1. American Council of the Blind of Texas (“ACBT”) 2017-2018 Scholarship Announcement

The American Council of the Blind of Texas awards scholarships on an annual basis to deserving students who will be entering college, currently attending a college, university, or enrolled in a trade school or technical program. The 2017-2018 ACBT scholarship applications will be available beginning March 1, 2017. Qualified students must be Texas residents. A completed application and all required supporting documentation must be received by the deadline indicated.

Application packets may be obtained from the following sources:
- Texas Workforce Solutions/Blind Services Division Counselors
- Education Service Centers
- The ACBT website – www.acbtexas.org
- Dianna Carter, ACBT Scholarship Committee Chair.

Scholarship applications must be received by Friday July 7, 2017. Decisions will be made and recipients will be notified by Friday August 11, 2017. We encourage all scholarship recipients attend the 2017 ACBT Conference/Convention so they may be recognized for their great achievement.

Conventional Details:
September 14-17, 2017.
The Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Dallas near the Galleria
4099 Valley View Lane

Scholarship recipients will be presented their scholarships during the Awards Breakfast on Sunday, September 17th. Please submit Scholarship Packets or requests for further information to the address below:
2. Mental Health and Criminal Justice – Case Study: Harris County, Texas

In 2013, State Senator Joan Huffman (R-Houston) sponsored Texas Senate Bill 1185 (SB 1185), 83rd Texas Legislature which created a pilot program in Harris County to divert individuals with mental illnesses from the jail. The law appropriates $5 million annually to Harris County, which the county matches equally, to divert individuals from the jail with the goal of reducing arrests and incarceration and increasing access to housing and health and social services. During the first year of implementation, the program was required to serve no less than 200 individuals.

Statistical analyses were performed on a sample of 371 participants who were enrolled and/or left the program in Fiscal Year 2015 and the beginning of Fiscal Year 2016. The following preliminary results were observed:

- Participants had received an average of 8 months (241 days) of service.
- There was a reduction in the number of bookings for people enrolled in the program and 44.1 percent (164) have had no further bookings into the Harris County Jail. Jail days were reduced by approximately 53 days per person, yielding a savings of 19,744 total jail days. At $149/day, the cost of these jail days can be estimated to result in a cost avoidance of $2,941,856.

To read more about the study go to: http://www.naco.org/resources/mental-health-and-criminal-justice-case-study-harris-county

3. Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation – Accepting Public Comment

The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (“TDLR”) has published proposed amendments, new rules and repeal to program rules pertaining to the Elimination of Architectural Barriers program as found in 16 Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 68. The proposed rule changes were published in the December 16, 2016 issue of the Texas Register (41 TexReg 9831).

TDLR will accept public comment on the proposed rules until January 17, 2017. The proposed rules can be viewed at https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/ab/abprop.htm. Anyone who wishes to comment on proposed rule changes can submit their comments by email to erule.comments@tdlr.texas.gov.

For questions or additional information, you may contact TDLR at:

TECHINFO
877-278-0999 X 42133 (Toll Free in Texas)
512-539-5669
512-539-5690 FAX
800-735-2989 (Relay Texas - TDD)
800-735-2988 (Relay Texas - Voice)
Email: techinfo@tdlr.texas.gov

4. Texas Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities – Business Forum

Business Owners, Human Resources Professionals and Hiring Managers are Invited to:
The Benefits of Hiring People with Disabilities Business Forum hosted by the TWC Commissioner Representing Employers in partnership with Texas Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities, Workforce Solutions Capital Area and the Society for Human Resource Management.

Wednesday, January 25, 2017
8:15 a.m. to Noon Austin local time
Norris Conference Center at North Cross Mall
2525 W. Anderson Lane, Austin, TX 78757

Register for free at:

The forum speakers will provide information to Texas entrepreneurs and the business community on hiring employees with disabilities. Additionally, a panel of employers will present on best practices and workforce development strategies. Other speakers will present on accessibility, assistive technologies and resources for businesses.

For additional information including a tentative agenda visit the TWC Events webpage, or contact Lisa Ried at 512-463-2800 or lisa.ried@twc.state.tx.us

The event is part of the Texas HireAbility Campaign to raise awareness about the benefits of hiring people with disabilities. Visit TXHireAbility Campaign for more information.

Texas Workforce Commission • 512-463-8942 • www.texasworkforce.org
Equal Opportunity Employer/Program Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.
Relay Texas: 800-735-2988 (TDD) or 711 (Voice)

5. Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs TDHCA – 2017-1 Multifamily Direct Loan Notice of Funding Availability (“NOFA”)

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (the "Department") has posted to its website the 2017-1 Multifamily Direct Loan Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA).

Up to $32,549,905 in Multifamily Direct Loan funding for the development of affordable multifamily rental housing for low-income Texans is available to for-profit and nonprofit entities that meet the requirements of the NOFA.

The Department will accept applications beginning on January 9, 2017. Based on the availability of funds, applications may be accepted until 5:00pm Austin local time on August 31, 2017.

The NOFA can be found at http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/multifamily/nofas-rules.htm or http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/nofa.htm.

The Department has also posted to its website the 2017 Multifamily Direct Loan Rule (10 TAC Chapter 13). This rule is intended to govern the various funding sources that comprise Multifamily Direct Loan funds and enhance their effectiveness in achieving policy objectives. 10 TAC Chapter 13 can be found at http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/multifamily/nofas-rules.htm or http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/multifamily/home/index.htm.

Both the NOFA and 10 TAC Chapter 13 will appear in the December 30, 2016, version of the Texas Register.
Additionally, the Department has posted to its website the Revised 2016 National Housing Trust Fund Allocation Plan. This document can be found at: http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/multifamily/home/index.htm

For additional information, please contact Andrew Sinnott, Multifamily Loan Programs Administrator, at (512) 475-0538 or andrew.sinnott@tdhca.state.tx.us

6. TDHCA – Request for Applications to Administer the CSBG in Dallas County

The Community Affairs Division of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs ("the Department") announces the release of a Request for Applications ("RFA") seeking interested qualified organizations to submit an application to administer the Community Services Block Grant ("CSBG") in Dallas County. The Department intends to make an award that will best serve eligible persons through the CSBG in Dallas County.

Interested applicants must be a private, nonprofit organization and meet the requirements set forth in the RFA. Complete applications must be received by Jan. 20, 2017, 5 p.m. Austin local time. Applications must be submitted electronically and address the requirements of this RFA in order to be considered eligible applications. The application forms contained in this packet and submission instructions are available on the Department's website at http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/community-affairs/nofas.htm

If you have questions pertaining to the RFA or application materials, please contact Karen Keith at 512-475-0471.

7. TDHCA - 2018 QAP Planning Project

7. Texas House Select Committee on Mental Health

The Honorable Joe Straus, Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives appointed the Select Committee on Mental Health in November 2015. Speaker Straus, via a Proclamation, attached as Appendix A, instructed the Select Committee to holistically study and make recommendations on virtually every aspect of mental health in Texas, including co-occurring substance abuse issues often referred to as behavioral health. As far as known in Texas legislative history, this was the first time that one committee was tasked with studying every aspect of local and state mental health systems in Texas.

To read the report go to: http://www.house.state.tx.us/_media/pdf/committees/reports/84interim/Mental-Health-Select-Committee-Interim-Report-2016.pdf

8. CSH Supportive Housing Summit 2017

Be part of the most important gathering of thought leaders in supportive housing & housing policy. Learn how to meet the challenges ahead & what to expect on the federal, state & local levels as key budget debates unfold. Receive up-to-date perspectives, predictions, trends & innovations focused on crucial & timely issues.

Join us in Denver May 24 - 26 for CSH Supportive Housing Summit 2017

- Community Investment/Supportive Housing Development
- Housing & Criminal Justice Reforms
- Healthcare & Housing Integration & Partnerships
- One Roof - Innovations in Housing Child Welfare Involved Families
- Supportive Housing Onboarding Track/Introduction to the Field
- Maximizing Services
- Pay for Success Financing, Contracts & Contacts
CSH and the National Equity Fund, Inc. released a comprehensive **Guide to Service Funding in Supportive Housing**.

Owners, property managers, service providers, and government policy makers all recognize the value and stability that comes from providing services for residents in affordable and supportive housing. Yet resources to cover the cost for these services are inconsistent, severely constrained, and have limited accessibility when developers and providers are planning and implementing housing developments.

Over the past year, CSH and National Equity Fund have collaborated on a project to explore innovative resources to fund services in supportive and affordable housing. The Guide is the result of this partnership.

The recently released Guide is targeted for a cross section of stakeholders interested in developing and sustaining quality supportive and affordable housing with services. The Guide features new and updated resources and mechanisms to streamline funding of services linked to affordable and supportive housing.