

# Children's Defense Fund–Texas

A strong, effective, and independent voice for all Texas children

With a statewide presence, and offices in **Austin, Houston** and the **Rio Grande Valley**, CDF-Texas works to ensure every child a *Healthy Start*, a *Head Start*, a *Fair Start*, a *Safe Start* and a *Moral Start* in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

For more than ten years CDF-Texas has been the leading voice for children and families in Texas. CDF champions public policies and early intervention programs that lift children out of poverty, protect them from abuse and neglect, and ensure their access to health care and quality education. CDF-Texas' work has been recognized nationally and internationally by NGOs and other agencies, including the **World Health Organization**, the **United States Department of Health & Human Services**, Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services, the American Association of School Administrators, the Anti-Defamation League, American Leadership Forum, America's Promise Alliance, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation *Covering Kids initiative*, Texas Association of Partners in Education, and Leadership Houston, to name just a few.

## CDF-Texas Programs and Initiatives

### Texas Finish Line Campaign • KidsWell Texas Campaign • Texas Well & Healthy Campaign

Texas has the highest rate of uninsured children (1 in 6) of all 50 states in the nation. Without coverage, children do not get needed medical care in a doctor's office and are forced to rely on emergency rooms where costs are exponentially higher. The costs are borne by the entire community through missed school and work, cost shifting, greater local tax burden, public health consequences, and many near- and long-term social and economic opportunity costs.



CDF-Texas leads the statewide advocacy campaign to ensure that all children have seamless access to the quality, affordable health care coverage they need to grow and thrive. The campaign coordinates advocacy, education, story-sharing and media relations with the support of 100+ of the State's most influential and leading health care stakeholders. CDF-Texas has led and contributed to major public policy advances to secure **health coverage for more than 850,000 Texas children**.

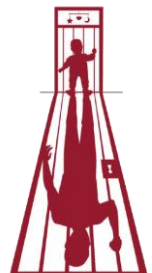


### CDF All Healthy Children Campaign (formerly the 100% Campaign)

CDF-Texas' *All Healthy Children Campaign* is an effective school-based outreach model that systematically identifies eligible uninsured children through school enrollment forms and connects them to CHIP or Children's Medicaid coverage. The campaign – a partnership with the **Texas Association of School Administrators** – was **1 of 10 projects recognized nationally in 2011 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** as a best practice and model for excellence in reaching eligible uninsured children and connecting them to health coverage. The American Association of School Administrators and America's Promise Alliance have also praised CDF-Texas' campaign as a national best practice.

### CDF Cradle to Prison Pipeline® Campaign

We face an urgent national crisis at the intersection of poverty and race that puts a Black boy born in 2001 at a **1 in 3 chance of going to prison** in his lifetime, and a Latino boy a 1 in 6 risk of the same fate. CDF's *Cradle to Prison Pipeline Campaign* is a **national call to action** to stop the funneling of tens of thousands of youth, down life paths that often lead to arrest, conviction, incarceration and sometimes death.



Focusing on early intervention and prevention, CDF-Texas works with community, business and civic leaders to raise awareness and to educate the public about the dangerous effects of not investing in children. CDF has also pioneered unique and effective approaches to systematically dismantle the Pipeline in communities across Texas through its signature *CDF Freedom Schools* program. The campaign was adopted by Class XXV of the American Leadership Forum in Houston.



### CDF Freedom Schools® Program

Rooted in the American Civil Rights Movement and the courageous efforts of college-age youths to make a difference, the *CDF Freedom Schools* program provides summer and after-school enrichment through a model curriculum that supports children and families around five essential components: high quality academic enrichment; parent and family involvement; social action and civic engagement; intergenerational servant leadership development; and nutrition, health and mental health.



Through community partnerships the *CDF Freedom Schools* program **boosts student motivation to read, generates positive attitudes toward learning**, and connects the needs of children and families to the resources in their communities. CDF-Texas has previously received funds from television's American Idol® Gives Back to expand *Freedom Schools* programs in Texas.

### CDF Beat the Odds® Scholarship Program

CDF initiated the *Beat the Odds* program in 1990 to affirm the academic success of young people who, in the face of overwhelming adversity, have worked hard to succeed and give back to their community. In recognition of their achievements, students are awarded college scholarships and other gifts. Scholars are also invited to participate in leadership training at the *CDF Haley Farm*, which serves as CDF's vibrant training ground for leadership development, advocacy and service. Since 1999, CDF-Texas has provided more than eighty students the **opportunity to attend college**.



In addition to providing scholarships, CDF's *Beat the Odds* celebrations serve as the organization's major annual fundraiser in Texas to sustain the effective year-round advocacy and programming for all the children of Texas who cannot vote, lobby or speak for themselves.

### Young Advocates Leadership Training® (YALT) Program

CDF is preparing the next generation of leaders committed to social justice and improving the lives of children in America through its youth leadership initiatives. The CDF YALT program is a three-day, intensive training in organizing for social change that **educates young adults about the state of America's children**, and about CDF's campaigns and policy priorities for quality education and affordable health coverage for all children. Participants are mentored in the basics of community organizing and strategies that can later be implemented in their college campuses and home communities.

### Strengthening Families to End Child Poverty

CDF collaborates with an array of federal, state and local government entities, faith- and community-based organizations and local businesses to educate parents about the importance of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credit (CTC), and other supports to reduce financial hardships and strain on working families. **CDF testifies and educates** the public about the consequences of predatory lending practices and has trained hundreds of high school and college-age young adults to provide free tax preparation in their communities through Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites.

### CDF National Observance of Children's Sabbaths® Celebrations

Every third weekend in October, CDF unites thousands of congregations of every faith to **lift up the needs of children in worship, prayer, song, and action** during an annual *National Observance of Children's Sabbaths* weekend. For more than ten years, CDF-Texas has worked with community partners, friends and families to present an annual Children's Sabbath celebration in Houston.