



Hogg Foundation  
*for* Mental Health

# PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH

COMMUNITY-INFORMED POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

2025-2026



**PREVENTION  
EARLY INTERVENTION  
ACCESS**

For over 80 years, the Hogg Foundation has been working to improve the mental health and well-being of Texans through strategic grant making, research, and policy education. Our work informs state-level policies that include funding and support for mental health promotion through prevention, early intervention, and access.

## What We Do

We work to effect systemic change to improve the mental health and well-being of all people in Texas. The Hogg Foundation Policy Team is here to assist your office with mental health and substance use questions during the Legislative Session. We offer the following technical assistance:

- **Individual Meetings:** Receive an overview of the Texas landscape of mental health and substance use topics.
- **Policy and Bill Analysis:** Community-informed and evidence-based policy analysis through our Policy Analysis Tool.
- **Policy Recommendations:** Recovery-focused, community-informed mental health and substance use policy recommendations based on the current Texas landscape.

For more information about us or to discuss how we can support you or your work, please contact our Policy Team:

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Reach out with  
a request.

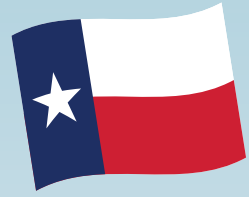
## Learn more

Check out “**A Guide to Understanding Mental Health Systems & Services in Texas,**” an interactive website to help you navigate pressing policy issues, funding, and programs of interest.



[hogg.utexas.edu](http://hogg.utexas.edu)





# PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH

COMMUNITY-INFORMED POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS 2025-2026

AT THE HOGG FOUNDATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH, WE ENVISION A FUTURE WHERE...



Hogg Foundation  
for Mental Health

## Prevention

Communities embrace policies that support mental health and well-being to prevent mental illness.

## Community Supports

Increase access to culturally tailored, **community-focused supports** in all areas of the state.

Ensure **rural communities** have access to necessary public resources including **broadband**.

Increase funding for **community-based mental health services** for **people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)** through the public mental health system.

Increase funding to address long-standing **Medicaid community-based waiver waitlists**.

## Safe & Supportive Schools

Support youth mental health through **investment in school-community prevention programs**, including Communities in Schools, Out of School Time, and other opportunities.

Boost **dedicated funding to school districts** for mental health programs, services, and supports that work for their individualized needs.

Ensure that **mental and behavioral health** related initiatives **remain an allowable funding use** within the School Safety Allotment.

Invest state funding to **continue school climate programs** that are funded by expiring federal dollars, including: Stronger Connections, Project AWARE, and other ESSER-funded initiatives.

Provide **school personnel** more opportunities for **suicide prevention trainings**.

Promote school efforts for **bullying prevention** and **alternatives to juvenile justice responses** including restorative justice practices.

Promote efforts to support **teacher mental health**.

## Substance Use

Invest state funding for the **voluntary accreditation recovery housing** program.

Support harm reduction and overdose prevention strategies that **save lives** and create opportunities for **connection to services**, such as an improved “**Good Samaritan**” law, **increasing access to Narcan**, and **decriminalizing fentanyl strips**.

Fully fund **Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) recovery support programs** to replace expiring federal COVID funds.

Devote state funds to HHSC strategies that **address substance use prevention, intervention, and treatment**, as they are facing a substantial reduction in federal funding.

## Non-Medical Drivers of Mental Health

Promote initiatives for Texans to have their **basic needs met**, including options for **affordable and safe housing**.

Safeguard Texas’s future with accurate **census outreach** through dedicated funding.

Create a trust fund for the **public health, substance use, and mental health sectors** to meaningfully collaborate and coordinate efforts.

Fund **supportive employment** and **supportive educational opportunities** for people with serious mental illness.



## Early Intervention

Texans can easily find timely, culturally-aware services and support before a crisis occurs.

## Youth and Family Mental Health Needs

Implement recommendations from HHSC **Children’s Behavioral Health Strategic Plan**, written as a directive through the 88th legislative session budget.

Increase **YES Waiver funds** in Article II to ensure youth get **wraparound community-based support** for intensive behavioral needs.

Increase funding for **Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHA) children’s services**, allowing for children and youth to get needed care in their communities.

Increase funding to **expand Youth Crisis Outreach Teams (YCOTs)** as a statewide service available 24/7.

Create a **Child First grant program** to support family and child mental health through **innovative home-based services**.

Replicate the **Handle With Care program** in other areas of the state to **support youth** who have experienced a traumatic life event.

## Grow Community Capacity

Increase state investments in HHSC community-focused grant programs, **allowing more local organizations to meet the needs of their communities**:

- Supporting Mental Health and Resiliency in Texans (SMART) Innovation Grant Program
- Rural Mental Health Initiative Grant Program (RIGP)
- Mental Health Grant for Justice-Involved Individuals (MHGJII)
- Texas Veterans + Family Alliance (TV+FA)
- Community Mental Health Grant (CMHG)
- Healthy Community Collaborative (HCC)

## Alternatives to Justice Responses

Support **comprehensive community support** before justice system involvement through **robust investment in programs**, including First Episode Psychosis (FEP), crisis respite, and mobile crisis outreach teams (MCOTs).

Support people with serious mental illness to **receive needed care in community-based settings** to avoid unnecessary justice-involvement.

Dedicate state funding to expand the successful **Outpatient Biopsychosocial Approach for IDD Services (OBI) Pilot** to five new locations to support people with IDD.

Increase funding for jail **Continuity of Care (COC)** liaisons.

## 9-8-8 Lifeline Capacity

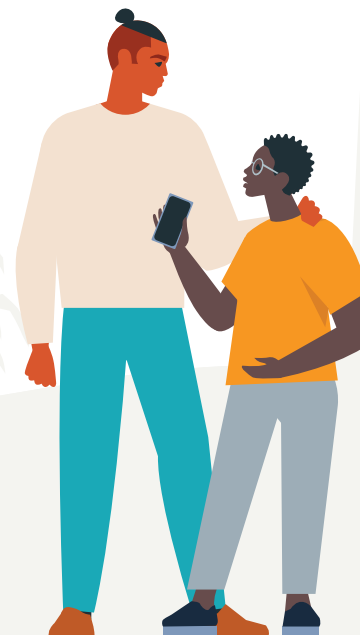
Create a **trust fund for ongoing 9-8-8 implementation**, allowing the nationwide hotline for people experiencing mental health crisis to run effectively for Texas.

Dedicate state dollars for the **9-8-8 call response and follow-up care** after a crisis.

## Have mental health and substance use questions during the legislative session?



Reach out to the Policy Team with a request!



## Access

All Texans have a range of available, affordable, and accessible mental health and substance use treatment when necessary.

## Workforce Pipeline, Recruitment, and Retention

Include Article III funding dedicated to the **Behavioral Health Innovation Grant Program** through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to **create innovative pipeline programs for emerging mental health and substance use professionals** in underserved areas of the state.

Continue to support the existing **Loan Repayment Program for Mental Health Professionals** for robust recruitment and retention efforts in the mental health and substance use workforce, including improvements to eligibility based on the state’s needs.

Promote Texans entering the mental health workforce through **paid internship stipends, paid licensing, and paid clinical supervision**.

**Prioritize the use of lived experience** through elevating the use of peer support specialists, recovery coaches, and certified family partners.

Increase funding for community **IDD Direct Care Worker wages** to improve retention and continued support for **people with IDD to continue living in their community**.

Allow Texas to join the **national counseling and social work licensure compacts**.

## Maternal and Postpartum Care

Increase access to services for **women with substance use disorder to stay with their children** during residential treatment.

Increase access to **maternal mental health services and supports**, including maternal peer support services and depression screenings in the first year postpartum.

Continue to **support new parents’ postpartum** physical and mental health through **community health workers and doulas**.

## Medicaid System Improvements

Allow **masters-level practitioners to bill Medicaid** for psychotherapy counseling services.

**Increase rates of Medicaid reimbursements** for mental health and substance use services to incentivize providers to participate.

Allow schools to bill Medicaid for delivering behavioral health services through the **School Health and Related Services (SHARS)** program.

Allow **Certified Family Partners** to be reimbursed through Medicaid.

Allow the **Medicaid Peer Services benefit** for youth 16 through 21 years of age.

Promote the use of Peer Support Services by defining **Peer Recovery Organizations**.

Include services in Medicaid that are proven to **support youth with behavioral needs**, including: Multisystemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy, and Coordinated Specialty Care.

Increase **health coverage options** for low-income, uninsured Texans to **improve behavioral health care access**.

Improve system efficiencies by **properly funding an overhaul of TIERS**, the state computer system used to assess whether people are eligible for Medicaid, CHIP, and SNAP.

## Mental Health Insurance Coverage and Administrative Efficiencies

Ensure **children have equal protections** for health coverage of their mental health by including a definition of **Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED)** in the Texas Insurance Code.

Continue efforts to **promote telehealth and telemedicine** throughout the state.

Learn more about the Hogg Foundation: [hogg.utexas.edu](http://hogg.utexas.edu)



Check out the new Texas Mental Health Guide.