# Region 9

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 West Texas

**Heart Gallery Organization:** One Accord for Kids
**Website:** https://oneaccordtx.org/programs/heart-gallery/
**Launch Event:** April 22, 2024

This region had previously existing Heart Gallery efforts that launched in early 2020 but lost traction during the pandemic. One Accord for Kids launched the Heart Gallery of West Texas in 2021 at the request of region 9 community partners, utilizing their extensive network of supporters and community engagement for funding. One Accord for Kid's Heart Gallery of West Texas celebrated their official partnership with the Heart Galleries of Texas project with a launch April of 2024. The Heart Gallery of West Texas has a strong referral relationship with DFPS; however, they face a unique challenge in that most children are placed out-of-region. At the beginning of the year, they had 39 youth featured on their website. Since then, they have received 27 new referrals and featured 25 more youth. Thirteen of the youth featured were also adopted. In terms of community engagement, the gallery hosted a launch event in April 2024 and organized 11 outreach events, reaching 255 attendees. They also held seven collaborative stakeholder meetings with a total of 25 attendees, and two information sessions, with 43 attendees total. On average, they hosted 15 Heart Gallery exhibits a month displaying 200 portraits, and their web traffic has increased from 956 visits in January to 1,680 visits in August.

## Needs Assessment of Post-Permanency Services in Region 9

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 9, **27 caregivers** and **24 providers** participated in the survey. A summary of findings is reported below.

### Familiarity with Post-Permanency Services

- 44% of caregivers (*n* = 12) and 26% (*n* = 6) of providers were very or extremely familiar with post-permanency services.
- 18 caregivers reached out to their region's Post-Permanency Services Provider (67%).
- 15 caregivers reported being very or extremely satisfied with the assistance they received (83%).

### Service Satisfaction by Service Sector

% of caregivers who were somewhat or very satisfied with:

- Medical services (58%, *n* = 26)
- School-based services (47%, *n* = 20)
- Developmental services (45%, *n* = 18)
- Post-permanency services (44%, *n* = 21)
- Respite (38%, *n* = 14)
- Mental health services (29%, *n* = 12)
- Childcare (27%, *n* = 10)

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

- **Comprehensive mental health services and supports** including specialized therapy, psychiatric services, alternative treatments, in-home care, outpatient programs for addiction, and residential care. Services need to be adoption-competent, trauma-informed, and local.
- **Specialized medical professionals and pediatricians** who are local and can offer developmental services including Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy and social skills groups for youth.
- **Tutoring and respite**, particularly for youth with more complex medical and/or behavioral health needs.
- **More local support groups and events** for families, including kinship families.
- **More information** about post-permanency services and **case workers or advocates** to help families access resources.
- 59% of caregivers also indicated they were interested in having f**amily resource centers** and 57% were interested in **Parents Night Out**.

## Caregiver Barriers to Accessing Services

- Lack of providers for needed services like therapy, mental health services, childcare and respite.
- Difficulties finding services in a convenient location without long waitlists.
- Difficulties covering out-of-pocket costs for services not covered by Medicaid or other insurance.

## Provider Barriers to Supporting Families

- Lack of funding for respite, mental health services, and post-adoption support.
- Lack of qualified mental health providers.
- Lack of specialized services for substance use or residential care.
- Lack of local services and supports available to refer families.

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

- Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA)
- Childcare or afterschool care (not specialized)
- Psychiatric services/medication management
- Behavior support services
- Primary Care Physician/Pediatrician

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

Region 9 has robust regional collaborations that are focused on post-adoption efforts to meet the needs of families along a continuum of care. Based on the needs assessment and RFA selection process, the following organizations were selected to provide services in Region 9:

- West Texas Counseling and Guidance: Hire full-time, post-adoption therapist to serve 85 clients/680 sessions.
- High Sky Children's Ranch: Hold adoption events, competency training for providers, and family therapy.
- Addy's Hope Social Services: Offer respite services and support groups to families.
- Open Homes Initiative: Build church partnerships to include mentoring and support groups for families.

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Moritz Center for Societal Impact
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