



Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
Quarterly Meeting – January 24, 2024
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 (by Naomi Cantu)
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)	Brittany Hinton	Yes
5	HHSC	Robert Hetzel	Yes
6	HHSC	Claire Irwin	Yes (by Lonnie Bean)
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	Yes
10	TDHCA, Community Affairs representative	Naomi Cantu	Yes
11	Texas Education Agency (TEA)	Desiree Viramontes	Yes
12	Texas Department of Juvenile Justice (TJJD)	Marqus Butler	Yes
13	Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)	Blake Harris	Yes (by Amber Morrison)
14	Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)	Kelly Davis	Yes
15	Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)	Joshua Hutchison	No

<There are currently 13 filled seats so quorum is 7>

Advisory Members present:

#	Advisory Member Organization	Representative	Attendance (Yes/No)
1	Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS)	Fedora Galasso	Yes
2	TNOYS	Ann-Charlotte Proffitt	No
3	TNOYS	Lauren Rose	Yes
4	Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute	Darilynn Cardona-Beiler	Yes
5	Texas Homeless Network (THN)	Eric Samuels	Yes
6	Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC)	Mike Wilt	Yes
7	Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC)	David Long	Yes
8	Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV)	Molly Thibodeaux	No
9	Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV)	Lisa Medina	Yes

Administrative support: Sean Lonergan (TDHCA)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Chairwoman Naomi Cantu called the meeting to order at 10:38 a.m., and confirmed that a quorum was present.

II. Remarks from the Chair

Chair Cantu had no remarks.

III. Approval of Minutes from the September 27, 2023 TICH Meeting (*Voting Item*)

Chair Cantu called for a motion to approve the September 27, 2023 minutes. Brooke Boston made a motion to approve the minutes, and Desiree Viramontes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no comments.

IV. Discussion and Possible Approval of Letter of Support for Texas Network of Youth Services' (TNOYS) Youth Homelessness System Improvement Grant Application (*Voting Item*)

Fedora Galasso of TNOYS first provided an overview of TNOYS and the Youth Homelessness System Improvement (YHSI) grant. Details of this overview and the YHSI grant can be found [here](#). Ms. Galasso requested the Council's support for TNOYS's YHSI application to help build program infrastructure and capacity through: increased partnerships (e.g., education, juvenile justice, child welfare, employment services); coordinated entry systems improvements (e.g., youth specific assessment tools); Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) improvements (e.g., data interoperability); better training and technical assistance resources (e.g., guidance on youth compensation) that more effectively engage youth; and heightened focus on equity.

Eric Samuels of THN voiced his support for TNOYS applying for this grant. Chair Cantu asked whether other communities would be interested in applying for the grant. Mr. Samuels responded that several communities may be interested, including Denton and El Paso. General discussion ensued.

Michael Wilt asked Ms. Galasso to elaborate on the data-side of TNOYS's collaboration with THN. Ms. Galasso deferred to Mr. Samuels, who summarized that the purpose of the collaboration is to match overlapping data points between homeless response systems, map these intersections out, then share this data to maximize service efficiencies. Lauren Rose of TNOYS stepped in to emphasize the importance of readily identifying multi-system-involved youth more efficiently. General discussion ensued.

Desiree Viramontes asked Ms. Galasso how the data and research supported by this grant will be disseminated. Ms. Galasso responded that building data roadmaps will enable them to glean insights on data gaps that TNOYS and THN can disseminate. Mr. Samuels added that data sharing will be a key tool. Ms. Viramontes asked for clarification over data dissemination. Ms. Galasso emphasized that TNOYS focuses on qualitative research through its youth participatory action model and provides training and technical assistance emphasizing the needs of systems-involved and neuro-divergent youth. Mr. Samuels also mentioned that THN anticipates conducting and disseminating quantitative research that assesses youth in the coordinated entry system. General discussion ensued.

Chair Cantu asked when the grant application was due, and how much grant funding TNOYS plans to request. Ms. Galasso responded that the grant application deadline is February 10, 2024, and that TNOYS plans to apply for \$1.5 to 2 million. General discussion ensued.

Marqus Butler of TJJD asked whether TNOYS or THN was familiar with the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) mapping that HHSC is conducting to track juvenile justice-involved youth. Ms. Galasso and Lauren Rose answered that TNOYS is familiar with this practice, and that they are working with TJJD and Meadows Mental Health Institute to consolidate the results of this mapping process. Ms. Galasso reinforced that these partnerships help reinforce the goal of achieving data interoperability to better understand the needs of systems-involved youth.

Ms. Galasso next requested a letter of support from the TICH for their grant application, and for Council member agencies to participate in TNOYS's projects that stem from this grant if they are awarded funds. Chair Cantu clarified that instead of providing a letter of support, the TICH would have a voting resolution regarding support for the grant. Chair Cantu next called for a motion to support TNOYS's application for the YHSI grant. Brooke Boston made a motion to support TNOYS's grant application, and Desiree Viramontes seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no comments.

V. Update from Texas Homeless Network (THN)

Eric Samuels and Anja Taylor of THN next provided a general THN update and an update on the Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network (THDSN) project. Mr. Samuels began with a general update on THN, stating that THN has helped 27 communities across the Balance of State Continuum of Care region submit applications for HUD's Homeless Assistance and Continuum of Care grants. Eight of the applications were for new funding for \$3.2 million, while over \$13 million was for renewal funding. THN also applied for additional grant funding under these grants that will help them assist communities with planning, HMIS data collection, and coordinated entry, which amounts to \$8.2 million.

Mr. Samuels next thanked TDHCA for its partnership with THN administering the Emergency Housing Voucher (EHV) program. He announced that 393 households were served by THN with EHV's from a pool

of over 1,900 referrals. Mr. Samuels also stated that survivors of domestic violence and veterans were served through this program and that the top counties THN served were Denton, Galveston, Victoria, and Lubbock. Jim Ward of THN added that EHV were allocated to households across 90 counties.

Brooke Boston of TDHCA echoed her enthusiasm over the success of this partnership. Chair Cantu sought clarification over whether the individuals housed through the EHV program would remain housed after its conclusion, which Mr. Samuels confirmed would be the case. Mr. Ward also clarified that even though 672 households met the requisite homelessness or at-risk definition necessary to be eligible for the EHV program, many of these households did not convert to voucher issuance for a variety of reasons.

Mr. Samuels next announced that THN's most recent annual conference this past September was the largest they have ever hosted with approximately 600 attendees. He stated that the next annual conference will be held September 11-13, 2024, at the Houston Omni Galleria. He mentioned that state agencies are welcome to present at this upcoming conference if the TICH fall quarterly meeting is hosted at this location, and that THN will continue to work with HHSC to provide a pre-conference training for stakeholders across the state.

Mr. Samuels last stated that, even though THN is not a direct service provider outside of the EHV program, he and his associates continue to receive calls for direct assistance. Michael Wilt of TSAHC asked Mr. Samuels to clarify how Mr. Samuels is receiving these requests, to which Mr. Samuels responded that they may be one of the listed numbers when individuals call 211 for assistance. General discussion ensued. Mr. Samuels concluded that THN would be happy to help streamline the process for assistance requests so that these requests can be resolved more efficiently.

(a) Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network Project

Mr. Samuels transitioned to providing an update on THDSN. He first announced that THDSN is funded through the end of the 2024 calendar year thanks to the generous support of the TSAHC. Regarding numbers, THDSN identified over 74,000 Texans who fell into homelessness over the first three to four quarters of 2023.

Anja Taylor of THN stepped in to provide the remainder of the update. She elaborated that the 74,000 Texans who have fallen into homelessness in 2023 only includes fourth quarter data from four of the nine participating CoCs. She also stated that because the San Antonio and Wichita Falls CoCs do not participate in THDSN, this total, even when completed, will be an undercount.

Ms. Taylor next provided an update on THDSN's external partnerships. She detailed an upstream eviction prevention pilot program collaborative between THDSN, the Access to Justice Lab at Harvard Law School, the University of Houston Law Center, and an organization called Connective. This program is mobilizing a study to determine whether households receiving housing-related "know your rights" information via text remain more housing secure than households not receiving such information. The purpose of this pilot is to raise awareness of legal services available to households facing eviction to keep more Texans housed. THDSN and its partners are currently enrolling participants in this pilot program.

Ms. Taylor next detailed another partnership with the City of Houston Mayor’s Office of Public Safety and Homeland Security stemming from a research request from the office as they build a tool that emergency managers can use to make more data-driven, inclusive decisions during disasters. This request amounted to THDSN agreeing to share data that will serve as a GIS layer for this emergency management tool. THDSN is working with its data warehouse vendor Green River to pull this data report. General discussion ensued.

Chair Cantu asked Mr. Samuels to clarify for the eviction prevention pilot program how many participants receive texts for housing resources. Mr. Samuels responded that thousands receive this information, but that the collaborative is gathering a representative sample of these recipients to determine the extent to which these resources helped individuals stay housed. General discussion ensued.

VI. Updates from Member Agencies

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

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

Rosy Falcon of TDHCA next provided an update on the Ending Homelessness (EH) Fund, ESG, ESG-CV, HHSP, and Transitional Housing for Veterans pilot programs. Ms. Falcon first provided an update on program allocation amounts across the EH Fund, ESG (past four fiscal years), and HHSP programs (past three fiscal years). Specific allocation and expenditure amounts, households served, and funding activities can be found on [pages 30-31](#) of the TICH meeting handouts. She noted that her team has expended \$5.2 million of TDHCA’s \$21.5 million across state and federal funding homeless programs for this fiscal year. Ms. Falcon also noted that the percentage of administrative funds for the ESG program depicted on page 31 of the meeting handouts should be 2% of the total, not 45%. She clarified that most ESG funds are allocated towards shelter activities.

Ms. Falcon next provided an update on the ESG-CV program. Details of this update can be found on [page 32](#) of the meeting handouts. Ms. Falcon announced that most funds have been expended, though there are a small amount of returned funds that she and her team are seeking to redistribute. Ms. Falcon estimated that she and her team expect to be fully expended by June 2024. General discussion ensued.

Ms. Falcon last introduced the Transitional Housing for Veterans pilot program. This program was created through the most recent state legislative session and is funded through an \$800,000 allocation taken from HHSP for the biennium. Applicants are able to provide their own homelessness definition to open up funds for a wider array of activities. After extensive research and collaboration with TVC, Ms. Falcon and her team plan to use this funding to support several entities with existing networks and transitional housing for veterans: U.S. Vets in Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio; American GI Forum in Austin; and Caritas in Austin. Ms. Falcon and her team have commitments to apply from U.S. Vets and the American GI Forum, and are still working with Caritas and other agencies to ensure

program deliverables are set-up appropriately. They expect to have a recommendation for award ready for the TDHCA Board in time for its March 9th Board Meeting.

ii. **Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHV) Program**

Andre Adams of TDHCA next provided an update on the EHV program. Mr. Adams first noted that the EHV program is leasing at a faster rate than any other HUD voucher program. He attributed this trend to the unique collaboration between housing authorities, homeless providers, and victim service organizations. Mr. Adams also praised the flexibility of eligibility requirements for the EHV program, which has enabled many individuals with high barriers to secure housing. He cited landlord incentives, security deposits, utility assistance, housing search assistance, and furniture and household goods assistance as eligible activities that EHV help cover. Overall, Texas has administered approximately 4,500 EHV, and TDHCA has matched 669 of its 798 vouchers with households (84% of allocation). Mr. Adams anticipated that he and his team will match at least 90% of its voucher award before the program match deadline. General discussion ensued.

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

Naomi Cantu, HOME-ARP Director at TDHCA, next provided an update on the HOME-ARP program. Chair Cantu first announced that she and her team have awarded \$52.9 million in rental development funds through the HOME-ARP program, which amounts to approximately 269 units obligated. They also have \$6.8 million pending in award in this set-aside. In the nonprofit capacity building operating set-aside, they have awarded \$3.3 million and are working through the process to obligate these funds. For the non-congregate shelter set-aside, Chair Cantu and her team have obligated approximately \$38 million and have \$1.5 million in program expenditures, a total that they expect to grow through the end of 2024.

Megan Sylvester from TDHCA stepped in to clarify that obligated funds for the HOME-ARP program mean that the funds are under contract.

iv. **New Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness Update**

Sean Lonergan, Homeless Policy Advisor at TDHCA, next provided an update on the new TICH State Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness (the Plan). Mr. Lonergan announced that the draft Plan is still under internal review. Mr. Lonergan deferred to Brooke Boston of TDHCA for any additional updates, of which there was none.

v. **State of Texas 2024 One-Year Action Plan Consultation**

Jeremy Stremmer of TDCHA next provided an update on the State of Texas 2024 One-Year Action Plan (OYAP) Consultation. Mr. Stremmer explained that this plan governs the use of HUD Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds, which include Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME, ESG, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), and National Housing Trust Fund funds. For Council participants seeking to make any suggestions about program operations or activity types covered by the OYAP, Mr. Stremmer encouraged Council participants to email Mr. Lonergan.

Mr. Stremler also stated that allocation amounts for each program covered by the OYAP have yet to be announced, but that he anticipated totals to be similar to the previous fiscal year. The OYAP will be submitted once these allocations are finalized. Chair Cantu stepped in to explain how NHTF is funded differently from other HUD CPD programs, and that HUD estimates they will have allocation amount for NHTF by April. Mr. Stremler added that hopefully all allocation amounts will be finalized at the same time, and that any inquiries or suggestions can also be sent to info@tdhca.texas.gov.

Eric Samuels of THN asked Mr. Stremler to clarify whether TDHCA is seeking input from only Council participants. Mr. Stremler responded that because the TICH quarterly meeting is a public meeting, anyone is welcome to provide input. Once the public comment period is underway, he also clarified that feedback will become part of the document. General discussion ensued.

(b) Other Member Agency Updates

There were no other member agency updates.

VII. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VIII. Closing Comments

Sean Lonergan of TDHCA stated that the next TICH quarterly meeting will likely be held in early May. Fedora Galasso of TNOYS added that TNOYS's annual conference is coming up and that she will relay pertinent information about the conference to Mr. Lonergan so he can distribute it to Council participants.

Chair Cantu asked Ms. Galasso where the TNOYS annual conference would be held. Ms. Galasso responded that it will be held June 4-7, 2024, in Houston.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:13 p.m.