



# DEEPENING OUR ROOTS IN TEXAS

Friends Austin plays an important role in ending foster care involvement for kids in our region.

Since 2019, Friends Austin has worked closely with partner organizations to enroll and serve child welfare-involved youth. Our referral partnerships with CASA of Travis County, Casey Family Programs, and the Center for Child Protection help us reach kindergarten-age children at a pivotal moment — reunification with their families — after they have experienced foster care.

In Travis County, 45% of children under 12 re-enter foster care within five years of reunifying with their families. Due to the stability provided to children and their families through the consistent presence of a Friend, not a single child enrolled in our program has re-entered foster care.

Our leadership team advocated within the Texas legislature for a multi-million-dollar, multi-year appropriation to provide long-term professional mentoring for children and families involved in Child Protective Services (CPS). In September

2024, we secured a five-year contract with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to provide professional mentoring for children involved in the child welfare system — a highly traumatic experience correlated with long-term academic, economic, and health consequences. We now have over 100 children in our program with documented histories of abuse and neglect.

This grant was awarded to Friends Austin and Friends Houston as we continue to grow and serve more youth with child welfare experiences. Friends Texas is also supported by this grant, enabling us to expand this important work to new chapters across the state.

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