

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

TEXAS INTERAGENCY COUNCIL
FOR THE
HOMELESS

via GoToWebinar

October 20, 2020
1:03 p.m.

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MR. DOYLE: Well, welcome, everyone. I think
3 we can see everyone with names, so I don't know that we
4 need to welcome or introduce ourselves. But welcome to
5 the quarterly meeting in October 20 of the Interagency
6 Council.

7 I just have a few remarks, and that is, I want
8 to thank you for being here. You've got a lot of things
9 to do. Thank you for the change of time, that helped me
10 out tremendously.

11 And that this issue continues to be one that
12 we're going to struggle with for a long time. And I don't
13 know about y'all, but I just see all of the units that
14 used to be eligible under what we would call affordable
15 housing that are taken by people now who can't even afford
16 their rent, and it's just pushing the homeless back to the
17 street again.

18 I don't know if y'all are seeing that as much
19 as we are here, but there's -- the unsheltered here in
20 Tarrant County seem to be growing exponentially, and I
21 don't think it's the ones that want to be outside. It's
22 just the ones that are.

23 So this is important work, and I think that we
24 need to make sure that we give it our full attention. So
25 that being said, you received a copy of the meeting

1 minutes from July, and from the Council members, I would
2 entertain a motion to approve those minutes.

3 MS. BOSTON: So moved. This Brooke.

4 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Is there a second?

5 MS. LOPEZ: This is Callie. Second.

6 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Thank you. All in favor,
7 say aye.

8 (A chorus of ayes.)

9 MR. DOYLE: Opposed, same sign?

10 (No response.)

11 MR. DOYLE: And those are passed. Thank you.

12 MR. SHEA: Mike, real quick, before we go on to
13 the next items, if we can just do some quick webinar
14 housekeeping. I want to make sure that anybody who wants
15 to comment knows how to.

16 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Very good. Take us in
17 there, Danny.

18 MR. SHEA: Okay. So just, again, a brief
19 overview of the specifics of this webinar. If you were
20 logged in as an attendee, this is more or less what your
21 screen should look like, with the cameras and slides up on
22 the left-hand side. And then your control panel on the
23 right, and the control panel is basically how you will
24 control all of the options to interact with this webinar.

25 So on the top half, in the upper, left-hand

1 corner, you have the orange arrow there -- will be how you
2 open and close your control panel. And then for audio,
3 you can choose between computer audio and phone. I think
4 the computer should be the default for most folks.

5 If you do want to call in with your phone
6 instead of listening through your computer, select "phone
7 call." And then the panel should give you a phone number
8 and some dial-in information, and you can call in that
9 way.

10 If you're having any trouble calling in or if
11 you need to exit the webinar and later want to log back
12 in, just give it two minutes. Sometimes this just needs a
13 little bit of time to refresh and see who all is in. And
14 then if you are planning on presenting or asking a
15 question, and you just want to make sure that your mic is
16 working okay, there is a "sound check" option in the
17 upper, right-hand corner of the audio panel, and so you
18 can use that as well.

19 Then please feel free to submit any questions
20 or comments that you have using the questions panel
21 towards the bottom of your control panel, and that's if
22 you do not wish to speak during the meeting. If you do
23 wish to speak, and some folks already have done this
24 during the meeting today, you can use the "raise hand"
25 function, which is circled in red with the arrow pointing

1 to it on the left-hand side of your control panel.

2 I will get a notification that you've raised
3 your hand, and then when there is time for questions, we
4 can unmute you. And then just as a reminder, today's
5 presentation is being recorded, and a recording and a
6 transcript will be provided, along with other meeting
7 materials, on the TICH webpage on the TDHCA website in the
8 next week or so.

9 So thanks, Mike. I just wanted to make sure
10 that we had covered all of that, and then if there aren't
11 any questions, we can move on to the next item.

12 MR. DOYLE: Well, I see, the majority of you
13 are young. I'm sure you've got that all figured out, and
14 there will be plenty of people to help me if I can't. So
15 there being no further questions, I'll go to our next
16 item, which is also a voting item, No. IV, on our -- on
17 your agenda.

18 We've sent out to you, or Danny did or
19 Elizabeth did, all the comments and corrections and
20 changes on the bylaws. Megan has looked through them, the
21 attorney, and feels good about that.

22 So since there was no comment in the last month
23 or so, I'll ask approval to -- or a motion to approve the
24 new bylaws.

25 MS. BOSTON: So moved. This is Brooke.

1 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

2 MS. CANTU: Second. This is Naomi. I couldn't
3 find my mic early enough to move.

4 MR. DOYLE: Uh-huh. We have a motion and a
5 second. Any comment or questions? [Audio interference.]

6 All in -- somebody needs to mute. All in
7 favor, say aye.

8 (A chorus of ayes.)

9 MR. DOYLE: Opposed, same sign.

10 (No response.)

11 MR. DOYLE: Those do pass. Thank you, TDHCA,
12 for your hard work on those things. That's important.
13 All right.

14 No. V, we have another voting item. Before I
15 ask for the vote, Eric, do you want to say anything about
16 the annual report?

17 MR. SAMUELS: Yeah. I mean, I can give an
18 update. So again, this year, I headed up the work on
19 updating the annual report, and this year, again, Mike,
20 Michael Wilt helped me, and Joyce Pohlman joined in.

21 We all kind of split it up into thirds, and
22 then went through and edited the report and updated it for
23 this year. And then Danny, and I think, Elizabeth
24 probably, Naomi, a few others probably at TDHCA -- I'm
25 sure Brooke joined in to provide some edits and some

1 additional items that needed to be updated on the TDHCA
2 site.

3 And I don't remember, Danny. Did we hear back
4 from Kevin James with HHSC on this? I don't know that we
5 did.

6 MR. SHEA: No. We were able to update the HHSC
7 portions of it, though.

8 MR. SAMUELS: You were able to? Okay.

9 MR. SHEA: Yeah.

10 MR. SAMUELS: So among all of us, we updated
11 everything, and I mean, again, it was just another update
12 from the year before. I had a note to Danny in one of the
13 versions that -- about maybe this year would be a good
14 year for us to look at that framework again, and you know,
15 maybe update that, because it's been a few years.

16 I want to say, has it been 10 years since the
17 framework has been printed out? It's been a while.

18 MS. YEVICH: About eight. I think it was 2012.

19 MR. SAMUELS: Oh, it was 2012?

20 MS. YEVICH: I believe --

21 MR. SAMUELS: So I mean, this seems like this
22 might be a good time to do that, because I mean, from my
23 perspective, it seems like I'm updating -- just basically,
24 you know, changing one year to the next, and things aren't
25 really changing a whole lot.

1 So it would be kind of nice to put a little bit
2 more meat on that bone. But I think it went well. And I
3 think it's pretty updated, hopefully ready to go, and will
4 be approved.

5 MR. DOYLE: So let me ask you a question. That
6 kind of -- I don't think you're saying that homelessness
7 really hasn't changed, because it makes it so easy for the
8 plan to be updated, but is that the case?

9 MR. SAMUELS: Well, I'm not saying that.
10 Homelessness in some ways, I guess, has changed, but in a
11 lot of ways hasn't. I think the way we approach
12 homelessness has changed quite a bit over eight years, so
13 I think the framework could incorporate some of those best
14 practices.

15 I think it would be to our advantage to update
16 our strategies that are outlined in the framework and
17 bring this up to speed. Now, the annual report, I mean,
18 that's not a place where you make changes to strategy. I
19 see the annual report as just a place where you report out
20 on what's happened, and that's where it ends there.

21 So I don't suggest we make changes to the
22 annual report, but if we're going to update the framework,
23 I think this would be a good year to do it. Definitely
24 before we get to 10 years, or by 10 years.

25 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

1 MR. SAMUELS: Yeah.

2 MR. DOYLE: But there are numbers in there that
3 reflect the number of homelessness -- number of homeless
4 persons on the point in time count.

5 MR. SAMUELS: Yeah, and they show that it's
6 going up.

7 MR. DOYLE: Because, you know, we start -- I
8 guess, unless you -- people in -- unless folks in Austin
9 have heard anything different, we're starting the session
10 next January or February.

11 MR. SAMUELS: I haven't heard anything
12 different. I'm assuming it's still going on. I just
13 don't know how it's going to happen this year, but we will
14 find out.

15 MR. DOYLE: Is there anything we're going to
16 advocate for?

17 MR. SAMUELS: I've not considered advocating
18 for this, for updating the annual report. Maybe we
19 should. We've been focused on some other issues from
20 THN's standpoint, but that could be something that we
21 think about and we advocate for updating.

22 MR. DOYLE: Yeah.

23 MR. SAMUELS: I mean, I think getting anything
24 passed this year is going to have to be something that is
25 without a fiscal note. That's for sure.

1 MR. DOYLE: Yeah, yeah. Or at least a small
2 fiscal note. Okay. Well, I just think that we ought to
3 be thinking about that.

4 If there's something with the session coming up
5 that we want to do, I don't know -- Megan can tell us, I
6 guess -- but I don't know if those bylaws need to be run
7 through any kind of process at the State to be finally
8 approved -- I don't know -- or TDCJ -- or TDHCA. Just a
9 thought.

10 MS. SYLVESTER: Bill, I think this is all we --
11 you would need. Brooke, we'll probably need to post -- or
12 Elizabeth, I'm not sure who's in charge of that section of
13 the website. But we probably need to post the most
14 current version.

15 MR. DOYLE: I didn't see anybody talking there.
16 I guess my screen's not big enough. Who was that? Was
17 that Megan?

18 MS. SYLVESTER: That was Megan.

19 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Thanks, Megan. Okay.
20 Anything else, Eric?

21 MR. SAMUELS: No, that's it.

22 MR. DOYLE: All right.

23 MR. SAMUELS: Hopefully, it's updated to
24 everyone's satisfaction.

25 MR. DOYLE: You have all gotten copies of the

1 annual report as updated. Thank you, Eric, for that hard,
2 hard work, and Mike too on that, Michael on that. So I'd
3 entertain a motion to approve the annual report.

4 MS. BOSTON: This is Brooke. So moved.

5 MR. DOYLE: Okay. You're our motion-maker
6 today, Brooke.

7 MS. BOSTON: I am.

8 MR. DOYLE: Is there a second?

9 MS. CANTU: This is Naomi. Second.

10 MR. DOYLE: Thank you. All in favor, say aye.

11 (A chorus of ayes.)

12 MR. DOYLE: Opposed, same sign.

13 (No response.)

14 MR. DOYLE: And that does pass. Thanks again,
15 Eric. Now, you want to give us an update on THN?

16 MR. SAMUELS: I sure can, and I am joined by
17 colleagues from THN, Shrabya Poudyal, Joe Schultz, and I
18 think, Nick Thompson, although I don't see him. I'm like
19 you, Mike. I don't see everyone. Okay. You are there.
20 Okay.

21 So I can give some brief updates. Actually,
22 you know what? How about we start with an update on --
23 no. I will start this, and then I'll hand it off. So I
24 need to let everybody to know, of course, we didn't have
25 our annual Conference on Ending Homelessness this year.

1 That would have been at the end of last month
2 and early this month, and that didn't happen. Hopefully,
3 it will happen next year in Houston, and it's around the
4 same time of year. So hopefully, we can all be down there
5 together for that.

6 Again, instead of that, and not really
7 replacing that, but instead of doing that this -- we've
8 been holding a webinar series with different topics for
9 the last few months, and next week, we have an event
10 called Homelessness in Texas. And we have speakers from
11 around the country and around the state talking about, you
12 know, what they struggle with in ending homelessness, what
13 successes they have had and what they think that we need
14 to do to end homelessness.

15 So that is on the 27th, and that is from 2:00
16 to 3:30 p.m., I believe. Correct me if I'm wrong, THN
17 folks. But try to listen in to that. You should be
18 seeing a lot of advertisement about that from us. In
19 fact, I'll send something out to Danny so he can get it
20 out to everybody.

21 It's just an hour and a half of different
22 videos from people from around the state talking, and
23 hopefully, we -- you'll find it inspiring. So we have
24 that next week. And I hope we'll have two other updates,
25 but how about we get into Nick giving us an update on the

1 VISTA project?

2 Unless we have that -- do we have that later
3 on? Sorry. I don't have the agenda in front of me.

4 MR. DOYLE: No, we do not.

5 MR. SAMUELS: Okay. So Nick can do that, and
6 then we'll get Shrabya and Joe to give that update on the
7 Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network project. I'll hand it
8 over to Nick.

9 MR. THOMPSON: So this didn't make it to the
10 agenda, but actually, this morning, I suggested someone
11 for service in Belton, at Central Texas Council of
12 Governments, to serve as the -- I mean, Veteran Employment
13 Specialist VISTA position.

14 And then we also had another interview this
15 morning for a candidate in Denton that I'm hopeful about
16 as well. So I'm just awaiting confirmation from CNCS that
17 they will be able to start their service in Belton, and
18 then hopefully soon for Denton as well.

19 The pandemic definitely slowed down our
20 recruitment efforts, as well as the beginning, but I'm
21 thankful and hopeful for these two candidates.

22 MR. SAMUELS: And I think, you know, Nick
23 deserves a lot of credit sticking with this project
24 throughout this pandemic. And trying to find host sites
25 is really difficult -- to nail someone down. So it's

1 really a big positive that we're finally getting folks
2 placed and in place to help these veterans.

3 As we start to wind down our sixth and final
4 year of our VISTA project, we are hopeful that we'll get
5 granted funding for another six years starting this next
6 May, but we are winding down this six-year stint of the
7 VISTA project.

8 So next will be the Texas Homeless Data Sharing
9 Network. Shrabya Poudyal was hired this summer as our
10 project manager for that implementation, and Joe Schultz
11 is a VISTA with us that has been helping with us, and
12 trying to help us find money and support this project.

13 So Shrabya, I'll let you provide a little
14 update, and Joe, you can jump in, and then I'm sure I'll
15 jump in at some point.

16 MS. POUDYAL: Thanks, Eric. Hello, everyone.
17 So I will be providing some updates on one of THF's
18 program. Like Eric said, Texas Homeless Data Sharing
19 Network, or THDSN, which is a data integration project to
20 connect homeless crisis response systems in the state.

21 At the last meeting in July, Eric shared about
22 the program model and the implementation plan. So after
23 that, now we have drafted and presented a data use
24 agreement to a number of COCs.

25 We have also drafted a business partner

1 agreement during this time. And I'm very happy to share
2 that, so far, we have received two signed data use
3 agreements, one from Texas Balance of State Continuum of
4 Care and from Houston-Harris County COC.

5 We are also close to receiving signed approval
6 from a few other COCs, such as Amarillo and Fort Worth-
7 Tarrant County. In terms of floating and sharing initial
8 data set or anonymized data in the platform, we will be
9 working with our vendor, Green River, and the
10 participating COCs in the next few weeks.

11 Now, I'd like to turn it over to my colleague,
12 Joe, to provide us with funding updates.

13 MR. DOYLE: I've got a question before we let
14 Joe --

15 MS. POUDYAL: Sure.

16 MR. DOYLE: -- take over. Refresh us on what
17 that's going to give us the ability to do, with the work
18 that you've been doing on the data sharing project.

19 MR. SAMUELS: Do y'all want me to take that?
20 Sorry, Shrabya, do you want to take it?

21 MS. POUDYAL: All right.

22 MR. SAMUELS: Go ahead if you want. I mean, I
23 don't want to step on your toes.

24 MR. DOYLE: Let's flip.

25 MS. POUDYAL: I will let you take it, Eric.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. SAMUELS: Okay. So -- well, what this will
3 allow us to do is to look at data on homelessness around
4 the state on a more frequent basis. So for example, at
5 any point in time, we could say, this is the number of
6 chronically homeless folks we have on the street here in
7 Texas, and we could even pinpoint it to a region in Texas.

8 So you could look at things on the aggregate
9 level like that. You could look at data to show trends on
10 a day-to-day basis regarding homelessness. But I think,
11 more importantly, and really what -- the reason for doing
12 this, in my opinion, is that we can help connect people
13 who move across these invisible geographic lines, you
14 know, these COC boundaries.

15 We can help them to find more opportunities and
16 help them to find those opportunities quicker. We have an
17 example of a gentleman who traveled from Houston to El
18 Paso. When he got to El Paso, he was attempting to get
19 into a veterans' program, because he had been on the
20 street and had been chronically homeless.

21 So he was going to be prioritized, you know,
22 right at the top of the list if they could determine his
23 chronicity. It took a phone call from El Paso to me, to
24 the people in Houston, and a few days to figure out that
25 this person, yes, was in fact chronically homeless and

1 could get into that housing.

2 If we had the data sharing network, that could
3 have been done as quickly as that person signing over a
4 release of information and that case manager gathering
5 that person's information and saying, okay, yes, you're
6 eligible for this program. You get into this housing this
7 night.

8 So that -- ultimately, I think that's the
9 reason to do it, but there are a lot of other reasons from
10 a research and data analysis standpoint.

11 MR. DOYLE: Do you --

12 MR. SAMUELS: I'm sorry, Mike.

13 MR. DOYLE: -- think, Eric, that it might be a
14 negative? Let me -- when I talk about this sometimes, I
15 hear somebody say, in rural areas, it's just going to
16 funnel all the money to the urban areas and it's going to
17 leave us out because it's going to make us look like a
18 non-factor.

19 MR. SAMUELS: It's going to make the rural
20 areas look like a non-factor? Is that what you mean?

21 MR. DOYLE: Yeah.

22 MR. SAMUELS: Well, I mean, as you probably can
23 guess, we have a vested interest in not doing that.

24 MR. DOYLE: Right.

25 MR. SAMUELS: Since my agency is also the lead

1 agency for nearly every rural county in Texas. So we're
2 not looking at this -- and I know it's going to happen,
3 but we're not looking at this to influence where money
4 goes.

5 That being said, this data will most likely
6 influence policy which will result in monies going to
7 certain places. But if it turns out that the monies need
8 to go to certain places rather than, you know, Monahans,
9 Texas, then, you know, maybe that's where it needs to go.

10 MR. DOYLE: Yeah.

11 MR. SAMUELS: I'm not worried about us
12 demonstrate -- I'm not worried about us painting a picture
13 that's not true with this. I think we'll have a better
14 set of data to paint a picture that is truer than what
15 we've had.

16 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

17 MR. SAMUELS: But I do hear that worry, and
18 that is something that we've considered as well.

19 MR. DOYLE: As the provider for most of Texas's
20 rural counties, it would be unfortunate if this data was
21 used against you.

22 MR. SAMUELS: Yeah, it would be, but it --
23 ultimately, you know, if there is a greater need in
24 another area, you know, we want to end homelessness in
25 Texas, so we want that money to go to another area. I

1 mean, I want our agency to keep growing, but not at the --
2 you know, not in a way that limits a community's ability
3 to end homelessness, that's for sure.

4 MR. DOYLE: Good attitude. Okay. I'm sorry,
5 Joe.

6 MR. SCHULTZ: Oh, no worries. Yeah. I'll just
7 give a little update on funding for this project we were
8 just talking about, the Texas Data -- Texas Homeless Data
9 Sharing Network. So it's been a bit of a struggle to
10 acquire funding for this project over this year, ever
11 since the virus hit, as many giving agencies are
12 allocating most of their funding towards direct COVID-19
13 relief.

14 And where, you know, we -- where this project
15 could definitely assist with that kind of disaster
16 management, it's -- you know, we can only frame it as more
17 of a long-term solution, a non-immediate solution. So
18 it's been a bit of a struggle, but we are pressing on and
19 feeling good about a couple of opportunities.

20 We've recently applied to AWS for their Imagine
21 Grant for \$100,000 in funding, and we have a few contacts
22 within AWS we've been working with on that proposal. So
23 we're feeling very good about that and we should have a
24 decision in the next month.

25 We've also been working with The Meadows

1 Foundation of Dallas and working with one of their senior
2 program officers on potential funding for the project as
3 well. And we should have a decision made on that by the
4 end of November. So a couple of good opportunities that
5 we have pursued lately.

6 And we are currently working on an application
7 for the Shell Oil Company for additional funding, and a
8 couple other grant opportunities coming up with The Brown
9 Foundation, as well as two different grant opportunities
10 with DASH, Data Across Sectors for Health. So we are
11 trying to, you know, put as many forks in the fire as we
12 can and give ourselves the best opportunity to acquire
13 funding for this project right now.

14 If anybody has any contacts within funding
15 agencies that they would love to -- they would like to
16 share, that would be greatly appreciated.

17 Thank you.

18 MR. DOYLE: So who are you working with at
19 Meadows?

20 MR. SCHULTZ: Mike McCoy at Meadows. Also,
21 Kathy Smith.

22 MR. DOYLE: Yeah. I can -- Mike and I are good
23 friends, so I could probably put in a good word for the
24 application. How much are you asking for?

25 MR. SAMUELS: So that was an interesting --

1 I -- Joe connected me with Mike. I got on the phone with
2 him while I was in the garage at my house, and talked to
3 him about the grant for about five minutes. And he said,
4 send me the grant application you just sent in, and that
5 was our application.

6 So I thought that was pretty interesting. But
7 we're asking for 100,000. We think that Meadows -- they
8 want us to break it down between two years. So we think
9 around 80,000 might be funded, and the other 22 -- 78,000
10 and then 22,000 in the next year.

11 100,000 total is what we've asked for. But
12 yeah, we'd appreciate that, of course.

13 MR. DOYLE: Yeah, yeah. 100,000 is kind of --
14 is Mike's choke point. He feels pretty good that he can
15 get almost anything through under 100. After that, it
16 goes through a different process at Meadows. So that's
17 why he probably wanted you to break it up.

18 But is it just THN -- is this for the data
19 sharing thing?

20 MR. SAMUELS: It is. Yeah. This involves nine
21 of the 11 Texas continua, and as Shrabya was saying, we
22 have two signed up officially now. We actually have two
23 more that are about to sign up, and Dallas probably
24 shortly after.

25 So I mean, that's -- we're talking, what, 218,

1 220, 222 counties right there out of 254. So it's going
2 to be fun trying to make this work.

3 MR. DOYLE: Have you gotten money from Meadows
4 before?

5 MR. SAMUELS: Never.

6 MR. DOYLE: Keep good records. You think that
7 the government's hard about reports. Mike is really hard
8 about that. I am on my second week filling out my report
9 for a partial year's funding. So it's pretty intense.

10 MR. SAMUELS: I believe it. We went through
11 the VISTA reporting as well, so --

12 MR. DOYLE: They're good for --

13 MR. SAMUELS: But yeah. But that's the report
14 on the Data Sharing Network, and hopefully, we can report
15 out more successes the next time we meet.

16 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

17 MR. SAMUELS: Just a few more things. So I
18 don't know if this has been on anybody's radar, but the
19 point in time count, you know, the 2021 point in time
20 count is coming in January. The pandemic is not gone.

21 So we've been working with the Texas COCs on,
22 you know, what we're going to do around that time, and
23 we've been hearing a lot of worries. So we are now
24 working with HUD and the National Alliance to End
25 Homelessness to find out, you know, how we might do this

1 in a safe way, what kind of leeway we might get to do this
2 in a safe way, and I do know conversations are happening
3 in Washington.

4 We haven't really heard anything officially,
5 but we might be hearing something soon about that. So
6 I'll just update you on that.

7 And then last, and definitely not least, our
8 Balance of State team has been working closely with the
9 folks at TDHCA. Thank you all for working so closely with
10 them to try to make sure that we get complete coverage of
11 the state with this Emergency Solutions Grant, COVID in
12 Response funding and CDBG.

13 So I want to make sure to mention the hard work
14 they're doing, because -- all of them, and not just our
15 staff, but the folks at TDHCA are working with our staff
16 to do it. It's a big puzzle to solve right there, and I
17 think we're going to get it done, but it's -- this has
18 been an all-hands-on-deck situation.

19 And I'm really proud of the work they're doing.

20 MR. DOYLE: Good, great. Thank you. Thank
21 you, Eric. All right.

22 Naomi, you've got a couple of things to update
23 us on.

24 MS. CANTU: Yes. I have a few. I want to make
25 sure you can all hear me. I think you can. All right.

1 So let's talk about Emergency Solutions Grant,
2 so ESG and the CARES Act funding first. So ESG/CARES, it
3 came in two rounds. So we're going to call them the first
4 allocation and the second allocation. The first
5 allocation is underwear -- sorry, underway. We are
6 working on contracting with all of the organizations that
7 were awarded currently.

8 We have a few background checks we are still
9 working through as well. But that was about 33 million
10 through that first allocation. For the second allocation,
11 we're talking about 64 million approximately, and we are
12 working on an application process right now.

13 We're working on it, today, yesterday and
14 tomorrow, on the application process, of what that's going
15 to look like. We have limited the activities for
16 ESG/CARES' second allocation to rapid rehousing and
17 homeless prevention, with a small carve-out for homeless
18 management information systems support to support extra
19 reporting requirements required through HUD for ESG/CARES.

20 So we are working with the COC leads, and
21 that's one of the piggybacks of what Eric was talking
22 about, working with the COC leads on running a local
23 competition for anyone who wants to. So that would mean
24 accepting applications on TDHCA's behalf of a plan on how
25 they were going to use homeless prevention and rapid

1 rehousing.

2 Part of this plan includes the use of landlord
3 incentives and landlord outreach since we have heavily
4 weighted those two activities. I want to go ahead and
5 just open up -- make sure I have all my notes in order
6 here.

7 Hold on a second. So we have some scoring
8 criteria that the COC leads hopefully will be using if
9 they choose to and then certainly in local competition.
10 And then the applicants will apply directly to us with an
11 application package once they are recommended for an
12 award. If COC leads do not wish to partake in a local
13 competition, we will reach out to the COC awardees with an
14 offer of funds of the ESG/CARES in terms of the second
15 allocation.

16 I want to talk a little bit about the HUD
17 notice for ESG/CARES. So the HUD notice came out in
18 September of this year. It was -- it outlined the
19 flexibilities and requirements for ESG/CARES. I'm not
20 going to go over each little bit, but just some
21 highlights.

22 They did include landlord incentives. So this
23 is very unique with a HUD program, especially ESG. So the
24 landlord incentives cannot exceed three times the rent
25 charge for the unit, so up to three times the rent. It

1 includes a signing bonus equal to two months of the rent.

2 So a bonus to the landlord, signing bonus,
3 equal up to two months of the rent, security deposits
4 equal up to three months of the rent, the cost of damages
5 or repairs not covered by the security deposit, and paying
6 the cost of extra cleaning or maintenance of a program
7 participant's unit for appliances.

8 So these are extra incentives offered to the
9 landlord, and again they -- I listed four possible
10 incentives, but it's a mix or match, to no more than three
11 times the total rent. Okay. So it's a mix or match.
12 It's not all of them.

13 The HUD notice also allows for hotel/motel
14 costs for program participants, not just in shelters. So
15 anyone who needs to isolate because of COVID can use
16 hotel/motel costs in order not to spread the infection to
17 household members. So that is unique as well.

18 It also allows for handwashing stations and
19 portable bathrooms for street outreach. So these are --
20 it's a unique activity, new through HUD, handwashing
21 stations and portable bathrooms creation through street
22 outreach.

23 It also defines what a temporary shelter is, in
24 terms of extra flexibility to allow for temporary shelter.

25 At this time, I think that TDHCA may fund only one

1 temporary shelter, but we are reaching out and seeing who
2 considers themselves a temporary shelter and what
3 flexibility they're allowed with those.

4 So that is a small update about the HUD notice
5 on ESG/CARES, and the HUD notice and where we are in the
6 application and award process. Any questions on those?

7 MR. DOYLE: I've got one, Naomi. It's just a
8 question that, does this fit? But there's an organization
9 here in Tarrant County that goes out to homeless
10 encampments, those sleeping outdoors, and provides trash
11 pickup in between the very seldom times that the city,
12 Republic or whoever that may be that does that, comes out
13 and helps clean up.

14 Is that something that's eligible under this in
15 some way?

16 MS. CANTU: I would have to do a little bit of
17 research on that. On the surface of it, it sounds like it
18 may not be, because most of our activities are focused on
19 a program participant --

20 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

21 MS. CANTU: -- like serving individuals. But I
22 can do some research if you want to pursue that.

23 MR. DOYLE: When you talked about quarantine at
24 the motels to keep from spreading COVID, there was some --
25 it just popped in my mind that, you know, if trash stays

1 are too long, there's a possibility that it could spread
2 through that type of surfaces, and I didn't know if that
3 would even -- I haven't even -- just thought about it when
4 you mentioned it, so it's nothing that I'm going to
5 explore.

6 I just wanted to -- was just curious.

7 MS. CANTU: Sure. And we will be interested to
8 see how many street outreach activities want to use the
9 handwashing stations or portable bathrooms to work with
10 the communities to create that for people who are living
11 in places not meant for human habitation.

12 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

13 MS. CARDON-BEILER: Naomi, thank you so much
14 for that information. This is Darilynn from Austin.

15 And I wanted to ask, are the COCs the only ones
16 able to apply or bring the resources to our local areas to
17 access the resources, or can it be a combination of
18 existing grantees or new applications and the COCs?

19 MS. CANTU: So it's going to be through the
20 COCs. It's either through the COCs or awarding through a
21 COC awardee, so anyone who has an award for COC funds. If
22 the COC lead agency does not wish to participate, then we
23 would reach out to the COC awardee and offer an award.

24 They only did this in two areas, two COC
25 regions -- three COC regions at -- for round one of

1 ESG/CARES. In the rest of the 11, we had COC lead
2 agencies run the local competition.

3 MS. CARDON-BEILER: Thank you.

4 MS. POHLMAN: Naomi, this is Joyce at Health
5 and Human Services Commission. And thank you for some
6 great work. It's very exciting.

7 I was wondering if any of the landlord
8 incentives will incentivize landlords to take people's
9 justice-involvement histories?

10 MS. CANTU: That's a good question. It's not
11 in the HUD notice that that is what it's specifically for,
12 but they are landlord incentives, so it's an incentive for
13 a reason, right?

14 It's an incentive most likely for people who
15 are hard to house. So hopefully, that can be used to
16 address a whole number of issues.

17 MS. POHLMAN: Thank you.

18 MS. CANTU: Any other questions?

19 (No response.)

20 MS. CANTU: Okay. Are we ready to move on to
21 the next item, because I think I'm speaking on that one as
22 well?

23 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Yes, go right ahead.

24 MS. CANTU: Great. So Homeless Housing and
25 Services Program. We are closing up our 2020 awards and

1 are starting up our 2021 awards. We do have -- we are
2 working to get those started. Many of them are already
3 started.

4 Some of the cities are working on different
5 program designs to be more flexible with the amount of
6 funding already available. So we are working closely with
7 the cities on those. We are also working to close the
8 contracts that we use for COVID response.

9 So this was a few hundred thousand dollars to
10 address the COVID response. We were able to shift some
11 funding around and provide a few extensions, so that is
12 still available in a few of the areas.

13 As a reminder, Homeless Housing and Services
14 Program is a pretty flexible program. It's a State-funded
15 general revenue program, and it funds both general
16 population and there's also a youth set-aside. Youth, as
17 in 24 or under, set-aside. And those go directly to
18 cities, where -- and designated nonprofit, if the city
19 chooses.

20 Any questions about Homeless Housing and
21 Services Program?

22 (No response.)

23 MS. CANTU: Okay.

24 MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Naomi.

25 MS. CANTU: Thank you, Mike.

1 MR. DOYLE: Brooke, Community Development Block
2 Grant?

3 MS. BOSTON: Yes. Hi, everyone. Brooke
4 Boston, TDHCA.

5 I wanted to just share with you guys about one
6 of our other big pots of funds that we got through the
7 CARES Act, which is the Community Development Block Grant,
8 or CDBG.

9 And typically, TDHCA doesn't have CDBG; it
10 normally goes to Texas Department of Agriculture, or in
11 the case of disaster funds, it goes to GLO. In this case,
12 the Governor designated TDHCA to receive all of the
13 distinct allocations of CDBG/CARES. And there were three
14 different allocations, and together, they total \$141.8
15 million.

16 There's other CDBG also coming into the State
17 that goes directly from HUD to entitlements. So this is
18 just the pot coming to Texas. So when we were designing
19 the best activities, you know, trying to figure out the
20 best way to use the money, we focused -- really thinking
21 about the impact that's been occurring on rental
22 households and the rental properties.

23 Based on Census Bureau statistics from mid-
24 July, roughly 23 percent of all Texas renter households
25 had missed their last month's payments. And 39 percent

1 had slight or no confidence that they could pay the
2 ensuing month's payment.

3 On the other side of the table, for the
4 landlords, you know, they're still having to continue to
5 pay mortgages and property taxes and maintenance costs.
6 And with the eviction moratoriums, while that's, you know,
7 a blessing for the tenants, and I'm very grateful it's out
8 there, at the same time, it made things worse in some
9 cases for those properties.

10 So we thought if we were able to assist those
11 households in rental units who have arrears, that would
12 be, you know, a win for stabilizing both the portfolio of
13 properties, as well as helping stabilize those households.

14 So the majority of funds have been programmed into rental
15 assistance activities.

16 105.9 million of the 141 million will go for
17 rental assistance, and I'll break that out for you a
18 little bit more. 40 million of it is required by HUD to
19 go to non-entitlement cities and counties, which means
20 kind of the smaller-than-50,000-population type
21 communities.

22 Excuse me. That will be released through a
23 competitive NOFA, and they'll be able to apply and have
24 access to those funds. Another 40 million, or roughly,
25 will be allocated to larger entitlement cities who already

1 have an existing COVID rental assistance program and are
2 basically in a position to just receive more money through
3 that same kind of conduit of funds.

4 So we are -- there are 74 entitlement
5 communities in Texas. Not all of them have an existing
6 program. We've been surveying them and polling and trying
7 to follow up with them, so I don't know for sure yet.

8 I think the final number will probably be
9 around 30 or 35 entitlements who get a direct allocation
10 and don't have to compete under a NOFA, because they
11 already have a program design in place. And then within
12 each region, if you envision the two activities I just
13 described, you have, you know -- if you envision, let's
14 say, a region of the state, you have a couple of large
15 communities who got their award directly as an
16 entitlement, and then you have some small communities who
17 got awards as non-entitlements.

18 And so it kind of has that Swiss cheese effect.

19 And there's a whole lot of outlying areas that weren't
20 covered in any of that, and so we're also seeking through
21 our notice of funding a regional provider to come in and
22 cover the rest of that. So we're envisioning someone like
23 a community action agency or a council of governments to
24 come in and help.

25 Our commitment, though, is to make sure that we

1 have full, statewide coverage. And so if, for some
2 reason, we don't end up with a regional provider in some
3 parts of the state, we will in fact create a State program
4 at TDHCA without a subrecipient to make sure we cover
5 those remaining areas.

6 Another aspect of the rental assistance program
7 is that it's for six months of assistance, up to five
8 months of that can be in arrears, and then up to one month
9 can be going forward. It could also be that if someone
10 only needed, let's say, one month of arrears, it could
11 also be that, plus five months going forward.

12 We also -- every subrecipient who receives our
13 rental assistance funds will be required to also
14 participate in our Eviction Diversion Program. And that
15 is -- 10 percent of their contract needs to be held for
16 that. And the Eviction Diversion Program is a partnership
17 between TDHCA, the Supreme Court of Texas, and the Office
18 of Court Administration.

19 Some of you have maybe seen headlines about
20 this, because there was a bunch of press going on last
21 week about it. Basically, it allows the courts to put the
22 eviction lawsuit on hold and divert those households and
23 the landlords into this program. And then the -- assuming
24 that the landlord and tenant each meet the requirements of
25 the program, then we make a lump sum payment to the

1 landlord who, in exchange, allows them to remain in their
2 home.

3 The landlord forgives any late fees or
4 penalties, and then the case is dismissed. And then it's
5 also made confidential so that it's not put on their
6 record for any future searches on that household. So it's
7 as though it didn't -- it's basically as though it
8 never -- the process hadn't started with the court. So
9 that's kind of the rental assistance focus, the 105
10 million.

11 And then some of the remaining funds left.
12 We're putting 21 million towards a State match
13 contribution for FEMA-eligible expenses relating to food
14 banks. Early on in the pandemic, TDEM expended
15 133 million on food distribution activities, and they were
16 able to get reimbursement for 75 percent of that from
17 FEMA, but we were not -- they weren't able to get the last
18 25 percent because it was expected that had to be a State
19 contribution. And so 21 million of our funds will go
20 to -- towards that.

21 And then lastly, we are doing -- for people
22 with disabilities, we set aside \$5 million specifically
23 for providers of people with disabilities. So you can
24 envision a group home, although we are not intending to
25 limit this only to group homes.

1 But for costs, anything from having increased
2 staffing costs, and either trying to retain staff or hire
3 new staff, we can pay for the cost of PPE and then we can
4 also reimburse them for their costs associated with having
5 to house one person or the other in a quarantining
6 situation. So if a group home, you know, needed to remove
7 one person from the group home so that everyone can be
8 quarantined apart from each other, the costs associated
9 with that.

10 We also have a small pot going for broadband
11 planning. And then actually I just got okayed today
12 that -- so this whole plan for these funds went out for
13 comment last week for five days.

14 And one of the comments we got was a request to
15 put some funding towards Disability Rights Texas for them
16 to help people with disabilities with potential reasonable
17 accommodations or challenges they are facing. And I just
18 got approval from my boss, Bobby, to go ahead and put some
19 of our added funds towards that as well. So that will be
20 an addition to our plan that we turn into HUD.

21 And that's it. But I'm happy to answer any
22 questions.

23 MR. DOYLE: Questions for Brooke?

24 (No response.)

25 MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Brooke. That's quite

1 interesting.

2 MS. BOSTON: Yeah.

3 MR. DOYLE: All right. Any other updates from
4 the members?

5 MS. LOPEZ: I have some updates, if this is a
6 good time.

7 MR. DOYLE: Yes, Cal. Go right ahead.

8 MS. LOPEZ: Perfect. Well, good afternoon,
9 everyone. I have -- I'm going to give you updates about
10 several resources that we've been developing at the
11 agency. I have provided them all to Danny, and he'll be
12 sending them out with the meeting minutes.

13 First of all, I'm excited to share that we have
14 created a 2020-21 Engaging Highly Mobile and At-Risk
15 Student Guide. TEA released this guide out into the field
16 in late August, and the guide includes information on how
17 our school districts can utilize reporting and data to
18 create strategic plans to help locate any students that
19 they have lost contact with since COVID-19 has ensued or
20 have not been engaged virtually due to COVID-19.

21 And it also provides some strategies and best
22 practices on mitigating any transitional barriers to
23 support academic achievement. It goes into dropout
24 prevention, working student support teams, home visit
25 safety procedures and protocols, innovative outreach

1 efforts, and how to establish any protocols for concerns
2 if a school district is out doing any type of home visits.

3 And then, of course, effective practices to
4 support student basic needs. So it's a great resource,
5 and we've provided the link for it. We've gotten some
6 great feedback out in the field from our school districts
7 about that, and we've also been presenting on the content
8 as well.

9 I also provided to Danny several COVID-19-
10 specific tools that we've created. One is an FAQ document
11 on guidance for students experiencing homelessness, a
12 tool -- identification tool for school staff and how to --
13 I think there's three tools, one specifically on
14 motel/hotel, one about students and families that live in
15 shelters. It has another about students living in
16 doubled-up situations, and then just overall guidance for
17 our school districts in how to be working with our
18 families and identifying our families during COVID-19.

19 The posters also that I provided in the last
20 meeting, we have created a digital version so that our
21 school districts have access to them. They're able to
22 print them or to email them to local shelters, food
23 pantries, community stakeholders.

24 We've also been providing trainings in which to
25 show them how to work with our apartment complexes in

1 posting this information, such as in the laundromat area
2 or mailboxes, for families to know that if they are maybe
3 experiencing some difficulties, that there is a program
4 there to support them and their children, or if they've
5 had other family members move in with them because they
6 have lost housing due to COVID-19. So I wanted to share
7 all those great tools.

8 Again, Danny has been provided all those things
9 to share with everyone today after the meeting. I also
10 wanted to give an update on our Texas Education for
11 Homeless Children and Youth Program Summit that we did in
12 partnership with the Texas Network for Youth Services.

13 This occurred last month. It was a two-day,
14 virtual summit that occurred September 15th through the
15 17th. And we are very excited to say it was a huge
16 success, given that we -- this is kind of the first time
17 for the agency giving a virtual summit like this.

18 We had over 1,200 people register for the
19 summit. So that was much higher than our targeted goal.
20 Our original goal was to have 500, and we had over 1,200
21 people to 1,300 people register for the summit.

22 We were able to have some great keynote
23 speakers. Liz Murray, the inspiration from behind the
24 film, *From Homeless to Harvard*, and the co-founder and
25 executive director of The Arthur Project, was our first

1 keynote speaker of the day, and she was quite
2 inspirational.

3 And on the second day, we had Dr. Victor Rios,
4 who is an associate dean of social sciences and a
5 professor of sociology at the University of California, as
6 our second keynote speaker. Both have -- they had
7 experienced homelessness themselves as teenagers.

8 And then we had a third keynote panel that
9 included myself, a service provider, and we had a young
10 lady who had herself lived homeless experience as well.
11 So we've been very happy with the outcome of the summit.
12 We only charged \$25.

13 Due to the virtual platform, we did have to
14 close registration a week in advance. And so TNOYS, in
15 partnership with TEA, will be having a follow-up, one-day
16 training in November that will be open to anybody who
17 attended the conference, and anybody who was unable to get
18 registered prior to the deadline.

19 So I will be providing that information to
20 Danny, as well as -- we're trying to finalize the date for
21 that. We anticipate it will be the week of November 16,
22 and it will have a focus on supporting youth engagement
23 and unaccompanied youth. So we're excited to share that.

24

25 And then my last update is, I've provided a

1 flyer for our Highly Mobile and At-Risk Student Program
2 Division webinar that will occur Thursday, November 5,
3 from 1:00 to 3:00. Topics that will be covered during the
4 webinar are Mental and Behavioral Health Updates,
5 information on Safe and Supportive Schools, Highly Mobile
6 Student Engagement, Transition Assistance for Foster Care
7 and Students Experiencing Homelessness, and other division
8 program updates.

9 And then lastly, I wanted to share that we are
10 in the process of working with our grants department at
11 the -- at TEA. We will be re-competing out our
12 competitive subgrant that is for school districts and our
13 Regional Educational Service Centers.

14 It is on a three-year grant cycle, and so we
15 will be competing this out early spring of 2021. And I
16 anticipate, by the time that we meet again, I will have
17 more information about that application.

18 MR. DOYLE: Great. Thank you, Cal. Any
19 questions for Cal?

20 (No response.)

21 MR. DOYLE: Any other updates from any other
22 member agencies?

23 (No response.)

24 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Are there any public
25 comments? I don't guess anybody filled out any paperwork.

1 It would be hard to do.

2 (No response.)

3 MR. DOYLE: Anything in closing?

4 (No response.)

5 MR. DOYLE: Next meeting is when, Danny?

6 MR. SHEA: So I don't know if we have it
7 scheduled specifically yet. It should be in January --

8 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

9 MR. SHEA: -- and we can go ahead to reach out
10 to everyone, if that's cool.

11 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Well, stay tuned for more
12 information about that. All right. It's a privilege to
13 be with you guys. Y'all do such great work, and you keep
14 it up and be safe out there. Okay?

15 If nothing else, I'll declare this meeting
16 adjourned.

17 (Whereupon, at 2:03 p.m., the meeting was
18 adjourned.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MEETING OF: Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless

LOCATION: via GoToWebinar

DATE: October 20, 2020

I do hereby certify that the foregoing pages, numbers 1 through 44, inclusive, are the true, accurate, and complete transcript prepared from the verbal recording made by electronic recording by Nancy H. King before the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

DATE: October 23, 2020

(Transcriber)

On the Record Reporting
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