

# Children's Defense Fund–Texas

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



## Who we are:

Children's Defense Fund (CDF) is a nonprofit advocacy organization that has worked relentlessly for **40 years** to ensure a level playing field for all children. We champion policies and programs that lift children out of poverty; protect them from abuse and neglect; and ensure their access to healthcare, quality education and a moral and spiritual foundation.

The CDF **Leave No Child Behind®** mission is 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.

## What we believe and do:

We believe in a future that fulfills the promise for every child to reach his or fullest potential. CDF-Texas programs and campaigns address the needs of Texas children in the following issue areas: health and mental health care, child poverty and family financial security, youth development and leadership, education, and juvenile justice.

## Celebrating 15 Years in Texas!

Since 1999, CDF-Texas has worked with partners statewide to provide a strong, effective and independent voice for *all* Texas children who cannot vote, lobby or speak for themselves. Our collaborative work has been recognized nationally and internationally by: **World Health Organization • U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services • U.S. Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services • American Association of School Administrators • Anti-Defamation League • American Leadership Forum • America's Promise Alliance • Robert Wood Johnson Foundation • Texas Association of Partners in Education**, and others.

## CDF-Texas Programs and Campaigns:

### Child Health Outreach: **All Healthy Children Campaign** (formerly 100% Campaign)

CDF-Texas' *All Healthy Children* campaign is a school-based outreach partnership that **identifies uninsured children through school enrollment forms** and connects them to affordable health care coverage through CHIP, Children's Medicaid or the ACA Marketplace. In 2011, CDF-Texas' campaign was **1 of only 10 projects recognized nationally** by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services as a best practice that could be scaled nationally. That same year HHS/ CMS recognized CDF-Texas with an ECHOES award for Excellence in Children's Health Outreach and Enrollment. The American Assoc of School Administrators has helped educate school leaders across the country about the campaign, and in 2012, AASA and CDF together launched the Texas model into other states, including: California, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi. In 2014 the project continues to expand in California and Texas.

### Child Health Advocacy:

For fifteen years, CDF-Texas has led statewide public policy changes to **protect and secure** health coverage for millions of Texas children.

Despite significant gains in recent years, including 1 million more children added to CHIP and Medicaid since 2007, Texas still leads in the number of uninsured, with 1.2 million children lacking coverage.

***When children can see a doctor, they do better in school and in life. And, we all do better.***

CDF-Texas plays a leading role in coordinating statewide *grassroots* and *grasstops* organizing campaigns to ensure that all Texas children and families can access quality, affordable care. Projects include the **TexasWellAndHealthy.org** campaign (part of national KidsWell and Finish Line efforts), **Cover Texas Now** and **My Medicaid Matters** coalitions. Since data show that with parents covered, kids do better, with the launch of: **TexasLeftMeOut.org** and **TejasMeDejoAtras.org**, CDF-Texas stands at the forefront of advocating for access to coverage for 1.5 million adult Texans who fall into the "coverage gap" created by our state's refusal to expand Medicaid under the ACA. CDF-Texas coordinates advocacy, education, story-collection/sharing, and media relations, engaging hundreds of the state's most influential healthcare leaders and stakeholders, both online and on the ground.

**TEXAS WELL AND HEALTHY**



**TEXAS LEFT ME OUT**



## Youth Development and Leadership:

### 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 literacy and cultural enrichment through a model curriculum that supports children and families around five essential components: (1) **high quality academic enrichment**; (2) **parent and family involvement**; (3) **social action and civic engagement**; (4) **intergenerational servant leadership development**; and (5) **nutrition, health and mental health**.

Through community partnerships the program boosts student motivation to read, generates positive attitudes toward learning, and connects children and families to resources in their communities. A past recipient of FOX television's *American Idol*® *Gives Back*, the program continues to grow and has been implemented in: Beaumont, Dallas, Fort Worth, Galveston, Houston, Katy, and San Antonio, including juvenile detention facilities.

### Beat the Odds® Scholarship and Leadership Development 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 and advocacy training at the **CDF Haley Farm**, which serves as CDF's vibrant training ground for intergenerational leadership development, advocacy and service. In addition to scholarships, **Beat the Odds** celebrations serve as CDF-Texas' **only annual fundraiser** to sustain effective year-round advocacy and outreach for Texas children.



**Since 1999, CDF-Texas has awarded college scholarships to more than 125 students to help advance their education!**

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

Through its various youth development initiatives CDF is preparing the next generation of leaders committed to social justice and improving the lives of children. CDF YALT is a **three-day, intensive training that educates young adults about the state of America's children and how to organize and advocate** for nonviolent social **change**. Participants are mentored in the basics of community organizing and strategies that can be implemented on college campuses and communities back home.

### Cradle to Prison Pipeline® Campaign

We face an urgent national crisis at the intersection of poverty and race that puts a 13 year old Black boy at a 1 in 3 chance of going to prison in his lifetime, and a Latino boy at 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 even death.

CDF-Texas works with community, business and elected leaders to raise awareness about the risk factors of the Pipeline and to encourage prevention and early intervention investments in children. The campaign was adopted as a class project by Class XXV of the American Leadership Forum –Houston Gulf Coast chapter.



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

Every third weekend in October, CDF unites 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, volunteers and families to present a Children's Sabbath service in Houston.

### Strengthening Families to End Child Poverty

CDF collaborates with an array of federal, state and local government entities, faith-based and community organizations and local businesses to educate parents about 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.

**Join the movement! Sign up for email updates at [www.cdf-texas.org](http://www.cdf-texas.org) or follow @CDFTexas on Facebook and Twitter.**