

# DOWNSIZING OF THE STATE SUPPORTED LIVING CENTER SYSTEM

AN ISSUE BRIEF FROM LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD STAFF

ID: 520

JANUARY 2013

## OBJECTIVE

State Supported Living Centers (SSLCs) provide 24-hour residential services, day habilitation, behavioral treatment, comprehensive medical care, and therapies for persons with an intellectual disability or a related condition.

As the census of the SSLC system has declined, Texas has downsized the centers rather than close and consolidate.

## KEY FACTS

- ◆ Texas operates 13 SSLCs.
- ◆ From 1977 to 2012, the average monthly census at Texas' SSLCs decreased from 12,132 to 3,881 (68.0 percent decline).
- ◆ Texas last closed SSLCs in 1995 and 1996.

## BUDGETARY IMPACT

The 2012–13 General Appropriations Act provided \$541.0 million in General Revenue Funds (\$1.3 billion in All Funds) for SSLCs.

## STATUTORY REFERENCES

The Texas Health and Safety Code 533.038 and Texas Human Resources Code 161.071(2) provide DADS with operational authority.

The Texas Health and Safety Code 533.084 requires the department to obtain legislative approval before closing or consolidating a facility.

Texas operates 13 intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ICF/IID) known as state supported living centers (SSLCs). These facilities were previously known as state schools. Texas continues to operate SSLCs despite 40-year nation-wide trends of deinstitutionalization and expansion of community services, as well as ongoing quality of care concerns at the SSLCs highlighted by the Department of Justice. As demand for institutional services has decreased and consumers have expressed a preference to be served in community settings, Texas has opted to downsize the population served at each center rather than close and consolidate centers. This has significant ongoing cost implications for the state. Texas last closed SSLCs in 1995 and 1996 when the average monthly system censuses were 5,879 and 5,724, respectively. The fiscal year 2012 average monthly census was 3,881. Various initiatives have contributed to downsizing.

## TEXAS STATE SUPPORTED LIVING CENTERS IN A NATIONAL CONTEXT

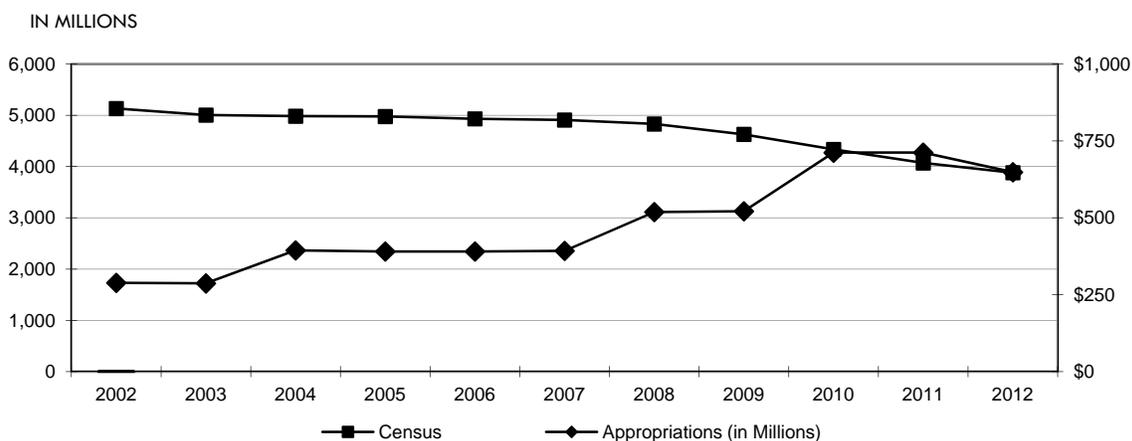
The Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) operates 12 SSLCs in Abilene, Austin, Brenham, Corpus Christi, Denton, El Paso, Lubbock, Lufkin, Mexia (forensic center), Richmond, San Angelo, and San Antonio. DADS contracts with the Department of State Health Services to operate an ICF/IID at the Rio Grande State Center. SSLCs receive persons admitted voluntarily or committed under the Texas Persons with Mental Retardation Act, and juveniles and adults committed under the Texas Family and Criminal Codes.

Since its peak in 1967, the national census of persons served in large state-run institutions has decreased to 30,602 (84.3 percent). Of the 354 institutions in operation between 1960 to 2010, 194 have closed. Texas serves the largest institutionalized population of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities of any state and 11.5 percent of the U.S. total, as of 2010. This amount includes state-owned and privately operated ICF/IID, as reported in the annual survey published by the Research and Training Center on Community Living. Texas also operates more large facilities than most other states (defined as 16+ residents). Only New York operates more large institutions than Texas. In 2010, the average size of a large institution in New York was 41 compared to 324 in Texas.

## DOWNSIZING OF STATE SUPPORTED LIVING CENTERS

Between fiscal years 1977 to 2012, the average monthly system census in Texas has decreased from 12,132 persons to 3,881 (68.0 percent). Since fiscal year 2002, the SSLC system census has declined by 24.4 percent. Seven campuses have experienced reductions of at least 100 people. These campuses include Abilene, Brenham, Corpus Christi, Denton, Lubbock, Mexia, and Richmond. The declining census is shown in Fig. 1. Fig. 1 also shows appropriations, which have increased for a variety of reasons including the Department of Justice settlement agreement. There have also been staffing reductions of 244 full-time equivalents in fiscal year 2012 and reductions in contracted employees.

**FIG. 1**  
**SSLC AVERAGE MONTHLY CENSUS AND ALL FUNDS APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEARS 2002 TO 2012**



SOURCE: Legislative Budget Board.

Ongoing initiatives related to downsizing of SSLCs include:

- **Community Living Options Information Process (CLOIP):** In 2000, the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation implemented the CLOIP process to inform state school residents of alternate living arrangements. In 2007 the Legislature strengthened the process and transferred responsibility to local authorities. The CLOIP process requires local authority staff to meet with each SSLC resident and their legally authorized representative at least annually.
- **Money Follows the Person (MFP):** The program came out of the Promoting Independence Initiative. MFP is a multi-state, multi-year federal demonstration. The program provides states with enhanced federal funding for persons who transfer from an institution (who reside there at least six months) to a community program. In Texas, 3,614 persons have moved out of ICF/IID since the inception of the Promoting Independence Initiative, as of June 30, 2012.
- **Reshaping directed by the Legislature:** Riders in the General Appropriations Act for the last two biennia (2010–11 and 2012–13) directed DADS to reshape the SSLC system through downsizing and to expand community services. In the 2010–11 biennium, the legislature appropriated \$157.7 million in General Revenue Funds to fund 7,832 slots in IDD community waiver programs. In the 2012–13 biennium, the legislature directed DADS to continue reshaping the system of SSLCs through downsizing.

Recent initiatives implemented by DADS to downsize the SSLC system and increase support for persons transitioning to community settings include:

- **Downsizing at Austin SSLC:** In fiscal year 2012, DADS halted admissions to the Austin SSLC and began a census reduction plan. As of June 2012, 29 individuals had been referred for community placement, and 3 individuals had been placed in community settings. As larger numbers of persons are placed in community settings, DADS will re-evaluate its downsizing plan for the Austin SSLC.
- **Community Transition Specialists:** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services approved DADS' request to hire 24 Community Transition Specialists and support staff using Money Follows the Person Demonstration funds in December 2011. These specialists are deployed across the SSLC system to support the community transition process for residents seeking to transition to community living. According to DADS, staff members focus on the logistics of community transitions and addressing issues that slow down placements.
- **Austin-area Pilot with Local Authorities:** In August 2012, DADS began a pilot program with three local authorities to test a model of increased support for people moving to the community. Local authority staff members provide SSLC consumers with additional exploration of community living alternatives, additional planning and support related to the placement. This includes working with the consumer and legally authorized representative to identify the optimal community provider and additional service coordination activities related to the transition.

#### USEFUL REFERENCE

Legislative Budget Board, "Transform State Residential Services for Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities," January 2011: [http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Health\\_Services/State\\_Supported\\_Living\\_Centers.pdf](http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/Health_Services/State_Supported_Living_Centers.pdf).

#### CONTACT

Lindsay Littlefield: [Lindsay.Littlefield@lbb.state.tx.us](mailto:Lindsay.Littlefield@lbb.state.tx.us)