

Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2010

The Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless (TICH) met on Wednesday, March 3rd, at 10:00 A.M.

Agency Members Present: Mike Doyle (Office of the Governor); Ricky Garcia (HHSC); Marc Gold (DADS); Lance Hamilos (DARS); April Zamora (TDCJ); Penni Massingill (DFPS); Joshua Martin (DSHS); Philip Cochran (TEA); Ronald Ridgeway (Texas Veterans Commission); Beverly Donoghue (TWC); Karen Lashbrook (TYC)

Advisory Members Present: JoAnn DePenning (J.DePenning Consulting); Melissa Mason (Texas Council on Family Violence); Lashonda Brown (Texas Head Start – State Collaboration Office); Barbara James (Texas Homeless Education Office); Ken Martin (Texas Homeless Network); Eric Samuels (Texas Homeless Network); Theresa Tod (Texas Network of Youth Services); Heloise Ferguson (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs)

Staff Support: Stuart Campbell (TDHCA), Mary Dodson (TDHCA)

Guests: Rita Gonzales-Garza (TDHCA), David Long (Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation, Texas Liaison to the USICH), Gayle Williams (TDHCA)

Welcome and Introductions:

Stuart Campbell welcomed members present in person or via conference call. Members introduced themselves.

HPRP ARRA Implementation

Mary Dodson provided an update on the HPRP program administered by TDHCA. A handout showed that from September 2009, through January 2010, TDHCA subgrantees served 15,480 persons in 6,012 households. Total expenditures were \$5,422,965.

Mary discussed a chart from the U.S. Conference of Mayors: *a List of Funded Program and Collaboration Opportunities for HPRP Programs* and reviewed the programs listed. Mary pointed out that TDHCA is administering the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) programs on the first page. She indicated the importance of TICH agencies coordinating ARRA funding.

Melissa Mason asked if HPRP funds could serve undocumented persons. Stuart Campbell stated that entities may not knowingly serve illegal immigrants with HPRP-funded services. States and units of general local government are required to verify a person's status as a U.S. citizen or qualified alien because HPRP funds may serve only those two groups. Non-profit organizations are not required to verify a persons' status, but they must ask persons about their status and document the responses. Melissa asked if a person who is petitioning for residency under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is eligible for HPRP-funded services. Stuart said he would ask HUD representatives this question.

State Plan

Stuart stated that when the current blueprint for a plan was drafted, the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HPRP) funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development (HUD) and the Homeless Housing and Services Program (HHSP) funding from the General Revenue did not exist, so the blueprint needs to be updated to include those two funding sources.

Subcommittee Reports

Statewide Definition/State Agency Coordination – Ken Martin: The subcommittee met on 11/05/09. Ken explained that how a statewide definition of “homeless” is viewed will affect how state agencies serve people experiencing homelessness. He distributed a handout of a draft definition based on a schema created by the European Union. The proposed definition included tiers of homeless situations and situations where people are at-risk of homelessness, such as “Housing is Inadequate,” “Housing is Insecure,” “Without Own Housing,” and “Literally Homeless.” Ken asked if members want the subcommittee to ask state agencies to adopt a specific definition. Mike Doyle said a tier structure is appealing because it allows flexibility for agencies to identify which homeless and at-risk living situations they address. Mike also advocated for a TICH staff person and funding to help the Council progress and improve its effectiveness.

Members recommended that TICH schedule site visits to service delivery sites, particularly to Haven for Hope in San Antonio, and that TICH coordinate meetings with THN's conferences and trainings and with the Regional ICH.

Promote Data Integrity/Improve State Investment – Eric Samuels: The subcommittee has not held a meeting yet. The importance of collecting state-level data on homeless services and reporting it to state agencies was discussed. Funding would be needed to create a database to compile statewide data or to establish a data warehousing system. Bringing Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) administrators together would be a first step.

THN has compiled Continuum of Care (CoC) data from across the state, but staff members would like guidance on how and to whom to present the information.

Not many CoC's are approved to submit an Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR), so they do not send data to HUD.

Increase Prevention Activities/Improve Outreach and Education - Beverly Donoghue: The subcommittee met on 10-21-09.

Increasing homelessness prevention is important. The subcommittee's tasks include:

- Developing an inventory of homeless services provided by TICH member agencies and other state agencies;
- Collecting data for outcomes and effectiveness of state programs; and
- Identifying how state agencies collaborate with non-profit organizations to provide services to people experiencing homelessness or at risk for homelessness.

The subcommittee members would like to improve outreach and engagement by identifying conferences and other trainings for TICH agencies' staff members to attend. They suggested a TICH spring conference to cover best practices.

It would be useful to have a State Plan created by TICH and a state agency collaboration plan created by THN. Beverly suggested reviewing local plans to see how homelessness is featured. Beverly has a complete list of notes from the October meeting.

Ken suggested reviewing local plans and incorporating their strategies into a statewide plan. He recommended collecting information from the bottom up, instead of pulling the information down from the federal government. Stuart asked how to connect the communities under a state plan when they already have local plans to guide their efforts. The state plan should be a blueprint and policy guidance. It would

be difficult to implement a plan relevant to every community in Texas. Mike responded that the state plan should support local plans and agencies, not restrict them. Stuart expressed his agreement with finding ways that TICH and the state departments can support local efforts.

Increase Supportive Housing/Improve Discharge Planning: The subcommittee has not met yet, as no chairperson has been identified.

It was requested that a current list of subcommittees and subcommittee members be sent out. Mary will do so.

Region 6 ICH meeting and USICH Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

Mike Doyle, Texas liaison to the USICH, summarized topics discussed at the Region 6 ICH meeting held on 02-23-10. The USICH would like state and local governments to create 10-year plans to end homelessness. More than 200 already exist around the country. Homelessness prevention was discussed quite a bit. Tarrant County and San Antonio have had much success with preventing homelessness. Preventing homelessness costs less than managing homelessness.

Mike suggested that the TICH needs a staff person and additional resources to create and implement a 10-year plan.

Mary noted that the USICH will establish an online portal where people can submit input for a national plan. Other themes discussed at the meeting included: lack of coordination makes administration of funding difficult-- agencies have to piece together funding to fully pay for programs; there is a shortage of local comprehensive service centers; a state-level CoC plan would be helpful; and incentives should be developed to encourage business and property owners to work with homeless services to end homelessness in their communities.

Heloise Ferguson added that the Regional ICH will continue holding monthly conference calls.

Update on Homeless Housing and Services Program (HHSP)

The eight largest cities in Texas received a total of twenty million dollars of general revenue funding for homeless services. All eight cities have signed contracts with TDHCA or will soon sign them.

Point in Time (PIT) Count Update

Eric Samuels said THN staff are compiling results from the Balance of State Survey of Homelessness and plans to share data from the survey at the next TICH meeting. Eric will aggregate the Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC) PIT count data with other CoCs' PIT data to estimate a statewide PIT count. Eric asked for suggestions about how to best utilize data from the surveys. Mike suggested using data to show how much homelessness costs in each local community. Stuart suggested that TICH utilize the data to support recommendations for changes.

2009 Balance of State Continuum of Care Application Update

THN submitted the BoS CoC application. All the renewal projects were approved, totaling \$1.9 million. Awards for new project applications (totaling \$6.1 million) have not yet been announced. Ken said that THN received a three-year renewal award for administering the BoS HMIS.

Housing and Health Services Coordinating Council (HHSCC)

TDHCA staff member, Marshall Mitchell, presented information about the purpose and duties of the HHSCC. The Council is charged with defining “service-enriched housing.” This type of housing includes services and serves elderly persons and persons with disabilities. The Council discussed whether or not to include persons experiencing homelessness as a target population for service-enriched housing. Council members said they’ve heard statistics that 40% of the homeless population has a diagnosed disability, but the Council would like to see more data verifying that percentage. The specifics of these terms are still being discussed. The Biennial Report is due 09/01/10. Three committees of the HHSCC have been established: Policies and Barriers, Cross-Agency Education and Training, and Coordinating. The HHSCC looks forward to working closely with TICH to house vulnerable populations.

TICH Web Page Updates

TDHCA staff members asked the TICH members and advisory members to submit ideas and suggestions for the TICH Web site.

General Announcements

Future TICH meetings will spotlight a member agency so the Council can learn about its activities.

TDHCA staff members will poll members for their availability and will then set dates for the remaining 2010 quarterly TICH meetings.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:00 noon.