \$55,000– \$75,000 | Over \$75,000 |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| All State Employees | 3.1% | 1.6% | 34.3% | 31.0% | 17.9% | 7.3% | 3.2% | 1.6% |
| State Employees with Disabilities | 2.0% | 0.8% | 34.8% | 36.1% | 17.9% | 6.7% | 2.2% | 0.4% |

Texas Job Accommodations Reported by JAN

| Employee with Disability | Accommodation Provided |
|--|---|
| Nurse with an allergy to latex | Hospital provided non-latex surgical gloves for emergency room staff |
| Factory employee who is deaf | Company placed flashing safety on forklifts and other heavy equipment |
| Data entry clerk with low vision | Employer provided larger computer monitor and screen magnification software |
| Clerical worker with tinnitus | Employee was placed in a separate office where she could use the telephone |
| Clerk with multiple chemical sensitivities | Company provided a portable air purifier |

needed, they also provide information about support services such as child care, vocational rehabilitation, student loans, and other forms of financial assistance.

Both local boards and workforce development centers play an important role in increasing the employment of people with disabilities. Therefore, it's important that their programs and services be accessible to all Texans. The Governor's Committee surveyed LWDBs across the state to evaluate actions taken by the boards to comply with the ADA and provide access to people with disabilities.

As of February 1999, Texas has 26 LWDBs; however, two have not yet been certified by the Governor and did not complete the survey. Additionally, eight of the ten certified LWDBs who completed the survey were not required to comply with some procedural requirements of the ADA because they have less than fifty employees. As a result, five of those boards have not drafted ADA transition plans and three have not conducted ADA self-evaluations. The table on page 12 presents results of the survey.



STATE EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

The Governor's Committee is responsible for collecting and monitoring data on employment of persons with disabilities in state agencies. This is the second year that the state collected information specifically about its employees with disabilities. Since reporting of disabilities is voluntary, and since state colleges, universities, and several large state agencies do not report

personnel data to the state's central database, the number of persons with disabilities employed by the state may be greater than reported.

The 143 state agencies using the database reported 2,164 employees with disabilities, an increase of 54.6% over the 1997 total of 1,399. However, the total number of state employees reported also rose sharply, due to several large agencies reporting for the first time this year. The percentage of state employees with disabilities remained constant, at slightly over 3%.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this analysis is that state employees with disabilities do not differ all that much from all state employees. The majority of state employees with disabilities work as professionals or paraprofessionals and earn between \$25,000 and \$55,000 annually, the same as all state employees. People with disabilities work in state agencies that serve people with disabilities, such as the Texas Commission for the Blind and the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, but they also work to help protect our environment in the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, to assist in the education of our children in the Texas Education Agency, and to regulate important industries in the Texas Railroad Commission and the Texas Department of Insurance.

JOB ACCOMMODATION NETWORK

The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a service of the federal government that provides timely, effective tips to employers on how they can best pro-



vide reasonable accommodation to their employees with disabilities. Reasonable accommodation is not only required by the ADA, but it also makes good business sense. JAN estimates that for every dollar businesses spend on accommodation, they save \$32.82 in increased productivity, savings on benefits, and training of new employees. A JAN study indicates that two out of three calls received are from businesses seeking to retain current employees.

JAN is a powerful tool for Texas businesses who are seeking innovative and cost effective solutions for accommodations. A recent survey of JAN users indicates that 20% of the accommodations made by businesses using JAN were cost-free, while 48% of the recommended accommodations cost less than \$500. For advice and answers about job accommodation, Texas businesses can call JAN's hotline at 800-526-7234 or visit their website at <http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu>.

WELFARE REFORM

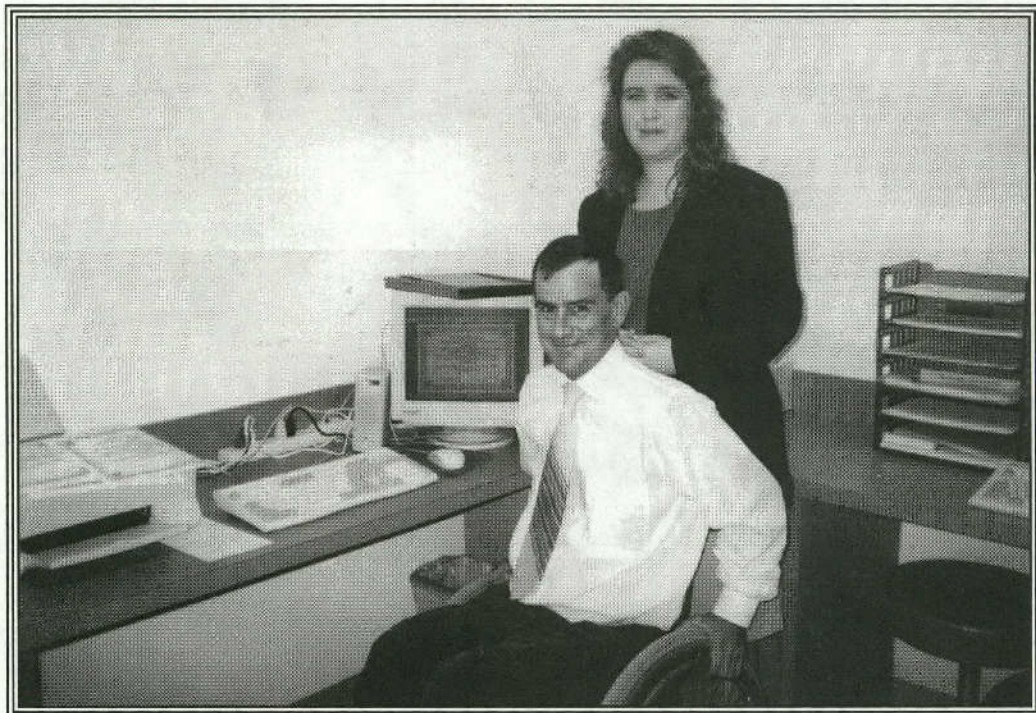
Identifying learning disabilities is an issue in Welfare Reform. According to the National Literacy Council, at least half of adult welfare recipients have low basic reading and math skills. Adult education and literacy providers estimate that more than half of these adults with low basic skills have an unidentified learning disability. The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, the Department of Labor, and the National Institute for Literacy are developing initiatives for identifying learning disabilities in welfare recipients before they begin basic skills or job training.

NEW FEDERAL INITIATIVES

In the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, (WIA) Congress linked employment, training, literacy, rehabilitation, and vocational programs into a workforce development system. Among many things, the Act requires coordinated state plans and formal agreements among programs to ensure cooperation, and the eventual development of similar performance measures.

The WIA amends the Rehabilitation Act. The amendments give the State Rehabilitation Council joint responsibility with the rehabilitation agency to develop goals and priorities for the State Plan and evaluate program effectiveness. Agencies must provide consumers written explanations of their options. Consumers must agree in writing to the renamed Individual Plan for Employment which will now contain a timeline for achieving the vocational goal.

In March of 1998, President Clinton established a national Task Force for Promoting the Employment of People with Disabilities to develop an aggressive



Danny LaDuque and Tammy Bush of Laredo work for Bringing Everyone Special Together (BEST) and Time Instead of Money Exchange (TIME) respectively. LaDuque and Bush have been actively involved with the parking enforcement program in the Laredo area.

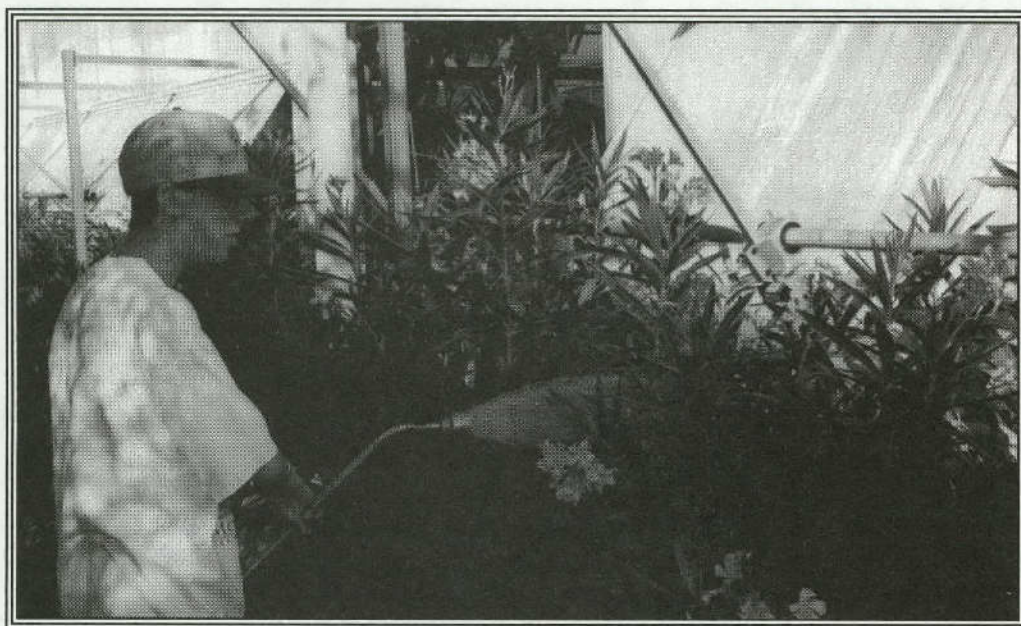
national policy to increase employment of persons with disabilities. The Task Force has five years to identify barriers to employment in existing disability programs, develop policy solutions, pass legislation, promulgate regulations and have a comprehensive program operating by July 26, 2002. The Task Force, made up of the senior executives of every federal agency that deals with disability issues, published its report on problems in existing programs, "Re-Charting the Course, December 14, 1998."

In response to the Task Force charge, the Social Security Administration and the Department of Labor are providing grant funding to support state and local initiatives and pilot projects to deal with current barriers to work. The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 provided states an opportunity to develop a Medicaid buy in option for people who return to work.



AGRICULTURE

According to the Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas leads the nation in the number of farms and ranches and land in agricultural production. One out of every five Texans works in the agricultural industry. The Texas Workers' Compensation Commission reports that an average of 2,800 farmers and ranchers incur lost-time injuries each year, some of which result in disabilities. Bringing together agriculture, engineering, rehabilitation and more than 50,000 Texas farmers and ranchers with disabilities, the Texas AgrAbility Project partnership includes the Texas Agricultural Extension Service of Texas A&M University and the Resource Center for People with Disabilities. Services provided include worksite assessment, information and referral, business access and community support. For more information go to <http://www.warmsprings.org/WSRC/AgrAbility/index.html>.



Justin Hill graduated Moody Gardens' transitional community program and is now a full time employee.

LAWSUITS AND ENFORCEMENT

The Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law of the American Bar Association (ABA) in May released a study of 1,200 federal court decisions from 1992 to 1997 involving Title I of the ADA to determine whether employees or employers were winning the majority of reported cases.

In 760 of these cases, the court issued a final decision about whether the employee or the employer prevailed – most often the employer prevailed. The ABA's study stated that employers won their cases approximately 92% of the time. In 30.5% of the cases, the employer won at the summary judgment phase, before the case ever went to trial. Of those cases involving

courts in the 5th Circuit (Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), the employer won over 98% of the time. The ABA concluded that "employees are treated unfairly under the (ADA) due to myriad legal technicalities" which keep them from getting to trial.

The Governor's Committee studied opinions issued in 1998 in Texas state and federal courts, and the 5th Circuit. Committee staff examined 49 reported and unreported opinions issued under the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and the Texas Human Rights Act. Thirty-seven of these cases – over 75% – ended with an employer or a state agency winning at the summary judgment stage in either district or appellate court. However, three of these cases involved ADA lawsuits filed by state prison inmates, would have been decided differently after the Supreme Court's decision in *Yeskey v. Pennsylvania*. Of the 12 ADA cases which were decided by the 5th Circuit in 1998, only one ended in

a victory for a plaintiff with a disability. However, the Supreme Court agreed to hear an appeal of the 5th Circuit's ruling in the case of *Cleveland v. Policy Management Systems*, which stated that an application for Social Security disability benefits creates a "rebuttable presumption" that an employee with a disability is not considered to be "qualified" under the ADA.

The only cases studied were those where a judge has issued a written opinion. This does not take into account the many cases where employees and employers reached a settlement or entered into alternative dispute resolution.

Additionally, this analysis does not take into account the number of employers who are complying with the ADA and are providing reasonable accommodations to their employees without the threat of a lawsuit. According to Peggy Mastroianni, associate legal counsel for the EEOC, "If you just look at the so-called outrageous cases, I think you are getting an incredibly skewed view of the ADA. You are not getting all the cases where people are working things out." According to Mastroianni, because the ADA is a new law, many of the ADA cases in court are "fringe cases" designed to test the boundaries of the law, similar to early cases filed under the Civil Rights Act. The more obvious cases, Mastroianni says, are resolved very easily, without going to trial.



Analysis of Positive EEOC Outcomes in Texas by Type of Disability*

| Type of Disability | Total Positive Outcomes | Total Charges | Percentage of Positive Claims |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Mental Retardation | 6 | 13 | 46.2% |
| Other Blood Diseases | 5 | 33 | 15.2% |
| Respiratory | 4 | 27 | 14.8% |
| Hearing Impairment | 10 | 68 | 14.7% |
| Manic Depression | 5 | 39 | 12.8% |
| Drug Addiction | 2 | 16 | 12.5% |
| Alcoholism | 3 | 26 | 11.5% |
| Diabetes | 11 | 96 | 11.5% |
| Depression | 18 | 180 | 10.0% |
| Cancer | 6 | 60 | 10.0% |
| Extremities | 23 | 248 | 9.3% |
| HIV | 4 | 51 | 7.8% |
| Speech Impairment | 1 | 13 | 7.7% |
| Allergies | 1 | 13 | 7.7% |
| Heart Impairment | 6 | 82 | 7.3% |
| Neurological | 19 | 260 | 7.3% |
| Vision Impairment | 3 | 47 | 6.4% |
| Back Impairment | 20 | 316 | 6.3% |
| Anxiety | 2 | 32 | 6.3% |
| Kidney Impairment | 1 | 17 | 5.9% |
| Asthma | 2 | 42 | 4.8% |
| Other Psychological | 2 | 58 | 3.5% |
| Chemical Sensitivity | 0 | 7 | 0.0% |
| Disfigurement | 0 | 3 | 0.0% |
| Gastrointestinal | 0 | 14 | 0.0% |
| Cumulative Trauma | 0 | 12 | 0.0% |

*Totals may differ from number reported because of allegations of multiple disabilities

In Texas, EEOC has settled several of its claims against employers who violate the ADA. In one case, EEOC settled a claim for \$104,103 on behalf of a person with a back injury who was fired even though she was performing the essential functions of her job without accommodation. EEOC also reached a \$10,000 settlement on behalf of a person with epilepsy who was fired from her job as a receptionist after experiencing a mild one-minute seizure on the job. EEOC also settled four separate claims against companies who were inap-

propriately using pre-employment physical examinations to deny employment to people with back injuries or diabetes or high blood pressure.

One of the myths that may keep some employers from hiring people with disabilities is that having people with disabilities in the workplace may lead to costly legal action. However, the reality is very different. Last year, the EEOC reported closing 2,158 claims of employment discrimination in Texas. Of these cases, the claimant reached a successful resolution in only



172 cases, or approximately 8%. In these cases, Texas employers agreed to pay \$2,517,578 in back pay and damages, for an average claim per employee of \$14,637.

The Texas Commission on Human Rights (TCHR) received 205 complaints of disability employment discrimination in 1998, down from 432 complaints filed in 1997. TCHR closed 114 of its pending complaints this year, with the majority of those complaints closed because no evidence of discrimination was found or the complaint was not within TCHR's jurisdiction. In 21% of the cases, TCHR issued a "right to sue letter" while in another 21% of the cases, TCHR achieved a settlement of the discrimination claim.

SUNSET REVIEW

In its review of state Health and Human Services agencies, the Sunset Advisory Commission examined the following issues about vocational rehabilitation agencies: direction for counselors, emphasis on services to people with severe disabilities, standards for approving medical services, public rate setting for services, and contract monitoring, and service/administrative duplication. The 1999 state legislature will consider the Commission's findings.

Local Volunteer Committee Accomplishments

Featured, during an April show of "On A Roll! Talk Radio on Life & Disability," was a promotion of a nationwide search for qualified job candidates with disabilities as more than 50 Dallas corporations came together for an annual Career Fair. Skills sought included engineering, lending, systems analysis, sales/marketing, accounting and more. This effort netted 600 resumes of professionals with disabilities and 50 hires (Dallas)

Held employer awareness symposiums, workforce seminars, and job fairs with more than 1,000 participants, more than 100 employers, which resulted in more than 50 hires. Topics discussed included how to interview, resume writing, the ADA and employment issues, and resources. (Austin, Bell County, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston and Nacogdoches)

Participated on workforce development board and assisted with workforce planning efforts (Austin and Dallas)

Conducted outreach efforts to human resource groups (Austin)

Represented the Bell County Committee on the Chamber of Commerce Board and the Miller Springs Alliance (Bell County)

Recognized Walter Holder, who is deaf, as Employee of the Quarter through the Waco Works program and the Chamber of Commerce newsletter (Waco)

Recognized employers and people with disabilities and/or proclaimed National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October (Austin, Beaumont, Bell County, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Denton, Edinburg, Fort Worth, Galveston, Lewisville, Lufkin, McAllen, and Waco)

Addressed several organizations about employment and accessibility (Texas Association of Mayors'/ County Committees)

**The Arlington Mayor's Committee
on People with Disabilities**
9th Annual TAMCC Leadership Conference
June 25-27, 1998
Arlington Hilton Hotel
E. Lamar Blvd. @ Hwy. 360 (just north of I-30)

CONFERENCE TOPICS
Fair Housing • Home of Your Own • Marketing Independent Housing • Accessible Remodeling • Traveling with a Disability • Training on Disability Reporting • Return to Work & SSDI • Employment • Enrichment • ADA Compliance • and more!

\$50 Registration includes:
• Breakfast, lunch and dinner for two days
• On-site professional entertainment

• **Choice between one of two off-site activities on Friday evening:**
A special play *Do Fairy Tales Come True?...A Deaf Girl's Dream*, a drama in American sign language - voice interpreted for the hearing, or a tour of The Ballpark In Arlington.

To register or for more information call (817) 459-6122
or visit the City of Arlington's web site at www.ci.arlington.tx.us

For persons not attending the conference
**Do Fairy Tales Come True?
...A Deaf Girl's Dream**
Mainstage Theater at the University of Texas at Arlington
Friday, June 26 8:00 p.m.
Saturday, June 27 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 28 2:30 p.m.
\$10 reservations or \$12 at the door
For reservations and more information call (817) 459-6122.
supported by
Arlington Star-Telegram



Public is invited to attend.

The Texas Association of Mayors' and County Committees' 9th Annual Conference in Arlington included the topics of employment, return to work, SSDI and more. The Texas Association received a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts to produce a play "Do Fairy Tales Come True? A Deaf Girl's Dream." It explored what would happen if the heroines from popular fairy tales were deaf. The play was presented in American Sign Language with voice interpretation for the hearing audience.

CELEBRATING
50
YEARS
1949-1999

**PEOPLE
PROGRESS
PARTICIPATION**

1 9 9 8 A n n u a l R e p o r t

Vision for Texas

Governor Bush's *Vision Texas* sets forth his vision for Texas as a foundation for strategic planning in Texas state government. His vision for Texas is:

"Together, we can make Texas a beacon state: a state where our children receive an excellent education so they have the knowledge and skills for the next century; a state where people feel safe in their communities and all people know the consequences of committing a crime are swift and sure; a state where our laws encourage jobs and justice; a state where each citizen accepts responsibility

for his or her behavior; and a state where our greatest resource—our people—are free to achieve their highest potential. I envision a state where it continues to be true that what Texans can dream, Texans can do."

Disability Vision for Texas

In support of that vision, the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities envisions a state where people with disabilities have the opportunity to enjoy full and equal access to lives of independence, productivity and self determination.



GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Mission

The Governor's Committee mission is to further opportunities for people with disabilities, so they may enjoy full and equal access to a life of independence, productivity, and self determination.

Structure

The Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities consists of 12 volunteer members appointed by the Governor (seven of whom must be persons with disabilities). There are four additional ex officio members representing state agencies serving people with disabilities. The Committee meets at least quarterly and is supported by a small staff.

History and Description

Governor Allan Shivers established the Texas Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handi-

capped in 1949. This Committee focused on promoting employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. It operated informally, with support from the Texas Employment Commission, until 1978. That year, the Committee was transferred to the Texas Rehabilitation Commission for support. Focus continued on public awareness and liaison with the President's Committee on Employment on People with Disabilities. In the early 1980s, the Committee increased its focus on local committees and began recognizing media professionals who portrayed the realities of people with disabilities.

In 1991, the Legislature moved the Committee into the Office of the Governor and changed its name to the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities. The Legislature also expanded the Committee focus to promote ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) implementation and to make policy recommendations affecting Texans with disabilities. The Committee continues its support of a network of 31 local volunteer committees doing similar work to promote dissemination of information about and implementation of federal and state laws addressing rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Summary of Long-Range State Plan for Texans with Disabilities

EDUCATION GOAL: Students with disabilities will have the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of education, including vocational and job training.

| TO ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES | THE COMMITTEE MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING |
|---|---|
| 1. Enforce compliance with all laws. | Modifying activities which do not comply; monitoring local campus and off-site facilities; and providing leadership in implementing IDEA transitional planning. |
| 2. Incorporate appropriate accessible measuring tools for students with disabilities in educational accountability systems. | Continuing to implement laws regarding assessment systems for special education students; and incorporating any accommodation and adaptive technology approved in the student's Individual Education Plan in all testing. |
| 3. Design the most effective learning accommodation for the student's individual needs. | Helping districts improve compliance with IDEA; and promoting training efforts for parents on IDEA requirements. |
| 4. Provide adequate support services. | Addressing the need for interpreters; exploring alternative approaches to providing interpreters services and training; promoting the development of advanced interpreter training programs; certifying and up-grading interpreter skills; emphasizing their educational value; ensuring appropriate accommodations for all disabilities. |

EMPLOYMENT GOAL: People with disabilities will be fully integrated into the Texas workforce.

| TO ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES | THE COMMITTEE MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING |
|--|---|
| 1. Provide appropriate, accessible, and effective employment services for persons with disabilities. | Coordinating services to the individual. |
| 2. Develop the skills that Texas businesses need. | Developing employment plans around skills in demand by employers and in partnership with the local workforce development board/area's economic development efforts; attracting innovative rehabilitation service providers; and promoting business internships and other skill development opportunities. |
| 3. Provide support and services needed to secure and retain employment. | Supporting efforts to modify disability benefits programs; developing approaches to maximize use of existing work incentives; and coordinating support services for Texans with multiple disabilities. |
| 4. Develop accessible public transportation that serves entire labor market regions. | Planning for development of local coordinated accessible transit systems. |

FULL PARTICIPATION GOAL: People with disabilities will fully participate in all aspects of our state through increased public awareness, effective accommodations, and accessible environments and communications.

| TO ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES | THE COMMITTEE MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING |
|--|---|
| 1. Make accessibility and accommodation the norm. | Including depiction of Texans with disabilities in state media products; and producing a video about benefits of complying with the Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS). |
| 2. Provide Texans with disabilities the knowledge and resources to get accommodations for themselves. | Establishing 211 as an accessible state-wide information and referral telephone number; promoting increased use of mediation to resolve complaints; and providing education regarding services, consumer rights and responsibilities. |
| 3. Fully enforce existing laws that ensure access and preserve housing and employment protections. | Enforcing compliance with state and federal laws. |
| 4. Apply Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS) uniformly. | Strengthening and improving the Texas Architectural Barriers Program. |
| 5. Purchase accessible automated information systems, hardware and software. | Implementing current laws that require newly purchased software and automated information systems to be accessible; and making all state agency web sites accessible. |
| 6. Provide communication accommodations by encouraging compliance with the ADA and Telecommunications Act of 1996. | Promoting ADA and Telecommunications Act compliance. |

HEALTH GOAL: Health care options will be accessible and available to people with disabilities in a manner that maximizes functional independence.

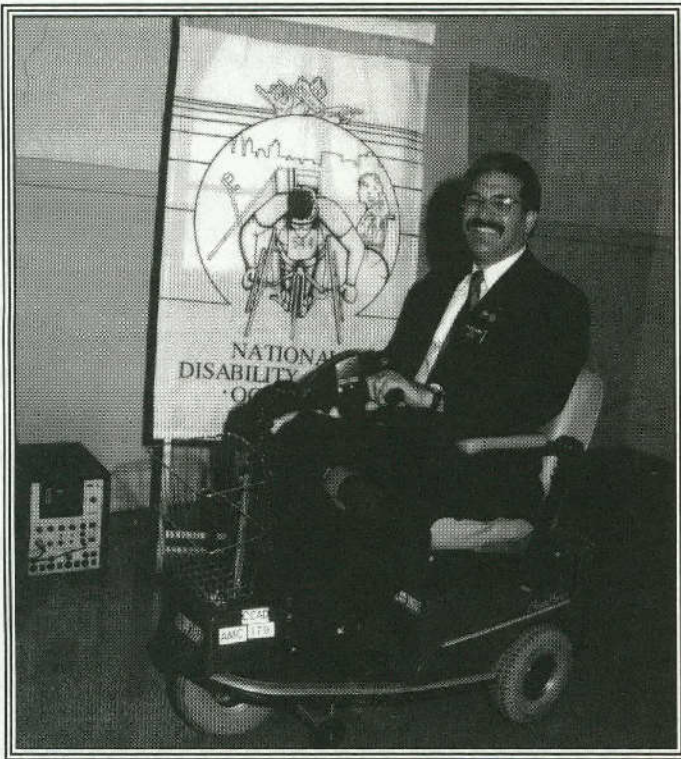
| TO ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES | THE COMMITTEE MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING |
|---|--|
| 1. Make quality health care widely available for people with disabilities. | Monitoring and evaluating managed care's performance in general and the STAR + PLUS project in particular. |
| 2. Make health insurance information accessible and readily available. | Requiring all insurance companies who receive State contracts to provide information in appropriate accessible formats at the time the information is requested. |
| 3. Make affordable health insurance available for people with disabilities. | Implementing federal and state laws; and educating consumers about insurance alternatives. |

INDEPENDENCE GOAL: The option to live independently and fully participate in Texas communities will be available through increased consumer-directed support services, and accessible transportation and housing.

| TO ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES | THE COMMITTEE MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING |
|---|--|
| 1. Provide long-term care services in the most appropriate setting. | Developing a plan to increase options for community-based services; designating one agency to implement plan; seeking waivers to allow service coordination; and increasing the number of people receiving Community Based Alternative services. |
| 2. Promote availability of affordable, accessible housing available across the state. | Monitoring compliance with relevant laws: identify funding for the Housing Trust Fund; and promoting publicly supported housing construction to incorporate basic access design features. |
| 3. Make safe, reliable, appropriate, paratransit available across the state. | Implementing state and federal laws and expanding paratransit services to unserved areas of Texas. |

1998 Accomplishments of the Governor Committee on People with Disabilities

- Conducted a year-long study on the lack of qualified sign language interpreters.
 - Surveyed Local Workforce Development Boards about their ADA compliance.
 - Provided 37,507 individuals and organizations information and technical assistance on various disability issues, including extensive media exposure for the Committee in a national periodical, a new local real estate magazine, and in many newspaper articles and television broadcasts.
 - Participated in the Sunset Advisory Commission's review of the Committee resulting in their recommendation to continue the Committee for 12 years.
 - Expanded the Committee Internet site to include Committee publications, articles, and links to other disability sites.
 - Collected and analyzed data regarding 2,164 state employees with disabilities.
 - Increased visibility by holding Governor's Committee meetings in Fort Worth, Arlington, and Galveston; participated in the annual Leadership Conference of the Texas Association of Mayors' and County Committees on People with Disabilities in Arlington. During the Fort Worth meeting, toured the Japanese Gardens which were creatively renovated to achieve access and also maintain the integrity of the gardens. During the Galveston meeting, members were briefed about the Hope Therapy program at Moody Gardens.
 - Held three public forums involving 107 individuals and received 87 responses to a survey that gathered input for revising the Long-Range State Plan for Texans with Disabilities.
 - Presented to the Governor and 1999 Texas Legislature a disability vision, five goals, 20 objectives and 44 recommendations in the areas of education, employment, full participation and access, health, and independence. These recommendations chart the future course of disability-related progress in Texas.
- See the Committee's recommendations in each section of this report.
- Welcomed new local committees in the Alamo Area and the Rio Grande Valley to the network of local volunteer committees whose accomplishments include job fairs, parking awareness programs, increased access and transportation, captioned movies, and a national business summit.
 - Supported a network of 31 local volunteer committees doing similar work. See their accomplishments in each section of this report.
 - Recognized six businesses and individuals for increasing employment of people with disabilities in a ceremony at the George Bush Library and Presidential Conference Center in Bryan/College Station. As a result of the event, the Library gift shop now sells a picture of the signing of the ADA.
 - Recognized 14 media professionals for their positive portrayal of Texans with disabilities in the media at a ceremony at the Resource Connection in Fort Worth. Noted artist, Randy Souders, provided keynote remarks. Also visited the Resource Connection which demonstrates how property formerly used as a state school can be transformed into a one-stop service center.
 - Held four ADA round-table discussions for ADA coordinators about accommodating persons with psychiatric disabilities, access in state facilities, historical perspectives, and web site access.
 - Developed and distributed an analysis of how new federal workforce legislation may impact Texans with disabilities.
 - The Governor's Committee Employment and Barbara Jordan Awards provided ideas for the awards structure of the Governor's Commission for Women's Carole Kneeland Award which focuses on women's health.
 - The Ability Awards initiated by the Governor's Alliance in Florida are patterned after the Texas employment awards.



At the Corpus Christi Army Depot, Roland Guzman celebrates NDEAM in October.

Long-Range Plan

The following is the Employment section of the 1999 Long-Range State Plan for Texans with Disabilities. To see the entire Plan go to

http://www.governor.state.tx.us/Disabilities/disabilities_index.html

GOAL: People with disabilities will be fully integrated into the Texas workforce.

Objective 1 The Texas Workforce Commission, local workforce development boards, workforce development centers, and vocational training programs provide appropriate, accessible, and effective employment services for people with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATION

- Relevant state agencies implement the new Workforce Investment Act of 1998 requirements about interagency referrals and interagency agreements on coordinating services to the individual.

Objective 2 People with disabilities be afforded the opportunity to develop the skills that Texas businesses need.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Rehabilitation agencies develop Individual Plans for Employment according to the individual's abilities and interests and in relation to the skills in demand by employers.
- Local vocational rehabilitation service providers provide job assistance, placement services, and small business development support in partnership with the local workforce development board/area's economic development efforts.
- Vocational rehabilitation agencies develop procedures to attract providers of innovative, effective job development, job placement, and job coaching services that yield positive outcomes.
- Texas businesses and educational institutions promote people with disabilities in business internships and other skill development opportunities.

Objective 3 People with disabilities have the supports and services they need to secure and retain employment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- State support efforts to modify disability benefits programs to facilitate recipients' return to employment.
- Texas Health and Human Services Commission review existing disability work incentives and develop approaches to maximize their use.
- Rehabilitation and human services agencies articulate a coordinated strategy for supporting Texans with multiple disabilities through rehabilitation and into employment.

Objective 4 Accessible public transportation serves entire labor market regions, providing service to metropolitan, suburban, and rural areas where jobs are located.

RECOMMENDATION

- Legislature develop legislation to address the transportation barriers experienced by people with disabilities and strategic planning for development of local coordinated, accessible transit systems.



FULL PARTICIPATION, ACCESS, AND ADA

Introduction

Since most people with disabilities in the 1950's lived in institutions or at home and rarely ventured into their communities to attend schools, recreational pursuits or to work, facility and communication accessibility were not issues. By the late 1960's Texas recognized the need of persons with disabilities to access government facilities and passed the State's first law requiring such accessibility. The ADA, passed in 1990, brought new requirements for facility, transportation, and communication accessibility.

In 1998, the laws to achieve full participation exist, but they are not universally understood or applied. At the Committee's public forums and through the written survey, Texans asked for complete compliance by government entities, especially on access to buildings. Sixty-five percent of survey respondents rated "increasing accountability of building designers" as a means to increase physical access. Texans named communication access in public buildings and services as equally important.

Forum participants observed that people with disabilities and their families sometimes do not know how to get services and that the general public does not understand access or accommodation. Survey respondents chose "increasing knowledge about accessibility" (54.8%), and "increasing disability awareness" (57.5%)

as very effective means to improve access for Texans with disabilities.

Highlights

This section contains information on statistics, state agency accomplishments, courthouses, access implementation, alternative dispute resolution, communications, and lawsuits and settlements.

STATISTICS

The Governor's Committee surveyed 86 people, including Texans with disabilities, employers, service providers, and family members, and asked them to rate certain entities based on access compliance and on knowledge of the ADA. The entity which earned the most positive response in the survey was Relay Texas. Of the respondents with opinions (75%) said that Relay Texas service was "good" or "excellent." Other high-ranking entities were retail stores (60%), state agencies (54%), and colleges (54%). Respondents with opinions (34%) ranked bus services as being "poor" followed by restaurants and employers, each with 32%. People with disabilities were judged to be the most informed about the ADA, with 68% of those with an opinion saying that people with disabilities had "good" or "excellent" knowledge of their ADA rights and responsibilities. Service providers (62%) and architects (52%) also were considered to be knowledgeable. Of those people with an opinion, 39% thought that elected officials had "poor" knowledge of the ADA, followed by managers (38%), contractors (35%) and builders (33%).

A University of Hawaii study surveyed local governments nationwide to determine their compliance with Title II of the ADA. Over 42% of local governments who responded to the survey indicated that they had a local committee for people with disabilities, while 15.2% indicated that they had plans for creating one. Approximately 90% had conducted an accessibility survey of their buildings, while almost two-thirds had made changes to their employment application process to accommodate people with disabilities. The survey showed that the 65% of local governments that had appointed an ADA coordinator generally did a better job of implementing the ADA.

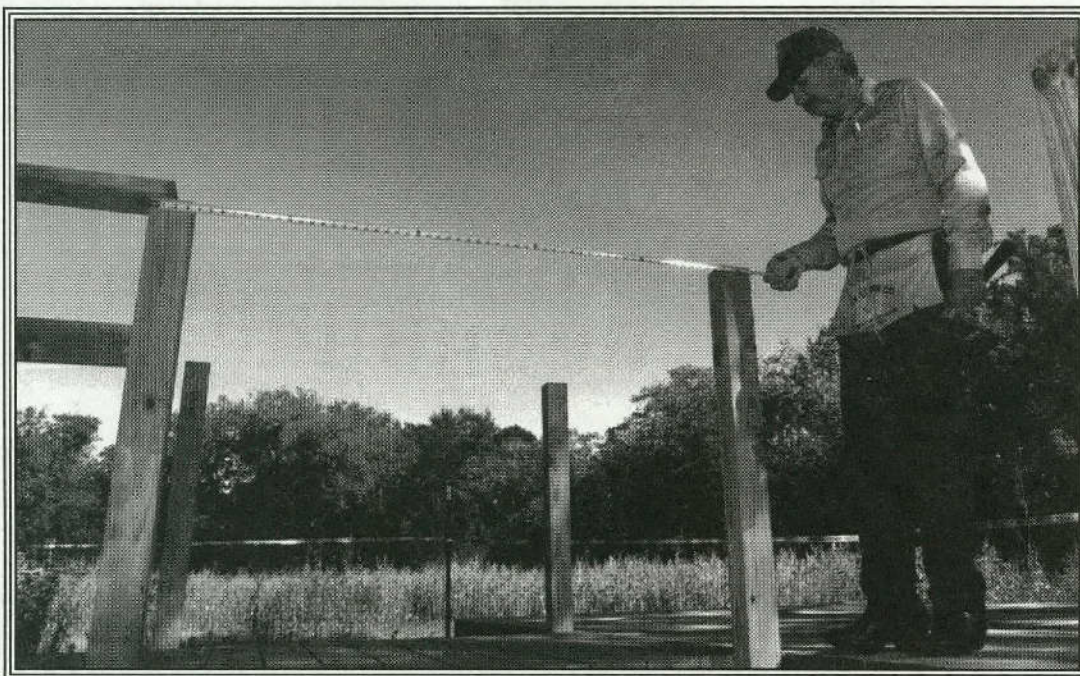
Web sites of interest:

- <http://www.cast.org/bobby> . . . Bobby (evaluates web site accessibility)
- <http://www.ilru.org/ilru-swdbtac.html> . . . Southwest Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center
- <http://www.license.state.tx.us/ab/tas/abtas.htm> . . . Texas Accessibility Standards
- <http://www.ci.sat.tx.us/planning/handbook/> . . . Disability Etiquette Handbook
- <http://link.tsl.state.tx.us/d/disability/> . . . Texas State Electronic Library, Disability and Rehabilitation
- <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm> . . . Department of Justice ADA Home Page
- <http://tatp.edb.utexas.edu/> . . . Texas Assistive Technology Partnership
- <http://www.onarollradio.com> . . . Talk Radio on Life and Disability



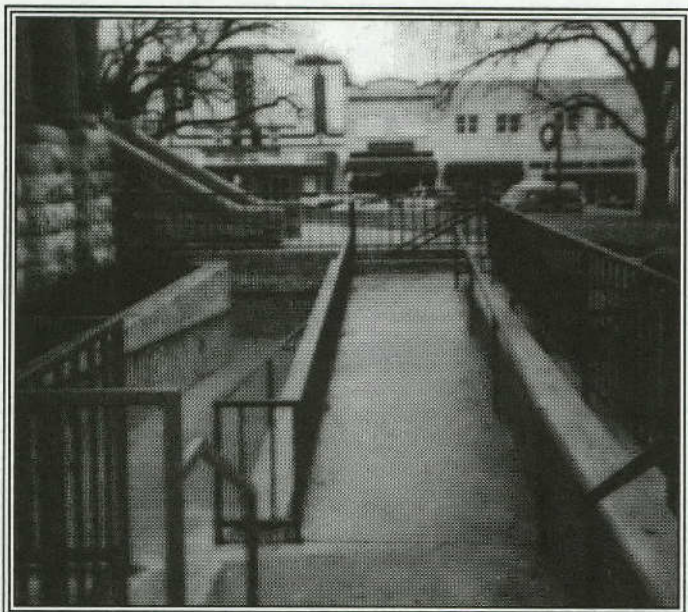
STATE AGENCY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Assisted the Department of Justice in reviewing ADA compliance of the state's 911 emergency system (Advisory Commission on State Emergency Communications)
- Included interns with disabilities in its internship program (Office of the Governor)
- Handled a record number of over 400,000 Relay Texas calls for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and achieved federal recertification of the Relay Texas program (Public Utility Commission of Texas)
- Studied the implementation of voting terminals with touch-screens so that people who are blind or have low vision can cast a secret ballot (Secretary of State)
- Issued a guide on making mandatory continuing legal education programs available to attorneys with disabilities (State Bar of Texas)
- Increased access in the Capitol complex and planned for access in the new Texas History Museum including audio description and captioning in the IMAX theater (State Preservation Board)
- Increased accommodations for persons with disabilities wishing to participate in the Sunset review process by providing real time captioning, large print and tape materials (Sunset Advisory Commission)
- Issued a report on accommodating jurors with disabilities (Supreme Court of Texas Jury Task Force)
- Provided \$21,000 in access grants to six local arts groups to stage cultural events involving people with disabilities (Texas Commission on the Arts)
- Issued 1,862 vouchers totaling \$819,770 for telecommunications devices for people with disabilities under the Specialized Telecommunications Device Assistance Program (Texas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Public Utility Commission of Texas)
- Adopted guidelines regarding accessibility of Internet information (Texas Department of Health)
- Produced a certificate for those accomplishing compliance with the Texas Accessibility Standards (Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation)
- Trained bus drivers regarding passenger assistance and emergency evacuation procedures for persons with disabilities (Texas Department of Transportation)
- Provided technical assistance about ADA compliance to historic county courthouses (Texas Historical Commission)
- Provided a \$180,000 grant towards the construction of "Casey's Clubhouse", a wheelchair-accessible playground in Grapevine's Dove Park, named after Casey Tridico, a child with from spinal muscular atrophy who died in 1995. (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department)



Park Ranger Steve Rogers measures rails on an accessible viewing area at Abilene State Park. Photo courtesy of Abilene Reporter News.





A new ramp at the historic Courthouse-on-the-Square in Denton County enhances access. Photograph courtesy of Denton County Human Resources Department.

COURTHOUSES

The Lone Star State boasts 225 historic county courthouses, many of which are in danger of being lost. Governor George W. Bush stated that "Texans consider these symbolic centers of community as treasures worth preserving." These courthouses pose challenges in historic renovation, but restoration also presents opportunities to make them accessible to people with disabilities.

Many of the historic courthouses of Texas are still used for county government or as museums. The ADA requires that when these courthouses are renovated, they be made accessible as long as doing so will not alter or destroy the historic character of the building. Courthouses that are not historic also need to be made accessible to allow people with disabilities to serve on juries, appear as witnesses or as parties to litigation.

In 1998, the Supreme Court of Texas' Office of Court Administration mailed an ADA information packet to judges and justices of the peace. The packet included information about achieving access and a checklist for accessibility. All courts that returned the checklist have at least one accessible entrance, and all but one provide accessible parking. Most courts reported that jury boxes and witness stands were not accessible, although counsel stations and jury rooms were generally reported as being accessible.

Information about effective communication in courts was mixed. All but one of the courts stated that assistive listening systems or sign language interpreters were available. However, few courts have taken steps to make communications more accessible, such as

placing accessibility information on juror summons forms, installing a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), or making juror summons forms available in alternate formats.

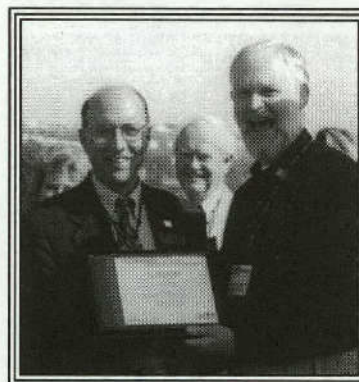


ACCESS IMPLEMENTATION

The Texas Architectural Barriers Act requires that public accommodations and government agencies constructing new buildings or modifying old ones submit their plans to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR). TDLR reviews these plans using the Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS) which the Department of Justice certified as equivalent to the ADA guidelines. This year the National Conference of States on Building Codes and Standards recognized the TAS as a nationwide model.

Last year TDLR inspected 7,426 buildings and certified 2,580 of them as being in substantial compliance with the ADA. The number of inspections increased by 118% from last year's totals, while the number of certifications increased by 47%. TDLR and its contract providers reviewed 9,924 building plans, responded to 181 complaints about accessibility, collected over \$40,000 in overdue penalties from builders, and referred 180 design professionals to appropriate regulatory boards for possible disciplinary action.

Texas law allows builders to apply to TDLR for variances from the TAS



Rick Baudoin (left) accepts an award at the National Conference of States on Building Codes and Standards. James C. Hanna, president of NCSBC and director of Maryland Codes Administration, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development is shown with Mr. Baudoin.

when circumstances warrant. For example, TDLR may allow parking garages to place van-accessible parking outside the garage if the garage does not have enough vertical clearance to accommodate vans. In fiscal year 1998, TDLR issued 910 decisions on variance applications. The majority of variance requests filed were for bathrooms and elevators. TDLR looked most favorably on variance applications regarding areas of rescue

assistance (97.7%), the height of strobe-light alarms (97%), bathroom stall door clearance (92.3%), the use of wheelchair lifts (83.3%), and grab bar placement in bathrooms (83.3%). Requests for full waivers of bathroom access (34.8%) and elevators (43.9%) were the ones most often rejected or postponed. Overall, TDLR



disapproved or delayed 30.9% of all variance applications.

In March, Accessology Inc. hosted a conference promoting increased understanding of accessible design, laws and standards, and how to make it work for people with disabilities. Architects, builders, people with disabilities and government service providers discussed and learned from each other. Dateline NBC reporter, John Hockenberry spoke about his own experiences regarding accessibility.

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Texas Commission for the Blind (TCB) reached a successful mediation with the Department of Justice (DOJ) to settle a discrimination complaint filed by employees with disabilities. This was the first time the DOJ successfully mediated an ADA discrimination complaint. TCB agreed to ensure that employees receive printed materials in an accessible format, to provide ADA training to its employees, and to refer employment discrimination complaints to mediation.

The Key Bridge Foundation, through a grant from the DOJ, provides professional mediation of ADA Title II and Title III complaints. Last year in Texas, Key Bridge successfully mediated 10 complaints of the 43 referred to them by DOJ. In one Texas case, mediators reached an agreement between the parents of a four-year-old boy with atypical autism and a university-affiliated nursery school, that refused to provide the care he needed. The school agreed to change its policy. In another case, a restaurant agreed to place a sign at an inaccessible restroom pointing to the accessible restroom.



Additionally, Texas has 17 Community Dispute Resolution Centers that use volunteer mediators to help resolve ADA and other cases. The Governor's Committee published a new brochure, "Mediating Your Disability-Related Complaint", that provides information about the mediation process, including a list of these centers. At least six other states requested copies of the brochure, which was distributed widely in Texas.

The Center for Public Policy Dispute Resolution at the University of Texas Law School surveyed 100 state agencies about their use of mediation. The survey indicated a 41% increase in mediation of employment cases since 1996. All state agencies that employ 1,500 employees or more are using some form of alternative dispute resolution in employment cases. The majority of these cases involve charges of discrimination; the survey did not request information on the kind of discrimination.

COMMUNICATIONS



The Internet can serve as a "great equalizer" for people with disabilities, providing knowledge, economic power, and job possibilities not otherwise available before. However, for some people with disabilities, the Internet can also be a source of frustration, because many web sites are not built with access in mind.

People with disabilities may use special tools to browse the web, and these assistive technologies can be confused by some website designs and functions. People who are blind or visually impaired and who use screen readers are not able to access information that's only presented as an image, while people who are deaf are not able to access information that's only given through an audio format. Making simple, cost-free accommodations on websites increases the availability and usefulness of the Internet.

Accessibility Internet Rally (AIR Austin '98) was a team-based website design competition organized by MAIN (Metropolitan Austin Interactive Network), Easter Seals serving Central Texas, and Goodwill Industries of Austin, with help from corporate sponsors, volunteers and the Virtual Volunteering Project. This was a fun, mildly competitive event—the first of its kind to assist Austin Area Non-Profit Organizations in getting on the web or redesigning web sites AND to make these sites more accessible for people with disabilities. For more information about the event, the resulting web sites or how to replicate this effort go to <http://www.main.org/AIR-Austin/>.

People with disabilities continued to play an important role in the news media. This year the first Disability News Service began covering the field of disability. It offers the media news items about people with disabilities. All management and staff employed by the service are journalists with disabilities. The new syndicate plans to sell articles on a regular basis to editors and publishers. Other new initiatives include Greg Smith's radio talk show, "On a Roll!", which is the only live weekly talk radio program that is syndicated and addresses disability issues. The show is aired on station KTNZ in Amarillo and via the Internet. Also, KAMU in College Station currently airs a new weekly radio program called "Living Without Limits."

People with disabilities report difficulty in getting effective communication from state agencies and community organizations about their disability and about available services. The Texas Information and Referral Network coordinates local and regional Texas information databases and now links information and referral providers through the Internet, but individuals seeking



Effective Media For Increasing Disability Awareness

| Media | Effective Score |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Disability Publications | 41.8% |
| Internet | 39.5% |
| Television | 34.9% |
| Libraries | 34.6% |
| Civic Professional Organizations | 34.2% |
| Civic Professional Meetings | 33.7% |
| Newspapers | 33.3% |
| Radio | 32.5% |
| Magazines | 28.0% |

help still have difficulty accessing this network. The Texas I&R Network and similar organizations nationwide are seeking to make the telephone number 211 the designated number for free information to community resources.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released new rules that require 100% of all new television programming to be closed-captioned during the next eight years for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The FCC revised its initial ruling that only 95% of programming had to be captioned. Additionally, the FCC will require captions on 30% of pre-1998 programming by 2003, and will require captioning on all Spanish-language programs over the next 12 years.

LAWSUITS AND SETTLEMENTS

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the ADA protects state prison inmates in the case of Pennsylvania Department of Corrections v. Yeskey. The Pennsylvania prison system refused to allow the plaintiff into a motivational boot-camp program due to his hypertension. The Court ruled that state prisons were "programs" as defined by Title II of the ADA and must be accessible to people with disabilities.

The Supreme Court also agreed to review the decision of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in the case of L.C. v. Olmstead. The Court will answer the question of whether people with disabilities who receive care in institutions must be served in "the most integrated setting possible," as required by the Justice Department's interpretation of the ADA. According to Attorney General Janet Reno, states should take reasonable steps "to provide services in the community where that is the

appropriate setting for the individual." The Olmstead case was filed by two people with mental disabilities who requested that the state of Georgia provide them with community care instead of institutional care. The federal appeals ruled that Georgia's policy of institutionalizing these individuals, instead of providing community care, "violated the core principle" of the ADA. The Supreme Court will issue its decision in the summer of 1999.

The most publicized ADA case of the year was that of golfer Casey Martin. Martin, who has difficulty walking due to a circulatory impairment, sued the Professional Golfer's Association (PGA) requesting the use of a golf cart to ride between holes. A federal district court judge in Oregon ruled that the PGA's refusal to allow Martin to use a cart violated the ADA. Martin went on to win the Nike Tour's Lakeland Classic tournament and earned the right to play in the U.S. Open.

In Texas, moviegoers with disabilities won a major victory when a federal district court judge in El Paso granted summary judgment against the Cinemark movie theater chain. Cinemark had built a Tinseltown theater in El Paso with stadium seating, which provided wheelchair seating only in the front row or the back row of the theater. The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities filed a similar lawsuit about the design of Cinemark Theaters in the Houston area.

A federal judge in San Antonio approved a settlement of an ADA class-action lawsuit against that city's VIA transportation system. The city agreed to meet performance standards in the operation of its paratransit system, to make bus stops and shelters accessible, to make modifications to its headquarters building, and to

provide ADA training for its employees.

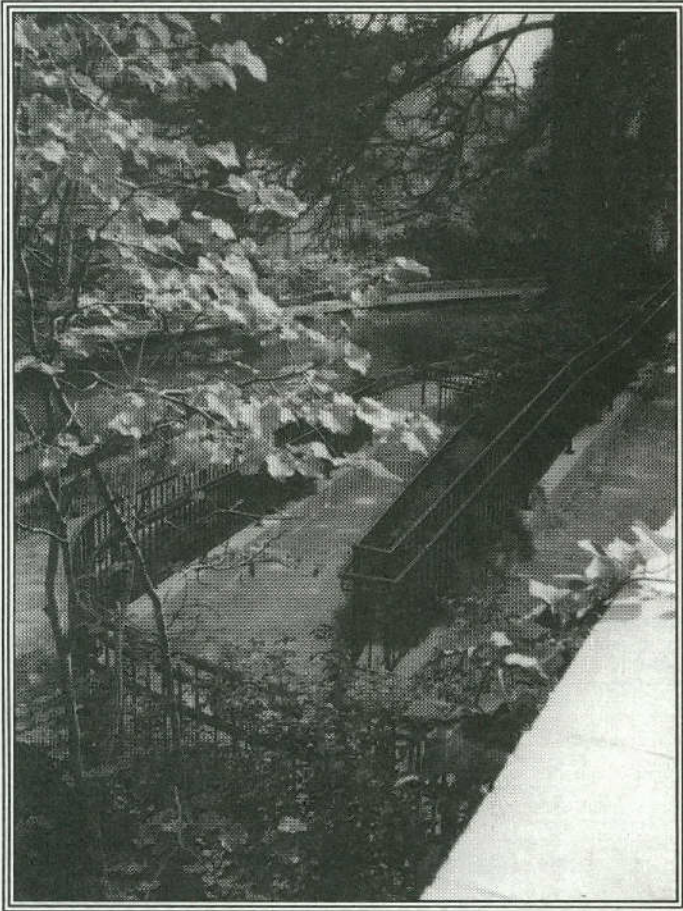
The most publicized ADA case of the year was that of golfer Casey Martin.

The Department of Justice continued its efforts to enforce the ADA. In cases that involved Texas, DOJ reached settlement agreements with the City of Southside Place to provide accessi-

ble 911 service, and with the City of Seminole to provide sign language interpreter service for its police department. National businesses that operate in Texas also agreed to bring their businesses in compliance with the ADA. Shell and Diamond Shamrock signed separate agreements to lower the height of pay-at-the-pump credit card readers at gas stations, and Wendy's restaurants agreed to eliminate railings that barred people who use wheelchairs from food counters.

DOJ also settled a lawsuit against the architectural firm of Ellerbe Becket, who designed several sports





A nicely integrated ramp increases access on San Antonio's Riverwalk. Photo courtesy of Mark MacDonald, Disability Access Office of the City of San Antonio.

facilities in which patrons who were standing blocked the line of sight for people in wheelchair seating. A federal district judge in Minnesota had previously ruled in this case that architects were liable for designs that violated the ADA. In another sports-related case, DOJ reached a consent decree with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) to modify its policies regarding student-athletes with learning disabilities. The NCAA agreed to allow classes designed for students with learning disabilities to be certified as "core courses," to designate an ADA coordinator, and to no longer require a minimum test score on college entrance exams.

Local Committee Accomplishments

- Worked with the Convention and Visitor's Bureau to produce an accessibility guide (Arlington)
- Reviewed local bond proposals for ADA improvements (Austin)

- Attended public meetings on reconstruction of Barton Springs and assisted with site review of Austin's Live Oak Theater (Austin)
- Gained Commitment by the city to adopt and use the TAS as inspection standard and full time support staff for city ADA office (Austin)
- Gained redirection of parking fines to fund city ADA accommodations (Austin)
- Hosted an Accessible Voting Summit with participation by the Secretary of State's Office, County Clerk, City Clerk, League of Women Voters, and local community organizations (Austin)
- Joined Killeen and Temple Chambers of Commerce to educate businesses about ADA compliance (Bell County)
- Formed a committee to encourage inclusion especially in the area of sports for people with disabilities and to eliminate existing barriers (Bell County)
- Identified accessibility project for 1999 as a collaborative effort with other agencies and committees and Miller Springs Nature Center Alliance, to support increased park accessibility (Bell County)
- Coordinated with Killeen groups to support parking and access related to ADA compliance (Bell County)
- Provided input to the city about curb cut placement following a survey ranking priorities as: hospitals and doctor's offices; local, state and federal government; downtown area, and neighborhoods (Corpus Christi)
- Co-sponsored an ADA conference (Fort Worth)
- Assisted with ADA access issues (Gaines County)
- Established criteria for an ADA Compliance Community Award for businesses who meet the guidelines (Galveston)
- Worked with the Mayor and City Council to make back entry to city hall more accessible by installing a new door and an open button (Galveston)
- Encouraged the city to provide access to Stewart Beach resulting in the purchase of a wheelchair accessible dune buggy (Galveston)
- Contacted city departments responsible for ADA compliance about contractual agreements for new buildings (Galveston)
- Monitoring construction of a new theater being built with stadium seating to foster accessibility (Galveston)



Decorated and rode on an accessible float during the holiday parade (Golden Crescent)

Co-sponsored "In The Know," an ADA workshop put on by The Institute of Rehabilitation and Research's ILRU program, and developed a handbook on "Best Practices for the 21st Century" for employers and others about ADA issues (Houston)

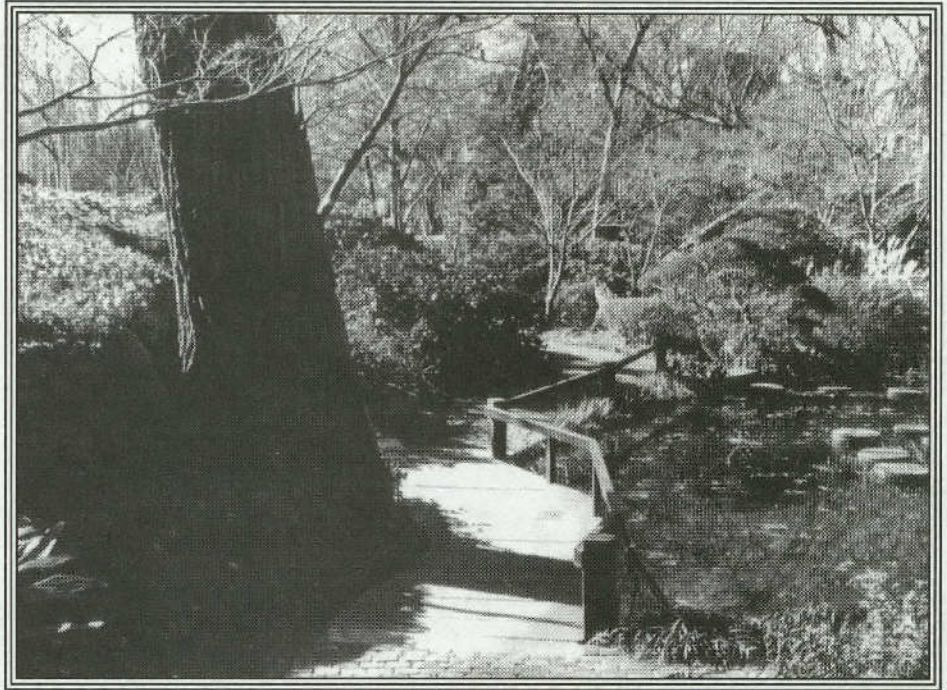
Produced 20,000 copies of Best News a periodic tabloid about disability issues; distributed by more than 300 local businesses the tabloid is free to the public (Laredo)

Identified and implemented a community youth project to build wheelchair ramps to increase community access (Laredo)

Developed an accessibility survey, a seven-page checklist, to be used by students to survey businesses and report findings in an essay format (Laredo)

Gathered more than 600 signatures to support bringing open captioned movies to the Waco community (Waco)

Interpreted at Brazos Nights, a summer music festival, featuring the jazz band Blue Mist with musicians who are blind (Waco)



Newly accessible Fort Worth Japanese Gardens features the widening of a bridge around a mature tree and opens the pathway to provide an accessible loop around the primary lake. Photograph courtesy of Cameron Alread, Architect Inc.

- Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation produce a video about benefits of complying with the Texas Accessibility Standards.

Objective 2 People with disabilities have the knowledge and resources to effect accommodations for themselves.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Legislature support establishment of 211 as an accessible statewide information and referral telephone number.
- State agencies promote the increased use of mediation and other alternative means of dispute resolution to resolve complaints.
- State agencies continue to provide education regarding services, consumer rights and responsibilities.

Objective 3 Existing laws that ensure access to facilities, parking, transportation, and voting and preserve housing and employment protections are fully enforced.

RECOMMENDATION

- Business and government comply with state and federal laws.

Long-Range Plan

The following is the Full Participation, Access and ADA section of the 1999 Long-Range State Plan for Texans with Disabilities. To see the entire Plan go to

http://www.governor.state.tx.us/Disabilities/disabilities_index.html

GOAL: People with disabilities will fully participate in all aspects of our state through increased public awareness, effective accommodations, and accessible environments and communications.

Objective 1 Accessibility and accommodation are accepted as the norm.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- All state agencies include depiction of people with disabilities in media products.



Objective 4 All state-owned and leased property, and all new construction intended for public use comply with the Texas Accessibility Standards.

RECOMMENDATION

- Legislature strengthen and improve the Texas Architectural Barriers Program to ensure efficient, uniform statewide enforcement of the Texas Accessibility Standards requirements.

Objective 5 Automated information systems, hardware and software, purchased with public funds, are accessible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- General Services Commission implement Section 2157.005 of Senate Bill 1752 (75th Legislature requirement for state agencies to purchase software which is accessible to persons who are blind or visually impaired).

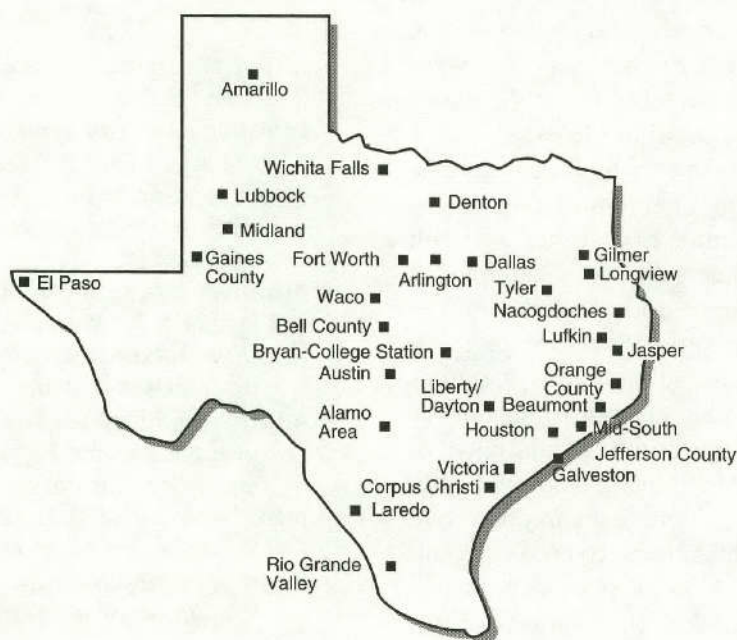
- Legislature ensure all funds appropriated for purchasing automated information systems will result in the purchase of accessible systems. Additionally, all state agency websites shall be made accessible.

Objective 6 Communication accommodations, (accessible signage and materials, sign language interpreters, accessible computer hardware, software, and telecommunications services, captioning and audio description) are provided by those who must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

RECOMMENDATION

- State continue promotion of ADA and Telecommunications Act compliance.

Texas Local Volunteer Committees on People with Disabilities— A Spirit of Collaboration





Patty Johnson (left) and Becky DeCluitt (right) work at the IHS exhibit during the Disability Expo in Beaumont, an event sponsored by SetLife and the Beaumont Mayor's Committee. Photograph courtesy of Nancy Comeaux, executive director of SetLife.

history, and reasons for refusing or canceling coverage. Texans want the information in accessible format at the time they are making a decision.

The forum testimony also indicated that the pressing insurance issue is Medicaid and Medicare provided through managed care. Texans with disabilities expressed concern that the managed health care model will not provide the supports and assistive devices an individual needs to maintain health and independent functioning.

Highlights

This section includes information on new Texas laws, managed health care, diabetes, awards, assisted suicide, lawsuits, and Sunset review.

NEW TEXAS LAWS

In 1997, the Texas Legislature passed several laws to improve health insurance and health care for people

Introduction

In the 1950's health services focused primarily on treatment and prevention of diseases like polio and medical treatment for disabilities such as spinal cord injuries and amputations experienced by veterans. Mental health and mental retardation services were provided primarily through state schools and hospitals where residents often spent their entire lives.

Progress during the last 50 years includes increasing community-based mental health and mental retardation services, strengthening of parents and self advocacy organizations, and increased medical rehabilitation focused on independence and productivity.

Medical advances allow people with complex medical conditions to thrive. Accessing the many resources needed to function is difficult and confusing. Survey respondents thought improving the availability of health insurance (65.5%) and increasing insurance coverage of accommodations, e.g. personal care, adaptive equipment and home modifications (64.6%), would very effectively improve the lives of people with disabilities. Texans who testified at the public forums need information about insurers' policies, complaint

Web sites of interest:

- <http://managedcare.hhs.gov/> . . . Disabilities and Managed Care
- <http://www.jik.com/pwdmc1.html> . . . Resources on Managed Care for People With Disabilities
- <http://aapd-dc.org> . . . American Assn. of People with Disabilities (member access to health insurance)
- <http://www.bcm.tmc.edu/crowd/> . . . The Center on Research for Women and Disabilities
- <http://www.txhealthpool.com> . . . Texas Health Insurance Risk Pool
- <http://www.tdi.state.tx.us> . . . Texas Department of Insurance Home Page for Consumer, Industry and Agent Insurance
- <http://www.rehab.state.tx.us/passiton.html> . . . Resources on Medical Equipment
- <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us> . . . Texas Health and Human Services Commission



with disabilities. The legislature funded The Health Insurance Risk Pool to serve Texans who were previously uninsurable, or whose health insurance would be more expensive than the pool's rates. The Pool began writing policies in February 1998. Averaging enrollment of 300 a month, 2,800 people gained insurance through the Pool by mid-December 1998. Information on eligibility and benefits is available to the public at <http://www.txhealthpool.com>.

New federal and state legislation began equalizing insurance coverage for physical and mental illness. Implementing these laws, the Texas Department of Insurance required all insurance companies to revise the wording and the rates in their contracts and insurance policy statements. The Department has received about 80 consumer questions about this coverage and no consumer complaints.

Implementing new state legislation, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission (TRC) developed a system to link those who wish to donate medical equipment with licensed organizations that can distribute the items to those who need them. Donors may call TRC's 1-800-363-1211. TRC either refers the donors to licensed organizations in their area, or lists the medical equipment or assistive device such as a hospital bed, a wheelchair, or a walker on TRC's website at <http://www.rehab.state.tx.us>. TRC has received 200 inquiries or referrals and 1,123 visits to the web site.

Congress passed the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 1997. It allows Texas to use federal and state matching funds to create a health insurance program for low income children. For the first year Texas expanded Medicaid coverage to teens aged 15-18 whose family incomes are no more than 100% of the federal poverty level. For the long term, legislators and agency officials are designing a system that best meets the needs of Texas. The legislature will consider the proposed CHIP program during the 1999 session.

According to the Comptroller's Office, Texas has 1.3 million children who are uninsured. In 1997 the Texas legislature began addressing this problem by creating The Texas Healthy Kids Corporation. This is a public/private initiative that uses volunteer contributions from communities, businesses, and non-profit groups to supplement premiums paid by families. The Corporation purchases insurance from private providers and began taking applications for coverage in 58 counties in September 1998. By December 15, 1998, 770 children were enrolled with private insurance companies. In January 1999, the program became available in the remaining 196 counties. The toll free number for applications is 877-WELLKID.

A new federal law provides \$70 million nationwide for birth defect research. Five regional centers will

gather and share birth defect information through a clearinghouse at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Texas is one of only three states that have a birth defect registry. The registry will help the Texas regional center track how many birth defects occur and where. This is essential information for identifying the causes of birth defects.

MANAGED HEALTH CARE

Health care in Texas, as in the nation, is increasingly offered through Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO). For several years, the state has contracted with HMOs for Medicaid health coverage. In 1998 a pilot project began for people with disabilities. The project, STAR+PLUS, contracted for Medicaid coverage with three HMOs in Harris County and enrolled 51,000 people by mid-December.

People with disabilities and their families have expressed concern about HMOs putting limits on medical treatment and health maintenance equipment. The Texas Health & Human Services Commission contracted with the Texas Health Quality Alliance to monitor care provided by all the Medicaid managed care projects in Texas. Texans using private insurance to pay for services through HMOs have expressed similar concerns about restrictions on coverage. The Texas Attorney General filed lawsuits against five health maintenance organizations practicing in Texas concerning methods they use to restrict services.

The Travis County Children's Partnership received a five year, \$7 million, grant from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The members in the Partnership are state and county agencies concerned with protection, education, and mental health of children and families. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission will administer the grant funds. The agencies will package a complex set of services ranging from health care to family counseling, all designed to keep children with severe emotional disabilities with their families. Half of the Partnership's board members will be families receiving services.

DIABETES

The World Health Organization predicts the number of individuals with diabetes in the world will double by 2025. The Texas A&M Center for Socioeconomic Research and Education predicts that metabolic diseases such as diabetes will be the fastest growing health risk in Texas between 1990 and 2030; the number of cases will increase by 170%. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control a form of diabetes normally found in adults is now appearing in chil-

dren. This type of diabetes occurs in individuals with a genetic tendency who eat a high carbohydrate, high fat diet and exercise little. Once diabetes develops, this diet and exercise pattern contributes to complications such as blindness, heart attack, and gangrene.

Texas is trying to prevent both the occurrences of the disease and its complications through the work of the Diabetes Council and its 17 local programs. They encourage Texans to eat a healthy diet and to exercise, by requesting food stores to stock more fruits, vegetables and low fat products or arranging to have the local gym open two nights a week. In addition, the Council educates health professionals in aspects of good care and conducts a public information campaign.

ASSISTED SUICIDE

The murder arrest of Dr. Jack Kevorkian in Michigan, following the televised death of a man with Lou Gehrig's disease, brought the debate over assisted suicide to the forefront. Many advocacy groups oppose the legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia, claiming that it reinforces the stereotypes and negative images of persons with disabilities, and instead call for alternatives, such as hospice care and increased services. Michigan voters defeated a proposed assisted suicide measure this year, although Oregon voted to retain its assisted suicide law last year. The Supreme Court has upheld laws in New York and Washington which make physician-assisted suicide illegal.

LAWSUITS

The Supreme Court ruled that HIV infection is a disability in the landmark case of *Bragdon v. Abbott*. The plaintiff is a person with HIV who had been denied treatment in the office of a Maine dentist. The Court

ruled that the plaintiff had a right to treatment under the ADA because her infection impaired the "major life activity" of reproduction.

The Court also unanimously ruled that spouses of laid-off or fired workers are eligible for health insurance coverage under COBRA, even if they are covered

under other health insurance plans. The Court also heard arguments in an Iowa case involving the possible liability of a school district for medical care for a stu-

dent who is quadriplegic. Additionally, the Court reached a major milestone with the hiring of its first law clerk with a disability. A person with generalized dystonia clerks for Justice John Paul Stevens.

Texas was awarded billions of dollars when the state settled its lawsuit against tobacco companies to recover smoking-related Medicaid costs. Many diseases which cause disabilities, such as cancer, emphysema, or heart disease, are worsened by smoking, and this historic settlement promises to provide resources to help fight these diseases and lessen the spread of smoking-related disabilities. Cigarette manufacturers also reached a nationwide settlement with 46 Attorneys General from other states.

In other legal action assessing responsibility for disabling injuries, the City of New Orleans filed a lawsuit against gun manufacturers to reclaim the cost of health care and law enforcement services due to handguns utilized in crimes. The City of Chicago has also filed a lawsuit against suburban gun dealers who allegedly sold handguns to gang members. According to the Texas Department of Health, over 2,700 Texans were killed or wounded by guns in 1997.

SUNSET REVIEW

The Sunset Advisory Commission in its review of all Health and Human Services state agencies examined the following health issues: control and evaluation of Medicaid managed care, local delivery of mental health services, and long term planning for mental health services. The Commission also examined service fragmentation in mental health and substance abuse services. The 1999 state legislature will consider the Commission's findings.

Local Committee Accomplishments

Coordinated or co-sponsored consumer help days, health fairs, and product expos to offer information on insurance, and showcase service and products with approximately 800 participants including vendors (Arlington, Beaumont, Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, Gaines County and Houston)

Continued support of the Handi-Aids Medical Store (Bell County)

Assisted the city in implementing a hurricane evacuation program for people who are elderly or disabled (Galveston)

Used Health of the Public Project data, conducted by UTMB's Department on Aging, to address physical

The Supreme Court ruled that HIV infection is a disability in the landmark case of *Bragdon v. Abbott*.



and mental health issues and nutritional needs of people with disabilities and the elderly (Galveston)

Dispersed information to members and community agency staff about Meals-on-Wheels programs for people with disabilities and the elderly in Galveston County (Galveston)

Provided transportation to doctor's appointments for people with disabilities (Laredo)

Checked accessibility at several places where children with disabilities were to receive vaccinations (Laredo)

Long-Range Plan

The following is the Health section of the 1999 Long-Range State Plan for Texans with Disabilities. To see the entire Plan go to

http://www.governor.state.tx.us/Disabilities/disabilities_index.html

GOAL: Health care options will be accessible and available to people with disabilities in a manner that maximizes functional independence.

Objective 1 Quality health care that serves the complex health needs of people with disabilities is widely available.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- State monitor and evaluate managed care's performance, including Medicaid and Medicare, in providing appropriate services to people with disabilities.
- State evaluate the STAR+PLUS pilot performance in effectively providing appropriate services to Medicaid clients with disabilities.

Objective 2 Health insurers provide information (on company complaint history, rules and regulations, reasons for denials or non-renewals) in accessible format and at the time the consumer requests it.

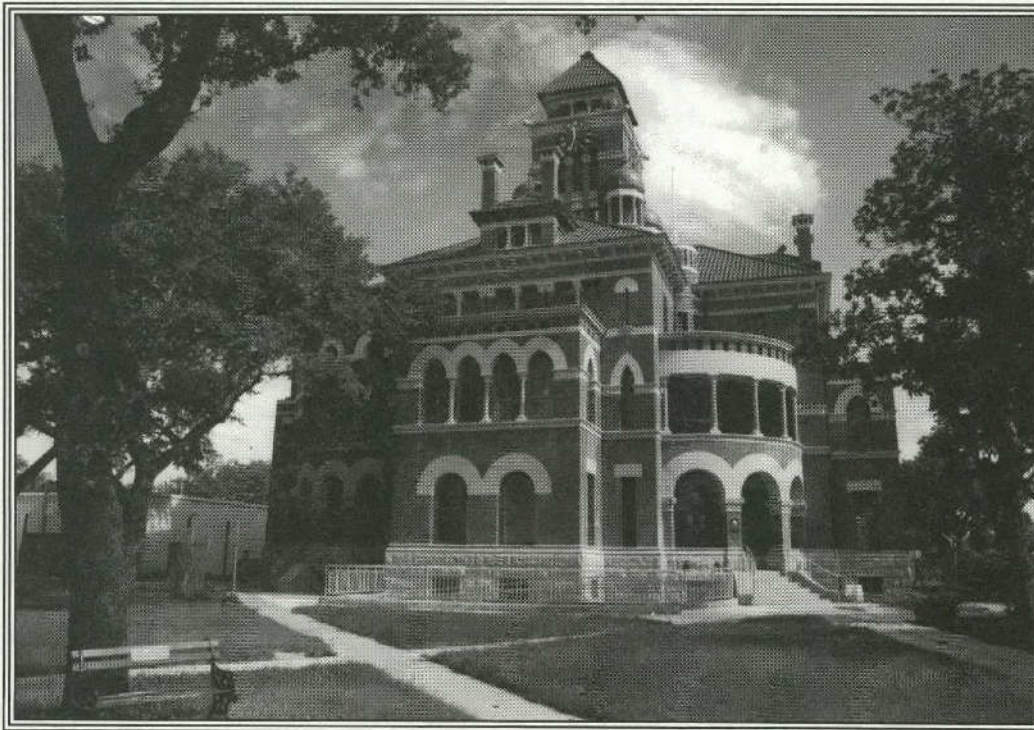
RECOMMENDATION

- State require all insurance companies who receive State contracts to provide information in appropriate accessible formats at the time the information is requested.

Objective 3 More affordable health insurance is available for people with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATION

- State continue implementation of relevant federal and state laws and provide education to consumers about availability of insurance alternatives.



A new ramp at Gonzalez County Courthouse facilitates access. Photograph courtesy of Chris Hutson of Volz & Associates, Inc.



INDEPENDENCE

Introduction

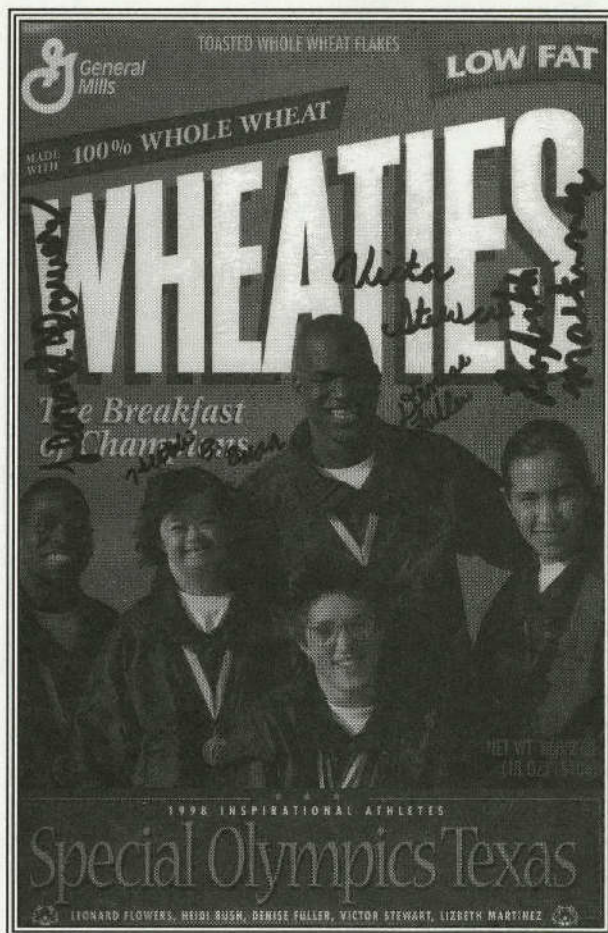
In the 1950's most Texans with disabilities were not believed to be capable of living independently. Consequently, little attention was paid to accessible housing or attendant services since many people lived with their families or in institutions. Transportation services were minimal and none were accessible to persons with disabilities.

Today, progress includes various government programs that provide attendant services, increasingly accessible transportation systems, and increased availability of accessible housing. Various federal and state legislation spurred much of this progress.

In 1998, Texans with disabilities and their families told the Committee that the goal for all services—health, rehabilitation, benefits—should be to make the individual capable of self management and independence. Texans described the factors necessary for independence as living and working skills, affordable housing, accessible transportation and assistance through persons or technology.

Also in 1998, forum participants noted most publicly funded programs still provide more institutional services than services that enable a person to live at home or in small group settings. Persons seeking community based services often wait more than a year. Affordable, accessible housing and safe reliable paratransit are also too scarce to meet the need.

In the future, increasing numbers of Texans will need accessible housing and transportation, and personal or technological assistance. The Baby Boomers are middle aged; the percentage of Texans over 80 increases yearly. As more older Texans experience



In 1998, Special Olympics athletes were featured on Wheaties cereal box.

functional limitations they too will seek services which allow them to live independently.

Highlights

This section contains information on transportation, community services, housing, lawsuits, and Sunset review.

TRANSPORTATION

The Texas Office of Community Transportation Services (OCTS) collects data about transportation for health and human services clients. OCTS studies local public transportation patterns to see what clients need to get to work, education and health care. In December, OCTS released a comprehensive assessment of Texas' local transportation needs and services and identified the barriers to coordinated local bus service.

Web sites of interest:

<http://uap.edb.utexas.edu/tpn.htm> . . . Texas PASS Network

<http://www.aptsforrent.com/naac> . . . National Accessible Apartment Clearinghouse

<http://www.access-able.com/> . . . Access-Able Travel Source

<http://www.hud.gov/progdsc/811main.html> . . . Department of Housing and Urban Development, Supportive Housing for Persons With Disabilities

<http://tatp.edb.utexas.edu/silc.html> . . . State Independent Living Center



Parking Placards for Persons with Disabilities Issued in Texas



This material supplies the data for developing a state initiative to support local coordinated services. OCTS reports that almost six million Texans depend upon transportation other than a personal vehicle, and roughly half of these are persons with disabilities.

Accessible buses, whether operating in metropolitan areas or between Texas towns, play an important role in independence for Texans with disabilities. The Federal Department of Transportation published regulations in September 1998, requiring wheelchair lifts or ramps on 50% of all over-the-road buses by October, 2006, and 100% by October 2012. Greyhound, the nation's largest bus carrier, purchased 80 new accessible buses as a step towards compliance with this rule. In Texas, over 50% of all buses belonging to metropolitan transit authorities are accessible. Transit authorities in the Austin, El Paso, and Corpus Christi metro areas

have 100% accessibility in both bus and paratransit services.

Additionally, Austin's Capital Metro bus service introduced its "Next Stop" automatic voice announcement system, which uses the Global Positioning Satellite system to announce bus stops. When a Capital Metro bus makes a stop, this state-of-the-art system announces the stop inside the bus, and announces the name of the route outside the bus. "Next Stop" gives information in English and Spanish, adjusts the volume of the announcement to compensate for ambient noise, and digitally displays the name of the stop for persons who are hearing impaired. This pilot program will be available citywide next year.

Many Texans with disabilities drive their own cars, but require access to disabled parking. Public officers and volunteers across the state continued their efforts to promote accessible parking by enforcing state laws against illegal parking in places reserved for people with disabilities. Texas allows cities and counties to train and equip volunteers to ticket those who park illegally in disabled parking spaces. Twenty-one accessible parking programs with 10 programs receiving assistance from local committees reported issuing 20,352 tickets and raising \$446,043 in revenue.

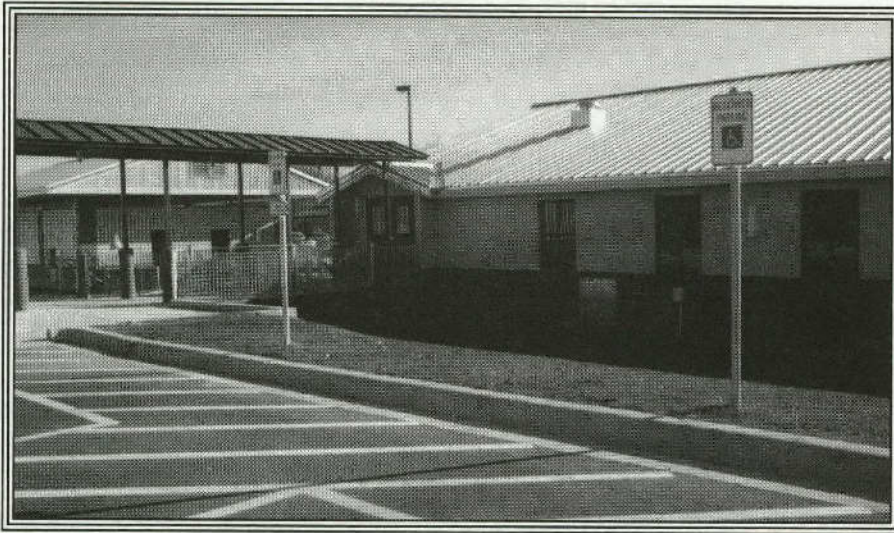
The number of parking placards issued to people with disabilities in Texas went up significantly last year after a decline in 1996. A record number of placards were issued in 1997, an increase of 120% over the number first issued in 1992. Placards expire after five years, so the increase may be attributed to the renewal of placards issued in 1992. A new Texas law requires that a hologram be placed on each placard to guard against counterfeiting.

COMMUNITY SERVICES

Created by former Lieutenant Governor Bob Bullock, the Senate Interim Committee on Home Health and Assisted Living Facilities examined what changes are needed to "assist and protect Texans in accessing these services." In addition to recommending clarification and tightening assisted living facility regulations and home health care licensing, the Committee recommended to the 1999 Texas Legislature the following changes in service delivery:

- Designate a state agency to deliver long-term care services and develop long-term care policies in Texas.
- Link home and community services with low income housing options.





Bell County courts and offices relocate to the new Bell County Courthouse Annex in Belton vacating the old courthouse on Main Street during it's restoration. Accessibility was a fore-thought. Accessible parking is next to the entrance; sidewalks are flush with parking lots; doorways flush with sidewalks; ramps instead of stairs; extra wide hallways with double doors; and accessible bathrooms; and all office signs include braille. Photograph courtesy of Susan B. Chambless, Bell County Judge and Commissioner's Committee on People with Disabilities.

- Create a single intake system for abuse, neglect and exploitation complaints and a state registry to track health care workers found to have abused or neglected clients.

In conjunction with one of its meetings, the Governor's Committee toured the Resource Connection, located on the grounds of the former Fort Worth State School, providing an alternate use of the state school site. The Resource Connection is a workforce development center that connects persons with education, employment, and health or human service needs. More than 35 different agencies deliver coordinated services at the Resource Connection.

The Burke Center, a mental health and mental retardation authority for Deep East Texas, received a \$250,000 extension on a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The grant will provide supported housing assistance to people with mental illness. It is designed to furnish financial assistance in an effort to help provide affordable housing.

The Arc of Texas Master Pooled Trust is the first trust fund in the state for persons with disabilities. It has been designed to provide an ongoing source of income that will supplement government benefits. To be eligible, a person must meet the Social Security Administration's definition of a person with a disability.

HOUSING

Congress funded two new disability programs through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development. One provides grants to non-profit organizations to build or rehabilitate an estimated 8,200 apartment units for low income people who are elderly or have a disability. The second will subsidize rents for 17,000 people with disabilities so that their rent does not exceed 30% of their income. Carrollton, Dallas and Denton received funding from these programs to build apartments and subsidize rent payments.

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs served a total of 1,258 people with disabilities in 1997 by providing home buying assistance, rental assistance, or renovation. The only state authorized program for affordable housing for low income people is the Housing Trust Fund (HTF). Ten percent of housing units created with HTF funds must be used for special needs categories which includes people with disabilities and five percent must be wheelchair accessible. The Fund served 15 people with disabilities.

The Texas Home of Your Own Coalition assisted five Texans with disabilities to become home owners in 1997 and four in 1998. This non-profit organization helps participants with down payments and closing costs and with renovations needed to make the home accessible.

The Austin Mayor's Committee, working in conjunction with various disability organizations, encouraged the city of Austin to pass an ordinance requiring certain design features in newly constructed single family homes, duplexes and triplexes that receive financial assistance from the city. The ordinance adopts a concept called Basic Design. The structure has one no-step entrance, wider doorways and hallways, lower light switches and higher electric plugs, and reinforced walls near the toilet and bathtub. This ordinance will make new houses basically accessible. Austin is the second city in the nation to adopt this design. Atlanta was the first.

LAWSUITS

The Florida Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities filed a class-action lawsuit against the state of Florida in March. The lawsuit, filed on behalf of 1,500 adults with disabilities, seeks to provide integrated community care for people with developmental disabilities who currently receive care in state institutions. The outcome of this case, and similar cases



which have been or may be filed in other states, will be affected by the United States Supreme Court's decision this year in the case of *L.C. v. Olmstead*. (See the Full Participation section of this report for more information about that case.) The Court's decision will help determine whether states must provide services to people with disabilities in integrated, community-based settings, rather than in institutions.

SUNSET REVIEW

The Sunset Advisory Commission, in its review of all Health and Human Services state agencies, examined the following issues related to independence: waiting lists for community care programs, and community care contracting and monitoring. The Commission also examined administrative duplication and service fragmentation caused by providing long-term care services in five separate state agencies. The 1999 state legislature will consider the Commission's findings.

Local Committee Accomplishments

Met with members of the DFW Airport board to discuss accessible parking and transportation issues (Arlington)

Worked with city, county and regional officials to establish alternative funding for accessible transportation (Arlington)

Met with city housing representatives about changes in architectural barriers removal programs (Arlington)

Worked to support a "visitability" ordinance becoming the second city in the nation to require basic access for newly constructed single family homes, duplexes, and triplexes which receive financial assistance from the city (Austin)

Represented disability issues on all community committees including Transportation Coalition, Housing, and Health and Human Services (Bell County)

Partnered with Public Works and Transportation to hold a public forum about the Traffic Signalization Improvement project related to pedestrian safety at signalized cross walks. The new system provides solutions to current limitations of signal timing for pedestrian crossings, standardized accessibility to persons with disabilities, detection of traffic prob-

lems from congestion, accidents, or lane closures. (Austin)

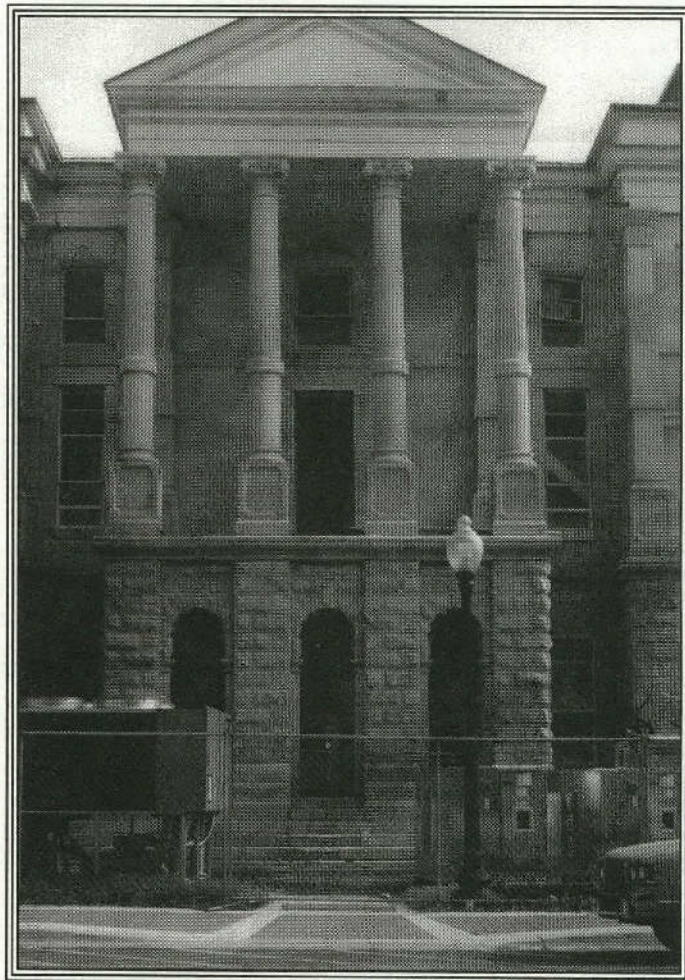
Reviewed and commented on the city's five year plan targeting housing before submission to HUD (Corpus Christi)

Working to provide access to fixed route bus stops, especially in remote areas (Corpus Christi)

Supported a conference about "Community Dialogue on Public Transportation" and recommended the mayor and city council appoint a person with a disability to the transportation board (Fort Worth)

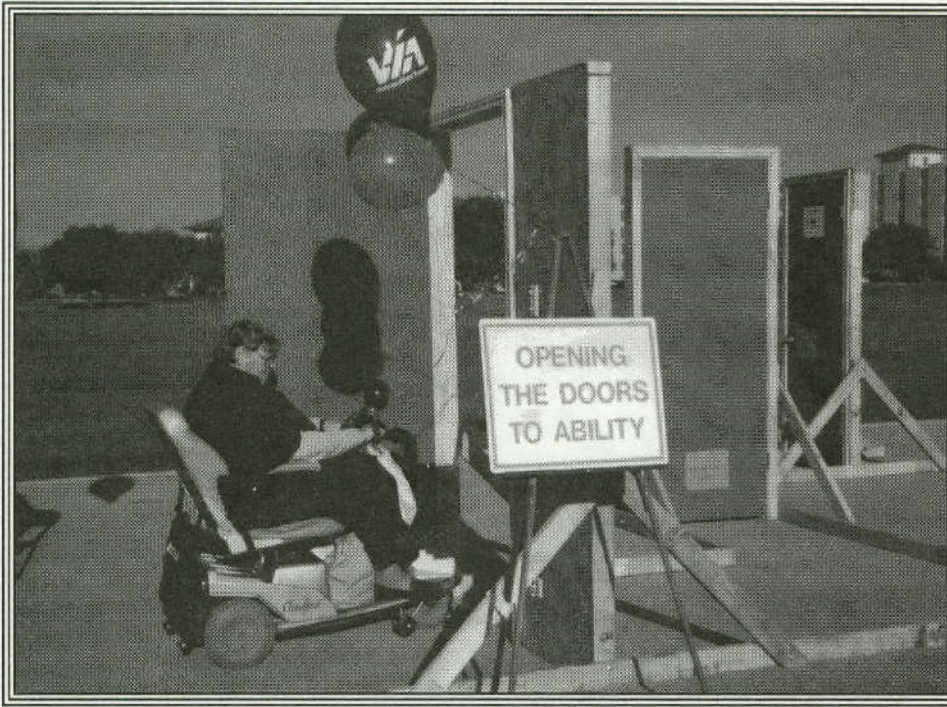
Received the National Organization on Disability cash award of \$1,000 for supporting accessible housing (Fort Worth)

Assisted with transportation, provided information on independent living, and helped in making a home accessible (Gaines County).



This major restoration of the Bell County Courthouse includes major improvements in accessibility throughout the structure. Full restoration of all three floors is expected to be completed by summer 2000. Photograph courtesy of Susan B. Chambless, Bell County Judge and Commissioners Committee on People with Disabilities.





Grace McGarvin of San Antonio participates in AccessAbility '98 as part of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). The theme for NDEAM was "Opening the Doors to Ability." Photograph courtesy of Yolanda Hagberg, Fort Sam Houston Public Affairs Office.

Monitored issues with Handivan transportation, compliance with the ADA, and identified and distributed a list of the issues to city leaders (Galveston)

Raised issues to city leaders about management and services related to the Galveston Housing Authority and monitored housing issues by having a representative attend Housing Authority Board meetings (Galveston)

Served as chair of the Personal Assistance Services Task Force of the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities and served on the Harris County Metropolitan Transit Authority (Houston)

Introduced, received, and reviewed applications for the city's housing modifications and rehabilitation program (Jasper)

Continued to encourage providing curb to curb transportation for persons with disabilities; ridership will be increased as seven new buses come on line (Laredo)

Partnered with the Laredo Webb Neighborhood Housing Services to help people with disabilities purchase an accessible home (Laredo)

PARKING

Governor's Committee provided information on parking education and monitoring programs in Texas (Angleton, Bedford, Bell County, Bexar County, Denton, Hurst, Jasper, Liberty, Dayton, Longview, Mansfield, Mission, Nacogdoches, North Richland

Hills, Pasadena, Plano, Silsbee, Tarrant County, Victoria and Waco)

Continued information collection and dissemination about 21 accessible parking programs with 10 programs receiving assistance from local committees on people with disabilities. The programs promote accessible parking for people with disabilities and have collectively issued an estimated 20,352 tickets, generated \$446,043 in revenue, and involved 488 volunteers. (Arlington, Austin, Beaumont, Corpus Christi, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, Laredo, Lufkin and Tyler)

Gained redirection of parking fines to city ADA accommodations (Austin)

Hired a part-time city employee to monitor disabled parking accessibility (Beaumont)

Coordinated a media blitz including a press conference and production of public service announcements to educate the public about parking for people with disabilities (Corpus Christi)

Increased public awareness of the need for accessible parking for people with disabilities by monitoring several business organizations to increase ADA awareness (Galveston)

Produced and distributed a brochure and addressed the city council about accessible parking (Corpus Christi, Fort Worth, Laredo and Tyler)

Outlined future goals focusing on parking and transportation issues (Nacogdoches)



Long-Range Plan

The following is the Independence section of the Long-Range Plan for Texans with Disabilities.

To see the entire Plan go to

http://www.governor.state.tx.us/Disabilities/disabilities_index.html

GOAL: The option to live independently and fully participate in Texas communities will be available through increased consumer-directed support services, and accessible transportation and housing.

Objective 1 Agencies provide long-term care services in the most appropriate setting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Legislature authorize an entity to develop and implement a long-range strategic plan to increase options for community-based services.
- Legislature designate one agency to implement this plan.
- State seek waivers from federal requirements that restrict service coordination.

- Legislature increase the number of people who can receive Community Based Alternative services.

Objective 2 Sufficient affordable, accessible housing is available in all areas of the state.

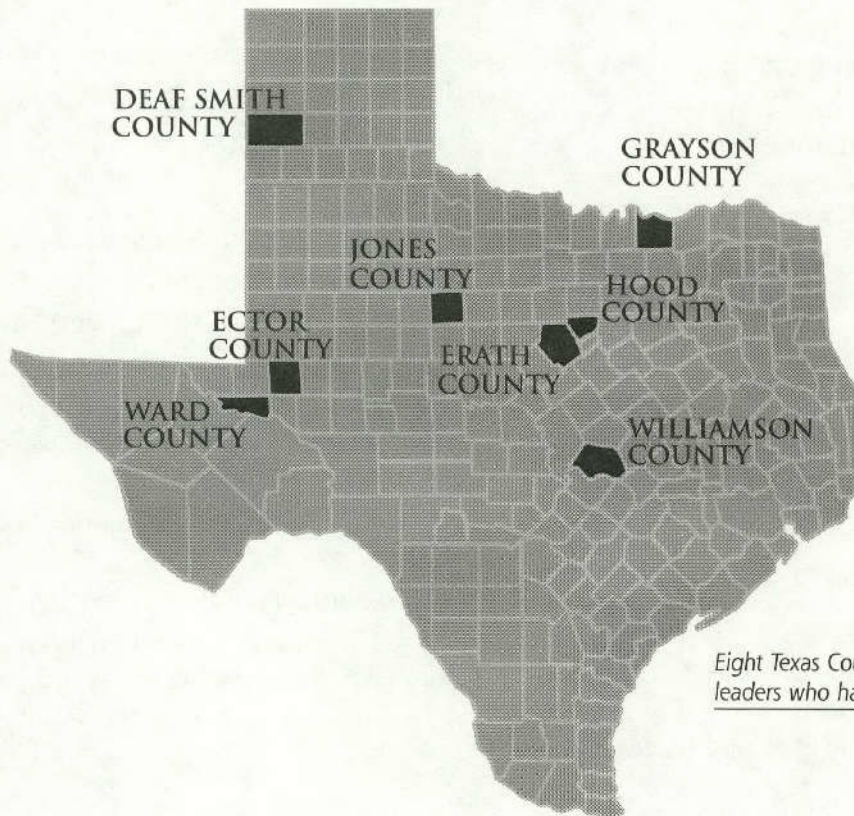
RECOMMENDATIONS

- State monitor compliance with accessible housing requirements of The Fair Housing Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.
- Legislature identify funding for the Housing Trust Fund.
- State promote publicly supported housing to incorporate basic access design features.

Objective 3 Safe, reliable, appropriate, and accessible paratransit is available in all areas of the state.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- State effectively implement state and federal laws related to paratransit.
- State expand paratransit services to unserved areas of Texas.



Eight Texas Counties bear the names of Texas leaders who had disabilities.



SELECTED PROCLAMATIONS AND LETTERS OF GREETING ABOUT DISABILITY ISSUES FROM GOVERNOR GEORGE W. BUSH

JANUARY

National Eye Care Month

Mayor Kenneth Barr, The Builders Association of Fort Worth and Tarrant County, League of Women Voters of Tarrant County, and The Fort Worth Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities, on their selection as a second place winner of the National Organization on Disability Community Awards Competition, January 14

FEBRUARY

American Heart Association Guild of Houston, February 6

National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans, February 8-14
Burn Awareness Week, February 8-14

MARCH

Educational Diagnosticians' Week, March 1-7

Orton Dyslexia Society, March 5-6

Alzheimer's Women's Association for Resources and Education, March 10

San Antonio Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Support Group, March 16

Employment for the Physically Disabled, Inc., March 23

June Garrison, Winner of the "People of Vision Award" from Prevent Blindness Texas, March 26

Stroke Clubs Day, March 28

APRIL

Cancer Fatigue Awareness Day, April 2

Special Education Reading Conference, April 3

Children's Disabilities Information Coalition, April 4

Public Health Week, April 6-13

Parkinson Disease Awareness Day, April 11

Tumor Registrar Week, April 12-18

National Multiple Sclerosis Society "MS 150" bicycle race, April 18-19

MAY

Blindness Awareness Month

Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month

AIDS Candlelight Memorial and Mobilization, May 5

San Antonio Area Disability Advocates issues conference, May 15

Madeline Sutherland, honored for 25 years of work at the Austin-Travis County Mental Health Mental Retardation Center, May 17

Special Olympics Texas Summer Games, May 29-31

JUNE

Goodwill Industries of Southeast Texas and Southwest Louisiana, 25th Anniversary, June 10

Disability Professionals Week, June 14-20

Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness Week, June 21-27

Texas Association of Mayors'/County Committees for People with Disabilities, annual leadership conference, June 25-27

San Antonio Lighthouse's exhibit on Helen Keller, June 29

JULY

National Federation of the Blind, July 4-11

National Association of the Deaf, July 7-11

Therapeutic Recreation Week, July 12-18

City of Mission, conference on community-based services, July 17

Americans with Disabilities Act anniversary celebration, San Antonio, July 24

Sunshine Kids Foundation Celebrity Golf Tournament, June 29

The Scleroderma Foundation, July 30

City of Austin, Sister Cities International National Association on Disabilities Award, July 31



AUGUST

National Down Syndrome Congress, August 7-9
American Cancer Society's "Relay for Life", August 7-8
Texas Association of the Deaf Sympo '98, August 21-22

SEPTEMBER

Destination Dignity Month
Marrow Awareness Month
Iron Overload Awareness Diseases Week,
September 13-19
CHARITech '98, September 15
Lone Star Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis
Society, September 26
Dallas Alzheimer's Association, September 26

OCTOBER

Disability Employment Awareness Month
Brain Injury Awareness Month
Rett Syndrome Awareness Month
Spinal Health Month
Breast Cancer Awareness Day, October 2
"Art for the Blind", October 2
Dystonia Awareness Week, October 11-18
White Cane Day, October 15
Lex Frieden, 1998 Laureate of the Henry B. Betts
Award, October 19

NOVEMBER

Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month
Epilepsy Awareness Month
Home Care Month
Expo '98 Disability Job Fair, November 5
Juvenile Diabetes—Distinguished Lecture Series

DECEMBER

Welcome Home: Community Services & Supports for
ALL Texans, December 13-16



EMPLOYMENT AWARD WINNERS

Presented six employment awards honoring companies and individuals on July 17, 1998 at the Presidential Conference Center and George Bush Presidential Library & Museum in College Station.

The Governor's Trophy

Theresa Johnson, San Antonio

Large Employer of the Year

Randalls Food Markets, Austin
Kathy Schwartz-Lussier

Medium Employer of the Year

H-E-B Food / Drug Stores
Bob Robinson, Midland

The Entrepreneurship Award

Jane Jones, Midland

Martha Arbuckle Award

Nacogdoches Mayor's Committee on People
with Disabilities Kathy Strong, Chair

Public Employer of the Year

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Johnson Space Center
Jessie Hendrick and Estella Gillette, Houston

About the event . . .

EMPLOYMENT AWARDS PRESENTATION, TOUR OF THE GEORGE BUSH PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM, AND WORKFORCE CONFERENCE.

On July 17, Texas Secretary of State Alberto R. Gonzales honored six Texas companies and individuals for employing and empowering people with disabilities. Guests enjoyed a private self-guided tour of George Bush Presidential Library and Museum in College Station. Audio description for people who are blind or visually impaired was provided for the first time during this tour.

An ADA roundtable and a public forum held that day offered the public a chance to learn more about the ADA and provided an opportunity to comment on the issues of importance to 3.9 million Texans with disabilities.

The event marked the 8th anniversary of the ADA and in celebration the gift shop made available a commemorative poster of Americans with Disabilities Act signing ceremony.

The Bryan-College Station Mayors' Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities hosted these events including a statewide conference, "Workforce Potential: Increasing Your Resources." Conference topics ranged from assistive technology to work incentives and tax credits.



BARBARA JORDAN AWARD WINNERS

Presented twelve Barbara Jordan awards and two honorable mentions March 26, 1998 at The Resource Connection in Fort Worth.

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS—INDIVIDUAL

Elaine Hime, Parent Education Project, University of Houston, Houston
"Resource Guide for Parents of Children with Disabilities"

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS—ORGANIZATION

Crockett Resource Center for Independent Living, Vera Randle
Articles about disability issues in 30 newspapers in 12 East Texas counties.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Austin, Phil Hatlen, Superintendent
"A Guide to Programs and Services"

PRINT—COMMENTARY

Sally Rogers, The Colorado County Citizen, Columbus
"Universally disabled"

PRINT—NEWS ARTICLE

Jennifer L. McKenzie, The Richardson News, Dallas
"The Richardson Development Center for Children" series

PRINT—FEATURE ARTICLE

Olivia Wade Alexander, Arlington
"Easy-to-use guide makes New Mexico even more accessible"

PRINT—ADVERTISING

Yvette Trevino, Advertising Department, Builders Square, San Antonio
"Designed for Access Brochure & Products Catalog"

PHOTOJOURNALISM

Rebecca McEntee, Austin American-Statesman
Photography for the article "No limits, no excuses"

AUDIO VISUAL

Capital Metro, Austin, Nancy Crowther
"Getting Around on Capital Metro"

TELEVISION—NEWS FEATURE

Jim Douglas, WFAA-TV (Channel 8), Fort Worth
"1997 Ann Marek Walk"

TELEVISION—DOCUMENTARY

KALEIDOSCOPE—Focus on Ability, San Antonio
David Pierce and Stephanie King

TELEVISION—PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Travis County Services for the Deaf, Austin, Deborah Drummond
Travis County Media Services, Austin, Susan VerHoef,
"Identification and Prevention of Hearing Loss" PSA

HONORABLE MENTION—SPECIAL CONTRIBUTIONS—ORGANIZATION

The Nacogdoches Daily Sentinel, Emily Morris
Covering issues of importance to Texans with disabilities

HONORABLE MENTION—PRINT—FEATURE ARTICLE

Sean Mitchell
"Bonnie & Bill," Texas Monthly article

About the event . . .

BARBARA JORDAN AWARDS, TOUR OF THE RESOURCE CONNECTION, AND PUBLIC FORUM

A total of 12 media professionals and organizations from all over Texas received Barbara Jordan Awards at an event hosted by the Fort Worth Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities on March 26, 1998 at the Resource Connection. The Governor's Committee also awarded two honorable mentions. Tracy Rowlett of WFAA-Channel 8 served as master of ceremonies for the event. Tracy and his wife Jill presented the Barbara Jordan Awards with assistance from Charles Boswell, Assistant City Manager in Fort Worth. Randy Souders, a noted artist and owner of Souders' Fine Arts, provided the keynote address.

A tour of the Resource Connection provided an educational opportunity for guests. After closing the Fort Worth State School, the alternate use of the state school site became the Resource Connection, a one-stop center that connects persons with education, employment, health or human service needs. More than 35 different agencies deliver coordinated services at the Resource Connection. The Governor's Committee also conducted a public forum to gather input about issues of importance to Texans with disabilities.



GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER RECOMMENDATIONS

Approved on June 25, 1998

Recommendation #1: Encourage the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to support and develop interpreter training programs, including at least one four-year program, that would result in higher graduate competencies.

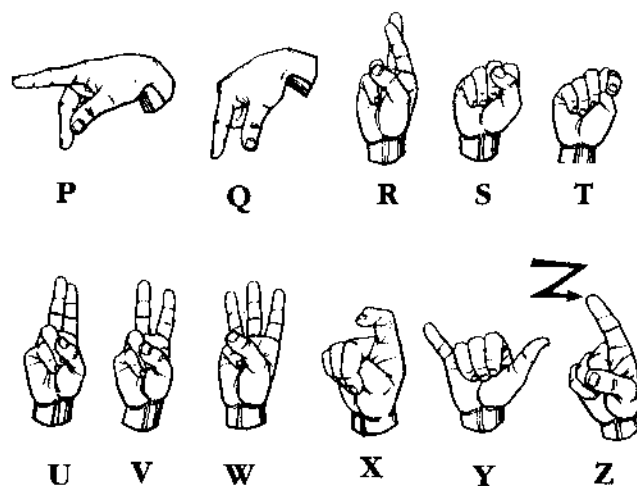
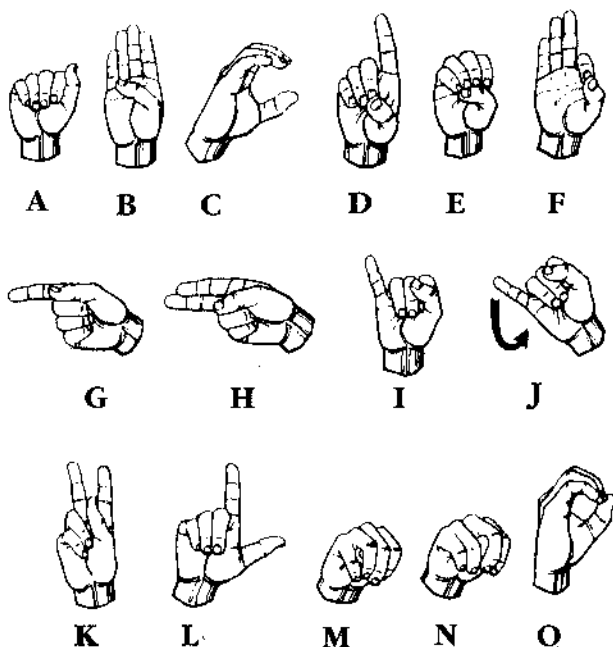
Recommendation #2: Support and encourage the development and use of remote interpreting/video teleconferencing, distance learning, and other approaches to increase the skills of interpreters and thereby provide more effective communications for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Recommendation #3: Encourage the Texas Education Agency to maintain its requirements that all current sign language interpreters be certified by the fall of 1999, and new employees be certified within their three year term, and develop training to continually up-grade interpreter skills.

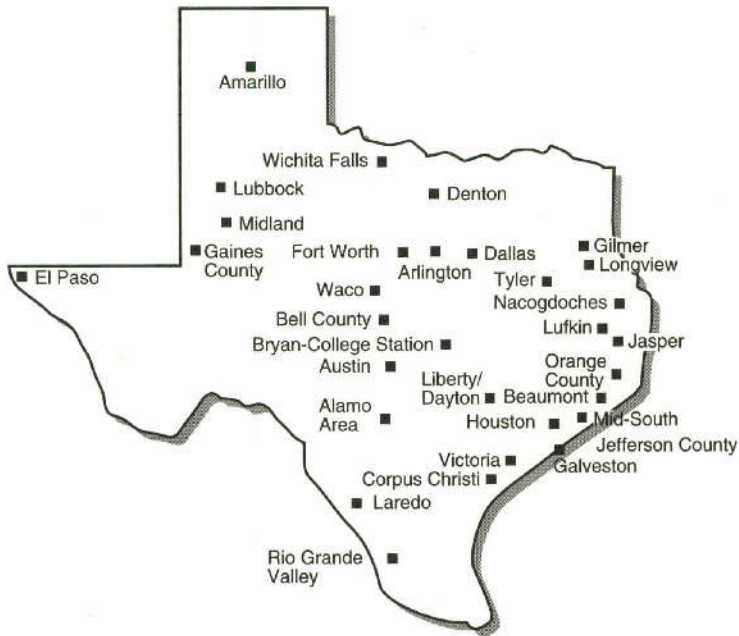
Recommendation #4: Encourage the Legislature to determine the sign language interpreter needs of students who are deaf (services required to comply with IDEA), and to recommend ways to address these needs, and determine accountability systems for this population.

Recommendation #5: Encourage Education Service Centers to promote increased understanding by school administrators on the complexity of learning sign language, the necessity of qualified interpreters for language acquisition of students, and the communication needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

THE MANUAL ALPHABET



Local Committee Map



Web sites of interest:

- <http://www.serve.state.tx.us> . . . volunteerism and community service
- <http://www.ncnb.org> . . . resources for non-profit boards
- <http://www.Impactonline.org/vv/> . . . virtual volunteering
- http://pointsoflight.org/assistance/assistance_corporate.html . . . corporate volunteerism
- <http://www.tded.state.tx.us/site-map.htm> . . . community profiles

Texas Local Volunteer Committees on People with Disabilities— A Spirit of Collaboration

The Texas Governor's Committee partnered with communities as far back as the 1940s. This volunteer effort offers a spirit of collaboration and an investment in the community and in the lives of people with disabilities. Recently, the committee provided information about local committee development to Arkansas, Minnesota, and North Dakota.

The Committee supports a network of 31 local committees with more than 1,300 volunteers. This year the Committee added local committees in the Alamo Area and the Rio Grande Valley. In addition, 21 communities expressed interest in developing a local committee. The Committee targeted development in communities with more than 50,000 people but information is shared with all who express interest. This report includes local accomplishments in each subject area.

Volunteer committees operate independently and make decisions that shape policies for local citizens with disabilities to enhance quality of life. These committees address the issues of access, parking, education, employment, housing, transportation, personal assistance, health and more. Each committee receives information about issues, trends, and the work and direction of the Governor's Committee.

Local committees also provided mentoring; addressed civic clubs, city councils, county commissioners, disability organizations; promoted appointment to local and state boards and commissions; established web sites; secured office space; hosted events like the Employment Awards, the Barbara Jordan media Awards, and Governor's Committee meetings.

A survey presented by The Dallas Foundation indicated that people in Dallas County are more likely to provide money than volunteer time. Of those volunteering, helping the elderly and helping people with disabilities ranked higher than help in educational settings, religious organizations, homeless assistance, victims of crime, and protecting the environment.

According to a Points of Light study survey respondents indicated: 74% agreed that volunteerism increased productivity of employees; 93% agreed that volunteerism builds employee teamwork skills; and 94% agreed that volunteerism improves corporate public image. Additionally, survey respondents stated that volunteer programs offer a competitive advantage by value added to service or product and cost savings in production and human resources.



Texas Governor's Committee on
People with Disabilities
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

CELEBRATING
50
YEARS
1949-1999

"From Isolation to Participation . . .
A History of Disability in Texas
1835-1999"

http://www.governor.state.tx.us/disabilities/disabilities_index.html