

**Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
Quarterly Meeting**

MEETING NOTES

1:00-3:00 pm
October 7, 2011

at

Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation
2200 East MLK Jr. Boulevard
Austin, TX

Members Present: Artricia Allen (TDHCA), Steven Ashman (DADS), Bill Carpenter (DSHS), Philip Cochran (TEA), Mary Dodson (TDHCA), Beverly Donoghue (TWC), Michael Doyle (Office of the Governor), Beth Engelking (DFPS), Pamela Maercklein (TVC), Chan McDermott (HHSC), Bennie Jo Wagner (TDCJ), Karen Lashbrook (TYC)

Advisory Members Present: JoAnn DePenning (DePenning Consulting), Barbara Wand James (THEO), Ken Martin (THN),

Staff Present: Colin McGrath (TDHCA/TICH)

Other: Michael DeYoung (TDHCA), Mindy Green (TSAHC), David Long (TSAHC), Tim Irvine (TDHCA), Ashley Schweickart (TDHCA)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Colin McGrath announced that Stuart Campbell left the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs for an opportunity in North Carolina.

Attendees introduced themselves.

II. Public Comment

None.

III. Notification of Recent Appointments to TICH

Colin McGrath announced that **Mary Dodson** had become a new council member, representing TDHCA's Community Affairs Division.

IV. Discussion and Action on the Election of TICH Chairperson

Colin McGrath stated that Mike Doyle had offered to serve as TICH's Chairperson. **Beverly Donoghue** seconded Mike's nomination. The council, which was in quorum, held a vote. All members voted in favor of having Mike Doyle serve as presiding officer.

JoAnn DePenning asked if the council should consider having a co-chair. In compliance with open meetings act, the council opted to discuss this issue at the following meeting.

V. Texas Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

Colin McGrath announced that TDHCA's executive staff approved the plan for public comment. The document is posted on the Texas Homeless Network's website at www.thn.org. The TICH website has a link to the document. Colin gave an overview of TICH's progress since February, when the council held a full-day meeting to begin developing the state plan. He outlined the five priority areas the council established in February: (1) defining homelessness; (2) inventory of services; (3) data collection; (4) collaboration and coordination with the US Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH); and (5) survey of state and local plans.

Colin McGrath explained how the council adhered to these priorities while developing the plan. The plan introduces a "housing status continuum" to promote a unified language describing homelessness. The TICH Housing Status Continuum is a definition of homelessness modeled on the European Typology on Homelessness and Housing Exclusion. Through a state agency survey, the council has been conducting an inventory of services that have relevancy to homelessness. Colin highlighted some findings from the survey and discussed data some agencies provided. **Barbara James** noted that the definition of homelessness is important because people often do not realize their circumstances qualify them as homeless under an agency's definition. They may not realize they are eligible for services. School districts complete residency questionnaires but do not ask whether an individual is "homeless." Rather, they ask, "What is your primary nighttime residence?"

Ashley Schweickart mentioned that TDHCA's Housing Resource Center (HRC) handles a public information line, and HRC staff do not explicitly ask whether callers are homeless. **Beverly Donoghue** noted that Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) asks veterans in TWC programs about homelessness. **Tim Irvine** asked whether the definition needs to address *nighttime* residence. **Barbara James** commented that McKinney-Vento and the U.S. Department of Education statutes use the term "nighttime residence."

Colin McGrath highlighted data provided by the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). He noted that the agency's data show a rate of successful program outcome that is 18 percentage points lower for homeless persons than non-homeless persons in the Vocational Rehabilitation program. Colin mentioned that in focus group meetings with individuals staying in the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (ARCH), an emergency shelter in Austin, participants reported that using the shelter's address for job applications hindered their job search. Participants felt that the shelter environment made it difficult to effectively find employment, and they have experienced negative reactions from potential employers when they have revealed that they are staying at ARCH or use ARCH as their address.

Colin McGrath mentioned that he is working with a demographer from the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). They will use addresses of all shelters and transitional housing programs in Texas to identify recipients of HHSC services who experience homelessness. This will allow them to begin analyzing the agency's performance as it relates to homelessness.

Regarding coordination with the USICH, Colin mentioned that **David Long** is the governor's appointed liaison to the USICH. The council has tightened relationships with the USICH through attending a USICH summit for state interagency councils on homelessness. **Mindy Green** noted that the USICH had not issued any recent guidance to the state regarding state ICH activities.

Colin McGrath noted that the council has not focused as much of its efforts on surveying state and local plans. Members have briefly reviewed local and state plans, but they should do so in greater depth.

Colin McGrath brought up the presentation on the plan that will take place at the Texas Conference on Ending Homelessness on October 13th in Dallas. He asked if any members would be at the conference and asked if they would want to participate in the presentation. **Bill Carpenter, Joann DePenning, Beverly Donoghue, Barbara James, Ken Martin, Mindy Green, Mike Doyle, and Mary Dodson** stated that they would attend and participate.

Colin McGrath initiated discussion about the current committee structure. He noted that the committees were designed to shape specific sections of the plan. He asked whether, now that the plan has neared completion, the existing structure should remain. **Beverly Donoghue** noted that the committees would still need to sharpen strategies in the plan once the agency survey is completed. She stated that the Prevention and Discharge Planning committee should continue to meet. **Bill Carpenter** asked about what the council would do with data. **Tim Irvine** wondered how data will hit common points among agencies and how it could advocate for services locally. **Ken Martin** stated that THN would be willing to continue working with TICH on data and that THN is planning to hire a data analyst. **Colin McGrath** stated that it seemed the members wished to maintain the committees and that they would remain intact.

Colin McGrath invited **Barbara James** to speak about the Texas Homeless Education Office's (THEO's) conference and homeless education plan. **Barbara James** gave an overview of the conference, explained that the plan was a requirement for the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, and noted that THEO wants to coordinate the NCLB homeless education plan with the TICH plan. She stated that participants in the conference on education for homeless children and youth identified four priority areas: training, data, collaboration, and services. She noted that the Department of Education component of the McKinney-Vento Act is up for re-authorization. She also noted that THEO presented the TICH Housing Status Continuum to the conference participants. The Housing Status Continuum received positive comments.

Tim Irvine mentioned the possibility of issuing a public service announcement to increase public awareness and understanding of homelessness. The PSA could be a joint message from multiple state agencies.

JoAnn DePenning mentioned a recent New York Times article that found the mortgage crisis to be a "public health crisis." She mentioned a recent Federal Reserve Conference in Houston on the intersection of community development and health. We need to publicly advise people about which services are available and help individuals reenter the mainstream economy. Coordination with media and faith-based organizations may help. **Beverly Donoghue** seconded the need for outreach. **Ken Martin** noted the need to have executives of state agencies at TICH meetings.

Tim Irvine suggested adding the creation of a small committee on publicity to the next meeting's agenda.

VI. Update on Survey of Available Services for the Homeless at State Agencies

The update took place during discussion on progress with the Texas Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness.

VII. HMIS Data Warehouse Project

Colin McGrath updated the council on progress with the data warehouse. He explained that the Continuum of Care (CoC) lead agencies and HMIS system administrators are working to develop a governing body, with each CoC having a vote. The governing body will have an executive committee. He discussed the briefing document he put together for the boards of directors of the state's Continuum of Care.

As the meeting neared adjournment, participants made final announcements.

Barbara James mentioned data from Texas homeless education, noting that homeless children in Texas are performing better in school than homeless children in the United States overall.

Ashley Schweickart announced that the Housing and Health Services Coordinating Council (HHSCC) is holding its next quarterly meeting on Monday, December 5th at 10:00 am. They are beginning the biennial planning process for 2012-13. She invited attendees to offer input into the HHSCC biennial plan.

VIII. Adjourn

To access this agenda, please visit our website at <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/tich/index.htm> or contact Colin McGrath, 512-475-3897; TDHCA, 221 East 11th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, and request the information. Individuals who require auxiliary aids, services or sign language interpreters for this meeting should contact Gina Esteves, ADA Responsible Employee, at 512-475-3943 or Relay Texas at 1-800-735-2989 at least two days before the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Non-English speaking individuals who require interpreters for this meeting should contact Nidia Hiroms, 512-475-3934 at least three days before the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Personas que hablan español y requieren un intérprete, favor de llamar a Jorge Reyes al siguiente número (512) 475-4577 por lo menos tres días antes de la junta para hacer los preparativos apropiados.

Next Meeting: To be decided.