



Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
Quarterly Meeting – July 25, 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 (by Brittany Hinton) |
| 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 | No |
| 9 | Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA), Housing Finance representative | Brooke Boston | Yes (by Elizabeth Yevich) |
| 10 | TDHCA, Community Affairs representative | Naomi Cantu | Yes (by Tiara Hardaway) |
| 11 | Texas Education Agency (TEA) | Jordan Brown | 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 |
| 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 | No |
| 7 | Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC) | David Long | No |
| 8 | Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV) | Gabriela Fuentes | 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 10:30am, and confirmed that a quorum was present.

II. Remarks from the Chair

Chair Doyle remarked that the public exposure of homelessness in the news is as extensive as any news coverage on homelessness he has seen in 20 years, and that the situation in Austin seemed particularly bleak based on a recent news story he watched. He asked the Council which groups are spearheading homeless service provision efforts in the Austin area. Eric Samuels responded that the local Continuum of Care (CoC), the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO), is leading these efforts. General discussion ensued.

III. Approval of Minutes from the April 26, 2023 TICH Meeting (*Voting Item*)

Chair Doyle called for a motion to approve the April 26, 2023 minutes. Elizabeth Yevich made a motion to approve the minutes, and Blake Harris 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. TDHCA Legislative Update

Michael Lyttle of TDHCA’s Department of Policy and Public Affairs first provided an update on the 88th Regular Legislative Session on matters related to the Council. Mr. Lyttle mentioned that two new funding streams resulted from this legislative session. The first stream is \$800,000 over the biennium for a transitional housing pilot program that addresses the needs of veterans experiencing homelessness in four areas of the state that

project to be Houston, Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio. The other stream is \$1 million over the biennium for a youth and young adult homeless housing and services program in Fort Bend County that is earmarked for a specific organization. Abigail Versyp stepped in to clarify that the organization is a youth ranch.

Mr. Lyttle also stated that many additional homeless bills were introduced, but none passed. He summarized that these bills related to topics including: feasibility studies to be conducted by the Council on homeless data networks and on specific housing needs of homeless subpopulations; creating a standardized definition of homelessness; and an efficiency study conducted by the state auditor's office of government homeless programs that would have provided recommendations to the legislature.

Chair Doyle commented that he was glad to see a transitional housing intervention that passed with funding. Mr. Lyttle added that an interesting aspect of this past legislative session that he noticed was that organizations from both sides of the political spectrum were engaged in discussing the ideas proposed in these introduced homeless bills. General discussion ensued.

Eric Samuels commented that a focus on homelessness prevention activities is also crucial in addressing homelessness, since it buys households more time to maintain their current housing as more deeply affordable and supportive housing becomes available. General discussion ensued.

Brittany Hinton of Texas Health and Human Services stepped in to ask for an overview of the activities of the Council since she was new to it. Elizabeth Yevich responded that Sean Lonergan, TICH Administrative Support, would provide an overview of the Council and its functions via email to Ms. Hinton.

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

Tahmoor Chadury of TDHCA next provided an update on ESG Annual Funds and ESG CARES Act Funds. Regarding the ESG Annual Program, Mr. Chadury stated that he and his team completed review of applications, started to contact applicants regarding staff scores, and are in the process of calculating final scores. He also mentioned that every CoC was either exactly subscribed or oversubscribed on funds, meaning all ESG Annual funds will likely be awarded within their respective CoCs.

Regarding the ESG CARES Act Program, Mr. Chadury stated that funding sub-recipients have expended 94.2% of ESG-CV 2 with two months remaining to expend the remaining amount of this allocation. Sub-recipients have also begun to draw down ESG-CV 3 funds and have until July 30, 2024 to draw down these funds. Mr. Chadury also highlighted several achievements from the program, such as serving over 70,000 individuals with street outreach, emergency shelter, rapid rehousing, and/or homeless prevention services and providing over 2 million bed nights at emergency shelters. He also stated that among the 24,000 people served through the program's homeless prevention funds, more than half have maintained their housing for at least three months or have been placed in permanent housing.

Eric Samuels asked how Texas' expenditure of ESG-CARES Act funds compares to other states. Abigail Versyp responded that Texas is ahead of the curve nationally in terms of funds expended. General discussion ensued.

Mike Doyle asked whether any of the ESG-CARES Act funds not expended by other states are recaptured and redistributed. Ms. Versyp responded that these funds have been recaptured and reallocated to high expenditure jurisdictions, which is the reason Texas has an ESG-CV 3 allocation. General discussion ensued.

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

Tiara Hardaway, HOME-ARP Program Manager at TDHCA, next presented an update on the HOME-ARP Program. Ms. Hardaway first reminded the Council that HOME-ARP has allocated its funds for rental non-congregate shelter and operating assistance. The program has two awards for its rental activity, one of which is under its National Housing Trust Fund set-aside for a development in Brownsville. For the program's current Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), it currently has \$51 million allocated across six awards in Austin, Abilene, Arlington, and Houston, with additional deals in the program's pipeline in Dallas and Grand Prairie that she and her team expect to award in Fall 2023.

Ms. Hardaway also mentioned that she and her team drafted an amendment to the HOME-ARP allocation plan for urban areas that was approved without substantial comment from the public or HUD. This amendment was an adjustment to the method of distribution for the program's nonprofit capacity building and operating assistance and non-congregate shelter funds. Ms. Hardaway elaborated that this amendment will help the program target areas that have high rates of unsheltered homelessness and high costs of living for nonprofits in good standing that have prior experience with building and managing innovative shelters. These awardees would receive capacity building and shelter funds.

Blake Harris asked whether there were areas or organizations already identified for these funds. Ms. Hardaway responded that The Other Ones Foundation (TOOF) and Downtown Austin Alliance were two organizations identified by the program that fit its criteria for funding. Funding consists of \$3 million in operating assistance and up to \$56 million for shelter development. Chair Doyle asked whether the shelter development funds would support the capital necessary for shelter construction. Ms. Hardaway confirmed that it would support this need and also mentioned that the \$10 million in awards for the program would be under consideration at TDHCA's next Board meeting.

Eric Samuels remarked at the impressive nature of TOOF's rapid growth. Chair Doyle asked for more background on TOOF, which Mr. Samuels provided. Mr. Samuels also mentioned that TOOF is planning to build non-congregate shelter tiny homes with the assistance of the HOME-ARP funds.

iv. **Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) Program**

Spencer Duran, Director of the Section 811 Program at TDHCA, next presented on the EHV Program. Mr. Duran first announced that this TICH quarterly meeting would be his last and that Tanisha McFarlane would be taking the EHV Program over in his place. He also mentioned that Abigail Versyp would be taking over the direction of the Section 8 Program at TDHCA.

Mr. Duran then transitioned to his update on the EHV Program. He first mentioned that 121 individuals were housed through the program since the last TICH quarterly meeting. The total number of individuals housed through the program now stands at 267 individuals through Texas Homeless Network (THN) and 49 individuals through the Tarrant County Homeless Coalition (TCHC). There are not yet any individuals housed through the Heart of Texas CoC in the Waco area, but TDHCA does have 10 referrals through this partnership. Cumulatively, TDHCA and its partners have used 40% of its 798-voucher allotment to house individuals through the EHV Program, with THN having housed 70% of their voucher allocation and TCHC having housed 13% of their voucher allocation. Even though this percentage is below the national average, Mr. Duran remarked that TDHCA is in no danger of having its vouchers recaptured by HUD since this program structure is brand new for TDHCA and has required extra time to implement effectively as a result.

Chair Doyle asked Mr. Duran how many vouchers TCHC received through the EHV Program. Mr. Duran responded that TCHC has received a 368-voucher allocation and are in the process of housing 213 individuals. He also stated that TDHCA's contract partner Home with Hope, the CoC lead agency for TCHC, has assisted with the administrative load associated with matching individuals to housing through the EHV Program. Mr. Duran also mentioned that Home with Hope would collaborate with another agency in Parker County to connect individuals in this area with vouchers. General discussion ensued.

(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.

In lieu of the update, Mr. Lonergan mentioned that he attended the Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) Annual Conference last month in Houston. He communicated his gratitude to TNOYS for their efforts organizing the conference and for their continued efforts assisting youth experiencing homelessness as well as their consistent presence at Council meetings as an advisory member. Mr. Lonergan also announced the results of the survey he circulated to TICH participants several months ago polling suggestions for a title for the Plan. The results indicated a preference for "Everyone Deserves a Home" followed by "A Home for Everyone," "A Place to Call Home," and "Seeking Solutions."

VI. Update from Texas Homeless Network (THN)

Eric Samuels next provided an update on THN. He first announced that THN's upcoming annual conference is expected to be held September 27th through the 29th, and that THN hopes to host the next TICH quarterly meeting at the conference venue. Mr. Samuels also announced that HUD staff from its Fort Worth office would be present at this year's annual conference to provide start-up training for HUD

CoC grantees from across the state. He also stated that HUD staff from its headquarters in Washington D.C. are slated to hold a workshop at the conference on new HUD rules. He last mentioned that the conference would host a PATH state training workshop as well. Mr. Samuels closed his update by thanking Mr. Duran and his team for their collaborative efforts working with THN, Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV), and other partners to bring the EHV Program to fruition.

Chair Doyle inquired over scheduling logistics related to the time and place of the upcoming TICH quarterly meeting. Mr. Samuels responded that they anticipate it will be hosted at the same location as last year, and that the meeting would take place on the morning of September 27th. General discussion related to scheduling logistics ensued.

Chair Doyle asked a second question regarding whether the CoC lead agencies and HUD representatives would be present at this year's annual conference. Mr. Samuels stated that he asked for both parties to attend this year. Chair Doyle asked whether they would be at the TICH quarterly meeting as well. Mr. Samuels replied that at least HUD staff has expressed interest in attending and should be able to attend. General discussion ensued.

(a) Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network Project

Anja Taylor of THN next provided an update on the future of the Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network (THDSN) and on THN's burgeoning partnership with the Managed Care Organization (MCO) Superior Health Plan. Regarding the partnership, Ms. Taylor stated that approximately a year ago THN executed a business associate agreement with Superior Health Plan for the purpose of data matching. This data matching includes client level data pulled from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to identify clients who are either currently experiencing homelessness or are accessing services within the homeless response system, particularly those who have Medicaid coverage through Superior Health Plan.

The goal of this partnership is to enhance care coordination by quickly identifying clients and providing them access to appropriate health care services to reduce emergency room utilization. Ms. Taylor also mentioned that THN partnered with Texas' State Health Information Exchange, the Texas Health Services Authority, and a third health information exchange agency called C3HIE to facilitate their collaboration with Superior Health Plan. These partners help match the list of clients from Superior Health Plan's database with individuals in THN's data warehouse. Through this first round of data matching, THN was able to identify 350 individuals, primarily in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. THN is working with Superior Health Plan case managers and other staff to connect with this clientele and get more information from these individuals to ensure they are getting the resources they need. Ms. Taylor last stated that THN hopes to partner with additional MCOs to replicate this process once this pilot partnership with Superior Health Plan concludes.

Ms. Taylor's last update was an announcement that THN has funding secured through December 2023 to fund THDSN, but lacks funding to sustain the project beyond this time horizon. She mentioned that THN continues to reach out to external stakeholders in an effort to secure additional grant funding, and asked that if the Council has any leads on funding opportunities that they are welcome to communicate them to THN.

Chair Doyle asked how much funding THDSN requires to sustain operations beyond 2023. Mr. Samuels responded that they are seeking approximately \$500,000 to sustain the project over the next two years. General discussion ensued.

Blake Harris of Texas Veterans Commission asked whether THN has a plan for sustaining THDSN beyond the end of the year absent the additional funding. Mr. Samuels stated that THN is in the process of negotiating with their data warehouse vendor Green River on those details. General discussion ensued.

VII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VIII. Closing Comments

Chair Doyle reminded the Council that the next TICH quarterly meeting will be held on at 10:30am on September 27, 2023, at the Austin Southpark Hotel as part of THN's Annual Conference.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m.