



Mental Health Policy Fellow Job Description

Position Summary:

The Texas Office for Prevention of Developmental Disabilities' (TOPDD) mission is to minimize the economic and human loss caused by preventable developmental disabilities and to promote sound public policies regarding the prevention of developmental disabilities. TOPDD is an independent state agency that is administratively attached to HHSC and governed by an executive committee.

The goal of the mental health policy fellow is to address issues related to both the prevention of DDs and the needs of persons who may have both a developmental disability and mental illness. Depending on the cause, developmental disabilities are preventable, especially when they are caused by prenatal alcohol and other drug abuse or brain injuries. It is important to note that: 1) Preventing neurodevelopmental disabilities can prevent mental illness; 2) Multiple diagnoses are common- mental illness, substance use disorders, and neurodevelopmental disabilities; and a holistic approach that recognizes how these issues interact is critical; 3) It is imperative to develop systems and support policies that respond to these needs, both in prevention and treatment programs across systems. This is a two year, grant funded position.

Duties:

The fellow will be responsible for coordinating and implementing consideration for co-occurring developmental disabilities/mental health approach needs," including the prevention of DDs, in all policies.

1) Build the knowledge and evidence base for policy options and strategies:

- Assemble and analyze data, existing programs, services, systems, and policies related to, a) the prevention of DDs (through integrated, coordinated services), and b) serving people who may have co-occurring DD/MH needs across systems of care;
- Investigate best practices in use that are relevant to DD/MH needs and conditions and disseminate information through policy briefings and presentations;
- Develop and support implementation of new policies that address, a) DD prevention, and b) co-occurring DD/MH and identify ways existing policies could be changed/adapted to more effectively prevent DDs and serve individuals who may have co-occurring DD/MH across systems.
- Research and write analyses on current policy issues; brief policymakers, journalists, and others on these issues; and serve as a resource for advocates and community groups.

2) Develop mechanisms to ensure that DD/MH needs are considered in the development of policy:

- Assist leaders and policy makers of different work groups and constituencies to integrate considerations of DD prevention and DD/MH needs during the development and implementation of policies;





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- Promote improved understanding of current challenges related to coordination and integration of care in preventing DDs and meeting the needs of individuals with DD/MH needs that will lead to measureable change;
 - Improve system coordination and collaboration around these goals;
 - Participate in and attend relevant groups such as the State Healthcare Integration Leadership Council, Integrated Health and Behavioral Health Workgroup as well as TOPDD's committees;
 - Engage groups to promote their inclusion of goals that address DD prevention and the needs of individuals with DD/MH needs as components of their overall goals and responsibilities.
- 3) Organize advocacy groups representing relevant stakeholders along with state agencies and non-profit organizations to develop shared policy priorities on DD prevention and the meeting the needs of individuals with DD/MH needs:
- Participate in and attend relevant groups such as the State Healthcare Integration Leadership Council, Integrated Health and Behavioral Health Workgroup, as well as the FASD Collaborative and etc.
 - Participate in meetings with non-profits engaged in advocacy efforts that represent people with mental illness, disabilities, children, etc.
 - Regularly meet individually with stakeholders 1:1 to ensure continued connectivity.
 - Provide presentations to organizations that need information on policy issues related to DD/MH
- 4) Participate in professional development activities:
- Attend Hogg foundation sponsored trainings;
 - Attend conferences, public policy forums, etc.

Qualifications:

Eligible candidates must have received a graduate degree in public policy, social work, law, or a related field within the past 18 months; and must be eligible to work full-time in the United States for the two-year duration of the program. Candidates should have an interest in mental health policy and a commitment to improving access to integrated health care services for individuals with co-occurring developmental disabilities and mental health needs. The ideal candidate will have knowledge of developmental disabilities and mental health issues, public policy, and experience working in diverse communities with cultural competency.

Candidates must be willing to travel 10% of the time in state, and make one trip to Washington, DC for training and career development.





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TOPDD Mental Health Policy Fellow Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone number: _____

Graduation date and degree earned: _____

Please describe your experience and/or interest in mental health work.

Please describe your experience and/or interest in policy work.





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Please describe your experience with and/or knowledge about developmental disabilities.

