



Trans Pride Initiative Annual Report

2016

2016 Annual Report, Trans Pride Initiative

Statement from the President

Trans Pride Initiative was founded in August 2011, and one full-time volunteer began working with the organization in the summer of 2012. In 2014, TPI began expanding our reach, joining the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs and taking initial steps to advocate for incarcerated trans persons. In 2015, TPI began to shape our own unique voice and perspective apart from other advocacy programs, particularly trans-focused programs that tended to align with the large nonprofit complex powers. That created challenges, but it also helped define TPI's culture and individual perspective on advocacy. In 2016, we built on that beginning.

The current year has provided opportunities to further develop our unique approach to anti-oppression work. We pushed for and took advantages of chances to form new relationships with others involved in similar work from various perspectives (from reproductive justice to immigration issues), and we took the first steps to building a community space where we could engage with others with similar aspirations, including rental of an office and community center in May.

Our Mission

Trans Pride Initiative empowers trans and gender nonconforming persons to rise above social barriers to equal healthcare, housing, employment, and education. We further define these areas of work under several more specific goals:

- **General Support**—Promoting a supportive network for all trans and gender nonconforming persons to better themselves.
- **Healthcare**—Working with healthcare providers to expand options for trans persons seeking medical services related to their gender identity.
- **Housing**—Helping organizations that provide supportive and assistance housing and services work with trans and gender nonconforming persons in affirming ways.
- **Employment**—Encouraging and helping local employers to establish training and hiring programs for trans and gender nonconforming persons.
- **Education**—Improving access to educational institutions for all trans and gender nonconforming persons.
- **Prison Support**—Communicating and providing information to incarcerated trans and queer persons primarily in Texas.
- **Anti-Violence Work**—Documenting violence against trans, queer, and HIV+ persons for national reporting.

Our Work

FY 2016 marked a very significant turning point for TPI. In January, we operated a kind of “pop-up” office in the front of the Community Pharmacy on Cedar Springs Road once a week. Although drop-in visitation was limited, having a physical space, even if temporary, was well received. When we learned of an inexpensive office space in Oak Cliff, we decided to rent our



Figure 1: On the opening day of the TPI community space, about 20 – 25 volunteers filled the office working on action planning for a protest of a proposed anti-transgender ordinance. Shown are a few of those making signs for protesters.

first office and community space in April. Opening day was May 1, a Sunday, and the space was full of people making signs and developing plans for a protest of the Rockwall City Council the next day (Figure 1).

The space greatly improved our ability to reach out to groups that were also doing anti-oppression work, and that in turn helped us better define our work as participating in a larger, anti-oppression framework. We had long thought a community center would be a significant accomplishment and organizing tool, and that proved to be the case, even if not exactly as we had expected.

The following sections present some of the work we undertook in our various goals areas. Additional efforts included the development of a more comprehensive strategic plan, as well as a fundraising strategy, both for the

period 2016 through 2020. To help implement these, we promoted Fundraising Team meetings that brought together leaders from two different local nonprofits. The idea was to engage folks who wanted to learn more about fundraising with experts from a more traditional perspective and a grassroots perspective. These experts would help the team develop an action plan to meet strategic and fundraising goals. The effort was not very successful, so we will use the lessons learned for our future efforts along these lines. TPI was successful in raising some funding from the Trans Justice Funding Project (third year in a row to be funded), the Borealis Foundation’s Fund for Trans Generations (submitted in 2016, awarded in 2017), and an unsolicited grant from the Tides Foundation’s Dignity and Justice Fund.

General Support—In late April, just as TPI was arranging to rent our community space, we learned that the City of Rockwall was proposing a “bathroom ordinance” that would restrict trans persons accessing public accommodations by a “genital rule.” This was very soon after North Carolina had passed a similar transphobic ordinance. We quickly mobilized to organize opposition, and other groups joined the effort. The ordinance was defeated when the packed meeting at the City Council, along with the emotional words from community members, convinced them to eschew such a move. Other work of a general support nature taken on during the year included:

- Further refinement of our member guide.

- An effort to hold committee meetings at a variety of coffee shops and small cafes with an honor system that covered the expenses of those who could not afford to pay.
- Regular weekly email newsletters and announcements throughout the year. Response was not great, however, so this would not be extended long in 2017.
- Made additional efforts to convert our monthly board meetings into combination board and community meetings, with some success.
- We started what we called a mobile food pantry that was carried in a box to community meetings for folks to take from or contribute to as the wished.
- From January through March, we tried having a walk-in space in an open reception area at the Community Pharmacy in Oak Lawn, the traditional LGBTQ neighborhood in Dallas. Although there was not enough traffic to justify continuing, the social media visibility this brought probably help spread the word about our work considerably.
- We started our Gender Justice campaign with the Rockwall protest, accompanied by our anti-violence restroom drops claiming that either “A Trans Person Peed Here” or “A Trans Ally Peed Here” in English and Spanish, providing facts about violence against trans persons, promoted by dozens of persons using signs and the hashtag #genderjustice (Figure 2).
- We organized an Autumn Community Dinner for fall holiday season and to promote participation in our work. It was fairly successful as far as attendance goes, but did not really develop any long-term volunteers and membership as we had hoped.
- TPI continued to try to get attention to the new Federal Transit Administration (FTA) rule adding gender identity to protected classes for public transit passengers, and although we received promises of promotion at the federal level, it never happened.
- After the election, set up a program to help fund identity document updates.



Figure 2: A collage of of the #genderjustice signs at the Rockwall City Hall protest on May 2, 2016.

Healthcare—In 2016, our efforts in healthcare fell off somewhat due to increased efforts in other areas and a lack of success increasing our capacity to take on all. We continued to discuss healthcare access options with trans persons contacting TPI and looking for resources. This is a service we routinely provide to about a dozen or more persons each year who cold-call us for referrals. In addition, the following are some of the more significant efforts undertaken during the year.

- TPI supported Affordable Care Act enrollment again this year. We created researched and created a flier to help guide access to trans health services in Texas general (Figure 3).
- Our efforts to continue our annual health fair started well, with a very active Healthcare Committee meeting to plan the event. However, Planned Parenthood chose to drop out rather than address complaints from trans persons at two local clinics, and University of Texas Southwestern’s Center for Breast Care lost funding needed to participate in a meaningful way. TPI canceled the event on May 4. We tried to reorganize it into a healthcare issues symposium, but a lack of participation meant we canceled that as well.

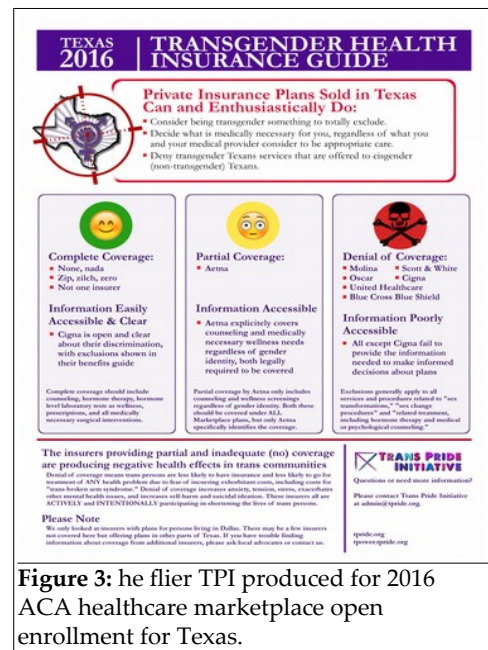


Figure 3: he flier TPI produced for 2016 ACA healthcare marketplace open enrollment for Texas.

- TPI filed a discrimination complaint against Parkland Health and Hospital System based on our investigations. At the end of the year, the complaint was placed on hold until a court case—Franciscan Alliance v. Burwell—is decided.
- TPI participated in the inaugural National Transgender HIV Testing Day (April 18).
- When they were issued in May, TPI helped helped promote the ACA Section 1557 regulations specifically addressing discrimination in healthcare services due to gender identity and transgender status.
- TPI also agreed to work with the organization Rad Remedy to input data into their database when we had the capacity to do so. Unfortunately, we were not able to identify volunteers interested in doing this work during the year.

Housing—As part of our effort to start several committees, we also tried to start a Housing Services Committee, but we were not able to generate sufficient interest this year. However, we continued to operate the Dallas Trans Shared Housing program, starting a Tumblr post page that individuals could use to post either available spaces or needing housing. The effort was moderately successful, and we worked with a number of persons seeking housing throughout the year.

One noteworthy effort involved our attempts to bring attention to a young homeless trans woman who essentially was told she would not be provided shelter in Dallas. The Bridge—with support and encouragement from the Dallas Police Department, the city, and Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance—began denying shelter to anyone with a history of a sex related conviction. This move meant that no shelter in Dallas would house a trans woman in this situation appropriately. The trans woman we work advocating for, who had received a conviction when she was 13 years old and had complied with court ordered registration for nearly 10 years without incident, found very temporary housing in a volatile family situation in Fort Worth,

then left to go to Colorado in order to access housing services. Attempts to file a federal complaint went unanswered, and the City of Dallas fair housing office refused to investigate; outreach to “community advocates” on the City Council were ignored entirely. Only the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs did a minimal investigation, to little effect.

Employment—TPI continued to have insufficient capacity to address employment issues on a consistent and active basis, but we also continued to support persons who reached out to us with employment complaints. Of note were our efforts to address discrimination in the provision of services by the Texas Workforce Commission, and we helped a trans woman file a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), where we feel she also experienced discrimination, and we pursued a complaint with the EEOC Director of Field Offices. In the end, she was able to negotiate a small settlement with the employment service that discriminated against her.

Education—In May, a Dear Colleague letter was released by the Department of Education and the Justice Department offering guidance that Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects students from discrimination based on gender identity. TPI helped promote and explain the guidance in social media and through interviews such as one for local public radio station KERA. In retaliation, the Texas University Interscholastic League began an effort to force trans students to compete according to the gender on birth certificate, and TPI contributed to the efforts to raise awareness and opposition to that harmful move.

Prison Support—During 2016, our prison support services became a major undertaking in our work through those inside spreading the word about our work (Figure 4). We started a Prison Services Committee, but as with the other committees, we were not able to figure out how to

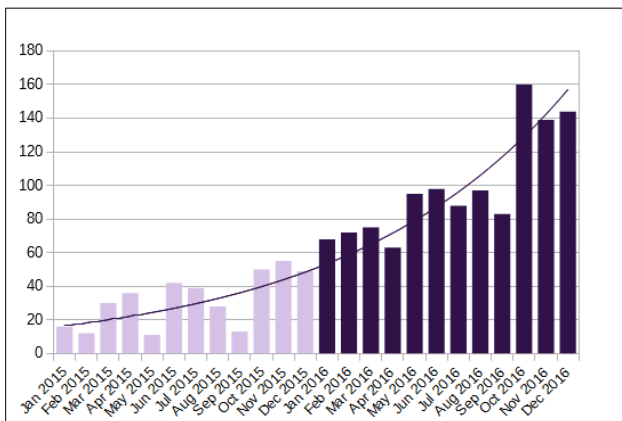


Figure 4: Correspondence as total letters and emails sent and received for 2015 (light color) and 2016 (dark color). The increase in 2016 was due to publication of a letter in the Black & Pink newsletter by one TPI correspondent telling others about how we had helped her.

transition participants into leadership roles within the committees, so it too languished over time. Other notable items for the year include:

- The *Texas Observer* published an article in January discussing TPI’s prison work and issues faced by trans persons in the Texas prison system.
- TPI participated in the first International Day of Solidarity with Trans Prisoners on January 22 primarily through social media and soliciting contributions for a zine published from contributions by incarcerated persons.

- TPI began looking more at immigration and detention issues and how trans persons are affected, attended Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) meetings concerning LGBTQ folks (particularly bringing up issues about the treatment of trans persons and

establishment of a new “trans pod” in the Dallas area). In the summer, we organized an ICE Out of Texas group to respond to the Prairieland Detention Center near Dallas. In August, we helped coordinate a Dallas meeting for a national working group organized by the Transgender Law Center and Familia: Trans and Queer Liberation Movement. The event was attended by about 40 advocates from around the country. TPI also began hosting weekly planning meetings to educate locals about ICE abuses and help support actions to bring attention and raise opposition to the Prairieland facility.

- TPI worked to promote additional improvements for the Dallas County Sheriff’s Office trans policy in the county jail system, an effort undertaken with the support of the Dallas office of the Department of Justice.
- TPI also began referring HIV+ incarcerated persons to AIDS Arms for guidance on accessing trans-affirming healthcare on release. AIDS Arms operates a program that provides information to soon-to-be-released persons to improve access to and retention in care.
- TPI hosted our second holiday card party to make cards for incarcerated persons, sending 100 to persons across the Texas prison system for 2016.

Anti-Violence Work— Among the committees attempted in 2016 was an Anti-Violence Committee, which met several times beginning in January. Committee members began discussing actions and programs that would support the safety of persons doing sex work through building a support structure based on community needs and providing HIV and STI prevention information and materials. The meetings were well attended as long as TPI was helping cover food costs at meeting sites, but as soon as we moved into an office and held the meetings there, participation dropped significantly, and no one ever expressed interest in leading the effort. Other efforts worth noting include:

- TPI provided guidance and support, as well as writing advocacy letters, for a person filing a discrimination complaint against the Transportation Safety Administration.
- TPI also tried to start two peer support groups at our community space. One was for survivors of violence, the other a kind of think tank meant to foster ideas and support for those facing various types of discrimination in schools, at work, or in their lives in other ways. Neither effort was successful.

Although TPI was still a member of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, demands for our time in other areas meant we were able to only do very minimal work on NCAVP business and reporting. We hope that in the future we can again increase our participation in this important organization.

Our Accomplishments

At TPI, we feel that among our most important accomplishments for the year was the organization of the Rockwall protest. A few weeks after the event, we received a phone call from a participant who was extremely happy to have been a part of the action. The person

identified as a butch lesbian with distinct masculine aspects to their identity who had experienced harassment and abuse due to their presentation for many years but never felt comfortable being active in the community. Their partner talked them into attending, which they reluctantly agreed to do. They said it was one of the most empowering things they had ever done, and they called to thank us for enabling them to experience such a powerful sense of community for the first time. This is why Trans Pride Initiative does this work, and we know that if we empowered one person enough to reach out like this, we empowered others as well. Even if the transphobic ordinance had passed, connecting and empowering community in this way would mean we accomplished an important success.

A second accomplishment is the growth of our prison outreach engagement. We noticed during this period that we began creating a sense of community behind the walls, connecting people to information that they then shared with others to more fully inform incarcerated trans and queer folks about healthcare and safety issues as well as providing outside support so important to easing the immense systemic indignities of the system and sometimes to even helping persons survive. That impact was also reflected in the number of persons coming out as trans in the Texas system: we saw an increase from about 100 in January 2015 to 227 in January 2016 and to 367 in December 2016.

TPI also considers our increasing experience and lessons learned as part of our accomplishments. Although we could view our inability to organize lasting committees that grew leadership in the community as a failure, we instead view this as an accomplishment because growing grassroots organizations requires experimentation and learning that will combine to create effective actions and endeavors. We created valuable experience by daring to try these efforts, producing lessons we can draw from that will help us grow more effectively in the future. These are important accomplishments that will be valuable in guiding future work.

In summary, 2016 was an incredibly significant year for TPI. We took some chances, we stumbled in places but better defined the environment in which we do this work, and because of these efforts, we are better prepared for the work in the coming years.

Financial Report

Due to large increases in our expenses for maintaining our office and community space, our increases grew significantly in 2016. Regardless, we were able to see growth in our income from donations sufficient to cover all expenses, and at the end of the year saw a net income of almost \$2,000. Taking on the additional expense of operating a physical location was a daunting step for us, but we feel that we were able to balance costs and expenses well enough to show that the step had not been a mistake because we are mainly concerned that we show sufficient income to grow operations as there are opportunities. We have been careful to carry over some of our donations year by year so that we have a small amount of padding to keep us secure in our operations.

The year of operations was essentially a break-even period, with the ending bank account approximately the same as the beginning, but with substantially more experience in our work.

2016 Statement of Activities

Revenue

Individual Contributions	\$5,143.86
Grant Income (TJFP)	\$2,000.00
Services	\$1,800.00
Total Revenue	\$8,943.86

Expenses

Office Supplies	\$334.03
Postage	\$252.62
Office Rent	\$4,136.00
Marketing	\$40.55
Licenses and Fees	\$12.00
Insurance	\$601.47
Volunteer Support	\$1,118.37
Direct Assistance to clients	\$95.30
Utilities, Internet, Web Hosting	\$447.75
Total Expenses	\$7,038.09

Net at Year End **\$1,905.77**

Carryover Funds from Prior Year \$12,855.29

Total Funds On Hand at Year End **\$14,761.06**

