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SERVING HUMANITY TO HONOR GOD

2022 TEXAS KIDS COUNT

DATA BOOK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



2022 TEXAS KIDS COUNT DATA BOOK

INTRODUCTION

A TEXAS FOR ALL CHILDREN

All children – regardless of race, class, gender, or national origin – deserve to fulfill their potential and have the opportunity to thrive. Over the last several years, Texas children and youth have faced serious challenges and disruptions to their lives due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Children of color, in particular, were disproportionately impacted by the disease itself and by the economic crisis that ensued. To be clear, the economic impacts exacerbated existing inequities in our systems across racial and ethnic lines.

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Texas ranks 45th in overall child well-being (based on measures of economic well-being, education, health, and family and community). In 2018, Texas ranked 43rd in overall child well-being, meaning we have worsening conditions for Texas children and youth. Our children are growing into the leaders of tomorrow. It is, therefore, our responsibility to ensure that we provide opportunities for all kids equitably.

Texas can be a state where all children can thrive. This report provides a deeper understanding of child well-being in Texas and identifies opportunities to invest in Texas children. Every Texan has proudly published a state data book for decades. This year, we are proud to include additional metrics to measure the status of child and youth well-being in the state, including data on LGBTQ populations and environmental justice indicators.

WHY CONSIDER RACE AND ETHNICITY?

At Every Texan, we advance equity with an understanding that racism is often a driving force of systemic inequities. We believe in a shared vision of a state where every Texan, regardless of race or ethnicity, can thrive. Racial equity is the condition where someone's racial identity can no longer predict how they fare in society. Disaggregating data by race and ethnicity advances an understanding of how racial and ethnic groups are differently situated in society, helps to uncover the drivers of inequities, and supports communities in developing strategies and actions that eliminate unjust disparities.

When we disaggregate data, we can reveal information about which groups of children have better outcomes than other groups, try to understand why, and figure out how to give all children the best chance to succeed. Every Texan's race-conscious, targeted approach to advancing equity offers the specificity necessary to make the greatest impact while creating processes to address inequities. Our research and data, therefore, reflect this strategic priority by ensuring that data is consistently disaggregated to inform policies, practices, and decision-making that address structural barriers that underpin racial inequities.

INTRODUCTION

It is important to note that racial categories are not rooted biologically in a person's skin color or innate characteristics. Rather, throughout history, social, economic, and political institutions have defined boundaries of racial categories, often creating social, economic, and political hierarchies.²² Separate from the concept of race, ethnicity is broadly understood as similar to ancestry or heritage (e.g., Korean, Mexican, German). However, state and federal data collection and reporting practices commonly use only two ethnic categories, i.e., Hispanic/Latino and non-Hispanic/Latino.

In this report, we have broken out Hispanic/Latino as a separate category combining race/ethnicity. Therefore, unless otherwise referenced, Hispanic/Latino categories are exclusive of the "White" racial category.

This report was authored by the **Every Texan Research and Data team**, as a part of **Texas Kids Count**, a project of Every Texan:

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THE ANNIE E. CASEY
FOUNDATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

KEY FINDINGS:

- In Texas, 20% of children live in poverty, and Black and Latino/Hispanic children have the highest child poverty rates across racial and ethnic groups.¹
- The cost of raising a child takes up a large portion of a parent's income. For example, a parent making the federal minimum wage spends over half of their income on full-day child care.²
- For every 100 families living in poverty in Texas, only four receive TANF cash assistance (compared to the national rate of 21 per 100).³

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Implement policies to ensure sufficient wages and benefits for workers to meet their family's needs.** When parents are paid a living wage, they are able to invest in themselves and their children's futures. Raising the statewide or local minimum wage and increasing access to paid sick leave can improve the economic security of all Texas families.
- **Invest in programs that help keep families out of poverty.** Programs such as Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) can lift families and children out of poverty. Policymakers should review and update the rules and regulations so programs are more accessible and equitable. For example, restrictions on owning cars and other assets to qualify for TANF should be eliminated, and unemployment insurance should be reformed so that benefits are adequate.
- **Fund programs that will increase access to affordable child care.** Increasing access to affordable child care will allow parents to pursue careers that will support their families by enhancing their economic mobility. Policymakers should follow the recommendations laid out in the 2023-2025 Child Care Workforce Strategic Plan (created by House Bill 619, passed in 2021 during the 87th Legislature of Texas), including laws to support child care workers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

 EDUCATION 

KEY FINDINGS:

- 84% of children in public Pre-K are economically disadvantaged, and over a third (35%) of children in public Pre-K are emergent bilingual or English learners.⁴
- The percentage of economically disadvantaged third grade students that did not meet third grade reading standards was over twice that of economically advantaged students (30% compared to 12%).⁵
- In Texas, 87% of economically disadvantaged high school students in the class of 2021 graduated, compared to 94% of non-economically disadvantaged students.⁶

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Improve funding and access to full-day Pre-K for eligible children statewide, especially economically disadvantaged children.** In 2019, the Texas legislature mandated that every district provide a full day of Pre-K instruction for four-year-old students. However, funding remains at half-day levels. Policymakers should provide support to economically disadvantaged students early by funding full-day, high-quality pre-kindergarten for eligible children.
- **Remodel Texas' school finance system to fund Texas schools at a level that meets the needs of all students.** Public education funding in Texas should not be based on attendance, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the systemic barriers that keep economically disadvantaged students and students of color from attending and completing school. Well-funded schools should be able to fairly pay and hire more teachers and school counselors, commit to smaller classroom sizes, invest in special education and bilingual/English learning programs, and offer a wider variety of courses.
- **Implement targeted support to close educational achievement gaps between groups of students.** For example, in 2022, the percentage of economically disadvantaged third-grade students who did not meet third-grade reading standards was over twice that of non-economically disadvantaged students (30% compared to 12%). In order for students to reach their full potential and be prepared for college or careers, legislators must support school districts with the funding they need to provide targeted support to close economic and race and ethnicity gaps in educational achievement.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



KEY FINDINGS:

- Texas ranks worst in the nation for children’s health insurance,⁷ with 12% of children under 19 uninsured.⁸ Hispanic/Latino children under 19 disproportionately make up Texas’ uninsured child population.⁹
- The infant mortality rate in Texas is 5.3 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.¹⁰ The rate is twice as high for Black mothers, at 10 infant deaths per 1,000 live births.¹¹
- In Texas, over 79% of SNAP participants are in families with children, compared to over 65% nationwide.¹²
- White students (25%) are more than twice as likely to ask for help from someone (such as a doctor, counselor, or hotline) before attempting suicide than Black (10%) or Hispanic/Latino students (11%).¹³

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Implement policy solutions to protect and expand access to affordable health care for all children and families.** Policymakers must ensure every Texas child has health insurance and can afford and access health services. In April 2023, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) will start the enormous task of “unwinding” — re-checking eligibility for all Texans on Medicaid over 12 months following a three-year nationwide pause on disenrollments during the pandemic. The 2023 Session is a critical time for the Legislature to act, to help Texas avoid a huge spike in eligible kids losing coverage in 2023 and 2024.
- **Expand after-school meals, summer nutrition, and school breakfast programs.** Millions of Texas children rely on school lunches to get nutritious meals. Policymakers must recognize that educational attainment hinges on the health and well-being of children. Therefore, policymakers must expand existing school nutrition programs to ensure that all children have access to healthy and nutritious meals at school and during the summer break.
- **Protect Medicaid and CHIP from damaging cuts or policy changes that reduce coverage for Texans or their ability to access care.** Texas can expand Medicaid so that all children and families in Texas can receive the health and mental health care they need. State policymakers can also extend comprehensive Medicaid coverage for postpartum women to 12 months after pregnancy, as recommended by maternal health experts.

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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Expand access to family planning resources.** Access to prenatal care and support during pregnancy should be expanded through outreach and increased Medicaid access in low-income communities and communities with high maternal mortality rates. Lawmakers can also help reduce unintended teen pregnancies — and high-school dropout rates — by authorizing the Texas Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to cover contraceptives, a benefit covered by 48 other states.
- **Increase the reach of food and nutrition programs.** If Texas were to remove barriers to enrolling in SNAP, Texas families, especially families of color, would be able to access healthy food more easily. Policymakers must consider existing barriers to accessing food and nutrition benefits and implement the necessary modifications to ensure that all those who need the support can access it. This includes ensuring children retain access to SNAP by extending enrollment to a year.

SAFE COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS

KEY FINDINGS:

- Children and youth of color are more likely than White youth to have negative experiences with the justice system. For example, Black and Hispanic/Latino youth are more likely to be detained in juvenile detention, correctional, and residential facilities compared to White youth.¹⁴
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and/or questioning (LGBTQ) youth disproportionately experience poor mental health outcomes compared to their straight and cisgender peers.¹⁵
- There are currently over 11,000 children in foster care¹⁶ and 302,000 children in informal kinship homes in Texas.¹⁷
- The rate of children and teens killed by guns has increased by 51% over the past two decades in Texas.¹⁸

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SAFE COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Advocate for policies that protect all Texas children.** Funding mental health staff, creating equitable safety policies, partnering with families and communities, and using risk assessments can help ensure that students *feel* and *are* safe. Policymakers should especially consider funding programs that coordinate trauma supports across schools, child welfare organizations, and health care facilities.
- **Improve the well-being of children in foster and kinship programs by fully funding Child Protective Services and a Kinship Navigator Program.** Many youth that age out of foster care experience homelessness.¹⁹ All children, no matter their family situation, need better support to ensure they are able to thrive during childhood and into adulthood. Policymakers must expand funding to improve the health and well-being of kids in foster and kinship care.
- **Support gun safety.** Policymakers must support gun safety and prevention efforts that establish standards for responsible gun ownership to help lower the rates of preventable gun related deaths, especially for children.



ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH



KEY FINDINGS:

- In 2020, there were over 2,100 inpatient hospital visits from children under 18 years old for asthma in Texas, with non-Hispanic Black children having the highest overall rate of pediatric asthma hospitalizations at 69.5 hospitalizations per 100,000 children, compared to 24.5 per 100,000 for non-Hispanic White children and 22.1 per 100,000 for Hispanic children.²⁰
- Certain populations in Texas, including South Texas border areas, along with clusters in far east and west Texas, rank high on the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index (SVI).
- According to the American Lung Association, four Texas areas (Houston-The Woodlands, El Paso-Las Cruces, Dallas-Fort Worth, and San Antonio-New Braunfels-Pearson) rank in the top 25 cities most polluted by ozone.²¹

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Support programs and policies that will mitigate negative health outcomes.** Environmental factors such as air pollution and exposure to high levels of ozone can contribute to children developing asthma or having asthma attacks. Policymakers must consider safeguards for children who are more vulnerable to environment-related illnesses and exposure to pollution by expanding access to health programs that will provide vulnerable populations with the services and medications they need.
- **Understand how the Texas environment is impacting children’s health.** Intentional data collection and a deeper analysis of communities across the state are needed to better understand how the state of children’s health intersects with our state’s environment. Policymakers must pursue a study to better understand how changes in the environment and air pollutants are impacting children’s health across different parts of the state.
- **Develop a plan for addressing the impact of the environment on children.** Existing vulnerability indices demonstrate that communities across the state will experience the negative effects of a climate or natural disasters differently. The COVID-19 pandemic is a perfect example of such a scenario. Legislators have an opportunity to build a healthier state, by focusing strategic investments in Texas’ most vulnerable children. Policymakers must put forward a bold roadmap of the state’s climate policy to mitigate existing threats to children’s health.

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CONTACT ELECTED OFFICIALS

TEXAS CAPITOL BUILDING DIRECTORY

GENERAL

Information & Tours	Capitol	1S.2
Capitol Gift Shop	Extension	E1.006
Capitol Grill Cafeteria	Extension	E1.002
Legislative Reference Library	Capitol	2N.3

SHARED MEETING ROOMS

Auditorium	Extension	E1.004
Legislative Conference Center	Extension	E2.002
Supreme Court Room	Capitol	3N.3
Appellate Court Room	Capitol	3N.4

GOVERNOR

Public Reception Room	Capitol	2S.1
Press Conference	Capitol	2S.2
Business Office	Capitol	1S.1
Legislative Division	Capitol	1S.1

SECURITY / EMERGENCY

Capitol Fire Marshal	Extension	E1.213
Capitol Health Services	Extension	E1.214
Department of Public Safety, Capitol Division	Capitol	1S.4

SECRETARY OF STATE

Secretary of State	Capitol	1E.8
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SENATE

Senate Chamber	Capitol	2E.8	Senate Sergeant at Arms	Capitol	2E.10
Senate Gallery	Capitol	3E.5	Lt. Gov.'s Reception Room	Capitol	2E.16
Lieutenant Governor	Capitol	2E.13	Ramsey Reception Room	Capitol	2E.14
Secretary of the Senate	Capitol	2E.22	Betty King Committee Room	Capitol	2E.20

SENATORS OFFICES

Sen. Alvarado, Carol	Capitol	1E.9	Sen. Kolkhorst, Lois W.	Capitol	GE.4
Sen. Bettencourt, Paul	Capitol	3E.16	Sen. LaMantia, Morgan	Extension	E1.712
Sen. Birdwell, Brian	Capitol	1E.3	Sen. Menéndez, José	Extension	E1.610
Sen. Blanco, César	Capitol	GE.7	Sen. Middleton, Mayes	Extension	1.708
Sen. Campbell, Donna	Capitol	3E.18	Sen. Miles, Borris L.	Capitol	3E.12
Sen. Creighton, Brandon	Extension	E1.606	Sen. Nichols, Robert	Extension	E1.704
Sen. Eckhardt, Sarah	Extension	E1.804	Sen. Parker, Tan	Extension	1.608
Sen. Flores, Pete	Extension	E1.808	Sen. Paxton, Angela	Capitol	3E.2
Sen. Gutierrez, Roland	Capitol	3S.3	Sen. Perry, Charles	Extension	E1.806
Sen. Hall, Bob	Capitol	4E.2	Sen. Schwertner, Charles	Capitol	3S.5
Sen. Hancock, Kelly	Capitol	1E.12	Sen. Sparks, Kevin	Extension	E1.810
Sen. Hinojosa, Juan "Chuy"	Capitol	3E.6	Sen. Springer, Drew	Extension	E1.706
Sen. Huffman, Joan	Capitol	1E.15	Sen. West, Royce	Capitol	1E.5
Sen. Hughes, Bryan	Capitol	3E.8	Sen. Whitmire, John	Capitol	1E.13
Sen. Johnson, Nathan	Capitol	3E.10	Sen. Zaffirini, Judith	Capitol	1E.14
Sen. King, Phil	Capitol	GE.5			

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Chamber	Capitol	2W.5	House Research	Extension	E2.180
House Gallery	Capitol	3W.2	House Sergeant At Arms	Capitol	2W.7
Speaker of the House	Capitol	2W.13	Speaker's Committee Room	Capitol	2W.6
Chief of Staff	Capitol	2W.27	Speaker's Conference Room	Capitol	2W.15
Chief Clerk	Capitol	2W.29	Center Conference Room	Capitol	3W.9

CONTACT ELECTED OFFICIALS

TEXAS CAPITOL BUILDING DIRECTORY

REPRESENTATIVES OFFICES

Rep. Allen, Alma A.	Capitol	4N.10	Rep. Guillen, Ryan	Capitol	3N.6
Rep. Allison, Steve	Extension	E2.322	Rep. Harless, Sam	Extension	E2.810
Rep. Anchía, Rafael	Capitol	1N.5	Rep. Harris, Caroline	Extension	E1.312
Rep. Anderson, Charles "Doc"	Capitol	1N.8	Rep. Harris, Cody	Extension	E2.606
Rep. Ashby, Trent	Extension	E2.806	Rep. Harrison, Brian	Extension	E2.704
Rep. Bailes, Ernest	Extension	E2.818	Rep. Hayes, Richard	Extension	E2.302
Rep. Bell, Jr., Cecil	Extension	E2.708	Rep. Hefner, Cole	Extension	E2.718
Rep. Bell, Keith	Extension	E2.410	Rep. Hernandez, Ana	Capitol	1W.11
Rep. Bernal, Diego M.	Extension	E1.508	Rep. Herrero, Abel	Capitol	3S.2
Rep. Bhojani, Salman	Extension	E2.314	Rep. Hinojosa, Gina	Extension	E2.214
Rep. Bonnen, Greg	Extension	E2.502	Rep. Holland, Justin	Extension	E2.608
Rep. Bowers, Rhetta Andrews	Extension	E2.906	Rep. Howard, Donna	Capitol	GW.11
Rep. Bryant, John	Capitol	4N.6	Rep. Hull, Lacey	Extension	E1.322
Rep. Buckley, Brad	Extension	E1.324	Rep. Hunter, Todd	Capitol	1W.5
Rep. Bucy III, John H.	Extension	E2.306	Rep. Isaac, Carrie	Extension	E2.702
Rep. Bumgarner, Benjamin	Extension	E1.418	Rep. Jetton, Jacey	Extension	E1.220
Rep. Burns, DeWayne	Extension	E2.604	Rep. Johnson, Ann	Extension	E2.412
Rep. Burrows, Dustin	Extension	E2.610	Rep. Johnson, Jarvis	Extension	E2.904
Rep. Button, Angie Chen	Capitol	GW.7	Rep. Johnson, Julie	Extension	E2.310
Rep. Cain, Briscoe	Extension	E2.706	Rep. Jones, Jolanda "Jo"	Extension	E1.424
Rep. Campos, Elizabeth "Liz"	Extension	E1.306	Rep. Jones, Venton	Extension	E2.404
Rep. Canales, Terry	Capitol	4S.4	Rep. Kacal, Kyle	Capitol	GS.6
Rep. Capriglione, Giovanni	Extension	E1.506	Rep. King, Ken	Extension	E2.808
Rep. Clardy, Travis	Capitol	GW.6	Rep. King, Tracy O.	Capitol	GW.16
Rep. Cole, Sheryl	Extension	E2.910	Rep. Kitzman, Stan	Extension	E2.716
Rep. Collier, Nicole	Capitol	4S.6	Rep. Klick, Stephanie	Extension	E2.504
Rep. Cook, David	Extension	E1.402	Rep. Kuempel, John	Capitol	GW.17
Rep. Cortez, Philip	Capitol	GW.4	Rep. Lalani, Suleman	Extension	E1.512
Rep. Craddick, Tom	Capitol	1W.9	Rep. Lambert, Stan	Extension	E2.814
Rep. Cunningham, Charles	Extension	E2.402	Rep. Landgraf, Brooks	Extension	E2.602
Rep. Darby, Drew	Capitol	GW.12	Rep. Leach, Jeff	Capitol	GN.11
Rep. Davis, Yvonne	Capitol	4N.9	Rep. Leo-Wilson, Terri	Extension	E2.720
Rep. Dean, Jay	Extension	E2.422	Rep. Longoria, Oscar	Capitol	4N.4
Rep. DeAyala, Mano	Extension	E2.416	Rep. Lopez, Janie	Extension	E2.802
Rep. Dorazio, Mark	Extension	E1.416	Rep. Lopez, Ray	Extension	E1.422
Rep. Dutton, Jr., Harold V.	Capitol	3N.5	Rep. Lozano, J. M.	Capitol	1W.4
Rep. Flores, Lulu	Extension	E2.312	Rep. Lujan, John	Extension	E2.812
Rep. Frank, James	Capitol	4S.2	Rep. Manuel, Christian	Extension	E2.320
Rep. Frazier, Frederick	Extension	E1.412	Rep. Martinez, Armando "Mando"	Capitol	1N.10
Rep. Gámez, Erin	Extension	E2.420	Rep. Martinez Fischer, Trey	Capitol	4S.5
Rep. Garcia, Josey	Extension	E2.304	Rep. Metcalf, Will	Capitol	1N.7
Rep. Gates, Gary	Extension	E2.506	Rep. Meyer, Morgan	Capitol	GN.12
Rep. Gerdes, Stan	Extension	E2.816	Rep. Meza, Terry	Extension	E1.204
Rep. Geren, Charlie	Capitol	GW.15	Rep. Moody, Joe	Capitol	GW.18
Rep. Gervin-Hawkins, Barbara	Extension	E1.302	Rep. Morales, Christina	Extension	E1.510
Rep. Goldman, Craig	Extension	E2.510	Rep. Morales, Eddie	Extension	E1.212
Rep. González, Jessica	Extension	E2.212	Rep. Morales Shaw, Penny	Extension	E1.406
Rep. González, Mary E.	Extension	E1.504	Rep. Morrison, Geanie W.	Capitol	1W.6
Rep. Goodwin, Vikki	Extension	E2.208	Rep. Muñoz, Jr., Sergio	Capitol	1W.3
Rep. Guerra, R. D. "Bobby"	Capitol	GN.7	Rep. Murr, Andrew S.	Extension	E1.308

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Rep. Ordaz, Claudia	Extension E2.414
Rep. Orr, Angelia	Extension E1.218
Rep. Ortega, Evelina "Lina"	Extension E2.204
Rep. Patterson, Jared	Extension E1.310
Rep. Paul, Dennis	Capitol GN.10
Rep. Perez, Mary Ann	Extension E2.406
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Rep. Price, Four	Capitol 1N.9
Rep. Ramos, Ana-Maria	Extension E2.318
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Rep. Thompson, Senfronia	Capitol 3S.6
Rep. Tinderholt, Tony	Extension E1.420
Rep. Toth, Steve	Extension E1.404
Rep. Troxclair, Ellen	Extension E1.208
Rep. Turner, Chris	Capitol 4N.3
Rep. VanDeaver, Gary	Extension E1.304
Rep. Vasut, Cody	Extension E2.712
Rep. Vo, Hubert	Capitol 4N.8
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Rep. Wilson, Terry M.	Extension E2.722
Rep. Wu, Gene	Capitol GW.8
Rep. Zwiener, Erin	Extension E2.908

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Business & Industry	Extension E2.128
Calendars	Extension E2.148
Corrections	Extension E2.110
County Affairs	Extension E2.130
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Health Care Reform, Select	Extension E2.142
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Homeland Security & Public Safety	Extension E2.146
House Administration	Extension E2.140
Human Services	Extension E2.152
Insurance	Extension E2.150
International Relations & Economic Development	Extension E2.118
Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence	Extension E2.120
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Ways & Means	Extension E2.116
Youth Health & Safety, Select	Extension E2.132

For concerns and information on accommodations for people with disabilities, please contact:
 • Senate ADA Coordinator: Deticia Sams 512.463.0400
 • House ADA Coordinator: Steven Adrian 512.463.0865

