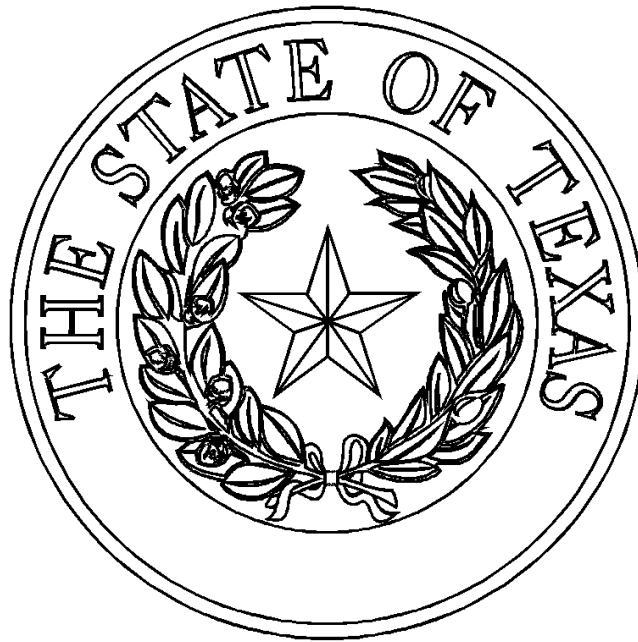


TEXAS INTERAGENCY COUNCIL FOR THE
HOMELESS



2016 ANNUAL REPORT

PREPARED APRIL 2017

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INTRODUCTION

This is the progress report of the Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless (“TICH” or “the Council”), required by Texas Government Code §2306.908.

In 1995, the 74th Texas legislature established the TICH. Legislation requires TICH to coordinate the state's resources and services to address homelessness. TICH serves as an advisory committee to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (“TDHCA” or “the Department”). Representatives from eleven state agencies sit on the council along with members appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house of representatives.

This report is provided to the governing body of each agency currently represented on the TICH, which includes the following, in accordance with §2306.903(a):

1. Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs;
2. Health and Human Services Commission;
3. Department of State Health Services;
4. Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services;
5. Department of Aging and Disability Services;
6. Department of Family Protective Services;
7. Texas Workforce Commission;
8. Texas Veterans Commission;
9. Department of Criminal Justice;
10. Texas Juvenile Justice Department; and
11. Texas Education Agency.

This report covers the activities of the Council in 2016. The Council’s work was primarily devoted to two studies, *Homelessness among Veterans in Texas* and *Youth Homelessness in Texas*. Both of these legislatively required studies with accompanying reports, further described in the following pages, included review and engagement by the TICH, the establishment of a special workgroup within the TICH for the purpose of the Veterans study, and several special-called meetings in addition to the regular meeting schedule of the TICH. Because a large part of the Council’s work efforts this year were associated with the two studies and the Pilot Program, described below, the report this year is organized around those efforts, not organized by statutory Council duties as has been the approach in the past. However, the last section of this report still addresses each of the TICH statutory requirements and associated progress within each area.

Other activities of the TICH during 2016, in addition to the work on the studies included:

- Hosting the Continuum of Care (“CoC”) lead agencies and members in September to specifically engage on how the TICH can better collaborate with the CoCs.
- Creating a Homeless Navigator Pilot Program, further described below with funding made available to TICH from Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas Education Agency. This included funds not only for the Texas Homeless Network (“THN”) VISTA volunteer supervisor and associated costs, but for stipends for interns.
- Funding THN to conduct analysis of point-in-time data on Veterans experiencing homelessness to help support the work of the study with funding made available to TICH from Texas Workforce Commission. Through this effort, THN produced a report that presented demographic findings, highlighting the similarities and differences between the general population and homeless Veteran population, and highlighting correlations between Veteran homelessness and other measurable factors.
- Receiving updates on the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs’ two major homeless funding sources – the Homeless Housing and Services Program and the Emergency Solutions Grant Program – and also discussing rule changes being made to the homelessness activities at the Department, as well as received briefings from several member or advisory member entities on their engagement with homeless individuals or special projects including the Texas Council on Family Violence, a report from THN on the H2 (Texas Healthcare and Housing) Action Plan and the federal CoC awards, and the Innovation Accelerator Program from the Department of State Health Services.
- Developing and approving TICH bylaws.
- Continuing to work under the framework established in *Pathways Home*, which the Council released as a proposed policy framework for coordinating state administered programs with local service providers.

Future Efforts and the Bylaws

Within the Bylaws adopted by the Council in 2016, several activities were newly identified that will require effort in the forthcoming year to implement.

- Section VI, Duties of State Agency TICH Members, states in subsection (A): “By December 31st of each year, each agency represented on the TICH shall report to the TDHCA a standard set of performance data, as determined by the TDHCA on the agency’s outcomes related to homelessness.” As each agency’s programs are not explicitly related to homelessness and/or are not reported currently as measures, the TICH will need to work with each member agency to identify what those outcome and performance data should be and then how those will be compiled and made reportable in some uniform way. A Performance Data Committee of the TICH is being established to support this effort.

- Section X, Action Plan and Reporting, states in subsection (A): “The TICH shall annually prepare an action plan, to be approved at the third meeting of the fiscal year for the following fiscal year.” The bylaws then identify several things that the plan should include:
 - 1) Goals established by each committee;
 - 2) Goals for any special projects that use contributions to the TICH; and
 - 3) Goals for any legislatively-required tasks.

An Action Plan Committee will be established in 2017 to propose a draft action plan to the full Council, in anticipation of adoption by the Council at the third meeting of the next fiscal year (spring 2018). The goal of the Committee will be to revisit the initiatives identified in *Pathways Home*, consider any special projects associated with contributions to the TICH, and evaluate any statutory efforts related to homelessness generated from the 85th Legislature; and to then identify the actions to be taken by the Council in the ensuing year that are reasonable and achievable within the resources available. Those recommendations may include the need for establishing *ad hoc* or longer term committees, and/or pursuing the addition of “advisors” to the Council for specific subject matters consistent with Section V, TICH Composition and Membership, Section G.

- Section X, Action Plan and Reporting, states in subsection (B): “The TICH shall prepare an annual report for the second meeting of the fiscal year.” The bylaws then outline a list of what that report, at a minimum, must include:
 - 1) A summary of policy recommendations made to the TDHCA and other member agencies, as well as a summary of agency responses;
 - 2) A report on changes or improvements in agency data reporting;
 - 3) A summary of service coordination activities;
 - 4) A report of needs assessments and/or gaps analyses;
 - 5) A report on agency performance measures;
 - 6) A report on the status of any each committee in relation to the goals established in the plan;
 - 7) A report on the status of any special projects that use contributions to the TICH;
 - 8) A report on the status of any tasks required by legislation; and
 - 9) A summary of other activities relevant to duties in Section IV.

While this report for 2016 satisfies the criteria of the legislative requirements for the report, it does not yet fully address all that is reflected in the Bylaws. The Council will establish a timeline and possibly a Committee, if needed, to establish how the expanded report requirements will be achieved, so that the next annual report for 2017 encompasses the requirements of the bylaws in time for the second meeting of the fiscal year (approximately January 2018).

HOMELESSNESS AMONG VETERANS IN TEXAS

Senate Bill (“SB”) 1580, authored by Senator Sylvia Garcia, was passed by the 84th Texas Legislature and signed into law on June 18, 2015. SB 1580 adds §2306.1101 to the Texas Government Code, which requires TDHCA, in conjunction with the Texas Veterans Commission (“TVC”) and the TICH, to conduct a study of Veterans experiencing homelessness. The study was due to the Legislature no later than December 1, 2016, and was submitted on that date.

The study required the following:

1. A definition of homeless used for the study;
2. The status of homeless Veterans in Texas;
3. An inventory of statewide and local entities providing services for homeless Veterans;
4. A list of funding sources of services for homeless Veterans;
5. Recommendations to the State’s approach to address Veteran homelessness; and
6. Recommendations to State lawmakers to assist homeless Veterans.

In August 2015, the TICH created the TICH Veterans Workgroup specifically to contribute to the homeless veteran study and report. TDHCA lead the TICH Veterans Workgroup, which had members from TVC, Health and Human Services Commission (“HHSC”), Department of Aging and Disability Services (“DADS”), Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (“DARS”), THN, and Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (“TSAHC”). The TICH Veteran Workgroup contributed significantly through ongoing review of working drafts of the study before the report was distributed to the TICH membership as a whole. The TICH Veterans Workgroup met at least once between each quarterly TICH meeting, and continued to meet until the study and report was completed.

To address the first study requirement (*i.e.* a definition of homeless Veteran used for the study), the report used the definition of homelessness used by HUD, which allowed for the use of data collected from the HUD-required point-in-time (“PIT”) counts of persons experiencing homelessness for the years of 2014, 2015, and 2016. The HUD PIT count is the main source of data for Veterans experiencing homelessness.

To address the second study requirement (*i.e.*, the status of homeless Veterans in Texas), several factors were considered, including:

1. The limitations of the PIT counts and the analysis of Veterans experiencing homelessness through the PIT counts, conducted by THN as noted above;
2. Statistics on Veterans in the general population, drafted by TVC;
3. Identified needs drafted by TDHCA, DARS, and TVC;

4. A case study of Houston, which has announced it effectively ended Veteran homelessness in June, 2015, drafted by TDHCA; and
5. A survey of the eight cities, including Houston, that took the national Mayors Challenge to end Veteran homelessness by 2015, conducted by HHSC's Center for Health Statistics.

To address the third and fourth requirement (*i.e.*, statewide and local entities providing services for homeless Veterans and funding sources for those services), TICH members provided information on how their programs address the needs of homeless Veterans and HHSC analyzed data purchased from OneStar Foundation on Texas nonprofits serving Veterans. Many state agencies had programs that assist persons, including Veterans, experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. Several agencies had programs specifically targeting or with a set-aside for Veterans experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, including TDHCA, TVC, HHSC, and TWC.

Regarding HHSC's analysis of nonprofits, the Center for Health Statistics analyzed services listed in 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network and GuideStar, an Internal Revenue Service database of nonprofits, to determine if any similarities or gaps could be identified. Analysis showed that, as of 2015, 83 out of 254 Texas counties showed no homeless services and 106 Texas counties showed no Veterans services listed in the datasets.

To address the fifth and sixth requirements (*i.e.*, recommendations to the state's approach to end Veteran homelessness and recommendations to State law to assist homeless Veterans), TDHCA and TVC hosted two roundtables to gather recommendations: one roundtable was held at the THN Conference on Ending Homelessness, October 15, 2015; and one roundtable was held at the TVC Summit, February 4, 2016. At the October conference held in Corpus Christi, TDHCA and TVC facilitated a discussion with approximately 75 attendees and at the February summit held in Bryan/College Station and hosted by Texas A&M University, approximately 55 people participated. TDHCA and TVC asked the attendees to break into small groups which:

1. Described the Veterans who were experiencing homelessness in their communities;
2. Reflected upon success stories for effectively ending Veteran homelessness in their communities, and determined if their identified successes could be used Statewide; and
3. Identified existing gaps or needs in programs or services that are preventing the ending of Veteran homelessness, and determine how those gaps or needs could be filled.

TDHCA and TVC synthesized the recommendations gathered from the roundtables. In addition, TDHCA sought input through an online discussion forum to receive recommendations for the Study. The forum was open from Wednesday, March 9, 2016, through Wednesday April 6, 2016, and received over 60 recommendations. The recommendations from the roundtables and online forums were grouped into the broad recommendations below. The TICH Veteran Workgroup discussed the recommendations before they were considered by the TICH as a whole. Discussion of

the recommendations from the public lasted over the course of a year at quarterly TICH meetings, and the considerations of the TICH regarding the recommendations are included in the final report.

1. Increase Partnership with the Rental Market
2. Identify Veterans, Share Information, and Increase Coordination
3. Increase Housing and Services Resources
4. Improve Access to Employment Resources
5. Improve Access to Mental and Physical Health Resources

Through collaboration with other state agencies and the TICH, TDHCA was on schedule and submitted the *Study on Homelessness among Veterans* to the Texas Legislature on December 1, 2016.

The complete report on Homelessness Among Veterans in Texas can be accessed at: <http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/tich/hvs.htm>

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN TEXAS

House Bill (“HB”) 679, authored by Representative Sylvester Turner, was passed by the 84th Texas Legislature and signed into law on June 17, 2015. HB 679 added §§2306.1101 and 2306.1102 to the Texas Government Code. The former defines homeless youth, and the latter required TDHCA, in conjunction with the TICH, to conduct a study of homeless youth. A report on the study was due to the Texas Legislature no later than December 1, 2016. The TICH created a TICH Youth Workgroup specifically for the report on homeless youth, which participated in shaping the report.

The study required the department to:

1. Collect data on the number of homeless youth in this state;
2. Examine the needs of homeless youth and the degree to which current programs are meeting those needs;
3. Identify any sources of funding that might be available to provide services to homeless youth; and
4. Develop a strategic plan establishing steps to be taken and timelines for reducing youth homelessness in this state.

To satisfy the count of youth experiencing homelessness required by the legislation, TDHCA initiated *Youth Count Texas!* for a statewide count and needs assessment of Texas homeless and unstably-housed youth. Several communities took efforts to reach out to youth in conjunction with the PIT count in January 2016, as well as at other times of the year. *Youth Count Texas!* started in October 2015 and lasted until March 2016.

The Department conducted the study in three phases.

Phase I – Survey Tool Development. From July to August 2015, TDHCA contracted with the Texas Network of Youth Services (“TNOYS”) to gather input from stakeholders including the TICH, hold three roundtables on the survey tools, and obtain commitments from a majority of CoCs to take the survey tool to their governing bodies for approval. The result was the creation of two surveys: one used during the annual PIT count of homeless persons in January 2016 and one for specific counts and needs assessments specific to youth used between October 2015 and March 2016. An annual PIT count is required by HUD.

Phase II – Survey Implementer. This phase began September 2015 and concluded in May 2016. TDHCA again contracted with TNOYS to create training for survey implementation, provide technical assistance for CoCs, provide a data collection methodology and system, and deliver a report of the results of the implementation. TNOYS developed partnerships for *Youth Count Texas!* with THN, Texas Homeless Education Office (“THEO”), a majority of the CoCs, and the University of Texas (“UT”) at Austin’s Child and Family Research Partnership. Teams of volunteers

were organized by local organizations in each community; some communities had as many as 84 volunteers administering surveys to youth who were homeless or unstably housed. *Youth Count Texas!* took place in the following communities:

1. Arlington/Fort Worth;
2. Austin;
3. Bryan/College Station;
4. Corpus Christi;
5. Dallas;
6. Denton;
7. El Paso;
8. Houston;
9. New Braunfels/Comal County;
10. San Antonio;
11. Victoria; and
12. Waco/Temple.

Over 850 surveys were collected. The data was compiled by UT's Austin Child and Family Research Partnership in preparation for analysis, which occurred in Phase III. In addition, TNOYS provided a report to TDHCA on the process of implementing *Youth Count Texas!*, incorporating feedback from count organizers, youth, and volunteers.

Phase III – Data Analysis. TDHCA contracted with the University of Houston (“UH”) Graduate College of Social Work for this final phase which began in June 2016 and concluded with the submission of the report on December 1, 2016. The data from Phase II, along with data collected from other Texas state agencies, was analyzed by UH to examine the number and needs of homeless youth and the degree to which current programs are meeting those needs, identify sources of funding which might be available to provide services to homeless youth, and develop a strategic plan for reducing youth homelessness in this state.

Data was collected and analyzed from TEA and DFPS, both members of the TICH. TEA provided information from its databases of the number of homeless youth identified in Texas schools from 2012-2015. DFPS provided information from its databases of the number of youth who could be identified as homeless by the definition of homeless youth in HB 679. For example, “a person who is living in an emergency shelter, abandoned in a hospital, or awaiting foster care placement” was identified by DFPS and included in the dataset.

In August 2016, in conjunction with the TNOYS annual statewide conference which was held in Houston, UH presented their initial findings of the data at a pre-conference workshop of 53 attendees. At this workshop, attendees had the opportunity to provide feedback on their thoughts

about the needs of homeless youth, what they found interesting about the data, and what they were seeing in their own practice.

UH then held two stakeholder feedback sessions. One was a virtual roundtable attended by 30 participants and the second was a well-attended presentation at THN's annual conference in September with 35 participants. UH also conducted individual interviews with a number of stakeholders to include members of the TICH. UH sub-contracted with TNOYS to help identify providers across the state, identify funding sources, and assist in conducting a direct provider survey that had 55 respondents. A survey of homeless liaisons at Texas schools was sent out across the state and had a response of 392 completed surveys. And finally, UH conducted a review of literature to help inform their final product.

The recommendations developed from the feedback sessions included five broad categories:

1. Improve Data Sources for Counting Homeless Youth
2. Provide a Full Continuum of Supports to Promote Housing Stability
3. Increase Service Delivery and Supports to Youth Identified Through Schools
4. Prevent Homelessness by Addressing Needs of Youth in Foster Care and Juvenile Justice
5. Remove Barriers to exiting Homelessness

The complete report on Youth Homelessness in Texas can be accessed at:

<http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/housing-center/youthcounttexas.htm>

TICH Support of the Reports

At a Specially-Called TICH meeting on November 17, 2016, to discuss both legislatively required reports, the voting members of this Council unanimously affirmed the TICH was in support of the report on *Youth Homelessness in Texas* and the report on *Homelessness among Veterans in Texas*.

EMPLOYMENT NAVIGATOR PILOT PROGRAM

The TICH coordinated with THN to supervise a VISTA volunteer to develop and administer a pilot program which would aid with employment of persons experiencing homelessness. The pilot program was tailored toward volunteers or existing staff at social service agencies to step into the Employment Navigator role in rural communities. Employment Navigators led outreach activities, compiled resources, and handled case-management for persons experiencing or at-risk of homelessness who were seeking employment. The pilot program was developed from September, 2015, to May, 2016, conducted between May, 2016, and July, 2016, and evaluated in August, 2016. The VISTA volunteer gave regular updates to the TICH and worked with TDHCA on the development and progress of the pilot.

To develop the pilot program, the VISTA volunteer and supervisor conducted over 20 interviews with stakeholders and experts, including TWC, TDHCA, Texas Workforce Development Board representatives, homeless coalitions, and other social service agencies. The barriers of clients experiencing homelessness that were brought up most frequently were lack of reliable transportation, personal identification, and professional experience. Interview participants indicated that clients experiencing homelessness sometimes possessed criminal histories and mental and/or physical disabilities that were barriers to obtaining employment. The interviews also indicated that employer prejudice can contribute to difficulties with finding employment for some members of this population.

To prepare for the employment pilot, THN partnered with Southeast Texas Workforce Development Board (“SETWDB”). This partnership was vital for the success of the Employment Navigators pilot because the Employment Navigators relied on the referrals and resources provided by local Workforce one-stop centers. THN was also in touch with many of the local service providers to gauge local successes with employing the project’s target population. Further, as the lead agency for the Balance of State CoC, THN had long-standing partnerships with many organizations in the project area. Organized collaboration with the local providers stimulated efficiency and maximal programmatic results.

THN partnered closely with the Port Arthur YMCA and the organization called “Some Other Place” to carry out the requirements of the pilot program. Two communities were chosen for the pilot program: Beaumont/Jefferson County and Port Arthur/Orange County.

The VISTA volunteer trained Employment Navigators to provide personal case management with the goal of obtaining regular employment. The Employment Navigators either provided resources or referred and escorted the clients to local social service agencies for any specialized assistance. The Employment Navigators were dedicated to collaborating with the SETWDB and one-stop center representatives to connect clients to employment opportunities. It was the responsibility of the

Employment Navigators to help their clients prepare for job interviews and visit the local Workforce one-stop centers.

To further ensure client and project success, the Employment Navigators were also responsible for conducting outreach with local employers. After working with the SETWDB representatives to identify employers who could benefit from hiring members of the target population, the Employment Navigators educated employers about the realities of hiring individuals who have experienced homelessness and/or long-term unemployment. By making personal contact with employers, the Employment Navigators helped to dispel prejudices and created mutually-beneficial protocol in the case that clients proved unfit for occupation.

THN considered the types of jobs program that would give participants the highest potential placement success rates. Based on the partner experience of Workforce Development Boards and interviews, THN representatives concluded that, while clients experiencing homelessness are assessed just like any other Workforce system participants, clients who face more serious barriers to employment had the most success with placement in construction, retail trade, administrative support, educational services, and healthcare positions. Through further research, THN staff identified the industries that experienced robust job growth in the pilot areas. The Employment Navigators conducted outreach to local employers focused on these employment sectors to help identify positions that could be made available to clients experiencing homelessness and/or long-term employment.

Employment Navigators collectively provided one-on-one case management to 25 individuals/families experiencing homelessness or at-risk of experiencing homelessness. Additionally, they assisted program participants in securing resources such as telephones, legal assistance, employment skills training, identification, transportation, and other basic needs items. Employment Navigators were responsible for providing program participants with access to TWC trainings and tracking participant's goals and milestones through the use of Individualized Employment Plans. Success was measured by a combination of the following factors: number of program participants referred to employment resources, number of clients that received one-on-one case management, number of Individualized Employment Plans created, and number of people referred to Workforce Career Centers.

STATUTORY DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL

(1) Survey Current Resources

As described above regarding both of the surveys, extensive work went into surveying not only the scope of the needs of veterans and youth experiencing homelessness, but the resources available to them. TICH members provided information on how their programs address the needs of homeless Veterans. Also, as part of the Veterans Study, HHSC's Center for Health Statistics also analyzed services listed in 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network and GuideStar, an Internal Revenue Service database of nonprofits, to determine if any similarities or gaps could be identified. More extensive information on the resources identified can be found in each of the reports.

Another facet of current resources is the readiness of the Continuum of Care ("CoC") lead organizations to distribute and manage State Emergency Shelter Solutions Grant ("ESG") funding, or of the CoCs to localize funding decision-making for the State ESG funds by handling the competitive availability and recommending of awards. This has been a successful effort and in 2016 five of the CoC lead agencies assisted in the localized decision-making of state ESG funds. Due to limitations of administrative funds, in 2016 none of the CoC lead agencies managed an ESG contract directly.

(2) Initiate an Evaluation of Future and Current Need

Both studies performed a thorough evaluation of current needs of the two homeless subpopulations, and made suggestions for future needs and recommendations. Additionally, through its annual compilation and reporting of Point-in-Time ("PIT") Count data presented at the July 12, 2016 meeting, THN presented the TICH with a statewide picture of current need for all homeless populations.

(3) Assist in Coordinating and Providing Statewide Services

The primary goal of *Pathways Home* is to provide a set of strategies to help state agencies coordinate resources to address the needs of homeless individuals in the state, through four general themes or categories: 1) Affordable Housing and Supportive Services, 2) Homelessness Prevention, 3) Data, Research and Analysis, and 4) State Infrastructure. For an outline of proposed objectives and strategies for assisting in the coordination and delivery of services, please refer to pp. 71-79 of *Pathways Home*. Efforts continue to be made in the above categories independent of the Council as well; for instance, TDHCA has targeted some of its multifamily loan funds for supportive housing and inroads are being made through the Housing and Health Services Coordinating Council through Housing and Services Partnership Academies that work to educate local areas of affordable housing options.

(4) Increase the Flow of Information among Separate Providers and Appropriate Authorities

Through both of the study efforts extensive information has been gathered and shared among the appropriate parties. Both studies held roundtables throughout the state to gather information from

key stakeholders associated with each subpopulation. For example, the youth homelessness study gathered input from educators, family, protective services staff, and other services that interact with at-risk youth. Additionally, TDHCA worked more actively in 2016 to engage CoC member agencies in the development of program funding for ESG and in the development of rule changes affecting the homelessness programs.

(5) Develop Guidelines to Monitor the Provision of Services for the Homeless and the Methods of Delivering those Services

In *Pathways Home*, the Council issues guidance on monitoring the delivery of services to persons experiencing and at risk of homelessness. Objective 2 of Data, Research and Analysis, pp. 63-65, provides guidance on developing metrics for monitoring the delivery of services. As reflected in the results of both studies, cogent recommendations are provided that, among other aspects, suggest areas for needed improvement in uniform guidelines in defining populations, surveying populations, and delivering services.

(6) Provide Technical Assistance to the Housing Finance Division of the Department in Assessing the Need for Housing for Individuals with Special Needs in Different Localities

THN has provided resources and data to the Council on the homeless population and its various subpopulations, including those with special needs. Further both studies shed light on the needs of youth and veteran sub populations. Information is provided to TDHCA via the Council. Also at the TICH meetings, TDHCA staff present program design and funding discussions relating to its homelessness program funds to the Council for input.

(7) Coordinate with the Texas Workforce Commission to Provide Homeless Individuals Information to Assist them in Obtaining Employment and Job Training

TWC is an active participant in the Council and is one of the few entities that has provided ongoing financial contributions. TWC as a participant at TICH meetings receives information on the needs of homeless persons. Through those contributions, the Council was able to establish the pilot program described above, in an effort to continue to expand and innovate in the arena of employment needs for persons experiencing homelessness.

(8) Establish a Central Resource and Information Center for the Homeless

2-1-1 Texas continues to serve as the state's central resource and information center for persons experiencing and at risk of homelessness. As a result of the veteran study and recommendations from the public, 2-1-1 worked to add information in its system for Veteran Service Officers referrals. With this ongoing communication, the central resources are becoming more comprehensive.

(9) Ensure that Local or Statewide Nonprofit Organizations Perform the Duties Under this Section that the Council is Unable to Perform

The Council works very closely with THN, which is authorized statutorily to provide program or policy assistance to the Council. THN is a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to Texas communities to end homelessness through training, technical assistance, and advocacy. THN assists service providers in receiving and managing HUD grants, administering services, and gathering data. THN also serves as the CoC Lead Agency for the Balance of State CoC, the vast majority of the state. THN has assisted actively in both studies performed and served as the lead on the pilot program noted.