



Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
Quarterly Meeting – September 11, 2024
Meeting Minutes

A transcript from the electronic recording of the meeting may be found here:
<https://www.tdhca.texas.gov/texas-interagency-council-homeless-tich>

Members present:

#	Member Agency	Representative	Attendance (Yes/No)
1	Office of the Governor appointee, Cornerstone Network (TICH Chair)	Mike Doyle	Yes
2	Office of the Lt. Governor	<i>vacant</i>	n/a
3	Office of the Speaker of the House	<i>vacant</i>	n/a
4	Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)	Brittany Hinton	Yes
5	HHSC	Robert Hetzel	No
6	HHSC	Claire Irwin	Yes
7	Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ)	Sherri Cogbill	Yes (by Carina Garcia)
8	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)	Valinda Bolton	No
9	Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA), Housing Finance representative	Brooke Boston	Yes (by Jeremy Stremmer)
10	TDHCA, Community Affairs representative	Naomi Cantu	Yes (by Tiara Hardaway)
11	Texas Education Agency (TEA)	Desiree Viramontes	Yes
12	Texas Department of Juvenile Justice (TJJD)	Marqus Butler	Yes
13	Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)	Blake Harris	Yes (by Gary Medina)
14	Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)	Kelly Davis	Yes
15	Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)	Blade Berkman	No

<There are currently 13 filled seats so quorum is 7>

Advisory Members present:

#	Advisory Member Organization	Representative	Attendance (Yes/No)
1	Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS)	Fedora Galasso	No
2	TNOYS	Ann-Charlotte Proffitt	No
3	TNOYS	Lauren Rose	No
4	Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute	Darilynn Cardona-Beiler	No
5	Texas Homeless Network (THN)	Eric Samuels	Yes
6	Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC)	Mike Wilt	No
7	Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC)	David Long	No
8	Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV)	Molly Thibodeaux	No
9	Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV)	Lisa Medina	No

Administrative support: Jeremy Stremmer (TDHCA)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Mike Doyle called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m., and confirmed that a quorum was present.

II. Remarks from the Chair

Chair Doyle had no official opening remarks other than to thank everyone for the great work they are doing and referenced continued great reports all year from THN about the state of homelessness.

III. Approval of Minutes from the July 17, 2024, TICH Meeting (*Voting Item*)

Chair Doyle called for a motion to approve the July 17, 2024, minutes. Jeremy Stremmer made a motion to approve the minutes, and Marqus Butler seconded the motion.

IV. Conversation with Continuum of Care (CoC) Agency Leads and Members

Chairman Doyle asked that as updates are made from CoC's to think about what TICH can do for you on a state level, legislatively, or other assistance which would help you do the work you do. He added that it is hard to be helpful without hearing about specific needs.

(a) CoC Updates and (b) CoC Initiatives

Eric Samuels, Executive Director of Texas Homeless Network (THN) began the discussion providing a report on the Balance of State (BoS), the 215 counties in Texas that surround the major metro areas. This year the BoS will be applying for at least 16.3 million. THN is also working with a consultant on submitting a proposal for the CoC Builds Program which would provide capital support funds.

Christina Allen with Caritas of Austin stated that their current challenge is criminal backgrounds relaying that the issue of antiquated statutes and regulations contributes to the challenge of this issue. Ms. Allen requested a revisitation of these outdated regulations in order to allow properties more flexibility. Chair Doyle asked about HUD guidance on this issue. Christina answered their guidance had been updated about properties creating blanket criteria yet the issue faced was enforcement. Marqus Butler with TJJD echoed Christina's comments. Eric Samuels also agreed reiterating the need for flexibility in certain categories related to criminal background checks.

Dennis Cox suggested adding a timeframe around criminal background categories. Chair Doyle brought up an example of re-entry for ex-offenders on what determines their date to be eligible for housing: date of conviction or date of release. He mentioned the work of Cornerstone Assistance Network in Tarrant County and that organization's partnership with Union Pacific.

Nathan with Crisis Center of Comal County relayed the challenges of limited income for seniors along with increased cost of food for those on food stamps. Anna from FrontSteps in Austin stated the need for more community centers and supportive services for long-time street clients. Trina also with FrontSteps reiterated the need for more supportive services related to mental health and drug addiction. Gary Medina added that homelessness without services only leads to loneliness and does not work. A general conversation ensued on the need for services.

Dylan from Lubbock brought up the topic of vouchers being available for veterans yet VA not providing adequate support staff. The Chairman referred this questions to Savin Ven Johnson with HUD's Office of Community Planning and Development (CPD). Savin explained that her office manages grants, not vouchers clarifying that it is HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing which manages the voucher programs. HUD's CPD homeless assistance grants go directly to both state and local governments and non-profits. Savin explained in more detail the management and process of the CPD office and that HUD could possibly change rules but if such regulations are in law this would then need to be changed by Congress. She concluded with her appreciation of the discussion and will take forward to HUD management the issue on reentry and background checks and vouchers.

Latoya Haywood joined the conversation with Christina and Dennis on vouchers suggesting that often places which will accept vouchers are not habitable and yet pass compliance inspections. She added that support from the Public Housing Authorities (PHA's) is minimal. Latoya next brought up the concern about minimal support around eviction, especially post-pandemic requesting more eviction programs would aid in this issue. Chair Doyle stated that often Justice of the Peace systems have processes in place to offer guidance and services for those facing eviction. TICH Member Brittany Hinton with HHSC commented on the legal aspect of the eviction process stating it's an unclear process. Savin offered details about HUD's rapid re-housing program and the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) both of which can possibly be instrumental with those facing eviction.

V. Updates from Texas Homeless Network (THN)

Anya Taylor from THN provided an overview and visual update on the Homeless Data Sharing Network which she oversees as Project Manager. Anya thanked the Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC) for their support of this initiative adding that THN is seeking additional partners to help fund this endeavor. Anya discussed the importance of data in preventing and ending homelessness and determining and understanding the scope of the problem. She revisited the earlier discussion on CoC's pointing out that there are 11 different continuums of care regions in Texas with THN serving the Balance of State (BoS). She presented a high level overview of the Point in Time (PIT) national census count both at the state, national and local levels showing that in 2023 the PIT count identified 27,377 homeless individuals across Texas on a single night in January. She then presented information about the housing inventory county and Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS), a database which case managers use when working with clients experiencing homelessness. HMIS data is what is shared by the CoC's for the Data Sharing Network which includes Universal Data Elements (UDE's) such as name and demographic information on individuals who are accessing services within their homeless response system. Anya discussed in detail that the Data Sharing Network allows for enhanced collaboration with other systems of care all of which interact with the unhoused population and that the network operates like a data warehouse. She relayed that this project began in 2019 and has brought on CoC's in specific cohorts now has 9 of the 11 CoC's participating in the project on a quarterly, if not more frequent basis. She concluded that THN BoS is working with San Antonio and Wichita Falls CoC on getting them onboarded as well and that the data dashboard lives live on the THN website.

Sandra Ottinger with City of Plano asked about the long-term vision of the network sharing system as opposed to HMIS suggesting that two systems might prove challenging for an individual agency to access and use. Anya replied that the data sharing network is not replacing HMIS reiterating it's an additional resource. Eric Samuels added that the intention was never to be double entry emphasizing that the intended outcome would be to eliminate some of the double entry that case managers already have to contend with for their other programs. Rafael from El Paso County brought up additional questions about HMIS and the Data Sharing Network. A general discussion ensued. Chair Doyle wrapped up the conversation reiterating the beneficial results from this collaboration which result in far more accurate numbers on homelessness in the state of Texas.

Eric Samuels then introduced THN's keynote speaker Ann Olivia, President of the National Alliance to End Homelessness. Ms. Olivia briefly thanked everyone for their hard work and promising practices.

VI. Updates from Member Agencies

There were no additional updates.

VII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VIII. Closing Comments

Chair Doyle concluded that though there are different challenges in each community yet adding that we are all in this together to serve those that are less fortunate than us to help them attain resources to get their lives back on track. He thanked everyone for their good work and in attending the quarterly meeting and that the next meeting would be in early 2025.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.