



Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
Quarterly Meeting – September 27, 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	vacant	n/a
3	Office of the Speaker of the House	vacant	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 (by Stephanie Taylor)
7	Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ)	Sherry Cogbill	No
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)	Kelly Kravitz	Yes
12	Texas Department of Juvenile Justice (TJJJ)	Marqus Butler	No
13	Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)	Blake Harris	Yes (by Amber Morrison)
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	Yes
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 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 reminded TICH participants of the importance of being an expert in their area, and that part of this expertise is rooted in knowledge of the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in their Continuum of Care (CoC) service area).

III. Approval of Minutes from the July 25, 2023 TICH Meeting (Voting Item)

Chair Doyle called for a motion to approve the July 25, 2023 minutes. Brooke Boston made a motion to approve the minutes, and Kelly Kravitz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no comments.

IV. Conversation with Continuum of Care (CoC) Agency Leads and Members

(a) CoC Updates

Camille Castillo of El Paso Coalition for the Homelessness stated that the number one issue the homeless response system in El Paso is facing relates to addressing immigration. Ms. Castillo also announced that she and her team conducted a summer youth Point-in-Time Count, and in total the CoC has conducted approximately \$4 million worth of projects in the 2023 fiscal year. Chair Doyle asked Ms. Castillo what she and her CoC partners needed to perform. Ms. Castillo replied that they need more funding and for the formulas used to distribute funds to be re-examined to ensure a more balanced allocation across CoCs. Eric Samuels commented that El Paso also needs more collaborative efforts for consistent data collection across the community.

Micki Metz of the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition (ECHO) in Austin commented that there is still a need for enough units to house households at-risk of or experiencing homelessness, as ECHO and its partners have sufficient funding, but not the unit capacity to house these individuals. Ms. Metz mentioned that creating more low-barrier units would be useful. Eric Samuels stated that the low vacancy rates in Austin make it difficult to match households with vouchers. Ms. Metz affirmed this sentiment. Mr. Samuels also stated the need for more supportive housing units in the area and in general.

Syda Gonzalez of the Amarillo CoC announced that her CoC also has an issue with lack of affordable housing availability. She estimated that the CoC has over one hundred vouchers that they have yet to match with units, and that part of the reason for this excess is attributable to a lack of housing stock.

Jeanie Cordova of Endeavors in Houston next provided an update on behalf of the Houston CoC. She commented that because the Community COVID Housing Program (CCHP) funding is ending, many individuals housed through its Rapid Rehousing Program might end up back on the streets since they do not meet the one year of homelessness criteria necessary to qualify for permanent supportive housing. Ms. Cordova also stated that nonprofits continue to struggle with the match requirements for housing and homelessness grants, which creates barriers for these organizations meeting their service goals.

Eric Samuels next presented an update on the Balance of State CoC, stating that they recently submitted an application for a \$12 million Notice of Funding Opportunity and hope to secure this funding. He also remarked that much more funding is needed for the 215 county service area of this CoC. Chair Doyle commented that he is grateful for THN's efforts gathering data on the number of people experiencing homelessness across CoCs.

(b) CoC Initiatives

Eric Samuels stated that next year's THN Annual Conference will be held at the Omni Galleria in Houston in September 2024. Mr. Samuels also remarked that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will provide start-up training at this conference, so any organization funded by HUD is eligible to have travel expenses covered by HUD if they participate in this training.

Mr. Samuels also stated that the Balance of State CoC continues to be busy working with communities across its region. He then remarked that he was alarmed at the high volume of information referral calls that his team had received, and clarified that THN only provides training and technical assistance, not direct services, as a CoC lead. He made a call to action that the TICH should consider ways in which the Council can leverage collaboration between its state agencies and service providers to fill the need that has become evident through the influx of calls seeking housing assistance. Chair Doyle affirmed this need and added that the governor's office would be interested in the actions the TICH is taking to address this influx of need. General discussion ensued.

V. 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) project. Ms. Taylor first announced that THDSN is still seeking funding to sustain its operations beyond December 2023, and that she and her team welcome any information that TICH participants can provide that might help THN secure a funding source.

Chair Doyle asked how much funding the project needs. Eric Samuels stepped in to emphasize the front-end work that has made THDSN a successful venture, and that any additional funding for the project would be a worthwhile investment.

Chair Doyle asked for an update on the THDSN homeless count. Ms. Taylor stated that, as of the end of Q3 2023, there are approximately 53,104 individuals who have experienced homelessness in the 9 of 11 CoCs that are providing data to THDSN. She mentioned that this data is likely an undercount since THDSN is only able to collect information from Homeless Management Information Services (HMIS) participating agencies and not everyone experiencing homelessness has the ability or opportunity to access services. Eric Samuels clarified that this count is the annualized number of people experiencing homelessness, not a point in time count.

Dr. Ben King, a professor at the University of Houston College of Medicine and an ex-officio member of the THDSN Board, asked the TICH to consider ways in which Council participants can continue to support THDSN. Chair Doyle asked the Council to share their ideas. Camille Castillo proposed that CoCs participating in THDSN should consider ways in which they can use their financial resources to support the project. Michael Wilt of TSAHC asked Mr. Samuels whether THN has inquired with Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) over funding. Mr. Samuels responded that although they are engaged with Superior Health Plan in identifying clients who are experiencing homelessness, there have been no discussions of a contract to support THDSN in the future. Mr. Wilt responded that Mr. Samuels should reach out to Kevin James from the Corporation for Supportive Housing to inquire over funding.

Richard Johnson, a community health worker at the Dell School of Medicine, commented that THN should consider partnering with corporations or universities to procure funding for THDSN. Mr. Samuels responded that THN is engaged in collaborations with these actors, but not to the extent of executing a funding agreement. He affirmed that THN is interested in funding from these stakeholders. Chair Doyle added that service providers should also consider pitching the economic benefit that funding from donors can provide to help garner more interest. General discussion ensued.

VI. Updates from Member Agencies

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

i. Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Annual Funds, ESG through the CARES Act Funds (ESG-CV), Homeless Housing and Services Program (HHSP)

Rosy Falcon of TDHCA next provided an update on the ESG and ESG-CV programs. She first provided an update on the upcoming deadline for the ESG-CV program, which is September

30, 2023. She stated that the program is 93% expended, about \$95.8 million of the \$103 million allocation, and that the program needs to expend \$97.7 million by the end of the month. The ESG program is 73% expended, and Ms. Falcon and her team are in the process of completing contracts for 2023 ESG annual funds, which they expect to be ready for expenditure by November 1, 2023. Ms. Falcon next shared that this round of ESG-CV funds have served over 68,000 households, while 2022 ESG program funds have assisted over 17,426 households. Ms. Falcon last announced that HHSP has served over 5,261 households over the last year. She qualified that the household count for HHSP is low because these funds are primarily used for case management or providing assistance so that other grants provide direct services.

ii. Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) Program

Tanisha McFarlane, Program Administrator at TDHCA, next provided an update on the EHV program. She relayed that 392 families are housed through this program, with 304 housed through THN and 88 housed through the Tarrant County Homeless Coalition. She and her team expect to extend their contract with THN so that all families that are currently searching for housing will be able to receive EHV assistance when they locate a unit. Ms. McFarlane also stated that their third contract, Heart of Texas Homeless Coalition, currently has 48 referrals but no families housed. She also remarked that because voucher holders are struggling to find landlords who will accept their voucher in Tarrant County that they are looking for landlords elsewhere.

Eric Samuels stepped in to thank TDHCA for collaborating with THN to contract out EHV's. Billy Streu of THN added that over 200 households that have been housed through the EHV program are survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, which represents a huge success for the program. General discussion ensued.

iii. HOME-American Rescue Plan (ARP)

Naomi Cantu, HOME-ARP Director at TDHCA, next provided an update on the HOME-ARP program. Ms. Cantu first announced that in the construction set-aside they have \$42 million contracted across 10 developments, with \$10 million remaining in this set-aside. These developments are comprised of 239 units, 170 of which are for qualified populations that include people experiencing homelessness, at-risk of homelessness, or formerly homeless temporarily housed. She expects these units to be online in approximately 24 months.

In the non-profit capacity building and non-congregate shelter set-asides, Ms. Cantu and her team have awarded funding in Austin to The Other Ones Foundation (TOOF) and Downtown Austin Alliance to help them build capacity and expertise to be able to help run TOOF's non-congregate shelter, a process that should take 16 months in total. She and her team currently have no additional funds available.

iv. 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. Chair Doyle asked if a name for the plan had been determined. Mr. Lonergan indicated that the titles “Everyone Deserves a Home” and “Seeking Solutions” were the front-runners for the plan.

v. State of Texas Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI)

Nathan Darus, Fair Housing Coordinator at TDHCA, next provided an overview of the State of Texas Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI). Mr. Darus stated that the AI is updated every five years and that it focuses on areas that prevent the state of Texas from achieving better fair housing outcomes. He also announced that he and his team are seeking early input on programmatic, legislative, and other issues that may be inhibiting the state of Texas from meaningfully and fairly housing individuals. To this end, he circulated a QR code that links to a survey that individuals can use to provide their input. The QR code link can be found [here](#).

Elizabeth Yevich asked Mr. Darus to specify the length of the early comment period. Mr. Darus responded that there is no hard date, but he expects to keep the comment period open until at least the end of October.

Michael Wilt of TSAHC asked whether TDHCA is allowed to comment on source of income discrimination. Mr. Darus responded that TDHCA as an executive agency cannot change anything about source of income discrimination, but if there was a critical mass of commenters who identified it in comment as an impediment, then it might be discussed in the AI.

(b) Other Member Agency Updates

Michael Wilt of TSAHC announced that TSAHC is hosting a permanent supportive housing symposium that will be held at the Renaissance Austin Hotel on November 6-7, 2023. Mr. Wilt stated that this conference is meant to compliment the THN Annual Conference in that it focuses on housing development, services and operations, and health outcomes. It is intended to engage housing developers, capital providers, funders, health plans, and service providers with the intention of facilitating affordable housing unit creation and finance. Mr. Wilt is also seeking CoC engagement to lead these conversations, as they already have several participating CoC leads but are seeking more to join the symposium. He then announced that on November 8, 2023, Kevin James of the Corporation for Supportive Housing will be leading a one-day academy focused on the nuts and bolts of supportive housing development. General discussion ensued.

Kelly Kravitz of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) next provided some education updates. She first announced that TEA has a new Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth (TECHY) website that will be launching soon focused on providing a comprehensive array of tools and resources for schools, service providers, and program administrators that serve students and families experiencing homelessness. She also stated that TEA has established regional McKinney-Vento liaisons in all 20 of the Education Service Center (ESC) regions across Texas. These liaisons provide technical assistance and training and professional development. Ms. Kravitz also announced that this past August TEA created and distributed posters listing the rights of homeless students and families that are posted in Texas public schools and canvassed

across local communities. She encouraged CoC leads to connect with its regional McKinney-Vento liaison to reach out to them regarding posters.

Ms. Kravitz next stated that TEA has received approximately \$97 million in COVID-19 funds over the past three years, and that she and her team are working to distribute this funding to meet COVID-19 related needs. She last provided an update on a new transition assistance policy that was adopted this past January 2023. This policy requires every school to create a welcoming and warm environment for homeless students, meaning these students and their families are provided resources and information to help mitigate barriers to school transitions when they enter the school system.

VII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VIII. Closing Comments

There were no closing comments.

IX. Adjourn

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