



# Brief: Fund Life-Affirming Choices

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## Key Points:

1. Catholics are called to respect life and care for the defenseless.
2. *Alternatives to Abortion* has helped over 200,000 families choose life.
3. We support HB 3873 to maintain and expand the *Alternatives* program.

**A Catholic perspective:** The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops supports increased funding to abortion alternatives for expectant parents. As Pope Benedict wrote, “Children truly are the family’s greatest treasure and most precious good.”<sup>[1]</sup> Yet parents are sometimes troubled or burdened with the news that they are expecting a child. We should understand more about their daily struggle so that we can effectively help them care for their families and thereby become witnesses of moral strength for us all.<sup>[2]</sup>

Texans and Catholics have a duty to help families make life-affirming choices, and we cannot ignore the circumstances under which a woman may be pressured to have an abortion.<sup>[3]</sup> Circumstances such as abuse, poverty, and lack of support must be included in the conversation when discussing pro-life legislation. We support programs intended to remedy those circumstances, as well as promote adoption as a legitimate option for families who cannot care for their children.

**Texas law and policy:** Texas legislators established the Alternatives to Abortion (A2A) program in 2005 and currently operates using funds from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and General Revenue.<sup>[4]</sup> The Alternatives program contracts with two

agencies providing support to new families, one of which is the Texas Pregnancy Care Network (TPCN). TPCN is a network of adoption agencies, residential care facilities, pregnancy resource centers (PRCs), and social service providers. The network provides:

- counseling and mentoring;
- material goods such as car seats, clothes, diapers, and formula;
- education regarding pregnancy and parenting;
- maternity home support groups; and
- referral to and enrollment in other social services.<sup>[5]</sup>

Eligibility is extended to any pregnant woman or adoptive parent for:

- 3 years after birth;
- 3 years after adoption, regardless of the child’s age; or
- 90 days after miscarriage or the loss of a child.<sup>[6]</sup>

As a result, the TPCN continuity of care extends for 45 months.<sup>[7]</sup> In FY 2017-18, TPCN supported the work of 135 subcontractors in 218 of the state’s 254 counties, serving in counties which account for 99% of Texas abortions.<sup>[8]</sup> Since its creation, TPCN has served a total of 219,073 women, adoptive parents, and other clients.<sup>[9]</sup> We support **HB 3873**, which

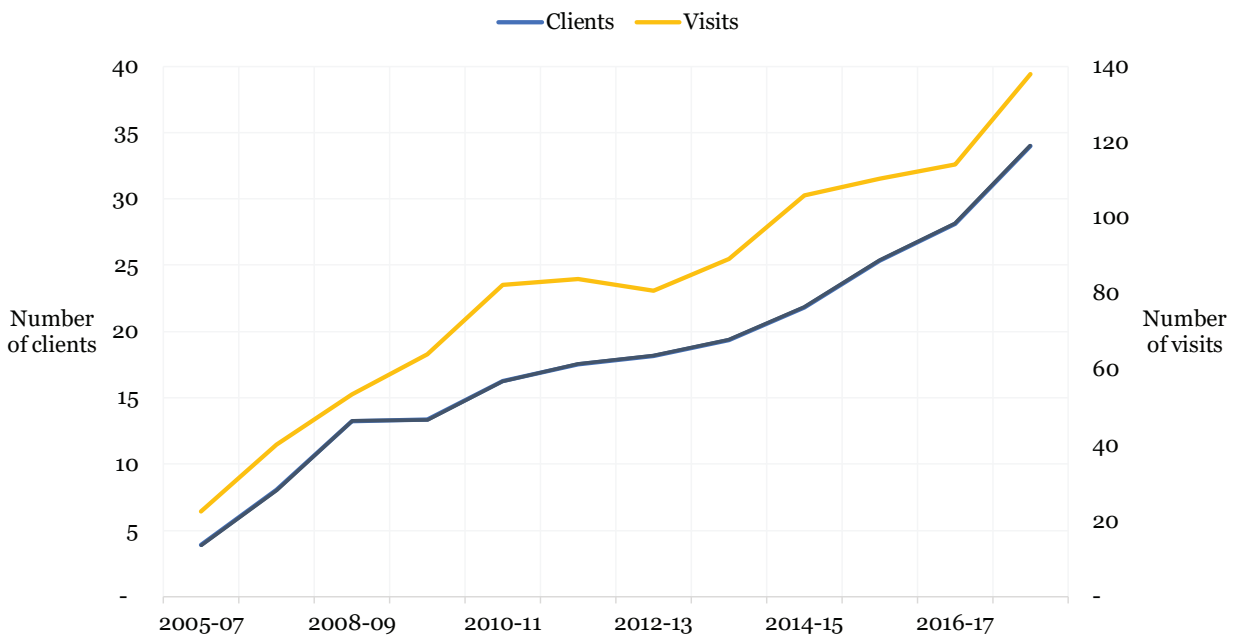
would expand the A2A program and show that Texas legislators have a strong dedication to supporting women, children, and families.

**Call to action:** To support this proposal in the Texas legislature, please visit [txcatholic.org/life](http://txcatholic.org/life) to find and contact your lawmaker. Please also pray for Texas and for our legislators, that they

may respect innocent life and care for the weak and defenseless.

*The TCCB is a federation of all Roman Catholic dioceses and ordinariates in Texas. There are 8 million Catholics living in our state. To contact us, call our office at 512-339-9882 or find TXCatholic on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).*

Figure 1: TPCN number of clients and client visits, in thousands (FY 2005 - 2018)



TPCN, *Annual Report to Health and Human Services Commission*, FY 2017-18. Page 7.

## Endnotes

1. Pope Benedict XVI, *Address at a Meeting on Family and Life Issues in Latin America*. (Dec. 3, 2005), Sec. 5.
2. Pope Francis, *General Audience*. (Jan. 7, 2015).
3. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), *Quaestio de abortu [Declaration on Procured Abortion]*, The Vatican. (November 18, 1974), Sec. 26.
4. 79 RS [SB 1 ENR](#). Page II-111; Texas Health and Human Services, *Alternatives to Abortion*. (Dec. 2017), Page 6.
5. *Ibid.*, *Alternatives to Abortion*, page 3; TPCN, *FY 2017-18 Annual Report to Health and Human Services Commission*. (FY 2017-18), Page 11.
6. *Ibid.*
7. TPCN, *FY 2017-18 Annual Report*. Page 2.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.* Page 8.