



## Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare

### Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Local Plan For Fiscal Years 2024 – 2025

[Redacted Signature]

Board Chair

8/31/2023  
Date

# Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare

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## Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Local Plan

### Introduction

In January 2023, Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare (Tri-County) initiated the Fiscal Year 2023 planning process to determine the direction of services for persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). During the planning process, Tri-County staff collected survey information from individuals served, families, interested community members and local officials (stakeholders) regarding the direction for services. Tri-County coordinated one virtual and five face to face stakeholder meetings in order to continue efforts to educate local stakeholders about our services and seek input from this growing population regarding special needs. Three evening planning meetings were also provided to ensure that community members had both day and evening options for participating in the planning sessions. Information gathered from these activities has been evaluated and will be discussed later in this plan.

### Mission Statement for Tri-County

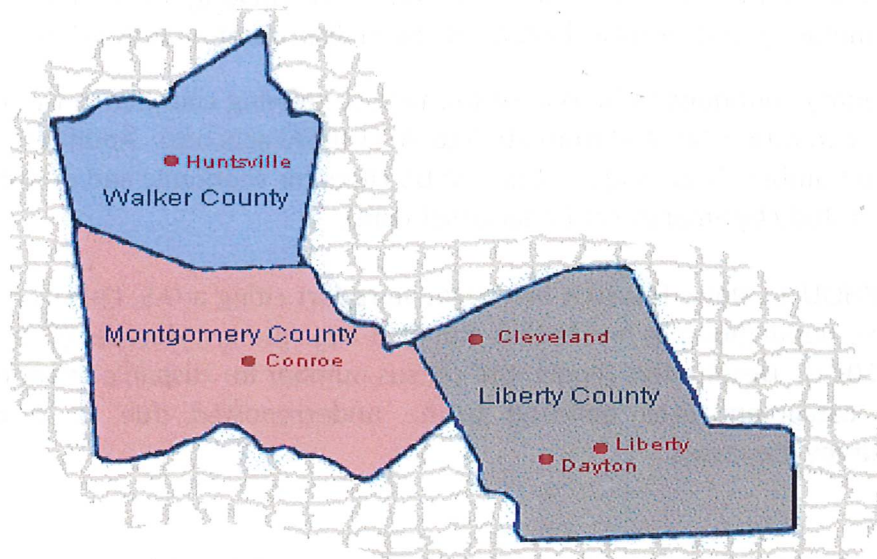
Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for those we serve and our communities by ensuring the provision of quality services for individuals with mental illness, substance use disorders and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

### Vision of Tri-County

Our vision is to develop a mental health and developmental disabilities care system with adequate resources that ensures the provision of effective and efficient services to meet the needs of our community. To achieve our vision, we will partner with the community to:

- Expand the availability of new and existing resources; and
- Assure the availability of technically and culturally competent staff.

## Service Area Demographics



Tri-County's service area covers a three county area just north of Houston to include Montgomery, Liberty and Walker Counties. The most populous of the three counties in the Tri-County service area is Montgomery County which is located on the northern boundary of Harris County. It consists of 1,077 square miles of rural and urban areas with a population estimate of 648,886 (2021 U.S. Census Estimate). The racial makeup is 58.7% Caucasian, 26.4% Hispanic or Latino, 7.4% African American, 3.5% Asian, 1.6% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 0.3% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander with 2.1% indicating two or more races (2021 U.S. Census Estimates). Individuals under the age of 18 make up 25.6% of the population and the per capita income in the past 12 months (in 2021 dollars) was \$44,256 (2022 U.S. Census Estimate).

Liberty County is the contiguous county east of Harris and Montgomery Counties and has 1,176 square miles with a population of 97,621 (2021 U.S. Census Estimate). The racial makeup is 50.5% Caucasian, 34.3% Hispanic or Latino, 10.2% African American, 2.2% American Indian and Alaska Native, 0.7% Asian, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander with 1.7% indicating two or more races (2021 U.S. Census Estimates). Children under the age of 18 make up 29.5% of the population and the per capita income in past 12 months (in 2021 dollars) is \$23,475 (2022 U.S. Census Estimate).

Walker County is north of Montgomery County, consists of 802 square miles and is considered rural. With a population estimate of 77,977, the racial makeup is 53.4% Caucasian, 24.3% African American, 18.7% Hispanic or Latino, 1.2% Asian, 0.8% American Indian and Alaska Native and 0.1% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander with 1.6% indicating two or more races (2021 U.S. Census Estimate). Individuals under the age of 18 make up about 14.4% of the population and the per capita income in the past 12 months (in 2021 dollars) is \$20,814 (2022 U.S. Census Estimate).



For Walker and Liberty Counties, it should be noted that all Texas Department of Corrections inmates are counted in the census numbers. In addition to inflating the number of residents in the county, the inmate population has historically been disproportionately ethnic.

Montgomery County continues to be one of the fastest growing counties in the United States with a 41.3% growth rate estimated from 2010 to 2021 (USAFacts.org). Additionally, the city of Conroe is ranked number six among the top 100 US cities for economic and population growth for 2022 in a new study by SmartAsset (Smartasset.com).

According to a KHOU 11 News Houston investigative report citing a U.S. Census report, Liberty County's Hispanic population has 'more than doubled over the last decade' (Cheryl Mercedes, September 25, 2021). Despite this report, the census number for Hispanic or Latino persons in the Tri-County catchment area believed to be underreported due to concerns about governmental survey processes.

## Persons served with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

### Priority Population

The IDD priority population consists of persons who meet one or more of the following:

- A person with an Intellectual Disability, as defined by Texas Health and Safety Code §591.003 (15-a);
- A person with Autism Spectrum Disorder, as defined in the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual;
- A person with an HHSC approved related condition who is eligible for, and enrolling in services in the ICF/IID, Home and Community-based Services (HCS) Program, or Texas Home Living (TxHmL) Program;
- A nursing facility resident who is eligible for specialized services for Intellectual Disability or a related condition pursuant to Section 1919(e)(7) of the Social Security Act;
- A child who is eligible for Early Childhood Intervention services through HHSC; and
- A person diagnosed by an authorized provider as having a Pervasive Developmental Disorder through a diagnostic assessment completed before November 15, 2015.

### Service Population Prioritization

Since resources are insufficient to meet the service needs of every individual in the IDD priority population, services should be provided to meet the most intense needs first. Intense needs are determined as follows:

- An individual is in danger or at risk of losing his or her support system, especially the living arrangements or support needs to maintain self;
- An individual is at risk of abuse or neglect;
- An individual's basic health and safety needs are not being met through current supports;

- An individual is at risk for functional loss without intervention, preventive or maintenance services; or
- An individual demonstrates repeated criminal behavior.

#### Persons Served in FY 2022

In Fiscal Year 2022, Tri-County provided IDD Services to 1551 individuals with IDD and their families.

#### Priority Population Prevalence Data

On average, 2-3% of the total population will have an IDD diagnosis or a related condition. If this prevalence data is applied to our service area, it is estimated that approximately 24,700 persons in Tri-County's service area have a qualifying diagnosis for state funded IDD Services.

### Current Tri-County Service Array

Tri-County currently provides the following services for the IDD Population:

- Screening – The process of gathering information to determine the need for services.
- Eligibility Determination – An interview and assessment or endorsement conducted to determine if an individual has an Intellectual Disability or is a member of the IDD priority population. IDD Waiver Program Eligibility is determined using criteria established by HHSC.
- Service Coordination – Assistance in accessing medical, social, educational, and other appropriate services and supports that will help an individual achieve a quality of life and community participation acceptable to the individual as described in the Plan for Services and Supports.
- Continuity of Services – Service Coordination performed for:
  - An individual residing in a State IDD facility whose movement to the community is being planned or for an individual who formerly resided in a State facility and is on community-placement status; or
  - An individual enrolled in the ICF/IDD program to maintain the individual's placement or to develop another placement for the individual served.
- Service Authorization and Monitoring – Service Coordination provided to an individual who is assessed as having a single need.
- Service Coordination- HCS or TxHmL Program – Service Coordination for individuals enrolled in the HCS or TxHmL Program.
- Habilitation Coordination – Assistance for a designated resident residing in a nursing facility to access appropriate specialized services necessary to achieve a quality of life and level of community participation acceptable to the designated resident and legally authorized representative on the designated resident's behalf.



- Community Support – Individualized activities that are consistent with the individual’s plan of services and supports and provided in the individual’s home and at community locations (e.g., libraries and stores).

Supports may include:

- Habilitation and support activities that foster improvement of, or facilitate, an individual’s ability to perform functional living skills and other daily living activities;
  - Activities for the individual’s family that help preserve the family unit and prevent or limit out-of-home placement;
  - Transportation for an individual between home and the individual’s community employment or habilitation site; and
  - Transportation to facilitate the individual’s employment opportunities and participation in community activities.
- Independent Living Skills – Individualized activities, provided to individuals in a nursing facility, that are consistent with the Individual Service Plan and provided in a person’s residence and at community locations.
  - Behavior Supports – Specialized interventions, provided to individuals in a nursing facility, to assist an individual to increase adaptive behaviors and to replace or modify maladaptive behavior that prevent or interfere with the individual’s inclusion in home, family, or community life.
  - Employment Assistance – Assistance provided to an individual related to locating paid, individualized, competitive employment in the community.
  - Supported Employment – Assistance provided to help an individual who has paid, individualized, competitive employment in the community, to sustain that employment.
  - Day Habilitation – Assistance with acquiring, retaining, or improving self-help, socialization, and adaptive skills necessary to live successfully in the community and to participate in home and community life.
  - Home and Community-based Services (HCS) – Individualized services and supports provided to persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities who are living with their family, in their own home or in other community settings, such as small group homes.
  - Permanency Planning – A philosophy and planning process that focuses on achieving family support for individuals under 22 years of age by facilitating permanent living arrangements that include an enduring and nurturing parental relationship.
  - PASRR Evaluation – An evaluation of an individual in a nursing facility to determine if the individual is appropriately placed and whether they have a mental health or Intellectual and Developmental Disability that would benefit from alternative placement or supplemental services.
  - Community First Choice (CFC) – A program that enables Texas Medicaid to provide the most cost-effective approach to basic attendant and habilitation service delivery. The services available in CFC include:
    - Personal assistance services;
    - Habilitation services;

- Emergency response services; and
  - Support management.
- Respite – Planned or emergency short-term relief services provided to the individual’s unpaid caregiver when the caregiver is temporarily unavailable to provide supports. This service provides an individual with:
  - Personal assistance in daily living activities and functional living tasks;
  - Habilitation activities;
  - Use of natural supports and typical community services available to all people;
  - Social interaction and participation in leisure activities; and
  - Assistance in developing socially valued behaviors.
- Crisis Intervention Services – Support provided to individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) with significant behavioral and psychiatric challenges. Individuals in need of Crisis Intervention Services often exhibit significant needs requiring additional support beyond the array of services typically provided within community programs. A “Crisis” is defined as a situation in which the individual presents an immediate danger to self or others, the individual's mental or physical health is at risk of serious deterioration, an individual believes he or she presents an immediate danger to self or others, or that his or her mental or physical health is at risk of serious deterioration. To avoid or lessen the crisis, crisis respite may be provided to an individual on a short-term basis (up to 14 calendar days). This respite may be in-home or out-of-home.
- Autism Program Services – Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services provided to children ages 3 through 15 years of age who have a diagnosed Autism Spectrum Disorder.

## Gathering Public Input in the Planning Process

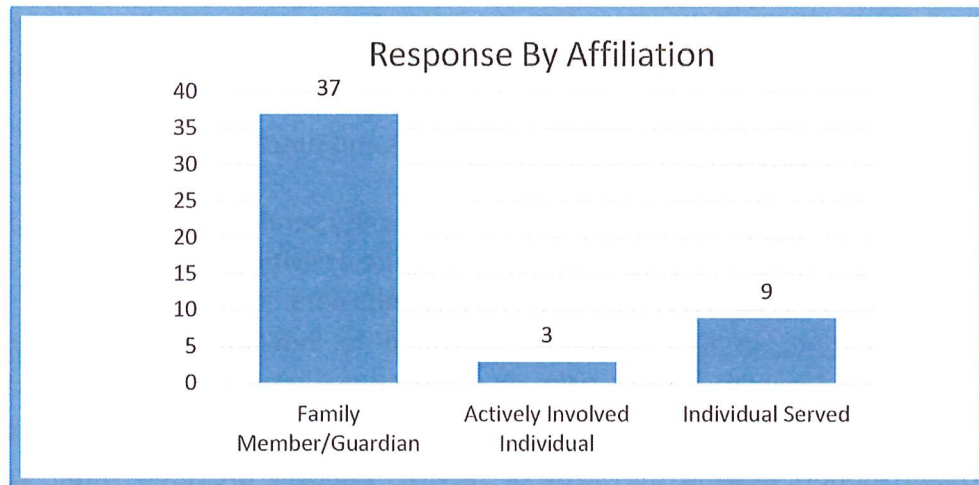
### Survey Response

Tri-County developed a survey about our IDD services which was provided in both English and Spanish to local stakeholders. An online survey option was also made available to stakeholders and distributed via email.

Questions on the survey included both closed and open-ended questions about services and focused on identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Needs (SWOT) of the IDD community in our area. The information provided by stakeholders through the survey was then incorporated into the final plan.



### Planning Responses by Affiliation



Out of the 49 survey responses received, the majority of stakeholders who completed the survey indicated that they are satisfied with the services they receive, however a further analysis of the results also indicated that there remain concerns that services available may not be meeting the community needs. Local stakeholders noted a need for increased services and resources (including transportation, respite, supports and services for individuals with Autism, additional supports for individuals on the interest list as well as additional supports, resources, and education for parents and guardians navigating IDD crisis situations and/or the IDD system of care) to better meet the needs of the community. Additionally, while several respondents reported excellent satisfaction with their service coordinators and others working with them and their family member, a few respondents outlined concerns surrounding staff retention and turnover.

### Community Forums

In addition to the survey process, seven meetings were held to gather information from stakeholders about services including both public meetings and meetings with identified stakeholders (i.e. PNAC and an SSLC representative). Interested stakeholders were provided with a brief educational session about Tri-County, the purpose for the planning process and were asked several open-ended questions.

Local Planning Meetings	
Date	Location
January 18, 2023	IDD PNAC Local Planning Kick Off Meeting
March 22, 2023	IDD PNAC Local Planning Meeting
March 28, 2023	Walker County Local Planning Meeting
March 28, 2023	Montgomery County Local Planning Meeting (Spanish)
March 29, 2023	Montgomery County Local Planning Meeting
March 30, 2023	Liberty County Local Planning Meeting (Liberty)
March 30, 2023	Liberty County Local Planning Meeting (Cleveland)



March 31, 2023	All County Local Planning Meeting (Virtual)
April 26, 2023	IDD PNAC Local Planning Meeting – Planning Review
June 7, 2023	IDD PNAC Local Planning Meeting – Planning Review
August 9, 2023	Meeting with SSLC Representative – Review of Draft Local Plan
August 9, 2023	IDD PNAC Local Planning Meeting – Review of SSLC Recommendations and changes to Draft Plan

### Planning Session Open-Ended Responses

A series of open-ended questions were asked of local stakeholders through both the survey process and at planning meetings. Below is a summary of where the responses converged for each question asked, taking into account feedback from all planning sessions and participants:

1. *What services would you like Tri-County to provide which are not currently being offered?*

Stakeholders continued to express concerns about the amount of funding available to serve individuals in our service area. While many expressed that they were happy with the services that were offered, they shared that they would like to see more of them as well as more funding to expand these services. Additionally, participants cited concerns over the long State Interest List and a need for adjustments to the system of care to include additional supports for and be more inclusive of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Specifically, stakeholders cited concerns about the lack of affordable resources and supports for individuals with autism who may not qualify for particular programs due to IQ but are not functionally capable of living independently. Other feedback included: Transportation for individuals to get to and from their place of employment/day habilitation site (as this is sometimes difficult for parents and guardians who need to work), support groups and regular educational opportunities for parents/guardians and socialization opportunities for individuals with IDD and their families.

2. *What services/supports do you think are the most needed for individuals with IDD and/or their family members?*

The number one area that stakeholders cited as the most needed was access to services and supports for young adults with IDD who have graduated high school. These responses included the need for flexible access to services that meet the needs of the individual and family, to include those who may not qualify for waiver programs but are unable to live independently; ABA therapy; respite; transportation; additional opportunities for socialization activities; and additional education and support for parents navigating the complexity of services. Feedback from the SSLC representative indicated similar results with respect to the needs of individuals on the Autism Spectrum and additional education and resources for parents and/or guardians, with the population needing additional focus reported to be slightly younger teens (15-16 age range). Additionally, respite was frequently cited as a high need for family members of individuals with IDD and several participants shared concerns about the available resource not being sufficient to meet the community need.

3. *What could we do to improve the services which are provided to persons with IDD or their families?*

While many stakeholders responded that they were happy with the services and supports they were receiving, there was a general acknowledgment that there was much that could be improved with additional funding. Responses included concerns with the impact that staff turnover can have on individuals with IDD and their families. Participants also cited concerns over the long State Interest List, feedback that eligibility criteria for waiver programs may be too strict and is excluding some individuals who are not able to live independently, and a desire for more local options for affordable long term residential, respite, and transportation options. Feedback on this question also converged around the need to provide additional supports and resources such as support groups or educational opportunities to assist family members and/or parents navigate the complexity of the services and supports, and respondents stressed the importance of daily activities and socialization opportunities for individuals with IDD.

4. *What education related to IDD do you feel is most needed in our community?*

While feedback varied on this response between participants, the following themes presented: Guardianship, Autism, Community Awareness, and the need to provide additional support and education for parents and family members navigating the complexity of services and supports for their loved ones. SSLC feedback included educating families about legislative changes surrounding access to the SSLC when additional guidance becomes available.

### Stakeholder Information Summary

Over a time period of several months, Tri-County staff collected information from interested stakeholders about IDD Services provided by the Center and asked for input about other services needed by this population. Although there were a great deal of interesting responses collected in this process, staff believe that the convergence of responses is especially significant. Areas where planning aligned are as follows:

- Belief that the community in general (families, employers, legislative staff, educational system, healthcare providers etc.) continues to need greater awareness about these disorders to include the needs of individuals and families as well as how community organizations are working with and impacted by IDD.
- Belief that individuals and families impacted by IDD need more supports than are available. Feedback specifically cited the challenges with long interest lists for waivers, services and supports for individuals with Autism, services and supports for those who may not qualify for waiver programs, and additional respite and local transportation options. Additionally, participants frequently focused on the need for increased funding to support the growing populations in all counties and the need to expand services in areas experiencing significant growth.
- The continued need to retain quality staff whenever possible to prevent turnover and lessen the impact of change on individuals with IDD and their families.



## Tri-County Services Area Goals and Objectives

In March of 2023, Tri-County's IDD Planning Network Advisory Committee reviewed stakeholder input from the local planning process and recommended the general direction for 2024 and 2025 Local Planning Goals and Objectives. Of special concern this planning session were the lack of resources available for transition age youth and adults on the Autism Spectrum, length of the interest lists, the need for additional funding to fill the service gaps that available services and supports don't address, and the continued need for education and supports for parents and guardians navigating the IDD system of care. Before consideration of the Goals and Objectives for this two-year planning period, the following community and Center strengths, needs, and barriers should be considered:

### Strengths

- Tri-County has experienced service and management staff that are knowledgeable about Health and Human Services rules and contract requirements.
- Tri-County has a history of fiscal and program audit excellence.
- Tri-County remains focused on providing the best services possible for persons with Intellectual and Development Disabilities.
- Tri-County has a long-standing positive relationship with the community and has increased visibility and collaboration with many community partners over the past several years.
- Tri-County has excellent Board governance and positive relationships with State and County officials.
- Tri-County continues to strengthen data reporting and outlier management.

### Community Needs and Priorities

- Tri-County needs additional financial resources to keep up with the growth in our service area and to fill gaps in care.
- Tri-County needs to continue to seek innovative ways to make stakeholders aware of our services and educate them about the disorders that their family members are experiencing while focusing on eliminating stigma and myths and promoting positive opportunities for community involvement (i.e. employment opportunities).
- Tri-County needs to continue to educate the community on navigating the IDD system of care including information on interest lists, waivers, and preparing individuals with IDD and their families for changes and resources available during typical developmental life stages.

### Barriers

- There has been rapid growth of the Tri-County service area while funding has not been able to keep up with the need. In addition to service needs, Tri-County's geographical location bordering Harris County presents a challenge providing competitive salaries as a means to retain staff who can find higher pay for similar positions in the area.



- Health and Human Services contract requirements do not provide much opportunity for flexibility in service design with current available funding.
- Community stigma exists for persons with IDD which can limit opportunities, some stakeholders have voiced concern about trends which may limit community integration and encourage more restrictive solutions.
- There are only very limited public transportation opportunities in the Tri-County service area.
- State regulations and mandates put centers at a disadvantage when competing with non-governmental entities for services.

### Outcome

Tri-County will ensure the provision of quality services for individuals with IDD and enhance the quality of life in our community.

### Goals and Objectives

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#### **Goal: Administrative Support for the Local Plan**

- Objective: Tri-County will continue to seek Grant and Resource Development opportunities and seek funding for new IDD programs including services that may benefit transition age youth and adults with Autism, and or expansion as available.
- Objective: Tri-County will use relationships with local and state officials to continue explaining the need for additional funding in our service area to include discussions of needs related to transportation, housing, respite, peer supports and services for individuals with autism spectrum diagnoses and those who have aged out of the public-school system.
- Objective: Tri-County and the local and regional Planning Network Advisory Committees will continue to review the cost effectiveness of the current service design and will make recommendations about service design changes as appropriate which will provide greater efficiency.
- Objective: Tri-County will continue to use their Quality Management and Compliance Departments to evaluate programs for contract compliance and quality of services and will make efforts to ensure health, safety, and well-being of persons in services.

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#### **Goal: Improve Transportation Options**

- Objective: Tri-County will continue to have conversations with local stakeholders involved in the development of community transportation options to ensure that our service locations and population served are considered in any future plans.

- Objective: Tri-County will continue to assist individuals served and their family members/significantly involved individuals with awareness of all community service options related to transportation.
- Objective: Tri-County will continue to discuss community transportation needs with city, county and state officials to ensure that funding needs are recognized and potential opportunities are made available.

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**Goal: Community Education**

- Objective: Tri-County will seek opportunities to provide education to the community that will reduce stigma and lead to a better understanding of individuals with IDD and the value of community integration.
- Objective: Tri-County will continue to provide education and information to the community on the services available as well as how to get on the State Interest list and why this is important as well as key information necessary to access needed services and supports, including legislative changes, as needed.

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**Goal: Staff Retention**

- Objective: Tri-County will continue to seek ways to retain current staff over the next planning cycle.
- Objective: Tri-County will continue to seek opportunities to provide development and growth for the current workforce.

