Region 2

The Heart Galleries of Texas received funding in the 88th Legislative Session to improve permanency outcomes for youth who have experienced foster care. Over the past year, efforts have focused on expanding the Heart Galleries model across the state, increasing community collaboration, developing online trainings and resources, identifying the post-permanency needs of families, and conducting a Request for Applications (RFA) process to select qualified providers in each region to help meet the post-permanency needs of families.

About the Heart Gallery of Northwest Texas

Heart Gallery Organization: Texas Family Initiative – 2INgage
Website: https://www.heartgallerynwtexas.org/
Launch Events: Early 2025

In 2023, the Heart Gallery of Northwest Texas was established in Region 2 through the Texas Family Initiative. By the end of its first year, August 2024, the gallery was fully staffed, had launched a website, and hosted 39 community information sessions, attended by 1,627 community members. This gallery has received 64 youth referrals and has featured seven youth. Two of the featured youth were also adopted. This gallery has also seen a significant increase in web traffic, growing from 153 hits in May to 1,237 in August. They are currently working on plans to host their first Heart Gallery exhibit and will be holding a launch event early next year.

Needs Assessment of Post-Permanency Services in Region 2

In March of 2024, researchers from the Texas Institute for Child & Family Wellbeing and staff at the Texas Center for Child and Family Studies conducted a statewide post-permanency needs assessment, surveying caregivers and providers about services, needs and barriers for families after adoption or permanency legal conservatorship. In Region 2, **9 caregivers** and **28 providers** participated in the survey. A summary of findings is reported below.

Familiarity with Post-Permanency Services

- 44% of caregivers (*n* = 4) and 25% (*n* = 7) of providers were very or extremely familiar with post-permanency services.
- Three caregivers reached out to their region's Post-Permanency Services Provider (33%).
- Two caregivers reported being very or extremely satisfied with the assistance they received (67%).

Service Satisfaction by Service Sector

% of caregivers who were somewhat or very satisfied with:

- Medical services (78%, *n* = 7)
- School-based services (75%, *n* = 6)
- Developmental services (71%, *n* = 5)
- Post-permanency services (25%, *n* = 2)
- Childcare (22%, *n* = 2)
- Respite (13%, *n* = 1)
- Mental health services (0%, *n* = 0)

Note: Percentages are based on the number of people who answer each question. Please exercise caution when interpreting findings with small sample sizes. Small sample sizes can limit the generalizability of the results, as they may not accurately represent the broader population.

Most Needed Services and Supports

- **Respite and childcare services** with a simplified approval process for respite providers.
- **Mental health services including residential treatment options** that are trauma-informed, accept Medicaid, and serve children and youth with significant mental health needs.
- **Practical supports for families**, including assistance with transportation, employment, and covering out-of-pocket medical costs.
- **Legal support for families** to help them navigate the system, understand legal paperwork, and obtain legal documents (e.g. birth certificates, social security cards, etc.).
- 89% of caregivers also indicated they were interested in **Parents Night Out**, while 56% were interested in having **family resource centers** and **advocacy opportunities**.

Caregiver Barriers to Accessing Services

- Lack of local trauma-informed and adoption-sensitive providers, especially those who take Medicaid.
- Financial barriers or lack of funding to obtain needed services.
- Lack of communication and support after adoption.

Provider Barriers to Supporting Families

- Lack of services and providers, such as mental health providers, to meet the needs of families in the region.
- Lack of appropriate resources to cover the different needs of families over time.
- Families and providers not knowing what services are available or where to reach out.

Top services that caregivers needed but had difficulty accessing or were unable to get:

- Respite (overnight)
- Respite or babysitting (not overnight)
- Child care or afterschool care (not specialized)
- Therapeutic or specialized camps
- Camp (general)
- Parent Support Groups

To learn more about this needs assessment, go to: Needs Assessment of Post-permanency Services in Texas Dashboard. You can locate all the data specific to your region.

Looking Ahead

The permanency collaborative in Region 2 is currently being established. This region has a strong set of mental health providers for two of the three main geographical areas. Based on needs assessment results and the RFA selection process, the following organizations will provide services in Region 2:

- Pure Hope Family Ministries: Provide emergency respite, support for basic needs, and subsidies for services.
- Texas Family Initiative (TFI): Offer individual, family, and sibling therapy services throughout Region 2.

Heart Gallery of Northwest Texas will host a launch event to engage local supporters in early 2025.

The University of Texas at Austin
Moritz Center for Societal Impact
Steve Hicks School of Social Work

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