



Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless  
Quarterly Meeting – April 26, 2022  
Meeting Minutes

A transcript from the electronic recording of the meeting may be found here:  
<http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/tich/meetings.htm>

**Members present:**

#	Member Agency	Representative	Attendance (Yes/No)
1	Office of the Governor appointee, Cornerstone Network (TICH Chair)	Mike Doyle	Yes
2	Office of the Lt. Governor	<i>vacant</i>	n/a
3	Office of the Speaker of the House	<i>vacant</i>	n/a
4	Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)	Helen Eisert	Yes
5	HHSC	Suzie Brady	No
6	HHSC	Claire Irwin	Yes
7	Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ)	Sherri Cogbill	Yes
8	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)	Valinda Bolton	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)	Cal Lopez	No
12	Texas Department of Juvenile Justice (TJJJ)	Marqus Butler	Yes
13	Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)	Blake Harris	No
14	Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)	Kelly Davis	No

<There are currently 12 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	Yes
2	TNOYS	Ann-Charlotte Proffitt	No
3	TNOYS	Lauren Rose	No
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 Voyles	Yes
9	Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV)	Molly Thibodeaux	No

**Administrative support:** Sean Lonergan (TDHCA), Jeremy Stremmer (TDHCA)

**I. Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Mike Doyle called the meeting to order via GoToWebinar at 1:35 pm, and confirmed a quorum was present.

**II. Remarks from the Chair**

Mike Doyle remarked that distribution of COVID-19 pandemic relief funds are winding down and thanked TICH participants who helped distribute those funds to assist eligible recipients in need.

**III. Approval of draft minutes from the January 25, 2022 TICH Meeting**

Mike Doyle then called for a motion to approve the January 25, 2022 minutes. Naomi Cantu made a motion to approve the minutes, and Claire Irwin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no comments.

**IV. Election of TICH Chairperson (*Voting Item*)**

Mike Doyle next called for a motion for nominations to chair the TICH this upcoming year. Naomi Cantu made a motion to nominate Mike Doyle as TICH Chairperson for the coming year, and Brooke Boston seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and with no comments.

**V. Updates from Member Agencies**

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

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

Rosy Falcon, Homeless Programs Manager at TDHCA, first presented on ESG CARES Act funds. Ms. Falcon announced that HUD recently issued Notice PIH 2022-06 (HA) which affected deadlines and requirements for ESG CARES funds. The notice replaced the initial

March 31, 2022 deadline for 80% fund expenditure with a June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022 deadline that requires only 50% of funds be drawn from the Integrated Disbursement and Information System (IDIS). This notice also extends the overall expenditures deadline from September 30, 2022 to September 30, 2023 for direct line services and December 31, 2023 for administration and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) funds. Ms. Falcon also mentioned the possibility of receiving additional funds that would have an expenditure deadline of June 30, 2024.

Ms. Falcon next provided an update on the regular ESG allocation. She indicated that 91.02% of the 2020 allocation was expended and 32.23% of the 2021 allocation was expended. She also announced that her team has completed and presented proposed award dates for the ESG program. Ms. Falcon then stated that the public comment period has closed for the new ESG program rules and that her team is preparing staff responses to each comment. She outlined several major changes for which they did receive comments. The first significant change is a proposal to set aside no less than 70% of the total allocation to offer continuing awards to high performing annual ESG sub-recipients. The second significant change is a proposal to simplify the competitive award and funding process to two competitions: a regional competition where any funds remaining after the continuing award process will remain within that fund's respective Continuum of Care region, and a statewide competition available to any applicants not funded under the regional competition.

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

Naomi Cantu, Director of HOME-ARP at TDHCA, next presented an update on the HOME-ARP Program. The HOME-ARP Program serves: households experiencing homelessness; households at-risk of homelessness at up to 50% Area Median Income (AMI); survivors of domestic violence: formerly homeless households; and households at or below 30% AMI with severe housing cost burden. The program is composed of \$132 million programmed to fund rental housing, non-congregate shelter, capacity building, non-profit operating funds, and administration.

Ms. Cantu next announced that the HOME-ARP Allocation Plan was approved by the TDHCA Board on April 14, 2022 and submitted to HUD on April 15. TDHCA received it back from HUD on April 22. She and her team are currently updating and clarifying some of the questions HUD had regarding the report, then they will resubmit. Once they receive HUD approval, TDHCA will release Notices of Funding Availability (NOFAs), the first of which will be for a \$10 million National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF) set aside for HOME-ARP. These set aside funds will help subsidize NHTF units with significant cost increases. Ms. Cantu also anticipated an approximately \$40 million NOFA for rental assistance that will be released in summer 2022.

Chairman Doyle asked for clarification regarding whether HOME-ARP funds could be used to fund capital expenses for a planned affordable housing project in Tarrant County for which a shelter is raising capital. Ms. Cantu reiterated that HOME-ARP funds can fund rental housing as an eligible activity, and that the shelter developing the project should keep an eye out for the rental housing NOFA that TDHCA plans to release this summer so the shelter can apply for funding.

iii. **Emergency Housing Vouchers**

Spencer Duran, Director of the Section 811 Program at TDHCA, next presented on the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) Program. The EHV Program is funded by HUD and is composed of Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers that are provided to public housing authorities (PHAs). EHV's are limited to four target populations: people experiencing homelessness; people at risk of homelessness; persons fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or human trafficking; and recently homeless families.

Mr. Duran stated that HUD awarded over 4,500 EHV's to PHAs across Texas, with TDHCA receiving approximately 800 vouchers from that total. To distribute these vouchers, Mr. Duran indicated that he and his team plan to award vouchers to service areas throughout the state without an EHV award or a PHA, an initiative that was approved by the TDHCA Board. TDHCA has partnered with Texas Homeless Network (THN) and Heart of Texas Homeless Coalition to help fill these service area gaps. THN has housed two households thus far, however, Mr. Duran stated that he and his team expect to house a much larger proportion of people with these vouchers once the referral pipeline is better established.

Chairman Doyle asked a question requesting more information about the EHV service area in Denton County. Mr. Duran responded that the service area without EHV's in Denton County is composed of the areas outside of the City of Denton, since the City has its own incumbent EHV program. Mr. Duran also clarified that TDHCA can still award EHV's in the City of Addison and City of Denton if voucher gaps remain in those municipalities.

Eric Samuels, Executive Director of THN, thanked TDHCA for its partnership in rolling out THN's share of EHV's, then asked Mr. Duran to confirm that two households were served as of the TICH meeting. Mr. Duran confirmed and also clarified that there are approximately 30 households possessing vouchers that have a 120 day window to find housing. Mr. Duran also mentioned that there are additional funds through TDHCA's Housing Stability Services program that the agency has invested to supplement EHV's.

## **(b) Other Agency Updates**

### **i. Texas Network of Youth Services/ Texas Education Agency**

Fedora Galasso, Executive Director of Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) provided an update for TNOYS and Texas Education Agency (TEA) on behalf of Cal Lopez, TEA McKinney-Vento Homeless Program Coordinator in Ms. Lopez's absence. Ms. Galasso first announced that TEA and TNOYS are co-hosting the Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth program summit August 29 through August 31 this year, and that the call proposal for this summit is now available. Participation is intended for all school professionals that work directly with youth and families experiencing homelessness, and Ms. Galasso encouraged anyone who falls under this criteria to consider participating in the summit. The summit will include both in-person and virtual programming, and the location is still to be determined.

Ms. Galasso next announced an update on TNOYS' relaunch of its statewide collaborative on youth homelessness. She stated that 120 participants joined the call, including the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness to discuss the strategic planning process and hold listening sessions around youth homelessness that would inform the new federal strategic plan. State agencies also joined the call, including TDHCA representative Naomi Cantu and

representation from the Office of the Governor, to provide updates. Ms. Galasso announced the next meeting for this collaborative will be held June 16. This meeting will include work groups focused on policy and youth homeless demonstration project sites.

Ms. Galasso last reminded the TICH of TNOYS' upcoming annual conference at the end of May that will focus on topics pertaining to youth experiencing homelessness.

## **VI. Homeless Individual Camping, HB 1925 Update**

Elizabeth Yevich, Director of the Housing Resource Center at TDHCA announced that there are no updates regarding HB 1925, as the agency has not received any plans or reports to date. Ms. Yevich proceeded to introduce Sean Lonergan, Homeless Policy Advisor at TDHCA in its Housing Resource Center division, who is developing a new state strategic plan to address homelessness alongside Brian Thornton, Senior Policy Analyst in TDHCA's Department of Policy and Public Affairs.

## **VII. New Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness Update**

Mr. Lonergan provided an update regarding his progress developing the new strategic plan to address homelessness following Ms. Yevich's introduction. Mr. Lonergan first emphasized that he is developing this plan in response to a need identified by TDHCA executive staff to revamp the first state strategic plan to address homelessness called *Pathways Home*. This new strategic plan aims to accommodate the present context pertaining to homeless program and service delivery, federal and state policy, and challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. To provide additional context, Mr. Lonergan then summarized the goals of the initial *Pathway Home* report, organized by four categories: affordable housing and supportive services; homelessness prevention; data, research, and analysis; and state infrastructure. Mr. Lonergan plans to reassess the objectives and strategies outlined within these categories in the new strategic plan.

Mr. Lonergan stated that he plans to gather organizational and TICH feedback to inform the first draft of the report. He plans to conduct informational interviews with homeless service providers and TICH membership, circulate a retrospective survey assessing TICH membership's thoughts on the objectives and strategies set forth by the *Pathways Home* report, and form working groups composed of TICH members and advisory members to inform the categories set forth in the new report.

Mr. Lonergan proceeded to detail each research and feedback component that will inform the new report. He first summarized examples of national scale and Texas-specific reports, data, and best practices that he has assessed to substantiate the new strategic plan. Next, he spoke more about the informational interviews and survey that will inform the report. The feedback gathered from the survey is designed to serve as the baseline for work group discussion, while also assessing the extent to which state agencies and service providers align on their view of homeless service provisions. The informational interviews are designed to glean more in-depth and context-specific feedback of the same criteria.

Mr. Lonergan then transitioned to summarize general and public hearing timelines. He first highlighted that TDHCA staff hope to have the report published no later than January 2023, prior to when the next

state legislative session starts. Regarding public hearings, Mr. Lonergan seeks to glean feedback at venues across the state once a first draft of the report is released. These public hearings must be held in-person in at least one location in a rural county and one location in an urban county to comply with state law.

**(a) Working Group Formation for the New Strategic Plan**

Mr. Lonergan next covered working group formation. Work groups will be formed to function as a collaborative brainstorming forum among TICH members and advisory members that will inform the recommendation framework of the new strategic plan. Work groups will be composed of at least three categories: Affordable Housing and Supportive Services; Homelessness Prevention; Data, Research, and Analysis; and a potential fourth category that may cover subpopulations or emergency response planning. Mr. Lonergan then disclosed that ultimate decision-making authority regarding which recommendations make final publication of the report lie with the Office of the Governor, and that these work group meetings are subject to Open Meetings Act requirements.

Mr. Lonergan then asked Elizabeth Yevich to facilitate the work group formation process. Ms. Yevich suggested that Mr. Lonergan could ask for participation from TICH membership via email following the TICH meeting to better facilitate work group formation.

Naomi Cantu asked a question regarding how often each work group would meet. Mr. Lonergan speculated that each work group would meet twice with each meeting taking an hour to ninety minutes in length. He expected the meetings would take place over the course of May and June. Ms. Yevich stepped in to clarify that both TICH members and advisory members are eligible to participate in the work groups. Megan Sylvester, Federal Compliance Counsel at TDHCA also clarified that these work groups would not be public meetings, which is the reason for the limitation on TICH member participation. General discussion ensued.

Chairman Doyle then asked for TICH members and advisory members who are participating in one or more work groups to notify Mr. Lonergan by Friday, May 6 of their intention to participate. General discussion pertaining to scheduling logistics ensued.

Fedora Galasso posed a question asking whether the public meetings schedule is finalized. Mr. Lonergan indicated that it is not finalized. Ms. Galasso posed a follow up question asking when the public meetings schedule would be finalized. Mr. Lonergan answered that TICH staff would finalize it as soon as possible, and that he would communicate the details of this schedule to TICH members and advisory members when they become available. Ms. Galasso asked a final follow up question regarding where a subpopulations category would fit into the new report framework. Mr. Lonergan indicated that this matter is still to be determined, but suggested that either a subpopulation theme would be interspersed throughout the report or a fourth category devoted to subpopulations would be created instead.

Chairman Doyle requested that TICH members and advisory members make an effort to attend the public hearings informing this strategic plan, if possible.

## **VIII. Update from Texas Homeless Network (THN)**

Eric Samuels next provided general updates from THN to the Council. Mr. Samuels announced that THN just finished registering all 215 Balance of State counties for the Fiscal Year 2022 Continuum of Care (CoC) competition with an annual renewal demand of approximately \$12.7 million. He also communicated that THN has seen that some CoCs are witnessing increased unsheltered Point in Time (PIT) Counts, while other CoCs are seeing increased sheltered counts. THN seeks to aggregate the numbers from all CoC PIT reports to assess the extent to which these trends exist on a broader scale. Mr. Samuels hopes to have this analysis completed by the next quarterly TICH meeting.

Mr. Samuels then reminded the Council that the THN Conference on Ending Homelessness will be held in Austin this year, and that anyone seeking to present at the conference can still submit a presenter application.

Mr. Samuels last announced that the THN technical assistance team has grown and, as a result, so have training provisions, which are up 11 percent from last year. He also announced that, even though THN is not a direct service provider, it has received an influx in calls from people around Texas experiencing or at-risk of homelessness who are seeking referral assistance. He emphasized most calls are coming from Travis and Williamson County, and that THN refers these callers to its CoC partners across the state. Mr. Samuels then probed the Council for questions, of which there were none.

### **(a) Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network Project**

Aubrey Fetzer, Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network (THDSN) Associate at THN then stepped in to speak on THDSN updates. Ms. Fetzer first announced that the public-facing dashboard summarizing THN's Statewide Homelessness Report is up on the THN website, and that THN is working with partners to refine the dashboard before publicly marketing it.

Ms. Fetzer next provided an update on THDSN's governance structure, emphasizing that there are two spots available on each CoC participating in THDSN, one CoC voting member representative and a second lived experience representative, meaning an individual who has experienced homelessness. Mr. Samuels chimed in to mention that THDSN encourages state agency representatives to attend governance meetings in a non-voting advisory capacity. He also mentioned that Texas Veterans Commission is a regular advisory participant in these monthly meetings. Ms. Fetzer then emphasized that THN is recruiting more lived experience participants, and introduced new THDSN Project Manager Anya Taylor as facilitating this membership growth.

Ms. Fetzer then provided an update on the four CoCs that THN is still recruiting for THDSN participation: Austin/ Travis County, Brazos Valley, Wichita Falls, and San Antonio. THN has successfully contacted three of these four CoCs, the Wichita Falls CoC being the exception. Ms. Fetzer indicated that both the Austin/ Travis County CoC and Brazos Valley CoC are interested in participating, but still face obstacles that THN is helping address. Barriers to participation included lack of capacity for the Brazos Valley CoC, while the Austin/ Travis County CoC required updates to return on investment data from its older clients.

Regarding data sources for THDSN, THN has received data from four of its seven member CoCs, and still is awaiting data uploads from its 3 newest CoC members. To facilitate the data upload

process, Ms. Fetzter stated that THN has submitted a grant application seeking funding for automated CoC data uploading compatible with THN's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).

Ms. Fetzter next revealed the latest update of the public-facing dashboard. Eric Samuels stepped in to clarify that the total number of people experiencing homelessness stated on the dashboard only covers the seven member CoCs and does not include all of the people in agencies that do not use HMIS. Mr. Samuels also clarified that the steep decline of people experiencing homelessness in 2020 is a result of shelters reducing maximum occupancy to comply with COVID-19 safety requirements. Ms. Fetzter reiterated that THN is not marketing this dashboard because it is working with two of its board members and its data warehouse vendor Green River to make the data more accessible and improve the web page's layout design. Ms. Fetzter anticipated that this dashboard will be updated quarterly, contingent on whether THN can obtain grant funding to facilitate data collection.

Regarding funding development, Ms. Fetzter mentioned that though THN did not receive funding from the Applied Materials grant application they submitted, it did unofficially receive funding from the Amazon Health Equity Grant that THN applied for in November 2021. Ms. Fetzter concluded her update by reintroducing THDSN Project Manager Anya Taylor, who THN expects to participate in future quarterly TICH meetings.

Following Ms. Fetzter's presentation, Eric Samuels offered two additional updates. First, he announced that THN is entering into a data sharing agreement with University of North Texas pertaining to homeless population migration from urban to rural areas. Second, Mr. Samuels announced that THN is trying to develop a Medicaid data matching project in partnership with the Health and Human Services Commission, but it is too early to announce any concrete collaboration.

Chairman Doyle thanked Mr. Samuels and THN for their hard work developing THDSN, and commented that THDSN will provide more credibility to future homeless data collection in Texas.

#### **IX. Notification of Meetings Return to In Person**

Following Ms. Galasso's updates for TNOYS and TEA, Elizabeth Yevich announced that, per directive from TDHCA's Executive Director and Legal team, quarterly TICH meetings will return to an in-person format starting with the next meeting. Ms. Yevich also stated that TICH members can call-in during these in-person meetings in order to count towards quorum, as long as they abide by certain requirements.

Megan Sylvester stepped in to clarify Ms. Yevich's guidance regarding quorum for in-person TICH quarterly meetings. Ms. Sylvester stated that statute requires a TICH member to reside 20 miles or more away from where the meeting is held in order for their presence to count for quorum. Chairman Doyle assented and announced that the next TICH quarterly meeting will be scheduled in adherence to these requirements.

#### **IX. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.



## **X. Closing Comments**

Chairman Doyle thanked the TICH for their vote of confidence to be able to Chair the TICH again. He wished everyone a safe rest of the week and stated that Sean Lonergan will relay the date for the next TICH quarterly meeting once it is scheduled.

## **XI. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:56 p.m.