“The new association … should be an effective instrumentality for cooperation between the state government and counties.”

– Minutes of TAC founding meeting, June 19, 1969.

May 28, 1969, Gov. Preston Smith signs Senate Bill 167, the enabling legislation for the creation of Texas Association of Counties.
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The Texas State Capitol Building.
Message from the President

Two years flew by in the blink of an eye. And the past two years serving as your president have been no different. It feels like just yesterday when I took office, and I will certainly miss my time working closely with Executive Director Susan M. Redford, the TAC staff, Board of Directors and other county officials.

During my tenure as TAC president, we celebrated TAC's 50th anniversary, and I learned what an integral part the Association is to every county official across the state. In addition to its presence at the Capitol during the 86th legislative session, TAC provides so many invaluable services to all counties and all offices, including affordable risk and health coverage, education and training, legal services, organizing and managing conferences for affiliate associations, and so much more. Over the past two years, I was lucky to witness the many ways TAC affects or supports Texas counties.

This past year has brought many challenges to Texas counties — mostly during the legislative session and its aftermath. We still face a great many hurdles to jump over due to Senate Bill 2, but with the continued diligent support of TAC's Legislative Services Department, as well as the leadership of TAC staff and Board, I believe we will right the ship.

I had the rare opportunity as TAC President to work closely with two different Executive Directors. After Executive Director Gene Terry’s retirement at the end of 2018, the Board selected former Ector County Judge Susan M. Redford as TAC’s new Executive Director. Though very different in certain ways, both Terry and Redford exemplify the characteristics of top-notch leadership. It was a wonderful experience to work with each of them.

Something that has always been dear to me is the employees. TAC is only as good as its employees, and I have always considered how to provide the best to TAC employees. I believe when you have good leaders, others follow. It shows when TAC provides great service to counties all across the state. This is what makes us strong.

It was an honor and privilege to serve as President of the Texas Association of Counties, and I plan to continue to pursue and develop ways to provide services and support to counties. While no longer president, I will still be actively involved with TAC as I continue my “day job” as Hidalgo County constable. I will also continue to engage with and learn from all the other amazing elected officials who make up TAC’s membership. Together we are stronger. We are always 254 strong!

Hon. Larry Gallardo
2018-2019 President and Hidalgo County Constable
Message from the Executive Director

I am pleased to share this year’s Member Report, which provides a comprehensive summary of major accomplishments by the Texas Association of Counties and its Pools in 2019.

In the following pages, you will find details about the many ways in which your Association serves you and county government.

The 2019 legislative session was sometimes a tough one for counties. Throughout that session, TAC provided a voice for county government at the Capitol, and we worked with you to make sure your legislators understood the impact that bills under consideration would have on county government and your constituents. Thanks to the persistent efforts of many local officials collaborating with our TAC Legislative team, the state budget included $250 million specifically for the Texas Transportation Infrastructure Fund that can be used by counties for their transportation projects. Also, counties can utilize Trusteed Programs within the governor’s office, including access to grants and other resources benefiting councils of government, disaster response, public safety and economic development. Funding for Trusteed Programs within the Office of the Governor totaled $1.4 billion.

The 86th Texas Legislature addressed some of the dangers of cybersecurity attacks to county government with the passage of House Bill 3834, which required county officials to take a course approved by the Texas Department of Information Resources. After the session, TAC developed a DIR-certified cybersecurity course, which we offered at no charge to you. This state-mandate course and other courses offered through our Cybersecurity Awareness Training Program helped members to think before they click to protect county and constituents’ data.

In addition, the TAC Health and Employee Benefits Pool returned $2.75 million in Pool contributions to member counties, and its average member contribution rates were approximately 2.8% less than the market trend — consistently below market trend for the past 18 years.

TAC employees are committed to serving you and, in turn, all of Texas. One of our most engaged and engaging staff members is featured in the back of this report — TAC HEBP Operations Manager Rob Ressmann, TAC 2019 Employee of the Year. Please take a minute to learn about Rob and the humor and goodwill he brings to his role in the Health and Benefits Services Department.

In closing, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the members of TAC’s boards and committees for their thoughtful guidance and support of the work we do. Your contributions made our 2019 accomplishments possible.

Susan M. Redford  
Executive Director, Texas Association of Counties
The Baker Hotel in Dallas served as a meeting space for county officials before TAC was created by the Legislature in 1969.
Texas Association of Counties | 2019 ACHIEVEMENTS

Launched Legislative Analysis Database
Developed a searchable database of the primary bills during the 86th Texas Legislature of importance to county government operations. The database, created in conjunction with TAC’s 2019 Legislative Analysis Report, encompassed roughly 160 bills arranged by subject matter and searchable by keywords, author, bill number or subject.

Earned NACIO Awards of Excellence
The National Association of County Information Officers (NACIO) selected two TAC Communications staff to receive Awards of Excellence — an Excellence Award in the One-Page Brochure category and a Best of Class Award in Writing for a County magazine feature story.

Delivered County Investment Training
The County Investment Academy trained 442 elected officials and staff in how to best manage county financial assets. The Academy offered three annual conferences in partnership with the McCoy College of Business Administration at Texas State University. About 310 Academy members represented 157 counties and seven special districts.

Supported Affiliate Associations
Assisted founding affiliate county official associations with conference planning and management, event registration, continuing education tracking and dues management. Support was provided to the County Treasurers’ Association of Texas, Tax Assessor-Collectors Association of Texas, Justices of the Peace & Constables Association, County and District Clerks’ Association of Texas, Texas Association of County Auditors, County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas, North and East Texas County Judges and Commissioners Association, West Texas County Judges and Commissioners Association, and Far West Texas County Judges and Commissioners Association.

Launched Grant Webpage
Designated a section of TAC’s website to focus on grant opportunities available to counties. As an additional resource for county officials, the webpage provided links to grants provided by funding agencies and grant funding resources.
Produced Texas Counties Deliver Videos
Rolled out two new videos in the Texas Counties Deliver series about county government. One explains the role and duties of a county commissioner. The other is a 90-second primer about Texas courthouse architecture. The series’ producer is Chet Garner of PBS’ “The Daytripper.”

Stood Firm Against Legislative Efforts to Centralize Power
Texas county officials and TAC’s Legislative staff faced an especially difficult regular session, as some in the Legislature and in state leadership focused much of their attention on centralizing more authority in Austin. However, despite those efforts, county officials stood united for responsive, responsible, local government.

Leadership 254
Twenty county officials are currently participating in TAC’s 14-month leadership program. They began the four-module program in 2019 and will complete it in the fall of 2020. Leadership 254 is focused on personal and professional reflection, growth and transformation. The participants, representing each county office and counties across the state, learned to overcome their limitations to redefine the possibilities they set for themselves, their courthouse, their county official association and their county constituents.

Sponsored the Annual Legislative Conference
More than 550 officials and staff gathered in Austin for three days of keynotes, breakouts, roundtables and networking opportunities. The 2019 theme, “Focused on the Future,” focused on important policy issues and the affect they have on county government and Texans.

Continued “LEGALLEASE” Newsletter
Produced monthly newsletter highlighting timely, relevant and interesting topics affecting county government in an easy-to-read question and answer format. Content was developed from questions posed the TAC Legal department. The newsletter is sent electronically to all county officials monthly.
TAC rented space in the Commodore Perry Hotel Building in Austin in 1975.
Texas Association of Counties | 2019 ACHIEVEMENTS

Texas Counties Deliver Radio and TV Spots Broadcast
Through a partnership with the Texas Association of Broadcasters, more than 200 local radio and TV stations across Texas broadcast public service announcements promoting county government and the www.texascountiesdeliver.org website.

Prepared Record Number of Fiscal Notes for the Legislature
Provided input on approximately 957 fiscal notes on bills and joint resolutions during the 86th Texas Legislature. The number of fiscal notes TAC worked on in 2020 increased by 32% from the previous session and gave legislators more representative explanations of how counties are affected financially by certain actions.

Obtained Certification for State-Mandated Cybersecurity Training
Obtained certification from the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) for a cybersecurity training course for county government. House Bill 3834, passed by the 86th Texas Legislature, made certified cybersecurity training an annual requirement for county employees who have access to government computer systems or databases.

Contributed to Court Briefs
Joined other county government organizations in amici curiae briefs to the United State Supreme Court, the Texas Supreme Court, and the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, protecting county interests.

Celebrated TAC’s 50th Anniversary
Throughout 2019, TAC celebrated the 50th anniversary of its 1969 founding. County magazine featured a series of articles about the origins of the organization, the development of its programs and services, and the leaders who have supported its mission. An interactive timeline of key TAC milestones was also provided on 50yearsoftac.org.
Texas Association of Counties

**Developed Commissioners Court Administrative Training Program**
County judges, commissioners, auditors, treasurers and tax assessor-collectors were given the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the county budgeting process following passage of SB2. They also learned how to calculate and set tax rates, and learned how to implement best practices to accomplish the county budgeting goals. The program was developed in partnership with the V.G. Young Institute of County Government.

**Provided Research Assistance to County Officials**
Assisted county officials in researching issues, finding statutes, regulations, opinions and court cases relevant to their particular county situation through the TAC Helpline. In all, 1,836 calls were answered in 2019.

**Connected With County Officials**
County Relations Officers (CROs) met with county officials in 143 counties to stay informed about their legislative concerns and other needs and to share information about TAC resources available to them, including cybersecurity training, Texas Counties Deliver and the County Best Practices Awards. In addition, CROs connected with officials while attending 33 conferences, roundtables and regional workshops.

**Presented to Affiliate Groups**
Presented at statewide and regional meetings of county officials on a wide variety of topics, including ethics, budgeting, the Public Information Act, the Open Meetings Act, elections and legal research.

**Continued Judicial Education Excellence**
TAC offered 120 hours of continuing education to attendees at the spring and fall judicial education sessions, Court Assistants’ Training Conference, Probate Academy and various regional workshops in partnership with the Texas Tech University School of Law. Also assisted with two DWI Summits and an Impaired Driving Symposium and partnered with the Texas Justice Court Training Center for the inaugural Texas Counties and the Mentally Ill — Bridging the Gap conference.

**Continued Tuesday Morning Breakfasts**
Hosted Tuesday Morning Breakfasts throughout the session. The breakfasts served as a dependable resource and metric for county officials and various affiliates’ legislative representatives visiting the Capitol. During the session, these gatherings became rallying points that supported county officials with background information to reinforce their message to the Capitol.
Updated Legal Publications
Revised and distributed information to county officials related to county powers and duties to include changes made during the 2019 session.

Offered 8 Regional Judicial Roundtables
Intimate-setting meetings allowed county judges the ability to candidly discuss challenges and solutions with peers in their region. Roundtables were held in Bee, Colorado, Hockley, Eastland, Mason, Leon, Cass and Glasscock counties.

Hosted Counties for Capitol Legislative Day
Brought county officials to Counties at the Capitol Legislative Day. The event was held at the beginning of the 86th Texas Legislature and featured remarks from key legislators. Legislators provided insight about the direction of the session and effective advocacy tactics for county officials. Later than day, county officials met with legislators and legislative staff in their offices and networked with them at a reception.

Celebrated County Government Day in the Capitol
Hosted legislative staffers and legislators for a County Government Day lunch in the Capitol. The event highlighted Best Practice Awards Program winner and illustrated the value of county government through a video kiosk and banners. The display remained up for two weeks.
2019 ACHIEVEMENTS

Produced TAC 2019 Planning Calendar
Completed annual update of calendar that includes dates related to the statutory duties of county officials, including any recent changes to elections, reporting requirements, taxation and budgeting.

Grew County Official Engagement in the Legislative Process
Added 104 members to TAC’s Core Legislative Group by encouraging county officials to engage in the legislative process and take actions that have an impact. County officials worked to preserve the local decision-making process by contacting legislative offices and traveling to Austin to provide testimony on important issues affecting their communities.

Continued “TAC on the Lege” Video Series
Filmed a weekly roundtable webcast to complement the legislative newsletter and help county officials navigate the twists and turns of the legislative session. Each episode, featuring various members of the Legislative Department staff, was a conversation about what was important to counties that particular week in the Legislature. Episodes were published on both YouTube and Facebook.

Launched Cybersecurity Awareness Training for Counties
Provided free cybersecurity training to nearly 12,000 county employees through a Cybersecurity Awareness Training Program. The program educated county employees on cybersecurity best practices and particularly to think before they click to protect their county computer networks and data.
In 1972 TAC rented office space in Building 55 at IH-35 and Town Lake.
Texas Association of Counties | LEADERSHIP

2019 TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Texas Association of Counties | LEADERSHIP

Seated (left to right): President and Hidalgo County Constable Larry Gallardo and President-Elect and Comal County Treasurer Renee Couch

Second Row (standing left to right): Bailey County Judge Sherri B. Harrison, Denton County Treasurer Cindy Yeatts Brown, Hunt County Clerk Jennifer Lindenzweig, Travis County Constable Carlos Lopez, Laurie K. English, 112th District Attorney, Immediate Past President and Brazoria County Clerk Joyce G. Hudman and Hays County Commissioner Debbie Gonzales Ingalsbe.

Back row (standing left to right): Anderson County Judge Robert D. Johnston, Tom Green County Auditor Nathan Cradduck, Lamb County Sheriff Gary Maddox, Johnson County Commissioner Rick Bailey, Dallas County Tax Assessor-Collector John R. Ames, Hidalgo County District Clerk Laura Hinojosa and Honorary Chaplain and Oldham County Judge Don Allred.
Texas Association of Counties Pools | 2019 ACHIEVEMENTS

Received AGRiP Award for Best Practices
The Association of Governmental Risk Pools (AGRiP) presented the TAC Risk Management Pool (TAC RMP) with an AGRiP Recognition Award for its completion of AGRiP’s Advisory Standards for public entity pools. The designation is a valuable credential in the risk management industry and sets TAC RMP apart from its competitors.

Celebrated TAC RMP’s 45th Anniversary
TAC RMP’s origin dates to the formation of the TAC Workers’ Compensation Self-Insurance Fund in 1974, when 77 counties joined together for pool coverage. The Pool celebrated that anniversary and the fact that TAC RMP has since grown to 400-plus members statewide that have access to more than a half-dozen types of coverage and extensive risk control programs and services.

Returned More than $2.75 million to Pool Members
The TAC HEBP Board approved the return of surplus funds to Pool member counties in June 2019. Strategic cost reductions and good stewardship practices mark the Pool’s commitment to its not-for-profit, service-oriented mission.

Presented HR Regional Workshops
Partnered with staff from the district office of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to present four Human Resources Tools for Managers and Supervisors trainings across the state. Seventy-three county officials and staff attended.

Provided No-Cost Boiler Inspections
In partnership with County Reinsurance Limited and Hartford Steam Boiler, provided 175 state-required boiler inspections for 73 members of the TAC RMP Property Program and recommended maintenance best practices.

Developed New Catastrophe Preparedness and Response Resource
Provided TAC RMP members in the Property Program with “County Catastrophe: Preparedness & Response,” a new collection of resources to help members create a Catastrophe Preparedness and Response Plan.
In 1997, TAC occupied 1204 San Antonio Street in Austin.
In 1968 TAC's first home was a trailer.
Texas Association of Counties Pools | 2019 ACHIEVEMENTS

Hosted the County Management and Risk Conference
County officials and their staff from across the state attended the annual conference in Galveston. General and breakout sessions covered topics aimed to help counties reduce risk and prevent losses throughout their operations.

Held First TAC RMP Defense Counsel Symposium
Launched one-day event that brought together over 60 TAC RMP defense counsel and Risk Management Services staff members for training and networking. Sessions included updates and insights into case law and other events shaping current legal liability risk management landscape for public officials, law enforcement and auto liability lines of coverage.

Provided Safety Equipment
Supplied a total of $768,180 in funding to 189 qualified members of TAC RMP participating in the Workers’ Compensation Program, to purchase pre-approved safety equipment in two online stores – road and bridge/building maintenance and law enforcement.

Developed Risk Management Webinars
Presented webinars on topics such as Hurricane and Catastrophe, Fire Safety and Workers’ Compensation from a County Perspective. Presentations were available to all TAC members at no charge.

Held 11th Annual Healthy County Boot Camp
This annual conference trains county and district wellness coordinators and sponsors on how to increase participation in various wellness programs. The Iris Stagner Award, recognizing the most innovative and enthusiastic coordinator or sponsor, was given to King County secretary of the AgriLife Extension Office Elizabeth Gilbert. Glasscock County Treasurer Alan Dierschke was awarded the first Lifetime Achievement Award for his proactive and successful wellness accomplishments since the inception of the Healthy County program.

Presented TAC RMP Awards
Recognized TAC RMP members for their commitment to controlling claims costs and developing and improving safety and loss control programs. Presented awards during the County Management and Risk Conference to more than 25 counties and four county staff in four categories: Safety Achievement Award, Excellence in Safety Award and Making a Difference Award.
Delivered Driving Simulation Training
Provided 309 hours of driver safety training to 1,855 law enforcement, road and bridge, emergency management and volunteer fire department personnel during 69 training sessions across Texas with TAC RMP’s Law Enforcement and Road & Bridge Driving simulators.

Grew TAC HEBP Membership
TAC HEBP added five new members, bringing total membership groups to 222 as of Dec. 31, 2019.

Presented Simulated Fire Extinguisher Training
Trained 1,150 county staff during 57, one-hour training sessions on the proper use of fire extinguishers in emergencies using a portable fire extinguisher simulator. The simulator allows training without the risk and other hazards of a live fire.

Earned High Workers’ Compensation Network Report Card Results
The Texas Department of Insurance’s 2019 Workers’ Compensation Network Report Card gave the Alliance workers’ compensation medical network — the second largest network in the state, of which TAC RMP is a member — high scores related to treatment of injured workers. Scores revealed that the Alliance’s overall average medical costs were the fourth lowest when compared to other networks, that it had the second highest level of satisfaction with medical care for their work-related injuries, and that it had the third highest rate of return to work — 97% of injured employees indicated that they went back to work at some point after their injury. The report card is a compilation of responses from 3,060 injured employee surveys from 17 workers’ compensation health care networks and other groups in Texas.

Offered Healthy County Employer Rewards
Healthy County distributed $101,886.70 in Employer Rewards to 147 TAC HEBP groups. The program honors participating members for their efforts and success in helping employees enroll and complete various Healthy County programs.

Implemented Coverage Enhancements to Benefit TAC RMP Members
The TAC RMP Board continued to approve coverage enhancements to benefit Pool members. It increased various coverage extension limits in the Property Liability Program, added coverage for Crisis Management in the General Liability Program and removed the sublimits for Privacy and Security coverage extensions in the Public Officials Liability Program.

Kept Premiums Below Market Rates
TAC HEBP’s average renewals for 2020 was 2.8%, keeping member contribution rates well below market and consistently below market trend for the past 18 years.
TAC moved to the United Bank Tower at 15th and Guadalupe in 1981.
Expanded Coverage and Service Options
TAC HEBP members and their dependents are now offered vision coverage through Dearborn National/EyeMed, expanded enrollment for Pool members with dental coverage, and low-cost telemedicine services 24/7/365 through MDLIVE. Airrosti pain treatment visits became more affordable when TAC HEBP offered a copay the same as a primary care office visit.

Provided Resistance Response Simulator Training
Delivered 31 Resistance Response Simulator training sessions to 341 county law enforcement officers totaling 133 hours of training to help them handle tense, unpredictable situations in a lawful and justifiable way.

Saw Prescription Benefits Manager Savings
TAC HEBP’s partnership with Navitus Health Solution, the new prescription benefits manager, effective Oct. 1, 2018, has resulted in a 24% reduction in pharmacy costs and continues to deliver savings, stabilize prescription trends and ultimately lower premiums for TAC HEBP members. The Pool’s contracted prescription drug program with Navitus allows the Pool to perform cost-benefit analysis on new-to-market drugs, to provide excellent services to Pool members and to continue to keep drug costs in check.

Helped 834 Members Lose More Than 3,000 Pounds
TAC HEBP offered the Naturally Slim weight loss program to members three times in 2019. In addition to an average weight loss of 6.1 pounds, 258 participants lowered their diabetes risk.

Hosted Four Healthy County Contests
Healthy County offered four step-based contests through a member portal (energized by Sonic Boom). By completing three of the four contests, 1,070 employees earned the Healthy Lifestyle Reward of $50 in Boomer Bucks, which could be used to redeem merchandise and gift cards on the Sonic Boom storefront.

Leveraged Technology for Better Insight
Launched a drone survey program to provide pre- and post-loss analysis for Underwriting, Claims and Risk Control. Forty-four buildings valued at a total of $321 million were inspected in four counties and resulted in the Pool providing more than 250 maintenance recommendations to the counties. Drone surveys allowed TAC RMP to gain a better view and understanding of its property portfolio and provide actionable intelligence to its members. Risk Control Consultants also used Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) cameras, a thermal imaging tool, during risk assessments of members’ property to detect potential trouble spots in mechanical rooms, electrical systems, and water heaters/boilers.
Texas Association of Counties Pools | LEADERSHIP

2019 TAC RISK MANAGEMENT POOL BOARD

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Grimes County Commissioner
2019 Employee of the Year | ROB RESSMANN

I am pleased to share this year’s Member Report, which provides a comprehensive summary of major accomplishments by the Texas Association of Counties and its Pools in 2019.

Anyone who has met TAC Health and Benefits Services Operations Manager Rob Ressmann knows he is no shrinking violet. His big personality is matched only by his big heart and a huge commitment to TAC and its members. These are just a few of the reasons his fellow TAC employees chose him to be the 2019 Employee of the Year.

Ressmann began his TAC journey in 2002 as an Employee Benefits Specialist in HBS before moving up to Assistant Manager.

“Eventually, it evolved more as the management team grew over the years,” he said.

Like many at TAC, Ressmann doesn’t have what could be described as a typical day.

“It varies from day to day,” he said. “Overall, I try and keep things running as smoothly as possible. I anticipate roadblocks and keep things fluid so people can do their jobs without any hiccups. If something comes up, I deal with it.”

While there is no typical day, there are many responsibilities for Ressmann to manage. As an Operations Manager, he oversees vendor contracts for the Health and Employee Benefits Pool (HEBP), manages the document retention scheduler for HBS, coordinates HEBP Board meetings and supports the entire HBS team.

“He is the glue of the HBS department,” said HBS Director Quincy Quinlan. “He is sensitive to the needs of his team and has his finger on the pulse of TAC.”

Ressmann’s role isn’t limited to the details of office work. He is also a much-needed source of stress relief, for his team and for TAC HEBP members.

“I do try to keep things light if possible, especially in our department,” he said. “One of our main focuses is managing health benefits for people, which is stressful for them and very personal. Our Employee Benefits Specialists take these calls from folks who might be anxious about their benefits, so I try to maintain an upbeat atmosphere in my role of supporting them to help keep their stress levels lower.”

His “upbeat” personality gives his co-workers a big boost, too.

“He provides me with so much feedback and support,” said HBS Wellness Consultant Ashley Cureton. “He truly cares about the department and TAC as a whole, not just the success of HEBP and the organization, also us as employees. He will check in with us to see how things are going, especially those of us who are primarily on the road.”

When he has the opportunity to get out of the building and out into the field, Ressmann jumps at it. “I don’t have as much of an opportunity to meet
with members as I used to. But when I get a chance, I take it,” he said.

One of his favorites is the annual Healthy County Boot Camp. At the 2019 event, he took advantage of the scheduled talent show to take on “Bohemian Rhapsody” by Queen. He did a crowd-rousing lip sync performance of the song, bringing the audience to its feet.

“It was a way I could make the whole thing fun. I decided to just go for it.”

Despite having such a big personality, Ressmann and his wife live small in a tiny house. “My wife and I were going to downsize after the kids were grown and out of the house. We watched ‘Tiny House Nation’ and thought it was great. It looked like a great way to free you from some of life’s trappings.”

His larger-than-life sense of humor, lightness of spirit and dedication to TAC and its members are all reasons he has endeared himself to his co-workers.

“He is a really fun individual, an incisive thinker and very thoughtful,” Quinlan said.

“He is the glue of the HBS department,” “He is sensitive to the needs of his team and has his finger on the pulse of TAC.”

– HBS Director Quincy Quinlan
TAC Executive Director Susan M. Redford is surrounded by TAC staff at the 2019 Top Workplaces celebration.
TAC’s current Austin home at 1210 San Antonio Street.