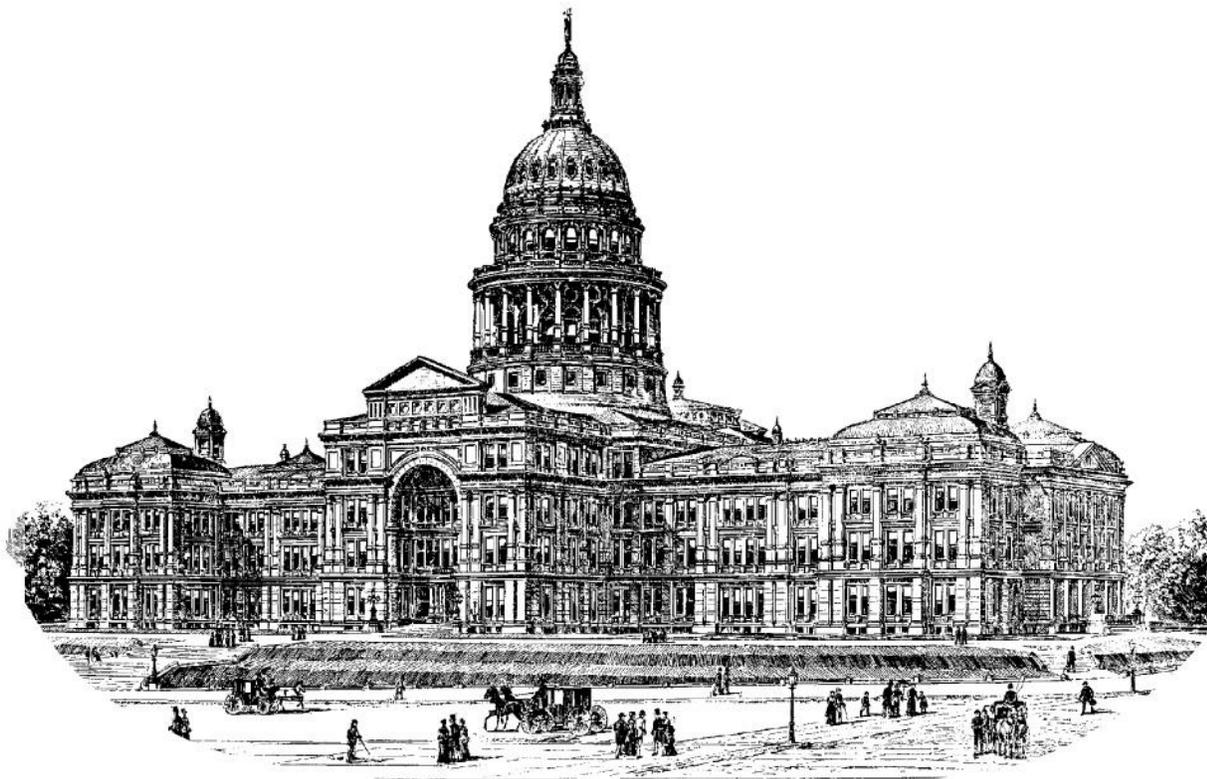


# TEXAS GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2013 – 2015 BIENNIUM

83<sup>RD</sup> LEGISLATIVE SESSION: JANUARY 2013



Presented to Governor Rick Perry in fulfillment of Section 115.009 (3) of the Texas Human Resources Code which requires that the Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities shall: *"before the end of each even-number year, submit to the Governor, and to the Legislature, a report that includes (c) any recommended changes in State laws relating to persons with disabilities."*



## ***About the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities***

In existence since September of 1950, the Texas Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicap was created by Allan Shivers. The Committee was continued by Governor Dolph Briscoe in 1978 through Executive Order DB-40. Executive orders by Governors William P. Clements in 1981 (WPC-14A) and 1987 (WPC 87-16) and Mark White in 1983 (MW-10) continued the Committee, with Executive Order MW-10 changing the name to Governor's Committee for Disabled Persons. In 1991, the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities was renamed and created statutorily by [Senate Bill 381](#).

[The Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities](#) (GCPD) works toward a State where people with disabilities have the opportunity to enjoy full and equal access to lives of independence, productivity and self-determination. The Governor appoints [twelve members](#) to serve on the Committee, seven of whom must be people with disabilities. Representatives from six State agencies serve as ex-officio or advisory members. The Committee makes recommendations to the Governor and Legislature on disability issues; promotes compliance with disability-related laws; promotes a network of local committees doing similar work; and recognizes employers for employing with disability; and media professionals and students for positively depicting Texans with disabilities. The members and staff also provide technical assistance, information and referral services to citizens of Texas on issues affecting Texans with disabilities. Members of the Committee work on issues related to Access, Communication, Education, Emergency Management, Health, Housing, Recreation, Transportation, Veterans and Workforce. The Committee's enabling law is outlined in the [Human Resources Code, Chapter 115](#).

### ***Mission***

The Texas 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.

### ***Principles***

The Committee is guided by the following Principles:

- First and foremost, Texas matters most. That is the over-arching, guiding principle by which decisions are made. Our State, and its future, is more important than party, politics or individual recognition.
- Government should be limited in size and mission, but it must be highly effective in performing the tasks it undertakes.
- Decisions affecting individual Texans are best made by those individuals, their families, and the local government closest to their community.

- Competition is the greatest incentive for achievement and excellence. It inspires ingenuity and requires individuals to set their sights high. And just as competition inspires excellence, a sense of personal responsibility drives individual citizens to do more for their future and the future of those they love.
- [The Committee] will be open and honest, pursuing the high road rather than the expedient course. And just as citizens should shoulder responsibility for their own decisions, [the Committee] will be accountable to the taxpayers for its actions.
- Finally, government should be humble, recognizing that all of its power and authority is granted to it by the people of Texas, and those who make decisions wielding the power of the state should exercise their authority cautiously and fairly.

# Executive Summary

Note: This document is a condensed version of the Committee's full report, which includes more information on each issue area. To access the Committee's full report, please visit the Committee's website [here](#).

## Overview

For the 2013-2015 biennium, the Committee offers 140 recommendations for its ten issue areas which include "Overview" and "Background and Purpose" sections which are meant to give an introduction, background, data and purpose for the following policy recommendations. The policy recommendations are stated in action-related terms in order to facilitate any legislation that may stem from them. The Committee feels strongly that its recommendations should be based on data which identifies the needs of Texans with disabilities. Our recommendations strive to leverage strategic federal, state, public and private partnerships to develop resources, reduce fragmentation in the service delivery system, address needs in a coordinated and comprehensive manner, provide choice and implement strategies that help people remain independent and involved in community life. Since last legislative session, the Committee carefully considered data from a variety of sources, including input from citizens. The Committee has sought win-win solutions to challenges facing our State and our citizens. Each of the appointed Committee members chose one of the ten issue areas as an area of focus during the biennium.

The recommendations focus on vital concepts important to Texans with disabilities in order to:

- Generate whole-community solutions that help foster full inclusion of people with disabilities in civic, cultural and social activities
- Create awareness and promote use of programs, services and resources for people with disabilities in Texas
- Support integrated opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in the full continuum of educational opportunities
- Support accessible housing options that are affordable, appropriate and safe
- Provide accessible, affordable, reliable and safe transportation
- Adjust the physical and recreational environment for inclusiveness and accessibility
- Increase employment, volunteer and educational opportunities
- Ensure access to key health, wellness and support services
- Promote effortless communications by, among and with people with disabilities in person and online

In summary, the following policy recommendations attempt to address these issues and many more facing Texans with disabilities with unanimous support of all Committee members. Our recommendations focus on key elements of Texas communities that promote the health, well-being, and independence of Texans with disabilities across the age spectrum.

## Texas Governor's Committee Citizens' Input Survey

The Committee implemented a Texas Governor's Committee Citizens' Input Survey from July to September of 2012 related to its ten issue areas. The survey asked citizens to provide input into the policy recommendations process and rank issues that had been identified by the Committee members for the 83<sup>rd</sup> Legislative Session. Citizens were also given the opportunity to provide open-ended responses to any issue important to them. There were 1,131 citizens who responded to the survey. (Full survey responses available)

Citizens identified the following as issues of "high importance" to them for the upcoming session and "strongly agreed" with the following concepts: (rank order of importance)

- Access to efficient and quality healthcare **(90.1 percent)**
- Access to affordable healthcare **(89.9 percent)**
- Ensure that emergency notification and warnings are provided in multiple formats, including formats that are accessible to people who are blind, deaf, hard-of-hearing, or use American Sign Language **(85.7 percent)**
- Increased employment opportunities for people with disabilities **(85.6 percent )**
- Accessible evacuation transportation **(84.9 percent)**
- Adequate, efficient Special Education programs, services and procedures **(84.7 percent)**
- Emergency planning processes that include people with disabilities **(84.2 percent)**
- Ensure appropriate (educational) accommodations are available during testing **(83.2 percent)**
- Education of employers about disability rights law related to employment **(82.3 percent)**
- Accessible post-disaster housing **(82.2 percent)**
- Integrate people with disabilities in the planning process for emergencies at the State and local level **(82.0 percent)**
- More resources and support for family caregivers, including respite services **(80.0 percent)**
- Strengthening existing anti-bullying laws in schools related to students with disabilities **(79.1 percent)**
- Aging-in-place (initiatives that would allow older Texans to remain in the community and homes, rather than in an institution or nursing care facility) **(78.6 percent)**
- Affordability of accessible, safe housing **(77.5 percent)**
- Increase financial assistance for people with disabilities to acquire assistive technology, including hearing aids **(77.3 percent)**
- Increased services for veterans with traumatic brain injuries **(76.1 percent)**
- Availability of community-based, integrated housing for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities **(76.0 percent)**
- Transit-oriented development (developing communities with accessible mass transportation to goods and services and a variety of pedestrian-friendly options) **(75.6 percent)**
- Affordability of accessible and timely transportation **(75.1 percent)**
- Support collaborative efforts between State and federal agencies to provide long-term care for Veterans with disabilities **(75.0 percent)**

- Improve availability of information on services for Veterans with disabilities, including job placements **(75.0 percent)**
- Increase training for medical professionals about Post-Traumatic Stress and traumatic brain injuries **(74.4 percent)**
- Increase availability of caregiver services of Veterans with disabilities **(74.3 percent)**
- Increased capacity for education providers in Positive Behavior Support training **(73.9 percent)**
- Accessible, affordable and safe housing and communities **(73.4 percent)**
- Enhance the physical environment for communities that are walk-able, roll-able, bike-able, which encourages physical activity, social engagement and aging-in place **(72.8 percent)**
- Increase affordability of hearing aids and other assistive listening devices **(72.7 percent)**
- Increase the participation of people with disabilities in State government and in their communities through the use of accessible technology **(72.5 percent)**
- Accessibility of information on State government websites (for example, information related to renewing or applying for a driver's license) **(71.8 percent)**
- Physical access to public buildings, programs and services **(67.6 percent)**
- Encourage the creation of complete streets (streets that safely allow for pedestrian, bicycle and scooter traffic) **(69.4 percent)**
- Amend programs' and services' participation policies for full inclusion of people with disabilities in recreational opportunities **(69.2 percent)**



## ACCESS

- **Recommendation 1.1:** Encourage the principles of “Livable Communities” in the long-range regional planning and development of communities in Texas, including emphasizing accessible transportation options and “Complete Streets.”
- **Recommendation 1.2:** Promote safe and accessible mobility options for drivers, public transportation vehicles and patrons, bicyclists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities in all planning, programming, design, construction, reconstruction, retrofit, operations and maintenance activities and products conducted at the city, county or State level.
- **Recommendation 1.3:** Support local and state implementation and development plans for compliance with the accessibility provisions in the revised ADA and TAS standards, and an ongoing method of assessing compliance.
- **Recommendation 1.4:** Encourage voluntary compliance with the ADA and TAS by creating incentives for compliance.
- **Recommendation 1.5:** Require all polling places for voting to fulfill the legal requirements to be fully accessible to people with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 1.6:** Explore ways to locate polling places that are on accessible transportation routes.
- **Recommendation 1.7:** Explore the use of new technologies that will increase accessibility for voters with disabilities.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- **Recommendation 2.1:** Encourage the use of accessible technology to reach traditionally underserved populations, including people with disabilities, especially through the use of social media.
- **Recommendation 2.2:** Foster the development of accessible mainstream technology and promote its adoption by people with disabilities, especially for employment, as well as civic and community engagement.
- **Recommendation 2.3:** Promote the awareness of and access to assistive technologies, including mainstream technologies that have a demonstrated track record of meeting the needs of people with disabilities.

- **Recommendation 2.4:** Support programs that increase the availability and affordability of accessible information and communication technologies, including high-speed Internet service, for all Texans.
- **Recommendation 2.5:** Provide publicly available educational resources for companies and developers to support the business case for, and the accessible development of, information and communication technology, including examples of market demand, business cases, business and technical requirements, sample code, training and testing tools.
- **Recommendation 2.6:** Encourage information sharing within the technological development community about emerging assistive technologies and best practices.
- **Recommendation 2.7:** Promote the development of standards of professional competence for accessibility practitioners in the area of information and communications technology.
- **Recommendation 2.8:** Support the inclusion of accessibility and Universal Design topics in the higher education curricula for computer science, engineering, design, and architecture.
- **Recommendation 2.9:** Encourage Texas State agencies and state institutions of higher education to enhance opportunities for participation by people with disabilities in government, the workforce, and the community through the use of technologies enabled by ubiquitous access to broadband, “cloud computing,” and related technologies.
- **Recommendation 2.10:** Promote the installation of hearing loops in places of public accommodations that have public address systems, spoken broadcasts or other audio programs.
- **Recommendation 2.11:** Support public programs and encourage private programs that assist Texans in the acquisition and the proper use of assistive hearing technologies, especially those with embedded telecoils.
- **Recommendation 2.12:** Promote awareness and knowledge of American Sign Language (ASL) as a secondary language.
- **Recommendation 2.13:** Encourage the inclusion of People-First language in the curricula of mass communication and journalism programs in Texas institutions of higher education.

## EDUCATION

- **Recommendation 3.1:** Require electronic textbooks and the [Virtual School Network in Texas](#) be developed and maintained in such a way that students with a variety of disabilities have equal access to all materials and instructions by teachers.
- **Recommendation 3.2:** Require Texas public schools to develop and use a centralized [Voluntary Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT\)](#) that will ensure commitment to procuring accessible products and materials.
- **Recommendation 3.3:** Build on the success of Western Governors University and continue to explore the intelligent use of technology to develop innovative, accessible learning models and personal educational pathways, while maintaining standards of educational excellence and student-teacher interaction.
- **Recommendation 3.4:** Educate teaching professionals on the resources available related to electronic textbooks and accessible technology options.
- **Recommendation 3.5:** Require the successful completion of Prevention and Management of Aggressive Behavior (PMAB) or similar training for all school district personnel who are likely to interact with students with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 3.6:** Establish a review panel of educators, diagnosticians and administrators to review the appropriateness of each case of restraint or seclusion in consultation with the student and his or her family, including how the incident could have been avoided
- **Recommendation 3.7:** Utilize the existing Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process to address bullying prevention
- **Recommendation 3.8:** Investigate the effects of zero tolerance policies on students with diagnosed emotional disabilities and whether modification of the application of zero tolerance policies would be appropriate for such students.
- **Recommendation 3.9:** Authorize prosecutors to request information related to a student offender's eligibility for special education services and information related to previous disciplinary actions already taken against the offender.
- **Recommendation 3.10:** Ensure that accommodations stipulated for a student in the student's IEP are provided for in all test-taking scenarios.
- **Recommendation 3.11:** Explore creative ways to provide testing accommodations related to post-secondary programs and professional certifications.

- **Recommendation 3.12:** Explore ways to increase accessible physical activity for all students, incorporating outdoor and nature activities.
- **Recommendation 3.13:** Explore use of volunteer health care practitioners in Texas public schools.
- **Recommendation 3.14:** Support efforts that will increase the number of clinical low vision and orientation and mobility evaluations for Texas students with the goal of eventually providing evaluations to all students with visual impairments in Texas.
- **Recommendation 3.15:** Promote collaboration between school districts and State agencies related to comprehensive transition planning, including planning related to further education, employment, housing, and independent living, for young adults with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 3.16:** Direct the Texas Education Agency to create a Transition Specialist Training Program that is consistent across all districts and that provides comprehensive training across issue areas relevant to transitioning students.
- **Recommendation 3.17:** Create a comprehensive guide for transitioning students with disabilities and family members, updated biennially, that outlines the services provided by Texas State agencies and private partners, includes information on applying for services, and is presented in a print version and an online, accessible version.
- **Recommendation 3.18:** Develop outcome-based transition standards which build in accountability on the delivery of services.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

- **Recommendation 4.1:** Ensure that all training courses for emergency management professionals address the requirements of people with disabilities and people with access and functional needs.
- **Recommendation 4.2:** Ensure that Texas Citizen Corps, Citizen Corps Councils, and Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADs) activities reflect the Whole Community concepts with full inclusion of Texans with disabilities and those with access and functional needs.
- **Recommendation 4.3:** Facilitate Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N) initiatives in Texas with full inclusion and participation of Texans with disabilities and those with access and functional needs.

- **Recommendation 4.4:** Encourage all State Health and Human Service agencies providing services to Texans with disabilities to discuss emergency preparedness and evacuation planning.
- **Recommendation 4.5:** Require local emergency managers to integrate local residents with disabilities as active participants in the integrated planning and recovery process.
- **Recommendation 4.6:** Require State and local disaster jurisdictions to provide effective, accessible and timely public alert warnings.
- **Recommendation 4.7:** Invest resources in individual and community efforts to facilitate the overall resiliency of the community.
- **Recommendation 4.8:** Support the use of information sharing and the use of developing emerging technologies to advance emergency management capabilities.
- **Recommendation 4.9:** Explore ways for emergency management and healthcare professionals to use the power of social media tools such as Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, crowdsourcing, crisis mapping and others to create avenues for real-time information gathering during active disasters.
- **Recommendation 4.10:** Explore the use of a Disability Virtual Operations Support Team to provide technical assistance for issues related to people with disabilities and access and functional needs in disasters using various forms of social media.
- **Recommendation 4.11:** Ensure sufficient communications that employ both high tech and low-tech capabilities in the event of a disaster in order to reach all audiences.
- **Recommendation 4.12:** Expand, enhance, and increase the use of social media in non-disaster times to ensure public awareness of community preparedness for all hazards in Texas.
- **Recommendation 4.13:** Utilize charitable and humanitarian giving via smart phones for disasters in Texas.
- **Recommendation 4.14:** Utilize technology to provide accessible webinars, materials and reports relevant to emergency management and issues related to Texans with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 4.15:** Encourage State enforcement of guidelines for broadcasters, cable operators, and satellite television services to comply with the equal access to public warnings requirement for the [Emergency Alert System](#).

- **Recommendation 4.16:** Encourage the Texas Association of Broadcasters to educate programming distributors, broadcasters, cable operators, and satellite television services on their [legal obligation](#) to make emergency information accessible to people with hearing and vision disabilities.
- **Recommendation 4.17:** Require State and local emergency management professionals to comply with their legal obligations to provide effective communication to Texans with disabilities and to people with access and functional needs.
- **Recommendation 4.18:** Support efforts to establish a Youth Preparedness Council, including youth with disabilities in Texas.
- **Recommendation 4.19:** Support efforts in Texas public schools to educate all students, including students with disabilities, on emergency preparedness and planning for their community.
- **Recommendation 4.20:** Strengthen existing Texas law to require Texas schools to create multi-hazard, comprehensive emergency preparedness plans that include children with disabilities and those with access and functional needs.
- **Recommendation 4.21:** Promote efforts to infuse emergency management principles and life skills across the entire educational experience to empower individuals, including children and youth.
- **Recommendation 4.22:** Support the adoption of digital, interoperable, Next-Generation 9-1-1 services across the state that are capable of interacting with those in need with voice, TTY, SMS, and real-time text.
- **Recommendation 4.23:** Explore ways to increase nursing home and congregate living preparedness, mitigation and recovery during disasters.
- **Recommendation 4.24:** Encourage the use of tornado shelters in Texas for congregate living facilities in historically tornado-prone areas.
- **Recommendation 4.25:** Map at-risk populations in settings where significant numbers of Texans with disabilities live together, such as long-term care and assisted living facilities, schools of special education, hospitals, community mental health centers, group homes, [State Supported Living Centers](#) and [State Hospitals](#).
- **Recommendation 4.26:** Ensure that providers of various home and community-based health-related services receive the same priority as ‘health care personnel’ for vaccinations during a pandemic event.

- **Recommendation 4.27:** Ensure that prioritization of debris removal and utility restoration is provided to areas that serve people with disabilities in congregate and residential living facilities.
- **Recommendation 4.28:** Examine ways the State can promptly reimburse public organizations that exhausted critical resources during disasters for any donated equipment, food or medical supplies.
- **Recommendation 4.29:** Rebuild any infrastructure destroyed during a disaster in an accessible manner, to the greatest extent possible, using the newly adopted [2010 Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines \(ADAAG\)](#).
- **Recommendation 4.30:** Require a disability-focused performance evaluation and assessment for all State exercises and disaster responses as standard operating procedure for after-action reports.
- **Recommendation 4.31:** Explore the use of [telemedicine](#) for emergency management response to natural or disease-related disasters.
- **Recommendation 4.32:** Support the development of electronic health record systems to be used in conjunction with telemedicine to assist in disaster health management.

## HEALTH

- **Recommendation 5.1:** Support the universal design of medical facilities and examination tables, diagnostic equipment and devices to benefit all people, including people with various types of disabilities.
- **Recommendation 5.2:** Promote education among medical service providers about legal requirements for accessibility of medical facilities, including the use of reasonable accommodations to ensure that Texans with disabilities receive prompt care in a setting that respects their dignity.
- **Recommendation 5.3:** Support health care reform in Texas that would increase the number of insured Texans while maintaining access to quality medical care with a strong emphasis on prevention and individual choice.
- **Recommendation 5.4:** Support efforts to help small employers offer health insurance to their employees.
- **Recommendation 5.5:** Encourage a regulatory environment that allows for “disruptive innovations” in health care delivery that will enhance affordability of health care for all Texans.

- **Recommendation 5.6:** Support integrated initiatives in chronic disease prevention and treatment that promote overall wellness of Texans.
- **Recommendation 5.7:** Invest resources in the continued development of technology that improves individuals' ability to self-monitor chronic health conditions and live independently.
- **Recommendation 5.8:** Establish a long-term plan to develop accessible community-based programs to increase physical activity and improve nutrition throughout the state to reduce chronic disabilities caused by obesity.
- **Recommendation 5.9:** Implement community programs, services and education throughout Texas to promote the cessation of smoking and other tobacco use and to address the need for reduction in potential alcoholism.
- **Recommendation 5.10:** Increase the safety and affordability of care within institutions, including State Supported Living Centers, State Hospitals, and Intermediate Care Facilities.
- **Recommendation 5.11:** Increase support for home and community-based care for all Texans with disabilities, whether they are recipients of Medicaid or not.
- **Recommendation 5.12:** Allow Medicaid funding to be spent on home and community-based care, such as [Community First Choice](#) options.
- **Recommendation 5.13:** Retool programs and regulations to enable people to access the services they need to live independently without creating financial hardship for the family.
- **Recommendation 5.14:** Support ongoing and expedited implementation of the activities outlined in the [2010-2015 Texas State Plan on Alzheimer's Disease](#).
- **Recommendation 5.15:** Explore the use of [telemedicine](#) to assist healthcare practitioners as a tool to serve the increasing numbers of people with disabilities in Texas.
- **Recommendation 5.16:** Explore the use of the medical home model for Texans.
- **Recommendation 5.17:** Promote workplace-friendly policies and practices for those in the workforce who are also acting as long-term caregivers.
- **Recommendation 5.18:** Support early intervention and therapeutic treatments for Texans experiencing mental illness.

- **Recommendation 5.19:** Encourage a multi-faceted, coordinated plan between State authorities, county jails, and public and private mental health authorities/providers to diagnose and treat offenders with mental illness in the most appropriate, therapeutic setting.
- **Recommendation 5.20:** Encourage the development of programs to facilitate the early identification and diagnoses of mental illnesses and linkages to appropriate and effective treatments.
- **Recommendation 5.21:** Support continued efforts to implement the August 2010 Texas Department of State Health Services Continuity of Care Task Force Report [recommendations](#).
- **Recommendation 5.22:** Support continued implementation of jail diversion programs and specialty mental health courts that prevent expensive incarcerations and allow for Texans with mental illness to receive appropriate treatment in the community.

## HOUSING

- **Recommendation 6.1:** Encourage localities to identify and address building codes and zoning regulations that lead to increased housing costs.
- **Recommendation 6.2:** Encourage housing subsidies and other initiatives that increase the affordability of housing for Texans with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 6.3:** Explore effective plans, policies, and practices for supportive housing that coordinate with community living and long-term care supports across State systems, using a consumer-directed approach.
- **Recommendation 6.4:** Support State efforts that would drive funding toward services provided in the community, rather than services only available in institutions.
- **Recommendation 6.5:** Encourage community integration of Texans in supportive housing by coordinating support services, housing, and transportation so people are able to participate in the social, economic, educational, and recreational activities available through community living.
- **Recommendation 6.6:** Encourage the promulgation of local visitability ordinances, which include basic accessibility requirements in the construction of certain single-family homes or duplexes.

- **Recommendation 6.7:** Continue to make funds available through the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs to low-income Texans with disabilities for home modifications for accessibility.
- **Recommendation 6.8:** Encourage private industry and the nonprofit sector to assist with home modifications for accessibility to low-income Texans with disabilities and Texas Veterans with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 6.9:** Improve enforcement of fair housing disability rights, including ensuring that all agencies at the local and State levels affirmatively further fair housing for people with disabilities by reviewing and eliminating obstacles to accessible housing.
- **Recommendation 6.10:** Encourage awareness of fair housing principles, especially requirements of reasonable accommodation.

## RECREATION

- **Recommendation 7.1:** Promote the rights and preferences of people with disabilities in the design and development of recreational services, programs, facilities, and functions, and encourage prompt compliance with the revised [2010 federal accessibility guidelines for recreational facilities](#).
- **Recommendation 7.2:** Increase awareness of new requirements in effect on March 15, 2011 and March 15, 2012 from the Department of Justice regulations to Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, in particular requirements that entities permit the use of wheelchairs and other power-driven mobility devices in all areas open to pedestrians, including walking and hiking trails.
- **Recommendation 7.3:** Incorporate [universal design and accessibility](#) into the long-range planning of State parks, public beaches and other recreational opportunities for Texans with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 7.4:** Encourage large public venues to incorporate family restrooms as an accessible amenities option.
- **Recommendation 7.5:** Encourage travel agencies, hotels, and other providers of travel and recreation activities to go above and beyond the minimum legal requirements of accessibility to create an atmosphere that is usable and welcoming to people with disabilities.

- **Recommendation 7.6:** Promote the creation and development of adult playgrounds and multigenerational playgrounds that will encourage physical fitness and healthy lifestyles.

## TRANSPORTATION

- **Recommendation 8.1:** Explore high speed rail options that include maximum accessibility requirements with focus on intelligent system technologies.
- **Recommendation 8.2:** Encourage communities in Texas to implement long term strategies for transit-oriented, mixed use development that would provide accessible, safe, reliable, and affordable transportation choices for Texans with disabilities in order to obtain employment, healthcare, housing and other needed services.
- **Recommendation 8.3:** Encourage local public transit programs to direct funding to improve accessible program design, including rural paratransit programs.
- **Recommendation 8.4:** Support State and local government efforts for aggressive coordination of accessible and affordable transportation, resources and services for Texans with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 8.5:** Promote the elements of transit-oriented development, livable communities and complete street concepts in Texas
- **Recommendation 8.6:** Encourage the principles of Livable Communities in the long range regional planning and development of communities in Texas, including accessible transportation options.
- **Recommendation 8.7:** Encourage public and private entities to voluntarily increase the percentage of accessible parking spaces above the federal minimum guidelines.
- **Recommendation 8.8:** Support legislation that would ban the use of hand-held wireless communication devices for text-based communication while operating a motor vehicle.

## VETERANS

- **Recommendation 9.1:** Increase access for female veterans to gender-specific health services including mental health trauma care.
- **Recommendation 9.2:** Support public and private initiatives in Texas to screen returning veterans for Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress and make information and resources available that are necessary for rehabilitation, transition, and return to work.

- **Recommendation 9.3:** Support legislation that would provide increased resources to the Office of Acquired Brain Injury and the Texas Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Council.
- **Recommendation 9.4:** Develop a multi-agency, comprehensive long-term strategy in Texas to address the mental health needs of current and returning veterans.
- **Recommendation 9.5:** Encourage Texas Medical Schools to train physicians in physical and psychosocial implications of compression injuries.
- **Recommendation 9.6:** Explore efforts to educate employers on the benefits of using qualified/trained individuals such as Certified Rehabilitation Counselors to provide job placement services to veterans with disabilities and encourage collaboration with education and federal organizations with similar missions.
- **Recommendation 9.7:** Develop a comprehensive psychosocial screening process for current and returning veterans that could help identify veterans who are at high risk of homelessness due to a physical, mental or cognitive disability.
- **Recommendation 9.8:** Support efforts to develop a continuum of housing options for returning veterans.
- **Recommendation 9.9:** Create a marketing and information program for returning veterans that educates them on all services available in Texas through the Texas Veterans Commission.
- **Recommendation 9.10:** Foster efforts to utilize social media and the Internet to provide a communication network of services for veterans with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 9.11:** Promote the use of accessible and usable technology to help veterans self-assess what services and resources are available to them through the Texas Veterans Commission.
- **Recommendation 9.12:** Support the collaborative efforts of state and federal agencies to improve timeliness, ease of application, and delivery of services and benefits to Texas Veterans.
- **Recommendation 9.13:** Promote the use of telemedicine to assist in providing health and mental health services to current and returning veterans in Texas.
- **Recommendation 9.14:** Explore ways to promote employment of current and returning veterans in Texas.

- **Recommendation 9.15:** Support efforts to provide accessible transportation for veterans to and from VA medical facilities, especially in rural areas.
- **Recommendation 9.16:** Encourage agencies with job placement components to link Veteran services websites to their websites to meet all the complex needs of today's Veterans.
- **Recommendation 9.17:** Support programs and services for peer-to-peer interactions of returning Veterans, including peer-to-peer counseling services.
- **Recommendation 9.18:** Support efforts to decrease the time related to processing VA disability-related claims.
- **Recommendation 9.19:** Support long-term planning efforts related to the needs of an aging veteran population with severe medical needs in Texas.

## WORKFORCE

- **Recommendation 10.1:** Encourage employers to promote full inclusion in the workplace, including through the provision of reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 10.2:** Expand tax incentives for employers to hire and retain people with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 10.3:** Develop an educational campaign to improve employers' knowledge about the financial benefits of hiring and retaining employees with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 10.4:** Encourage accessible emerging workforce technologies.
- **Recommendation 10.5:** Ensure all State and local government websites provide a fully accessible job application process.
- **Recommendation 10.6:** Include businesses owned by people with disabilities in the State's definition of [Historically Underutilized Businesses](#) (HUBs).
- **Recommendation 10.7:** Encourage the [Texas Workforce Investment Plan](#) to utilize existing online resources to educate additional staff on placement needs and reasonable accommodations.
- **Recommendation 10.8:** Support continued funding and expansion of the [Texas Disability Navigator Program](#).

- **Recommendation 10.9:** Encourage public-private partnerships to increase the employment of people with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 10.10:** Build capacities of workforce agencies to respond to needs of the aging workforce.
- **Recommendation 10.11:** Encourage practices that allow for flexible terms of employment that could benefit older workers while still ensuring productivity for the employer.

## **AVAILABILITY OF MATERIALS IN ALTERNATE FORMATS AND NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION**

This information is available in alternate formats upon request.  
Contact the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities  
1100 San Jacinto, Suite 1.200, Austin, Texas 78701  
512-463-5739; 512-463-5745 (fax)  
Use the relay option of your choice to call us.  
e-mail: [GCPD@governor.state.tx.us](mailto:GCPD@governor.state.tx.us)

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