

Texas Statewide Capacity Building Conference

*Transition Planning and Pre-Employment Skills Training
for Younger Teens with Disabilities*

Blazing a
TRAIL

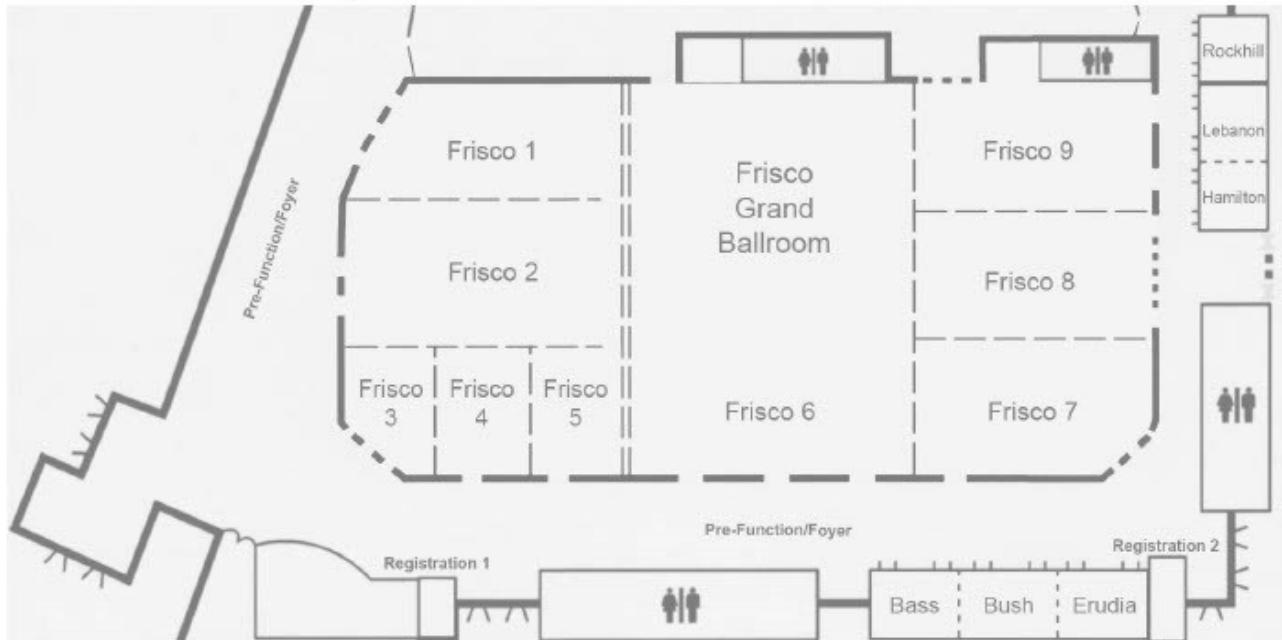
October 7-9, 2024



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Center on Disability
& Development



1st Floor Conference Center Space



These activities are financed under the TWC Federal Vocational Rehabilitation grant. For the Federal fiscal year 2024 (October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024), TWC anticipates expending \$320,291,817 in Federal Vocational Rehabilitation funds. Funds appropriated by the State pay a minimum of 21.3%

of the total costs (\$86,686,349) under the Vocational Rehabilitation program. Revised June 2024.

For purposes of the Supported Employment program, the Vocational Rehabilitation agency receives 94.7 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For the 2024 Federal fiscal year, the total amount of grant funds awarded are \$1,501,230. The remaining 5.3 percent (\$83,402) are funded by Texas State Appropriations. Revised June 2024.

For purposes of the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind program, the Vocational Rehabilitation agency receives 90 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For the 2024 Federal fiscal year, the total amount of grant funds awarded are \$2,213,488. The remaining 10 percent (\$245,943) are funded by Texas State Appropriations. Revised June 2024.

Estas actividades están financiadas bajo la subvención de Rehabilitación Vocacional Federal de la TWC. Para el año fiscal federal 2023 (octubre 1o, 2023, hasta el 30 de septiembre, 2024), La TWC espera gastar \$320,291,817 en fondos Federales de Rehabilitación Vocacional. Fondos apropiados por el estado para pagar un mínimo de 21.3% del costo total (\$86,686,349) bajo el programa de Rehabilitación Vocacional. Actualizado junio 2024.

Para fines del programa de Empleo Apoyado, la dependencia de Rehabilitación Vocacional recibe el 94.7 por ciento de sus fondos por medio de una subvención del Departamento de Educación de EE.UU. Para el año fiscal federal 2024, la cantidad total de fondos de la subvención concedida es de \$1,501,230. El 5.3 por ciento restante (\$83,402) es subsanado por Apropiaciones del Estado de Texas. Actualizado junio 2024.

Para fines del programa de Servicios de Vida Independiente para Personas Mayores Ciegas, la dependencia de Rehabilitación Vocacional recibe el 90 por ciento de sus fondos por medio de una subvención del Departamento de Educación de EE.UU. Para el año fiscal federal 2024, la cantidad total de fondos de la subvención otorgada es de \$2,213,488. El 10 por ciento restante (\$245,943) está subsanado por Apropiaciones del Estado de Texas. Actualizado junio 2024.

HOWDY!

On behalf of the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University, it is my pleasure to welcome you to Frisco, TX for the 2024 Statewide Capacity Building Conference. Thank you for your devotion in serving young Texans with disabilities, their family members, and all who provide students with quality transition services. I am glad you are here!

This conference is made possible by the work and dedication of many individuals, all of whom represent their respective entities with integrity, compassion, wisdom, and professionalism. I applaud the conference organizers, speakers, and facilitators for providing a platform for attendees to engage in thought-provoking conversations and deepen their understanding of how to strengthen our capacity to enhance Texas' quality of transition services. This work is important and necessary, and we take pride in the intentionality and relevancy of the conversations that will further engage us throughout our time together.

I humbly want to thank Erin Wilder, Leigh Ann Godinez, Kristen Davis, Meagan Orsag, Robin Miller, Marcy Hancock, Joette Hardin, and Jana Bishop, for the countless hours of listening, brainstorming, planning, and implementing a conference of this magnitude. You have created a safe, collaborative space in which the honest and important realities that we all face each day can be shared and handled with the utmost care and respect. Your tireless commitment throughout the Statewide Capacity Building Project is greatly appreciated. Thank you for leading by example and dedicating your lives to this work. I also want to express our sincere gratitude to the TWC Leadership for the incredible vision and support of this systems-change project which serves as an example to many other states for improving transition service.

To our friends and colleagues who have graciously sacrificed your time and energy to gather these next few days, it is your words that have set the foundation for the knowledge-sharing, development of best practice, and capacity building that will benefit all transition professionals in Texas. Thank you for "sitting at the table" to make your voice heard. We are here because you embrace, embody, and exude the clarion call of the disability community, "Nothing About Us Without Us," in which all voices matter. Your vision for what is possible for young Texans with disabilities unites us, regardless of our agency, university, school district, or organization affiliation. I encourage you to redefine, reimagine, and transform what it means to prepare ALL people to work in Texas by providing quality transition services in our state.

Once again, welcome, and I wish you all the best for a successful conference!



Dalun Zhang, PhD

Director

Texas A&M Center on Disability and Development

Capacity Building Team



Dalun Zhang, PhD

Director, Texas A&M
Center on Disability
and Development



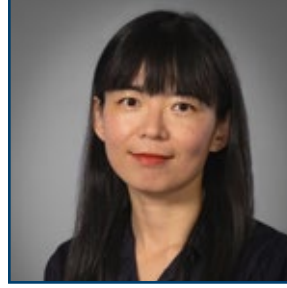
Robin Miller, MS

Director of Employment
Programs,
Texas A&M CDD



Marcy Hancock, MSE

Program Coordinator
Texas A&M CDD



Xinyuan Yang, PhD

Assistant Research
Scientist, Texas A&M CDD



Jana Bishop, BS

Program Coordinator,
Texas A&M CDD



Joette Hardin, MEd

Program Coordinator,
Texas A&M CDD



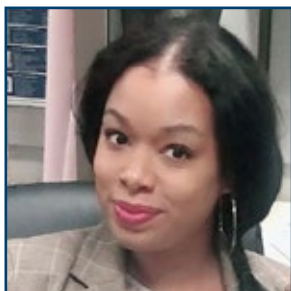
Erin Wilder, MEd, CRC

TWS Program Manager
for Transition and
Pre-Employment Transition
Services (Pre-ETS)



Leigh Ann Godinez, CRC, LPC

TWC Program Specialist
for Transition and
Statewide Coordinator for
Project SEARCH



Kristen Davis MS, LPC

TWC Program Specialist for
Transition and Pre-ETS

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Special Thanks to the Texas Workforce Commission for Making this Event Possible



EDWARD "ED" SERNA is the Executive Director of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), the second largest workforce system in the United States.

Appointed to his position by the agency's three-member Commission in August 2019, Mr. Serna oversees an operating budget of \$2.5 billion and provides leadership and vision for the agency's more than 4,600 personnel in the implementation of workforce policies, education and training initiatives and vocational rehabilitation services set by the Commission, as well as the administration of \$2 billion in Unemployment Insurance benefits annually.

During Mr. Serna's 38 plus-year career, he has occupied numerous leadership positions in state government at 6 different agencies and in the private sector. He has successfully managed large-scale IT projects, administrative operations, contracting and continuous improvement projects that have resulted in improved service delivery.

Before coming out of retirement to join TWC in 2014 as Director of Business Operations and later as Deputy Executive Director, Ed was selected as the first executive director of the then newly established Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) in 2010.

Mr. Serna earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of North Texas.



BRYAN DANIEL serves as Chairman of the Texas Workforce Commission where he works to promote and support the growth of Texas' world class employers and talented workforce. To champion that goal, he advances innovative workforce and economic development strategies in collaboration with TWC's education partners, local officials, and industry leaders to establish Texas' competitive edge as the best place to work in the world.

Prior to joining TWC, Bryan served for four and half years on Texas Governor Greg Abbott's senior staff where he led the Office of Economic Development and Tourism – which included the Texas Enterprise Fund, Events Trust Fund, Governor's University Research Initiative, Texas Tourism Office, Texas Music Office, Texas Film Commission, Texas Workforce Investment Council, the Economic Development Bank, the Texas Military Preparedness Commission and the State of Texas Mexico Office.

Bryan's tenure as the Texas State Director for Rural Development for President George W. Bush and as Chief Administrator for Trade and Business Development at the Texas Department of Agriculture, along with his private sector experiences as a marketing executive and member of the board of directors, have provided him with valuable insights on economic development and workforce issues.

Bryan is a graduate of Texas Tech University with both a bachelor's degree and master's degree. In 2019, Texas Tech's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources recognized Bryan as a Distinguished Alumnus.



ALBERTO TREVIÑO III serves as the Commissioner Representing Labor for the Texas Workforce Commission. He was appointed by Governor Greg Abbott to the three-member Commission and confirmed by the Texas Senate in 2023.

Commissioner Treviño retired from the U.S. Border Patrol. He served over 30 years in law enforcement as an agent, police instructor, background investigator and patrol officer. He also served as treasurer and executive vice-president for the Local 3307 of the National Border Patrol.



JOE ESPARZA currently serves as the Commissioner Representing Employers for the Texas Workforce Commission. Governor Abbott appointed him to the three-member commission on November 7, 2023.

In his role, Commissioner Esparza serves as an advocate for over 660,000 Texas employers and over 3 million small businesses. He and his team serve as a key resource for all Texas employers to help businesses grow and thrive in Texas.

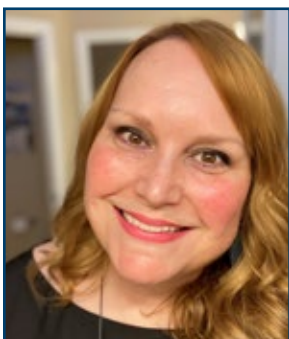
Prior to his appointment, Commissioner Esparza was sworn in as Texas Deputy Secretary of State on December 14, 2018. In addition, Esparza previously served as a Senior Appointments Manager in the office of the Governor, overseeing numerous gubernatorial appointments during Governor Abbott's first term.

A graduate of Texas Tech University, Esparza earned a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Communications. Esparza received an Honorable Discharge from the United States Marine Corps and is a Veteran of the Global War on Terrorism, having served in Iraq.



CHERYL FULLER of Austin is the Director of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Vocational Rehabilitation Division. She has 33 years of experience working in federally funded programs that focus on helping Texans prepare for, obtain, and retain employment. Prior to transferring to TWC on September 1, 2016, with the former DARS programs, she served as the DARS assistant commissioner for its Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS) from August 2013 through August 2016. Fuller joined DARS in 2011 as the director of its Center for Learning Management after serving more than 11 years as director of the Texas Workforce Investment Council in the Office of the Governor. She began her career in Abilene, where she worked for almost nine years in employment and training programs funded by the Job Training Partnership

Act and the Workforce Investment Act. Fuller was appointed to the Rehabilitation Council of Texas by Governor Perry in 2014 and was reappointed by Governor Abbott in 2019. She has a bachelor's degree in Communications from Angelo State University.



ERIN WILDER has spent her 22-year career in Vocational Rehabilitation working primarily in the area of transition. She has been a VR Counselor, Regional Transition Specialist, Statewide Transition Specialist, and has spent the last 6 years in her role as Program Manager for Transition and Pre-ETS. She has a passion for working with educators and students and loves the potential students hold. She is fortunate to have the best team in the universe.

In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two children, as well as their two mouthy cats!

Keynote Speakers

WHAT IS SELF-DETERMINATION AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Ricky and Karrie will present about self-determination, including what it is and means in the lives of people with disabilities. They will discuss research-based practices that can be used to advance self-determination outcomes for young people with disabilities. They will highlight assessment and intervention approaches that can be used in schools and delivered during pre-ETS services and highlight how people with disabilities can be involved in shaping research and practice to enhance outcomes.



KARRIE A. SHOGREN, PH.D. is Director of the Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities (a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities) and Ross and Marianna Beach Distinguished Professor in the Department of Special Education all at the University of Kansas. Dr. Shogren's research focuses on assessment and intervention in self-determination and supported decision making for people with disabilities. Dr. Shogren has led multiple grant-funded projects, including assessment validation and efficacy trials of self-determination interventions in school and community contexts. Dr. Shogren has published over 250 articles in peer-reviewed journals and is the author or co-author of 25 books. Dr. Shogren has received grant funding from several sources to support self-determination research, and strives to advance inclusive research, policy, and practice.



RICKY BROUSSARD is a Peer Support Specialist for Pre-Employment Transition Services, Consumer Directed Services, and other initiatives at Imagine Enterprises in Texas. At the age of 10, Ricky had to leave his home and for the next 29 years lived in 4 different intermediate care facilities. It wasn't until Ricky received his Home and Community Based Medicaid waiver that he was able to move into his own apartment with the help of his circle of support. Ricky understands how to hire staff, wages that are paid, working with agencies, and the importance of finding people he trusts to help with his finances. In 2007 he was the president of Texas Advocates and spoke about the waiting list at the Capitol of Texas in Austin. One of Ricky's greatest achievements was his testimony for the Ricky Broussard Act (House Bill 617 passed in 83rd legislature) which helps educators and families to get the info they need for transition services. He was also a recipient of the Texas APSE President's Award in 2023.

Keynote Speakers



CORINNA VILLAR COLE, PH.D., ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, is the Coordinator of the Special Education Programs at Sam Houston State University, which include the M.Ed. in Transition, M.Ed. Online, and M.Ed. in Special Education with Educational Diagnostician and Bilingual Educational Diagnostician Graduate Certificate. She is the President-Elect of the Council for Educational Diagnostic Services (CEDS), a division of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), Director of the Houston area Bilingual Assessment Leadership Group (BALG), active member of the Texas Educational Diagnosticians' Association (TEDA) where she was the President in 2020, and the University Advisor for Hou-Met, the Houston Chapter for TEDA. She was the Director of Appraisal and Diversity of the Garrett Center on Transition and Disability Studies at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. Her research interests include the assessment practices for Emergent Bilingual students, special education, bilingual/ESL education, transition, early childhood education, and second language acquisition. Dr. Cole is an enthusiastic advocate and trainer of parents of children with disabilities and has worked in that capacity for over 30 years.



DR. SUZANNE JONES has been in education for 29 years. She started her career as an elementary classroom teacher and an ESL curriculum specialist before entering the field of special education as an educational diagnostician. As an educational diagnostician, she served all grade levels and in various leadership positions in a large urban school district with an emphasis on the learning needs of CLD students. Currently, she is the evaluation and transition specialist at Region 6 Educational Service Center. In addition, she serves as an adjunct professor with Sam Houston State University in the educational diagnostician preparation program.

Agenda — Monday, October 7, 2024

TIME/LOCATION	SESSION
12:30–1:00 <i>Frisco 6</i>	REGISTRATION
1:00–1:20 <i>Frisco 6</i>	WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS Dalun Zhang, Ph.D., Director of the Center on Disability and Development, Texas A&M University
1:20–2:50 <i>Frisco 6</i>	KEYNOTE: WHAT IS SELF-DETERMINATION AND WHY DOES IT MATTER? Karrie Shogren & Ricky Broussard
2:50–3:05	SNACK BREAK
3:05–3:25 <i>Frisco 6</i>	GREETINGS FROM EDWARD SERNA Executive Director, Texas Workforce Commission
3:25–3:35 <i>Frisco 6</i>	GREETINGS FROM BRYAN DANIEL Chairman and Commissioner Representing The Public, Texas Workforce Commission
3:35–4:30 <i>Frisco 6</i>	BLAZING A TRAIL: THE CAPACITY-BUILDING PROJECT'S COLLABORATIVE EFFORT TO EXPAND PRE-ETS SERVICES FOR YOUNGER TEENS Dalun Zhang, Ph.D., Robin Miller, M.S., and Xinyuan Yang, Ph.D., Texas A&M University
4:30–5:30 <i>Frisco 6</i>	NETWORKING EVENT

Agenda — Tuesday, October 8, 2024

TIME/LOCATION	SESSION
7:30–8:00 <i>Frisco 6</i>	REGISTRATION
8:00–8:20 <i>Frisco 6</i> <i>Frisco 1 & 2</i>	WELCOME This morning, TWC staff will attend sessions in Frisco 6. Educators will be in Frisco 1 & 2.
8:20–8:30 <i>Frisco 6</i> <i>Frisco 1 & 2</i>	GREETINGS FROM JOE ESPARZA Commissioner Representing Employers, Texas Workforce Commission

Agenda — Tuesday, October 8, 2024 (cont.)

TIME/LOCATION	SESSION
8:30–9:30 <i>Frisco 6</i>	ASSESSMENT AND SERVICE PLANNING FOR YOUNGER VR CUSTOMERS—PART 1 VR State Office Transition Team
<i>Frisco 1 & 2</i>	USING INFORMAL ASSESSMENTS AND DATA TO DETERMINE JOB READINESS Texas A&M Staff: Robin Miller, Joette Hardin, Jana Bishop, Marcy Hancock
9:30–9:50	SNACK BREAK
9:50–10:50 <i>Frisco 6</i>	ASSESSMENT AND SERVICE PLANNING FOR YOUNGER VR CUSTOMERS—PART 2 VR State Office Transition Team
<i>Frisco 1 & 2</i>	SEQUENCING OF SKILLS AND CASCADING SERVICES Texas A&M Staff: Robin Miller, Joette Hardin, Jana Bishop, Marcy Hancock
10:50–11:00	BREAK
11:00–12:00 <i>Frisco 6</i>	ROLES OF TWC TRANSITION AND GENERAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS IN COLLABORATION WITH SCHOOLS - A PANEL DISCUSSION TWC TVRC/VRC and Educational Service Center Staff Facilitated by Leigh Ann Godinez and Kristen Davis
12:00–1:00 <i>Frisco 6</i>	LUNCH
1:00–2:00 <i>Frisco 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9</i> <i>*See pg. 16 for your room assignment</i>	CAPACITY BUILDING FOR A STRONGER COLLABORATION: INDIVIDUAL REGIONAL SESSIONS WITH VR/EDUCATOR ACTIVITIES—PART 1 VR and Educational Service Center Program Specialists
2:00–2:10	BREAK
2:10–3:10 <i>Frisco 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9</i> <i>*See pg. 16 for your room assignment</i>	CAPACITY BUILDING FOR A STRONGER COLLABORATION: INDIVIDUAL REGIONAL SESSIONS WITH VR/EDUCATOR ACTIVITIES—PART 2 VR and Educational Service Center Program Specialists
3:10–3:30	BREAK
3:30–4:30 <i>Frisco 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9</i> <i>*See pg. 16 for your room assignment</i>	CAPACITY BUILDING FOR A STRONGER COLLABORATION: INDIVIDUAL REGIONAL SESSIONS WITH VR/EDUCATOR ACTIVITIES—PART 3 VR and Educational Service Center Program Specialists

Agenda — Wednesday, October 9, 2024

TIME/LOCATION	SESSION
8:00–8:10 <i>Frisco 6</i>	CLOSING REMARKS, RECOGNITION, AND THANKS Robin Miller, Director of Employment Programs, Texas A&M Center on Disability and Development
8:20–8:40 <i>Frisco 6</i>	GREETINGS FROM ALBERTO TREVIÑO III Commissioner Representing Labor, Texas Workforce Commission
8:40–10:10 <i>Frisco 6</i>	KEYNOTE: CREATING A SUCCESSFUL PATH: TRANSITION PLANNING FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS Corinna Cole, Ph.D., Associate Professor, is the Coordinator of the Special Education Programs at Sam Houston State University Suzanne Jones, Ph.D., Evaluation and Transition Specialist, Region 6 Educational Service Center
10:10–10:30	SNACK BREAK
10:30–12:00 <i>Frisco 6</i>	TRANSITION SERVICES UNLOCKED: FRISCO ISD'S COLLABORATIVE JOURNEY WITH PROJECT SEARCH—A PANEL DISCUSSION

Keynote Presentations

WHAT IS SELF-DETERMINATION AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Karrie Shogren & Ricky Broussard

Ricky and Karrie will present about self-determination, including what it is and means in the lives of people with disabilities. They will discuss research-based practices that can be used to advance self-determination outcomes for young people with disabilities. They will highlight assessment and intervention approaches that can be used in schools and delivered during pre-ETS services and highlight how people with disabilities can be involved in shaping research and practice to enhance outcomes.

CREATING A SUCCESSFUL PATH: TRANSITION PLANNING FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

Corinna Cole, Ph.D., Associate Professor, is the Coordinator of the Special Education Programs at Sam Houston State University | Suzanne Jones, Ph.D., Evaluation and Transition Specialist, Region 6 Educational Service Center

Postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities are most effective when families are involved in the transition planning. Therefore, this session aims to provide professionals with information and strategies to facilitate transition planning for the culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) student that bridges school and home expectations. Building this bridge requires professionals to understand language acquisition, to consider the background of CLD students and their families, and to recognize family expectations. This session will conclude with a collaborative activity to allow participants to share how they will weave this new learning into their practice of transition services.

Objectives

Transition professionals

- will gain knowledge on creating a collaborative team that involves a strong partnership between school and home
- will gain the skills to ensure effective transition services for culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students
- will understand the best practices to implement ensuring positive post-school outcomes for CLD students.

Session Descriptions

MONDAY 3:35–4:30 PM | FRISCO 6

BLAZING A TRAIL: THE CAPACITY-BUILDING PROJECT'S COLLABORATIVE EFFORT TO EXPAND PRE-ETS SERVICES FOR YOUNGER TEENS

Dalun Zhang, Ph.D., Robin Miller, M.S., and Xinyuan Yang, Ph.D., Texas A&M University

Established in 2018, the Statewide Capacity-Building Project is a joint venture between the Texas Workforce Commission and Texas A&M University's Center on Disability and Development to build collaboration and address barriers in an effort to improve transition outcomes for students with disabilities. This session will review the rationale behind the project, its history, its impact on collaboration between vocational rehabilitation professionals and educators, and its implications for future practice.

TUESDAY 8:30–9:30 AM | SEE BELOW FOR SESSION LOCATIONS

VR STAFF - FRISCO 6

ASSESSMENT AND SERVICE PLANNING FOR YOUNGER VR CUSTOMERS—PART 1

VR State Office Transition Team

How do you determine VR service needs if a student has never worked before or has no idea what they want to do after high school? How do you plan services in a way that will help students build skills over time and have meaningful preparation for work and independent living? This session will walk through a process of informal assessment, including information that can be requested from school and what it might tell you about a student and questions you can ask that will give you clues about what services and supports the students might need. Once we've talked about how to determine need, we will walk through the process of planning services for younger students so they are well-prepared for life after high school.

EDUCATORS - FRISCO 1 & FRISCO 2

USING INFORMAL ASSESSMENTS AND DATA TO DETERMINE JOB READINESS

Texas A&M Staff: Robin Miller, Joette Hardin, Jana Bishop, Marcy Hancock

"Using Informal Assessments and Data to Determine Job Readiness" is a comprehensive professional development session designed to enhance the ability of educators to support students with disabilities in their transition to employment within Texas Workforce. Through this session, participants will gain valuable insights into the role of informal assessments and data analysis in determining job readiness. They will explore how informal assessments, including interviews, observations, and work samples, uncover students' skills and strengths, aligning with Texas Workforce program requirements. Participants will learn practical strategies for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to make informed decisions regarding students' job readiness and eligibility for Texas Workforce programs. By understanding the collaboration between educators and VR staff, attendees will be empowered to develop effective employment plans that leverage students' strengths and meet program criteria. The session will also provide tangible resources to support students' transition to meaningful employment within Texas.

Session Descriptions

TUESDAY 9:50–10:50 AM | SEE BELOW FOR SESSION LOCATIONS

VR STAFF - FRISCO 6

ASSESSMENT AND SERVICE PLANNING FOR YOUNGER VR CUSTOMERS—PART 2

VR State Office Transition Team

How do you determine VR service needs if a student has never worked before or has no idea what they want to do after high school? How do you plan services in a way that will help students build skills over time and have meaningful preparation for work and independent living? This session will walk through a process of informal assessment, including information that can be requested from school and what it might tell you about a student and questions you can ask that will give you clues about what services and supports the students might need. Once we've talked about how to determine need, we will walk through the process of planning services for younger students so they are well-prepared for life after high school.

EDUCATORS - FRISCO 1 & FRISCO 2

SEQUENCING OF SKILLS AND CASCADING SERVICES

Texas A&M Staff: Robin Miller, Joette Hardin, Jana Bishop, Marcy Hancock

The path to independence for students with disabilities can be complex, and it is our role as educators to simplify and support their transition. This engaging and informative presentation will offer insights into the world of transition services, with a focus on skill development and the coordination of services to promote student success.

Through this session, attendees will gain a deeper understanding of the strategic sequencing of skill development, from foundational to advanced, and how this lays the groundwork for a student's future. We will explore the concept of 'cascading services', a strategic and efficient approach to coordinating support services, ensuring a smooth transition and maximizing resources.

TUESDAY 11:00AM–12:00 PM | FRISCO 6

ROLES OF TWC TRANSITION AND GENERAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS IN COLLABORATION WITH SCHOOLS - A PANEL DISCUSSION

TWC TVRC/VRC and Educational Service Center Staff, facilitated by Leigh Ann Godinez and Kristen Davis

A panel of counselors from Texas Workforce Commission will share with participants the differences in the roles of liaison and transition counselors at the schools and what their duties look like while serving students with disabilities. Education Center Staff will discuss how TWC counselors can supplement activities and services being provided by the school partners. The responsibilities of TWC Counselors will also be looked at closely.

Session Descriptions

TUESDAY 1:00–4:30 PM | SEE BELOW FOR SESSION LOCATIONS

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR A STRONGER COLLABORATION: INDIVIDUAL REGIONAL SESSIONS WITH VR/EDUCATOR ACTIVITIES

VR and Educational Service Centers Program Specialists

Session will include an overview of specific VR processes that students must participate in to access Pre-ETS services. ESC staff and TWC Program specialists will discuss the Potentially Eligible process and the role of the counselor, education staff, guardian and student in the process. There will be hands-on activities to ensure that participants can identify best practices when referring students to TWC.

*Session Locations	
Region 1 - Frisco 1	Region 4 - Frisco 7
Region 2 - Frisco 6	Region 5 - Frisco 8
Region 3 - Frisco 2	Region 6 - Frisco 9

WEDNESDAY 10:30AM–12:00 PM | FRISCO 6

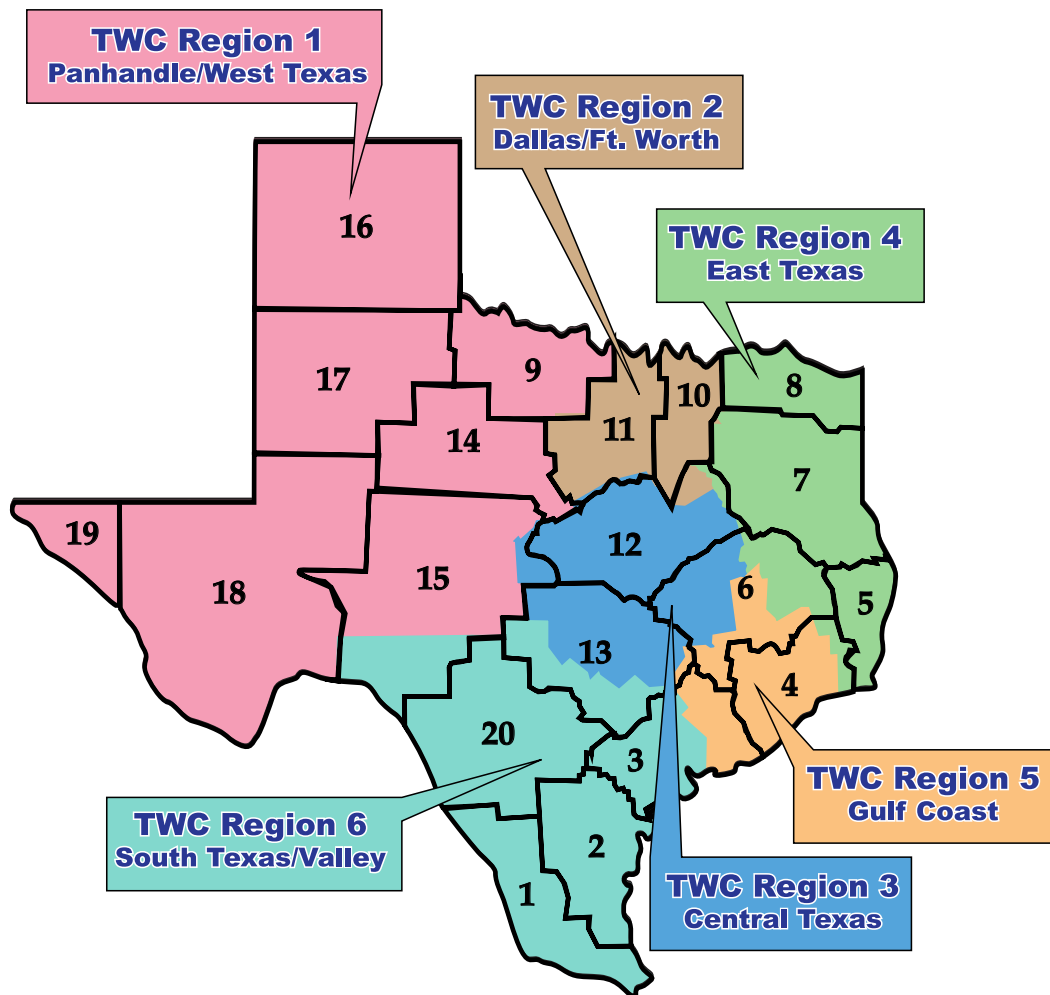
TRANSITION SERVICES UNLOCKED: FRISCO ISD'S COLLABORATIVE JOURNEY WITH PROJECT SEARCH — A PANEL DISCUSSION

Frisco ISD staff and Project SEARCH Interns



Project SEARCH staff and participants will highlight their experiences in the SEARCH program, best practices, and learned lessons. Presenters will answer questions about process, procedure, and outcomes from the time in the program. Participants will learn more about Project SEARCH and how to begin the process of program implementation.

TWC & ESC Regional Map



TWC Regions and Regional Transitions Specialists

TWC REGION 1 – Andrew Castillo, 915-330-9014

ESC Region 9 Wichita Falls
 ESC Region 14 Abilene
 ESC Region 15 San Angelo
 ESC Region 16 Amarillo
 ESC Region 17 Lubbock
 ESC Region 18 Midland
 ESC Region 19 El Paso

TWC REGION 2 – Rosla Hocker, 817-524-8536

ESC Region 10 Richardson
 ESC Region 11 Fort Worth
 ESC Region 12 Waco (Navarro County)

TWC REGION 3 – Vacant

ESC Region 6 Huntsville
 (Milam, Robertson, Leon, Madison,
 Brazos, Grimes, Burleson, Washington)
 ESC Region 12 Waco
 ESC Region 13 Austin
 ESC Region 15 San Angelo (San Saba)

TWC REGION 4 – Kirstin Johnson, 903-504-9531

ESC Region 5 Beaumont
 ESC Region 6 Huntsville
 (Houston, Trinity, Polk, San Jacinto)
 ESC Region 7 Kilgore
 ESC Region 8 Mt. Pleasant

TWC REGION 5 – Janeen Gordon, 832-840-2946

ESC Region 3 Victoria
 (Colorado, Wharton, Matagorda)
 ESC Region 4 Houston
 ESC Region 6 Huntsville
 (Austin, Montgomery, Walker)

TWC REGION 6 – Rebecca Quintero, 210-238-3592

ESC Region 1 Edinburg
 ESC Region 2 Corpus Christi
 ESC Region 3 Victoria
 ESC Region 20 San Antonio

Education Service Center (ESC) Transition Specialists

ESC REGION 1 – EDINBURG

Josie Reyes - joreyes@esc1.net

ESC REGION 2 – CORPUS CHRISTI

Kathleen McNeill-Murch

kathleen.mcneill-murch@esc2.us

ESC REGION 3 – VICTORIA

TJ Burke - tyoung-burke@esc3.net

ESC REGION 4 – HOUSTON

Dr. Theresa Cortney

theresa.cortney@esc4.net

ESC REGION 5 – SILSBEE

Lauren Peet - lpeet@esc5.net

ESC REGION 6 – HUNTSVILLE

Suzanne Jones - sjones@esc6.net

ESC REGION 7 – KILGORE

Tracy Johnston - tjohnston@esc7.net

ESC REGION 8 – MT. PLEASANT

Jennifer Solomon - jsolomon@reg8.net

ESC REGION 9 – WICHITA FALLS

David Hamilton - david.hamilton@esc9.net

ESC REGION 10 – RICHARDSON

Amy Reeves - amy.reeves@region10.org

ESC REGION 11 – WHITE SETTLEMENT

Carla Johnson - cjohnson@esc11.net

ESC REGION 12 – WACO

Monica Johnson - monica.johnson@esc12.net

ESC REGION 13 – AUSTIN

Chris Nelson - chris.nelson@esc13.txed.net

ESC REGION 14 – ABILENE

Casey Westmoreland

cwestmoreland@esc14.net

ESC REGION 15 – SAN ANGELO

Valerie Moos - valerie.moos@esc15.net

ESC REGION 16 – AMARILLO

Kristi Tucker - kristi.tucker@esc16.net

ESC REGION 17 – LUBBOCK

Nancy Coffey - ncoffey@esc17.net

ESC REGION 18 – MIDLAND

Mary Groomer - mgroomer@esc18.net

ESC REGION 19 – EL PASO

Leah Wood - lwood@esc19.net

ESC REGION 20 – SAN ANTONIO

Sam Gonzalez - samuel.gonzalez@esc20.net

STATE TRANSITION COORDINATOR — TEA

Elizabeth Danner

elizabeth.danner@tea.texas.gov

How to contact your TED



Scan the QR code or follow the link for video instructions for how to contact your TED.

tx.ag/FindingYourTED

TWC Statewide Initiatives

EXPLORE APPRENTICESHIP

Explore Apprenticeship (EA) is a program that builds on Explore Apprenticeship 1.0, a two-week summer program that started in 2019. EA provides in-depth career exploration and work-based learning opportunities to students with disabilities, aged 14-22 in apprenticeship related occupations for 14 weeks, and gives the option for students to participate in up to 12 weeks of work-based learning through paid work experience in the industry of their choice. The program is a partnership between Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS), Dallas College, San Jacinto College, and Texas Workforce Commission, and Local Workforce Development Boards (TWC-LWDB).

Currently, TWS-VRS is working to expand this program to different colleges and areas within the state and welcomes inquiries to bring this program to your area.

For questions, please contact TWC-VR Program Specialists Kristen Davis or Gabriela Martinez via email at Kristen.Davis@twc.texas.gov or Gabriela.Martinez@twc.texas.gov.

FOSTER YOUTH INITIATIVE

TWC recognizes that helping foster youth and those aging out of foster care transition to independent living requires more than addressing the need for shelter, food, and safety. Intensive and coordinated efforts are required from public agencies and community organizations, professionals, community leaders, and concerned volunteers to support youth in becoming engaged, responsible, and economically self-sufficient adults. Texas Family Code §264.121 directs that workforce services be prioritized and targeted to meet the unique needs of foster youth and former foster youth. The provision of supportive services for foster youth is also prioritized.

As part of this initiative, TWC-VR is dedicated to improving educational and employment outcomes for foster youth by focusing on enhanced collaboration among stakeholders dedicated to the welfare of foster youth by leveraging stakeholder resources.

For questions about the Foster Youth Initiative or to make a referral for services, please contact TWC-VR Program Specialists Laura Villarreal or Gabriela Martinez via email at Laura.Villarreal@twc.texas.gov or Gabriela.Martinez@twc.texas.gov.

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE PRE-ETS INITIATIVE

Texas Workforce Commission - Vocational Rehabilitation Division (TWC-VR) is partnering with Texas State Parks to offer paid internships to students. Program information includes:

Who: Students receiving 504 or special education services ages 16-22

Where: Over 80 State Parks across the great state of Texas. For a map of state parks in your local area, please go to: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/parks-map>

What: Up to 12 weeks of part-time paid work with flexible work schedules. Various task and job types are available including clerical, park programs, custodial, and maintenance. Some tasks will be dependent on the location and unique programs within each park.

To get started, students (or educators) can let their Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselor know they are interested in this opportunity. Through this partnership, VR counselors can coordinate a meeting with the local state park.

For questions, please contact TWC-VR Program Specialist Alyssa Kee via email at Alyssa.Kee@twc.texas.gov.

PATHS Program

Postsecondary Access and Training in Human Services

General Information:

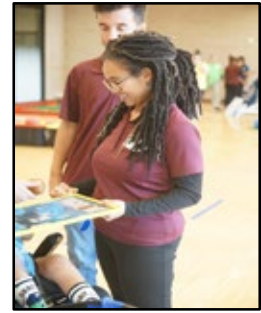
The PATHS Certificate Program is a two-year certificate postsecondary training program offered through the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University that prepares graduates to be Direct Support Professionals, Para-Professionals, or Child Care Professionals. This program prepares graduates for independent living and employment working in a career in human services.

Coursework

- Self-Determination
- Professionalism
- Technology
- Budgeting
- Healthy Choices/Cooking
- Exercise
- Healthy Relationships and Personal Safety
- Skills to Pay the Bills
- Community Day
- Study Skills
- Person-Centered Practices
- Content
- Field-Based Experience Preparation
- Communication Through Movement
- Library Instruction and Media Studies

Fieldwork

480 Total Hours of hands-on practicum experience across two years



Statistics

Total Graduates To Date (2012-2023)
~214 students

Total Students Currently Enrolled:
23

Graduation Rate (2021-2023 cohort)
94%

Practicum Hours Worked (2021-2023)
15 students worked ~11,330 hours



Website



Facebook



This Program is Supported by Texas Workforce Commission



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Center on Disability
and Development

paths.tamu.edu



Aggie ACHIEVE

Academic Courses in Higher Inclusive
Education and Vocational Experiences

*Texas' first inclusive, certificate-based, four-year educational opportunity for
young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.*

**More than one million school-eligible individuals (ages 6-21) in the
United States have intellectual or developmental disabilities.**

As young adults, many hold the very same dreams for adulthood as others without disabilities in their community: find a great job, forge new friendships, live on their own. The catalyst of many of these opportunities is the ability to go to college.



Through **Aggie ACHIEVE**, these students can have this experience while building employment skills. Aggie ACHIEVE aligns coursework, internship opportunities, and extracurricular activities with each student's academic interests and employment goals. Students have access to all campus-related activities.



aggielachieve.tamu.edu

**Each student's program of study will be individually designed through a comprehensive, collaborative process called person-centered planning, where each student and their family member(s) meet with a staff member to design individualized goals. Faculty will work with ACHIEVE staff to develop a modified syllabus and Independent Learning Agreement to set expectations and assignments.*



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and Development

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A Purposeful Life

Give them Roots and Wings

A Free Monthly Workshop Series

What is A Purposeful Life?

A Purposeful Life: Family Training Series is a community outreach project focused on increasing the capacity of self-advocates, siblings and family members to live a purposeful life. It's a collaborative project between Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University, Families of Autistic Children Engaged Together for Support, College Station ISD, Bryan ISD and the Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living. Professionals, family members, and parents have worked together to develop the training and materials as well as to deliver the monthly training, all on a volunteer basis.

Pre-registration is essential for meals and childcare. We're offering dinner, childcare for your little ones (2 years and up), and a special youth training program for children and adults with disabilities aged 11 and above. Need a Spanish translator? We've got you covered! Just be sure to request it on the Spanish registration page.

We will be hosting at Central Church, The Grand - B105, 1991 FM 158 RD, College Station, TX beginning October 3, 2024, from 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm. Or join us online via Facebook LIVE using the same registration link. Share the info and forward this info to anyone who might benefit.

Can't make it in person? No problem! You can catch us on Facebook LIVE.

Register Online!



When:
1st Thursday
each Month

Location:
Central Church
1991 FM 158 Road
The Grand - B105
College Station, TX 77845

To receive more information please email
Aimee Ortiz-Day at aday@tamu.edu.

cdd.tamu.edu/service-outreach/purposeful-life/

Collaborating Programs





TEXAS A&M
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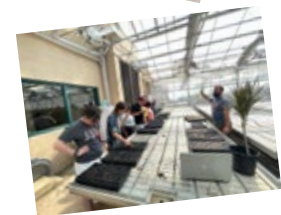


Horticultural Options in Plant Sciences (HOPS)

The HOPS Program is a two semester (approximately 32 weeks) training program whose purpose is to provide instruction and support to individuals with disabilities to gain the necessary skills and experiences in work readiness in order to successfully transition into competitive integrated employment in the horticulture industry. Students take various horticulture courses in the fall semester. Industry professionals are invited as guest speakers during the fall semester to share experiences and insights working in the field. A certification course is delivered in the spring semester to prepare students for the well-recognized industry credential tests pertinent to their chosen career field. Student is required to attempt the credential tests. The program focuses primarily on four of the five core Pre-ETS areas, which include:

- **Career Exploration** – Students enrolled in the HOPS program engage in presentations from employees in the field, gain understanding of career and employment settings through coursework and volunteering at various industry employment settings connected to their career field interest.
- **Work-Based Learning** – Students participate in both volunteer activities and a semester-long practicum to offer assistance to local non-profit organizations and at job sites aligned to their career of choice.
- **Job Readiness** – Students are provided instruction to develop skills in the areas of employability, socialization and interpersonal, as well as independent living.
- **Self-Advocacy** – Students are provided direct instruction in self-advocacy, personal centered practices, and specific job/career related content as well as independent living skills. This instruction is facilitated through mentorships (program staff who are college aged Texas A&M University students).

Fifteen (15) applicants will be selected to attend. Individuals enrolled in the program attend specifically designed classes on the campus of Texas A&M University System. During the fall semester, students take content-specific classes, field-based experience classes (to prepare for their practicum), a professionalism class, a study skills class, and an optional independent living skills. Independent living skills are taught in conjunction with the Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living. Additionally, students are required to join at least one student organization at Texas A&M University to develop social skills and skills for professional development.



**For more information about the program and application
please visit**

<https://cdd.tamu.edu/education/hops-program/>

****Acceptance is not guaranteed. A panel of reviewers will score applications after the application deadline. You will be notified in April of the status of your application. Acceptance in this program is contingent on a successful completion of the W.A.C.O. Program (and a passing score in the Garden Science 101 class of W.A.C.O.)*

Application Instructions

Individuals applying for the HOPS program must be 18 as of the start date of the WACO program <https://cdd.tamu.edu/education/waco-project/>, as attendance to WACO program is a PREREQUISITE REQUIREMENT. Complete applications must be submitted and received by **application deadline**. Specific date will be provided at a later date. Contact **Ms. Shelbi Davenport** at shelbi.davenport@ag.tamu.edu or **Dr. Xuan (Jade) Wu** at jade.wu@ag.tamu.edu.

Institute for Person-Centered PRACTICES

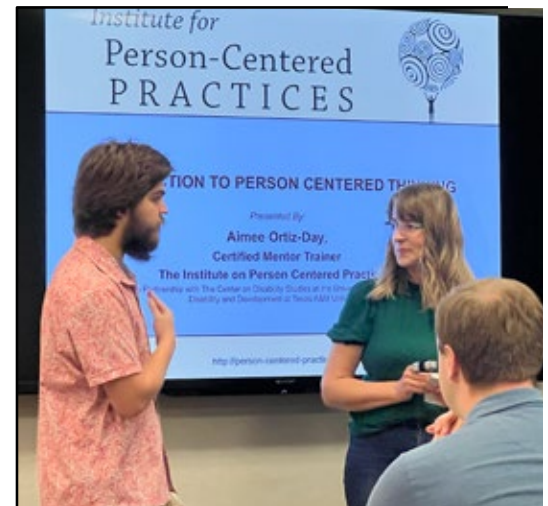
A **journey** of *discovery*...

what is **important to** the person is just as vital as what is **important for** the person.



Better Lives, Not Just Better Plans...

The Institute on Person-Centered Practices uses a person-centered framework to support people with disabilities, and other people who are marginalized from their communities to live their lives as they define them. We offer training and technical assistance on person-centered practices with a wide range of organizations that support people to be included in their communities, family members, and people with disabilities. We believe we must take it to scale. We must embed person centered practices in the fabric of organizations that support people to maximize impact leading to positive life changes. We offer training and support directly to people to develop plans that guide outcomes based on what is important to them.



Ty Day and Trainer, Aimee Ortiz-Day

The Institute was founded in 2010 as a collaborative partnership between the **Texas Center for Disability Studies at the University of Texas at Austin** and the **Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University**.

The Institute has a national reach with experienced **Person-Centered Thinking Trainers** and **Mentor Trainers** who bring different approaches to the training content based on their experiences.

The Institute has the capacity to certify Person-Centered Thinking trainers bringing person centered practices into the framework of how organizations provide training.

With experience training across states using a person-centered framework to assist people with a range of support needs to have positive control over their lives. Our partners represent a diverse group of individuals, family members and service organizations.

For more info visit: <http://www.person-centered-practices.org/>

PROJECT REDD: Research and Evaluation on Disability and Disaster

About Project REDD:

- Project REDD collaborates with a broad range of academic, research, and organizational entities to investigate psychological, educational, and social constructs related to the effects of disaster and emergencies. In addition, Project REDD studies issues of critical importance to individuals with disabilities affected by disaster including; long-term recovery, case management, sheltering, mitigation, and preparedness.
- Project REDD uses evidence-based findings to develop training, outreach programs, and products that assist people with disabilities impacted by disaster.

Our Mission:

- Conduct high-quality research and evaluation studies on how disasters affect individuals with disabilities in their families, and
- Provide research-based training, education, and outreach on the topic of disability and disaster for organizations, service providers, and individuals.

Project REDD Materials:

We share our research with:

- Emergency management personnel,
- Case managers,
- Volunteer organizations,
- Disability-related organizations,
- County extension agents, and
- Individuals with disabilities and their families.

We're here to help make a positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities in disasters.

For more info, visit our website.

<https://redd.tamu.edu/>

Contact the Project Director, Dr. Marcia Montague at mmontague@tamu.edu



REDD **Y**
DIRECTORY
RESOURCES FOR DISASTERS AND DISABILITY
disabilityresources.tamu.edu



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and Development

*Project REDD is affiliated with the
Center on Disability and Development
at Texas A&M University.*

iGROW

I GENERATE RURAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORK



Project Impact: 2021-2024



Center on Disability
& Development
EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Rural Texans Matter

The Center on Disability and Development (CDD) is at the forefront of developing programs in response to emerging issues in the disability field. We have a commitment to serving Texans with Disabilities. The goal of iGROW is to meet the diverse needs of rural communities by providing high school students with pre-employment and leadership training to support their transition to work and/or postsecondary education.

2021

3 rural school districts
19 students

- Age Fourteen: 10
- Age Fifteen: 2
- Age Sixteen: 3
- Age Seventeen: 4
- Age Eighteen: 0

2024

11 rural school districts
88 students

- Age Fourteen: 38
- Age Fifteen: 28
- Age Sixteen: 11
- Age Seventeen: 8
- Age Eighteen: 3



iGROW Site
Locations



56

Pre-ETS
lessons

Pre-Employment
Transition Services
Lessons taught



36

students

participated in the
Paid Work Experience
(PWE) working
approximately 4,396
hours earning
\$45,490



17

enrichment
activities

such as college and
trade school visits,
guest speakers, job
shadowing, and mock
interviews



34

parent and
community
trainings

provided in Central,
East, and West Texas.
Topics include VR
Services Night, Parent
Involvement in the IEP,
and Person Centered
Planning



45

local
employers

agreed to employ
iGROW students



26

students

participated in
Vocational Adjustment
Training (VAT) Skills to
Pay the Bills



15

students

participated in the
youth leadership and
college exploration
camp (YAP)



36

inter-
agency
team
members

rural school district
and Texas Workforce
Commission Vocational
Rehabilitation staff
working together
across the state



Learn more
about iGROW
Informational
Video

Kelly Majewski, M.Ed iGROW Director,
Center on Disability and Development (CDD)
at Texas A&M University (TAMU)
832-344-7500 kellymajewski@tamu.edu



cdd.tamu.edu/education/igrow-project-about

This work was supported by the Texas Workforce
Commission (Sponsor Award Number: 3022VR5048)

The "I Generate Rural Opportunities for Work" (iGROW) Project is a four-year, pre-employment and leadership-training program in partnership with TWC's Vocational Rehabilitation Program, for up to 20 students with disabilities per year who are currently enrolled in high school (ages 14-22). The purpose of the program is to provide a training environment to support students gain the necessary skills and experiences in work readiness in order to successfully transition into postsecondary education and/or competitive integrated employment.

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE



bvcil
Brazos Valley Center
for Independent Living



Work and College Opportunities Program

Program Dates: June-July

The Work and College Opportunities (W.A.C.O.) project at Texas A&M University is a 6-week program held in the summer for young adults with a disability. TWC-VR Transition Services, Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living (BVCIL) and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension & Center on Disability and Development collaborate to put together a unique college and employment experience. This college and work opportunity program for TWC customers is held at Texas A&M University. Participants receive development and instruction in professionalism, self-determination, self-advocacy, teamwork, assistive technology, independent living skills, and other related areas connected to employment and college attendance while participating in a paid work experience.

Thirty (30) young adults will be selected to attend. The project would be in-person. During both experiences, participants will learn about college opportunities and work in the community 10-20 hours a week. Development of vocational skills, career exploration, and independent living skills are emphasized. The employment sites, job coaches and transportation are provided by Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living (BVCIL).

For more information about the program and application, please visit

<https://cdd.tamu.edu/education/waco-project/>

Application Instructions

Individuals applying for the W.A.C.O. project must be 18 years of age by the start date of the program. Complete applications must be submitted and received by application deadline. Specifics will be provided at a later date. Contact Ms. Shelbi Davenport at Shelbi.davenport@ag.tamu.edu or Dr. Xuan (Jade) Wu at jade.wu@ag.tamu.edu.

****Acceptance is not guaranteed. A panel of reviewers will score application after the application deadline. You will be notified in April of the status of your application****

TEXAS TRANSITION CONFERENCE

Providing a smooth transition from school to adult life for youth with disabilities

The Texas Transition Conference is a two-day event, with a pre-conference session, focused on providing evidence-based practices that result in a smooth transition from school to adult life for youth with disabilities.

Participants will receive intensive training in five focus areas:

- STUDENT-FOCUSED PLANNING
- FAMILY INVOLVEMENT
- INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION
- STUDENT DEVELOPMENT
- PROGRAM STRUCTURE



Conference attendees come from all over the state of Texas and include educators, transition specialists, vocational coordinators, service agency representatives, and youth with disabilities and their families.



The 2025 TTC Conference will be held

February 19-21, 2025

at Royal Sonesta Galleria

2222 W Loop S.

Houston, Texas 77027

REGISTER ONLINE: <http://ttc.tamu.edu>

Early Rate \$350 (payments received by 12/13/24)

Regular Rate \$425 (payment received after 12/13/24)

\$200 (parents, youth and pre-service teachers)



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Center on Disability
& Development



**We care about what
you think.**

**Your feedback will help us
plan future training sessions
and resources for transition
professionals.**



**Please take our survey
by scanning the QR Code
or visit:**

tx.ag/CDDsatisfactionSurvey2024

Notes

Certificate of Attendance

This certifies that

_____ has successfully completed 11.5 hours of continuing education on
Pre-Employment Transition Services for Younger Teens
at the

Texas Statewide Capacity-Building Conference

October 7 - 9, 2024



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Center on Disability
and Development



Dalun Zhang, Ph.D.
Director,
Center on Disability and Development



cdd.tamu.edu