



Disability Inclusive Communities

Community Assessment Toolkit

**Texas Health and Human
Services**

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Read Only Version



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1. Introduction

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) offers services designed to assist people with disabilities with opportunities to enhance independence and involvement in their community. Through its initiatives, HHSC is committed to enhancing the quality of life for all Texans with disabilities.

The Disability Inclusive Community project is an initiative to assist people and communities in integrating a person with disabilities into all aspects of community life. By describing the process of assessment and implementation, this toolkit will assist communities with initiation or improving the inclusiveness of all citizens, especially those with disabilities. Texas is an Employment First state, and this toolkit will address Texans with disabilities who may not be employed due to chronological age, degree of, physical or cognitive impairment, or a combination of disabilities. How they spend their day, how they would like to spend their day and the community's efforts to include these individuals will be the focus of this toolkit.

Integration into the community is inevitable for a person receiving Medicaid services in Texas. In March 2014, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) issued federal regulations adding requirements for settings where Medicaid Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) are provided. The regulations require a Medicaid HCBS setting be selected by the person and have other qualities based on the person's needs indicated in a person-centered service plan. CMS has given states until March 17, 2023, to bring Medicaid programs into compliance with the regulations.

CMS issued the HCBS Settings Rule at 42 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §§441.301(c), 441.710(a), and 441.530 which focuses on the provision of opportunities and the inclusion of people with disabilities to live, work, and receive services in integrated, community settings where they can fully engage in community life. The clarification in the HCBS Settings Rule aligns with Texas' commitment to providing a full range of services and supports in the most integrated settings possible.

The HCBS Settings Rule requirements listed below have been used as a guide and reference during the development of this toolkit:

- The setting is integrated and supports full access for people receiving Medicaid HCBS to the greater community, including opportunities to seek

employment and work in competitive integrated settings, engage in community life, control personal resources, and receive services in the community, to the same degree of access as individuals not receiving Medicaid HCBS;

- The setting is selected by the person from among setting options including non-disability specific settings and an option for a private unit in a residential setting. The setting options are identified and documented in the person-centered service plan and are based on the person's needs, preferences, and resources available for room and board for residential settings;
- Ensures a person's rights of privacy, dignity and respect, and freedom from coercion and restraint;
- Optimizes, but does not regiment, individual initiative, autonomy, and independence in making life choices, including but not limited to, daily activities, physical environment, and with whom to interact; and
- Facilitates individual choice regarding services and supports, and who provides them.

Community, civic, and municipal entities collaboration will be essential to the success of this initiative as communities around Texas embrace all citizens and realize the unique enhancements inclusion offers. People with disabilities, outside the workplace, have historically been excluded in the community, and segregated in various settings such as day habilitation centers, sheltered workshops, skilled nursing facilities, etc. Becoming a community member means being a part of the community in all aspects of community living such as attending religious activities, participating in community organizations, volunteering, etc. The opportunity to become a fully participating community member allows a person with disabilities to pursue their own dreams; it also provides the chance for them to interact with and become an active contributor to their community. Special interest classes, co-op workspaces, and volunteering with organizations of their choice are all opportunities that reduce social isolation and educate the individual and other community members to the unique qualities each has to offer.

The full implementation of this toolkit will require commitment and a willingness to learn more about the community, its citizens and explore innovative ideas to engage and include all community members. This guide consists of four units:

- Understanding Why Inclusion is Important
- Inclusive Community Values

- Inclusive Community Assessment
- Next Steps

The process for each community will be unique. This toolkit is designed to be a guide to assist in moving forward in recognizing the exceptional value each person brings to the community. This toolkit is intended to provide an outline for partnership, assessment, consensus, progress, and next steps. It is expected that all aspects of the community will be impacted by this project. It is also anticipated that local government representatives will need to be included to address any physical and budgetary needs. This may be especially true in relation to local transportation.

As noted previously, each community will have a unique approach to the use of this toolkit. Understanding why inclusion is important and the values held by the community are essential in effectively assessing where the community sees its inclusiveness. Thoroughly assessing services and supports is vital to the outcome of this undertaking of inclusion.

Once the assessment process is complete, community task force members will have information for identifying and implementing community outcomes. These outcomes will bring people and organizations together to move forward in becoming an inclusive community which values the unique qualities and skills of all its citizens.

Implementing outcomes is not the final step. Assessing the progress of those outcomes is vital to success. Re-evaluating initial outcome goals may be needed. Next steps will need to be recommended, revised, and implemented.

This is an ongoing process requiring commitment and will evolve over time. However, the ultimate outcome is a community where all citizens are involved, contributing, and committed to ensuring the community's inclusiveness and vitality.

2. Understanding Why Inclusion is Important

Understanding the importance of inclusion can be summed up by stating that all citizens regardless of age, economic, educational, social, or physical status should be engaged in participating in the full range of available community activities. Those activities include, but are not limited to work, education, participation in religious organizations, public and/or private social/service organizations, recreational activities, volunteerism, etc.

Regardless of ability or disability, everyone should be encouraged to participate in the life of the community. Most facets of life are aimed toward a non-disabled person. As a result, a person with disabilities may be isolated from participation and enjoyment that occurs from the benefits of being fully engaged in community life.

There are various levels of inclusion:

1. **Presence:** Living in a community but having little to no contact with others in the community. People with disabilities are isolated by choice or physical limitations. These limitations can be a personal physical limitation, a living/work environment, or by the availability of personal assistance or transportation.
2. **Encounter:** Interactions with others that occur when out shopping, eating in restaurants, visiting museums or other community locations. These interactions do not result in participation leading to the development of relationships or the feeling of being included in the life of the community.
3. **Participation:** Cultivation of friendships and connections with others through meaningful associations with other people regardless of ability through the participation in the life of the community. Participation requires a sense of acceptance, belonging, and equality and is essential to inclusion in the community.

To participate in the life of the community and enhance the value of life, everyone, including people with disabilities, should be provided the same opportunities and support personalized to their individual needs. Many people with disabilities are overlooked when it comes to the need for socialization, participation, education, employment, etc., because programs or organizations do not accommodate for the range of needs for those wanting to participate. It is essential these entities recognize the value and benefits of diversity.

An inclusive environment enriches society through:

- Ensuring continued growth;
- Expanded life experiences;
- Relationship development;
- Expanded employment opportunities; and
- Reduced social isolation.

Not only does inclusion benefit non-disabled people by providing opportunities to meet and get to know others with disabilities, but it also allows people with disabilities to develop skills that will enhance their contribution to the community. This enhances the quality of life for everyone.

There are many examples of ways to encourage inclusion. One is volunteerism. This is free for everyone; however, it provides opportunities for social interactions and skill development. A second example is Timebanking. According to [TimeBank.org](https://www.timebank.org/), Timebanking is a movement “where time is currency, accessing the untapped assets while fostering care, respect, and justice in our communities.” One hour of service equals one credit. These credits can be used to receive services or donated for others to receive services.

3. Inclusive Community Values

A welcoming and inclusive community provides opportunities and encouragement for all citizens of the community to be a participating member. Community membership goes beyond being in community settings but also includes participating in community life. Community participation and contribution are vital components of true inclusive community membership. Developing an inclusive environment, community partners work together through assessment, planning, and implementation of the areas identified in this toolkit. Inclusive communities have values that support all community members.

Inclusive Community Values ensure all community members are:

- Welcomed;
- Valued – because of, not in spite of – their differences;
- Acknowledged;
- Encouraged/Supported to contribute and participate;
- Respected;
- Included;
- Accepted;
- Have a sense of belonging;
- Feel safe and at home; and
- Allowed to have self-determination and dignity of risk.

Ensuring all citizens have the same opportunities to be an actively engaged community member is the basic value system of an inclusive community. This toolkit includes a set of indicators that allow the community leaders to assess their current level of inclusivity and plan for future improvement.

The community indicators include:

- Demographics
- Health and Wellness
- Housing and Home Modifications
- Transportation and Accessibility

- Employment Opportunities and Options
- Educational Opportunities
- Peer Support
- Community Engagement

Community members are encouraged to use these indicators to ensure the community expresses the value system of a welcoming and inclusive community. When communities work to encourage all their members to participate more fully, everyone benefits. Members with different backgrounds, interests, experiences, and abilities contribute to a community's uniqueness, diversity, and inclusivity. This toolkit will help communities identify their strengths and areas needing improvement. Encouraging diverse participation at the beginning of this process can lead to more community members interested in using this toolkit and developing a community dynamic encompassing the needs of all citizens.

4. Inclusive Community Assessment

Each community has a distinctive identity. This unit will provide a sample assessment which can be used to identify those areas where change may need to occur. In addition, it is provided as a framework for partnership, evaluation, and consensus in assessing the values held within a community. It is intended as a means through which a community-enhancement process begins.

Prior to the use of this or any assessment tool, a team of stakeholders representing each sector of the community should be identified. Participants should represent both public and private segments of the community. This should include, but not be limited to, elected community officials, state and federal partners, city planners, representatives of social service organizations, and people with disabilities.

This team should be made up of a cross section of people with a desire to enhance the overall quality and equality of life in the community and representative of the community. Recommended team members representing various community members are listed below:

- Office of the Mayor
- City Council member
- Federal agency, such as Social Security Administration
- Hospital district
- Substance abuse recovery program
- First responders, such as police, fire department, ambulance services
- Public housing authority
- Community waiver program housing
- Institutional housing
- Apartment owner
- Public and private transportation services
- Employer
- Local school district
- Public and/or private college
- Clergy

- Parks and recreation
- People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)

Once identified, this team should meet at least monthly. Each team member should be encouraged to assess their representative sectors by providing information that will help in the development of an action plan.

The action plan are those tangible things whether large or small that shift attitudes and opportunities for those with and without disabilities in the community. Understandably, large more complicated issues such as transportation will involve more resources and time. Therefore, it is recommended this team focus on smaller successes. This could be engagement in employment, community recreational sports teams, participation in service organization, such as the Lions or Rotary clubs, etc. As the team learns from these smaller successes, more complex issues should evolve and become available in the community.

Sharing these successes with the broader community is important. Some suggestions are recognition through chamber of commerce banquets, city council recognition, etc. In addition, these successes should be publicized. Engaging local media outlets will be important in messaging these successes and to encourage others to support additional opportunities for all community members.

Appendix B includes a sample of a community assessment tool recommended for use with this toolkit.

5. Next Steps

It is important for the team to remain active and enthusiastic about the process. Recognizing and seeing the benefits of successes is an important aspect of continued enthusiasm. Remember this is an ongoing process. Some of the changes identified may take years to achieve.

Once the action plan has been developed and some successes are recognized, it is vital to reassess recommendations and the actions needed to achieve progress. Often this results in a shift in priorities. It could result in the need for policy changes requiring “thinking outside the box.” Team membership may change as people rotate off or additional members are identified as needed.

Public awareness and engaging with various forms of media will help garner community support. This will also result in new recommendations or changes in priorities. Highlighting the benefits of relationships with all types of people will reduce stigma and fear that may be hampering opportunities. One way to do this is through the benefits of successful employment. Public service announcements and media reports are important ways to inform and engage the public.

Regardless, change is inevitable. Being flexible and identifying shifting priorities will be essential in moving toward a more inclusive community where all people have shared life experiences.

As previously stated, integration into the community is inevitable for people receiving Medicaid services. CMS has issued new federal rules impacting people receiving these services. However, integration is only part of inclusion. To be truly included, a person should have shared life experiences and relationships that enhance the quality of life.

This toolkit has been designed to assist communities in recognizing and embracing the inclusion of all its citizens with disabilities.

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
CCDEL	Colleges of Careers and Development for Exceptional Learner
CIL	Center for Independent Living
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CLASS	Community Living Assistance and Support Services
CMS	Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
DBMD	Deaf Blind and Multiple Disabilities
HCBS	Home and Community Based Services
HCS	Home and Community Based Services
HHSC	Health and Human Services Commission
IDD	Intellectual and developmental disabilities
MDCP	Medically Dependent Children Program
NA	Narcotics Anonymous
PAL	Peer Assistance Leadership
STEPS	Skills, Training and Education for Personal Success
TWS-VRS	Texas Workforce Services – Vocational Rehabilitation Services
TxHmL	Texas Home Living
VAST	Vocational Advancement and Skills Training
WTLC	Where the Learning Continues
YES	Youth Empowerment Services

Appendix A. Glossary

Accessible Housing refers to the constructions or modifications (such as through renovation or home modification) of housing to enable independent living for persons with disabilities.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a global, community-based program created to help those struggling with problematic drinking get sober with the support of their peers through daily meetings and discussions surrounding addiction.

Best Buddies International is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to establishing a global volunteer movement that creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, and inclusive living for people with IDD. Best Buddies is the world's largest organization dedicated to ending the social, physical, and economic isolation of the 200 million people with IDD. These programs empower the special abilities of people with IDD by helping them form meaningful friendships with their peers, secure successful jobs, live independently, improve public speaking, self-advocacy, and communication skills, and feel valued by society.

Centers for Independent Living are nonresidential, private, nonprofit organizations that help people with disabilities achieve their independent living goals. People with IDD may be eligible to receive the following core services from any of the 27 Texas centers for independent living:

- Information and referral: Get help accessing the information and resources you need to achieve your goals.
- Independent living skills training: Receive training in specific everyday skills essential to living independently, such as meal preparation.
- Counseling: Get a better understanding of your disability and help setting and reaching your goals.
- Advocacy: Receive training in self-advocacy skills and receive assistance advocating for accommodations, equal access, and other rights.
- Transition services: Receive help moving from nursing homes and other institutions to home and community-based residences, or help transitioning from high school to employment and post-secondary education opportunities.

Independent living services assist a person to:

- Live and accomplish daily tasks more independently
- Participate in your favorite activities
- Improve communication access and ability
- Improve transportation access and mobility
- Gain a better understanding of their disability
- Increase confidence in their abilities
- Increase access to the community and participation in society

Circle of Support is a group of people who come together to protect and advance the interests of someone living with disability into the future. A Circle of Support is not responsible for 'caring for' the person, but instead are there to 'look out' for the person. An effective Circle of Support can have a strong voice and help people to identify, share, and achieve their hopes and dreams. Members of the Circle of Support know and care about the person and know the person's history and ambitions. Circle of Support members might include family members, friends, and other people who are interested in being involved long term in the person's life.

Dignity of Risk is the idea that self-determination and the right to take reasonable risks are essential for dignity and self-esteem and so should not be impeded by excessively cautious caregivers concerned about their duty of care.

Employment First Initiative is a national movement developed by the Office of Disability Employment Policy in the U. S Department of Labor to ensure employment in the general workforce should be the first and preferred option for people with disabilities receiving assistance from publicly funded systems. The premise is all citizens, including people with significant disabilities, are capable of full participation in integrated employment and community life.

Guardianship is a legal relationship established by a court of law that appoints a guardian to care for someone who is incapacitated and unable to care for themselves.

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) 1915(c) waivers allow states to provide home and community-based services as an alternative for people who meet eligibility 169 Glossary criteria for care in an institution. See also Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS), Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD), Home and Community-based Services (HCS), Medically Dependent

Children Program (MDCP), Texas Home Living (TxHmL), and Youth Empowerment Services (YES).

Inclusive including or covering all the services, facilities, or items normally expected or required. Not excluding any of the parties or groups involved in something.

Integrated having, including, or serving members of different racial, religious, and ethnic groups as equals.

Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities includes many severe, chronic conditions that are due to mental and/or physical impairments. IDD can begin at any time, up to 22 years of age. It usually lasts throughout a person's lifetime. People who have IDD have problems with major life activities such as: language, mobility, learning, self-help, and independent living.

Job Apprenticeship is a system in which workers train on-the-job while earning wages, doing productive work, and taking courses.

Job Coach, also called an Employment Specialist, assists people with disabilities to find and keep jobs. Job coaches also work with employers. They provide on-site support to people in order to help them adjust to the workplace and the routine of getting to and from work.

Lions Club is an international non-political service organization with a mission to empower Lions clubs, volunteers, and partners to improve health and well-being, strengthen communities, and support those in need through humanitarian services and grants that impact lives globally, and encourage peace and international understanding.

Medicaid is a joint federal-state entitlement program that pays for medical care on behalf of certain groups of low-income persons. The program was enacted federally in 1965 under Title XIX of the Social Security Act. Texas participation in Medicaid began September 1, 1967.

Narcotics Anonymous is a nonprofit fellowship or society of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. They are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean.

Peer Assistance and Leadership is an approved Texas Education Agency course for 8th through 12th grade students. The program provides guidance and

mentoring for peers and younger children on issues such as self-esteem, drug awareness, and social skills. The curriculum recognizes the potential of youth as a resource and catalyst for change in other troubled youth. They provide a critical first line of defense in building resiliency among peers. Its peer helping program philosophy identifies an innate capacity for social understanding, personal well-being, and community participation within every person. When participating in positive, productive pursuits with peers, youth can more easily resist negative influences, such as illegal use of addictive substances, excessive school absences and unlawful activities.

Quality of Life is defined by the World Health Organization as a person's "perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns."

Rotary Club is an international service organization whose stated purpose is to bring together business and professional leaders in order to provide humanitarian service and to advance goodwill and peace around the world. It is a non-political and non-religious organization.

Score-A-Friend is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building inclusive schools and communities. They create opportunities for inclusion and friendship for people with disabilities by providing disability inclusion awareness, education, and advocacy strategies, while inspiring and leading the next generation to build a more inclusive world. Programs provide youth and adult members of all abilities the opportunity to work together to identify and implement new inclusive strategies within their communities.

Special Olympics is the world's largest sports organization for children and adults with intellectual disabilities and physical disabilities, providing year-round training and activities to 5 million participants and Unified Sports partners in 172 countries.

Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services provides a variety of Vocational Rehabilitation services that assist eligible people with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining, retaining, or advancing in competitive integrated employment.

Timebanking is a pattern of reciprocal service exchange that uses units of time as currency. It is an example of a complementary monetary system. Timebanking is primarily used to provide incentives and rewards for work such as mentoring

children, caring for the elderly, being neighborly work usually done on a volunteer basis.

Transitional Education Program is a program in a few Texas colleges and universities that works with students with intellectual disabilities and helps them keep going with their studies or get job training. These may be a great choice for students who need a bit more time and support with transition. These programs include Austin Community College in Austin, Skills, Training and Education for Personal Success (STEPS), West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Where the Learning Continues (WTLC), Lone Star College in Cypress, College of Careers and Development for Exceptional Learner (CCDEL) and Houston Community College in Houston, Vocational Advancement and Skills Training (VAST Academy).

Transportation Services

- Curb-to-Curb service is a type of transit service where, on both the origin and destination ends of the trip, the driver gets out of the vehicle and assists the passenger between the vehicle and a sidewalk or other waiting area no more than 15 feet from the vehicle.
- Door-to-door service includes everything described above, but also includes taking the passenger to the door of the school or doctor's office. On the ride back, the rider will walk the passenger all the way back to their door. Going the extra 20 steps or so ensures the safety of passengers and offers them peace-of-mind knowing they will have assistance throughout the entirety of the trip.

We Hire Ability is part of the Texas Hire Ability campaign between the Texas Workforce Commission, the Texas Governor's Committee on People with Disabilities, and the Texas Workforce Solutions to raise awareness about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities and highlight the contributions of people with disabilities in the workforce. The program recognizes Texas employers for their commitment to hiring people with disabilities as well as their efforts to create an inclusive workforce. Beginning in 2021, employers whose workforce includes people with disabilities in an integrated workplace, and in which they comprise at least 10 percent of the employer's Texas-based workforce, are eligible to receive a We Hire Ability employer recognition decal to display on their storefront and a digital decal to display on their website.

Appendix B. Community Assessment Tool

Community Demographics

Each community should be aware of basic demographic information. This information can be located at the United States Census Bureau website (www.census.gov). Information is available in data, narrative, geographic, subject, ranking, and supplemental formats. Summary section below is provided to address the community's strengths and gaps in the information and/or supports and services available.

Provide the Following Population Information for Your Community

Total population: _____

Percentage of population with a person with intellectual and developmental disability (IDD): Male _____ Female _____

Percentage of population with a person with IDD under the age of 22:

Male _____ Female _____

Percentage of the population with a person with IDD over the age of 22, but younger than 62: Male _____ Female _____

Percentage of population with a person with IDD over the age of 62:

Male _____ Female _____

Percentage of population with a person with IDD whose rental costs are more than 30 percent of overall income: Male _____ Female _____

Demographics Summary

Use this section to summarize the demographic make-up of the community as it relates to people with disabilities. This information will contribute to the overall assessment of the community's inclusiveness of its citizens with disabilities.

Health and Wellness

Access to healthcare services to maintain a person’s health is vital to the person’s overall wellbeing and the community’s healthfulness. Healthy citizens contribute to the life of the community. Maintaining good health allows for a person to engage in and with the community. This engagement enhances the overall physical, mental, and social well-being of a person with disabilities and the community.

Does the community have a hospital? Yes _____ No _____

Does the community have outpatient medical and dental clinics? Yes _____ No _____

Please specify which one or both:

Does the community have other outpatient medical services, i.e., laboratory, radiology, etc., available?

Are medical and dental professionals experienced in the treatment of a person with IDD?

Is preventative or maintenance health education available to a person with IDD?

Are community exercise programs available to a person with IDD?

How are people with IDD made aware of these available services?

Are local mental health services available to people with IDD?

Are mental health support groups available to people with IDD?

Are Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, or other substance abuse programs and services available to a person with IDD? Please specify

Are first responders (i.e., police, fire fighters, etc.) trained regarding interaction with a person with IDD?

If so, who provides and how often is this training required or provided?

Are home health and/or hospice services available in the community?

Are the services listed above provided to people receiving Medicaid?

Health and Wellness Summary

Use this section to summarize the health and wellness services available in the community as it relates to people with disabilities. This information will highlight medical and health prevention/maintenance needs within the community, as well as how the community interacts with people with IDD who may be in a crisis. Use of this summary will assist the community in identifying areas the community can address more readily and those that will require more long-term planning.

Housing and Home Modifications

Housing availability and accessibility is paramount to successful integration and inclusion into community life. A person with IDD can experience greater personal freedom, more participation in social activities, more frequent interactions with family and friends when living in an inclusive community setting.

Housing

Which of the following housing types are available in your community for a person with IDD?

- Own Home/Family Home
- Community-Based Apartments
- Community-Based Group Homes
- Host Homes
- Institutions
- Temporary Housing
- Housing/Shelter for Homeless

Are affordable inclusive housing options available in your community?

Are there waiting lists for housing assistance?

Are there services, supports, or programs in your community to assist with exploring housing/living options, property availability and housing applications?

Who is eligible for this service?

Are there existing programs or services to assist people with timely payment of housing expenses (rent, utilities, etc.) and communication with landlords?

Who is eligible for this service?

Are available housing options located near transit routes?

Are any of the available housing options located within walking distance of basic shopping and recreational activities?

Are available housing options located near the following:

- Hospitals and medical services
- Employment opportunities
- Educational establishments
- Faith communities

Are any of the housing options available for people with IDD target or serve the aging population?

Are there any special housing complexes or apartment buildings specifically for people with IDD in your community?

Do residential and neighborhood associations include people with IDD in their meetings and activities?

Home Modifications

Are housing options available that are accessible to people with varying or changing physical abilities?

Are community providers who serve people with IDD allowed to make modifications to leased homes to accommodate the physical needs of the people they serve?

Are there existing homes/facilities that provide reasonable housing accommodations/modifications to serve those with physical challenges?

Are there waiting lists for accessible housing?

Housing and Housing Modifications Summary

Use this section to summarize the housing make-up of your community as it relates to people with IDD. This information will provide insight on housing patterns within your community. Inclusive housing is a major factor in providing people with IDD the opportunity to not only be physically integrated into their community, but also engages in the activities of community life. Use of this summary will assist your community in identifying housing needs that can be accommodated soon and those that will require more extensive planning.

Transportation and Accessibility

The ability to navigate a community is vital to the person's, as well as the community's, inclusivity. Transportation and accessibility allow for people with IDD to engage in and with the community. This engagement enhances the overall physical, mental, and social well-being of the person and the community.

Public Transportation

Does the community offer public transportation for passenger pick-up at designated locations?

Are the designated pick-up locations within walking distance of residential areas?

Are the designated pick-up locations within walking distance of commercial area?

Are there any areas of the community without access to public transportation?

Residential _____ Commercial _____

Are there pick-up locations within walking distance of hospitals, medical and dental clinics, or other outpatient services?

Are maps, routes, and service times posted at each pick-up location?

Are maps, routes, and service times available throughout the community?

Are maps and routes easily understandable?

Are routes to pick-up locations accessible by paved walkways?

Are transportation services available 24 hours daily including holidays?

Are transportation vehicles wheelchair or other mobility devices accessible?

Are accommodations available for people with hearing and/or vision impairments?

If so, what accommodations are available?

Home Pick-up Services

Is home pick-up service available through the community's public transportation service?

If so, how is it scheduled and how far in advance should it be scheduled?

Is it available daily, including holidays?

Is this service available throughout the community?

Is this curb-to-curb or door-to-door service? (please specify which one)

Is information about this service available throughout the community?

Are vehicles accessible for people with mobility, visual, and/or hearing impairments?

Other Transportation Options

If curb-to-curb or door-to-door options are not available, are there community organizations that provide this service? Please list.

To what types of locations is this service provided (i.e., medical appointments, shopping, recreation, etc.)?

Is the community aware of these organizations or this service?

What are the eligibility and application requirements?

When is the service available?

Is there a fee for this service?

Transportation and Accessibility Summary

Use this section to summarize the transportation and accessibility make-up of the community as it relates to people with disabilities. This information will highlight transportation needs within the community. Transportation and accessibility are significant factors contributing to the overall assessment of the community’s inclusiveness of its citizens with IDD. Use of this summary will assist the community in identifying areas the community can address more readily and those that will require more long-term planning.

Employment Opportunities and Options

Access to employment provides a person with IDD the opportunity to not only earn a wage, but also to engage with others in their community. Work settings provide an excellent opportunity for community inclusion both with co-workers and the public.

Employment Opportunities

Are there support services that assist people with IDD with job seeking, completing applications, scheduling interviews, interview preparation and practicing job skills,

i.e., Texas Workforce Services – Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS)?
Please list:

What types of employment opportunities are available in the community for a person with IDD who can work independently?

Do people with IDD who are working independently receive the same work benefits as other employees?

Are they working with other people with IDD or co-workers from the public?

Are there people with IDD within the community who are self-employed?

Do any community employers participate in the Texas Hire Ability program?

Employment Options

If people with IDD are currently employed, are they offered opportunities to be involved in workplace sports teams, interest groups, and/or employee associations?

Are people with disabilities working in the community with the assistance of a job coach?

Is there access to a job apprenticeship program within the community?

Are there day programs serving people with IDD that also serve other people from the community who are not disabled?

Employment Opportunities/Options Summary

Use this section to summarize the employment opportunities, services, and programs available within the community. Employment is an important avenue for encouraging and supporting inclusion into the community. Use of this summary information will assist the community in identifying ways to assist a person with IDD to work within the community.

Educational Opportunities

Educational opportunities are extremely important to a community. As educational opportunities become more inclusive, the community's approach to inclusiveness is increased. Although public school systems serve as the primary method of inclusion for school aged children with IDD, there are many other educational opportunities that can be offered for people with IDD. Lifelong education is an essential component in the lives of a person with IDD. An educated populace adds value to the overall physical, mental, and social aspects of community life.

Educational Opportunities

Are there colleges or universities offering postsecondary educational services to people with IDD located in your community area?

Do they offer associate degrees and/or job training programs that are inclusive?

If so, what types of training programs are available? Please list.

How are the eligibility and applications processes publicized?

Is financial assistance available?

Is there a Transitional Education Program located in your community?

Is there a Center for Independent Living (CIL) near your community?

Does your community have a local Peer Assistance Leadership (PAL) program within the schools?

Community Education Regarding Inclusiveness

What types of inclusive specific educational and information sharing programs are available to the general community population?

Have any programs been provided in the past 12 months?

If not, are any programs planned within the next 12 months?

How are these programs advertised?

What has been the interest in these types of programs?

Educational Opportunities Summary

Use this section to summarize the opportunities for community education for people with IDD, as well as the general community population. This information will highlight needs within the community, as well as how the community interacts with people with IDD who may be interested in postsecondary education along with community members who are interested in enhancing community inclusiveness. Use of this summary will assist the community in identifying areas the community can address more readily and those that will require more long-term planning.

Peer Support

Peer support is an integral part of successful inclusion into a community. It occurs when other people provide emotional support, share knowledge, practical

assistance, serve as role models, and help connect people with IDD to resources, opportunities, and community groups. Peer support not only assists people with IDD to live successfully in a community, but it also supports community inclusion.

Do members of your community participate in the Score-A-Friend program?

Do members of your community participate in the Best Buddies program?

How are family and friends supported to provide peer support to people with IDD in the community?

Does the community have a parent support who is informed of community activities and opportunities for inclusion?

Do any of your church or religious organizations have outreach programs that include people with IDD?

If so, do they have programs that encourage a “buddy” type system?

Do service providers for people with IDD have systems in place to seek advocates for those who do not have an active family or guardian?

Has the community established any Circles of Support for people with IDD?

Peer Support Summary

Use this section to summarize the various types of peer support available for people with IDD in your community. This information will provide insight into the current supports available to a person with IDD. Use of this summary will also assist you in identifying areas where peer support could continue to be supported or initiated.

Community Engagement

The ability to be involved in a community is vital to the person's, as well as the community's, inclusivity. Volunteerism and engagement in all aspects of community life enhances community inclusiveness. This engagement also enhances the overall physical, mental, and social well-being of the individual and the community.

What types of inclusive recreational programs are available in the community?

Are neighborhood parks accessible?

Are the community sports leagues inclusive?

Are there specialty clubs (bird watching, cooking, reading, gardening, etc.) available in your community?

Are the clubs, cultural and ethnic centers, and art and theater organizations open to all community members?

Is there a Special Olympics program within the community?

Are community members encouraged to volunteer?

Are people encouraged to participate in religious and spiritual activities?

Do these organizations provide integrated or segregated religious and spiritual training?

Do service organizations such as Rotary Club, Lions Club, etc., include people with IDD in their membership?

If so, do people with IDD know how to become a part of these organizations?

Do local hospital, churches, social service agencies, etc., offer people with IDD opportunities to volunteer?

How does a person with IDD learn about and apply for volunteer opportunities in the community?

Are people with IDD in the community encouraged to participate in the voting process?

What areas in the community need to develop or increase integrated or inclusive opportunities for people with IDD?

Community Engagement Summary

Use this section to summarize the opportunities for community involvement available in the community as it relates to people with IDD. This information will highlight needs within the community, as well as how the community interacts with a person with IDD who may be more civic minded. Use of this summary will assist the community in identifying areas the community can address more readily and those that will require more long-term planning.
