



Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless  
Quarterly Meeting – February 15, 2023  
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                        | Yes                 |
| 7  | Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ)                                               | Sherri Cogbill                      | 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 (by Elizabeth Yevich) | Yes                 |
| 10 | TDHCA, Community Affairs representative                                                   | Naomi Cantu                         | Yes                 |
| 11 | Texas Education Agency (TEA)                                                              | Jordan Brown                        | Yes                 |
| 12 | Texas Department of Juvenile Justice (TJJJ)                                               | Marqus Butler                       | No                  |
| 13 | Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)                                                           | Blake Harris                        | Yes                 |
| 14 | Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)                                                          | Kelly Davis                         | Yes                 |
| 15 | Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)                                          | Joshua Hutchison                    | 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             | Yes                 |
| 4 | Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute             | Darilynn Cardona-Beiler | No                  |
| 5 | Texas Homeless Network (THN)                       | Eric Samuels            | No                  |
| 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        | No                  |

**Administrative support:** Sean Lonergan (TDHCA)

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Mike Doyle called the meeting to order at 10:36am, and confirmed that a quorum was present.

**II. Remarks from the Chair**

Chair Doyle had no remarks.

**III. Approval of Minutes from the September 28, 2022 TICH Meeting (*Voting Item*)**

Chair Doyle called for a motion to approve the September 28, 2022 minutes. Naomi Cantu made a motion to approve the minutes, and Blake Harris seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no comments.

**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. 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**

Abigail Versyp, Director of Single Family and Homeless Programs at TDHCA, presented in place of Rosy Falcon on ESG Annual Funds and ESG CARES Act Funds. Ms. Versyp first announced that any organization enrolled in any of the ESG Annual Programs before February 25, 2022, are eligible to receive TDHCA’s winter storm waivers from HUD, which allows for a longer period of time for rental assistance and other waived requirements.

Ms. Versyp next announced that TDHCA's ESG-CARES Program subrecipients have expended 88 percent of program funds, including reallocated funds. She stated that the vast majority of ESG-CARES I and II funds, approximately \$97 million, would be expended before the program's expenditure deadline of December 31, 2023. Ms. Versyp last announced that \$5.8 million in reallocated ESG-CARES funds would be awarded at TDHCA's March Board Meeting in order to meet the obligation deadline for these funds. Ms. Versyp and her team stated that they would request agencies that receive these funds to expend them prior to the June 30, 2024, expenditure deadline in order for her team to close out the grant.

Chair Doyle asked whether ESG-CARES funds supported temporary housing activities. Ms. Versyp responded that ESG-CARES subrecipients might have programmed their funds locally to support such an activity. Chair Doyle clarified that this activity may have been supported by Treasury funds through one of the Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) programs. Ms. Versyp responded that TDHCA's ERA administrators could allocate 10 percent of their ERA funds for services, and elaborated that the temporary housing activity may have been supported through a segment of the agency's rental assistance funds.

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

Naomi Cantu, Director of HOME-ARP at TDHCA, next presented an update on the HOME-ARP Program. Ms. Cantu announced that the program has funded its first award for \$6.3 million for a metro development of 31 HOME-ARP units called Burnet Place Apartments in Austin. She stated that this award was part of the HOME-ARP National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) set-aside, which supports NHTF-awarded developments at risk of returning funds.

Ms. Cantu also announced that the HOME-ARP Program has released its rental assistance Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), which is comprised of \$51 million, though her team has received funding requests for more than double this amount. She elaborated that scoring criteria for this funding includes previous experience developing and managing housing designated for qualified populations, including people experiencing homelessness, as well as future project commitments. She also stated that the tiebreaker criteria is the amount of funds requested versus total units of the proposed project. She next shared that there are many layered funding deals with existing funding sources, which helps with the financial feasibility of these projects. Her team is hoping to award the majority of HOME-ARP rental assistance funds between May and July 2023.

Ms. Cantu last provided an update on the non-profit capacity building and non-congregate shelter funds that are part of HOME-ARP. She announced that her team is in the process of reformulating the NOFA for these funds in order to tailor these funds to the state's political and homeless landscape for a possible non-congregate shelter.

Chair Doyle asked Ms. Cantu to clarify the meaning of "non-congregate" in the context of the HOME-ARP Program. Ms. Cantu responded that this term means individuals would have their own single room occupancy unit with a bathroom. Chair Doyle asked a follow up question regarding how many units would be appropriate for projects funded by this program. Ms. Cantu responded that her team is still determining the threshold criteria for the number of units the program would fund for a proposed project as well as how many units that they want this program to cumulatively fund across Texas.

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 announced that his team is only leasing with voucher holders in partnership with Texas Homeless Network (THN), but has signed contracts with other CoCs to allocate 100 percent of EHV's. Mr. Duran stated that his team has collaborated with three Continuum of Care (CoC) lead agencies to allocate its 798 EHV's: they have partnered with THN to distribute 380 vouchers, Tarrant County Homeless Coalition to distribute 368 vouchers, and Heart of Texas Homeless Coalition to distribute 50 vouchers.

Mr. Duran elaborated that under his team's partnership with THN they have housed 167 households, and anticipated they would house all of THN's voucher holders within the next several months. Of these 167 households, Mr. Duran shared that 86 households are survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking and 10 households are veterans. Mr. Duran also stated that the EHV Program requires participating CoCs to provide housing search assistance to voucher holders, for which the program provides \$350 to assist with moving expenses. Mr. Duran announced that 104 households are currently receiving housing search assistance under the EHV Program, 57 of whom are survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking and three of whom are veterans. Mr. Duran next stated that THN has made 436 EHV referrals to Mr. Duran's team, and he is confident that all 380 EHV's for THN will be issued to households and that these households will be housed. Mr. Duran last announced that HUD made a recent EHV Program audit visit to TDHCA, and praised the agency's Finance and Legal Divisions as well as THN's program design for a successful visit.

Mr. Duran turned over his update to Jim Ward of THN to provide an update on the new Stability Vouchers Program. Mr. Ward stated that this program is non-competitive component of a competitive funding application that HUD released to all 11 of Texas' CoCs in 2022. He elaborated that 11 Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) have registered their interest in this component, and that THN is offering a required letter of support to TDHCA in registering its interest.

Regarding the competitive application process for this funding stream, Mr. Ward announced that HUD awarded \$4 million in the Texas Panhandle to Panhandle Community Services for a rapid rehousing project for the next three years, and hopes that this grant will be renewed. Michael Wilt of Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC) stepped in to ask a clarifying question regarding whether the Amarillo CoC is part of the Balance of State (BoS) CoC. Mr. Ward responded that though THN has interfaced with the City of Amarillo regarding merging the Amarillo CoC into the BoS CoC that Amarillo remains their own CoC. He also clarified that the \$4 million award he described earlier is for Potter and Randall Counties, which are outside of the CoC jurisdiction of Amarillo.

Mr. Ward elaborated that this \$4 million award was only 13 percent of the requested amount by the BoS CoC, so there are many communities across the 215-county BoS CoC service area that did not receive the funds they requested. For the allocation of stability vouchers, Mr. Ward stated that HUD would prioritize CoCs and PHAs that received a competitive allocation of the HUD funding he mentioned earlier. Ms. Cantu stepped in to ask whether these stability vouchers could be project based. Mr. Duran responded that TDHCA, as a PHA and housing finance agency, would be well equipped to leverage its multifamily programs or potentially a loan NOFA to project-base these stability vouchers.

Ms. Cantu asked for clarification over whether the \$4 million amount mentioned by Mr. Ward would be for the stability vouchers. Mr. Ward specified that this allocation was for a separate activity, and that HUD has yet to determine the amount of stability vouchers that would become available. Mr. Ward clarified that this number of vouchers is contingent on the number of PHAs that register their interest in this programming component. Mr. Duran elaborated that he is optimistic that TDHCA is well positioned to administer these stability vouchers because the target population for these vouchers is similar to the EHV Program.

Chair Doyle asked Mr. Duran for elaboration on the term “stability vouchers” in the context of this program. Mr. Duran anticipated that the target population would consist of people at-risk of homelessness and households engaged in temporary housing programs. Mr. Ward also clarified that these stability vouchers would prioritize families who would be eligible for Continuum of Care programs. General discussion ensued.

Ms. Cantu asked whether the stability vouchers have the same qualifying populations as the EHV Program. Mr. Duran responded that they are similar except for the caveat that veterans are identified under the Stability Vouchers Program, whereas the EHV Program was silent on the veteran population. General discussion ensued.

iv. **TDHCA Legislative Update**

Elizabeth Yevich of TDHCA provided a legislative update for the agency on behalf of Michael Lyttle and his Department of Policy and Public Affairs (DPPA) staff. Ms. Yevich reported that there have been eight bills filed so far this legislative session that mention homelessness, five of which are refiles from last session. She mentioned that Representative Liz Campos refiled four of these bills. Ms. Yevich elaborated that TDHCA has drafted fiscal notes for three of Representative Campos’ refiled bills, meaning that the agency has drafted a narrative communicating the fiscal impact of these bills at the request of the Legislative Budget Board. Sean Lonergan TDHCA’s Homeless Policy Advisor is the fiscal note liaison for TDHCA’s Housing Resource Center and responsible for drafting fiscal notes for these homelessness related bills

Ms. Yevich also announced that two bills filed this session are related to the Homeless Housing and Services Program (HHSP, one of which is new and the other that is a refile. Ms. Yevich also mentioned HB 2181, which is a bill related to youth and young adults homeless housing and services, and HB 1917, which is a miscellaneous housing bill filed by Representative Walle. Ms. Yevich last announced that DPPA and Mr. Lonergan will keep the TICH apprised of any additional bills related to homelessness as they arise.

Helen Eisert of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) commented that a refile bill from last session called HB 2244 was recently filed, which directs HHSC to create a Texas Pathways Pilot Project for people experiencing chronic homelessness. Ms. Eisert also mentioned that this bill incorporates Medicaid support services in addition to housing the chronically homeless population.

**(b) Other Agency Updates**

There were no other agency updates.

**VI. New Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness Update**

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 announced that the draft was submitted for internal review a couple months ago and is still running its course through this process. As soon as any updates arise, Mr. Lonergan stated that he would first notify Chair Doyle followed by the rest of the TICH. He closed by expressing his gratitude for all the TICH participants who contributed feedback that informed the first full draft of the plan.

Chair Doyle asked Mr. Lonergan whether he has named the Plan. Mr. Lonergan responded that TDHCA staff voted on several options internally, and that the leading contender was “Everyone Deserves a Home.” He also mentioned that he would circulate the survey asking TICH participants for their input on the Plan’s title after the meeting. General discussion ensued.

## **VII. 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 shared an update on the recently updated data dashboard. She explained that this dashboard is derived from their OpenPaaS data warehouse system, which is where nine of the state’s eleven CoCs upload their Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data. THN still seeks to onboard the San Antonio and Wichita Falls CoCs to THDSN.

Ms. Taylor also shared that, as of last month, THDSN has the most updated data in its warehouse that it has had in over a year, which is a product of increased engagement across CoC participants. She elaborated that this real-time updated data has also contributed to enhanced advocacy, research, and data analysis initiatives. The data dashboard, which can be found [here](#), now displays an annualized count of the total number of people experiencing homelessness across its nine participating CoCs in 2022, a total of 92,995 individuals.

Chair Doyle asked Ms. Taylor how this total compares to 2021. Ms. Taylor recalled that the 2021 total was approximately 67,000 to 69,000 individuals. Chair Doyle commented that the change from 2021 to 2022 is substantial, which Ms. Taylor qualified with the context that the Austin/ Travis County and Brazos Valley CoCs were not participating in THDSN for most of 2021. General discussion ensued.

Ms. Taylor also stated that only two of the nine CoCs that participate in THDSN, Tarrant County and Dallas, automatically upload their data, meaning they share it with THDSN every 24 hours. The remaining participating CoCs only provide manual data uploads. THDSN requests these uploads on a quarterly basis, however, Ms. Taylor shared that, due to capacity issues and other factors, the upload process can be delayed, which impacts the quality of THDSN’s data. She also stated that THN works with its data warehouse vendor Green River and CoCs to conduct data cleanup measures that mitigates any errors identified in THDSN. Ms. Taylor encouraged TICH participants to visit the data dashboard to access its interactive features, including a five-year population chart and a statewide map that displays a variety of demographic data at the county level.

## **VIII. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

## **IX. Closing Comments**

Chair Doyle commented that he has received a wave of calls regarding violence and vandalism among the homeless population in his area, and he advised that the TICH should be unified in their description of this perceived trend. He also reiterated the sharp increase in the annualized total count of people experiencing homelessness from 2021 to 2022 as described by Ms. Taylor in her THDSN update, and asked the Council how it can justify this increase. Blake Harris and Naomi Cantu stepped in to clarify that this increase is not necessarily a product of a percentage increase in the population. Instead, this perceived increase is a more complete picture of the number of people experiencing homelessness in Texas, since THDSN now has more CoC participants providing HMIS data that contributes to the total count.

Chair Doyle asked a follow up question regarding when THDSN will have their final annualized count numbers of people experiencing homelessness. Ms. Taylor reiterated that this data is still fluid because many of the CoCs are still engaging in manual uploads that are not on a standardized timetable, which complicates THN's efforts to collect accurate and comparable data. For example, the Waco/McLennan County CoC has not provided updated data to THDSN since August 2021. Ms. Cantu added that THDSN's annualized count is different than the Point-in-Time (PIT) Count since the annualized count does not account for the length of time an individual is experiencing homelessness. General discussion regarding the PIT Count ensued.

Ms. Taylor shared that THDSN's annualized count identified that approximately 51 percent of the over 92,000 people experiencing homelessness across the state in 2022 were experiencing homelessness for the first time. Ms. Cantu redirected the discussion to Chair Doyle's previous comment regarding the reports of vandalism and violence among the homeless population and added that mental health is an important consideration when assessing these reports. Chair Doyle affirmed that mental health is an essential factor, and added that the number of chronically homeless individuals as a percentage of the total homeless population appears to have greatly increased. General discussion ensued.

## **X. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.