

**Texas Center for Disability Studies**

**2020-2021**

**Annual Report**



The University of Texas at Austin  
**Texas Center for Disability Studies**  
*Steve Hicks School of Social Work*

# A Letter from the Director

Dear TCDS Community,

As a new Director for TCDS, I am looking forward to getting to know you over the next year. I have engaged with many of our partners and learned so much about the work they do in Texas and nationally and about many opportunities for future collaborations. Despite this past year being a very trying one with COVID-19 impacting many of our families, communities, and workplaces, TCDS staff and our community partners have not stopped their important work to better the lives of people with disabilities in the state.



The TCDS team has found ways to address the needs of disabled Texans while adapting to the COVID-19 environment including providing services, education, training, and research activities remotely. The Texas Technology Access Program (TTAP) supported more than 11,000 Texans which is amazing! We have expanded our research efforts and successfully brought a LEND program to TCDS. Additionally, we have engaged with our DD ACT partners on launching an effort to vaccinate people with disabilities and their caregivers throughout the state of Texas.

I look forward to our next year in which we will expand our research efforts, find ways to grow our secondary education programs for people with disabilities, launch our LEND program, and add organizational infrastructure to our collaborations with our DD ACT and other state partners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandy Magaña". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Director, Texas Center for Disability Studies  
Professor, Steve Hicks School of Social Work

A graphic consisting of the words "Thank you!" written in a white, bold, sans-serif font. The text is set against a dark orange circular background that has a slight gradient and a drop shadow.

Thank you to the incredible work by our Community Advisory Committee and partners across the state. Our advisory committee, fellow colleagues, and partnerships help us create a better world through research, education, practice, and policy. We embrace these partnerships and strive to utilize the expertise from each of these individuals and organizations.

## TCDS Joins Steve Hicks School of Social Work

The Texas Center for Disability Studies (TCDS) is excited to announce its move to the Steve Hicks School of Social Work at The University of Texas at Austin.

TCDS, formed in 1989, focuses on research, education, practice and policy. The center provides community training, access to assistive technology, post-secondary and critical disability studies education opportunities and wide-ranging research initiatives.

Along with the shift to the Steve Hicks School, TCDS welcomes their new director, Sandy Magaña, Ph.D., who is Professor in Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disabilities at UT Austin.

“I am so excited to take TCDS to the next level,” Magaña said. “The team at TCDS is so warm, skilled and committed and I am thrilled to work with them. Many expressed to me what a good fit the Steve Hicks School of Social Work was for TCDS.”

TCDS has partnered with the Steve Hicks School on various projects in the past, including the Critical Disability Studies academic programs, the Crip Conversations Speaker Series, the establishments of internships for social work students and the Disability graduation at UT Austin.



“Disabilities require multi-dimensional approaches that engage families and communities,” Steve Hicks School Dean Luis H. Zayas said. “As a profession, social work is grounded in the concept of the person-in-environment and such a vantage point can serve the best interest of persons with disabilities and their loved ones. Social work principles connect fully with the mission of TCDS. We know that this integration will prove powerful.”

The TCDS Critical Disability Studies program in collaboration with the Steve Hicks School of Social Work offers an undergraduate minor and a graduate portfolio.



## TCDS Receives LEND Grant

Texas has taken an important step forward in training leaders in service to children and adolescents with autism and other disabilities. The University of Texas at Austin's Texas Center for Disability Studies (TCDS) was awarded the prestigious LEND grant to develop the next generation of interdisciplinary leaders prepared to improve the lives of youth with disabilities and their families.

The Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities Program, or LEND, was awarded by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau to UT Austin in collaboration with Texas State University and Baylor University. A network of 60 LEND programs in the United States prepares trainees from a wide range of disciplines to assume leadership roles in their fields to improve the lives of children and adolescents with disabilities. Beginning July 1, TCDS, a part of the Steve Hicks School of Social Work at UT, will join this large network.

**"We are so excited to have a LEND program in Central Texas," Dr. Sandy Magaña, director of TCDS said. "Our goal is to train the workforce to better serve children and families with disabilities, especially those from underserved racial, ethnic and rural populations in Texas."**

The LEND Award was the result of collaborations across the UT campus and Central Texas through the Autism Consortium of Texas led by Magaña. Other faculty members involved in the effort come from the Dell Medical School, the schools of Nursing and Law, and the departments of Special Education, Speech Language and Hearing and Psychology. Texas State University and Baylor University bring several disciplines as well. The program is called ACT LEND, named after the Autism Consortium of Texas.

**"Receiving a LEND award is a major recognition of UT's strengths in autism and disabilities research," said Jennifer Lyon Gardner, UT's Deputy Vice President for Research who championed the cause by providing seed money support in developing the LEND proposal. "Sandy and the TCDS will be able to leverage the support from LEND to create a training program backed by evidence and informed by scholarship happening across our campus. Ultimately this program will help Texans on the autism spectrum, as well as their families and support networks, thrive."**



Self-advocates, family members and graduate students will participate as trainees and will focus on supporting diverse areas across Texas. Trainees will complete 300 hours of training which includes clinical sessions, leadership conferences, family mentoring and a research project.



Learn more about our LEND grant  
and how you can apply to be a trainee here.

# Our Year by the Numbers

**6,091**

people received informational support.



**82** Critical Disability Studies students.



**1,600** reused and refurbished devices.

**1,824**

families, professionals, and self advocates trained.

**16,446**

website visits.

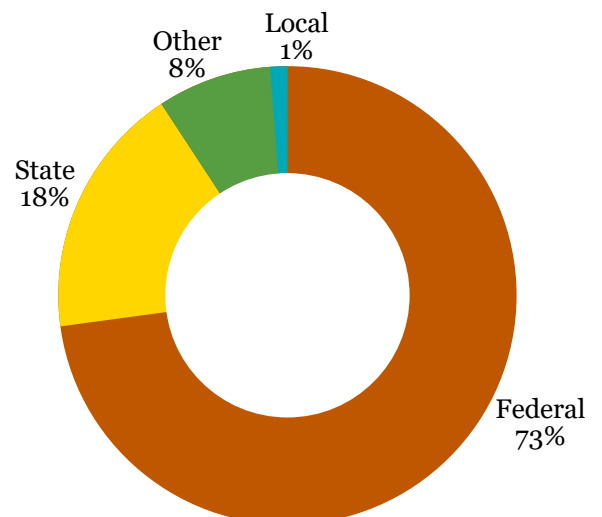


**300** collaborating agencies.

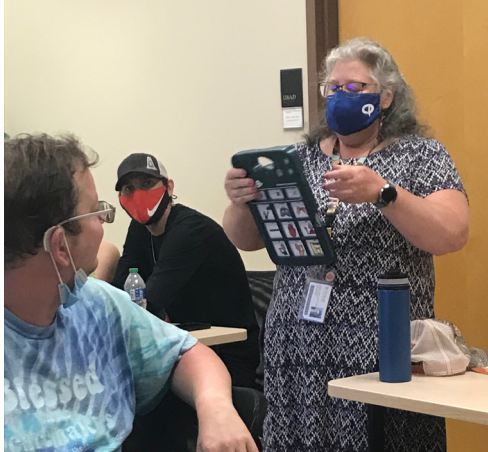
## Finance and Funding

Total leveraged dollars for the fiscal year:

**\$4,948,522**







## Assistive Technology

- 11,000+ people supported through the Texas Technology Access Program.
- 181 hands-on device demonstration sessions across 16 demonstration centers in Texas.
- After a 5-month device loan pause to update cleaning and sanitation measures, 95 assistive devices were loaned out to community members across Texas.

## Transition and University

- 82 students participated in the Critical Disability Studies minor and graduate portfolio programs.
- Eight students graduated from the E4Texas program which was modified for the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 16 professionals trained through the Student Diversity Impact Seed Grant.
- Six scholars accepted into the BRIDGE program to provide quality services to children transitioning from public schools to adulthood.
- [Multiple Crip Conversations events ranging from school resources to art, science, and disability.](#)



## Health and Wellness

- 22 trainees completed the inaugural Road to Recovery: Trauma Informed Care training program.
- 361 attendees to Genetics Series events in rural towns across Texas.
- [Genetics Series Fragile X: A Conversation](#)

## Family Support

- 980 people were trained by the Institute for Person Centered Practices.
- Six webinars on Support and Connection during COVID-19 covering one page profiles, people planning together, and trauma coping skills.
- [Support and Connection Series](#)
- [The Ins and Outs: One Page Profiles for Healthcare Settings.](#)

### Support and Connection Series

**Karyn Harvey**  
**Trauma and Coping**  
**Skills**



## Research



- Promoting Obesity Prevention among Children with Developmental Disabilities and Families through Engaged Research (PODER) program recruited 73 parent/child dyads, conducted 4 presentations, and published 1 manuscript on [results about Latino families' experiences with COVID](#)
- 40+ families participated in parent-mediated intervention program, ASPEN.
- Conducted three ASPEN presentations and published one manuscript, with another manuscript pending review.



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