



Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
Quarterly Meeting – July 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	No
8	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)	Valinda Bolton	No
9	Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA), Housing Finance representative	Brooke Boston	No
10	TDHCA, Community Affairs representative	Naomi Cantu	Yes
11	Texas Education Agency (TEA)	Cal Lopez	Yes
12	Texas Department of Juvenile Justice (TJJJ)	Marqus Butler	No
13	Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)	Blake Harris (by Anthony Bustos)	Yes
14	Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)	Kelly Davis	Yes

<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	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)	Molly Voyles	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 1:37 pm, and noted that only six Council members were present initially. Chairman Doyle proceeded to adjourn the TICH meeting due to lack of quorum, then called a TICH committee meeting in its place. Upon the conclusion of Rosy Falcon’s agenda item Helen Eisert entered the meeting, at which point Chairman Doyle adjourned the TICH committee meeting, reconvened the TICH meeting, and confirmed that a quorum was present.

II. Remarks from the Chair

Mike Doyle remarked that the Office of the Governor has expressed a heightened interest in the new TICH Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness and that he is eager to convey updates to the Office of the Governor regarding workgroup progress and the timeline of the Plan.

III. Approval of draft minutes from the April 26, 2022 TICH Meeting

After Mike Doyle confirmed that a quorum was present, he then called for a motion to approve the April 26, 2022 minutes. Naomi Cantu made a motion to approve the minutes, and Helen Eisert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no comments.

IV. Updates from Member Agencies

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

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

Rosy Falcon, Homeless Programs Manager at TDHCA, first presented on ESG annual funds, ESG CARES Act funds, and HHSP annual funds. Ms. Falcon announced that TDHCA has expended 73.4% of its original \$97.9 million allocation in both rounds of ESG CARES Act funds, well above the national and statewide average expenditure rates of 61.1% and

62.2%. Ms. Falcon next announced that her team is still awaiting a reallocation amount notice from HUD of unspent ESG CARES funds, and in the interim is working to identify high performing subrecipients to which this funding can be applied once Ms. Falcon and her team receive the notice.

Ms. Falcon next provided an update on ESG annual funds. TDHCA has expended 92.3% of its 2020 annual funds and 60.6% of its 2021 funds and has recently undergone several changes to its application process. The new application process for 2022 annual funds includes a 70% set-aside for continuing awards. This application period for the set-aside funds closed, and out of the \$9.3 million total allocation, \$5.1 million was accepted by 26 subrecipients within six Continuum of Care (CoC) regions. The remaining \$4.2 million was available for competition until July 29 with an anticipated contract term from November 1, 2022 through October 31, 2023.

Ms. Falcon last provided an update for the 2023 allocation of HHSP annual funds. Out of the approximately \$6.2 million total allocation, \$4.7 million is designated for the general set-aside and \$1.5 million is targeted for the youth set-aside. These funds are available to the nine cities across Texas that meet the population requirements for this entitlement funding.

Chairman Doyle asked whether Wichita Falls and El Paso are among the nine cities entitled to HHSP funding. Ms. Falcon replied no to the former and yes to the latter. Chairman Doyle asked a second question seeking clarification regarding the manner in which the ESG CARES recaptured funds will be distributed. Abigail Versyp, Director of Single Family and Homeless Programs at TDHCA, stepped in to clarify that TDHCA will only receive ESG CARES recaptured funds if a county responsible for expending ESG CARES funds did not meet HUD's expenditure requirements and if no city within that county met the same requirements, and vice-versa. Ms. Versyp anticipated that funds from Hidalgo County, Brownsville, and Corpus Christi will likely be recapture by TDHCA, but none from the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

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

Naomi Cantu, Director of HOME-ARP at TDHCA, next presented an update on the HOME-ARP Program. 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 first provided updates on the rental housing funds for which \$56 million are programmed, including \$10 million set-aside for applicants that have already been awarded National Housing Trust Funds (NHTF). Ms. Cantu and her team received five requests for application for this set-aside, and hope to release the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the remaining \$49 million later in the summer, which will include approximately \$3 million in funding for nonprofit capacity building and operating costs (NCO) along with any leftover funds from the NHTF set-aside.

Ms. Cantu stated that the rental NOFA is expected to primarily serve as gap financing for low-income housing tax credit projects or other awards, but also acknowledged that HOME-ARP only developments may also be funded. The NCO NOFA is expected to fund capacity building for a large scale non-congregate shelter of 200 units or more. A year after the

capacity building has been built Ms. Cantu anticipated that she and her team will release a non-congregate shelter NOFA.

Chairman Doyle asked Ms. Cantu to define the term “non-congregate shelter” in the HOME-ARP context. Ms. Cantu clarified that non-congregate shelter means separate rooms for each household that contain a sanitary facility in each room. The funding for non-congregate shelter is eligible to cover capital costs for reconstruction, new construction, or rehabilitation, but is not eligible to cover operational expenses of the shelter. These units are also not subject to lease or occupancy agreements.

iii. **Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Housing Stability Services (HSS) Funds**

Cate Tracz, Director of Housing Stability Services at TDHCA, next provided an update on the Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) Housing Stability Services (HSS) program. The ERA HSS program is allocated through two pots of funding, ERA1 and ERA2. Eligible activities for this program include case management, document recovery services, transportation, housing navigation, landlord incentives, hotel/ motel deposits, child care, food, and clothing. These funds may not be used for direct rental or utility assistance.

Ms. Tracz and her team at TDHCA have expended approximately 70% of TDHCA’s \$71 million in ERA1 funds, which have served over 33,000 households with housing stability services. ERA2 funds were awarded to 46 subrecipients, many of which also received ERA1 funding. Ms. Tracz mentioned for Chairman Doyle’s information that Presbyterian Night Shelter was one of the subrecipients that received both ERA1 and ERA2 funds. General discussion on this matter ensued.

Ms. Tracz closed by clarifying the eligibility requirements for this funding, which mandates that recipients are households at 80% AMI or below and at-risk of experiencing homelessness or housing instability.

(b) Other Agency Updates

i. **Texas Education Agency**

Cal Lopez, McKinney-Vento Homeless Program Coordinator at Texas Education Agency (TEA), next provided grant funding updates for TEA. Ms. Lopez announced that TEA has increased its funding to support Regional Educational Service Center Capacity Grants from \$50,000 to \$75,000 to support statewide regional technical assistance, professional development, and resources. TEA also increase its competitive grant amount from \$8.3 million to \$8.7 million, allocated to 92 grantees that collectively serve 213 school districts.

Ms. Lopez also mentioned that TEA launched its first ever formula-funded eGrant and has awarded or is in the process of awarding 78% of its \$55 million allocation. Last, Ms. Lopez reminded the Council that the Texas Education for Homeless Children and Youth Summit will be held Monday, August 29 through Wednesday, August 31 at the San Marcos Conference Center with both virtual and in-person attendance options. TEA is co-hosting this conference with Texas Network of Youth Services, and Fedora Galasso mentioned that she would circulate more information about the conference to the Council for members who are interested in attending.

ii. **Texas Network of Youth Services**

Fedora Galasso, Executive Director of Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS), next provided an update on TNOYS' Statewide Collaborative on Youth Homelessness. One of the Collaborative subgroups is focused on Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) implementation, technical assistance, and training. There are five YHDP program across Texas in Austin, Waco, San Antonio, Tarrant County, and Harris County. Chairman Doyle asked Ms. Galasso to clarify where the THDP program operates in Tarrant County. Ms. Galasso clarified that since YHDP funding is run through Tarrant County Homeless Coalition, it covers the entirety of the CoC service area.

Ms. Galasso also mentioned that the Collaborative has a policy working group focused on the policy needs for services and supports to youth experiencing homelessness. Last, Ms. Galasso stated that TNOYS is finishing up conducting listening sessions across its statewide network of providers that work directly with youth, many of whom are experiencing homelessness or with lived experience, and plans to share the feedback from these listening sessions with the Council soon.

Chairman Doyle mentioned he was interested in learning more about the YHDP projects in Tarrant County. General discussion ensued.

V. New Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness Update

(a) Update on Feedback for New Strategic Plan (Organizational Interviews, Survey, Virtual Roundtables)

Sean Lonergan, Homeless Policy Advisor at TDHCA, next provided an update on feedback consolidation for the new TICH State Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness (the Plan). Mr. Lonergan prioritized this agenda item to discuss progress regarding feedback that he and his team have gathered via organizational interview, a survey, and virtual roundtables.

Mr. Lonergan first stated that the categorical structure of the Plan will be tentatively composed of three core categories: affordable housing and supportive services, homelessness prevention, and data, research, and analysis. These categories are in line with first *Pathways Home* strategic plan, with the exception of the state infrastructure category, which Mr. Lonergan and his team elected to integrate into the three core categories. Mr. Lonergan also mentioned that the report would focus on two supplementary themes, one theme focused on emergency response planning and the other focused on addressing disparities across different subpopulations. Chairman Doyle asked if these themes would be addressed in the core categories, and Mr. Lonergan affirmed that they would be integrated into those sections.

Regarding timeline for the Plan, Mr. Lonergan and his team are targeting January 2023 for the publication of the final product to coincide with the new state legislative session and late September or early October for the release of a first draft. In the time between publications, Mr. Lonergan and his staff plan to hold ten public hearings across the state to gather public comment that will inform the final draft of the Plan.

Chairman Doyle asked if Eric Samuels planned to hold an event where attendees at the Texas Homeless Network (THN) Annual Conference, also the venue for the next TICH quarterly meeting,

could have the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft plan. General discussion regarding scheduling for this feedback ensued, concluding with Chairman Doyle requesting that an agenda item focused on feedback for the draft Plan be included at the next TICH quarterly meeting.

Mr. Lonergan next detailed the extent of the feedback he and his team have gathered. Mr. Lonergan and his team have conducted semi-structured interviews with over 30 organizations and agencies involved in the homeless services system, collected hundreds of verbal and written comments from over 100 respondents through the survey and virtual roundtables, and used Likert scale survey questions to gather quantitative feedback that will inform the Plan's recommendation framework. Among other groups, the scope of respondents and participants engaged with these three modes of feedback included individuals with lived experience, nonprofit service providers, university researchers, state agency representatives, local government officials, and consultants.

Chairman Doyle asked Mr. Lonergan to clarify the number of cumulative virtual roundtable attendees so that he could convey this total to the Office of the Governor. Mr. Lonergan confirmed Chairman Doyle's calculations.

(b) Update on Workgroup Progress for the New Strategic Plan

i. Affordable Housing and Supportive Services

Kelly Davis, Program Specialist at Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and Chair of the Affordable Housing and Supportive Services Workgroup, first provided an update. Ms. Davis emphasized the workgroup's focus on landlord engagement and accountability, choice in housing, the importance of promoting strategic partnerships across the public and private sector involving housing developers to increase affordable housing stock, and the inclusion of hospital districts and mental health community organizations to promote the pairing of supportive services with housing.

Ms. Davis also recounted cross-disciplinary discussions involving emergency response planning and addressing disparities, and potentially broadening the definitions of homelessness to better capture different subpopulations. She also mentioned the potential of incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices to guide providers and developers as well. Ms. Davis similarly highlighted the focus on efforts to meaningfully engage individuals with lived experience in building and maintaining elements of the homeless response system.

Chairman Doyle posed a question asking for more details regarding the workgroup's conclusions drawn regarding the lack of affordable housing in Texas. Ms. Davis reiterated that the above-mentioned discussions were the extent to which that issue was addressed. Chairman Doyle responded by vocalizing a need for a means by which developers can create more affordable housing through a less complicated system than low-income housing tax credits.

Fedora Galasso then stepped in to clarify that discussions around definitions of homelessness in this workgroup primarily were focused on the definitions of youth homelessness and the extent to which HUD's definition is narrower than the McKinney-Vento definition. Chairman Doyle concurred with Ms. Galasso's point.

ii. Homelessness Prevention

Naomi Cantu next provided an update as Chair of the Homelessness Prevention Workgroup. Ms. Cantu summarized the main points covered by the group, including the appropriate time to intervene and the challenges of modifying the at-risk of homelessness definition. As an example, Ms. Cantu mentioned the difficulties of identifying when evictions result in homelessness versus when the household self-resolves. She also recounted discussions of eviction expunction after a certain look-back period for households and awareness training on what “at-risk” looks like since it is less visible than experiencing homelessness.

Ms. Cantu also emphasized the importance of flexible funding, and how COVID-19 funding streams such as CARES Act funding and ARPA funding have covered activities that were not previously eligible as means of prevention assistance. Ms. Cantu stated that TDHCA’s HOME-ARP program allows activities such as car repair and groceries, examples of the type of flexible funding she hopes will persist in future permanent funding programs.

Cate Tracz stepped in to mention the HSS team’s provision of \$40 million in funding to the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, which sub-awarded these funds to ten Legal Aid services to assist households facing evictions with legal services, and that the outcomes of this funding may be useful to this workgroup.

Chairman Doyle also mentioned the importance recognizing criminal justice involvement and job loss as predictors for individuals and households at-risk of homelessness. He also reiterated Ms. Tracz’s point that the HSS program would be a great test model to assess outcomes among this population to more proactively target prevention services. General discussion ensued.

Chairman Doyle and Ms. Cantu also both recounted that landlord incentives such as deposit payments have not achieved its intended effect, which has complicated the process by which providers keep at-risk households housed.

Fedora Galasso asked whether youth exiting foster care and the criminal justice system were discussed as part of the at-risk definition, which Ms. Cantu confirmed falls under the “exiting an institution” provision. Eric Samuels also suggested that more consistent eviction data being provided across the state would be useful in identifying the at-risk population.

iii. Data, Research, and Analysis

Eric Samuels last provided an update on the Data, Research, and Analysis Workgroup as its Chair. Broadly, Mr. Samuels recounted that the workgroup discussed assessing the overall quality of data, ensuring that ample data is collected among different sub-populations, and potentially using the Plan as a means to influence data collection policies and procedures in the future.

Mr. Samuels also mentioned discussions encouraging more data sharing across overlapping systems, such as coordinating the homeless response system with the Texas Department of Emergency Management and other systems of care. Mr. Samuels emphasized that this level of collaboration can help the system better identify disparities in service, duplication of services, and opportunities for more efficiencies that the Council can help facilitate through this Plan.

Mr. Samuels last mentioned discussions regarding ways in which the Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network can facilitate reaching the above-mentioned goals, and ways in which other systems can be involved to better identify and serve groups that are hard to reach such as families doubling up and veterans not receiving assistance.

Chairman Doyle asked Mr. Samuels what he sees as the final product of this workgroup. Mr. Samuels responded that he hopes that the Plan provides a more comprehensive view of homelessness across the state, more identification of systems overlap to encourage collaboration, and more guidance regarding ways to efficiently and consistently share homeless data that is endorsed by the state. General discussion ensued.

VI. Update from Texas Homeless Network (THN)

(a) Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network Project

Eric Samuels next provided updates on the Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network (THDSN) to the Council. He mentioned that THDSN now covers nine of eleven total CoCs across the state, which compose over 90% of the state's population and geography, and that the public facing dashboard is up on the THN website.

Mr. Samuels also stated that THN is working closely with the Texas Health Services Authority (THSA), the statewide Health Information Exchange (HIE), to negotiate a data use agreement with THSA and its managed care organizations (MCOs). The purpose of this partnership is to better identify and track clients upon discharge from healthcare facilities to the homeless service system. Mr. Samuels also mentioned collaborations with University of North Texas researchers studying migration patterns of individuals experiencing homelessness and with Endeavors as a THDSN user.

Mr. Samuels last announced that THN did not receive grant funding from Amazon Web Services (AWS) for 2023, so 2022 is the last year they will receive such funding from AWS. Aubrey Fetzer, THDSN Associate at THN, stepped in to provide additional updates. Regarding funding development, Ms. Fetzer stated that the THDSN team has solidified a need for automated data uploaders for the THDSN's Continuum of Care partners. Second, Ms. Fetzer mentioned that she and her team are working to develop more training webinars to facilitate engagement between THDSN's CoC partners and the data sharing warehouse's open path system.

(b) THN's Role in Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) Program

Jim Ward, Director of Planning at THN, next updated the Council on THN's role in administering the state's allocation of EHV's. Mr. Ward explained that TDHCA was invited to administer half of the Balance of State (BoS) CoCs allocation of 1,486 EHV's, and that Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) are required to accept EHV's from the CoC through its coordinated entry process. Since there is a minimal CoC presence in many communities within the BoS CoC, THN and TDHCA have coordinated since May 2021 to fill this gap. Through an award of ERA HSS funds, THN was able to hire a team of six staff dedicated to the EHV program subject to a contract with TDHCA to refer 380 EHV's in a 186 county service area.

Mr. Ward mentioned that THN has received referrals from more than half of the counties in this service area, and is working on the back-end to verify applicants' eligibility so they can be

prioritized and referred to TDHCA for voucher issuance. Once the client receives an EHV, they return to THN for assistance locating housing and can utilize \$3,500 in service fee funding per voucher to pay for expenses such as security deposits, utility deposits, moving expenses, and staff time assisting with housing navigation.

As of July 2022, THN has made 269 referrals to TDHCA, 109 of which are survivors of domestic violence, and only 20 of which have been relinquished voluntarily. All the household referred to TDHCA have been accepted, meaning they are eligible for the program. Mr. Ward stated that the primary challenge with this process is matching voucher holders with housing, though he and his team have found that landlord incentives have proven to be effective in the EHV context.

Naomi Cantu commented to clarify that her commentary earlier on landlord incentives being ineffective may have been over-generalized and that she recognizes its value in certain situations. Chairman Doyle also commented that landlord incentives in urban areas versus rural areas have disparate effects.

VII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VIII. Closing Comments

Chairman Doyle thanked the TICH for members' and guests' participation, Sean Lonergan and his team for their work on the Plan, and Kelly Davis, Naomi Cantu, and Eric Samuels for their work as Workgroup Chairs for the Plan.

XI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:04 p.m.