



# DPC Issue Brief

...promoting progressive public policy  
for Texans with disabilities.

**Title:** Improving Employment Programs for Texans with Disabilities

**Background:** Since the inception of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the employment prospects of Texans with disabilities have not significantly improved. This is despite greater awareness among many employers of the rights of employees and applicants with disabilities, effective employment assistance programs, a shift from segregated work programs to competitive employment, and overall improved access and participation in community life by people with disabilities. While these gains have been a benefit to individuals, Texans with disabilities have not gained statistically in overall employment, employment in state agencies, or self-sufficiency as seen in dependence on public assistance.

**Recommendation:** The Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) recommends that the Texas Legislature direct the Health and Human Services Commission and Texas Workforce Commission to analyze all programs and services that impact employment of Texans with disabilities to determine:

1. Opportunities to consolidate or improve employment programs such that resources are shifted to the most successful programs while maximizing federal funding;
2. Progress to date and required steps to transform segregated work programs and any state-funded programs that do not result in competitive employment;
3. Best practices for determining provider rates for a range of employment services;
4. Opportunities to apply principles of self-determination in employment programs, including opportunities for self-employment, telecommuting, and other non-traditional employment outcomes;
5. Opportunities to increase hiring of people with disabilities by state agencies.

**Contact:** John Meinkowsky, TACIL Representative - ARCIL, Inc. 825 East Rundberg Lane, Suite A-1, Austin, TX 78751, Telephone: (512) 832-6349, Facsimile: (512) 832-1869, Email: [johnm@arcil.com](mailto:johnm@arcil.com)

**MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS:** *Statewide Members:* Advocacy, Incorporated, Brain Injury Association of Texas, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, Epilepsy Coalition of Texas, The Institute for Disability Access/ADAPT, Lone Star Association for Persons in Supported Employment, Mental Health Association in Texas, National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Texas, National Multiple Sclerosis Society of Texas, Texas Advocates, Texas AIDS Network, Texas Association of Centers for Independent Living, Texas Association of the Deaf, Texas Center for Disability Studies/ Texas Technology Access Project, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, Texas Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, Texas Legal Services Center, Texas Mental Health Consumers, Texas State Independent Living Council, Texas State Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, The Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University, Council for Families for Children, United Cerebral Palsy of Texas, The Spina Bifida Association of Texas, Inc., and the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Texas. *Local Members:* Epilepsy Foundation Central & South Texas. REACH Resource Centers on Independent Living – Dallas, Fort Worth and Denton, Corpus Christi Committee for Persons with Disabilities, Goodwill of Central Texas and Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living