

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

PUBLIC HEARING

ON

DRAFT HOUSING AND HEALTH SERVICES COORDINATION COUNCIL
2014-15 BIENNIAL PLAN

Room 1-100
William B. Travis Building
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas

Tuesday,
June 24, 2014
1:06 p.m.

BEFORE:

TERRI RICHARD, HHSCC Coordinator

ON THE RECORD REPORTING
(512) 450-0342

I N D E X

<u>SPEAKER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Introduction: Terri Richard Timothy K. Irvine	3
Tanya Lavelle	7

P R O C E E D I N G S

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2 MS. RICHARD: Welcome to the public hearing.
3 Today is Tuesday, June 24, and I'm Terri Richard. We are
4 here to talk about and to allow public comment for the
5 Housing and Health Services Coordination Council 2014-
6 2015 Biennial Plan.

7 The document may be found on the following
8 website: www.tdhca.state.tx.us, and then just go to the
9 council's website and then there is a button for Biennial
10 Plans. You can also request a paper copy of the plan
11 just by contacting the Housing Resource Center at P.O.
12 Box 13941, Austin, Texas 78711-3941, or you can just pick
13 up the phone and give me a call. My number is 512-475-
14 2953.

15 We are representatives of the Texas Department
16 of Housing and Community Affairs, and we're here to
17 receive comments from stakeholders and the general public
18 regarding the plan. The hearings give the opportunity
19 for the public to provide input into the plan prior to
20 submission to the Office of the Governor and the
21 Legislative Budget Board on August 1, 2014.

22 The plan includes an overview of the council,
23 definitions of service-enriched housing, the importance
24 of service-enriched housing, council activities over the
25 last three years, and overview of the State of Texas

1 Comprehensive Analysis of Service-Enriched Housing
2 Finance Practices final report and council
3 recommendations for the 2014-2015 biennium.

4 This is the third biennial plan, and so with
5 this plan we tried to take a broader look at service-
6 enriched housing in Texas, as well as other states. We
7 contracted with the Technical Assistance Collaborative to
8 identify best practices in six other states, and focused
9 the recommendations on three of that organization's
10 recommendations. You'll also see more about services in
11 this report, including additional resources from the
12 legislature and federal funding opportunities.

13 So just want to remind you, if you have not
14 already done so, please turn off your phone. For anyone
15 interested in speaking, I'd just ask you to fill out a
16 witness affirmation form and note the topic you wish to
17 discuss. Also, as you speak, please provide your name
18 and who you represent. We're here to accept public
19 comment and will not be able to respond to questions
20 about the plan. The comment period for the biennial plan
21 started last Friday, June 13, and it's going to end this
22 Friday, June 27. Any comment received at this public
23 hearing will be considered official public comment for
24 these documents.

25 The Housing and Health Services Coordination

1 Council was authorized by the 81st Legislature in 2009,
2 based on recommendations from the Legislative Budget
3 Board. The council includes 17 members: the executive
4 director of the Texas Department of Housing and Community
5 Affairs serves as the council chair, and then we have
6 eight members appointed by the governor and eight other
7 members that are state agency representatives. The
8 council meets quarterly. We typically meet in January,
9 April, July and October. The Texas Department of Housing
10 and Community Affairs provides clerical and advisory
11 support.

12 And we have our executive director of the
13 Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs and the
14 chair of the council here. If you'd like to say a few
15 words?

16 MR. IRVINE: Thank you very much. Welcome to
17 this hearing.

18 I just want to say, on a personal note, that
19 service-enriched housing really is important.
20 Everybody's home needs to work for them. My home needs
21 to work for me, your home needs to work for you, and for
22 persons with disabilities, often that entails a need for
23 accessibility and it also entails a need for additional
24 services. I have a member in my household who receives
25 services that come to the house, and I've got to tell

1 you, it's pretty darn wonderful that those services can
2 be brought to my son.

3 I think that being able to live in a home of
4 your own choice is very impactful. It's one of the most
5 important and wonderful self-determinant things we do,
6 and service-enriched housing helps all Texans to meet
7 those objectives.

8 The council, as Terri said, does meet
9 quarterly. We certainly invite not just public comment
10 at council meetings but public engagement. Council
11 meetings are always open meetings, they are posted on our
12 website, and we invite people to come and talk to us,
13 engage us, bring us ideas, bring us questions,
14 challenges.

15 I think that the council was conceived
16 primarily as a way for the state government agencies to
17 get into dialogue and understand each other's needs and
18 limitations better, but I also think it's a great setting
19 for the larger opportunity of understanding challenges
20 and fashioning solutions. So everybody reading this
21 transcript, you are invited to engage and participate.

22 As Terri said, today is not, strictly
23 speaking, that type of engagement, this is just formal
24 public comment on the plan document that's been
25 published, and look forward to receiving public comment.

1 MS. RICHARD: Thank you, Tim.

2 We do have someone who would like to give some
3 public testimony. Tanya, if you would like to come up
4 and speak in front of the microphone.

5 MR. IRVINE: Just identify who you are and
6 whose behalf you're speaking.

7 MS. LAVELLE: Absolutely. Good afternoon. My
8 name is Tanya Lavelle. I do policy for Easter Seals of
9 Central Texas. At Easter Seals of Central Texas we've
10 been providing a lot of community services for over 75
11 years, including multiple housing programs. Some of the
12 programs we provide are TBRA, we do Home of Your Own, Amy
13 Young, as well as Section 811 units.

14 The lack of affordable housing is a huge
15 issue, and it's evidenced by the tremendous waiting lists
16 at not just Easter Seals but that lots for different
17 housing providers keep over the rest of the state. And
18 affordable accessible housing is really something that we
19 at Easter Seals focus on and we're very happy to be able
20 to comment on this pretty great plan today.

21 So just a couple of kind of general comments I
22 wanted to make. The first one is kind of delineating
23 between service-enriched housing and permanent supportive
24 housing. They are two different things. I think, at
25 least the way we see it, permanent supportive housing is

1 a type of service-enriched housing but they're not the
2 same thing. Not all permanent supportive housing models
3 are integrated, which is a big concern for the disability
4 community. The majority of people that we serve want to
5 live in more integrated settings, not just integrated
6 within their community but also within the actual
7 development that they live in.

8 It's important that, as a state, we don't
9 invest all of our housing dollars in one type of model,
10 especially one that does not necessarily serve a large
11 chunk of the population that we're trying to help through
12 this program.

13 Additionally, I'm very excited to see the TAC
14 report so heavily referenced in the biennial plan. They
15 really did a great job with the report and it really does
16 paint a great roadmap for Texas moving forward on how to
17 kind of build capacity for service-enriched housing. So
18 that was great to see in the report.

19 So my first kind of more focused comment is
20 about the recommendation to develop state funding
21 mechanisms for housing programs in Texas. As was
22 evidenced in the TAC report, all six states that they
23 focused on invest their own GR in their housing programs
24 for service-enriched housing. It's true that Texas has
25 been doing a fairly good job at bringing down federal

1 dollars, but the waiting lists really indicate that we've
2 got to do something else. And so really, the way that we
3 see as being the best fix to this is investing our own
4 state GR to create programs that are really going to
5 serve the needs of Texans and the needs of the disability
6 population here.

7 So one way that we sort of saw this kind of
8 happen a little bit last session was through DSHS, their
9 mental health housing vouchers that they created, and
10 that really is kind of one way that we can go about this,
11 maybe using that as a pilot, trying to see how we could
12 develop that into a more robust, longer term, disability-
13 neutral program. They already made a little bit of
14 investment at the state level, the legislature says this
15 is something we're interested in, so I think it would be
16 great if we sort of took that and ran with it, at least
17 using it as a possible base as a beginning for ideas
18 moving forward.

19 In the report we would like to see some
20 stronger language about recommendations about actually
21 creating these funding mechanisms. The legislature
22 really does need your guidance on how to do this. As
23 advocates we do say, often, the same thing session after
24 session, and I think really it is impactful when we have
25 an agency behind us saying that they are not just sort of

1 talking, they have reason to be doing this, we support
2 them. That, I think, really makes what we say more
3 impactful.

4 So we would like to see stronger language
5 about actual recommendations. And another way to
6 possibly do that would be to follow in the Sunset report
7 route within DADS where they said they wanted to close
8 some of the SSLCs. Really advocating to invest that
9 money in community services would be a fantastic way to
10 help people both transitioning out of institutions, as
11 well as people within the community who have been waiting
12 for these types of services. So that's something that
13 we've identified as kind of a recommendation we'd like to
14 see moving forward in terms of funding mechanisms.

15 Another thing that we really liked in the
16 report was making ADRCs local lead agencies. Local lead
17 agencies are identified as a best practice within the TAC
18 report, and their role is to coordinate community
19 services and be a point of contact for landlords. I
20 personally spent a lot of my last two years as a fellow
21 studying North Carolina's housing model in depth, and the
22 local lead agencies are really a huge component of their
23 success because it makes it easier for landlords to sort
24 of buy into the program.

25 That is sort of a concern that we've seen when

1 we talk to people about it, kind of landlords are worried
2 about what happens if a resident doesn't pay or if a
3 resident falls into a crisis. Having local lead agencies
4 really creates a conflict-free case management component
5 of this, and it's kind of like a little pyramid and
6 allows the housing agency to deal with housing, the
7 housing agency to deal with services, the local lead
8 agency to help tenants and maintain the relationship
9 between them and the landlord.

10 Another thing we'd like to mention is the
11 increased QAP points for service-enriched housing.
12 Increasing the points is another best practice that was
13 reported in the TAC report and was actually a
14 recommendation from the last biennial report. It's an
15 incentive for all parties to work together to better the
16 lives of people with disabilities, and I know that you
17 guys in the agency did consider doing it last QAP and we
18 were pretty upset to see that not come to fruition, and
19 we would like to encourage you guys as an agency, as well
20 as to kind of be a little more direct in the report
21 saying that this is a really big issue and that making
22 more points for Section 811 would really help to bolster
23 the quality and the availability of service-enriched
24 housing in Texas.

25 Kind of along the lines of the QAP points, we

1 were very much in favor of increasing the points for
2 developers willing to provide case management on site.
3 That's another tremendous benefit to service-enriched
4 housing, and having people on site is another way to kind
5 of ease landlord concern about participating in programs
6 like this. And we also are in favor of increasing the
7 points for more deeply affordable units.

8 And kind of finally, my last comment has to do
9 with kind of barriers to housing. If we're going to try
10 and fix service-enriched housing in Texas, it's going to
11 take a while, and so one of the main things that we as an
12 agency feel that we need to do is maintain the integrity
13 of the programs we already have going. We believe that
14 is the council's place to make recommendations to ensure
15 the sanctity of the programs we already have, including
16 Amy Young and the Home of Your Own program. We really
17 want to make sure that these programs are serving the
18 people that they are meant to serve and that they are
19 able to function in the way that they need to function to
20 serve people that currently could benefit from service-
21 enriched housing but simply can't access it.

22 So recommendations we'd like to see
23 specifically in the report regarding those programs would
24 be to make sure that Amy Young dollars can be spent
25 modifying mobile homes, which at Easter Seals is where we

1 get the majority for our applicants. Since we have no
2 longer been able to serve these people, it's been a
3 tremendous barrier to housing for people with
4 disabilities, especially with the people in rural areas
5 that we try and serve.

6 And the last recommendation would be to make
7 sure that the Home of Your Own program is properly funded
8 which, because of the switch to the reservation system,
9 even with the small set-aside, it doesn't really exist
10 within ours anymore, we can't really serve anybody
11 because of the way that the money is now being doled out.
12 And that's a program that has really benefitted a lot of
13 people with disabilities who want to achieve the dream of
14 homeownership, but because of the way it's now being
15 funded, we are unable to serve anybody.

16 So that's all I have to say, and thank you
17 very much for the opportunity to comment, and good job on
18 the report.

19 MS. RICHARD: Thank you, Tanya, appreciate it.

20 We don't have anyone else that would like to
21 make any further comment, so there being no one else, we
22 will conclude the hearing. And thank you again.

23 (Whereupon, at 1:19 p.m., the public hearing
24 was concluded.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

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3 IN RE: HHSCC 2014-2015 Biennial Plan

4 LOCATION: Austin, Texas

5 DATE: June 24, 2014

6 I do hereby certify that the foregoing pages,
7 numbers 1 through 14, inclusive, are the true, accurate,
8 and complete transcript prepared from the verbal
9 recording made by electronic recording by Nancy H. King
10 before the Texas Department of Housing and Community
11 Affairs.
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17 _____ 6/27/2014
18 (Transcriber) (Date)

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20 On the Record Reporting
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