



Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
Quarterly Meeting – April 26, 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	No
5	HHSC	Suzie Brady	No
6	HHSC	Claire Irwin	Yes
7	Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ)	Sherri Cogbill	No
8	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)	Valinda Bolton	No
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)	Jordan Brown	Yes
12	Texas Department of Juvenile Justice (TJJJ)	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)	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	Yes
6	Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC)	Mike Wilt	Yes
7	Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC)	David Long	Yes
8	Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV)	Gabriela Fuentes	Yes
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 10:30am, and confirmed that a quorum was present.

II. Remarks from the Chair

Chair Doyle had no remarks.

III. Approval of Minutes from the February 15, 2023 TICH Meeting (*Voting Item*)

Chair Doyle called for a motion to approve the February 15, 2023 minutes. Blake Harris made a motion to approve the minutes, and Naomi Cantu 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, presented on ESG Annual Funds and ESG CARES Act Funds. Ms. Falcon first announced that TDHCA has received a \$9.8 million allocation of ESG Annual Funds for FY 2023, a total that is slightly lower than its FY 2022 allocation. Approximately \$9.4 million of these funds will be competitively allocated across the state’s Continuums of Care (CoCs) that have eligible providers. There are 29 potentially eligible providers across the state for which Ms. Falcon and her team would determine their eligibility and send an ESG application.

Ms. Falcon also noted that she and her team would continue to distribute ESG continuing awards; however, because there are more recipients that are eligible this year compared to last year, the percentage of continuing awards would be lower. Eric Samuels of Texas

Homeless Network asked Ms. Falcon to clarify the number of CoCs that would be eligible for a continuing award. Ms. Falcon stated that, based on preliminary review, four of the state's eleven CoCs do not contain any entities eligible for an ESG continuing award, though she and her team are in the process of verifying this review's accuracy. She also mentioned there is an appeals process that CoCs can pursue as well to determine eligibility for continuing awards.

Ms. Falcon next provided an update on ESG CARES Act Funds. She announced that she and her team have expended \$92 million, or 94%, of TDHCA's ESG CARES 1 and 2 allocations as of the end of March 2023. TDHCA still has until September 30, 2023 to fully expend these funds, which Ms. Falcon and her staff expect to accomplish. She and her team also have an ESG CARES 3 allocation of \$5.5 million that they are processing and contracting out. Chair Doyle asked which entities would receive those funds. Ms. Falcon responded that they are going to Haven for Hope and several nonprofits in the Austin area, all existing programs that she and her team identified as having the operational capacity to expend these funds in the required timeframe.

Ms. Falcon last provided a performance update on TDHCA's ESG-CARES subrecipients. She highlighted that program subrecipients have used ESG-CARES funds to serve over 65,000 households, or nearly 93,000 individuals, with either street outreach, emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, and/or homeless prevention services. More than 14,000 of these individuals served were survivors of domestic violence; over 8,200 households were served with rapid rehousing, with 50% of these households securing permanent housing within 60 days; and more than 13,000 households received rental assistance through either rapid rehousing or homeless prevention services. Ms. Falcon also mentioned that these funds were used to help provide over 1.7 million bed nights in emergency shelters. Eric Samuels remarked at the impressive scope of services that these ESG-CARES funds have helped support.

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 rental assistance Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) was released in December 2022, and that she and her team hope to award HOME-ARP funds in this set-aside in either May or July 2023. Ms. Cantu also stated that she and her team rolled over approximately \$3.2 million in nonprofit capacity building operating costs for rental assistance into development because of high demand and because funds for the non-congregate shelter set-aside were oversubscribed. Ms. Cantu also stated that there are still funds available for nonprofit capacity building, and that there is a plan amendment out for public comment that focuses the funds on high need areas for large shelters as well as criteria that an applicant must meet to be awarded. If awarded nonprofit capacity building operating cost funding, the program also will reserve funds for the shelter provider to streamline the application process.

Chair Doyle asked whether any nonprofits in rural Texas have taken advantage of HOME-ARP funds. Ms. Cantu responded that the nonprofit capacity building operating cost funding is focused on areas with high needs, including areas with 400 or more people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, so that a large shelter can achieve economies of scale. General discussion ensued.

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 195 total households have been housed through the program and 536 households have been referred into the program, 28 and 100 more compared to the respective amounts announced at the last TICH meeting in February. All of this activity has occurred in tandem with Texas Homeless Network (THN), and Mr. Duran and his team anticipate that they will reach the goal of 380 households housed through this partnership.

Mr. Duran also provided an update on TDHCA's two other CoC partners involved with administering EHV's, Tarrant County Homeless Coalition (TCHC) and Heart of Texas Homeless Coalition (HOTHC). No households are housed through these partners, but TDHCA has received 34 referrals from TCHC for households in temporary assistance programs. For these households, Mr. Duran and his team will deploy Section 8 vouchers to ensure they are housed after losing the temporary subsidy, then move on to other households. Mr. Duran and his team aim to house 368 households in partnership with TCHC through the EHV Program. TDHCA also has a contract signed with HOTHC for 50 EHV's, however, HOTHC is still in its process mapping stage, so they have yet to make any referrals.

Chair Doyle asked Mr. Duran to clarify which counties are eligible for these EHV's and why they are eligible. Mr. Duran answered that the EHV Program has the same eligibility requirements as the Section 8 Program, but that the Public Housing Agency (PHA) administering the EHV's must have a referral process set up with the local CoC or other eligible referral entity. Further, Mr. Duran explained that EHV's target people experiencing and at-risk of homelessness and survivors of domestic violence. EHV's also includes \$3,500 per voucher for housing search assistance, landlord incentives, and other activities.

Chair Doyle asked Mr. Duran to distinguish the difference between a Section 8 voucher and an EHV. Mr. Duran responded that, in essence, an EHV is a Section 8 voucher with a referral requirement that certifies a household's eligibility.

Mr. Duran last provided an update on the Stability Vouchers Program. He announced that because HUD offered TDHCA far fewer Stability Vouchers than expected, TDHCA does not plan to proceed with the program.

iv. **TDHCA Legislative Update**

Jeremy Stremmer of TDHCA next provided a legislative update on behalf of TDHCA's Department of Policy and Public Affairs pertaining to bills that concern the Council that were reported favorably. Mr. Stremmer first detailed H.B. 834, related to the establishment by TDHCA of a pilot program to solicit donations made by text messages for the benefit of local programs. He next summarized H.B. 2131, related to the administration of the Homeless Housing and Services Program (HHSP) by TDHCA that lowers the eligible population thresholds from 285,500 to 250,000. Chair Doyle requested that Mr. Stremmer explain the reasoning behind lowering the threshold. Mr. Stremmer responded that it would allow more cities to qualify for HHSP funds.

Mr. Stremler next explained H.B. 2533, related to the implementation of a statewide homeless data sharing network to share real time data on homelessness. He elaborated that this bill would facilitate data sharing and collection between THN's Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network (THDSN) with health care insurance providers. Mr. Stremler next summarized H.B. 3220, which would create a work group including TDHCA and Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) to study the potential use of surplus government property and other funding sources to house veterans experiencing homelessness. He then detailed H.B. 2822, which would require the Council to produce a study on the housing needs of youth transitioning out of foster care or the juvenile justice system.

Mr. Stremler closed with summaries on two Senate Bills concerning the Council that were reported favorably, S.B. 1803 and S.B. 2018. S.B. 1803 relates to an audit of TICH member state agencies that would assess the effectiveness of state funded homeless programs in helping beneficiaries advance toward self-sufficiency. S.B. 2018 relates to the addition of enforcement authority for the Attorney General's office and other entities in the event that local municipalities fail to meet certain requirements stipulated in last legislative session's H.B. 1925, which prohibited camping in public places.

Michael Wilt asked Mr. Stremler to clarify whether any of the bills he summarized had advanced past the House. Mr. Stremler stated he believed they had not yet cleared the House. Eric Samuels confirmed Mr. Stremler's response and added that the Senate bills had not yet cleared the Senate either.

Mr. Wilt also asked how many cities currently qualify for HHSP funding. Rosy Falcon responded that nine cities currently qualify and that if H.B. 2131 passed, two additional cities would likely become eligible. General discussion ensued.

v. **Consultation on State of Texas One-Year Action Plan**

Mr. Stremler next informed the Council that the 2023 State of Texas One-Year Action Plan is out for public comment through May 24, 2023 and that a public hearing on the plan would be held Tuesday, May 2, 2023 in the Stephen F. Austin Building Room 172 at 2:00 PM. He elaborated that the plan covers the Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program, National Housing Trust Fund, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, and Housing for Older Persons Act (HOPA) funds.

(b) Other Agency Updates

There were no other agency updates.

V. 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 is still under internal review and that there are no additional updates to announce. As soon as any updates arise, Mr. Lonergan stated that he would first notify Chair Doyle followed by the rest of the TICH. General discussion ensued.

Chair Doyle asked whether there is a statutory deadline for the Plan and whether the Office of the Governor (OOG) would review it. Mr. Lonergan replied that there is no statutory deadline and that the OOG would eventually review the Plan. General discussion ensued.

VI. Update from Texas Homeless Network (THN)

Eric Samuels next provided an update on THN. He first announced that THN is working with the CoC Balance of State (BoS) communities to apply for CoC Funding and CARES Act funds and facilitate EHV referrals. While these efforts have been generally successful, Mr. Samuels also noted that the recent CoC Supplemental NOFA did not yield the levels of funding that BoS communities had hoped to receive. Mr. Samuels and the THN team continue to meet regularly with all 11 Texas CoCs to stay updated on each CoC's affairs.

Mr. Samuels also provided a comment on H.B. 2533, noting Mr. Stremmer's description earlier in the meeting and adding that the bill is intended to fund THDSN's expansion. He last announced that the Texas Conference on Ending Homelessness is being held this September, and that HUD representatives are expected to attend to provide training opportunities for HUD homeless assistance fund grantees. He invited any Council participants who are interested in participating in this training event to reach out to THN.

(a) Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network Project

Anja Taylor of THN next provided an update on THDSN's [data dashboard](#). Ms. Taylor first summarized several charts and tables pertaining to data collected by THDSN from Q1 of 2023 (hand out accessible [here](#)), highlighting that 23,408 individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness, 19,766 households were experiencing homelessness, and that 24% of this population was reported as unsheltered. Ms. Taylor also mentioned that THDSN identified approximately 8,200 and 2,000 individuals who entered and exited homelessness in Texas during this time period.

Chair Doyle asked Ms. Taylor to clarify how many children per household exist among households experiencing homelessness. Mr. Samuels responded that the ratio is approximately 1 to 1.2 children per household experiencing homelessness, which is lower than usual. He anticipated that this rate would increase as the year progresses. General discussion ensued.

Michael Wilt asked Mr. Samuels whether this data defines people experiencing homelessness using the McKinney Vento Act or HUD definition of homelessness. Mr. Samuels replied that it uses the latter definition. Spencer Duran asked whether the data collected by THDSN includes data from all nine participating CoCs, which Mr. Samuels confirmed. Chair Doyle asked how many people experiencing homelessness are being missed in the CoCs that do not participate in THDSN, comprised of San Antonio and Wichita Falls. Mr. Samuels estimated 15,000 people. General discussion ensued.

Ms. Taylor last pointed out several charts summarizing the demographics of data collected on people experiencing homelessness across the state, including household type and racial composition. Mr. Samuels added that THN is using this data in partnership with University of North Texas to assess the movement of people experiencing homelessness across the state. He added that THN is also working with Superior Health Plan to identify people that are on their

insurance rolls who are experiencing homelessness in order to provide them with better health care.

Naomi Cantu asked Ms. Taylor to clarify the meaning of the legend in one of the maps that THN presented on homelessness rates by county across Texas. Mr. Samuels clarified that the pink areas indicate a higher rate of homelessness. Ms. Cantu asked a follow-up question regarding whether the places where higher rates of homelessness exist indicate where services are provided. Mr. Samuels clarified that these counties have service providers that collect and share HMIS data with THDSN, and that these rates do not include survivors of domestic violence. General discussion ensued.

Chair Doyle asked Ms. Taylor to confirm the percentage of households with children experiencing homelessness as displayed in the THDSN. Ms. Taylor and Mr. Samuels confirmed this percentage. General discussion ensued.

Chair Doyle last asked for clarification regarding the percentage of people in Texas who are counted as homeless. Mr. Samuels estimated about 0.5% or less. General discussion ensued.

VII. Public Comment

Michael Wilt of the Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC) announced that TSAHC will hold a supportive housing symposium in the fall focused on increasing the capacity of nonprofit developers and training best practices, among other goals. He stated that more details would be forthcoming this summer.

VIII. Closing Comments

There were no closing comments.

IX. Adjourn

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