



Department of  
*Assistive and  
Rehabilitative  
Services*

*2007  
Annual Report*

# DARS



Early Childhood Intervention Services

Rehabilitation Services

Blind Services

Disability Determination Services



# Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services

## 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Early Childhood Intervention Services

Rehabilitation Services

Blind Services

Disability Determination Services



WE ARE DARS



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2008

2009

2010

2011



# *Introduction*

## *The Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services*

The Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services administers programs that ensure Texas is a state where people with disabilities and children who have developmental delays enjoy the same opportunities as other Texans to live independent and productive lives.

The Department has four program areas:

- Rehabilitation Services
- Blind Services
- Early Childhood Intervention Services
- Disability Determination Services

Through these program areas, DARS provides services that help Texans with disabilities find jobs through vocational rehabilitation, ensure that Texans with disabilities live independently in their communities, and help children with disabilities and developmental delays reach their full potential.

The 2007 Annual Report has been expanded to serve as a more comprehensive resource for readers who want to know about DARS operations. Additions to the report include statistics on DARS employees, brief biographies of the Department's executive management team, highlights of the DARS strategic plan, and descriptions of the Department's advisory councils and committees.

It is a fundamental value of DARS to listen, to learn, and to be responsive to our stakeholders and our consumers in an ongoing effort to make programs and services even better.

If you have suggestions or comments, please call the DARS Inquiries Unit at 1-800-628-5115, or email: [DARS.Inquiries@dars.state.tx.us](mailto:DARS.Inquiries@dars.state.tx.us). If you have comments that relate specifically to the 2007 Annual Report, please email: [CCEA@dars.state.tx.us](mailto:CCEA@dars.state.tx.us).

# TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF ASSISTIVE AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

## 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

### *Message from the Commissioner*





# DARS

Annual Report  
2007



**Terrell I. Murphy, Commissioner**

## *A Year in the Life of DARS*

Welcome to the 2007 DARS Annual Report. This has been another eventful year for our young agency, which was launched in 2004.

Our calendar year began with the 80th Texas Legislature, which convened January 9. When the Legislature adjourned 140 days later, DARS consumers were the beneficiaries of overwhelmingly positive outcomes. The Legislature funded two new independent living centers to serve approximately 4,000 consumers, as well as a new initiative that will provide consumers with assistive technology and training to help them stay in their communities and out of institutional settings. Funding also was provided to serve 183 people waiting for rehabilitative services for traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. DARS consumers and advocates for people who have disabilities worked tirelessly for these and other initiatives. Proactive communications with elected officials was at the heart of their efforts.

While the Legislature conducted its business in Austin, our offices around the state continued the day-to-day operations that move us closer to our vision: a Texas where people with disabilities and families with children who have developmental delays enjoy the same opportunities as other Texans to pursue independent and productive lives.

And they made significant progress. For example:

- The Division for Rehabilitation Services placed 100 transitional vocational rehabilitation counsel-

ors in Texas schools, helping students with disabilities manage the transition from school to work or higher education. And the number of consumers served and dollars spent on services to the deaf and hard of hearing population increased.

- In the Division for Blind Services, the number of blind consumers who found employment increased from 719 in 2006 to 765 in 2007. The average weekly earnings for these former consumers increased from \$377 to \$394.
- The Division for Early Childhood Intervention Services received the U.S. Department of Education's highest rating for meeting the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. ECI was one of only 15 states or territories and the only large state to achieve this honor.
- The Division for Disability Determination Services adjudicated more than 268,000 Social Security cases and beat the national averages for initial claims accuracy and processing time.

These accomplishments came about thanks to DARS employees. As you learn about DARS and the Texans who have achieved their goals with the Department's help, it's easy to see why our employees are our most valuable resource. Through a new initiative called E<sup>3</sup> I have challenged them to take DARS even closer to our vision. E<sup>3</sup> is shorthand for a world-class DARS attitude: Excellent service...Every customer...Every time.

I am confident that DARS consumers will benefit from the commitment and pride that E<sup>3</sup> encourages as we look forward to the year ahead.

# TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF ASSISTIVE AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

## 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

### *Who We Are*







# *Our vision, mission, and guiding principles*

## DARS VISION

A Texas where people with disabilities and families with children who have developmental delays enjoy the same opportunities as other Texans to pursue independent and productive lives.

## DARS MISSION

To work in partnership with Texans with disabilities and families with children who have developmental delays to improve the quality of their lives and to enable their full participation in society.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The DARS mission, principles, and values will guide our decisions.
- Consumers and their families, when appropriate, will be active participants in planning the services they receive.
- We will deliver quality services in innovative and creative ways, individually suited to our consumer's needs, and delivered with respect and courtesy.
- Stakeholders, consumers, staff, and service providers will have meaningful opportunities to provide input on agency policies and services.
- We will celebrate our successes and learn from our mistakes – as one team.
- We will promote efficiency, effectiveness and quality service delivery by building a program support system that aligns with the DARS mission.
- We will create and maintain a work environment characterized by respect, trust, and open communication between staff and management.

# DARS EMPLOYEES *the Statistics*

## *DARS EMPLOYEES by the Numbers*

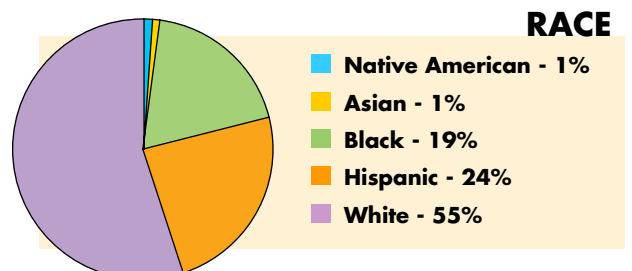
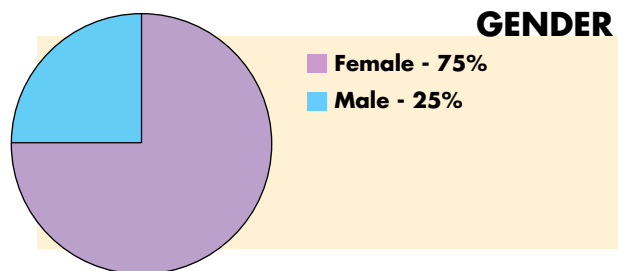
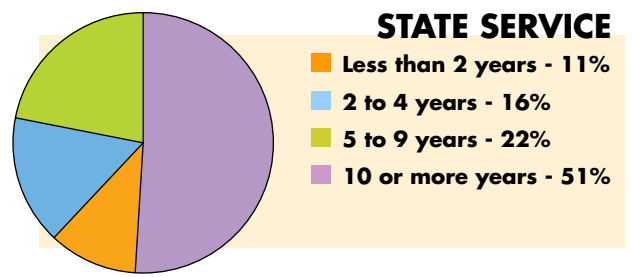
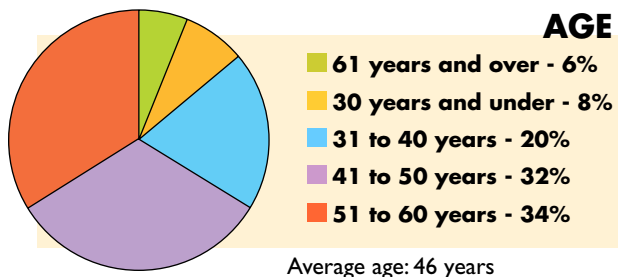
DARS enjoys a stable, long-tenured workforce. More than half of our employees have at least 10 years of state service.

Approximately 3,128 DARS employees in offices throughout the state work to improve the quality of the lives of Texans with disabilities. The majority of DARS employees (2,577 employees, or 82 percent) are assigned to regional offices throughout Texas. The remaining 554 employees, or 18 percent, are assigned to the central office in Austin.

The DARS Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS) has approximately 1,300 employees. The Division for Disability Determination Services has

approximately 930 employees. And the Division for Blind Services employs approximately 530 staff, including teachers, counselors, and various specialists. The Division for Early Childhood Intervention has approximately 40 employees who provide oversight and support to contractors who provide services throughout the state.

Within the Health and Human Services Enterprise (comprising DARS, the Health and Human Services Commission, and the Departments of State Health Services, Aging and Disability Services, and Family and Protective Services), DARS has the lowest employee turnover rate (9.9 percent).



Source: HHS System Strategic Plan for FY 2007-2011

# TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF ASSISTIVE AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

## 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

### *What We Do*



# *Rehabilitation Services*



## MISSION

To work in partnership with Texans with disabilities to assist them in achieving their goals of suitable employment, living independently, and eliminating barriers to communication and community access.

# *DRS HELPS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES PARTICIPATE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES*

The DARS Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS) is designated as the state's principal authority on the vocational rehabilitation of Texans with disabilities, except persons with visual impairments and those who are legally blind. DRS provides services through the following programs.

- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs)
- Independent Living Services (ILS)
- Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services (CRS)
- Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS)

DRS employees are located in a central office in Austin, five regional offices, and 120 field offices

throughout Texas. The Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT), which is federally mandated by the Rehabilitation Act, joins in a partnership with DRS to review, analyze, and advise DRS on policy and the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services, including eligibility requirements. The RCT also contributes to the preparation of the DRS State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation.

For more information about DRS programs and services and eligibility requirements, call the DARS Inquiries Unit at 1-800-628-5115 or visit the DARS website at [www.dars.state.tx.us](http://www.dars.state.tx.us) and select Division for Rehabilitation Services or Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services.

## DRS OVERVIEW



### DRS AT A GLANCE

For every dollar spent on vocational rehabilitation, consumers generate more than \$9 in personal taxable income through the remainder of their work lives. By retirement, the average rehabilitated consumer will have repaid the cost of services at least four times through taxes paid.

- **The Vocational Rehabilitation Program** helps people with disabilities prepare for, find, and keep jobs. Services are individualized and may include counseling, training, medical treatment, assistive devices, job placement assistance, and other services. The VR Program also helps public school personnel plan the move from school to work for students with disabilities and serves consumers who need ongoing support to maintain employment.

- **The Office for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS)** works in partnership with people who are deaf or hard of hearing to eliminate communication barriers and ensure equal access within their communities. DHHS helps people of all ages who are deaf or hard of hearing express their freedoms, participate in society, and reduce their isolation regardless of location, socioeconomic status, or degree of disability. The Office maintains a network of community partners to coordinate and facilitate service delivery.

- **Independent Living Services and Independent Living Centers** concentrate on self-sufficiency and quality of life, even if work potential is limited. ILCs and ILS promote self-sufficiency despite significant disability by providing people with improved mobility, communication, personal adjustment and self-direction. ILCs throughout the state provide assistance through peer counseling, information and referral, advocacy support, independent living skills training, and other services.

- **The Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services Program** provides intensive therapies to people who cannot function independently due to traumatic spinal cord or brain injuries.

We Are  
**DARS**





# Exploring the World Through Cyberspace

## Meet Lauren Matthews

Lauren Matthews is a young woman who has dreamed of becoming a poet and the author of children's books. It's an amazing journey Lauren has gone through to get to where she is today.

At the age of nine, she was diagnosed with an astrocytoma, a type of brain tumor. The radiation treatment she underwent left her with some hearing loss in her right ear.

At 18, Lauren began having difficulty walking, which was found to be caused by subsequent brain lesions in her cerebellum and spinal cord, and she underwent a year of chemotherapy.

Then in 2003, she was diagnosed with radiation necrosis (a mass of dead tumor tissue and injured brain that can occur following radiation) and developed spastic quadriparesis (weakness of her arms and legs). She experienced significant loss of her speech. One of the first items Lauren requested from DARS was a voice recognition system so she could use a computer and independently control her environment.

DARS administered a rehabilitation technology evaluation to help fulfill Lauren's request, including a desktop computer workstation with voice-activated software and microphone and training on how to use it. DARS also evaluated Lauren's wheelchair needs and speech needs and gave her adaptive aids for household accessibility.

Through these services, DARS gave Lauren's "voice" back to her and unlocked her ability to

communicate. As a result, Lauren has been able to use her computer to send letters, share poetry, and generate artwork.

Independent living counselor Linda Mueller was struck by Lauren's success, which reached a level Linda has not witnessed in a previous DARS intervention. Lauren now has an avenue to express her thoughts and emotions and the joy of being the person she is. She has the ability to achieve her dreams via her computer and voice-activated software. Lauren is an avid reader and enjoys soaking up knowledge as she explores the world through the internet. She also uses her computer to balance her checkbook, order books, and research subjects of interest to her.

In addition to using her computer for research, Lauren has decided to become an entrepreneur. She is exploring selling her computer artwork to a t-shirt company, which will enable her to move into DARS' vocational rehabilitation program.

With her new computer system, Lauren has continued to write letters and poems, and she has written a story. She also enjoys scanning in pictures and drawings and modifying them to look like she wants them to look.

Most importantly, she's proud of her independence, writing, "This is very exciting because I can do this all on my own. No one has to sit next to me. I can go where I want and do what I want on the computer at my own pace."



# A Reason to Smile

## Meet Tammy Fortenberry

Tammy Fortenberry is a dental assistant in Frost, Texas, with a great personality. She always has a cheerful demeanor and wears a smile. Tammy has every reason to smile because she is alive and able to take care of her three children; she can drive, go to work, and participate in society in spite of her condition.

In 2006, Tammy was involved in a terrible accident that injured her spinal cord and left her paralyzed from the neck down.

“While I was lying in the hospital at Baylor, I did not think I would ever be a useful person again. I have always had to work, and I was a single mother for most of my older two children’s lives,” Tammy said. “I remember thinking, ‘What am I going to do now? My neck is broken, I am paralyzed from the chest down, and my car was totaled. How will I ever be able to drive again, work again, or basically do anything?’”

Baylor Rehabilitation Institute referred Tammy to DARS’ Comprehensive Rehabilitation Services (CRS) program. CRS helps Texans who’ve sustained spinal cord and brain injuries by providing intensive therapies that help them re-enter society and live as independently as possible.

Tammy went through the CRS program and made tremendous progress. Counselors at DARS concluded that Tammy was ready to return to work and enlisted her in the vocational rehabilitation program, which helps people with disabilities prepare for, locate, and keep jobs.

With help from a DARS vocational rehabilitation counselor, Tammy received career guidance and home accessibility modifications. She also received drivers training and vehicle modifications that allowed her to drive herself, something especially important to Tammy.

“For me not to be able to get in a car and just go was a major ordeal for me,” she said. “I will never forget the day, February 18, 2007. I was able to drive again! I was so excited I could barely believe it. A little over a year since my accident, and I am on the road again. I cannot even begin to tell you the happiness when I was able to take my daughter to school by myself and go to the store again without having to ask someone or wait until my husband got home. I was free again.”

To complete Tammy’s independence, DARS supplied a stand-up wheelchair that enabled her to return to work at the Waco office of Dr. David Rhoden. “In a few months, I was standing up and rolling around everywhere,” Tammy recalled. “Talk about freedom; there is no other feeling like standing again after so long.”

With the help of DARS programs, services, and counselors, Tammy Fortenberry has experienced a journey to independence and is able to enjoy her work, her family, and her life. “I am so grateful to my family, my boss Dr. David Rhoden, and friends at work and at home, especially the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services,” she said.



# *Early Childhood Intervention Services*



## MISSION

**ECI assures that families with young children with developmental delays have the resources and supports they need to reach their goals.**

# *ECI COORDINATES SERVICES FOR FAMILIES OF INFANTS AND TODDLERS WITH DISABILITIES OR DELAYS*

DARS Division for Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECI) coordinates a statewide system of early childhood intervention services for families of infants and toddlers, birth to age three, with disabilities or developmental delays. ECI provides services through contracts with local community agencies and organizations. These include mental health/mental retardation community centers, school districts, education service centers, and private nonprofit organizations.

Eligibility is determined by a team of professionals and the family. Children are eligible for ECI services if they meet one of the following criteria.

- Developmental delay: Children with delays in one or more areas of development (cognitive, motor, communication, social-emotional, or self-help skills)

- Atypical development: Children who demonstrate age-appropriate skills, but whose patterns of development are different from their peers, such as a child with problematic social patterns

- Medically diagnosed conditions: Children who have medically diagnosed conditions such as Down syndrome or spina bifida

ECI services are funded through federal, state, and local funds; Medicaid; private insurance; and a family cost share system.

To make a referral or for more information, call the DARS Inquiries Unit at 1-800-628-5115 or visit the DARS website at [www.dars.state.tx.us](http://www.dars.state.tx.us) and select Early Childhood Intervention Services.

## **ECI AT A GLANCE** *From our Family Outcomes Survey*

“ECI has been a tremendous help to our daughter. She was born with club feet and spina bifida level 3-4. We were told that she would never walk or possibly be cognitive with her age level. She is now 18 months, standing, and is very smart. I am so pleased with the progress she has made since coming home from the hospital. She has reached many milestones with ECI’s help.”

“If there wasn’t a program like ECI, I would be very sad and lost. My child was diagnosed with Down syndrome, and I was lost grieving for a long time. It was good to have professionals come into my house and be there not only for my child, but also for me. Thank you for the help you have provided for my baby.”

“ECI has been a very productive and positive program that has contributed to the success of our child and helped our family to be part of his learning experience. I especially enjoy having his services and needs met at home, where he is in his environment. I know I made the right choice when I selected ECI.”

# Information about ECI Services

## Referral

Most ECI referrals come from the medical community or directly from families. Other referral sources include the Department of Family and Protective Services, child care centers, and social service agencies.

## Individualized Planning Process

In a location chosen by the family (home, child care center, etc.), an interdisciplinary team conducts comprehensive evaluations and assessments to determine eligibility and plan services.

## Comprehensive Services

Services may include family education and support; audiology and vision services; nursing and nutrition services; and physical, occupational, and speech-language therapies. ECI teams made up of family members and professionals work to promote development in daily activities.

## Service Coordination

ECI service coordinators seek community services for the child and family, coordinate services received from other agencies, and monitor service provision.

## Home and Community Settings

Services are provided where children learn best, in their homes and other familiar places.

## Licensed or Credentialed Professionals Provide Services

Licensed speech language pathologists, physical and occupational therapists, psychologists, registered nurses, registered dietitians, social workers and counselors, and early intervention specialists are part of ECI teams.

## Beyond ECI

As children near age three, when ECI stops providing services, the team (including the family) reviews options and decides on the next step, which may include public school services, preschool services, Head Start, child care centers, or other programs.

# ECI SERVICES

# We Are DARS





# Exciting Results of ECI Support

## *Meet the Logan Family*

Like any new mother, Rachel Logan experienced the joys and struggles of being a first-time mom. Rachel, however, had triplets, so her range of new experiences was magnified.

Rachel gave birth to three boys - Cal, Luke, and Seth - on October 20, 2002, at Medical Center of Plano. Born more than two months early, Cal and Luke came home from the hospital when they were eight weeks old. Seth had to stay until he was 12 weeks old. His longer stay was due to eating problems, which eventually led to a feeding tube and surgery for reflux, a condition that prevented him from digesting milk properly.

In February 2003, the Early Childhood Intervention Division (ECI) Infant and Toddler Intervention Program began providing Seth with occupational therapy and addressing his feeding issues.

"I was unfamiliar with feeding therapy and how to help him," Rachel said. "The therapist gave me a real comfort level with the feeding tube by teaching me how to burp him differently. It was all very overwhelming."

Rachel explained what a challenge it was to help Seth learn to eat. She described the variety of baby bottles she had to use, all dependent on the mixture of milk and cereal they were going to

experiment with at that meal. "The entire day revolved around trying new techniques to help Seth eat," Rachel said.

ECI also provided nutritional information and feeding strategies for Seth, suggesting certain diagnostic options while evaluating Seth's swallowing and tongue coordination.

"They taught us exercises and skills to practice. They also made sure we were comfortable with the exercises. The therapists helped us monitor his progress and were always so encouraging," Rachel said.

ECI also helped prepare Rachel for Seth's future development.

"ECI educated us on how to conduct therapy on a daily basis and helped us know when progress was being made. The agency kept us aware of the up and coming milestones," she said.

The exciting results of all this communication, training, and support are seen in Seth's life today. He is active, agile, and coordinated - a happy child who spends most of his days laughing, jumping, and climbing with his two brothers.

# CONSUMERS

## EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION SERVICES



# Helping Alicia and her Family

## *Meet Alicia and Jessica*

Alicia was born with cytomegalovirus (CMV), a viral illness that affects the brain. As a result, she has seizures, blindness, hearing impairments, and difficulty swallowing. She is fed through a tube and sometimes needs a ventilator to help her breathe. Southwest Texas Methodist Hospital referred Alicia and her mother Jessica to Brighton School ECI soon after Alicia was born.

Once Alicia entered the ECI program, a team of professionals was assigned to her. The team included a speech therapist, service coordinator/physical therapist, and a nutritionist. Their job was to help support Alicia and Jessica, who had recently completed high school.

ECI understands that by helping the family they also help the child.

After Alicia was born, Jessica couldn't afford a place to live. ECI service coordinator Lisa Cruz helped her find an apartment through a company that provides subsidized housing to qualified families enrolled in Brighton School ECI.

Then, ECI focused on ways to make family routines, bathing, and feeding easier for Jessica and Alicia. "We located a bathing chair and helped Jessica with feeding routines and with management of saliva, so Alicia wouldn't choke," Lisa said.

Because of her limited vision and movement, staff worked together to find what types of activities Alicia preferred, speech therapist Lynette Ramirez explained. "We rocked her or moved her to a sit-

ting or standing position and observed her reaction to determine what she liked. We also worked on basic pre-speech communication, associating a prompt from us within her routines. For example, we tugged gently under her arm before we'd pick her up."

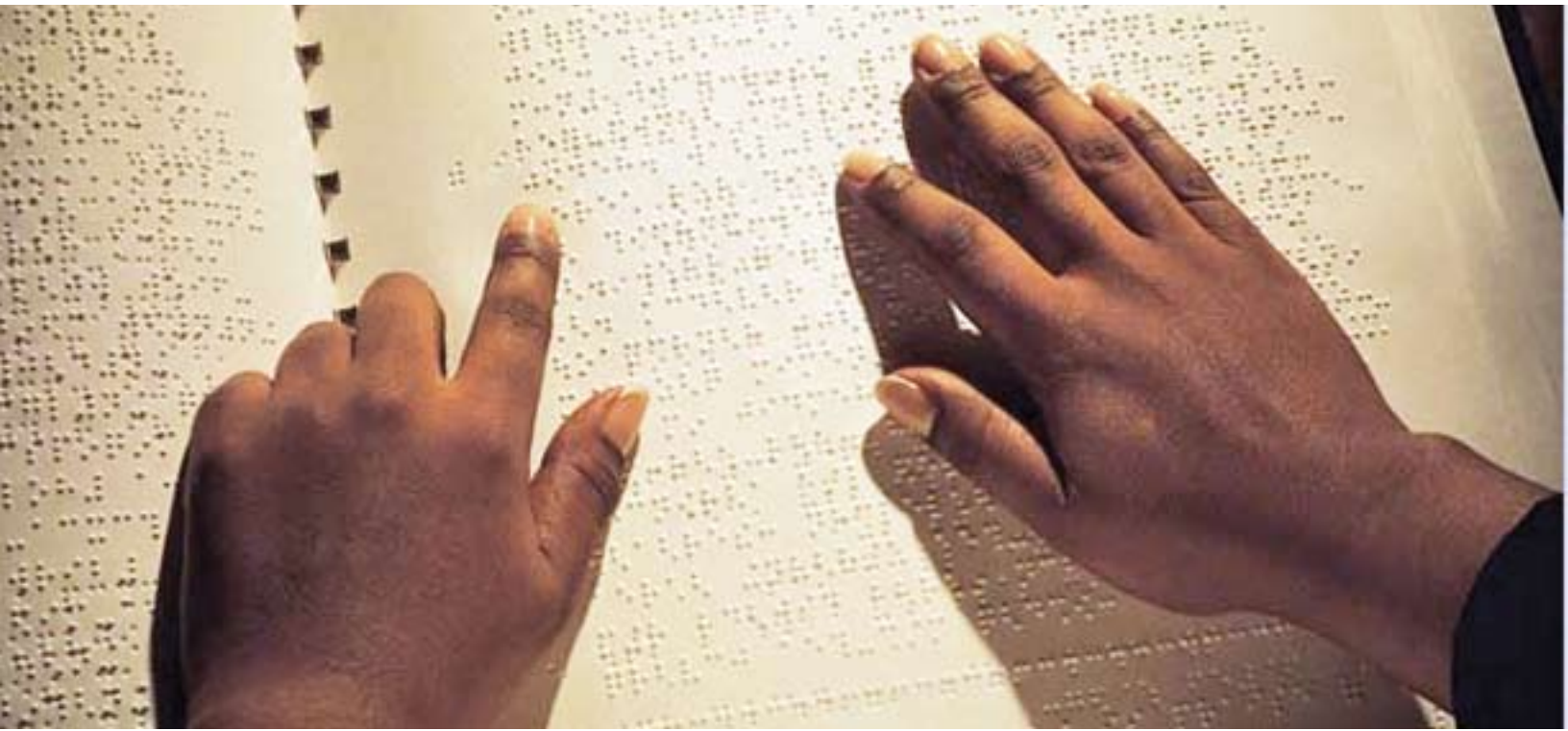
Jessica and her mother, who provides child care, have done much reading about Alicia's condition and how to help her. They attend classes and they work closely with ECI staff. "It's wonderful to see a family being so supportive," Lisa says.

Jessica recently married, and she and her husband enrolled in a community college, moved into a townhouse, and are jointly sharing in Alicia's care. Alicia is growing up, has graduated from Brighton School ECI, and moved on to a public school program that serves children with disabilities. Alicia and her family look forward to their future together.

When Alicia was born, Jessica had to learn about her child's medical needs and how to provide her with full-time care. As she gradually realized that Alicia's situation was going to remain the same, Jessica had to figure out how to live her life and meet Alicia's needs. With lots of help from ECI, and with the asset of her own positive nature, Jessica has found a profession in which she would like to work. She also has managed to continue her education while helping and enjoying Alicia.

In short, Jessica learned to take care of herself. And that in turn helps her young daughter.

# *Blind Services*



## MISSION

To work in partnership with  
Texans who are blind  
or visually impaired  
to reach their goals.

# *DBS STRIVES TO ENSURE THAT EACH PROGRAM IS TAILORED TO FIT THE NEEDS OF THE CONSUMER*

The DARS Division for Blind Services (DBS) assists individuals of all ages who are blind or visually impaired and their families. Depending on their goals and needs, DBS offers services to help Texans live independently and participate fully in community life, find a high-quality job, or receive the training needed to be successful in school and beyond.

In a society designed by sighted people for sighted people, barriers are inadvertently created for people who are without sight. To overcome these barriers, a person who is blind or severely visually impaired must have specialized adaptive skills and a high level of personal confidence. An extensive continuum of services and an effective partnership between the consumer and DBS are the keys to successfully acquiring these skills and bolstering personal confidence.



No person's rehabilitation plan is the same as another's, and DBS strives to ensure that each rehabilitation program is tailored to fit the needs of the consumer. Services must be matched to the consumer's choices, skills, aptitudes, and capabilities to assure success.

The Division for Blind Services envisions a Texas where people who are blind or visually impaired enjoy the same opportunities as other Texans to pursue independence and employment.

For more information about DBS programs and services and eligibility requirements, call the DARS Inquiries Unit at 1-800-628-5115 or visit the DARS website at [www.dars.state.tx.us](http://www.dars.state.tx.us) and select Division for Blind Services.

## **DBS AT A GLANCE**

For business, finding and keeping good employees is one of the keys to success and is a major challenge in today's market.

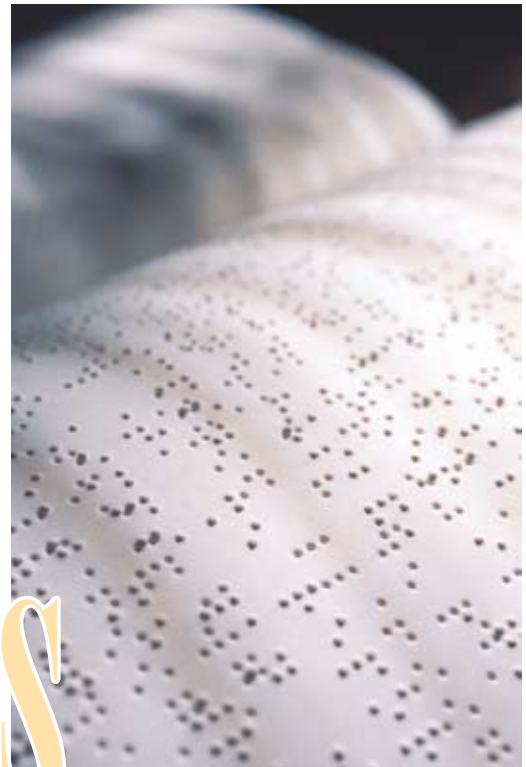
Helping individuals who are blind or significantly visually impaired go to work is at the core of the DBS mission.

DBS programs are designed to help business find the right match to fill business needs.

By focusing on business needs, DBS is better able to meet the employment needs of persons who are blind or significantly visually impaired.

# Information about DBS Programs

- **The Vocational Rehabilitation Program** is designed for adults whose visual condition limits their ability to begin or continue work. Program services may include counseling and guidance, physical or mental restoration, vocational diagnostics, vocational and adaptive skills training, adjustment to blindness services, orientation and mobility training, braille skills, services to individuals who are deafblind, Transition Program services to provide educational and career guidance to youths and young adults, assistive technology and employment assistance services, supported employment services, and assistance in obtaining employment.
- **The Business Enterprises of Texas (BET)** program is a federally sponsored, state-administered program that provides food management opportunities for Texans who are blind or visually impaired.
- **The Independent Living (IL) Program** assists adults who are blind or visually impaired to learn adaptive skills to continue to live independently and confidently with vision loss.
- **The Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center (CCRC)**, a residential program located in Austin, offers intensive training in basic skills for Texans who are blind.
- **The Blind Children's Vocational Discovery and Development Program** helps children from birth to age 22 who are blind or visually impaired to develop their individual potential. Specialized services reduce the impact of vision impairment on the child's social, emotional, physical, educational, and vocational development.
- **The Blindness Education, Screening, and Treatment Program (BEST)** works to help Texans keep their vision healthy. The intent of the BEST program is to prevent blindness. This program is funded with voluntary donations when Texans renew their drivers' licenses.



# PROGRAMS



# Self-Employment through Self-Determination

## Meet Preston Fansler

Preston Fansler was born deafblind and developmentally delayed. His parents applied for services with the DARS Division for Blind Services (DBS) shortly after his birth.

Working with the DBS Blind Children's Vocational Discovery and Development Program, Preston's parents advocated for their son's educational services. They became actively involved in family conference activities, the Deafblind Symposium at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and the Deaf-Blind Multihandicapped Association of Texas.

Through perseverance and networking, Preston's parents became convinced that their child was capable of being successful. They worked continuously with his DBS Blind Children's specialist and the local school district to ensure that Preston acquired the skills he would need as an adult to be both happy and productive. These efforts focused on the development of long-term skills and a strong support system designed to accommodate Preston's special circumstances.

Preston is now 19 years old. He is still in high school and will continue in school until age 21. He can sign using the hand-over-hand method, he uses a white cane to travel independently, and he helps mow the family's lawn. He is an excellent swimmer and likes to ride horses. He is also a self-employed business owner.

As he grew older and acquired improved independent living and work skills, Preston progressed from the Blind Children's Program to the DBS Transition Program. He also progressed in school and, through vocational training classes, found that he loved to shred paper.

With the assistance of his transition counselor, Preston acquired two industrial-sized paper shredders. Thus was born Handy Able Hands, a document shredding business with the slogan, "You create confidential data, I destroy it confidentially."

Preston's business has three weekly customers and two customers who call him when they need documents shredded. All of his customers are medical offices, and business is booming. He is very proud of being a full-service business and, based on his customer's preference, he can either shred on-site or transport the documents home to be destroyed.

Preston sends out monthly invoices and deposits his business receipts each month. Handy Able Hands has become so successful that Preston and his family are exploring ways to expand the business.



DIVISION FOR BLIND SERVICES

# Success and Self Confidence in Zapata, Texas

## Meet Triana Guerra-Flores

As a young child, Triana Guerra-Flores of Zapata, Texas, was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, a serious eye condition that leads to progressive loss of sight. Triana's deteriorating vision caused her to encounter numerous problems in school. Throughout her public education, her family had to fight attempts by the local school district to label her as a special education student.

Despite these difficulties, Triana successfully graduated with distinction (cum laude) in the top ten percent of her high school class and made the decision to pursue her dream of becoming a teacher.

Determined to achieve her goal, she contacted the DARS Division for Blind Services (DBS) and applied for vocational rehabilitation services. Working with her VR counselor in preparation for college, Triana received substantial counseling and career guidance services as well as specialized orientation and mobility training and comprehensive assistive technology training.

When Triana was accepted for college, her DBS counselor helped her apply for tuition exemption. Triana worked hard to keep up with her coursework and make good grades. At the beginning of each semester, DBS helped her purchase the required books and supplies she needed for her upcoming classes and helped her arrange for

the reader services she needed to complete her reading, library research, and other academic assignments.

Triana was persistent and dedicated to reaching her goal. She stayed in close contact with her counselor for ongoing counseling and guidance services. And as graduation grew closer, she began working with DBS specialists from the employment assistance services unit.

With a bachelor's degree in her hand, Triana decided to apply for an opening with the local school district in her hometown. Today, Triana is 24 years old and employed as a kindergarten teacher with the Zapata Independent School District.

In addition to living her childhood dream of becoming a teacher, Triana also speaks at public engagements with her mother and is pursuing her master's degree.



DIVISION FOR BLIND SERVICES

# *Disability Determination Services*



## MISSION

To improve the quality of life for Texans with disabilities who apply for or receive SSA disability benefits by making timely and accurate disability determinations.

# MAKING TIMELY AND ACCURATE DISABILITY DETERMINATIONS

The DARS Division for Disability Determination Services (DDS), funded entirely through the Social Security Administration (SSA), makes disability determinations for Texans with severe disabilities who apply for Social Security Disability Insurance and/or Supplemental Security Income.

Texans with physical and/or mental impairments apply for benefits at their local SSA field office, and their applications are forwarded to DDS for a disability determination. SSA, however, is responsible for making final decisions as to whether a person is eligible to receive benefits.

This DARS division is responsible for developing medical evidence and making the determination as to whether a claimant is disabled under the law. Usually, the division first tries to obtain evidence from the claimant's own medical sources. If that evidence is unavailable or insufficient to make a determination, arrangements will be made for a consultative examination (CE) to obtain the additional information

needed. After completing its development of the evidence, trained staff makes the disability determination and returns the case to the field office for appropriate action. If the staff determines that the claimant is disabled, SSA completes an eligibility determination, computes the benefit amount, and

begins paying benefits. If the claimant was found not to be disabled, the file is kept in the field office in case the claimant decides to appeal the determination.

To apply for disability benefits, call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213 or visit their website at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) to learn more about the application process for disability benefits. If you already have filed a disability claim with Social Security, you may contact the DARS Division for Disability Determination Services at

(512) 437-8000 or 1-800-252-7009 to obtain information or ask questions concerning your claim.



## DDS AT A GLANCE

Texans receive \$511.4 million each month in Social Security disability benefits.  
(Source: SSA Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics)

This year the DDS received a Social Security Commissioner's Citation for assisting the nation in meeting its initial disability claims processing goals.

The Texas DDS is the largest centralized DDS in the United States.

As measured by SSA, the Texas DDS achieved an accuracy rate of 95.9 percent for federal fiscal year 2007. This compares to the national average of 93.8 percent. (Source: SSA Office of Quality Performance)

# Information about DDS Programs

The Social Security Administration administers two disability programs that pay cash benefits and provide medical coverage to people who are unable to work because they have severe physical or mental impairments.

These cash benefits are designed to replace part of the income lost if a person becomes disabled. Many people are qualified to apply for both of these programs. Regardless of the program, DDS will make the disability determination for SSA, but only SSA can determine who is eligible to receive benefits.

**Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)** is related to work. A person earns coverage for themselves and family members by paying Social Security tax.

The program covers workers age 18 – 65 who are disabled, disabled widows/widowers, and disabled adult children of workers.

Claimants must wait five months from the onset of their disability before getting their first check; they must wait 24 months after the first check before Medicare starts.



**Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** is related to means – what a person has or owns. A person who does not own much or have much income may be able to qualify for this program. SSI covers adults 18 – 65 years of age and children from birth to age 18. There is no waiting period

for benefits to start; Medicaid coverage for medical care begins with the first check.



# PROGRAMS



# Faster Service through Specialization

## *DDS- Reaching Its Goals*

The Division for Disability Determination Services (DDS) is known for providing exceptional service to all Texas claimants, and for the most part, a generalist approach is best for maintaining that standard. Using this approach, all of the 510 disability specialists (DSs) in the Division's 34 operational units process cases for adults 18 to 65 and children of all ages. They also evaluate the full range of physical and mental impairments.

However, unusual developments and events occasionally require some units to focus on certain types of cases. This specialized approach centralizes the knowledge unique to a particular situation. More importantly, it allows DSs to provide claimants in unique circumstances the same expeditious service that other claimants receive.

- In the early 1990s the AIDS epidemic began to have a significant impact on the number of disability claims being filed. In response to this unique caseload, an operations unit was established to process disability cases in which AIDS/HIV positive was alleged. This specialization allowed the DSs to gain knowledge of the disease, as well as treatment facilities in Texas.

- In August and September of 2005, hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused a massive relocation of residents from Louisiana, many of whom subsequently filed for Social Security disability. DDS focused their cases in one unit so that the DSs could learn about medical resources in Louisiana and meet the challenges related to obtaining re-

ords from areas that were devastated by the hurricanes. Almost 6,000 hurricane-related disability cases have been received in DDS to date.

- A decision was made in April 2007 to centralize all military casualty cases in one operations unit. The decision came about after the Social Security Administration (SSA) established procedures to expedite disability claims for all military casualties that occurred October 1, 2001, or later. Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) in San Antonio has become a major rehabilitation center for military personnel suffering from amputations, burns, and traumatic brain injury. BAMC's new Center for the Intrepid is a state-of-the-art rehabilitation facility to which hundreds of military casualties are referred. As a result of this increasing population, a significant effort was begun by SSA to secure disability claims from these wounded warriors. Because they are residing in Texas while undergoing treatment, the claims are sent to DARS DDS for adjudication. The centralization of military casualty cases allowed a limited number of DSs to become familiar with traumatic conditions and to streamline the process for obtaining medical records.

"DARS DDS adjudicates over 250,000 cases each year with the goal of making timely and accurate determinations," says Assistant Commissioner Mary Wolfe. "While specialization is not routine, specialization 'as needed' has become an important part of our ability to achieve that goal."

# TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF ASSISTIVE AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

## 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

### *Where We're Going*





## *Planning New Strategies and Directions...* *Charting the Course for DARS*

Looking ahead to 2008, DARS is following a comprehensive approach to planning and tracking our progress. This approach is embodied in the DARS Roadmap, which will guide us through the next five years. As we pass each mile marker on this journey, employees, stakeholders, and consumers will benefit from our commitment to set priorities that are compatible with the Roadmap and make the best, most efficient use of time and resources.

The Roadmap will lead DARS to four key destinations, where:

- 1) World-class services and business practices are the DARS standard,
- 2) Constructive collaboration is the theme of DARS' interactions with all internal and external entities,
- 3) DARS executives are the models of leadership and commitment to a united DARS, *and*
- 4) Employees are DARS' most valuable resource and are empowered to develop competency to achieve world class services.





# TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF ASSISTIVE AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

## 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

### *Appendices*



# APPENDICES *the Budget for DARS*

## *Costs and Budget Breakdown by Program Areas*

<b>BUDGET BY DIVISION</b>	<b>SFY 2007</b>	<b>Million \$</b>	<b>METHOD OF FINANCE</b>	<b>SFY 2007</b>	<b>Million \$</b>
<b>DRS</b>		<b>209.7</b>	<b>Federal Funds</b>		<b>421.3</b>
<b>ECI</b>		<b>153.0</b>	<b>General Revenue</b>		<b>98.8</b>
<b>DDS</b>		<b>101.3</b>	<b>Interagency Contracts</b>		<b>17.8</b>
<b>DBS</b>		<b>50.5</b>	<b>Other</b>		<b>1.0</b>
<b>Program Support</b>		<b>24.4</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>538.9</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>538.9</b>			

Source: LAR for 2008 - 2009

<b>EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY</b>	<b>SFY 2007</b>	<b>Million \$</b>
<b>Services/Grants</b>		<b>342.3</b>
<b>Salaries/Wages</b>		<b>127.3</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>		<b>69.3</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>538.9</b>

# APPENDICES *Program Statistics*

## *Rehabilitation Services - a Breakdown of Numbers and Services*

### VR ELIGIBLES SERVED BY PRIMARY DISABILITY SFY 2007

Disability Group (Primary Disability Only)	Percent
Musculo-Skeletal	27
Cognitive	18
Mental/Emotional	18
Deaf and Hard of Hearing	10
Neurological	5
Substance Abuse	4
Traumatic Brain Injury/Spinal Cord Injury	3
Cardiac/Respiratory/Circulatory	2
Other Impairments	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

### SERVICES PURCHASED FOR VR PROGRAM

Based on Total Encumbered for Program VR and Budget Year 2007	Percent
Restoration Services	36
Training	29
Assistive Technology	15
Diagnostic and Evaluation	10
Maintenance and Transportation	4
Other	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

### VR EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

Employment Type	Percent
Competitive Employment	98.9
Self Employment	1.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

### VR SUCCESSFUL CLOSURES BY OCCUPATION

Occupation	Percent
Service	21
Professional, Technical, and Managerial	17
Office and Administrative Support	17
Healthcare Related	11
Transportation & Material Moving	8
Construction, Maintenance & Repair Related	8
Sales & Related	8
Production	7
Protective Service & Military	2
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	1
Homemaker or Unpaid Family Worker	0.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

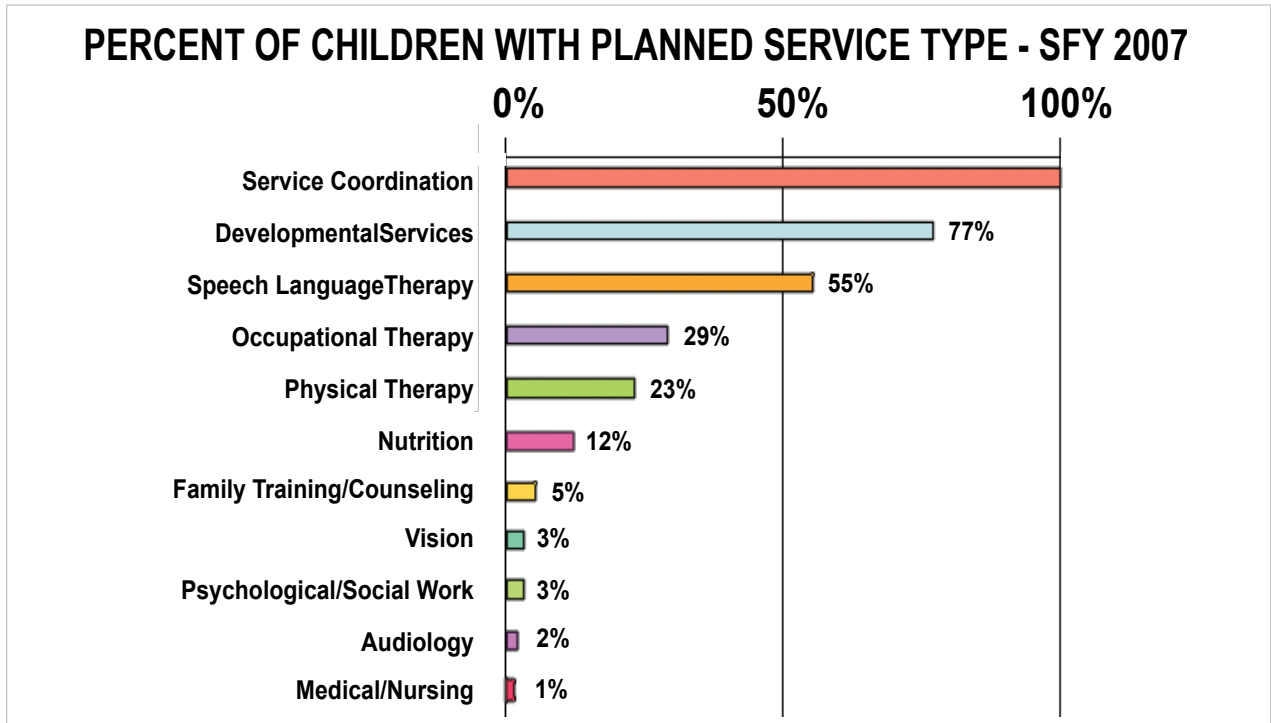
*Total number of consumers served is 82,916.  
Total number of successful closures is 11,132.*

*Source: DRS Case Management System*

*Note: Data as of 10/9/07 for SFY 2007  
Date: 10/10/07*

# APPENDICES *Program Statistics*

## *Early Childhood Intervention - a Breakdown of Numbers and Services*



### REASONS FOR ELIGIBILITY for CHILDREN ENROLLED in ECI - SFY 2007

Basis for Eligibility	Percent
Medical Diagnosis	11
Atypical Development	17
Developmental Delay	72
<i>Of those with delay or atypical development:</i>	
<i>Speech/Communication</i>	<i>67%</i>
<i>Physical/Motor</i>	<i>43%</i>
<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>30%</i>
<i>Adaptive/Self-Help</i>	<i>23%</i>
<i>Social/Emotional</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Vision</i>	<i>2%</i>
<i>Hearing</i>	<i>2%</i>

37% of children have delays in more than one area

### RESULTS OF A FAMILY OUTCOMES SURVEY

<i>Families reported that:</i>	Percent
They felt very comfortable participating in meetings with professionals to plan services	91
They were often able to help their child learn or practice new skills	88
ECI services helped their family effectively communicate their child's needs	86
ECI services helped their family be able to help their child develop and learn	86

# APPENDICES *Program Statistics*

## *Blind Services - a Breakdown of Numbers and Services*

### VR EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES SFY 2007

OCCUPATIONS	Percent
Professional, Technical & Managerial Service	24.3
Office & Administrative Support	18.5
Production	12.5
Sales and Related	10.4
Homemaker or unpaid family worker	8.4
Healthcare related	8.2
Construction, Maintenance & Repair Related	7.5
Transportation and Material Moving	5.2
Farming, Fishing and Forestry	3.2
Protective Service and Military	1.4
	0.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL SERVED	SFY 2007
Programs	Percent
Vocational Rehabilitation	59
Independent Living	21
Blind Children's Vocational Discovery & Development	20
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Total number served - 16,188*

*Source: DBS Case Management System*

### BLIND SERVICES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

#### Consumers Receiving Planned Services \*

STATE	Total
Texas	6,211
Florida	3,381
North Carolina	2,906
New York	2,438

#### Consumers Closed Successfully Employed \*

STATE	Total
Texas	1,332
New York	705
North Carolina	700
Florida	694

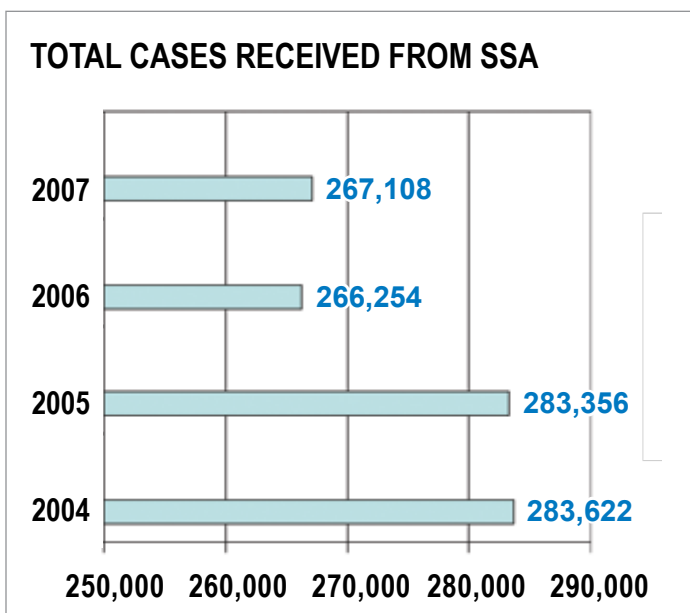
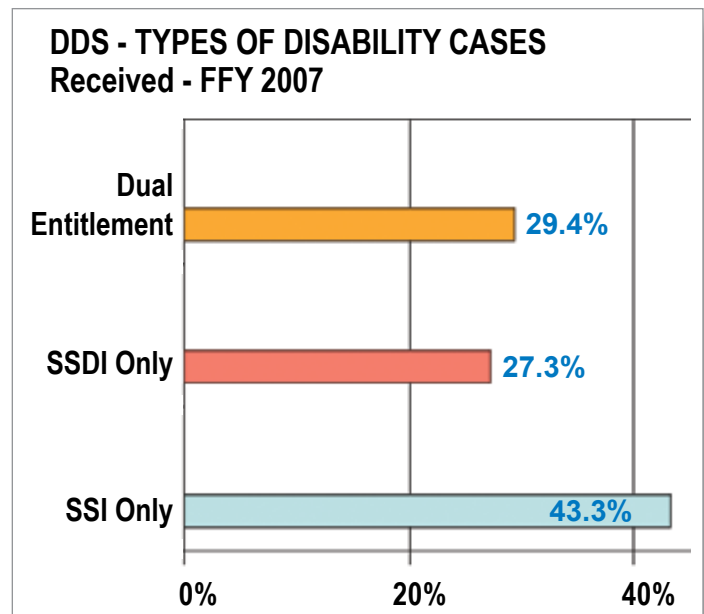
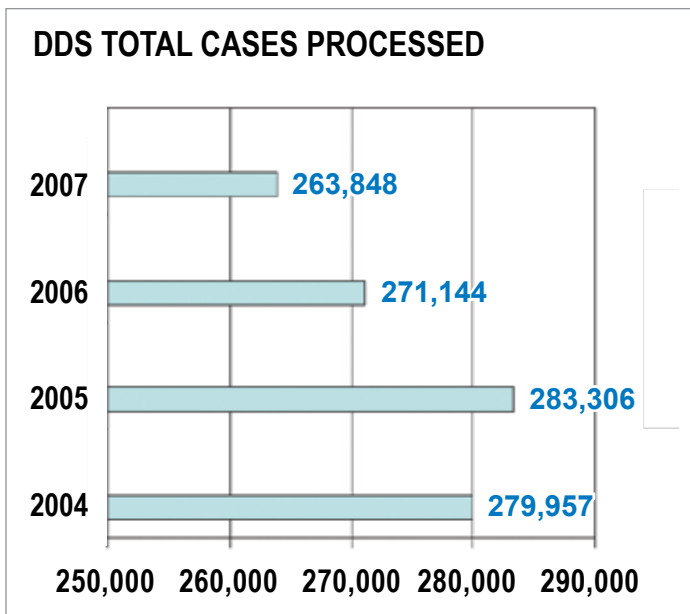
#### Numbers of Closures at/above Federal Minimum Wage \*

STATE	Total
Texas	1,159
North Carolina	690
Florida	653
New York	378

*Source of Information for the national statistics is the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Website. \*Numbers are based on FFY 2006 reports. May not match state fiscal year numbers.*

# APPENDICES *Program Statistics*

## *Disability Determination Services - a Breakdown of Numbers and Services*

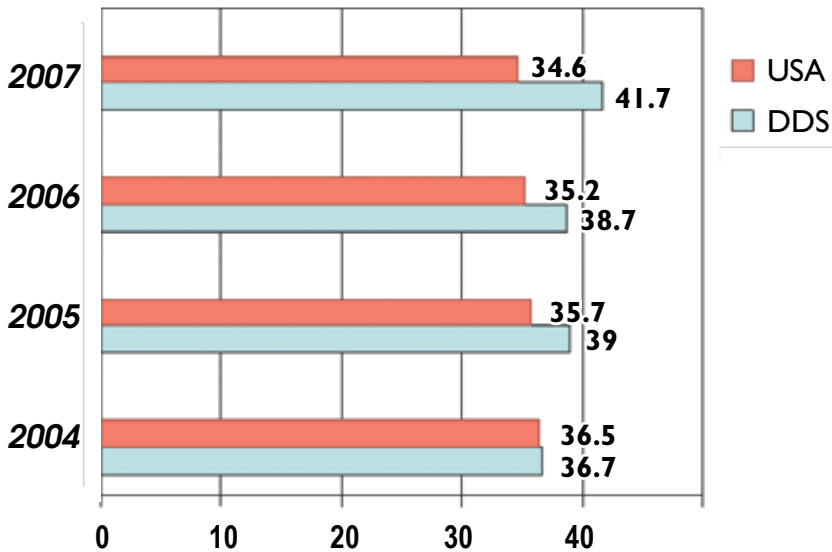


*Source: State Agency Operations  
Report published by SSA (09/28/07)*

# APPENDICES *Program Statistics*

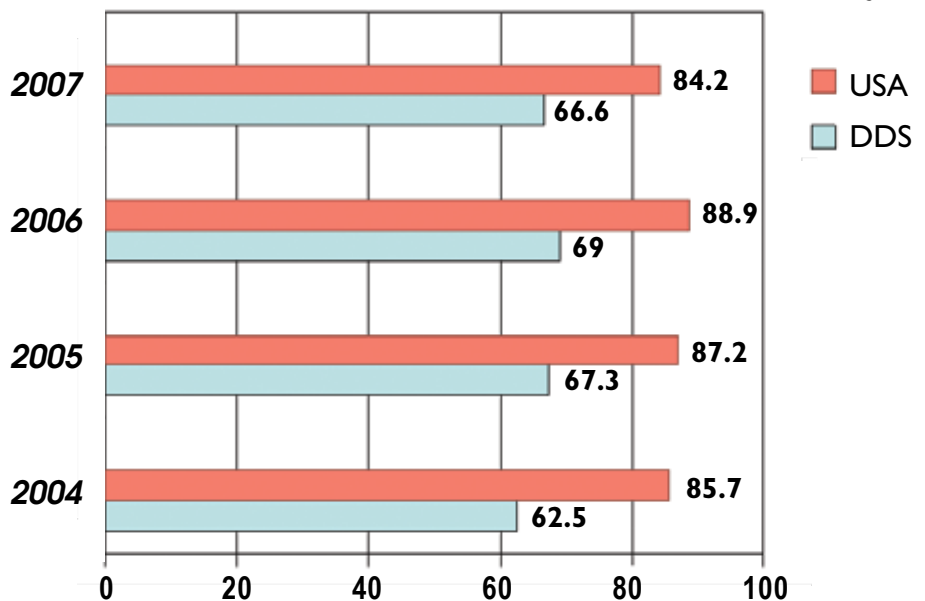
## *Disability Determination Services - a Breakdown of Numbers and Services*

**PERCENT OF INITIAL DISABILITY CASES ALLOWED  
COMPARED TO NATIONAL AVERAGE**



Source: State Agency Operations Report published by SSA (09/28/07)

**AVERAGE INITIAL CASE PROCESSING TIME - In Days**



Source: SSA Office of Disability Programs, DDS Performance Management Report (09/28/07)



# DARS EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT *Profiles*

*The Department's executive leaders have a wealth of professional*

## **Terry Murphy — Commissioner**

Terry Murphy was appointed commissioner of the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services in December 2003. Before his appointment, Commissioner Murphy served more than three decades at the Texas Commission for the Blind. His positions included: placement specialist, MH/MR program specialist, assistant state supervisor for community-based MH/MR services, assistant state supervisor for field services, deputy director for programs, and executive director. He has served in several national organizations, including the Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation, National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, and the American Foundation for the Blind. He recently received the Texas Rehabilitation Action Network's Lifetime Achievement Award for service in the Public VR Program and the Texas Rehabilitation Association's Professional of the Year Award. In addition to his distinguished career in public service, Commissioner Murphy is a proud veteran who was awarded three Bronze Stars and a Purple Heart during his service in Vietnam. He is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin.

## **Debra Wanser — Deputy Commissioner for Executive Support**

Debra Wanser joined DARS in July 2007. She works closely with the commissioner on day-to-day operations and provides strategic direction

to programs. The DARS Centers for Policy and Innovation, Program Coordination, and Consumer and External Affairs also report to Ms. Wanser. Before joining DARS, Ms. Wanser was the assistant commissioner for adult protective services at the Department of Family and Protective Services and associate commissioner for family health at the Texas Department of Health. Ms. Wanser has 28 years of direct care and administrative experience in nursing, mental health, public health, and social services. She has degrees from the University of Texas LBJ School of Public Affairs, St. Edward's University, and Oklahoma State University School of Nursing.

## **Alvin Miller — Chief Operating Officer**

Alvin Miller became chief operating officer for DARS in March 2004. He has served in senior management positions with the Texas Commission for the Blind (TCB), Office of Attorney General (OAG), and the Texas Comptroller's Office. Mr. Miller joined the Comptroller's Field Operations Division in 1973 as a state tax auditor and was promoted to director of field operations in 1981. He also served as director of the State Comptroller's Human Resources, Training, and Revenue Management Divisions. In 1992, Mr. Miller joined the Office of Attorney General (OAG) as chief fiscal officer. While with the OAG, he served as chief administrative officer of the State Employee Workers' Compensation System and director of





# DARS EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT *Profiles*

*experience at the local, state, and national levels.*

Information Systems Development, where he led the systems implementation of federal welfare reform. He joined the TCB in 1999 as chief financial officer. Mr. Miller is a certified public accountant, certified governmental financial manager, and a project management professional.

#### **Bill Wheeler — Chief Financial Officer**

Bill Wheeler has been the chief financial officer (CFO) for DARS since its inception. Prior to that, he was the CFO at the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. He has 12 years of state experience – all in financial management positions. Before joining the state, Mr. Wheeler spent 15 years in the private sector in financial management positions, including jobs as chief financial officer and budget manager in Dallas, Houston, and Austin. Mr. Wheeler holds a bachelor's degree in economics from the University of Texas at Austin and a master of business administration degree from Texas State University. He also is a graduate of the Governor's Executive Development Program.

#### **Terry Smith — Assistant Commissioner for Rehabilitation Services**

Terry Smith has worked in rehabilitation counseling and management for 30 years. Prior to becoming assistant commissioner, he served as a regional director for the Texas Rehabilitation Commission (TRC) for 14 years. Mr. Smith has broad experience in identifying and developing

programs and services via private and public partnerships. He has an in-depth understanding of the labor market and the development of responsive systems that meet the needs of employers and Texans with disabilities who are seeking employment. Mr. Smith received his bachelor's degree from the University of North Texas and a master's degree in rehabilitation studies from Sam Houston State University. He has been licensed as a certified rehabilitation counselor since 1981.

#### **Barbara J. Madrigal — Assistant Commissioner for Blind Services**

Barbara J. Madrigal has almost 30 years experience in providing services to Texans who are blind. She has held positions in direct service delivery, program development and implementation, and management. Ms. Madrigal has a bachelor's degree in education for the deaf and master's degrees in counseling and human services administration. She has taught deaf and hearing impaired students, served as an instructor for the migrant program at St. Edward's University, and worked with the American Red Cross in its services to military families. She is on the Executive Committee of the Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation and secretary of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind. Her many honors include recognition as Texas Commission for the Blind's Employee of the Year, a resolution



# DARS EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT *Profiles*

## *The DARS Management Team Combines Historical Knowledge with Fresh Perspectives*

from the Texas House of Representatives recognizing her efforts to enhance employment opportunities for blind Texans, an award from the San Antonio Lighthouse for outstanding dedication and contributions to the blind/visually impaired, and the State Agency Council's Outstanding Women in State Government award in the management category.

### **Kim Wedel — Assistant Commissioner for Early Childhood Intervention Services**

Kim Wedel came to DARS with a varied background, including 16 years experience in community-based nonprofits in California, New York, and Texas. She worked for the State of Texas for nine years at the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS). She also was director of community services at DADS. She holds a master's degree in social work (Licensed Master of Social Work in Texas) and a master's degree in public administration.

### **Mary Wolfe — Assistant Commissioner for Disability Determination Services**

Mary Wolfe became the assistant commissioner for disability determination services (DDS) in March of 2004. Ms. Wolfe started her public service career with the Texas Rehabilitation Commission (TRC). During her 29 years with TRC and DARS, she has held both staff and management positions. Ms. Wolfe worked in various divisions and assignments in the offices/units of Disability Determination Services field services in regional, satellite, and the central office in Austin. Also during this time, Ms. Wolfe served as the interim commissioner of TRC and was responsible for administering policy, oversight, and administrative functions, including DDS. Ms. Wolfe received her Bachelor of Liberal Studies degree from St. Edwards University in Austin with a degree in public administration.

# PROFILES DARS



# APPENDICES *Advisory Councils & Committees*

## **DARS Council**

The DARS Council assists the Commissioner in developing rules and policies for the Department. The council is composed of nine members of the public appointed by the Governor. To be eligible for appointment to the council, a person must have demonstrated an interest in and knowledge of problems and available services related to early childhood intervention services or to persons with disabilities other than developmental delay and mental retardation and persons who are blind, deaf, or hard of hearing.

More information on the council is available on the internet at <http://www.dars.state.tx.us/news/darscouncil.shtml>.

## **Members**

Timothy J. Flannery, Seabrook,  
*presiding officer*  
David Coco, Austin  
Lance L. Goetz, Dallas  
Connie Hughes, Idalou  
Joseph Muniz, Harlingen  
Diane M. Novy, Sugar Land  
Robin Riccardi, Spring  
2 vacancies

## **Early Childhood Intervention Advisory Committee**

The ECI Advisory Committee assists the DARS Division for Early Childhood Intervention Services in the development and implementation of the policies that constitute the statewide ECI system. The Governor appoints the members of the committee.

More information on the committee is available on the internet at <http://www.dars.state.tx.us/ecis/advisorycommittee.shtml>.

## **Members**

Richard Adams, Dallas  
Terry Beattie, Austin  
Dorothy Jean Calhoun, Houston  
State Rep. Myra Crownover, Denton  
Katrina Daniel, Austin  
Peter W. Ellis, San Antonio  
Beth Engelking, Austin  
Barbara Fountain, Austin  
Michelle Gee, Austin  
Dottie Goodman, Austin  
Rachel Hernandez-Reynolds, Weslaco  
Barbara W. James, Austin  
Diane Kazlow, Plano  
Laura Logan Kender, Lubbock  
Katherine (Kathy) Lee, Temple  
John David McCloy, Katy  
Alba A. Ortiz, PhD, Austin  
Kathy de la Pena, Edinburg  
Pamela M. Perez, El Paso

# COUNCILS



# APPENDICES *Advisory Councils & Committees*

Teresa Petersen, Brazoria  
Harvey Salinas, Corpus Christi  
Michelle J. Smith, Justin  
Lynn Sullivan, Fort Worth  
Monica Villegas-Thyssen, Austin  
Lesa Walker, MD, MPH, Austin

## **Rehabilitation Council of Texas**

The Rehabilitation Council of Texas reports to and advises the DARS Commissioner and the Health and Human Services Executive Commissioner regarding the Department's performance in providing vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities. Council members are appointed by the Governor.

More information on the council is available on the internet at <http://www.dars.state.tx.us/announcements/rct.shtml>.

## **Members**

Shawn Patrick Saladin, Austin, chair  
Joseph F. Acosta, Jr., El Paso  
Patricia Alvarez, Austin  
Corbett Chase Bearden, Austin  
Tobin Richard Boenig, Austin  
Ramona Diane Cardenas, San Antonio  
Brenda Lynn Dunn, Austin  
Carol C. Edwards, Conroe  
Roy Larry Evans, San Angelo  
Mike Halligan, Georgetown  
Richard Giles Hatfield, Austin  
Dwayne W. Horner, Dallas  
Paula Jean Margeson, Plano

Cindy Miller, Garden Ridge  
William F. Mullican III, Austin  
Richard P. Poe, Austin  
Karen Stanfill, Houston

## **State Independent Living Council**

The State Independent Living Council is an equal partner with DARS in the development, approval, and implementation of the State Plan for Independent Living. The Texas SILC leads, promotes, and advances independent living philosophy and advocates for the rights of individuals with disabilities. The Governor appoints council members, with the majority being individuals with disabilities.

More information on the council is available on the internet at <http://www.dars.state.tx.us/news/silc.shtml>.

## **Members**

Paula Margeson, Plano, chair  
Dennis Borel, Austin  
Michelle Crain, Lubbock  
Glenda Embree, Austin  
Larry Gardner, Austin  
Marc Gold, Austin  
Robert Hawkins, Bellmead  
Marcia Ingram, McAllen  
Kristen E. Jones, Houston, secretary  
Donald Landry, Groves  
Tracey Michol, Kingwood  
Scotty Sherrill, Nacogdoches  
Morgan Talbot, McAllen, vice chair



**APPENDICES** *Contact information*

## *Getting in Touch with Us*

### **Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services**

**Address:**

4800 N. Lamar Blvd.  
Austin, TX 78756

**Phone:**

(512) 424-4000

**Email:**

[DARS.Inquiries@dars.state.tx.us](mailto:DARS.Inquiries@dars.state.tx.us)

**Inquire toll free about DARS programs  
and services:**

1-800-628-5115

1-866-581-9328 TTY

**Additional Information about DARS**

Additional information about each of the  
DARS service divisions is available at  
[www.dars.state.tx.us](http://www.dars.state.tx.us).

### **Texas Health and Human Services Commission**

**Mailing Address:**

Texas Health and Human Services  
Commission  
Office of the Ombudsman, MC H-700  
P O Box 13247  
Austin, TX 78711-3247

**Physical Address/Headquarters:**

HHSC Headquarters  
Brown-Heatly Building  
4900 N. Lamar Blvd.  
Austin, TX 78751-2316

**Additional Information about Health  
and Human Services**

Call 2-1-1 for access to information  
about health and human services  
in your community.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**  
DEPARTMENT OF ASSISTIVE AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

# Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services

## 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

Early Childhood Intervention Services

Rehabilitation Services

Blind Services

Disability Determination Services





Department of  
Assistive and  
Rehabilitative  
Services

2007  
*Annual Report*

DARS

This report is published annually  
by the  
**Department of Assistive  
and Rehabilitative Services.**

Inquiries may be made to:  
**Department of Assistive  
and Rehabilitative Services**

4800 N. Lamar Blvd.  
Austin, TX 78756

Phone: (800) 628-5115

Email: [DARS.Inquiries@dars.state.tx.us](mailto:DARS.Inquiries@dars.state.tx.us)

You may also view this annual report on the Internet  
at:  
<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/>

The Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services  
is an equal opportunity employer and services provider.

#01670 12/2007

