



Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
Quarterly Meeting – September 28, 2022
Meeting Minutes

A transcript from the electronic recording of the meeting may be found here:
<http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/tich/meetings.htm>

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)	Helen Eisert	Yes
5	HHSC	Suzie Brady	No
6	HHSC	Claire Irwin	No
7	Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ)	Sherri Cogbill (by Heather Parsley)	Yes
8	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)	Valinda Bolton	Yes
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)	Cal Lopez	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

<There are currently 12 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 State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC)	Mike Wilt	Yes
7	Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC)	David Long	No
8	Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV)	Molly Voyles	No
9	Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV)	Molly Thibodeaux	Yes

Administrative support: Sean Lonergan (TDHCA)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Mike Doyle called the meeting to order at 10:33am, and confirmed that a quorum was present.

II. Remarks from the Chair

Mike Doyle remarked that he is seeking input on behalf of the Office of the Governor regarding successful efforts to address homelessness in Texas. Chair Doyle opened the question to all TICH participants present. The ensuing commentary served as the basis of discussion for Agenda item VII, “Conversation with Continuum of Care Agencies.”

III. Approval of Minutes from the July 26, 2022 TICH Meeting

After concluding discussion among CoC lead agencies and other TICH participants regarding the state of the homeless response system in Texas, Chair Doyle called for a motion to approve the July 26, 2022 minutes. Cal Lopez made a motion to approve the minutes, and Helen Eisert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no comments.

IV. Updates from Member Agencies

(a) Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)

i. Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Annual Funds and ESG through the CARES Act Funds

Rosy Falcon, Homeless Programs Manager at TDHCA, first presented on ESG Annual Funds and ESG CARES Act Funds. Regarding ESG Annual Funds, Ms. Falcon stated that 73% of 2021 program year grants are expended, with most of these contracts ending in October 2022. Ms. Falcon and her team are also working with subrecipients to maximize the share of funds that are expended.

Chair Doyle asked a question regarding the structure of the expenditure charts that Ms. Falcon used to guide her update. Ms. Falcon clarified the charts' structure, then highlighted that TDHCA will be releasing \$1.3M in additional ESG Annual Funds primarily into higher expended regions. Ms. Falcon also announced that she and her team will announce ESG Annual Funds awards for program year 2022 on October 13, 2022, and that most of the funding stayed within its original allocation.

Chair Doyle asked another question regarding the reasons why subrecipients do not expend their entire allocation. Ms. Falcon stated the reasons vary depending on the funding stream, but mentioned that some subrecipients lack sufficient staffing capacity to administer the funds or try to sub-award the funding and run out of time on their grant period. Follow up discussion ensued.

Ms. Falcon next provided an update on ESG CARES Act Funds. She first mentioned that TDHCA has expended approximately 87% of its \$97 million allocation, well above the national expenditure rate at 67.14%. The \$11 million from this original allocation that has not been expended is being reallocated to the highest expended vendors that have not de-obligated funds. Ms. Falcon and her team also recently awarded \$2.3 million in additional ESG CARES Act funds, and also received \$5.8 million in reallocated ESG CARES Act funds for which they are currently developing a distribution plan.

Michael Wilt asked Ms. Falcon to provide an explanation regarding the low expenditure rate of ESG Annual Funds in the Amarillo CoC service area. Ms. Falcon answered that Amarillo is a high need area that lacks sufficient service capacity, which makes it difficult for this area to expend funds, but that her team is working diligently to provide technical assistance with these funds before they are reallocated elsewhere.

ii. **HOME-American Rescue Plan (ARP)**

Naomi Cantu, Director of HOME-ARP at TDHCA, next presented an update on the HOME-ARP Program. This program is organized into several components that include rental housing, non-congregate shelter, and nonprofit capacity building and operating costs. Ms. Cantu anticipated a fall Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the rental housing component. She and her team are also working to coordinate this funding with existing funding sources, including the National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF), to maximize its impact. The HOME-ARP team has accepted two applications for the NHTF set-aside within HOME-ARP's rental housing activity for NHTF awardees who are having difficulties maintaining their award, though one applicant has withdrawn and is expected to resubmit.

Ms. Cantu expected that the non-congregate shelter NOFA will be release in about a year because she and her team plan to release the nonprofit capacity building and operating costs NOFA first. Ms. Cantu explained that this arrangement will help accommodate an applicant's increased capacity building and operating expenses associated with the creation of a large scale non-congregate shelter.

iii. **Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) and Stability Vouchers Programs**

Spencer Duran, Director of the Section 811 Program at TDHCA, next presented on the EHV and Stability Vouchers Programs. Regarding the EHV Program, Mr. Duran first stated that

TDHCA initially received an allocation of 300 EHV's, but now possess nearly 800 EHV's because HUD reallocated all the EHV's from housing authorities that declined to participate in the program to TDHCA. EHV's are Section 8 vouchers that include a \$3,500 stipend to help cover service fees that facilitate voucher holders' access to housing such as furniture and moving expenses. Mr. Duran also mentioned that the EHV Program is innovative because vouchers can cover 120 percent of small area rents based on zip code, which allows for voucher holders seeking housing in more expensive zip codes to match their voucher with a unit.

Mr. Duran next stated that TDHCA has contracted 380 EHV's to THN. THN has provided 410 referrals for these vouchers, though only 30 households have been housed so far out of the nearly 800 total EHV's. Mr. Duran is encouraged that this number will continue to grow, as the EHV program is housing an average of one household per day in September 2022 despite it being a program that serves hard-to-house populations.

Mr. Duran next called on Billy Streu of THN to elaborate on the progress of the EHV Program. Mr. Streu clarified that 50 households are leasing at the moment from the program. He also emphasized that the rate of numbers housed continues to accelerate, which he attributed to the strong partnerships established through the EHV Program between THN, TDHCA, and local housing authorities. Mr. Duran thanked Mr. Streu and mentioned that he and his team are also working on incentivizing partnerships with rural property owners where housing stock is sparse. He stated that the \$3,500 service fee may act an effective means of engagement in rural settings.

Michael Wilt of TSAHC asked Mr. Duran whether TDHCA planned to partner with any other organizations other than THN and Heart of Texas Homeless Coalition to allocate the 370 remaining EHV's that are not yet committed. Mr. Duran mentioned that HUD has restricted TDHCA's ability to award these vouchers through a competitive process, so the means by which these vouchers will be committed are still to be determined. Megan Sylvester of TDHCA stepped in to clarify that TDHCA is not in danger of having these vouchers recaptured, so they have ample time to plan on the best way to proceed with the EHV's that remain. Mr. Duran elaborated that even though HUD is recapturing EHV's from housing authorities that have not committed them, TDHCA will not have them recaptured because they have demonstrated the capacity to house people using EHV's.

Mr. Streu then stepped in to praise the collaborative efforts among staff at TVC and TCFV to assist veterans and survivors of domestic violence with services even when THN was unable to offer members of these populations EHV's. Eric Samuels of THN also praised the EHV team for their hard work contributing to the program's success. Chair Doyle also praised TDHCA staff involved with the TICH.

Mr. Duran concluded his update with a presentation on the new Stability Vouchers program. The Stability Vouchers program is designed to facilitate partnerships between local developers and CoCs through project-based vouchers. Through this program, local developers would apply for project-based vouchers, and, if awarded, CoCs would coordinate with the developer to refer clients to these vouchers and also provide services for the same clients. Mr. Duran mentioned that this program is still pending TDHCA Board approval on October 13, 2022, and that he and his team still need to submit TDHCA's registration of interest to HUD by October 20, 2022 to determine how many Housing Stability vouchers they will receive.

(b) Other Agency Updates

i. Texas Education Agency (TEA)

Cal Lopez, McKinney-Vento Homeless Program Coordinator at TEA next provided an update for TEA. Ms. Lopez mentioned that TEA held the Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth Summit in collaboration with TNOYS this past August 2022, for which there were 330 attendees and 436 virtual attendees representing all 20 TEA regions across Texas. The Summit focused on connecting youth to community services and hearing from youth-led panels focused on efforts to address youth homelessness.

Ms. Lopez also mentioned that the National Association for Education of Homeless Children and Youth invited TEA to present in San Diego at the end of October 2022 on its rural panel it formed to discuss challenges, practical solutions, and best practices for students. Ms. Lopez next requested that Chair Doyle share with the Office of the Governor that she and her team seek more time to expend their state and federal funds because some of the McKinney-Vento service regions in Texas are geographically spread and have limited staffing capacity. Ms. Lopez last stated that TEA is working with its regional liaisons to maintain McKinney-Vento staffing capacity once ARPA funding is no longer available.

ii. Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS)

Fedora Galasso, Executive Director of TNOYS, next provided an update on TNOYS' Statewide Collaborative on Youth Homelessness. Ms. Galasso mentioned that that this collaborative meets monthly and is focused on state funding that supports housing and homeless services for youth and young adults in Texas. This collaborative also is composed of state agency representatives, one focused on HUD's Youth Homeless Demonstration Programs (YHDP) and one focused on homeless policy.

V. New Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness Update

(a) Update on Feedback for New Strategic Plan (Organizational Interviews, Survey, Virtual Roundtables)

Sean Lonergan, Homeless Policy Advisor at TDHCA, next provided an update on the new TICH State Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness (the Plan). Mr. Lonergan first provided background regarding the four channels of stakeholder feedback that he and his associate Brian Thornton of TDHCA used to gather a broad array of input. These channels included a survey, semi-structured organizational interviews, virtual roundtables, and TICH member workgroups.

Mr. Lonergan next stated that he and Mr. Thornton are in the process of synthesizing feedback using a qualitative analysis tool and method called thematic analysis, and that this analysis would inform the Plan's recommendation framework. Mr. Lonergan then provided an overview of the outline handout of the Plan for TICH participants. This overview summarized the Plan's introduction; its categorical structure; its contextual and feedback analysis sections; and a loose outline of its recommendation framework. Mr. Lonergan specified that the feedback analysis would consist of

both quantitative analysis of Likert scale survey responses and qualitative analysis of open response input through the survey, virtual roundtables, organizational interviews, and workgroups.

Joli Robinson, President of Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (MDHA) asked the extent to which discussions regarding racial disparities will be discussed in the Plan. Mr. Lonergan clarified that themes of race and ethnicity will be discussed in the demographics section of the report, but that he could not guarantee the specific content that would be included because the internal and external review process of the Plan has yet to occur.

Blake Harris of TVC asked a follow-up question regarding how populations with multiple risk factors will be discussed in the Plan. Mr. Lonergan specified that he and Mr. Thornton are drafting these sections with the recognition that multiple risk factors permeate across different demographics and that these overlaps will be reflected in the Plan.

Ms. Lopez asked whether the Plan will discuss the negative impact of a criminal record on an individual's ability to secure housing and the extent to which a felony should stay on a person's record when applying for housing. Chair Doyle clarified that this plan will mention these issues, but will not necessarily solve them. Mr. Lonergan further clarified that he and Mr. Thornton plan to develop this recommendation framework to reflect the sentiment of the Texas homeless response systems' stakeholders, but also reiterated that the scope of this framework may be constrained by the review process it will undergo. Chair Doyle mentioned that this Plan will also comprise part of the statutorily mandated annual TICH report that summarizes the progress of its members' and advisory members' efforts towards addressing homelessness in Texas.

VI. Update from Texas Homeless Network (THN)

(a) Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network Project

Anja Taylor of THN next provided an update on the Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network (THDSN). Ms. Taylor first explained the first phase of THDSN's development regarding the usage of its OpenPaas system to gather data from CoCs participating in THDSN. Since THDSN's inception several years ago, participating CoCs make quarterly uploads on behalf of its clients from the homeless management information system (HMIS) to OpenPaas to facilitate data sharing across CoC service areas. For phase two, Ms. Taylor explained that THDSN is branching out from CoCs to other systems that serve homeless populations such as direct service providers.

Ms. Taylor next summarized that THDSN is guided by a board composed of members from CoCs across the state. Mr. Samuels clarified that the Board has ultimate decision-making authority over all actions taken on behalf of THDSN. Ms. Taylor next summarized the CoC service areas of the nine CoCs that participate in THDSN, and that the Wichita Falls and San Antonio CoCs are the only two CoCs that have yet to join this collaborative.

Mr. Harris asked why two CoCs have yet to join THDSN. Mr. Samuels specified that Wichita Falls has cited lack of capacity as its reason for not joining, and that San Antonio has demonstrated interest but is hindered from joining by structural challenges such as its HMIS lead managing the CoC.

Ms. Taylor next provided an update on THDSN's public facing dashboard. Based on a recently generated report from the OpenPaas system, the dashboard shows 67,142 individuals currently experiencing homelessness. Helen Eisert of HHSC asked why there were so many more individuals illustrated on this dashboard compared to Texas' annual Point in Time Count from this past year. Mr. Samuels specified that the dashboard data is annualized and not a one-day snapshot, so it will count individuals who experience homelessness for varying lengths of time at any point during the year. He also mentioned that this number is likely greater because Wichita Falls and San Antonio are not participating in THDSN.

Chair Doyle asked Mr. Samuels to provide an estimate regarding the total number of individuals experiencing homelessness throughout the year in Texas. Mr. Samuels provided a conservative estimate that 70,000 people are experiencing homelessness in Texas on an annualized basis, but that closer to 20,000 to 30,000 people are experiencing homelessness at any one given point in time. Follow up discussion ensued.

Ms. Taylor next summarized interactive graphics also available on the THDSN page of THN's website, including filters that break down different populations experiencing homelessness. She then detailed a collaboration with managed care organization Superior Health and the Texas Health Services Authority for which THN recently executed a data sharing agreement. Through this agreement, THDSN will be able to match or compare client lists of individuals in the OpenPaas system with Superior Health's client list. From there, THDSN can use this data to work with direct service providers to enhance care coordination and facilitate resource delivery to individuals on these lists experiencing homelessness. Mr. Samuels added that this collaboration is important because it helps individuals experiencing homelessness improve health outcomes through access to preventive care, which reduces the need for expensive interventions such as emergency room trips among this population. Follow up discussion ensued.

VII. Conversation with Continuum of Care Agencies

(a) CoC Program Competition Funds

In response to Chair Doyle's inquiry outlined in Agenda item II, Michael Wilt of TSAHC provided an update on TSAHC's Supportive Housing Institute (SHI) in partnership with HHSC. Mr. Wilt stated that SHI is engaged with six of eight nonprofit developers recruited by the City of Austin and Travis County to facilitate the creation of permanent housing as part of the City and County's goal to house 3,000 people using a combination of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and private fundraising capital. Mr. Wilt recounted City of Austin Mayor Steve Adler's remarks that many Texas cities can still reach a functional zero homeless population, and that the community collaboration across Austin and Travis County to leverage ARPA funding with other capital sources for this purpose has been effective. Follow-up discussion ensued.

Joli Robinson of MDHA next provided an update regarding the usage of ARPA funding across Dallas and Collin Counties. Ms. Robinson stated that the City of Dallas and Dallas and Collin Counties have also used a collaborative approach to leverage ARPA funding. Despite this influx in funding, Ms. Robinson mentioned that the City and Counties are still struggling to provide affordable housing commensurate with need and match units to voucher holders as rents continue to rise in the area. Christine Saldivar of El Paso Coalition for the Homeless reiterated

Ms. Robinson's comments, and added that they are struggling to keep many of their clientele housed, especially those on fixed incomes, as rents rise in El Paso.

Chair Doyle stepped in with a follow-up question asking whether TICH participants face zoning issues such as minimum square footage requirements that are inhibit the creation of new affordable housing in their locale. Ms. Robinson stated that many affordable developments in Dallas are built in unincorporated areas to avoid zoning issues and other restrictions, which creates issues for tenants in these units such as lack of proximity to community amenities. Follow up discussion ensued.

Katie Vela, Executive Director of South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless (SARAH), next provided an update on efforts to address homelessness in San Antonio and Bexar County. As unsheltered homelessness numbers have risen across the state in recent years, Ms. Vela stated that the San Antonio area's unsheltered homeless population has remained the same due to ample shelter capacity with on-site services combined with relatively affordable housing. Ms. Vela cautioned that this trend has changed in the last couple years, noting an increase in families with children experiencing homelessness. Ms. Vela elaborated that these families are struggling to keep up with rising rents and locate affordable units even with a voucher in hand, losing social supports in the process. She mentioned that because much of the COVID-19 relief funding in the area was directed towards eviction prevention, new affordable housing development has stagnated. To facilitate development, the City of San Antonio approved a \$150 million housing bond with \$25 million set-aside for permanent supportive housing. Ms. Vela hoped that this funding can focus on the rehabilitation of older units to maintain existing affordable housing stock in the area.

Cal Lopez of TEA next provided an update. Ms. Lopez mentioned that TEA has allocated 90% of its ARPA funding allocation to school districts and charter schools across Texas to better identify students and their families experiencing homelessness as defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, such as those living in doubled-up situations who are not counted under HUD's homeless definition. Part of this allocation facilitated increased funding to support staffing capacity, trainings, and other services for the 20 regional McKinney-Vento liaisons across the state. TEA is also in the process of developing new infographics that summarize its updated data on students experiencing homelessness. Ms. Lopez also mentioned that TEA has a small panel focused on identification, transportation, and services for students experiencing homelessness in rural areas, for which TEA planned to provide progress updates at an upcoming national homeless conference.

Chair Doyle posed a question to TICH participants regarding strategies they seek from HUD to facilitate the creation of more affordable housing. Chair Doyle detailed an anecdote regarding HUD not permitting his nonprofit Cornerstone Network to pay itself rent using HUD vouchers for a condominium community it rehabilitated. Chair Doyle suggested that if HUD were to permit nonprofit affordable housing owners to pay themselves rent using vouchers, then more developers would be incentivized to build more affordable units. Chair Doyle then recounted a second anecdote that exemplified HUD's constraint of nonprofits from succeeding in provisions of affordable housing.

Ms. Lopez stepped in to state that voucher holders should have longer periods of time to find housing upon reception of a voucher. Ms. Saldivar detailed instances of this issue among El Paso Coalition for the Homeless' clientele. Chair Doyle asked Ms. Saldivar whether her agency could fill units with their clientele if they were made available, and Ms. Saldivar affirmed that these units would be filled. Follow up discussion ensued regarding the need for HUD's Fair Market Rent standards to be raised commensurate with local rent increases so that vouchers can cover these increases.

Valinda Bolton of DFPS stepped in to mention that recently passed state legislation has facilitated greater access for youth at-risk of and experiencing homelessness to secure their identification or driver's license from the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). Ms. Bolton also mentioned progress made in expanding DFPS's Supervised Independent Living (SIL) program to Texas A&M campuses across the state. Naomi Cantu of TDHCA also stated that TDHCA's administration of its programs has excelled to the extent that it has received additional allocations, and that this success is the product of sound program planning.

Chair Doyle made one final statement remarking that Texas' level of collaboration across its homeless response system makes it unique compared to other states, and that he plans to relay this sentiment to the Office of the Governor.

VIII. Public Comment

Elizabeth Yevich of TDHCA stepped in to announce that H.B. 1278 requires the TICH to hold one meeting on homeless issues in a rural county and another meeting on homeless issues in an urban county every year. Ms. Yevich proposed that the urban meeting be held in Tarrant County, which Chair Doyle affirmed and volunteered to organize. Mr. Samuels volunteered to help coordinate the rural meeting.

Ms. Lopez asked whether there would be a virtual meeting, and Ms. Yevich clarified that the statute requires both meetings to be in-person.

Ms. Taylor also mentioned that THN would hold a more in-depth presentation on THDSN during the THN Annual Conference the day after the quarterly TICH meeting.

IX. Closing Comments

Chair Doyle told TICH participants to keep up the good work.

X. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:16 p.m.