



# **2015 Mental Health First Aid Report**

**As Required By  
Texas Health and Safety Code Section 1001.205(b)**



**Department of State Health Services  
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## **Introduction**

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an eight-hour, evidence-based curriculum that teaches individuals how to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The training teaches individuals the signs of addictions and mental illness, how to assess a situation and provide assistance, the impact of mental illness and substance use disorders, and the availability of local resources. MHFA training increases awareness of mental health and reduces stigma around mental illness.

House Bill 3793, 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013 directed the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to provide grants to Local Mental Health Authorities (LMHAs) to train their staff and contractors as instructors of MHFA. After receiving certification, MHFA instructors provide the MHFA training to educators at no cost to the educators or their employers.

[S.B. 133, 84th Legislature, Regular Session, 2015](#) made amendments to broaden eligibility criteria for MHFA training to all school district employees and resource officers, instead of educators only. The expanded criteria include school bus drivers, cafeteria staff, secretaries, and others who regularly interact with students throughout the course of their duties. This increases the likelihood that children and adults experiencing a mental health crisis will encounter school staff who are equipped to provide assistance as needed, which not only benefits the students, parents, and school districts, but the communities across Texas. The legislation changed reporting requirements to align the DSHS reporting schedule with the LMHA data collection schedule. S.B. 133 also amended the funding structure to allow LMHAs more flexibility related to using grant funds either to certify trainers or to train additional school district employees and school resource officers.

[Texas Health and Safety Code Section 1001.205\(b\)](#), as amended by S.B. 133, 84th Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, states that not later than December 1 of each year, DSHS shall compile the information submitted by LMHAs related to the number of MHFA trainers certified and the number of individuals trained in MHFA and submit a report to the Legislature containing the number of:

- LMHA employees and contractors trained as MHFA trainers during the preceding fiscal year
- Educators, school district employees other than educators, and school resource officers who completed a MHFA training program provided by a LMHA during the preceding fiscal year
- Individuals who are not school district employees or school resource officers who completed a MHFA training program provided by a LMHA during the preceding fiscal year

## **Fiscal Year 2015 Results**

All 37 LMHAs and one Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) continue to participate in this program. DSHS receives an annual state plan from each of the LMHAs that outlines how many resource officers, school district employees, and community-based personnel they plan to train within the year. Additionally, the plans include information about how the LMHAs will develop and maintain community partnerships to increase training opportunities.

Prior to the implementation of S.B.133, LMHAs trained school district employees classified as educators; all other trainees were classified as non-educators. Therefore, the fiscal year 2015 data on the number of individuals that received MHFA training reflect these categories. In fiscal year 2015, the MHFA program and statewide partnerships have resulted in:

- 206 LMHA employees and contractors trained as MHFA instructors
- 6,527 educators trained in MHFA
- 4,792 non-educators trained in MHFA

In fiscal year 2016, these data will be collected as indicated in S.B. 133; individuals trained will be categorized as either “school employees” or “non-school employees.” DSHS is working with the Health and Human Service Commission and the Texas Council of Community Centers to create a statewide marketing strategy to increase collaboration with school districts in providing MHFA.