

## **Texas Ramp Project Pandemic Statement November 2020**

Safe access for people with disabilities is an ongoing issue, based on more than 5,000 referrals received in 2019. Although Texas Ramp Project volunteers have built fewer ramps in 2020 because of COVID-19, referrals have continued, although at a slightly lower pace. In fact, they are likely to increase after the virus has passed as it will leave more Texas residents, especially older adults, with physical weakness or disability. We have also been dealing with fewer build crews, as our corporate volunteers are no longer having service days and many of our regular builders are retired people with preexisting conditions.

TRP has also experienced a downturn in funding as many of our regular sources are feeling the need to address more immediate COVID-related needs. This has left TRP with less ability to serve vulnerable Texans with mobility issues, especially considering the state's aging population. Grants from foundations and donations from churches and individuals have decreased since the pandemic arrived in the United States.

Complicating this downturn in receipts have been dramatic price increases in the cost of lumber and other materials. This uptick is due to a shutdown of lumber mills in March and April and an increase in homebuilding and home remodeling projects during the pandemic. Between early shortages and increased demand, lumber prices are up as much as 50%. This has increased the average ramp cost from around \$600 to as much as \$800 to \$1,000. This means our funding does not go nearly as far as it has in the past.

We are hopeful that 2021 will bring an end to the pandemic and stabilization of both funding and costs so that the Texas Ramp Project can proceed full speed at serving the more than 1.6 million Texans who have mobility issues.