



Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
Quarterly Meeting – February 18, 2025
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	Yes
6	HHSC	Claire Irwin	Yes
7	Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ)	Sherri Cogbill	Yes
8	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)	vacant	n/a
9	Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA), Housing Finance representative	Brooke Boston	Yes
10	TDHCA, Community Affairs representative	Naomi Cantu	Yes
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
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	Yes
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 Homeless Network (THN)	Anja Taylor	Yes
7	Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC)	Mike Wilt	No
8	Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC)	David Long	No
9	Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV)	Molly Thibodeaux	No
10	Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV)	Lisa Medina	Yes

TDHCA Staff Presenters: Matthew Lovitt; Rosy Falcon; Abigail Versyp; Naomi Cantu; Cate Tracz

Administrative support: Jeremy Stremler (TDHCA); Nathan Darus (TDHCA)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Mike Doyle called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m., and confirmed that a quorum was present.

II. Remarks from the Chair

Chair Doyle had no official opening remarks.

III. Approval of Minutes from the September 11, 2024, TICH Meeting (*Voting Item*)

Chair Doyle called for a motion to approve the September 11, 2024, minutes. Naomi Cantu made a motion to approve the minutes, and Marqus Butler seconded the motion.

IV. Election of TICH Chairperson (*Voting Item*)

Naomi Cantu nominated Chair Doyle to retain his position as TICH Chairperson. Chair Doyle called for additional nominations from the Council, but none were offered. Chair Doyle called for a vote to elect the TICH Chairperson for the upcoming year, and the Council voted unanimously to retain Chair Doyle.

V. TDHCA Legislative Updates

Matthew Lovitt, Senior Legislative Affairs Advisor with TDHCA showed a PowerPoint presentation for the membership on the 89th legislative session to date. He provided a quick overview of where things were with the session, what's happened to date and what could be expected from the future. Matthew also highlighted several bills that relate to homelessness. After covering the important dates within the session, he pointed out the important March 14th date which is the bill filing deadline for new or general

bills. Session ends on June 2nd. Next, he covered some key aspects of the House and Senate leadership reiterating that most of the actual substantive work happens at the committee level.

Matthew stated that to date, TDHCA's engagement with the legislature had been limited with the exception of TDHCA Executive Director Bobby Wilkinson who sat before the Senate Finance Committee in mid-February, a meeting that went smoothly.

Next was the listing of 10 bills which related to homelessness:

HB636 directs TDHCA to establish a statewide homeless data sharing network and to collaborate with the Texas Homeless Network; **HB714** and its companion, **SB337**, introduces the Texas tenant readiness and Landlord incentive Pilot program; **HB1173** expands list of eligible cities who can be part of the state funded homeless housing and services program; **HB2016** establishes the Housing Texas Fund designated to enhance affordable housing initiatives and support for those experiencing homelessness; **HB2142** mandates that TDHCA conduct a study on feasibility of various models aimed at addressing homelessness in Texas; **HB2426** creates a work group, including TDHCA, to study possible use of surplus government property and potential funding sources for homeless veterans; **HB2742** requires TDHCA to draft guidelines and monitor homeless shelters and funds to implement equitable operations; **HB2746** creates a pilot program (up to TDHCA's discretion how to operate) that would be funded by text donations and fund local homelessness services programs; **HB2808** codifies the Youth and Young Adult Homelessness program at TDHCA; **SB399** mandates a biennial audit of state agency homelessness services, including TDHCA, to evaluate efficiency and efficacy of services offered.

Eric Samuels with THN asked a question about HB2808. Matthew explained that it codified what was already in Rider 16. Abigail Versyp with TDHCA clarified that the bill changed the age of youth in the Rider previously stated as 18 to 24 to 18 to 26.

VI. Consultation for State of Texas 2025-2029 Consolidated Plan

Jeremy Stremmler, Manager of TDHCA's Housing Resource Center spoke next about an upcoming draft of the HUD required 5-Year Consolidated Plan (Con Plan) relaying that the document oversees how the five programs within the Plan will operate with their allocated HUD funding. The consultation is an opportunity for anyone to provide feedback on what they think might be working well, what might need improvement and any other ideas or changes. The HUD programs in the Con Plan are ESG, HOME, NHTF, CSBG and HOPWA. The draft Con Plan is expected to be completed by early spring and go out for 30-day public comment in May. The new five-year period begins September 2025.

VII. TDHCA Programs Update

Rosy Falcon, Homeless Programs Manager provided an update on two new programs that the Department is in the process of implementing. The first is the Rapid Unsheltered Survivor Housing program (RUSH). The program is funded by recaptured funds from unspent homeless assistance grants, including both ESG and COC funding. The Department received an allocation of \$1,885,000 to assist individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness in the disaster affected areas. This funding is intended to fill gaps that are not covered by the federal disaster relief programs and ESG

funds can be used for short-term disaster response needs and also supports other eligible activities under the regular ESG programs, so that would cover street outreach, emergency shelter, homeless prevention and rapid rehousing. The eligible service areas are limited to those identified by FEMA for individual assistance under a major disaster declaration which is 52 counties across five of the 11 CoC's. These funds are being distributed to 18 of the current 2024 ESG sub recipients who are already providing services in these areas.

The second program is TDHCA's Youth and Young Adult Homeless Program which was created during the regular session of the 88th Texas Legislature. It was through Senate Bill 30, so it was the supplemental appropriations bill that allocated \$1,000,000 in general revenue for the Department to develop and implement a program aimed at supporting homelessness services for youth and young adults. This program is specifically for Fort Bend County and so the goal of this program is to provide housing and critical services in Fort Bend County for individuals aged 24 years of age or younger to help prevent homelessness. TDHCA's Governing Board recently awarded \$800,000 of that \$1,000,000 to two organizations. These organizations are in Houston and Fort Worth. The one in Houston plans to use the funds for a transitional housing and wrap around services for homeless youth. For Fort Bend County their target audience will be youth aging out of foster care, though anyone that is 24 years of age or younger that is homeless or at risk of homeless would qualify for their services.

Rosy then fielded several questions from Chair Doyle about the RUSH program confirming that the majority of the counties would be in the Balance of State (BoS) reiterating that anybody that is currently an ESG sub or an ESG eligible participant wouldn't have to go through recertification. They would automatically be eligible if they were residing in one of the counties for the disaster area. Rosy distributed a handout of the FEMA Designated Areas Eligible for Individual Assistance.

Naomi Cantu, Director of Home-American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP) presented next. Naomi began with a brief overview of HOME-ARP stating that with the \$133M funding the focus of the program is homeless and at-risk populations and other vulnerable populations stating that the rental side is going well. She then spoke about an open Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) related to the shelter side of HOME-ARP. The NOFA is for Non Profit Capacity Building and Operating Cost Assistance (NCO) for non congregate shelter applicants. The intention is to support nonprofits that will then apply for non congregate shelter. There is \$750,000 for nonprofit capacity building and operating funds to support nonprofits that are going to undertake non congregate shelter development within 9 months of award. Several detailed handouts related to this NOFO were distributed and presented online which covered the logistics of the NOFA. Naomi stressed that NCO and NCSO capacity building, operating and non congregate shelter cannot pay for operating of a shelter. The program cannot pay for services, overhead, staffing, insurance, nothing related to operating a shelter. Instead, the program pays for general costs to support the non profit.

Cate Tracz, Director of Housing Stability Services (HSS) provided an overview stating that the Department has been administering HSS for the last four years as part of its pandemic COVID response. HSS is nearing close-out, so it is in the ramp down phase. HSS is a grant program for sub recipients and local communities and non profits with an array of housing stability support services. The program is a subset of the Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program. Texas was awarded more than \$2 billion in

ERA funding. The HSS program is a carve out, small portion of those funds that could be used for anything around rental assistance or utility assistance payments to support households to maintain stability due to or during the pandemic. The program is still in operation during this ramp-down period. HSS began in May of 2021 and must complete by September 30, 2025. Funding came in two tranches. The first was \$63M that went to 28 sub recipients. Those contracts have now all closed. The second portion was for \$157M with 47 sub recipients. To date, 23 are still active and spending down their funds. With \$26M left, the HSS program is on track to be fully and completely spent by September. A 2-page handout was shown and distributed which listed the open contracts as well as provided several accomplishments achieved by the program funding specifically highlighting partnerships with both TVC and THN. The presentation concluded with a mention about the HSS program contracting with Texas Access to Justice Foundation to create a statewide coordinated response to pandemic-related legal services needs focusing on housing stability and eviction diversion. To date, more than 46,000 households have received legal services related to housing stability.

VIII. Updates from Member Agencies

No Member Agencies offered updates.

IX. Updates from Texas Homeless Network (THN)

Eric Samuels, THN President and CEO, relayed that THN is continuing with their CoC Modernization Plan whereby they are assessing options of dividing the BoS into two separate CoC's.

The reason for this would be to be able to or be eligible to receive more planning funding from HUD. In other updates, Lubbock (both the city and Lubbock County) is pulling out of the BoS as they plan to be their own CoC again. THN has also been working with El Paso on their CoC leadership as there have been some challenges within El Paso on who should be leading that CoC. Currently, there will not be funding for the lead agency, the El Paso Coalition for the Homeless. THN is working with HUD to see if they can get their funding reinstated.

Chair Doyle then asked Eric if there had been any progress with Wichita Falls, San Antonio or Austin about joining the THN's Data Sharing Network. Eric responded that Austin is sharing. As for San Antonio, progress was being made but their current point person, the CEO of Haven for Hope is leaving that position. However, THN hopes to work with Haven for Hopes interim CEO. As for Wichita Falls, they do not currently have the capacity.

Anja Taylor, Project Manager for the Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network next presented and shared a report on homelessness in Texas. Anja pointed out that a dashboard of the Network was available off THN's website. The Network works with 9 of the 11 CoC's, the two exceptions being Wichita Falls and San Antonio. Currently they have about 93% coverage area across the state and this is where that data is being pulled from. In 2024, they were able to identify 57,600 who accessed services within the homeless response system. She stressed that the Network is limited as can only capture clients who access services at an HMIS participating agency: a participating agency has to be using HMIS. However, even with those limitations, this is the most accurate number that shows the scope of homelessness in Texas. She added that the data is collected from these participating CoC's at least quarterly and that a few like Tarrant and Dallas County share every 24 hours.

Chair Doyle asked whether homelessness had risen or fallen from 2023 to 2024. Anja replied that there was about a 5,000 client reduction in the overall homeless population numbers indicating that this 5,000 number came primarily from the BoS near the border. She stated that the number of individuals experiencing homelessness across the state of Texas has remained roughly the same.

X. Public comment

Fedora Galasso with Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) shared that like everyone else, TNOYS is closely monitoring the legislative session tracking bills which relate to homelessness, foster care, youth and their needs. TNOYS recently had their day at the Capitol with youth homeless services providers and upcoming will be an annual Day of Action along with their TNOYS Annual Conference.

XI. Closing Comments

Chair Doyle thanked the membership for allowing him to serve another year as Chair exclaiming that he “enjoyed the heck out of this!” Adding that “I’ve been doing this for 34 years now, so it takes a long time for someone like me to learn anything but at the same time I appreciate your confidence and if there is nothing else, have an early lunch and great rest of your winter. I hope it’s over the next couple of days.”

XII. Adjourn

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