

# Community Now!

*Independence from waiting. Freedom from institutions.*

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## Mission

Community Now! is a statewide nonprofit organization passionately committed to promoting inclusive communities for all Texans often marginalized because of a disability.

## We Believe

Our loved ones with disabilities should have the option to live in their communities and not languish on long waiting lists for services or forced to live in a dangerous, dehumanizing segregated institution.

The services for our citizens with disabilities must be nothing short of exceptional and that those responsible for providing these services must be held accountable.

Public policy and tax dollars must be aligned to support Texans with disabilities who want to live in smaller, more cost efficient settings in their communities and no longer support the waste and abuse of a failed institutional system.

## Our Work

- Support **educational demonstrations** that encourage immediate action by key Statewide leaders.
- **Educate** the community through multi-media resources regarding the abuse in Texas' institutions, lack of accountability and the need for long-term care systems reform.
- Help produce **documentary films** to expose the abuse, lack of accountability, and failures of institutions for individuals living with an IDD label.
- Provide **on-going information about the need for long-term care reform**, including the reduction of "interest" lists, known as a waiting list, and the closure and consolidation of Texas institutions.
- **Organize** local Community Now! networks/coalitions in Texas.
- Provide small, **one-time grants**, up to \$250.00 to individuals who leave a Texas institution to live in their community. The "Free Haseb Fund" Grants provide an opportunity for an individual to purchase a house warming item of their choice.

## How You Can Help

- Get Connected. Join the Community Now! Yahoo Group or follow us on facebook.
  - facebook <http://www.facebook.com/communitynowfreedom>
  - Yahoo Group [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Community\\_Now/join](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Community_Now/join)
- Host an informational meeting in your community.
- Organize a Community Now! coalition in your community.
- Educate your elected officials about the need for long-term care systems reform.
- Invest in Community Now! All donations are tax-deductible.

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## Recommendations for Long Term Care Systems Reform

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1. Direct the Health and Human Services Commission to develop a long range plan to re-balance long term care services for Texans with Disabilities. This plan should include the following components:
  - Develop a diversely represented Task Force to guide plan development.
  - Close and consolidate State Supportive Living Centers (SSLC) as the population decreases. The closure process must include the choices of those choosing to remain in these facilities and ensure those who wish to leave have every opportunity to do so.
  - Ensure supports and services for individuals living in the community are available, exceptional and accountable.
  - Persons transitioning from SSLC's to community settings should develop a Person Directed Plan to ensure the successful transition in order to meet individual needs.
  - Money Follow the Person protocols utilized for individuals with disabilities exiting nursing homes and private ICF-MR facilities should be incorporated to support persons exiting SSLCs.
  - Designate all funding saved through consolidation and closure of SSLCs to fund individuals with disabilities on Waiting Lists for community services and supports.
2. Consolidate Medicaid Waivers into a system that determines services based on needs generated through Person Centered Planning.
3. Personal Care Attendants and other Direct Support Professionals must be paid a living wage plus appropriate benefits.
4. Expand Consumer Directed Services (CDS) options to all waiver services and ensure information on how to access these services is readily available and accessible.

