



Thank you for your interest in creating a Texas Advocate's chapter! Our mission is to fight unfair treatment of people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and fight for more and better services in the community. Our Board of Directors is made up of representatives from each of our chapters, all of whom have an intellectual and/or developmental disability. We currently have 20 chapters across Texas with 500 self-advocate members. Our chapters are:

- Advocate Leader of Dallas
- Advocates of Fort Bend County
- Austin Advocates
- Brazos Valley Self-Advocates
- Coastal Bend Self-Advocates
- El Paso Del Norte YLF
- Gregg County Self Advocates
- Gulf Coast Self-Advocates
- Heart of Texas Self-Advocates
- People First Advocates of Wichita Falls
- San Antonio League of Self Advocates
- Self-Advocate Leaders of Denton
- Bridging the GAP Self-Advocates
- Southeast Texas Self Advocates
- Tall City Self-Advocates
- The Self-Determination Group
- Texas Advocates of Harrison County
- Tyler Rose Advocates
- United Advocates of Tarrant County
- Williamson County Self-Advocates

There are many benefits to being a part of Texas Advocates. Here are a few great benefits:

- Support through trainings and materials that Texas Advocates creates
- Board member and supporter travel to/from Austin Board Meetings, paid by Texas Advocates
- Discounted registration to the annual Texas Advocates' conference
- Visits to the Capitol during legislative session, paid by Texas Advocates
- Being a part of a self-advocacy group that is 500 self-advocate members strong

Included in this packet to help you get started is:

- New Chapter Check List
- Successful Chapter Handbook
- Texas Advocates Bylaws
- Board Member/Chapter Representative Application
- Chapter Representative Responsibilities

When your chapter is ready to be voted into Texas Advocates, or if you have any questions or need support through the process, please contact Annessa Lewis at (512) 522-6591 or Annessa.lewis@texadvocates.org.

Sincerely,

Annessa Lewis
Executive Director

New Chapter Checklist

- Find interested members. You will need 10 people to count as a chapter. Collect all of your new member's contact information into a single call list.
- Pick a chapter name.
- Find a volunteer advisor (or two!) who will offer you support as you, and your chapter, needs it.
- Find meeting space and set meeting times. Most chapters meet once per month.
- Elect officers for your chapter: president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer.
- Decide as a chapter if you would like to create your own chapter bylaws or use the Texas Advocates' bylaws. Chapters can always edit/create bylaws later, but always agree to the state Texas Advocates' bylaws too.
- Vote on which member will represent the chapter at board meetings. We have two meetings per year in Austin and one per year at conference. Travel to Austin is covered, which includes mileage or bus ticket, food, and hotel stay for the chapter representative and a supporter, if needed.
- Have the elected advisor and chapter representative fill out and submit the chapter representative application to Texas Advocates.
- Decide on how much member dues will be. \$10 per year is paid per member to Texas Advocates by June of each year. Dues help pay for board travel and other self-advocate travel. Some chapters charge \$20 per year per member (with the chapter keeping half) so there are some funds for local activities and travel for the chapter.
- Talk with our staff and board to be voted in at next board meeting!



TEXAS ADVOCATE CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVE (BOARD MEMBER) RESPONSIBILITIES

- Chapter representatives must be Texas Advocates dues-paid members.
- They must be a current or past local officer or board member.
- They must submit a board member application to their local chapter prior to local elections and to the Texas Advocates if they are elected.
- They must commit to attend all board and committee meetings including the annual meeting
- They must be committed to working to achieve the vision and mission of Texas Advocates.

Board Member Responsibilities

- The board leads the organization between annual meetings.
- Each Chapter Representative is required to report back to their local chapter about the activities of the Texas Advocates.
- Each chapter representative will report to the board on their local chapter's activities.
- Chapter representatives will serve as a legislative liaison between the Texas Advocates and the local Chapter.
- Chapter representatives will participate in developing and implementing Texas Advocates goals and training activities
- Chapter representatives will agree to serve on at least one Texas Advocate committee and attend all committee meetings they agree to serve on.
- Chapter representatives will attend all board meetings, including the annual meeting.



Board Representative Nomination Form

Name of Chapter:

Chapter Representative's Name:

Address:

Phone:

Cell Phone:

E-mail:

Chapter Advisor's Name:

Address:

Phone:

Cell Phone:

E-mail:

1. Do you need any accommodations to help with your duties as a board representative (personal assistance, interpreter, accessibility, special meals, reading assistance, travel assistance, etc.)?

Yes No I will need:

2. What is the most important quality of a good board representative?

3. Describe your qualities, activities, or interests in self-advocacy and self-determination that would make you a good board member:

By submitting this nomination form, I am committing to attend all board meetings, the annual meeting, participating in all officer duties and that I will work to accomplish the vision and mission of the Texas Advocates. I understand my responsibilities as a board representative and agree to have good communication with my own chapter and the Texas Advocates' board.

Signature:

Date: