



50 YEARS

SERVING TEXAS

CHILDREN AND
FAMILIES





50 YEARS OF US





50 YEARS



IN THE FOLD





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TEXAS



Fifty Years in the Fold

In 1975, a group of childcare and adoption agencies gathered a grassroots effort to strengthen the policy affecting Texas children, youth, and families most. The association quickly became known as one of the strongest advocates for responsible legislation and a symbol of fruitful collaboration.

Fifty years later, the connections that make this network special are deeper, more complex, and more diverse than ever. We are incredibly proud to unite providers, partners, and State decision-makers each day for the diverse needs of children, youth, and families working towards brighter futures. That's our bottom line.

The Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services (the Alliance or TACFS) and the Texas Center for Child and Family Studies (the Center) is continuously working to keep this vibrant, strong, and unified network, bringing more friends into the fold each year.

Changing Gears to T3C

Texas Child-Centered Care, or T3C, is the new foster care rate methodology that Texas legislators, state agencies, and providers are using to define the service continuum and the true costs of care. In shifting to T3C, provider operations are preparing to make substantial improvements to their services and the way they are delivered. The 88th Texas Legislature funded readiness grants which were administered through a partnership between the Center, ACH Child and Family Services (ACH) and the state's single source continuum contractors (SSCCs).

Additionally, the Center has collaborated with ACH, the SSCCs, and Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) in the creation of training and workshops to help support providers on the road to T3C credentialing (which is expected to occur in 2027).

The T3C Readiness Assessment is an anonymous online tool created by the Center that walks providers through the service package requirements, as outlined in a System Blueprint published by Texas DFPS to help assess current readiness. The tool helps providers determine where to focus their efforts toward getting ready to offer specific T3C packages.

169

**Providers have used the
Readiness Assessment tool**



In addition to hosting five readiness workshops, training needs were identified to create a training suite of impactful sessions including:

- Continuous Quality Improvement Lab
- Strengthening Residential Care: Treatment and Program Models
- T3C Office Hours Series (in partnership with Texas DFPS)
- T3C Super Session at TCCAC 2024
- And many more!

Readiness by the Numbers

Grant Awards in FY 2024



\$4,859,674

Operations grants

+ \$868,650

Building grants

\$5,728,324

Readiness grants



ADVOCACY



We're building to something...

Architecture and the Coming Session

The TACFS network is engaged in intricate system engineering on both large and small scales. With a spotlight on the most urgent needs facing children, youth, and families, providers also have a full picture of the issues plaguing the continuum at large. This year, the Alliance joined dozens of key stakeholders in a renewed focus on mental health, our continued commitment to transition-aged youth, and statewide Community Based Care (CBC) rollout.

Guided by the TACFS Board, Advocacy Committee, and members, TACFS policy priorities represent a community-driven system that serves children, youth, and families even better. For the 89th Texas Legislature, our priorities include a fuller continuum of family preservation services, stable insurance coverage for foster care providers, continued statewide rollout of CBC and T3C, and mental health supports for children and families.

Learn more about our Advocacy Day and more about our policy priorities at tacfs.org/89th.

Our Support for Statewide CBC Expansion



Region 3 (Dallas Area)

Connecting Court to Community

A Community Engagement Pilot Project successfully launched in collaboration with the North Texas Foster Care Consortium, the Dallas Child Poverty Action Lab, and the Dallas County Child Protection and Permanency Court. A key part of the project is adding a staff position within the court titled Family Engagement Specialist who serves as a link between the court, advocates, legal representatives, families, and support services. The specialist will work closely with the court to understand and address the needs of youth, caregivers, and families at risk of child removal due to abuse and neglect, as well as those working towards reunification or other permanency goals. The goal of the program is to help individual families access resources they need while identifying gaps in resources to improve community support over time.



Region 7 (Central)

Rare, Brief, and Non-Recurring

In Region 7 there is a cross-sector coordinated effort underway to explore how the region might prepare to implement Community Based Care by taking real action to address the needs of children and families. This collaborative effort (called CBC7) is a partnership between the Center and the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. In addition to several regional convenings to advance CBC implementation, a cohort of community organizations and collaboratives in Region 7 are working on projects seeking to make children's time in foster care rare, brief, and non-recurring.



Across the State

Providers in Region 10 (El Paso) are finding ways to support youth mental and behavioral health needs, supporting grandparents and other kinship caregivers, and keeping children local during foster care stays. Similarly, Fort Bend County in Region 6 (Houston) and Region 11 (the Valley), are actively establishing coalitions to prepare for CBC. These collaborative efforts involve hosting comprehensive discussions to understand the specific needs and opportunities in their communities.

Investing in Mental Health Supports

Mental Health Cohort

Recognizing that children and families engaged with the child welfare system have a unique need for mental and behavioral health services, TACFS recently formalized a Mental Health Cohort. This dedicated body is a group of Alliance members that will serve as a specialized advocacy front in developing and promoting much-needed innovation within health policy and reimbursement matters. A new position, Senior Director of Mental Health Services, was created to serve as lead staff liaising with the Cohort. The cohort is focused on creative solutions and make recommendations for reimbursement shortfalls, the provider network adequacy crisis, service delivery constraints, provider enrollment and compliance challenges, policy innovation, managed care limitations, and more.

SMART Grant

The Center has received the Supporting Mental Health and Resiliency in Texas (SMART) Grant from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to start innovative programs within behavioral health and family preservation. The primary focus of the pilot is in-home diversion from foster care for families at risk of refusal to assume parental responsibility (RAPR). The flagship initiative is Resilient Families, a joint project with CK Family Services, which supports parents facing severe challenges in caring for children aged 3 to 17 with serious mental health needs. Designed for those nearing a breaking point, it provides compassionate guidance, practical resources, peer support from verified treatment-level foster parents, and respite options to stabilize families. Additionally, the Center is exploring piloted diversion services to additional areas across Texas.

The image shows the Texas State Capitol building in Austin, Texas, with its iconic dome and classical architecture. The building is partially obscured by a pattern of small pink dots in the upper left corner of the slide.

ADVOCACY

Paving Roads to Success

Alliance for Our Futures

Created by TACFS and backed by the Selfless Love Foundation, a thought leader on issues facing youth transitioning to adulthood, Alliance for Our Futures, has been on a mission to build Youth Councils across Texas, partnering with provider organizations to create safe spaces for shared activities, learning, and advocacy. These councils give participants the chance to connect with peers, find their voices, and actively influence the systems affecting their lives. In 2024, three more Youth Councils were established in new regions thanks to the

commitment of both the youth and the staff champions who guide each council's journey. This makes seven groups supported by this initiative working toward growing across the state. In addition to the local activities of the council, staff champions meet monthly to connect and compare notes. And youth are invited to virtual workshops using FosterClub's SPARK curriculum with topics like strategic sharing and self-advocacy, and informative townhalls with topics like healthcare, employment, and legal services.



Youth Councils: 2INgage, Bexar County Fostering Educational Success, Our Community, Our Kids, Saint Francis, SJRC Belong, A World for Children, Texas Family Care Network

A Prestigious Invitation: Sharing Youth Workforce Challenges



In 2024, Alberto Trevino III, the Commissioner Representing Labor for the Texas Workforce Commission, invited Alliance for Our Futures staff and youth with lived experience to survey and present on the employment experiences and challenges of youth and young adults with lived foster care experience at his keynote session for the Commission's annual conference. The data from the survey shows that there are opportunities for additional programs that meet modern workforce interests and needs, greater connection and accessibility to programs and supports, and lots of opportunities for partnerships with young people to design programs and services that best meet their needs.

Dale Carnegie Leadership Program



In summer 2024, 13 youth graduated from the Dale Carnegie Leadership Program, Foundations for Success. Made possible by generous support from the Selfless Love Foundation, this leadership training course was offered exclusively to Texas youth with lived experience in foster care.

“Undoubtedly, it's been a life-changing journey, and I'm living proof of its impact.”
- Jack



Birds of a Feather

TACFS is partnering with the organizations that share our values most. We share a passion and a laser focus on youth who wish to be adopted, for kinship families, and for children and youth who wait the longest to find permanency. The foundational programs and services created by these collaborations are what make adoptions possible and can help to sustain them.

Heart Galleries of Texas (HGTX)

This year, 11 Heart Gallery programs have been formally established, showcasing community collaboration and a statewide commitment to youth awaiting permanency statewide. Several Heart Gallery programs were already active in some regions and this vital funding worked to broaden their approaches, implement best practices, and enhance existing efforts. Additionally, the HGTX team has produced robust information about the post-permanency needs of families through a statewide needs assessment, and supported professionals, caregivers, and local Heart Galleries through training and capacity building.

This rapid growth was made possible by collaborations between experienced program providers, grant-awarded organizations stepping up to establish a Heart Gallery in their region, their supportive communities, and the HGTX team.

In a focused approach to improving post-permanency outcomes, \$3.4 million of grant funds were allocated across the 11 regions in addition to two statewide partners. These funds are enhancing Heart Gallery programs and expanding post-permanency services such as therapy, respite, and training.

Partners: Moritz Center for Societal Impact at the Steve Hicks School of Social Work at the University of Texas at Austin, Texas Alliance of Child & Family Services, and the Texas Institute for Child & Family Services



COLLABORATION



Remember TXPOP?

The Texas Permanency Outcomes Practice Model (TXPOP) has been adapted and utilized for the post-permanency phase to train professionals and other supportive adults surrounding an adoption. The TXPOP practice model is a set of strategies that child welfare practitioners can use to assist children and families across the permanency spectrum.

Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption

The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption believes in the adoptability of every child. And their signature program, Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) is an effective and proven approach for achieving permanency for older youth and those with mental health needs. Growing from 29 to 34 recruiters this year, more than 75 children are being served by the WWK model. The Foundation is partnering with the Center to implement a multifaceted approach to scale the WWK program across Texas.

- Children served by the Foundation were 1.7 times more likely to be adopted
- Older children were three times more likely to be adopted
- Children with mental health issues were more than three times more likely to be adopted
- Children with mental health issues were three times more likely to be adopted



COLLABORATION

Reporting Repair

As part of a federal grant partnership led by the University of Texas at Arlington, the Center joined a project to contribute to the development of training modules for university students on Equitable Mandated Reporting. Staff conducted surveys and completed interviews with mandated reporters in various fields. The survey was completed and closed with over 100 responses representing social workers, educators, law enforcement, and healthcare professionals. Armed with knowledge of where the gaps lie, the Center will continue to assist the project Advisory Board in developing training on modules such as consultation with supervisors or colleagues, reporting procedures, and “gray cases” (a situation where there is uncertainty about whether abuse or neglect is present).

Training at the Center

Supervisors Get Certified

The Center and the National Certification Board for Child Welfare Professionals are continuing efforts to credential child welfare supervisors with graduates from Our Community Our Kids (4), 2INgage (5), SJRC Texas | Belong (19), and 15 more sitting for their certifications in December 2024. The fifth cohort begins in Spring 2025 and will include two more SSCCs that encourage the certification for supervisors on staff (making six at the time of publishing). Texas remains the leader in elevating and professionalizing the field of child welfare supervising by offering this certification.



Governor Supports CSEY Workforce Training

There is a small but mighty group of Texas organizations providing direct and intensive therapeutic care to children and youth survivors of commercial sexual exploitation.

This year, six organizations received Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth (CSEY) training and technical assistance from the Center fully funded by the Office of the Governor's focus on eradicating child sex trafficking. Through original trainings and collaborations with partners like My Life My Choice and RTI International, this cohort of professionals and clinicians worked on how to effectively respond to survivors. The Center also worked closely with the Alliance for Freedom, Restoration, and Justice to continue providing a train-the-trainer for child-placing agencies on how to effectively equip foster parents to serve this population.



2024 CSEY Education Provided by the Center

1,714
people

33
trainings

153
clinicians

4,872.5

That's person-hours of training!



EDUCATION

An Umbrella of Family Support

The Texas Family Support Network

In Spring 2024, the Center and Texas Health and Human Services office of Family Support Services (FSS) held the first annual Family Resource Center Summit. Leaders from the National Family Support Network (NFSN), parent leaders, and staff from family resource centers (FRCs) across Texas gathered in Austin for shared learning to elevate the practice of family support. As a part of an ongoing partnership with FSS and the NFSN, the Center provides ongoing training, technical assistance, and support to 22 state-funded FRCs.

The Harvard Kennedy School Government Performance Lab

The Center and six state-funded family resource centers (FRCs) received ten months of coaching and implementation support focused on increasing referral pathways and connecting priority populations to FRCs.

St. David's Foundation

St. David's Foundation provided the Center with a grant to strengthen the Texas Family Support Network. The Center will provide three FRCs with training and technical assistance focused specifically on ensuring community voice and parent leadership as critical components of the FRC model.



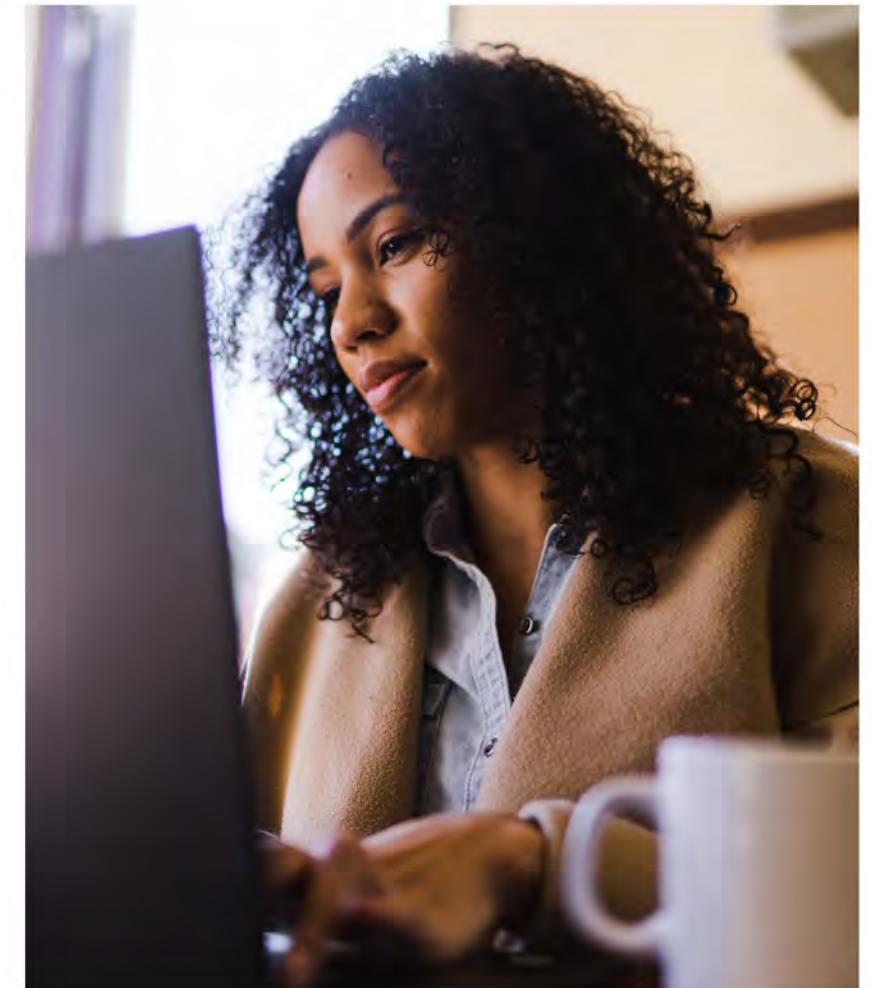
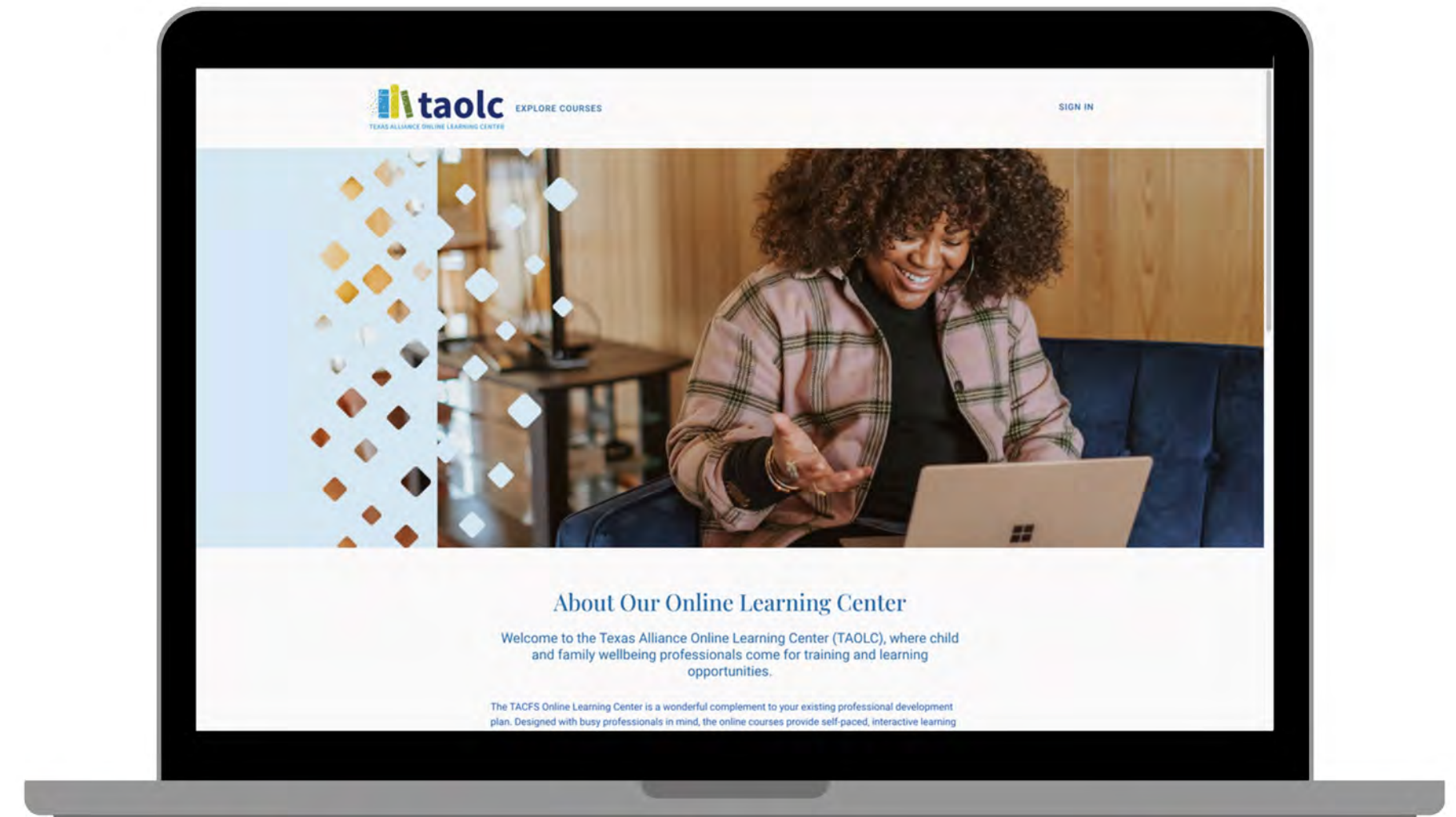
On Demand Training Gets a Refresh

The Texas Alliance Online Learning Center, the Alliance's online learning platform for child and family service providers, had a site facelift and record enrollments in 2024 with popular courses such as Emergency Preparedness, Deep Dive Into Investigations, and Implementing & Embedding a Trauma-Informed Approach.

71%
enrollment increase

3,010
course enrollments

EDUCATION



Breakthrough to Excellence

The Texas Child Care Administrators Conference (TCCAC), hosted by the Center, continues to grow and remains the largest professional development opportunity for child welfare providers in the country. Residential Child Care Administrators, Child Placing Agency Administrators, attorneys, and clinical professionals from all over the state attend TCCAC to earn many of the continued education credits they will need to maintain their certifications.

1,547
Attendees

110
Presenters

49
Sessions



EDUCATION

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