

2022-2025
TCCWB
Strategic
Plan



Created by
The Bush School of Government and Public Service Capstone
at Texas A&M University





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Mission

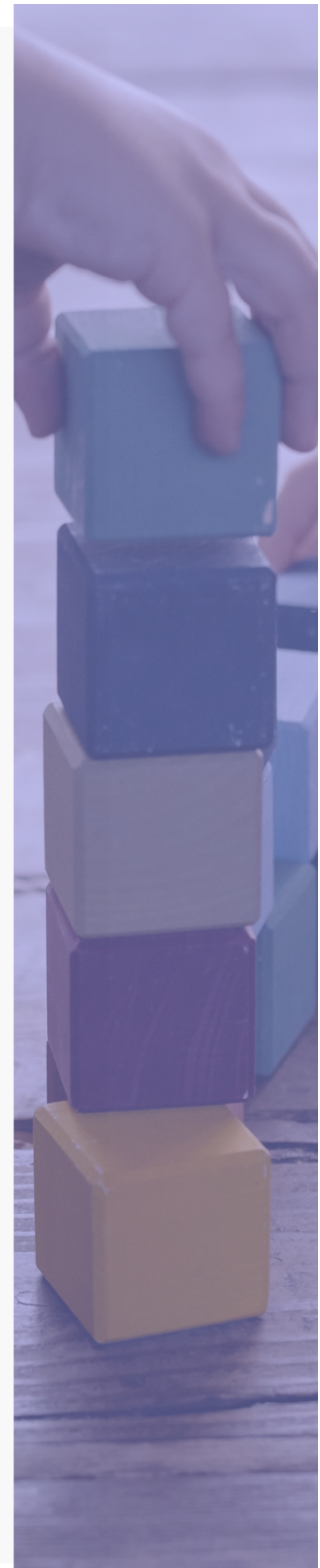
Our capstone team worked with the TCCWB to rewrite their mission statement and ensure it accurately portrayed the organization's activities. Multiple activities and thought exercises that were pulled from strategic planning literature, like Bryson and Alston's *Creating Your Strategic Plan* and La Piana and Mendes Campos' *The Nonprofit Strategy Revolution*, were utilized during focus groups to help the Texas Council create a revised mission statement that more accurately reflects the organization's activities and goals. The following mission statement is proposed as a recommendation for the Texas Council to adopt, as it accurately reflects the organization's activities. The last part of the mission statement was reframed by the capstone group in the affirmative to evoke a positive tone that more accurately reflects the impactful work the TCCWB is doing in the Texas child welfare system.

We assist Texas Child Welfare Boards in serving their communities by providing education and training, advocating for child welfare policies, and supporting a statewide network of volunteers and organizations creating a healthy child welfare system.

Vision

Similar to the Mission Statement, our team worked with the TCCWB's Executive Committee to create the vision statement below. An activity was conducted to spark ideas about the organization's future and effectively translate those ideas into the organization's vision statement below.

Empowering Child Welfare Boards to be successful by providing education and advocacy, thus promoting unity to ensure that all Texas children are safe and protected.





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**Bush School of Government
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Executive Summary



Executive Summary

The Bush School of Government and Public Service partnered with the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards (TCCWB) in the 2021-2022 academic school year to equip them with strategic direction, refine their value proposition, and improve their operational effectiveness. This nonprofit organization assists County Child Welfare Boards (CWBs) in coordinating local funding and resources for foster families and youth. The Texas Council supports these local efforts across the state by providing training, awareness, and education to CWBs operating in the Texas child welfare system. Using the findings from stakeholder input, a strategic plan was developed to help the Texas Council achieve its mission of supporting a statewide network of volunteers and organizations concerned with child abuse and neglect. With the ongoing privatization of Texas' foster care system and emerging challenges with the current structure of the organization, it is essential to have a strategic plan to fortify their capacity to champion the wellbeing of all children in our state. To this end, this strategic plan has been developed to align with the TCCWB's mission and further its goals.

Through our analysis, we have identified four areas of opportunity that we recommend the Texas Council prioritizes to improve their services to CWBs in communities across the state:



1. Clarifying and streamlining the roles and responsibilities of TCCWB members within the organizational structure.

The various CWBs and Regional Councils have varying structures, creating challenges for the TCCWB. Consequently, the expectations between individual CWBs and the TCCWB have become unclear and complex. In turn, member roles and purposes at the regional and state level are blurred. Additionally, there are discrepancies between the amount of training and advocacy the county boards and Regional Councils expect from the TCCWB and what they are currently receiving.



2. Refocusing the organization's mission and associated goals to better encompass the full picture of TCCWB's main objectives.

Along with stakeholder input, our group revised the TCCWB's goals and mission statement, given that neither are currently in line with their objective of providing resources to Regional Councils and county boards that support foster children.



Establishing more cohesive communication methods to relay information optimally.

The TCCWB's relationship with Regional Councils and county boards can be restructured to provide an optimal level of communication. State and local boards share a strong desire for more communication between the TCCWB and state/local boards. Additionally, they wish for up-to-date briefings on what is currently happening across state CWBs and the TCCWB more broadly, as the current communication methods make it difficult to distribute resources among the different regions in Texas adequately.



Improving funding source stability and diversity.


Finally, establishing stable and diverse funding streams is crucial for the TCCWB to fulfill the role of supporting Regional Councils and Child Welfare Boards. The TCCWB should consider recruiting a fundraising professional that helps develop these funding sources, which would improve the programs and influence of the TCCWB.

Purpose & Process

Our capstone's purpose is to help the TCCWB more successfully fulfill their mission of supporting a statewide network of child advocacy volunteers by creating a strategic plan. Strategic planning is a deeply collaborative process that is based on stakeholder feedback to guide "what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it" (Bryson and Alston, 2011). The strategic plan gives the organization's leadership the ability to understand changes and challenges facing the organization, clarify goals and a vision for the future, and increase the value it delivers to its members and other stakeholders.

This information is crucial right now because the TCCWB has an opportunity to make a statewide impact in Texas foster care as the system transitions to a privatized model. The changing environment may be confusing and challenging for many stakeholders. As DFPS begins to take a backseat to private and nonprofit organizations, the TCCWB has the chance to provide leadership to regional councils and county child welfare boards by informing them of how to adapt to these changes so the children they serve are not negatively impacted.

To conduct the strategic planning process, we collected qualitative data through interviews and focus groups to get a holistic understanding of the TCCWB, its stakeholders, and its environment. The background information we gathered through focus groups at the September meeting framed the development of our interview questions. Through 22 one-on-one interviews of members and external stakeholders, we gathered information on respondents' relationships to and knowledge of the TCCWB and the Texas child welfare system



in general, as well as respondents' ideas of how the TCCWB could provide further value to stakeholders. We conducted two focus group sessions with the TCCWB's Executive Committee to focus on strategic-level objectives, refine the organization's mission and vision statements, and get feedback on preliminary recommendations. At the February meeting, we conducted focus groups with each of the TCCWB's committees to set operational-level goals that align with the strategic direction of the TCCWB, which is critical in a strategic planning process (Aguinis, 2018). We then used the findings from our focus groups and coded interview data to develop our final recommendations and deliverables. In total, our process took our group of ten students a collective 3227.75 hours from August 2021 through the end of April 2022.

Stakeholder Analysis

We developed a chart that identifies the TCCWB's major stakeholders; their evaluation of the TCCWB's performance, Regional Councils, and County Child Welfare Boards (where applicable); and stakeholder needs from the TCCWB. This stakeholder analysis is useful for identifying groups that have an interest in the work of the TCCWB and how they evaluate the organization's performance.

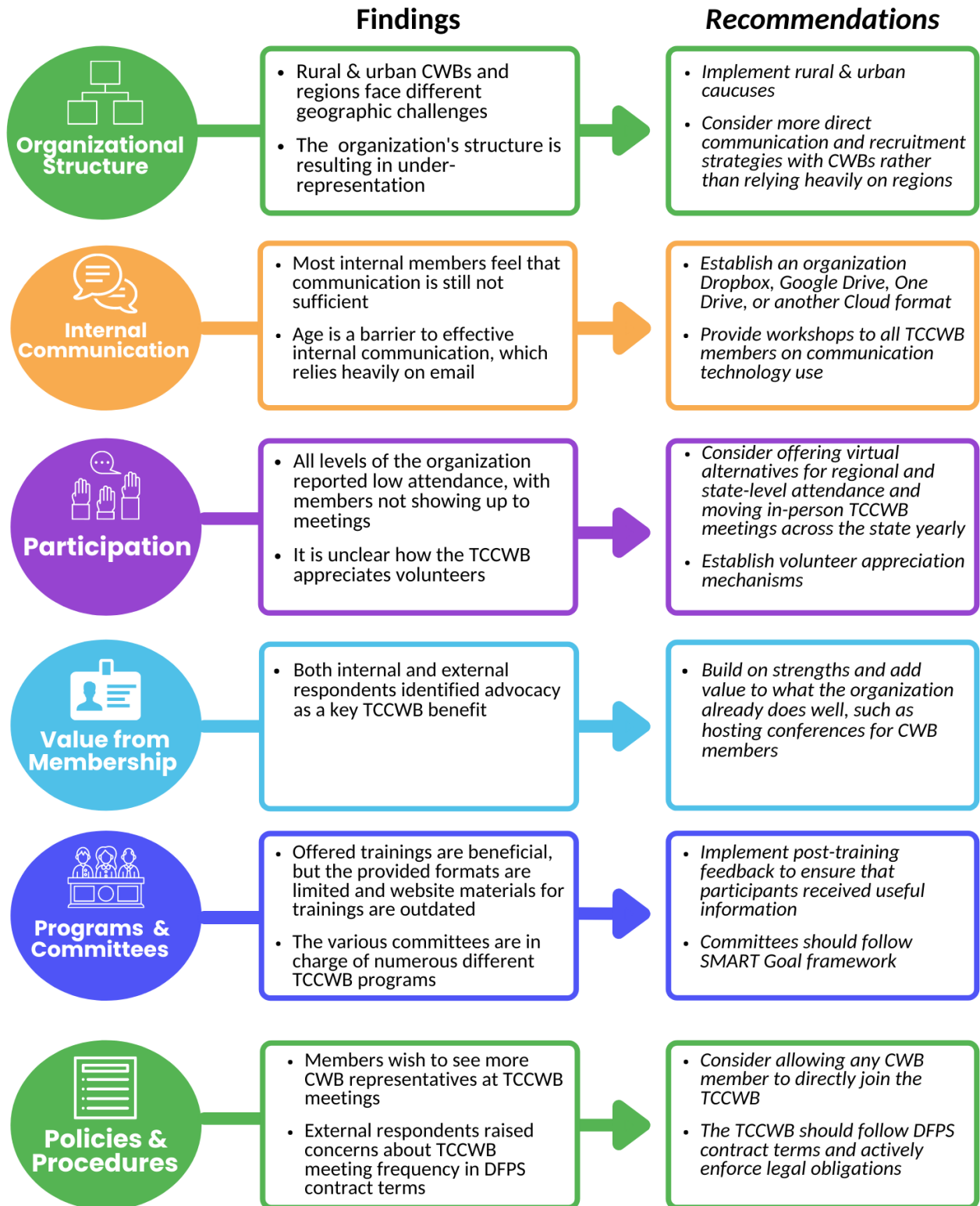
Our team has executed the following analyses and deliverables throughout the strategic planning process:

- Organizational Chart
- Board Checklist
- Environmental Analysis
- SWOT Analysis
- TCCWB Committee SMART Goals
- Objectives & Accountability Handouts
- Implementation Plan
- Communication Plan
- Logic Model
- Outreach Plan
- Funder Infographic
- Next Steps
- Performance Indicators
- Guide to Prepare for an Updated Plan

Findings and Recommendations

We analyze the findings from our research and provide recommendations. The results are divided into two categories: internal and external orientation. We describe findings and recommendations pertaining to TCCWB's internal activities under the internal orientation section. Findings and recommendations pertaining to external activities of TCCWB are under the external orientation section.

Internal Orientation Findings & Recommendations





Internal Orientation Findings & Recommendations

Organizational Structure and Status


Our findings indicate that rural and urban CWBs and regions face different challenges and require unique solutions for their geographic areas of the state. Internal stakeholders (TCCWB members) stated that they are satisfied with the current TCCWB leadership, their input is heard at TCCWB meetings, and the current organizational structure is adequate but could be improved. We discovered that the TCCWB's current organizational structure—relying on regions to pass information to CWBs and appoint members—causes communication breakdowns and an under-representation throughout all levels of the organization. Finally, some respondents worry that the TCCWB's mission and purpose are too broad. Based on these findings, we recommend that the Texas Council form rural and urban caucuses, eliminate regional councils as a point of contact for CWBs, and standardize regional bylaws as well as policies and procedures. Finally, CWB members should be able to directly apply for membership in the TCCWB.

Internal Communication

Some of the internal members of the TCCWB noted a significant improvement in overall communication. They specifically noted that the communication from leadership has increased over the last few years, resulting in an increase in overall communication. At the same time, our findings suggest most of the internal members feel that the communication between regions and/or TCCWB is broken and ineffective. Our findings suggest that age seems to be a barrier to effective internal communication that relies heavily on email. It is difficult for the members to adapt to newer technologies, and while we understand these difficulties, it is challenging to run an organization of this scale without increased technology. Therefore, our recommendation is that the Texas Council communicate proposed technological changes with members in advance and in-person when possible, with the ultimate goal of establishing an organization Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox, or another Cloud storage format. Also, it would be helpful to solicit pro bono support from a marketing firm or to recruit a volunteer who could specialize full-time on communications.

Participation

All levels of the organization reported low attendance, with members not showing up to meetings. At the county level, low attendance prevents CWBs from forming quorums and thus holding meetings. This lack of attendance causes regional meetings to be canceled and communication breakdowns from the TCCWB to the CWBs. Finally, lower levels of the



organization are not represented at the state and regional levels due to low attendance and participation. We recommend that the Texas Council consider offering virtual alternatives for regional and state-level attendance, and moving in-person TCCWB meetings across the state each year.

Value from Membership

Most internal respondents were pleased with their TCCWB experience; however, opinions on the TCCWB's value to external stakeholders varied. Both internal and external respondents identified advocacy as a key TCCWB benefit. We put forth the idea that the TCCWB develop performance metrics to demonstrate impact so the TCCWB can clearly communicate its value to members and external stakeholders. Further, we recommend the TCCWB build on its strengths and add value to what it already does well, such as hosting conferences for CWB members.

Programs & Committees

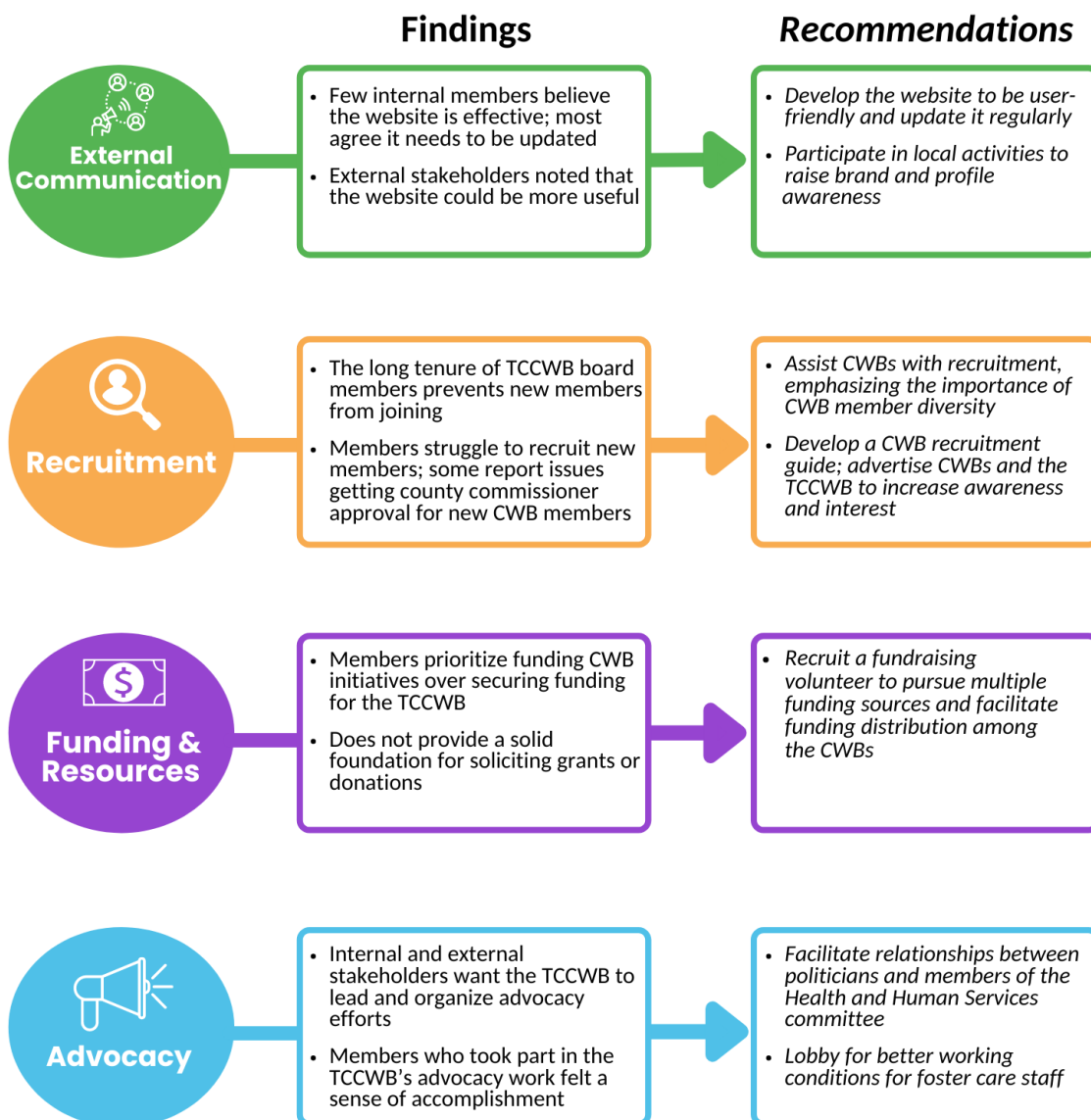
The TCCWB also provides values to its members and external stakeholders through its programs, which are overseen by its internal committees. However, many external respondents and CWBs not affiliated with the TCCWB had a low awareness of the TCCWB's programs. The Texas Council should begin collecting information about the impact of its programs to attract funding to further improve the reach and impact of these programs. More detailed findings and recommendations for each committee can be found in the main document.

We recommend that the bulk of committee work should be done outside of TCCWB meetings, and each committee should have different monthly meeting times or dates. We believe this will allow members to fully participate with different committees and increase the total amount of work accomplished, which will further improve the TCCWB's programs.

Policies and Procedures

Many internal respondents expressed concern about the TCCWB's current onboarding process and wished to see more CWB representatives at TCCWB meetings. Therefore, we suggest regions and county boards change procedures to allow county members who are not county board presidents or executives to join the TCCWB. The TCCWB should also focus on the critical function of their website and clearly define who is responsible for updating and maintaining it so that everyone can find current information. Some external respondents raised the issue of TCCWB meeting frequency, so we recommend that the TCCWB follow the DFPS contract terms and actively enforce the legal obligations (see [Mandate Checklist](#)) for the CWBs.

External Orientation Findings & Recommendations





External Orientation Findings & Recommendations

External Communication

Our findings suggest mixed responses regarding the external communication efforts of TCCWB. While a few internal members believe that the TCCWB's website is great and full of resources, most agree that the website needs to be updated more regularly and is not very helpful. External stakeholders interviewed also noted that they find the website, marketing materials, and outreach strategies of the TCCWB to not be very useful for their use. Participants suggested that the Council should do targeted marketing, conduct workshops to train internal members about various marketing tools available, and have a website that is regularly updated and is user-friendly. We also recommend that the TCCWB participate in local activities to raise brand and profile awareness.

Recruitment

While many of our respondents said the TCCWB's demographic makeup is adequate, many also said the board's average age is too high and that the board is not ethnically diverse as they would like. We discovered that the long tenure of TCCWB board members prevents new members from joining and bringing new ideas to the table. Finally, we discovered that members at all levels struggle to recruit new members. Both the CWB and the TCCWB are affected. Also, some internal members report issues getting county commissioner approval for new CWB members. These issues include CWBs having no say in who county commissioners appoint to their boards, or county commissioners not confirming new members specifically selected by CWBs to serve on said boards. We recommend the TCCWB assist CWBs with recruitment, emphasizing the importance of CWB member diversity. Develop a CWB recruitment guide, and advertise CWBs and the TCCWB to increase awareness and interest. Possibly recruit directly from CWBs (see [Organizational Structure and Status](#)) and possibly implement term limits for TCCWB membership.

Funding and Resources

We discovered two major issues affecting TCCWB funding. Members prioritize funding CWB initiatives over securing funding for the TCCWB. The TCCWB did not provide a solid base for soliciting grants or donations. We advise doing targeted volunteer recruitment of an individual with fundraising experience to help pursue multiple funding sources and facilitate funding allocation among the CWBs as a short-term strategy. However, considering the long-term development, we advise recruiting a fundraising professional in order to build up a

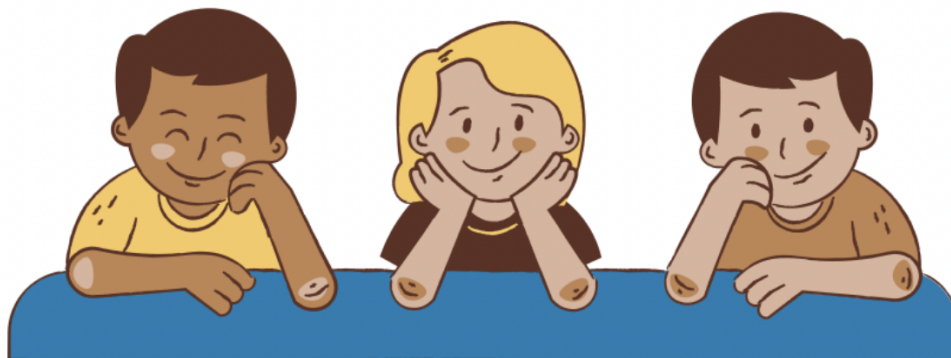
robust funding foundation. The TCCWB must also be aware of the funding challenges posed by the changing environment of the Texas foster care system.

Advocacy

Members who took part in the TCCWB's advocacy work felt a sense of accomplishment. Both internal and external stakeholders wanted the TCCWB to lead and organize advocacy efforts. We determined that the TCCWB is in the best position to communicate with the DFPS and the CWBs. In this area, we believe the TCCWB can help DFPS and local CWBs by advocating for foster care services. Facilitating ties with politicians and members of the Health and Human Services (HHS) committee would further assist the TCCWB's reputation and position in advocating for foster care services. We also urge the TCCWB to lobby for better working conditions for foster care staff.

Conclusion

The work of our capstone has been focused on enhancing the capacity of the TCCWB to achieve its mission. This strategic plan has been formulated to provide opportunities and directions for the organization to overcome current obstacles and pursue positive growth. Obstacles such as the complex organizational structure, mission, and associated goals that do not capture a complete picture of the TCCWB's main objectives, inefficient communication methods across the various levels of the organization, and minimal resources for funding have hindered the organization's growth. Thus, we have tailored a set of tools and approaches within this strategic plan to allow the TCCWB to build upon its opportunities. The information provided will enable the organization to develop its structure, mission and goals, communication, and funding. Our capstone has devised a strategic plan that accurately addresses the needs of the TCCWB in its effort to support the local and regional councils.





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**Bush School of Government
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Introduction





Introduction

For the past year, our capstone group has been working on creating this strategic plan to improve the capacity of the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards (TCCWB) to achieve its mission of supporting a statewide network of youth advocacy volunteers. This is a critical project for the TCCWB as the organization seeks to aid local child welfare boards (CWBs) by providing greater resources for children in the Texas child welfare system. This is an especially crucial project at this time as Texas shifts toward a privatized model of foster care. As the traditional model of foster care in which DFPS provides all services with support from CWBs and, by extension, the TCCWB, slowly disappears, the TCCWB must assert itself within Texas' new foster care system and demonstrate value. The TCCWB must have the necessary tools in place to provide the best possible support as they are key in assisting the boards that directly support youth in the foster care system. Furthermore, this strategic plan includes tools for improving internal and external communication, information on how to revitalize organizational membership and involvement, resources for strengthening financial relationships, and resources for increasing social media presence. We created this strategic plan by carefully collecting and analyzing data gathered through interviews, focus groups with internal and external members, and a SWOT analysis. As you will find in the results section of the strategic plan, we have defined four main areas for the Texas Council's consideration. Prioritizing these four areas will support the TCCWB in improving their service to CWBs in communities across the state:

1. A complex organizational structure that lacks clear roles and responsibilities.
2. A mission and associated goals that do not encompass the full picture of the TCCWB's main objectives.
3. Communication methods that do not seem to relay information throughout the organization adequately.
4. Improving funding source stability and diversity.

Our work focuses on enhancing the capacity of the TCCWB to achieve its mission and better support Regional Councils and county child welfare boards across Texas. These resources and steps provided throughout the strategic plan are a comprehensive toolset for the TCCWB. After implementing several solutions to strategic issues identified in this strategic plan, the TCCWB can consider establishing performance indicators for each of its programs and activities. Upkeeping the strategic goals and following the strategic plan will ensure that the organization can continue to fulfill its mission and support Regional Councils and county child welfare boards.



Purpose

The foster care system responds to the needs of at-risk children and their families. Assistance can range from housing relocation to counseling in the home. However, social variables such as increased poverty rates, homelessness, educational disparities, mental health issues, housing instability, and racism have all led to obstacles in the foster care system (Chipungu & Bent-Goodley, 2004). That is why it is critical that the TCCWB has the tools in place to support children in the child welfare system.

Our capstone's goal was to improve the capacity of the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards (TCCWB) to aid their mission of supporting a statewide network of child advocacy volunteers through the creation of a strategic plan. Because the child welfare system is constantly changing, nonprofit organizations need to evolve to meet changing external demands (Bryson & Alston, 2011). Budget and funding changes, staff turnover, membership decline, legal mandates, legislative demands and social issues require organizations to effectively and efficiently manage their operations. Strategic plans offer a multi-year plan that guide the organization's direction. "Strategic planning is a deliberate, disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is, what it does, and why it does it" (Bryson & Alston, 2011, p. 3). The strategic plan provides the organization's leadership with tools to enhance their internal and external communication, create tools to revitalize organizational membership and participation, explore ways to improve funding, and increase external awareness through advertising to the broader public and potential partners. We have conducted multiple assessments, interviews, activities, and focus groups to deliver guidance for the organization and its leadership in the form of a strategic plan. An important aspect of the strategic planning process has been the careful collection and analysis of data and research collected through interviews and focus groups with internal and external members.

To properly develop a strategic plan for the TCCWB, our group conducted two types of data collection to fully understand the organization, its members, and its goal. First, we conducted one-on-one interviews with members of the TCCWB, Regional Councils, Local Child Welfare Boards, County Commissioners, Judges, members of the Texas Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS), and other external stakeholders. The purpose of these individual interviews was to collect sufficient data about the organization to guide our recommendations and findings. Focus groups were then conducted with the TCCWB Executive Council and the general members of the TCCWB to gain subsequent information and inform our final recommendations. Through these data collection methods and previous literature reviews, our group was able to compile our findings into a strategic plan that will aid the TCCWB in their ability to meet their mission.




Process

Throughout this project, we collaborated with the TCCWB and had support and guidance from our professor, Dr. Robichau. In the fall semester, we began the process of finding and analyzing best practices to integrate knowledge in the context of an applied field project. For our group, in particular, this project aimed to carry out the strategic planning process for a child welfare nonprofit organization. After learning more about our client and establishing team dynamics and project management tools, we identified a primary research question or problem through our Scope of Work Memo. This part of our process was also facilitated by our preliminary data collection from our first meeting with our client in September 2021.

We then synthesized a body of child welfare and strategic planning literature through working papers, reading reviews, and analysis papers written in the first half of the semester. The central contextualizing activity included each member writing an issue paper in the second half and then compiling those into a comprehensive literature review that developed the group's expertise of the child welfare system in the U.S. and the strategic planning process for nonprofit organizations. Collectively, the group then selected an appropriate research design to address the research problem identified and applied those methods towards identifying and gathering the necessary, appropriate data. We ended the fall semester by writing an interim report and giving a presentation to both our peers at the Bush School and to our client. At the end of the fall semester, we began our data collection process, which meant reaching out to both external and internal stakeholders of the TCCWB and scheduling and completing our Zoom interviews to gather more detailed information about organizational challenges faced.

This interview process consisted of conducting individual interviews using two distinct interview protocols, one specifically tailored to internal TCCWB stakeholders and one tailored to external stakeholders. For both groups, we collected data on participant demographics, participants' relation to and familiarity with the TCCWB, and the amount of time each participant has been involved with the TCCWB and the Texas child welfare system. Internal stakeholders, including county-level CWB members, Regional Councils members, and members of the TCCWB itself, provided data on the current state of the TCCWB, including the policies and procedures, organizational structure, and demographic makeup for all three levels of CWBs, the current communication methods of the organization, the TCCWB's past and present advocacy activities, and the overall value that internal participants received from their TCCWB membership. External stakeholders, including Texas Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS) personnel, members of various County Commissioner's Courts and their staff, and outside nonprofit partners, provided data on the TCCWB's relationship with their organizations. This data highlighted the TCCWB's external communication strategies and communication programs such as newsletters, social media, the TCCWB's website, and the current issues facing



Texas's child welfare system. County Commissioners Court participants were asked questions directly associated with their county's CWB. These questions included the value their county gains from having a CWB, how CWB members are chosen, the information shared between the court and the CWB, and the amount of support given to their county's CWB either from within the county government or outside organizations.

In the spring semester, we concluded our data collection stage by wrapping up our interviews, preparing their transcripts, and carrying out our first focus group with the TCCWB's Executive Board. This first focus group was intended to review the organization's mission statement, perform a SWOT analysis, and ask some of our group's questions for the Executive Board. Later on, towards the end of February 2022, our research team took the lead in developing a data analysis protocol, familiarizing themselves with our data analysis software, NVivo, and analyzing the data from those interviews. That same month, we also met with the Council at their annual meeting in Austin, Texas for the second time. During that meeting, we centered our efforts on creating committee-specific SMART goals, discussing the importance of accountability, breaking up those goals, and asking questions to each of their five committees.

We then moved on to write a technical report that summarized our interview data characteristics and presented our research findings. While we began the process of dividing up each of the components that would go into the final strategic plan and establishing deadlines early on in the semester, all members of the group began more actively putting together their assigned sections in early March. On March 25th, we had our final meeting with the Executive Board to revisit their mission statement and discuss the need for a more specific breakdown of their mission for funders, create a TCCWB vision statement and theory of change, ask issue-specific questions, and receive feedback on a few components of our strategic plan. The following week, at the beginning of April, we began writing our final report, putting together our strategic plan, and ensuring that it was visually appealing, cohesive, and usable. Finally, we presented our final results and product to our peers and the TCCWB at the end of the month. In total, our process took our group of 10 students a collective 3227.75 hours from August 2021 through the end of April 2022. **Figure A** below summarizes the full process for completing our final product below.



Figure A: Project Process



Environmental Analysis

This environmental analysis aims to examine critical external factors that impact the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards and suggest how the Texas Council can adapt to the changing landscape.

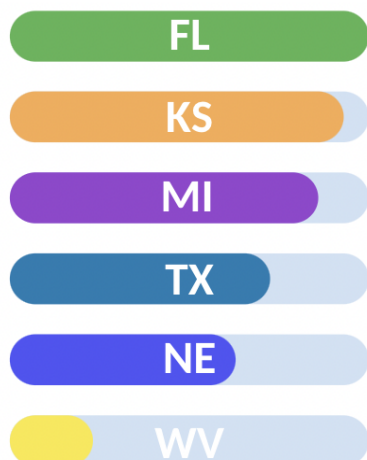
To make the biggest possible impact in the foster care system, the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards must have a strong understanding of its external environment. The following **environmental analysis** will briefly explore some systemic negative outcomes in the foster care system, followed by a discussion of the privatized model of foster care as a solution to these outcomes. Most importantly, for the future of the TCCWB, the effects of transitioning from a traditional foster care system model to a hybrid foster care model are discussed. This transition emphasizes greater collaboration between the private and public sectors in providing services to foster care stakeholders.

The foster care system answers the call of vulnerable children and families who need assistance. However, societal factors such as higher poverty rates, homelessness, gaps in educational attainment, mental health problems, housing instability, and racism have contributed to challenges in the foster care system (Deutsch et al., 2015; Gypen et al., 2017; Chipungu & Bent-Goodley, 2004). Further compounding the system’s adverse effects, children of color are overrepresented in the foster care system and therefore experience an increased number of negative outcomes (Dettlaff & Boyd, 2020; Huggins-Hoyt et al., 2019).


Privatization as a Solution

The Move to Privatization

Figure B: State Privatization Comparison



Throughout the US, states have begun to move toward a model of privatized foster care, or “community-based care” (CBC), to address some of the shortcomings of the public foster care system, as well as to capitalize upon cost-savings that large private firms may provide (Eatough, 2017; Steen & Smith, 2012; Yampolskaya et al., 2004). **Figure B** compares how privatized six different states’ foster care systems have become. Both Florida and Kansas were early adopters of the lead agency model, a form of privatized foster care, and have since wholly privatized their systems.




While these states may be considered leaders in the field today, it is worth noting that it has taken upwards of twenty years to reach this point (Kirk, 2018). Texas is now privatizing replicating the Florida and Kansas models, moving one region at a time, with Regions 1, 2, 3b, and 8b currently in various stages of the privatization process. As traditional public foster care agencies begin to assume supporting roles in many states, including Texas, it will be necessary for the TCCWB to adapt to the new environment to remain competitive for government funding. The Texas Council should keep a close eye on each region as it privatizes to understand this new system's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

The Effects of Privatization

From an administrative point of view, large-scale privatization appeals to Texas legislators compared to the expensive and complicated state-run system. In the private model, service providers within the foster care system engage in the free market and should be driven to improve their services (Eatough, 2017; Steen & Smith, 2011). Legislators and advocates for privatization believe that competition between service providers will improve the quality and efficiency of care (Steen & Smith, 2011). In addition, financial incentives in contracts made with federal, state, and local entities incentivize private agencies to make more rapid matches of children to foster parents (Deutsch et al., 2017).

While this approach seems as though it would improve the current state of the foster care system by encouraging agencies to provide the best services to the most youth possible, the opponents of the privatization movement contend that the human services market (including foster care) cannot be defined by conventional metrics such as efficiency, particularly when the number of potential service providers is low, as would be the case in rural areas of Texas (Steen & Smith 2011).

Research, data, and opinions on the overall net effect of privatization remain mixed. The privatized foster care model affects youth differently based on several factors, including age, ethnicity, and physical and mental health; however, privatization has been consistently linked with a higher total number of placements per child within the foster care system (Steen & Duran, 2013). Foster care privatization can improve outcomes for some minority children, but these benefits do not apply to all minority youth equally. Privatization can also benefit older children who traditionally face many issues in the foster care system, including extended stays and a lack of life skills training while in these stays (Beam, 2014). These children also face an increased likelihood of adoption dissolution should they ultimately be adopted (Sattler & Font, 2020). As previously discussed, longer stays in the foster care system are associated with adverse long-term effects. These effects can grow over time or worsen with each additional foster placement. By devoting the resources early to adopting older children, states can



interrupt this cycle, ultimately saving funds in the long run and improving outcomes for their residents.

Under privatization, private firms are economically incentivized to place children quickly and cheaply, thus leading to lower costs per case and higher placement rates (Eatough, 2017). This ultimately contributes to a higher risk of a child experiencing abuse or neglect while within the care of the foster care system due to inadequate foster matches and increased time spent in foster care (Eatough, 2017). African American and American Indian/Alaskan Native children are more likely to experience these impacts as they are more likely to experience more placements and longer total time in care. This increased time in care and increased privatization compounds the risk of further abuse or neglect (Huggins-Hoyt et al., 2019).

A Hybrid Model of Foster Care

Private agencies must provide services to children that the public model does not provide well. Therefore, for the state to minimize overall spending, it should develop a hybrid model in which healthy young children may filter through the public system quickly with a lower cost to the state. Those children who experience more difficulty filtering through the public system, ultimately costing the state more if they were to stay in public care, should instead be entrusted to private agencies incentivized to match children with parents, ultimately removing the child from care faster. Ultimately, neither the public nor the private foster care system works perfectly for all youth in the foster care system, necessitating a blended model that minimizes costs and maximizes benefits to the state.

What this Means for the TCCWB

As the state of Texas privatizes its foster care system, the Texas Council will have the opportunity to assert itself as an important organization that supports foster care employees and volunteers. Additionally, the TCCWB can play a key role through advocacy in protecting the interests of children in foster care while the state pursues the cost savings often promised by privatization. The TCCWB should also play a role in educating regional councils and CWBs about the anticipated effects of privatization. To adapt and thrive in the changing foster care climate, the TCCWB must demonstrate a clear purpose, benefit, and role within the foster care system to not lose important funding.



Stakeholder Analysis

A stakeholder analysis aids in the identification of groups that have an interest in the work of an organization, how they evaluate the organization’s performance, and what is needed from the organization. We conducted this process by interviewing internal and external stakeholders and conducting focus groups with TCCWB members.

Based on the information we gathered, the following chart identifies the TCCWB’s major stakeholders, the evaluation of the performance of the TCCWB, Regional Councils and County Child Welfare Boards (where applicable), and stakeholder needs from the TCCWB.

Table 1: Stakeholder Performance Evaluation and Needs from the TCCWB

Organization (# of Respondents)	Evaluation of Performance	What the Stakeholder Needs from the TCCWB
TCCWB members (14)	Mostly positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leadership, direction, innovation ● Information about legislative sessions and advocacy agendas ● On-demand training videos ● Time and place to share experiences and new ideas ● Peer support, to feel appreciated and see impact ● Virtual or hybrid meeting option ● Recruitment of younger, more diverse members from Regional Councils and CWBs ● Guidance on using social media, marketing/fundraising, and best practices from other CWBs ● Tools like Google Drive to share important documents ● Restart Urban/Rural Caucuses ● Formal orientation for new TCCWB members
Regional Councils (14)	Fairly positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Information from the TCCWB to pass on to CWBs ● Advocacy at local, state, and national levels ● Assistance from TCCWB with regional problems and reestablishing nonexistent regions ● Fulfilling objectives outlined in DFPS cost-reimbursement contracts, updating annual business plan with CPS, including Performance Data Report, and effective virtual meetings
County Child	Mixed - Depends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Updated contact list of all CWB members

Welfare Boards (14)	<p>upon interaction with the TCCWB</p> <p>Mixed - Some Regional Councils nonexistent: wide variety of capacity and support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facebook page for all CWB members to network and share information ● Easy-to-use new CWB member orientation and other trainings to improve volunteer effectiveness ● Advocacy at local, state, national levels; connect CWBs with their legislators ● More funding from the TCCWB ● Promotion of child abuse prevention awareness campaigns and positive public perception of CPS ● Assistance from TCCWB with recruiting foster/adoptive families and coordinating clothing/supplies for foster children (i.e., Rainbow Rooms) ● Guidance and support on fulfilling tasks and duties on Mandate Checklist
Department of Family Protective Services (3)	<p>Mostly negative for the TCCWB</p> <p>Very negative for Regional Councils</p> <p>Positive for CWBs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthen and support CWBs and Regional Councils ● Abide by the terms of the CAPTA Grant contract ● Updated contact list of all CWB members and TCCWB leadership ● Updated and better organized website ● Support caseworkers and other DFPS personnel through advocacy and awareness campaigns ● Assist with recruitment of foster/adoptive homes ● Promotion of family-based safety services ● Assistance with CWOP issue
County Commissioners Court (4)	<p>Mostly unaware of TCCWB</p> <p>Positive for CWBs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Information about CWBs and why they are important ● Leadership and support for CWBs ● Advocacy at local, state, national levels
Private Foster Care Agency (1)	<p>Positive for TCCWB</p> <p>Very positive for CWBs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In privatized regions, smooth over relationships between private providers and CWBs ● In regions yet to be privatized, make CWBs aware of coming changes and ease the process ● Assistance with CWOP issue
Texas Legislature (0)	<p>Somewhat unaware of TCCWB except for HHS committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For the TCCWB to strengthen and support the stakeholders within the child welfare system for the benefit of Texas children ● Advocacy efforts to hear CWB perspective and information about legislative impacts

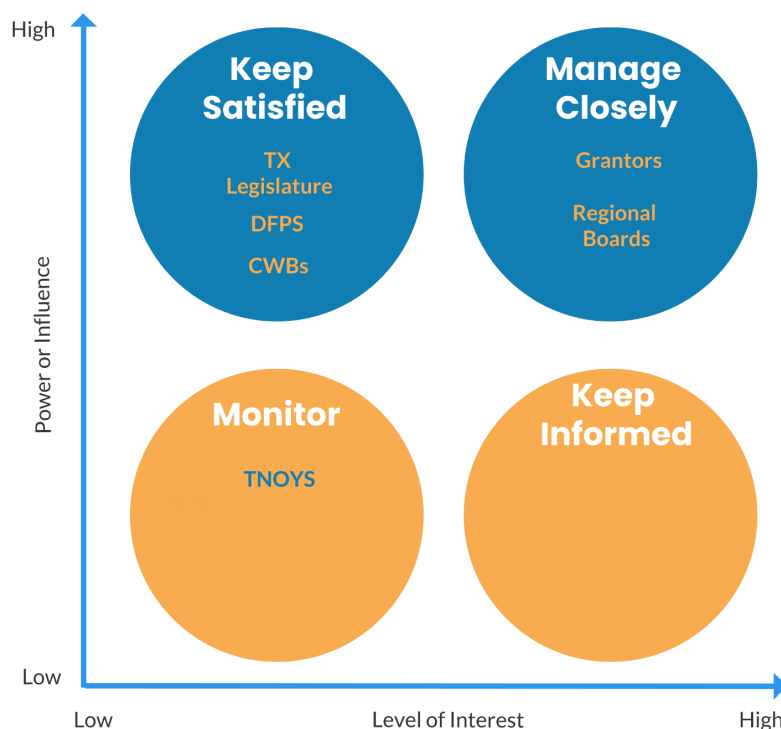


*Note: The analysis of external stakeholders is not exhaustive primarily due to low response rates from these groups. We encourage the TCCWB to continue to identify and reach out to these groups. A list of additional organizations to contact can be found in the [Outreach Plan](#).

In addition to understanding what stakeholders need from the TCCWB and how they evaluate its work, it is also important to determine how to interact with each stakeholder using a **Power vs. Interest Grid (Graph A)** pictured below).

1. For each stakeholder, first, determine the stakeholder’s power or influence to affect the TCCWB. Can they make decisions that significantly affect the work of the TCCWB?
2. Next, determine the interest the stakeholder has in the outcomes or activities of the TCCWB. How much do they care about what the TCCWB does?
3. Once the stakeholder’s relative power and relative interest have been determined, write the name of the stakeholder in one of the four categories: Monitor, Keep Satisfied, Keep Informed, or Manage Closely.
4. Continue to add new groups to the grid as you establish relationships with groups like those listed in the Outreach Plan.

Graph A: TCCWB Power vs. Interest Grid



The TCCWB must also decide how involved the TCCWB would like to be with each of these stakeholders. For example, will the TCCWB ignore, inform, consult, involve, or collaborate/partner with the stakeholder over a particular project or responsibility or does the stakeholder have full decision-making authority over certain things? Each of these is an important consideration when determining how to interact with each stakeholder.

Moving forward, the stakeholder analysis process can help the TCCWB to:

- Identify major stakeholders
- Know what these stakeholders think about how good of a job the TCCWB is doing
- Understand what each stakeholder needs
- Recognize the varying degrees of power and interest the stakeholders have in the work of the TCCWB
- Prioritize its relationships with different stakeholders
- Define how involved the TCCWB should be with each stakeholder



Organizational Chart

Figure C below shows the Texas Council's organizational structure.

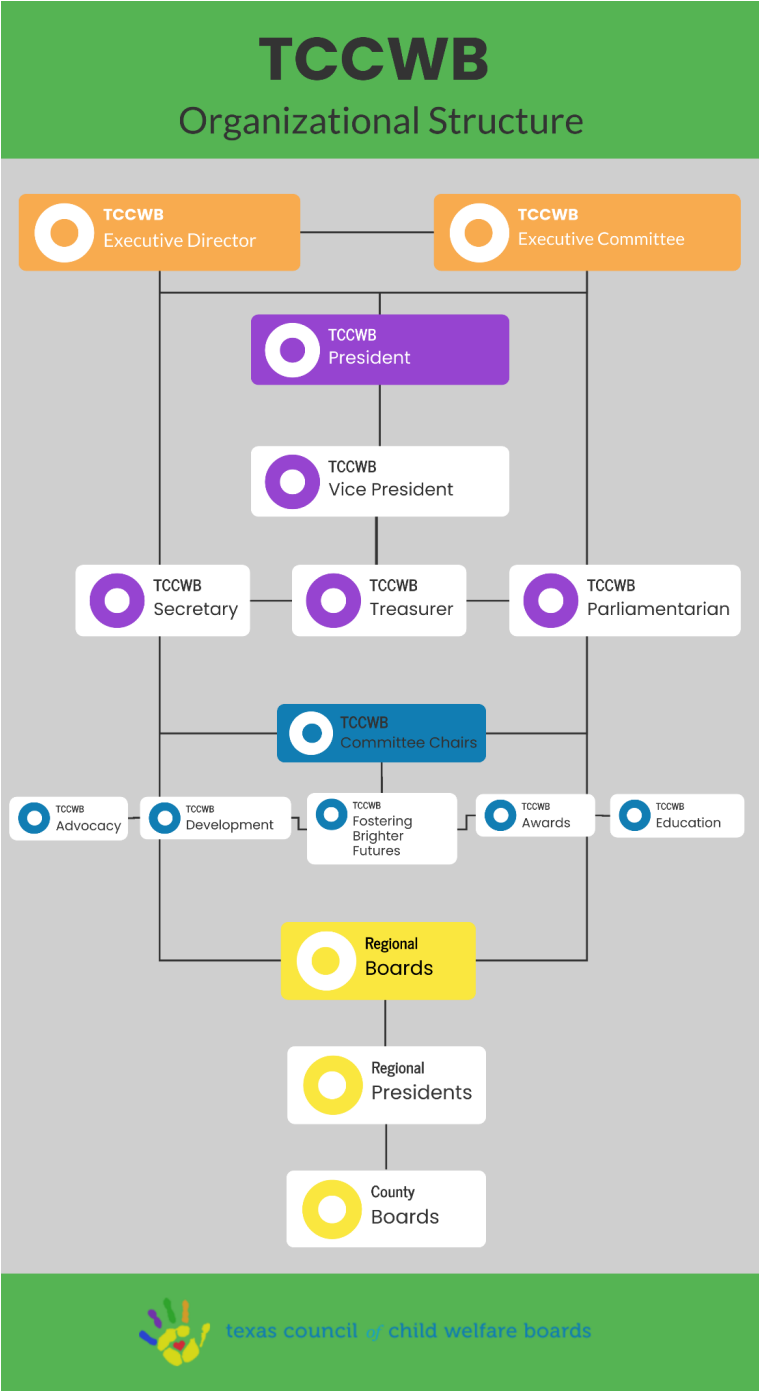


Figure C: TCCWB Organizational Structure



Checklist: Mandates for County, Regional, and Texas Council Child Welfare Boards

Specific Responsibilities of CWB Members

Responsibilities of individual CWB members include:


- Attending all CWB board meetings and assigned committee meetings;
- Reviewing the agenda and supporting materials prior to board and committee meetings;
- Serving on committees or task forces and offering to take on special assignments;
- Staying informed about the board's mission, policies, and services;
- Staying informed about CPS policies, programs, staff, and child abuse and neglect issues;
- Informing the community about the CWB's child welfare programs and other programmatic activities through social media and other communications;
- Helping to develop, recommend, and present the annual budget to the commissioner's court;
- Assisting with grants and other opportunities for funding;
- Enhancing processes and decisions in support of child welfare services and creating opportunities for CPS staff recognition;
- Adhering to conflict of interest and confidentiality policies;
- Assisting with building an informed and supportive constituency in the community;
- Recruiting, training, and developing new CWB members;
- Abiding by Texas open access laws in adherence to state law;
- Serving as a liaison to other resources for children who have been abused and/or neglected in the community; and
- Facilitating the solution of child welfare-related problems in the community.
- In fulfilling these duties, CWB members must work closely with county officials and DFPS staff.

Specific Responsibilities of Regional Council Delegates

Each CWB will elect delegates to the Regional Council as their county representatives.

Duties of Regional Council delegates include:

- Adhering to all CWB guidelines listed above;
- Reporting the local CWB activities and concerns to the Regional Council;

- 
- Relaying information obtained at Regional Council meetings back to the CWB;
 - Educating oneself and the CWB on child abuse and neglect, and resources available for prevention, intervention, and treatment;
 - Assist with fundraising activities, as necessary, to increase Regional Council's budget;
 - Regularly attending Regional Council meetings; and
 - Actively participating in the Regional Council's committees and activities.

Specific Responsibilities of TCCWB Delegates

Each Regional Council elects delegates to TCCWB.

Duties of TCCWB delegates include:

- Adhering to all CWB and Regional Council guidelines listed above;
- Attending TCCWB Council meetings and assigned committee meetings regularly;
- Reviewing the agenda and supporting materials prior to Council and committee meetings;
- Reporting local CWB and regional activities, ideas, and concerns at each TCCWB meeting by submitting the County/Regional Report Information Form;
- Relaying information obtained at state Council meetings back to the Regional Council and local CWB;
- Educating oneself and the Regional Council on child abuse and neglect, and resources available for prevention, intervention, and treatment;
- Serving on at least one committee other than the Urban or Rural Issues Committee and actively participating in committee meetings and activities;
- Helping to formulate goals and objectives for TCCWB and evaluating progress in achieving these goals and objectives;
- Helping to advocate for the Texas Council's activities with the Texas Legislature and other external stakeholders;
- Notifying TCCWB Secretary and mailing list coordinator of changes to contact information;
- Submitting appropriate documentation for expense reimbursement to the Treasurer within one week of Council meeting dates;
- Developing a transition binder with outlined responsibilities and policies, to hand down to the next person in that role (If committee chair).

Training

Every member of a CWB must participate in all listed trainings below:

- New Member Training
- CWB Chairs are responsible for ensuring that each new CWB member receives:
 - A copy of the Child Welfare Board Resource Manual,
 - Minutes from the past few CWB meetings,
 - Required Forms:
 - Form 250, Volunteer Registration Form,
 - Form 250b, Background Check Authorization Form,
 - Form 251, Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement, to be completed and returned to the DFPS Community Initiatives Specialist,
 - A copy of local CWB bylaws,
 - A current local CWB membership list,
 - A copy of the CWB contract with the county, and
 - A list of CPS staff members working with the CWB and their telephone numbers.
 - The CWB's CPS staff liaison may arrange for duplication of these materials.
- The [TCCWB website offers training resources](#) for CWB members. In addition to the Child Welfare Board Resource Manual mentioned above, an electronic copy of this Operations Manual is also available, along with a Child Welfare Board Training PowerPoint slide show, with or without an audio track.
- State law also requires new members to receive training on the Open Meetings Act and the Public Information Act within 90 days from the date of appointment. This training is available at the [Office of Attorney General \(OAG\) website](#). Members may also request a free DVD of the training videos by contacting the OAG at 1-800-252-8011. At the conclusion of the training, members must print a course completion certificate and file a copy with the county clerk.
- In addition, each board is encouraged to provide new member orientation that includes:
 - An overview of CPS,
 - Instruction of CWB procedures and member responsibilities, and
 - Connection with an experienced CWB member to serve as a mentor.
- A DFPS Community Initiative Specialist (CIS) may assist with new member training upon request of the CWB chair and with approval by the CIS's supervisor.

Annual background checks and other items to revisit include:

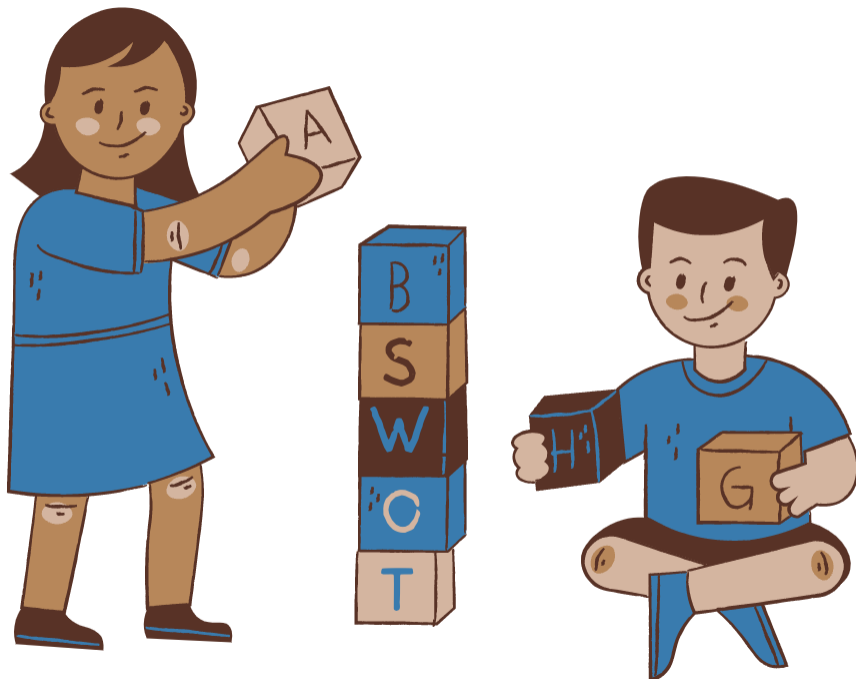
- CWB members should revisit trainings and regulations annually to ensure compliance is met.
- CWB members should regularly update the Texas Council Master Contact sheet to ensure all CWB, Regional, and Texas Council members' contact information is in one place.
- Potential CWB members should authorize a background check prior to appointment by the commissioner's court. CWB members are authorized by the Texas Family Code, §264.005, to receive confidential client information; however, most CWBs take on additional projects and activities outside the scope of statutory authority.
- CWB members who have any contact with children and families must have a criminal background check and a DFPS Central Registry Check performed **annually**.
 - The DFPS Community Initiatives Specialist (CIS) provides Form 250b and the Background Check Authorization Form for members to complete and return. The CIS then submits the forms for processing and notifies the member if a match is found or a problem occurs.
 - Members who refuse to complete Form 205b or who have a positive match are prohibited by Government Code, §411.114, from having any contact with children and families receiving DFPS services.
 - CWB members will be prohibited from interacting with children and families if any pending or confirmed allegations of abuse, neglect, or exploitation against a child, an adult with disabilities, or an elderly person or a crime involving an offense against the family, public indecency, or the Texas Controlled Substance Act are found. Members should voluntarily report allegations and findings to the commissioner's court that appointed them.



SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis examines an organization's internal strengths and weaknesses, and identifies external opportunities and threats that impact the organization's ability to operate (Bryson & Alston, 2011). SWOT analyses provide a high-level understanding of an organization and the factors that affect it to develop successful strategies.

In February 2022, we conducted a SWOT activity with the Executive Committee. First, we asked about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the TCCWB. Then, after each answer, we asked more direct questions about what the TCCWB can do to improve its strengths, overcome any weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities, and minimize threats. These questions shift the conversation from simply creating lists to devising actionable strategies that improve the TCCWB's results. The SWOT analysis on the following two pages contains the results from this activity.



Strengths

- Advocating at state legislature
- Creating public awareness
- De-stigmatizing child welfare
- Awarding excellence in foster care
- Engaging and connecting CWBs
- Providing technical assistance to CWBs
- Sharing success stories from CWBs and Texas Council

Weaknesses

- Communicating with internal and external stakeholders
- Continuity/volunteer turnover
- Trainings for CWB nonprofit organization
- CWB understanding of TCCWB's value
- Keeping information current from TCCWB and from CWBs
- Maintaining internal accountability for committee work



Opportunities

- Using Zoom/collaborative technologies
- Fundraising in local communities
- Hosting a conference for CWBs to help them learn about the TCCWB
- Sharing information routinely using social media platforms
- Recruiting interns/volunteers from universities in social work programs

Threats

- Responding to the Children Without Placement (CWOP) issue
- Meeting in-person during COVID-19
- Relying too much on DFPS funding
- Distance for in-person meetings
- Rural/Urban divide
- Limited volunteer time



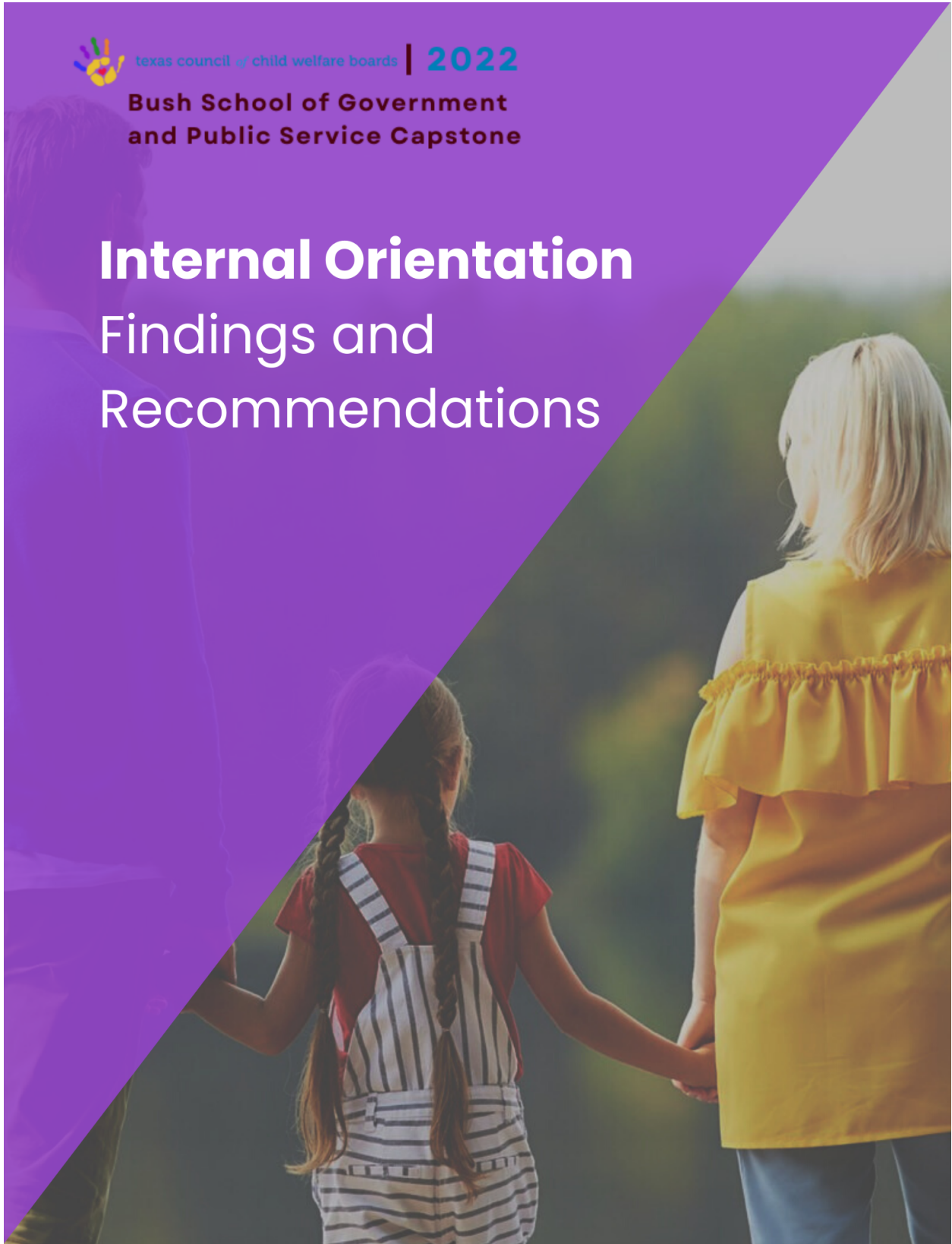


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**Bush School of Government
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Internal Orientation

Findings and Recommendations





Internal Orientation Findings and Recommendations

Organizational Structure and Status

Current Landscape

Current Leadership

All members of the TCCWB we interviewed noted satisfaction with the current leadership, especially TCCWB Executive Director George Ford. One member described Mr. Ford's contribution to the organization as such:

“[Ford] hired people to do what the other person did. He hired people to pay the bills. He hired people to do the website. He hired people to take care of the meetings, the committee meetings, and that kind of stuff. And since he has done that, it has made a huge difference, a huge difference. His job is to get out there and try to... well, we didn't have very many boards, we had a whole bunch of counties that didn't have board members, we had a whole bunch of regions that weren't open. And since he started, he has opened up a bunch of regions. He made a huge difference, a huge difference.”


Moreover, several members noted that they felt their input at TCCWB meetings was heard and appreciated by TCCWB leadership. They also stated that the TCCWB leadership kept the organization on track and that they directly helped struggling regions and boards organize.

Organizational Structure

When asked about the current organizational structure of the TCCWB, Regional Councils, and CWBs, members of the TCCWB generally believed that the organization's structure was adequate but could be improved. In addition, members noted deficiencies in the coverage of CWBs throughout the state and their representation on the TCCWB, with one member stating:

“It's just very porous in terms of the representation across the state. You have strong pockets. You have other areas that are not strong – or nonexistent. There's a significant divide between regions and boards.”

A respondent shared their first hand-experience with this problem, stating:



“Let's put it this way: it [the organizational structure] wasn't effective for those five years that [our region] didn't have a representative. I mean, it couldn't have been effective, but there was no communications from the state to the region or the region to the county, because there was no region.”

This member explained that Region 3 still lacks representation from the largest county, Dallas County, and suspects that they do not participate in Regional or State Councils because they will gain no benefit from doing so. This point also signaled another common theme in the distribution of CWBs and regions: CWBs from rural areas of the state tend to face different problems than urban areas. Because they face various problems, solutions that work for urban CWBs may not be helpful to rural CWBs.


DFPS personnel we spoke to had a different view of the organizational structure of the TCCWB. One DFPS official stated, “I think the single biggest hurdle is the structure. And I think if that were addressed and resolved, many other things would become more feasible.” DFPS’s main concern with the organizational structure is the Regional Councils, which they find ineffective and unnecessary. Similar to the concerns of TCCWB members, DFPS is concerned that the current regional structure causes problems with the flow of information from the state. For example, when regions are not functioning, there is no way for information from the TCCWB to be passed on to CWBs. Additionally, there is no clear process for appointing members to the TCCWB from defunct regions, meaning there is a lack of representation from these areas of the state on the TCCWB.

Moreover, as stated by TCCWB members earlier (see the [Participation](#) section), the volunteer structure of the TCCWB means that many members will be unable to participate in the organization outside of their CWB. The volunteer-based nature of the organization was also reported to make the structure and functioning of the TCCWB and its lower levels difficult to understand at times.

Mission and Purpose

TCCWB members noted that an essential goal of the organization is to support regions and CWBs. As stated by a TCCWB member, “the Council is there for things. It’s to support people, to support the local board and the Regional Councils.” The TCCWB was also reported to be a platform for Regional Council and local boards to network with one another and a platform for organization-wide advocacy.

DFPS did not report similar findings, instead questioning if the mission of the TCCWB was defined at all. For example, one member of DFPS questioned, “How are you going to be a mission-driven organization if your mission is that broad?”



Recommendations

Revive the Rural and Urban Caucuses

TCCWB members have championed the revival of rural and urban caucuses, where rural and urban CWBs and Regional Councils meet to discuss problems and solutions that directly affect their boards, fostering conversations more relevant to their unique circumstances. We agree with this assessment, and we recommend that the TCCWB establish rural and urban caucuses. We believe that it would be helpful for these groups to meet directly with one another to discuss specialized issues and develop strategies that will work for their specific circumstances.

Establish Direct Communication with CWBs


DFPS personnel have stated that the TCCWB could benefit from more open and direct communications with CWBs by removing the regional level as much as possible from the communication process. Several different members of the TCCWB back up this finding, and the literature on internal communication shows support for direct and authentic communication between leadership and lower levels of organizations (Men & Stacks, 2014). Therefore, in addition to passing information to Regional Councils, the TCCWB should communicate directly with CWBs. The Regional Councils would no longer be responsible for relaying important information discussed at TCCWB meetings with their county boards. Instead, multiple communication platforms should be developed through which the TCCWB communicates directly to CWBs, including email lists and Facebook among other communication platforms.

Encourage Standardization within Regional Councils

We recommend that the TCCWB considers standardizing bylaws, policies, and procedures across regions when it complicates how the TCCWB deals with them. Currently, Regional Councils have various bylaws, standards, and board procedures, like choosing TCCWB representatives. We recommend that the TCCWB encourage Regional Councils to standardize their regional policies and procedures to reduce variation when it reasonably benefits the Texas Council. Moreover, the literature on organizational standardization argues that standardizing policies and procedures allows for greater cooperation through restricting individual leeway in decision-making (Botzem & Dobusch, 2012).

Continue Supporting and Rebuilding Defunct Regions

We also recommend that the TCCWB continue to bring back defunct regions and strengthen existing Regional Councils. Encouraging Regional Councils to recruit more members will provide the TCCWB with greater numbers of potential TCCWB members in the future. In



addition, for Regional Councils that are currently not operating, it is essential that the TCCWB establishes a process of accepting members from CWBs in these regions, perhaps through an application process.

Consider Recruiting TCCWB Members Directly from CWBs

We believe the TCCWB should consider shifting from the current system where its members are appointed/elected Regional Council members to a system where its members apply directly from CWBs yet still ensure a fair regional balance of membership. We believe this system could improve the TCCWB's ability to recruit younger and more diverse members with desirable knowledge and skills. It could also ensure that selected members only have to commit time to one other organization outside of their county-level CWB instead of two.


Clearly Define the TCCWB's Mission and Purpose

DFPS personnel stated that the TCCWB could benefit from more clearly defining its mission and sense of purpose. We agree with this statement because not only does a clear mission help guide the work of the organization (Patel et al., 2015), but it also helps with receiving funding. Grantors and funders will not give money to organizations when they cannot clearly understand and measure what they do (Gregory & Howard, 2009). Therefore, we recommend that the TCCWB define its mission statement more clearly, similar to the activities carried out in the Executive Committee focus groups. Refining the TCCWB's mission statement will help the public and potential donors understand and support the work of the TCCWB.

Internal Communication

Current Landscape

A few members of the TCCWB noted a significant improvement in overall communication. They specifically noted that the communication from leadership has increased over the last few years and resulted in an increase in overall communication. However, our findings suggest most members felt that the communication between the Regional Councils and CWBs was broken and ineffective. There also seems to be a lack of communication in sharing information from the TCCWB down to the county-level boards. From our interviews, we gathered that if information about the TCCWB reached the CWBs, it was often in a much more limited or distorted fashion than the original message. These communication issues have confused internal members and caused stress about having accurate information at their disposal. One member described the situation as such:



“There are times when I do not know what is going on...it’s stressful and confusing. There’s a clear lack of communication in terms of disseminating information from the state down to the different counties, and that bothers me.”

COVID-19 has seemed to affect the internal communication at the organizational level. Meeting in person has been limited due to COVID-19 restrictions, and meeting on Zoom has made most members feel disconnected from others. A majority of the members feel like the online meetings have made conversations formal and restricted them from having informal discussions with other members, which hurts the culture of the TCCWB and its networking value. One member described the situation as such:

“During and after COVID, meeting online made things more formal: giving updates, taking updates, and understanding any new changes made. Beyond this...nothing...I don’t feel like I know what’s going on with...other members. It’s not how it used to be.”

The most common method of internal communication is electronic mail, which many members seem to prefer. However, the contact list not having everyone’s information on it makes it hard for all members of the organization to be on the same page. Members believe it is imperative to keep everyone updated in one email thread, but other members have complained about being bombarded by multiple emails. Based on interviews, our findings suggest that relying heavily on electronic mail seems to be a barrier to effective internal communication, especially for older members. In addition, it is difficult for members to adapt to newer technologies and situations. One member described the situation as such:


“Age seems to be a barrier for our communication... Like I tried to teach our Regional Council about Groupme, or one of the other like, you know, chat type things so my emails would stop blowing up, but it hasn’t happened yet.”

Participants from the external key stakeholders suggest that the lack of a list with all the CWBs in the state has made things difficult. When they need information from CWBs, they have no place to go.

Recommendations

Increase Communication with Local Child Welfare Boards

There should be greater effort to have ongoing communication with the local boards, whether it is through a quarterly newsletter, a blog, or another format like a Facebook page.



Consider Recording Meetings and Maintaining a Shared Drive

Having recorded lessons or written lessons would be helpful in terms of exchanging information from one meeting to the other. Further, we also recommend establishing an organization Dropbox, Google Drive, One Drive, or other Cloud formats for storing, sharing, and working collaboratively on important documents.

Consider Offering Workshops for TCCWB Members

TCCWB members expressed interest in workshops to help them learn new technology and adapt. These workshops could teach TCCWB members how to use and operate virtual meetings software, internal communications software, and file sharing software utilized by the TCCWB.

Participation


Current Landscape

Attendance will be discussed in several areas of our findings. Still, this section lays out all mentions of attendance at TCCWB, Regional Council, and County Welfare Board meetings made by TCCWB internal members. Attendance, members physically showing up to meetings, was noted as a problem by numerous internal members of the TCCWB. Our findings showed that members within all levels of the organization—County Welfare Boards, Regional Councils, and TCCWB—experienced challenges in being able to attend meetings. Overall attendance was indicated as a problem within itself and a major barrier to the inner workings of the organizational structure of the TCCWB.

At the county level, lack of attendance restricts CWBs from establishing a quorum, halting their ability even to hold meetings. One TCCWB member elaborated on this issue, stating that attendance is “our biggest issue, especially meeting in person; we have to have people who will commit to showing up, because if we don't have a quorum under the Open Meetings Act, we can't have a meeting.”

At the regional level, poor attendance leads to some regions not holding meetings at all. In an extreme case, one TCCWB member noted:

“[We] haven't held a regional meeting in two years because nobody would come. And so, we know it, but I mean, that's what we're supposed to do, but it's kind of hard to have a meeting and nobody comes except for your own board.”



Poor attendance at the regional level was also found to cause communication breakdowns. Under the current organizational structure, regions are responsible for passing information down from the TCCWB to the local boards. As a TCCWB member noted:

“We've never had a Regional Council, where all the local boards are there... so I think there has to be more communication from the Texas Council down to the Regional Councils and local boards. I don't think you can depend on your Regional Council to pass that information along. At least not at this point.”

Another TCCWB member corroborates this point stating, “we're going virtual, but the attendance is not that great, so I think local boards miss a lot.”

Finally, at both the regional and state levels of the organization, poor attendance has been found to affect the representation that each CWB and Regional Council has at the higher levels of the organization. One TCCWB member stated, “you don't always have your representation at the Texas [Council] and Regional Councils.” This means that at any given time, input from different CWBs and Regional Councils is not being heard by the upper levels of the organization.

Poor attendance was attributed to several factors, but the main factor that affected attendance was members’ personal commitments outside of the organization. Several members indicated that the time commitment needed to participate in the organization, especially at the regional and state levels, prevented them, or other members, from being as involved as they would like to be. Moreover, at the regional level, this time commitment issue is especially true for large, more rural regions, where CWB representatives must travel long distances to attend in-person meetings. This is also true at the TCCWB meetings, as members that live further away from Austin must travel and stay multiple days to attend the bi-annual meetings. One member spoke on their problems with the time commitment TCCWB meetings require, stating:

“Now that they're going back to the Austin meetings, I don't know... if I'll be able to make one. I've got two small kids under 5 years, so... And this is a volunteer gig -- I'm a small business owner, I have my own consulting firm. So that's going to be hard.”



Recommendations

Recruit Responsible Members

Not many respondents identified opportunities to improve attendance. The main solution presented was to recruit people who would have the time and passion to commit to the various levels of the organization. We agree with this sentiment, and we acknowledge that because the TCCWB is not directly involved with recruitment at the CWB level, it may be difficult for the TCCWB to influence CWB recruitment tactics. However, it is not impossible (see [Recruitment](#) section).

Develop Programs that Directly Benefit Members and Emphasize Volunteer Appreciation

Outside of recruiting more enthused members, we recommend that the TCCWB make members feel that participation in the TCCWB is worth their while (ex., Practical training sessions at meetings). Some members of CWBs and the Region Council do not currently see value in being involved with the TCCWB. Therefore, we recommend that the TCCWB works to develop programs that directly benefit lower levels of the organization. We believe that once the TCCWB has more activities that benefit its lower levels, more interest in attending TCCWB meetings and events will follow (see [Value from Membership](#) for more information on this topic). Moreover, it is not clear how the TCCWB is actively and continuously appreciating volunteers. To show gratitude for their service, the TCCWB should actively work to thank their volunteers consistently for their time as it contributes to increased morale, retention, and productivity. Humphrey-Pratt (2006) points out that appreciating volunteers' work and dedication through rewards or formal organizational recognition could provide volunteers with a sense of belonging and contribution. Such recognition would motivate volunteers to remain actively engaged in the organization.

Offer Virtual Meeting Options

Another solution to mitigate some of the attendance issues caused by time constraints, especially travel-related time constraints, is to offer virtual alternatives for attendance, at least at the regional and state levels. We recommend that the TCCWB and its lower level, offer virtual options where possible. For example, the Texas Open Meetings Act prevents County Welfare Boards from meeting virtually, but based on our understanding, this legislation does not restrict Regional Councils and the TCCWB. We recommend that all Regional Councils and the TCCWB implement virtual meeting options like Zoom for all major in-person meetings. This would allow individuals who cannot attend in person due to travel restrictions to remain active participants at both levels of the organization.



Consider Moving Meeting Locations Around the State

Regarding travel-related restrictions for TCCWB members, the TCCWB could consider moving in-person TCCWB meeting locations to different cities across the state. As stated in the individual interview findings, traveling to Austin is not feasible for some CWB and Regional Council members who may otherwise be interested in being active within the TCCWB. In addition, many different state and national organizations move their major meetings between other cities year-to-year. The TCCWB could shift meeting locations between different Texas cities, such as Austin, Houston, San Antonio, Dallas-Fort Worth, Corpus Cristi, Loubuck, etc., to allow members local to those regions a greater opportunity to attend in-person TCCWB meetings.

Value Gained from the TCCWB

Current Landscape

Almost every TCCWB member expressed that they received generous peer support and felt fulfilled by participating in the TCCWB. They indicated that they gain value from sharing experiences and information from different regions and counties. For example, one benefit of membership is learning about ongoing foster care issues at the state and local levels and the new legislative issues related to the Texas foster care system. Members frequently mentioned that they could meet with other like-minded individuals from different parts of Texas and know they were not alone. They also felt they contributed to improving children's lives, which helped them feel fulfilled. One member stated, "I feel I can make a difference," and "You get a lot of love, and you are able to give love too."

In contrast, there were more diverse views of the value that the TCCWB brings to people outside the organization. For example, one DFPS respondent noted that the TCCWB helped child welfare boards across the state by formalizing processes and common practices like background checks. However, most external respondents from the county level (such as county commissioners or CWBs not affiliated with the TCCWB) stated that they do not get anything of value from the TCCWB. These respondents had never interacted with the TCCWB and did not see the TCCWB currently providing any benefit to help them do their job better.

TCCWB members and external respondents described the value they expected to gain from the TCCWB. For example, responses typically included expectations that the TCCWB lead advocacy efforts at the state level to address issues in the foster care system and help CWBs establish networking relationships with each other to share information and resources.



Recommendations

Clearly Articulate the TCCWB's Value


It is essential that the TCCWB clearly articulates the value it brings to members, DFPS, potential funders, and the public. Helping volunteer members feel like they are making a difference helps them feel fulfilled, motivating them to continue volunteering (Humphrey-Prat, 2006; Manetti & Toccafondi, 2014). For instance, the TCCWB can provide good work rewards or hold a volunteer service award annually to appreciate volunteers' dedication and express recognition and gratitude from the organization. Some outside organizations benefit greatly from the help the TCCWB provides, but the TCCWB must be loud and clear about how it can help other outside organizations when establishing new relationships. If people feel that interacting with the TCCWB is not worth their time or that they get nothing out of it, they are much less likely to continue the relationship.

Develop Performance Metrics

One way to help articulate the TCCWB's value is through developing performance metrics that demonstrate the Texas Council's impact or help further improve that impact. Adopting well-developed performance metrics in evaluating an organization's work could improve the organization's accountability and present its achievements better, which is crucial for gaining the public's trust and building a nonprofit's reputation (Lee & Nowell, 2015; Moura et al., 2019). Some examples of performance metrics could include the amount of money transferred to CWBs or the number of foster and/or adoptive families recruited through Fostering Brighter Futures. Other metrics could be simply for internal use to improve current programs, such as the satisfaction ratings of CWBs with available training materials. Some information, like signature legislative accomplishments, are not "metrics," but it is still essential to share these achievements visibly and often. When people know your impact, they are more likely to provide you with substantial support, such as financial support through donations or grants (Lee & Nowell, 2015).

Continue to Strengthen and Improve what the TCCWB is Doing Well

In addition to clearly stating its impact, the TCCWB should work to improve its strengths to add even more value to what it already does well. As most TCCWB members value the networking aspects of meetings, the Texas Council could facilitate networking activities like happy hours, roundtables to discuss problems and ideas, or have speakers present on an interesting topic (like the ongoing privatization of foster care in Texas). Beyond bringing value to TCCWB members, the Texas Council should emphasize its networking value to CWBs by hosting a conference for CWB members. Johansen and LeRoux (2012) state that networking is beneficial



to nonprofits' effectiveness, especially community networking. The conference would be an excellent opportunity for the TCCWB to provide clear value to CWBs, gain more CWB interest in the TCCWB, and improve the Texas Council's reputation.

Programs & Committees

Current Landscape

Aside from the value of its network, the Texas Council also provides value through its programs, which are overseen by its internal committees: Resource Development, Education (Trainings), Advocacy, Awards, and Fostering Brighter Futures. In addition to responses from interviews, this section includes findings from focus groups with these committees and the executive committee. We received a variety of opinions about these programs, and we incorporated this feedback through the SMART Goal-setting Activities (located in [Appendix A](#)) with each committee. External respondents and CWBs not affiliated with the Texas Council have low awareness of the TCCWB's current programs, and they indicated that current services are lacking.


Resource Development

Some external stakeholders said that the TCCWB does not do enough to demonstrate the impact of its programs, which is necessary to attract funders. Without proper funding, the TCCWB cannot provide as much financial support as the local boards would like. When the TCCWB can easily demonstrate its value to the public and its contribution to the child welfare system, it will attract more funding. More information related to the work of the Resource Development committee can be found in the [Funding and Resources](#) section.

Education

Many internal members expressed that the TCCWB provides good training resources and materials. Most members of the Council agree that their website is helpful because these trainings are both online and in-person, and members can download the online resources on the TCCWB's website. However, the interview and focus group findings did not clearly show the utilization of the TCCWB online training resources. Many internal respondents indicated that training content is useful, and many made specific references to onboarding sessions, nonprofit governance, using technology, the Open Meetings Act, and how to create bylaws.

However, based on interviews, several internal members were dissatisfied with the format, stating that a long online handbook is difficult and time-consuming to use. Although new members are given information about training when they enter the TCCWB, they are



unaware of where to find it and how to take it. Some internal members are still not aware of any offered training through the TCCWB's website. Some internal respondents stated that they would like to see more training provided in-person at the annual meetings and at the local meetings to ensure everyone has the same knowledge and information about the current child welfare system.

Awards

When asked about the TCCWB's programs, the first one that came to mind for many internal members was the annual award banquet, where the TCCWB rewards excellence in the foster care system through its six awards. Based on feedback from focus groups, it seems as though this program has the largest budget of the TCCWB's programs. Currently, this event is limited to awardees, their guests, and TCCWB members. Nominations for these awards are solicited from CWBs, who are asked for donations to help fund the banquet and the outstanding foster youth award.

Fostering Brighter Futures


To combat negative stereotypes of foster and adoptive families, Fostering Brighter Futures (FBF) focuses on telling positive experiences of foster care parents. However, in the focus group sessions, it became clear that the committee was having difficulties getting CWBs and regions to pass on these positive stories for the committee to publish.

Advocacy

Both internal members and external stakeholders identified advocacy as a critical task of the TCCWB, which is evident by the existence of the Advocacy Committee within the TCCWB. The Advocacy Committee focuses on raising public awareness of the children's welfare in the foster care system and advocating for better foster care services in the legislation. More information related to the work of the Advocacy committee can be found in the [Advocacy](#) section.

Restructuring Committee Work

At the TCCWB annual meeting, we observed an essential issue with trying to do committee work at meetings: many members are part of multiple committees. So when all committees are meeting at the same time, members cannot fully participate in each of their committees because they can only choose one. Based on feedback from an Executive Committee focus group, we learned that most committee work is done at the TCCWB general



meetings that are held twice a year, and not much is accomplished in the time between meetings.

Recommendations

Resource Development


First, enrich existing programs by focusing on improving the quality of services and clearly make the value proposition of the TCCWB to CWBs and potential funders to attract more funding for services and better provide substantive support to CWBs (See recommendations related to [Funding and Resources](#) section).

Education

Training that incorporates racially-biased decision-making and cultural competencies for caseworkers, judges, and other stakeholders can reduce the disparities present in the foster care system (Dettlaff & Boyd, 2020). Therefore, TCCWB, as an important stakeholder in the child welfare system, needs to enhance the education of its members in this area. The majority of internal members of the TCCWB recommended that there should be more forms of training files and methods, such as live training and virtual training for the TCCWB, Regional Councils, and CWBs. To develop these new materials and improve current training, the TCCWB should conduct surveys of CWBs to get feedback and recommendations. Other internal members stated that the training content should be updated online, as it is now somewhat outdated. Because some internal members were not aware of the training on the TCCWB website, TCCWB should ensure people know where to find them and how to use them. After members receive training, the TCCWB should follow up with participants and get feedback to ensure the members get helpful information from training.

Awards

We recommend that TCCWB could invite the press to the banquet for more publicity and more recognition for the award winners. To share the experiences of the awardees, we strongly recommend telling the story and the future plan of the award winners to raise the public's understanding of youth life in the foster care system. The TCCWB should study how many of these awardees continued to pursue their degree after the first year of the award, how many completed their degrees, and how these statistics compare to the national average for foster children attending college. Tracking this impact could be a huge selling point to potential donors and grantors.



In our view, the TCCWB should not rely on CWB donations to fund this program. Instead, the Awards committee could partner with Resource Development to implement a corporate giving structure where a certain amount of donations earns a specific reward level that provides some perks (ex. \$500 for gold status that comes with certain benefits, \$250 silver status, etc.). This structure is common for many banquet events and could be a great opportunity to further improve the TCCWB's name recognition as well as its ability to fund its other programs. In the future, as the success of the awards banquet continues to grow, the TCCWB could consider charging for tickets or tables at the banquet, excluding awardees and their guests. As funding increases, the TCCWB could also consider increasing the amount of money awarded to foster youth winners or increasing the number of young people winning the award.

Fostering Brighter Futures

FBF should seek stories directly from the source: foster/adoptive families themselves. It may be helpful to seek out support groups for foster/adoptive parents and to interview people who wish to share positive experiences with the foster care system. Another potential source for stories is by approaching private foster care agencies. Consider reaching out to groups such as TNOYS or TACFS. Because FBF provides a service to private foster care agencies by encouraging people to foster and adopt, it should consider trying to partner with some of these agencies to get more stories. The benefits of collaboration between organizations include improved flow of information (e.g., organizational expertise, innovative ideas) and resources between organizations, potentially expanding or improving program services (Proulx et al., 2014). Access to information resources through inter-agency collaboration can better demonstrate value to external funders or donors and help improve their ability to further develop, close service gaps, and meet the needs of the people they serve. Additionally, FBF could consider requesting funding from these agencies by demonstrating how its impact benefits these agencies.

Advocacy

Members of the executive committee believed collaboratively developing the advocacy agenda with local boards and other stakeholders was a good way to improve advocacy efforts. Other ideas about improving the effectiveness of volunteers on advocacy days included providing volunteers with talking points and training them in how to contact their legislators. See the [Advocacy](#) section for more information and recommendations.



Restructuring Committee Work

To fix these problems, the bulk of committee work should be done outside of TCCWB general meetings and at different dates/times than other committees. This would allow every member to fully participate with any committee they choose without worrying about time conflicts or picking one committee over another. Committee meetings should be conducted at least monthly via Zoom to make progress on current objectives and accomplish more in between general meetings. Instead of doing simultaneous committee work, General TCCWB meetings should consist largely of updates from committees and getting feedback or ideas from general members about setting new goals or priorities. Additionally, holding an additional general TCCWB meeting per year is a good opportunity to ensure that progress is being made towards committee objectives. To provide more convenient communication opportunities for the committees, TCCWB should make more use of Zoom for meetings. As the pandemic struck in 2020, it threw the workplace into the digital world. Both employees and leadership experienced adjustment challenges in the transition to digital working, but the accessibility of telework has given the workplace an accessible platform for active communication (Li et al., 2021). Therefore, this third meeting could better be done over Zoom to save on travel costs and time.

Policies and Procedures


Current Landscape

The majority of internal members of the Council believe that the current TCCWB onboarding process needs to be improved. Currently, two representatives from a local board, the president and vice president, can go to the Regional Council. Some local members believe that there could be more representatives at the local level and that everyone should be eligible for election. Additionally, some DFPS members mentioned that the TCCWB had not followed their current contract with their agency. They shared this by stating that TCCWB is not fulfilling their agreed number of meetings since they now meet twice a year, which is insufficient. Moreover, the TCCWB is not meeting their agreement on the number of grants they should apply for each year (see [Funding and Resources](#) section for more discussion).

Recommendations

Update and Maintain Website Content

Participants in our study mentioned a few ways to improve policies and procedures of the TCCWB. The TCCWB's website is an important medium for information sharing, and many members mentioned that the content on the website is outdated, so the TCCWB should have



clear accountability for who is responsible for updating/maintaining the website, and there should be a clear process to request updates/changes to the website to ensure the right information gets to the person/people who have the ability to change it. While this responsibility can be delegated to a specific individual, such as the TCCWB secretary who has managed the website in the past, it can also be the responsibility of a committee. For instance, the Education Committee's Ad Hoc team in charge of transitioning their website's platform could take on the responsibility of website maintenance once completed. When an organization expands in size or complexity or grows across borders, it needs an internal communications network to keep its employees in sync (Whitworth, 2006).

Strengthen Internal Trainings

Moreover, the TCCWB should emphasize and strengthen their internal training (see [SMART Goals](#)). Literature on board development practices, such as onboarding processes and procedures, shows that training and professional development result in better prepared board members (Brown, 2007).

Abide By DFPS Contract Terms and Extend Term Length for Executive Positions

And we recommend that it's important for TCCWB to abide by the terms of the DFPS contract and to provide reminders to CWBs about compliance with legal obligations (mandate checklist). Also, in order for the TCCWB to have more effective organizational management, we recommend that the TCCWB extend the term length for executive positions from one year to two years.

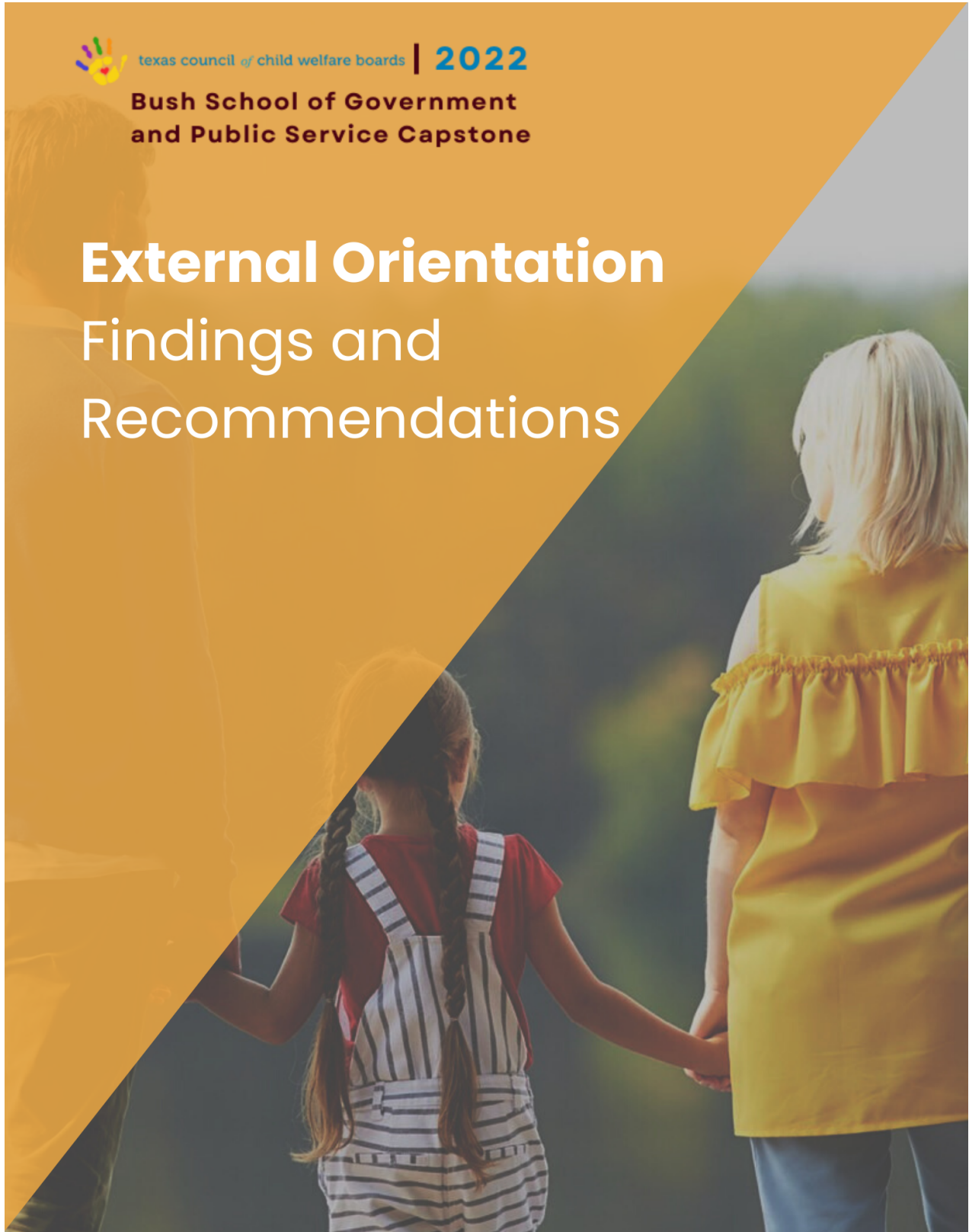




texas council of child welfare boards | 2022

**Bush School of Government
and Public Service Capstone**

External Orientation Findings and Recommendations





External Orientation Findings and Recommendations

External Communication

Current Landscape

Members of the TCCWB noted improved external communication than in earlier times of the organization's history. While a few internal members believe that the TCCWB's website is great and full of resources, most agree that the website needs to be updated more regularly and is not very helpful. One internal member specifically noted that the TCCWB's website has plenty of helpful information that could present a better external communication strategy but is not properly utilized. At the same time, a few participants who belonged to the internal members' group did not know if the Council had any clear marketing strategy. Further, internal members suggested that although local CWBs made better use of local newspapers as a way to provide information and outreach to their communities, Regional Councils did not have the same approach.

Furthermore, a few participants believe that the age of the members has shaped the external communication plan of the organization. For instance, the organization does not use Instagram even though it is essential for them to do so to reach a larger audience. Lastly, most participants believe that even though word of mouth has helped the Council recruit members in the past, it is not a very effective strategy going forward. Talking about their outreach strategies, one of the internal members noted:

“We just started talking about that this last session so we haven't really got anything...strategies or anything in place right now, I don't think, but we will. We just started to talk about it.”

Our findings suggest that the external stakeholders find the website, marketing materials, and outreach strategies of the TCCWB to not be very useful for their use. Talking about the communication strategies, one of the participants said:

“There's a disconnect between what they [TCCWB] do and what they communicate...they do more than what we see on their website; which is not really updated anyway.”

Additionally the external stakeholders find the organization's website to be confusing. The headings, in particular, are the most confusing factor and do not seem to be very intuitive for external users not familiar with the organization already. Apart from that, our findings also suggest that the wording of content on the website is not very helpful to the external users.



Recommendations

Increase Targeted Marketing and Provide Trainings for Council Members

The Council needs to understand who is the targeted audience for marketing entirely. For instance, if they seek to obtain more volunteers from the age group of twenty years old and above, Instagram would be an effective medium for marketing (Di Lauro et al., 2019) for literature on nonprofit using social media for fundraising). Moreover, training workshops will be needed for internal Council members to help them understand the current marketing tools available. Members should strive to get more flyers and use them as a promotional tool. The Council's website also needs to be regularly updated, be more resourceful for external users by having more information about local CWBs, and be more user-friendly.

Participate in Local Activities

We also recommend that the TCCWB participate in local activities to raise brand and profile awareness. Further, it would help the organization to find opportunities to promote awareness of their work. Lastly, using social media to spotlight different CWBs would also be beneficial in increasing visibility to the public.


Recruitment

Current Landscape

Difficulties in Recruitment

Perhaps the most difficult issue facing the TCCWB's ability to recruit members is the number of steps required to become a TCCWB member. First, a person seeking to join the TCCWB must be appointed by the county commissioner to their local CWB. Next, the CWB must appoint that person to their Regional Council. From there, the Regional Council selects that person to represent them at the Texas Council. That is three major steps required to join an organization, and each step has its own complications that may prevent someone from continuing forward to the next level. This finding is also supported by several reports from TCCWB members about experiencing various difficulties in recruitment at different levels of the organization.

At the county level, CWBs face challenges with recruiting new members. Although the process of being appointed to a CWB varies from county to county, all members must be officially appointed by the county commissioner. Regardless of how these members are selected, many interviewees shared that it was difficult to identify people who are interested in joining. In some counties, the county commissioner relies upon current board members to



identify and recruit potential CWB members, submitting their recommendations to the county commissioner. Some boards also solicit applications for the position. However, in some counties, CWBs have no role whatsoever in selecting board members, and the county commissioner may just appoint family, friends, or people who helped get him or her elected. Indirectly, this means that the talent pool of potential TCCWB members is limited by the decisions of county commissioners across the state. In addition to some CWBs struggling to get county commissioners courts to appoint members they want, some also struggle with getting board-approved appointments voted on and approved by county commissioners courts. When too many positions on the board are vacant, this can seriously limit the work of the CWB. We found that the above issues are especially true for rural CWBs.

Regional Councils report difficulties in recruiting CWB members to join their council. This is because many CWB members do not want to participate in Regional Councils, and this issue extends to the TCCWB. One member talked about this problem stating, “...nobody seemed interested in doing any of that stuff. They don’t really want to be on the Regional Council; they don’t want to be on the Texas Council. And I don’t know why.”


Because Regional Councils struggle to recruit and retain members, this further limits the pool of talent the TCCWB can draw its membership from. When speaking with TCCWB members, we learned that Regional Councils can differ in the way that they appoint members to the TCCWB because each Regional Council’s process can be different in their bylaws. We believe this can further complicate the process of bringing potential TCCWB members into the organization.

Demographic Makeup

Several TCCWB members have emphasized the county commissioner courts’ role in filling open spots on CWBs. Some members reported that some county commissioners appoint friends and people they know, which affects board diversity, equity, and inclusion. Because membership at the higher levels draws only from members of CWBs, a lack of diversity and inclusion at the county level will likely also be reflected in Regional Councils and the TCCWB.

Several TCCWB members and DFPS personnel commented on the current demographic makeup of the TCCWB. The most common observation was the high average age of TCCWB members, with most members being 60 or older. The same was said of CWBs as well. Many members stated that they would like to see younger people recruited into the organization. Moreover, several members noted that TCCWB members stay in their positions for long periods of time, with one member stating:

“The same people stay on the board like for twenty years. They stay on the Texas Council for ten, fifteen, or twenty years. And they were



really good but you don't get the opportunity for other people to try to be a [leader]."

One TCCWB member and a DFPS employee noted that the ethnic diversity of the Council could be improved; however, a majority of TCCWB members saw no issue with the current ethnic makeup of the Texas Council. Low levels of diversity on the Texas Council is an important factor because all actors in the foster care system are in positions to potentially perpetuate racial disparities (Pryce et al., 2019). Pryce et al. (2019) indicates that race impacts the quality of services provided to families because of implicit bias demonstrated by social workers and child welfare agents. Systemic racism and lack of access to proper resources or support impact families of color disproportionately (Chipungu & Bent-Goodley, 2004). Black children represent 23% of all children in foster care but only 14% of children in the general population (Dettlaff & Boyd, 2020; Huggins-Hoyt et al., 2019). In 2006, the Texas state legislature mandated that the foster care system address racial disparities as there is a direct correlation between racism and the risk factors that cause abuse and neglect of children (Dettlaff & Boyd, 2020). It is vital for the Texas Council to increase the diversity on their board, eliminate racial bias and ensure they are not contributing to disparities in the foster care system.


Recommendations

Develop a Recruitment Guide for CWBs

Because CWBs and Regional Councils struggle with recruitment, we think the TCCWB should play a more active role by developing a recruitment guide. The recruitment guide could include identifying specific skills in potential volunteers that would significantly improve the organization's work (ex., fundraising, advertising/marketing). Additionally, the guide could identify where to find potentially interested volunteers, perhaps from different service groups like Lions Club, Rotary Club, ICMA, NAACP chapters, CASA, local school boards, etc. This guide could also include information on how to work with county commissioners to increase the current local board's role in influencing the appointment of newer volunteers and filling vacant positions. The TCCWB could also develop a flier for county commissioners that explains the importance of CWBs and the TCCWB to new commissioners.

Identify and Utilize Potential Members-at-Large

We also believe that the TCCWB should identify needed skills and use members' networks to identify potential candidates to become members-at-large. Strategically using the TCCWB's three vacant member-at-large positions would be an excellent way to bring in younger, talented volunteers without concurrently serving as members at the local and regional levels.



Consider Recruiting Members Directly from CWBs

For a long-term recruitment strategy, the TCCWB should consider recruiting members directly from CWBs instead of relying on Regional Councils (see [Organizational Structure and Status](#) section for more detail). We believe that one reason CWB members do not want to join Regional Councils or the TCCWB is related to the limited time of volunteers serving concurrently on multiple levels, which is especially true for younger members. Another reason is a limited CWB understanding of the value of Regional Councils and the TCCWB; the TCCWB must make this value clear and participation easy, fun, and rewarding. In the short term, we also believe that the TCCWB should consider encouraging Regional Councils to standardize their procedures for appointing TCCWB members.

Improve Ethnic Diversity within the TCCWB

Members of the TCCWB presented several opportunities for improving the demographic makeup of the TCCWB and its recruitment strategies. On the issue of diversity within the organization, one Texas Council member stated:

“One of the things that we talked about in the Texas Council meeting is to make sure that the local boards are very diverse. We’ve got to be diverse enough to serve whatever our community is – that’s how we should be diversified. So if we have Blacks and Hispanics in our community, and we serve Hispanic children and Afro American children, then we need to have Hispanics or Afro American on our [county] board.”

The literature has shown that increased ethnic diversity within nonprofit boards can increase organizational performance as long as diverse members are given the opportunity for their voices to be heard and their input is utilized (Buse et al., 2016; Fredette et al., 2019; Harris, 2014).

Advertise the Activities of the TCCWB and CWBs

Other members have suggested advertising about local CWBs and the TCCWB via television, newspaper ads, and social media to increase awareness and interest in the organization to boost recruitment of members at the local level. The utilization of social media in particular has been noted as a growing method of recruitment of membership for various types of organizations (Madia, 2011). This advertising should be targeted to counties that struggle to recruit CWB members.



Consider Term Limits for TCCWB Members

Although a few members have expressed interest in board term limits for the TCCWB, we do not recommend that the Texas Council pursues term limits at this time. In the long run, however, we think term limits could be suitable for the TCCWB, but only after the TCCWB has significantly improved recruitment at the local and regional levels to ensure a large talent pool of volunteers interested in joining the TCCWB. Implementing term limits if there is not enough interest in replacing term-limited members would be counterproductive to improving the organization. The primary justification given by members for implementing term limits is to encourage new members to join the TCCWB and for new ideas to be brought to the forefront of the organization. A Bexar County representative stated that their Regional Council had implemented term limits of six or seven years, and one member of the TCCWB leadership expressed interest in the possibility of implementing term limits at the TCCWB level.


Funding and Resources

Current Landscape

The majority of internal respondents indicated the inadequate number of resources within the TCCWB, which includes a lack of human resources and significantly absent financial resources. However, when asking about their funding sources, most members only indicated one funding source from the DFPS grant and one strategy for attracting donations through the license plate program. One TCCWB member stated, "I was gonna say funding is the problem...[it] is a big deal, I think we haven't pursued [it]."

In addition, contrary to the TCCWB's expected role in supporting the Regional Councils and CWBs, the Council was sometimes asking for donations to make up for the insufficient funding within the organization. Further, a DFPS respondent pointed out that based on the contract signed between the DFPS and the TCCWB, the TCCWB has to write and submit three grants a year to expand its funding sources. However, the TCCWB does not seem to be meeting this requirement.

According to members' responses, we found two essential issues that affect the TCCWB's funding capacity. First, several members mentioned that when looking for opportunities to get grants, members prioritize their county boards ahead of securing more funding streams for the TCCWB. One member directly indicated, "...when we're trying to write for grants for that, most grants, at least the local grants that I've filled out, want to serve the local communities and not the whole state." Second, the TCCWB does not currently record its program outcomes, making it difficult to solicit grants or donations when it cannot demonstrate its impact. One external stakeholder stated,



“They’ve always struggled to raise money because, again, for what? To hold regional meetings? Well, nobody’s gonna pay for that, right?”

Based on most of the statements from TCCWB members and external stakeholders, funding sources for the local CWBs were relatively stable compared to that of the TCCWB. Most CWBs have three primary funding sources: jury fees, county budgets, and donations. However, funding disparities existed at the county level, especially between rural and urban areas. Rural counties, such as some counties located in south Texas, did not receive funding from their county, while counties in urban areas like Dallas or Houston provide stable funding for their CWBs.


Funding issues will likely be further complicated as the state of Texas continues to privatize and change its funding structure. The Family First Prevention Services Act, passed in 2018, restructured federal child welfare funding, placing an emphasis on prevention measures rather than foster care services (Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, n.d.)

Although funding has been revealed as an essential issue within the TCCWB, most respondents still have expectations for the TCCWB and provide suggestions for several areas for improvement. Both internal and external respondents indicated that the TCCWB should have a professional fundraiser with more solid fundraising strategies. One TCCWB member stated, “we might have to add a fundraiser.” Several respondents expressed their expectations that the TCCWB help with connecting nearby counties to share resources, especially for initiatives like Rainbow Rooms. Moreover, TCCWB members point out that assisting local boards to connect funding resources would be an ideal goal for the TCCWB regarding TCCWB's role in supporting the local CWBs. Some TCCWB members and external stakeholders even mentioned that the TCCWB should provide more funding to the local CWBs directly. Lastly, the TCCWB should assess how it fits into the changing model of Texas foster care, especially as it relates to the Family First Prevention Services Act to ensure that it remains eligible and competitive for funding.

Recommendations

Recruit a Fundraising Professional

Hiring a fundraising professional would be the most practical and effective strategy to address the fundamental issue of lack of funding and resources. Sargeant & Shang (2016) indicate that fundraising leadership is a crucial element in elevating fundraising performance that requires fundraising expertise and the mindset of embedment in the organization. This fundraising professional will focus on fundraising for the TCCWB first, then work on distributing resources to the local CWBs after the TCCWB builds up stable funding. An alternative to hiring a



fundraising professional is recruiting one by making them a member-at-large. More details on this can be found under recommendations in the Recruiting section of this document.

Diversify Funding Sources


Pursuing a diverse funding stream is critical for nonprofits to establish a healthy financial foundation. Carroll and Stater (2009) indicate that nonprofits can reduce their revenue volatility and promote greater organizational longevity through building funding diversification. Therefore, the TCCWB should prioritize looking for funding sources other than the DFPS and CWB members in developing future fundraising programs or campaigns. To accomplish this goal, the TCCWB could use the [Outreach Plan](#) to identify possible funding sources. A more straightforward strategy would be to create more opportunities for digital donations. For instance, the TCCWB should create and publicize an Amazon Smile account for Amazon to donate a certain percentage of money spent by the public or even CWB members buying things for the Rainbow Rooms. The TCCWB should encourage CWBs to participate, and it could consider attempting to redistribute some of this money back to them through a process similar to how license plate funding is distributed. Additionally, the TCCWB could run digital fundraising ads on social media sites like Facebook; the cost is often low and high payoff. Warner & Hatchmann (2014) find that social media effectively engages existing and potential donors, volunteers, and stakeholders to be involved in nonprofit work. By providing more involvement opportunities for the public and stakeholders through social media, there will also be more opportunities open for funding and donations.

Provide Fundraising Support to CWBs

Based on the TCCW's mission of supporting the work of CWBs, the TCCWB could provide a fundraising packet as a guide for different fundraising events that CWBs could put on to raise money for their board. The TCCWB should also create a detailed how-to guide for CWBs to get and increase county funding, jury fee funding, or funding from community chest organizations like United Way. As soon as possible, the Texas Council should avoid fundraising from its own members and instead provide more funds to CWBs.

Encourage Collaboration and Assist CWBs with County Level Efforts

To respond to CWB's interest in TCCWB assistance with Rainbow Rooms, the Texas Council could help facilitate joint county board cooperation. Perhaps the simplest and most helpful thing the TCCWB could do is keep the contact list updated for CWBs to communicate with each other. The Texas Council could also create a survey of CWBs to understand how their emergency resource rooms are operated, what items are most needed, and best practices that could be shared with other CWBs. Another thing the Texas Council should consider is providing



a platform (like the Facebook page) for county boards to request and exchange items in emergency resource rooms. For example, one CWB could post in the group to ask for diapers, and other CWBs could respond to donate extra diapers they have or swap them for something else. This would require little work from the TCCWB but could be very valuable to CWBs. As for a much longer-term goal, the TCCWB could consider playing a more active role in resource sharing by organizing a centralized inventory system that helps coordinate regional needs for emergency resource rooms.

Advocacy


Current Landscape

Members who participated in the TCCWB's advocacy work generally expressed that they gained value and a sense of accomplishment. The TCCWB used to visit legislators doing advocacy under the lead of Tex-Protects during the legislative session every two years. However, since Tex-Protects' previous executive CEO retired, Tex-Protects decided to stop organizing Children's Advocacy Day. There were twice that the TCCWB's advocacy committee tried to lead its own Children's Advocacy Day by delivering its advocacy theme packet to legislators. The advocacy committee made the first try an in-person office visit to the Capitol but had the second time by post due to the COVID pandemic. Since then, COVID significantly halted the progress of TCCWB's advocacy work. Therefore, for most internal members, their description of the advocacy work conducted by the TCCWB remained at the time of alliance with the Tex-Protect. Even the members involved in the advocacy work thought the TCCWB was not mature in leading the advocacy. One internal member stated the reality of the TCCWB's advocacy work,

"...what happened with the advocacy work was that [the] Texas Council never really took on the advocacy itself."

Along with the fact that the TCCWB was not active in leading political advocacy and building networks among legislators, legislators were less familiar with the TCCWB's role in the foster care system. When talking about the difficulties in doing advocacy, one TCCWB member stated,

"A lot of [legislative] offices don't even know what child welfare boards are, but that's not good...I can't go in there and demand something if I have to explain who we are first."



Both internal members and external stakeholders showed interest and expectations for the TCCWB in leading and organizing advocacy. Almost all respondents mentioned the importance of advocacy work for raising public awareness on foster care issues as the TCCWB's primary role in improving the foster care system. One internal respondent stated, "I think that educating boards on what their advocacy [role is] and, you know, awareness could look like would be huge." In addition to advocating for children's wellbeing, external stakeholders expressed expectations for the TCCWB to advocate for people who serve in the Texas foster care system, such as DFPS and Child Protective Services (CPS) employees and caseworkers. One external stakeholder stated, "I think there should be more advocacy for the agency and the caseworkers themselves." The DFPS and CPS workers are critical human resources to support and take care of the kids in the foster care system. Therefore, advocating for a better working situation is a way to support their work to make them more likely to provide higher qualities of care to the children.


Recommendations

Take a Leading Role in Child Welfare Advocacy in the State

The nonprofit sector is an essential structure mediating between the government and the community (Reid, 2006; Leroux & Goerdel, 2009; Almog-Bar & Schmid, 2013; Lu, 2018). The role of the TCCWB as a bridge between the DFPS and the local CWBs provides the TCCWB with the best position that could convey information from the DFPS and have first-hand knowledge from the CWBs. Therefore, leading the advocacy for foster care services should be essential for the TCCWB in its supporting role between the DFPS and the local CWBs. It also allows the TCCWB to serve as a voice for its constituency to improve their well-being by bringing ideological and structural changes to the existing system (Almog-Bar & Schmid, 2013; Mellinger, 2014; Lu, 2018). To fulfill this role, the TCCWB should actively lead the advocacy day during the legislative session and plan to organize a vast turnout from the local CWBs to increase the volume of the advocacy and raise awareness throughout the state. In addition, partnering with other organizations with the same advocacy focus could also expand the capacity for advocacy and achieve a broader effect. Bass et al. (2007) indicate that as the capacity of collaborative networking increased, a nonprofit could develop better skills for influencing decision making, build strong coalition partners to address policy issues, and communicate with elected officials.

Establish and Maintain Relationships with Legislators and HHS Personnel

Facilitating the establishment and maintenance of relationships with the respective legislators and members of the Health and Human Services (HHS) committee would help build up the reputation and status of the TCCWB in conducting advocacy for foster care services. This



relationship-building could benefit future advocacy work with fewer obstacles and more supporting volunteers. To maintain the continuous relationship with the HHS committee members, the TCCWB should develop a plan to educate and interact with legislators outside of the legislative session.

Advocate for DFPS and CPS Personnel

DFPS and CPS workers are critical human resources to support and take care of the kids in the foster care system. Therefore, it is valuable for the TCCWB to advocate for a better working situation for employees working in the foster care system. It also aligns with the TCCWB's role in supporting the DFPS and the local CWBs to do their jobs better. More importantly, it would benefit the kids in the foster care system because if we take better care of DFPS and CPS workers, they can take better care of children in the foster care system.



TCCWB Committee Smart Goals

What are SMART Goals and why are they useful?

SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (The Management Center, 2021). The SMART framework's elements work together to create a goal that is well-thought-out, measurable, and attainable. The SMART goal framework establishes boundaries and defines the steps, resources and milestones needed to track progress (The Management Center, 2021). The TCCWB is more likely to reach their objectives efficiently and effectively by using SMART goals.

Setting goals is a good strategy for the individual committees and organization as a whole to progress and reach the goals set. Creating SMART goals allows the committees and TCCWB members to strategically plan how to use time and resources by identifying targets and creating a clear roadmap for how the committee and organization members will get there. When setting a goal, make sure to include all of the steps required for the achievement, which are listed below. Consider the following when utilizing the SMART goals framework.

Table 2: SMART Goal Framework

SPECIFIC	For a goal to be effective, it must be focused on a specific, tangible outcome. What do you want to do?
MEASURABLE	Measurements (by numbers or defined qualities) can help you track progress to the goal. How will you know when the goal has been met?
ACHIEVABLE	Goals must be challenging enough that completing them would be significant progress but not so challenging that they are unachievable. Considering resources, capacity, and execution, can we feasibly accomplish this?
RELEVANT	Goals should bridge the gap between your current mission/activities and your long-term vision of success. Does the goal align with the goals of the TCCWB?
TIME-BOUND	Goals should include a clear deadline. When will the goal be feasibly accomplished?



Committee SMART Goals:

The following SMART goals were developed by members of each of the TCCWB's committees using the framework as described above. Developing these goals from the ground-up promotes buy-in from the members that will be executing these goals, making successful implementation more likely (La Piana & Campos, 2018).

Advocacy


1. Create broad public awareness of the TCCWB through scheduled presentations and participation in round tables and other related events by 12/31/2022.
2. Recruit three at large members to TCCWB through Board member recruitment by 12/21/22.
3. Publish legislative agenda by 12/31/2022.
4. Increase social media presence by creating content for advocacy alerts and our webpage.

Awards

1. Receive a completed application for each award, from all 11 regions for the next award cycle.
 - a. This would mean that because there are currently six annual awards, they would receive a total of 66 applications per year since only one application from each region is selected.
2. Collect more data about what our history of recipients is, so that we can use this as a highlight of our programs for potential funders
 - a. Compile and include the amount of money awarded each year and the combined total of all TCCWB awards presentations.
3. Increase the funding for the annual award banquet by asking each county for a donation of \$50 or more, if they are able to.
4. Brainstorm potential contacts that could donate a computer, like was done in previous years, and reach out to those contacts to see if they could provide one each year for the two outstanding youth award recipients.

Fostering Brighter Futures

1. Find a co-chair and attend nine out of 10 meetings. Set up access to information before 3/11/22.

- 
2. Build a true committee, consisting of one representative from each region. Have five out of 11 regions by our 12/11/22 meeting.
 3. Post one post per week up to December 2022.
 4. Find an intern by reaching out to Texas A&M Kingsville professor in Social Work to get an intern. Consider alternative partnerships with other universities and the potential for more than one internship available with the TCCWB.

Education

1. Define Committee Parameters done by 10/31/2022.
2. Update the TCCWB website by 10/31/2022.
3. Update TCCWB Website from current platform to Wix by 10/31/2022.
4. Update and adjust the current trainings provided by the TCCWB by 10/31/2022.
5. Develop and release video trainings for training manual by 02/28/2023.

Resource Development

1. Raise \$1,000 in individual donations by next year.
2. Identify five sources of plausible funding (foundations, corporations, sports teams) by the Fall meeting.
3. Create a fundraising packet with success stories from successful counties and regions, county budgets and fundraising ideas and examples.
 - a. This will be provided to all counties, covering:
 - i. All programmatic activities and other events.
 - ii. Research gathering information over 6 months.
 - iii. Will produce products over the following 6 months.
4. Develop a transition binder for the chair to hand down to the next person in that role.
5. Have \$20,000 to create a financial safety net, with the short-term goal being \$5,000

Objectives and Accountability

When setting SMART goals, it is helpful to break each goal down into smaller steps to achieve these goals. Assigning responsibility for these objectives to members helps maintain accountability and ensures that these tasks are completed. At our February meeting with the Texas Council, we conducted a similar activity by identifying necessary intermediate steps and ensuring that transparency and direct responsibility were assumed by the appropriate committee member.

Customized steps to achieve an optimal outcome must be identified and completed. For each goal, ask “What steps must be taken to accomplish this goal, and who will be responsible for each step?” Each task must have an ambitious deadline to ensure progress but still be realistic enough that it is achievable by the responsible team member. To access the handout for setting future goals for the TCCWB, see **Appendix A. Table 3** on the page below contains examples of accountability breakdowns for some of the goals created by TCCWB committees:

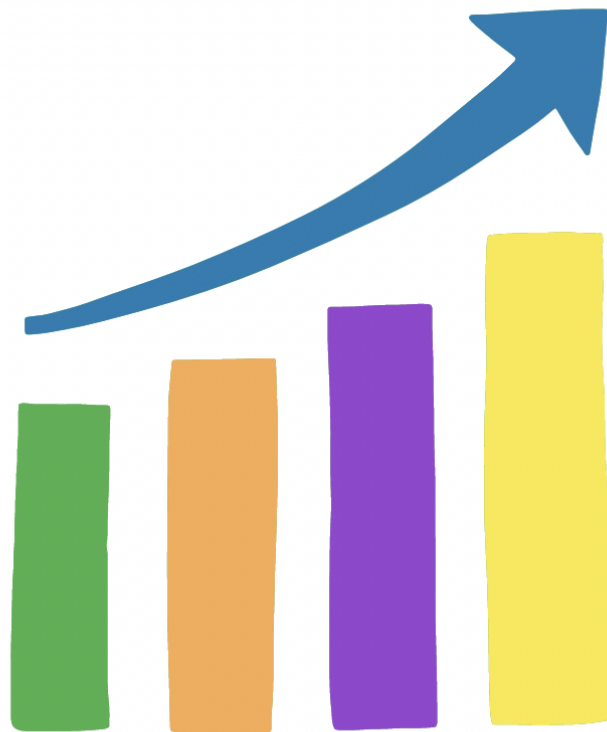


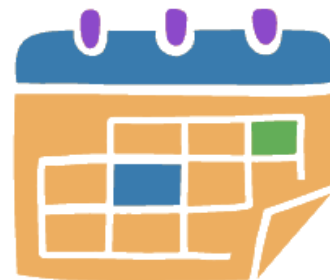
Table 3: Accountability Breakdown by Committee

Advocacy			
Goal	Task related to SMART Goal	Deadline	Team Member Responsible
Create Awareness	Send four advocacy alerts per year, do presentations for various stakeholder groups with a goal of two per year	12/31/22	Joel, George, Janet
Increase Recruitment	Create content for advocacy posts and do more outreach with DFPS	Ongoing	Joel Levine
Awards			
Goal	Task related to SMART Goal	Deadline	Team Member Responsible
Receive More Applications	Have updated application ready to send out earlier, send three rounds of reminders to all regions	06/01/22	Diane Glover
Collect More Data	Find records of all past recipients, create a spreadsheet with that information, compile names into a document that is easily accessible and includes the total amount awarded	12/31/22	Jeanette Elias, with support from all committee members
Fostering Brighter Futures			
Goal	Task related to SMART Goal	Deadline	Team Member Responsible
Build up Committee	Get one representative from each region, ongoing process of advertising the committee to all regions in Texas	12/07/22	Catherine Earley and Jennifer Kremer Oliva
Find an Intern	Make connections with three professors, establish a relationship with Texas A&M Kingsville and find two other university professors	4/30/22	Catherine Earley





Education			
Goal	Task related to SMART Goal	Deadline	Team Member Responsible
Define Committee Parameters	Improving the goals set for committee and members	10/31/22	All Committee Members
Update TCCWB Website	Make manual accessible and digestible, create clear guidelines for all board members, adding interactive table of contents, and including bylaws inside the training manual	10/31/22	All Committee Members
Resource Development			
Goal	Task related to SMART Goal	Deadline	Team Member Responsible
Define Committee Parameters	Improving the goals set for committee and members	10/31/22	All Committee Members
Update TCCWB Website	Make manual accessible and digestible, create clear guidelines for all board members, adding interactive table of contents, and including bylaws inside the training manual	10/31/22	All Committee Members



Implementation Plan

This implementation plan describes the goals and deadlines of each committee to serve as a guide toward successful implementation and bring the strategic plan to life. When using this implementation plan, consider what resources, personnel, and time are necessary to accomplish each goal and objective, similar to the SMART Goals activity in **Appendix A**.

We organized the [SMART Goals](#) by their deadlines to make tracking progress easier for the Executive Committee.

Table 4: Committee SMART Goals Organized by Deadline

F	Fostering Brighter Futures committee	AW	Awards committee	AD	Advocacy committee	R	Resource Development committee	E	Education committee		
Goals	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
F	Find a co-chair & set up information	2/25									
F	Post one post	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
F	Find an intern			4/30							
AW	Receive all the award applications				6/1						
AD	Increase social media presence		√			√		√			√
R	Fundraising packet information collect						8/1				
R	Identify five funding sources						8/31				
AW	Increase funding for annual awards								10/31		
AW	Reach to potential donors for awards								10/31		
E	Research training								10/31		
E	Define committee purpose								10/31		
E	Update website contents								10/31		
E	Update website to new platform Wix								10/31		
AD	Recruit three at-large members										12/21
AW	Collect data about history of recipients										12/31
AD	Relationship building presentation with outside groups										12/31
AD	Foster care issue round table										12/31
AD	Publish legislative agenda										12/31
F	Raise \$1,000 in individual donations										1/1/2023
R	Produce fundraising packet										1/31/2023
R	Develop a transition binder for the chair										1/31/2023
E	Develop and release video training for training manual										2/28/2023
R	Create a \$5,000 financial safety net										8/31/2023
R	Develop a safety net to \$20,000										1/31/2025





Communication Plan

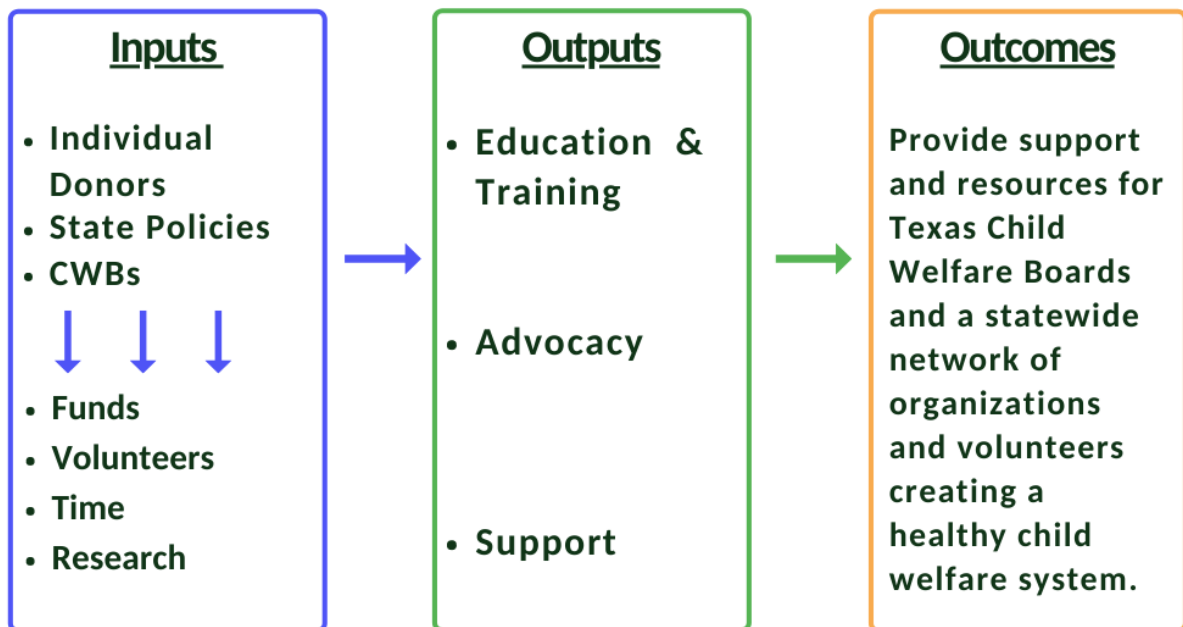
We have created a [communication plan](#) to support the TCCWB with their internal and external communication strategy. This is intended to be used by Texas Council members to improve their communication with county members, Regional Council members, and external stakeholders that could support the mission of the Texas Council. The communication plan's objective is to provide insight into how to engage and communicate with stakeholders both internally and externally. As a result, it is broken down into two parts—internal communication and external communication. Both are critical to increase the engagement among internal and external stakeholders and promote the TCCWB's mission (Whitworth, 2006). The communications plan has been sent out in a separate document to the members of the Executive Council.

To connect volunteers, staff, and other stakeholders with the TCCWB mission statement, it is vital to increase internal communication within the TCCWB. Furthermore, internal communication improves the organization's ability to learn from mistakes, reduce organizational risk, and evolve at a faster rate (Whitworth, 2006). The internal communications plan contains suggestions for how the TCCWB might improve communication with county boards, Regional Councils, and within the TCCWB itself. This is critical to ensure that the TCCWB, Regional Council members, and county members are aware of current issues and events happening within the child welfare system and how Child Welfare Board members can engage with the Texas Council. This will increase productivity and better align the mission and goals of the organization (Li et al., 2021).

The external communication plan provides information on social media, outreach, and marketing strategies to increase external outreach. This is a very detailed “how-to” guide that will allow the Texas Council to follow a step-by-step process to increase the quality of external communication. Examples and links will provide further information as you read through the guide. We have also provided examples and templates of emails that can be used to solicit donations from potential donors. External communication strategies are an effective component of receiving donations and increasing your organization's exposure to the community (Seo & Vu, 2020). The guide focuses on social media as it is an excellent method to connect with a larger demographic. Social media allows the TCCWB to cast a wider net and find supporters who believe in their mission. Additionally, social media is a great way to receive donations and share information about any events (Seo & Vu, 2020). It is an excellent way to stay engaged and connected with Texas Council members, regions, counties, and all other stakeholders.

Logic Model

TCCWB Logic Model



Outreach Plan

Community outreach will allow the TCCWB to increase its external support by gaining more volunteers and assistance for child welfare advocacy, building capacity for its programs, and increasing funding to further the mission. An outreach plan is an important part of a strategic plan as it increases the capacity of the organization by coordinating outreach through funding materials, grant applications, and partnership lists (Brown & Cooper, 2021).

Our team has provided the TCCWB with multiple materials to prepare the organization for successful community outreach initiatives. These include the Funder Infographic (located in [Appendix B](#)), a TCCWB [logic model](#) and a partnership list ([Table 5](#)) that entails contact information for nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and potential funders. The Partnership List below outlines how to use the provided materials to successfully achieve your fundraising and outreach goals. **Table 5**, the partnership list, is broken into two sections: Nonprofits and public organizations, and potential funders. This table provides a list of potential partners for the organization by including their organization name, their purpose and their website.



Table 5: TCCWB Partnership List

Org Category	Org Name	Purpose	Website
Nonprofits	Communities in Schools	Partner	Communities In Schools of Texas
	Safe Families for Children	Partner	Safe Families for Children
	Children's Rights	Partner/Funding/Resource	Child welfare organizations
	Texas Association of Counties	Partner	Texas Association of Counties
	Council on Urban Counties	Partner	Texas Conference of Urban Counties
	The Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services (TACFS)	Partner/Resource	TACFS
	Texas Network of Youth Services	Partner/Resource	TNOYS
Government Entity	Children's Bureau	Grants & Funding	Children's Bureau
	Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP) Grants		CBCAP Grants
	Texas Family and Protective Services Council Members	Partner	Texas Family and Protective Services Council Members
	Single Source Continuum Contractors	Resource	SSCC

Table 5: TCCWB Partnership List (Continued)

Org Category	Org Name	Purpose	Website
Potential Funder	American Legion Child Welfare Foundation	Funding	Grantseekers Overview
	The Rees-Jones Foundation	Funding	The Rees-Jones Foundation
	W.K. Kellogg Foundation	Funding	W.K. Kellogg Foundation Grants
	Annie E. Casey Foundation	Funding	Annie E. Casey Foundation
	Collaboration	Funding	FRIENDS National Center Collaboration
	David and Lucile Packard Foundation	Funding	David and Lucile Packard Foundation
	Doris Duke Charitable Foundation	Funding	Doris Duke Charitable Foundation
	Rural health Information Hub	Funding	Rural health Information Hub Funding
	Susan Dell Foundation	Funding	Dell Grants
	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	Funding	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grants



TCCWB OUTREACH PLAN

Step 1

Define Goals & Objectives

Select concrete, achievable goals and metrics. It is best to discuss and solidify what you want out of a funder or partner to set appropriate expectations.



Step 2

Identify your targets

Who is your audience? Break them down into groups so that you can craft personalized messages for each group (ex: federal grantors receive a different message than a local nonprofit partner).



Step 3

Create Your Message

Create attention-grabbing, specific messages for each group you've identified.



Step 4

Package Your Message

Determine the best format for your messages. Some audiences, like grantors, may have a required form. Other audiences may be more receptive to various forms of outreach (phone, social media, events, etc.).



Step 5

Distribute the Message

Make a plan for getting your message out and then execute!



Step 6

Provide More Information

Once your audience has received your message, you can provide them with more information, particularly about direct benefits to them.



Step 7

Evaluate Your Plan

What worked? What did not? What will you change next time you talk with this audience or adapt for a different audience?



www.tccwb.org

Figure D: Outreach Plan



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Next Steps





Next Steps

Performance Indicators

After having implemented a number of solutions to strategic issues identified in this strategic plan, the TCCWB can consider establishing performance indicators for each of their programs and/or activities. In their most basic form, performance indicators are used as targets for organizations to work towards and to evaluate their success (Lee & Nowell, 2015). They can be thought of as milestones to not only gauge progress but also insight that aids all members of the organization in key decision making. This is how the TCCWB can measure their progress towards achieving their program outcomes and their impact. By that same token, these indicators can be used for reporting purposes as well.


Performance indicators are essential to organizations for various reasons. Among the most important are:

- Creating alignment within the organization altogether or specific committees
- Providing a realistic snapshot of organizational health, which includes financial factors and potential threats
- Identifying what is working well and is getting them closer to success and what could be improved
- Holding members accountable for their individual contributions and progress towards meeting their objectives

Below are a few examples of performance indicators for nonprofit organizations working in the field of child welfare:

- Number of workshops given to service providers
- Dollar value of clothes and shoes given to children
- Hours of volunteer work mentoring children
- Average time to close a child wellbeing-check case
- Growth in revenue
- Number of children served
- Member satisfaction rating
- Donor retention rate or growth

Based on discussions with various TCCWB stakeholders throughout the process of creating this strategic plan, the following are recommendations for potential performance indicators that fit the mission and activities. It is worth noting that as an external third party, we



are limited in fully grasping the member workload, the organization's capacity, and therefore, the feasibility of these sample performance indicators. As such, these should only be considered as illustrative of what performance indicators could look like once created with input from all levels of the TCCWB.

They are as follows:

1. Number of new TCCWB members and retention rate
2. Number of attendants at TCCWB semi-annual meetings
3. Dollar value of tangible resources or supplies granted to local CWBs and/or Regional Councils
4. Monthly TCCWB website traffic
5. Number of live trainings and workshops provided to TCCWB members
6. Number of applications received for the yearly TCCWB award ceremony
7. Dollar amount of financial support given directly to TCCWB award recipients (i.e. outstanding male and female of the year)
8. Number of Advocacy alerts and/or TCCWB website posts
9. Number of gifts and donations secured by the TCCWB
10. Online Gift Percentage
11. Total number of CWBs reached in the state of Texas
12. Number of relationship-building and networking opportunities with external key actors

As an example, below are some performance indicators for the TCCWB to monitor as they follow the strategic plan. These indicators will be important markers for the organization to consider regarding its success and determining next steps. These guiding questions have been broken into three categories: contextual factors, post transition organization, and post transition leadership. The first, contextual factors, initiate consideration of the organization's current resources, feedback, organizational culture, and more. The second, organizational transition, is to identify how the strategic plan is affecting the organization as a whole. Lastly, post transition leadership takes into account the effect on leadership.

The performance indicators depicted in **Table 6** have been formatted as a series of questions for the TCCWB to consider. It is difficult to predict how the organization will react to the strategic plan as time goes on. These questions allow the leadership to reflect on the changes being made and consider any future steps.

Table 6: Indicators to Consider for Next Steps

Domain	Guiding Questions	Sample Indicators
Contextual Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is the TCCWB meeting county boards’ and Regional Councils’ expectations of training and advocacy? ● What activities have the TCCWB participated in and what were the benefits? ● Do the child welfare boards have diverse leadership and representation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the rate of interaction with the County/Regional Council with the training manual? ● Has the TCCWB offered assistance with family group decision-making meetings, foster parent training, or foster youth conferences? ● Does the TCCWB have a diverse range of representation in age, gender, race/ethnicity, and other factors?
Post Transition Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have your communication strategies stayed the same, improved, or declined? ● Has there been any more clarity on the Structure of the TCCWB? Is information being adequately distributed across the levels of the TCCWB? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Has the TCCWB’s Relationship with the Regional Councils and county boards increased? ● Is there less confusion and need for clarification internally? ● Do all levels of the organization feel as though they are updated on relevant information in a timely manner?
Post Transition Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is the organization meeting its goals? ● Has the Leadership of the TCCWB monitored the state of the smart goals set by executive committees? ● Have the changes in leadership activities aided or hindered organizational activities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have the SMART goals set in February been met and completed? Have any more been set? ● Have new goals been set? Have more opportunities opened up to the organization? ● Are operations functioning as expected?

Guide to Prepare for an Updated Plan

This strategic plan has considered the organization’s past and present to formulate a toolset to aid in their development and overall growth. It was written with the intention of strengthening and developing the TCCWB over the next three years. Updating and adjusting the plan as needed is vital to its success and sustainability, therefore it is recommended to update the strategic plan every three years (La Piana & Campos, 2018). To do this, the TCCWB can use performance indicators, such as those indicated in the Next Steps section of the plan, to track progress as components of the strategic plan are implemented. These indicators will be crucial for the Texas Council to use when judging its performance and next actions. The TCCWB should assess the qualitative performance indicators displayed in **Table 6** above, which have been presented as a series of questions. It is impossible to forecast how the organization will respond to a strategic change over time. These questions will help the leadership reflect on the changes that have been made and identify any necessary adjustments that can be made moving forward.

It is our hope that your leadership and committees use this strategic plan and its tools to successfully achieve your mission. We thank you all for your time and feedback over the last few months as it was vital to our end goal and recommendations. We wish you luck and success!

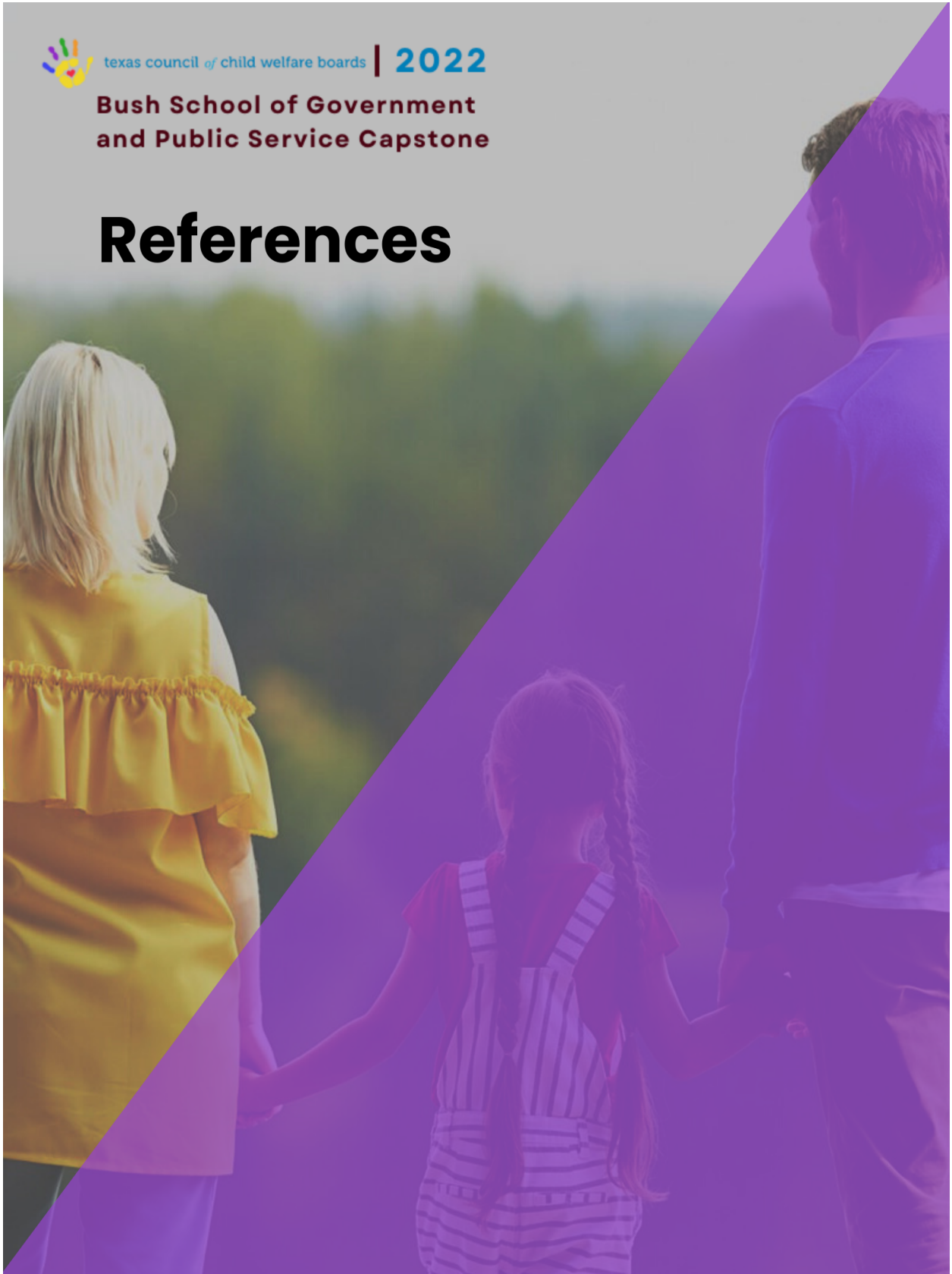




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Appendices



Appendices

Appendix A: SMART Goal Worksheets

SMART Goals Worksheet

SPECIFIC	For a goal to be effective, it must be focused on a specific, tangible outcome. What do you want to do?
MEASURABLE	Measurements (by numbers or defined qualities) can help you track progress to the goal. How will you know when the goal has been met?
ACHIEVABLE	Goals must be challenging enough that completing them would be significant progress but not so challenging that they are unachievable. Considering resources, capacity, and execution, can we feasibly accomplish this?
RELEVANT	Goals should bridge the gap between your current mission/activities and your long-term vision of success. Does the goal align with the goals of the TCCWB?
TIME-BOUND	Goals should include a clear deadline. When will the goal be feasibly accomplished?

SMART Goal Examples

- Build a volunteer team of 100 door-to-door canvassers by September.
- Increase web traffic by 20% by the end of the year.



Use This Template to Write Your SMART Goals

Relevant: To improve our current activity of _____ to reach our vision of success _____, we will set the **Specific** goal of _____.

I will know success when I see it using these **Measurable** standards:

-

An **Achievable** plan to achieve this goal includes these tactics/activities (consider time, resources, capacity):

	By (date)
	By (date)
	By (date)

Time-Bound: My goal will be achieved between _____ (start date) and _____ (end date)

Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Time-Bound





Write your completed SMART Goals Here:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



Appendix B: TCCWB Committee SMART Goal Accountability Worksheet

Committee Name: _____

TCCWB Member Name: _____

Goal #	Task related to SMART Goal	Deadline	Team Member Responsible

Appendix C: Funder Infographic (Page 1)



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WHO IS THE TEXAS COUNCIL OF CHILD WELFARE BOARDS?



COLLABORATION

Coordinate with public, private, community, and judicial resources in pioneering solutions that support children and families and work to eliminate abuse.



EMERGENCY RESOURCES

Support Rainbow Rooms and other emergency resource centers that are available to CPS caseworkers to help them meet the critical needs of abused and neglected children.



FUNDING

County boards contribute \$20-30 million dollars annually to meet children's needs that cannot be met by the limited state funding of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS).



ADVOCACY AND COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Sponsor public awareness events to promote child abuse prevention and recruit foster and adoptive homes.



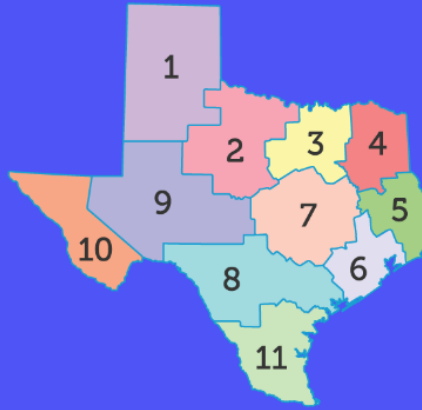
VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Contact your local board for opportunities in your area.
<http://www.tccwb.org/boards/>

HELP SUPPORT THE TCCWB TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF TEXAS YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE.

<http://www.tccwb.org/>

Appendix C: Funder Infographic (Page 2)



Region	Email Address	Website
Region 1	region1@tccwb.org	www.tccwb.org/boards/region-1/
Region 2	region2@tccwb.org	www.tccwb.org/boards/region-2/
Region 3	region3@tccwb.org	www.tccwb.org/boards/region-3/
Region 4	region4@tccwb.org	www.tccwb.org/boards/region-4/
Region 5	region5@tccwb.org	www.tccwb.org/boards/region-5/
Region 6	region6@tccwb.org	www.tccwb.org/boards/region-6/
Region 7	region7@tccwb.org	www.tccwb.org/boards/region-7/
Region 8	region8@tccwb.org	www.tccwb.org/boards/region-8/
Region 9	region9@tccwb.org	www.tccwb.org/boards/region-9/
Region 10	region10@tccwb.org	www.tccwb.org/boards/region-10/
Region 11	region11@tccwb.org	www.tccwb.org/boards/region-11/

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