

TEXAS INTERAGENCY COUNCIL FOR THE HOMELESS

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Annual Report - 2017

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Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless  
[www.tdhca.state.tx.us/tich/index.htm](http://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/tich/index.htm)

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## INTRODUCTION

This report is the progress report of the Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless (“TICH”), 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”).

Representatives from nine 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, per §2306.903(a):

1. TDHCA;
2. Health and Human Services Commission (“HHSC”);
3. Department of State Health Services (“DSHS”);
4. Department of Family Protective Services (“DFPS”);
5. Texas Workforce Commission (“TWC”);
6. Texas Veterans Commission (“TVC”);
7. Texas Department of Criminal Justice (“TDCJ”);
8. Texas Juvenile Justice Department (“TJJD”); and
9. Texas Education Agency (“TEA”).

This report covers the activities of the TICH in 2017 and is organized based on the nine specific duties of the TICH per state law. This report covers progress made on each of these assigned duties since the last report of the TICH. As a companion to this report, TICH works under the framework of *Pathways Home: A Framework for Coordinating State Administered Programs with Continuum of Care Planning to Address Homelessness in Texas*, which TICH released as a proposed policy framework for coordinating state administered programs with local service providers in Texas. TICH intends for *Pathways Home* to address most of the duties required under its statute.

## **ACTION ON STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

### **(1) Survey Current Resources**

During the 2017 quarterly meetings, TICH members discussed a need for further information from state agencies, especially concerning the housing status of clients served with state funds and how the state agencies may be preventing or ending homelessness.

The diversity of State agencies along with the numerous private entities that deliver services for people experiencing homelessness and for persons at risk of homelessness present a significant challenge to identifying and presenting a unified survey of resources. Through routine presence at TICH meetings the appointed agency representatives and advisory members are provided opportunities to describe their programs and progress.

Beyond the quarterly agency updates, the Performance Measure Committee was formed at the meeting of April 11, 2017, in order to survey existing TICH member agency performance data to identify statewide data that may be adjusted to reflect homelessness outcomes. The Performance Measure Committee is working to ultimately provide to the TICH a report uniformly reflecting the combined agency data on homelessness in Texas.

#### *Update on 2016 HUD Homeless Assistance Grant funding*

The Texas Homeless Network (“THN”) and its Continuum of Care (“CoC”) partners reported out on resources provided from federal funding sources, namely funding from HUD’s Homeless Assistance Grant FY16. The CoC Program is offered by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (“HUD”) to promote community commitment to the goal of ending homelessness, and consists of a network of organizations. This reporting is important because federal funding can bolster the efforts of state funded programs and recipients of these funds can utilize state funds to leverage dollars from HUD. During the TICH meeting of January 31, 2018, THN staff updated attendees on the results of the FY16 CoC awards. Chart 1 depicts the 2016 CoC funding allocations by CoC.

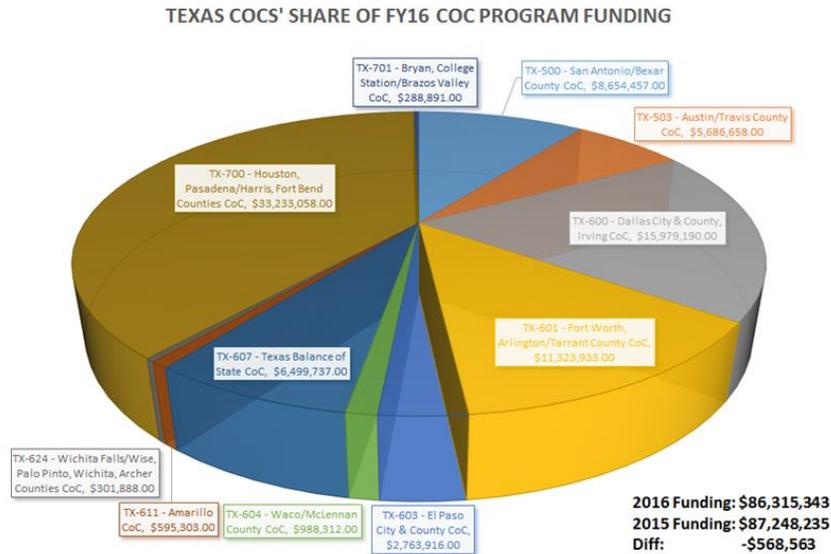


Chart 1 – Texas CoC Funding Allocation

*Update on the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program Award*

During several meetings, representatives from the Austin/Travis County CoC provided updates on the new HUD Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (“YHDP”) Award. The Austin/Travis County CoC was one of ten communities nationwide to receive the YHDP award and the \$5.2M allocation nearly doubles the funding the Austin/Travis County CoC receives from HUD for youth homelessness assistance. It was reported that the YHDP target population will be youth and young adults under age 25 and TICH members engaged in discussion and provided input regarding best practices for serving youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and also which Texas CoCs were applying for additional YHDP funding from HUD.

Representatives from TSAHC indicated that this program aligns well with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Criteria and Benchmarks for Achieving the Goal of Ending Youth Homelessness. The criteria and benchmarks work together to provide a complete picture and an ongoing assessment of a community’s response to youth homelessness. Together, these criteria and benchmarks are intended to help communities reduce the number of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness to as close to zero as possible, while building long-term, lasting solutions that can effectively and efficiently respond to future needs.

**(2) Initiate an Evaluation of Future and Current Needs**

In developing *Pathways Home*, TICH initiated efforts to evaluate the current and future needs of the state, focusing on four subpopulations: families with children; unaccompanied youth; individual adults experiencing chronic homelessness; and veterans. The assessment of current needs draws primarily on Point-in-Time (PIT) Count data. However, members recognize the need to expand the data sources used to gain a better understanding of the population.

*Data on Homeless Populations*

TICH finds extensive limitations in existing sources of data on homeless populations. In the past, the council in conjunction with TDHCA, discussed plans to establish an information database to support more sophisticated evaluation of current and future needs. A key component in this effort would be the development of a data warehouse. The proposed system would integrate data from the state's eleven independent Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) implementations. HMIS gathers client-level data from persons served in homeless assistance programs in CoC jurisdictions. Its use is widespread because HMIS allows homeless service providers to better coordinate an effective homeless crisis response system and because programs receiving some federal and state funding are required to use it. The data warehouse would have had the ability to match records in HMIS across all eleven CoCs in Texas and to connect to existing data in agencies' administrative datasets for cross-systems analysis.

TDHCA had previously identified funding for this effort in 2013; however, concerns among the CoC members regarding which entity would own the data so the project never entered the implementation phase. Representatives from the Texas CoCs remain interested in the concept of a data warehouse and this item remains of interest to the TICH. Implementation of a data warehouse may occur if:

- A non-governmental entity with strong ties to Texas CoCs and its communities leads the effort;
- Resources are made available through public and/or private sources that would allow expenses of constructing a system capable of integrating large, diverse data sets such as those in question; and
- Official agreements are structured between each participating entity that establish equity among all and that preserves client and Contributing HMIS Organization ("CHOs") information security and anonymity.

#### *Disaster Response Coordination*

During the 2017 TICH meetings, there were multiple updates from many of the members of the TICH of disaster recovery efforts in response to Hurricane Harvey. In addition, THN reported that it had been holding weekly Harvey Recovery Coordination calls with Texas CoCs. During these meetings the lack of access to data on persons experiencing homelessness proved to be a significant issue. If data were shared in this group, evacuees who were homeless pre-disaster and those that became homeless because of Hurricane Harvey could better be identified and served. Furthermore, if these data had been available, it could have better informed the recovery response early on and could be used in the development of a long-term recovery plan. Discussion was held at the TICH as to the role of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Texas Department of Emergency Management's emergency planning efforts, and possible outreach with those agencies as to this coordination.

### **(3) Assist in Coordinating and Providing Statewide Services**

TICH accomplishes this requirement through regular meetings and by attendance and cooperation of State agencies, participation in THN's Annual Conference on Ending Homelessness, and involvement in workgroups that are relevant to identified challenges. Additionally, through TDHCA's administrative support of TICH, including maintenance of the TICH web pages (<https://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/tich/index.htm>), interested parties are able to access information and assistance.

The primary goal of *Pathways Home* is to enumerate a set of strategies to help state agencies coordinate resources to address the needs of homeless individuals in the state. The document organizes this framework under four thematic sections: 1) Affordable Housing and Supportive Services; 2) Homelessness Prevention; 3) Data, Research, and Analysis; and 4) State Infrastructure. This discussion begins on p. 34 of *Pathways Home* under the section titled *Framework for Strengthening Texas's Infrastructure*. For an outline of the document's proposed objectives and strategies for assisting in the coordination and delivery of services, please refer to pp. 71-79 of *Pathways Home*.

TICH continues to increase communication between state agencies and non-profit agencies through webinars, in-person workshops and teleconferences. THN hosts a semi-monthly CoC Leader conference calls designed to facilitate conversation among the eleven CoCs in Texas to work on common issues and provide information that may be helpful in preventing and ending homelessness across Texas.

Additionally, in 2017, TDHCA awarded Community Services Block Grant Discretionary ("CDBG-D") funds to THN to support homelessness efforts in the Balance of State Continuum of Care and related statewide homelessness initiatives.

During 2017, to assist in coordinating and planning statewide services, the TICH members provided updates about several programs and services for people experiencing homelessness. An overview of many of these updates by member agencies follows.

## TDHCA

### *Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)*

The Emergency Solutions Grants program, formerly the Emergency Shelter Grants Program, is a competitive grant that awards funds to private nonprofit organizations, cities, and counties in the State of Texas to provide the services necessary to help persons that are at-risk of homelessness or homeless quickly regain stability in permanent housing. The ESG program is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is administered by TDHCA in the State of Texas.

The ESG program provides funding to:

- Engage homeless individuals and families living on the street;
- Improve the number and quality of emergency shelters for homeless individuals and families;
- Help operate these shelters;
- Provide essential services to shelter residents;
- Rapidly re-house homeless individuals and families; and
- Prevent families and individuals from becoming homeless.

As reported in the 2018 SLIHP, the ESG program expended \$8,977,678 and served 28,706 individuals in SFY 2017.

### *Texas Ending Homelessness Fund*

The 85th Texas Legislature passed H.B. 4102, which was enacted on September 1, 2017. The act amended Subchapter H, Chapter 502, Transportation Code to add Section 502.415, Voluntary Contribution to Ending

Homelessness Fund. This section allows registrants of a motor vehicle in Texas to elect to contribute any amount of funds to the newly established Ending Homelessness Fund. Funds will be sent by the assessor-collector to the comptroller, and held in trust to be administered by TDHCA as trustee. The funds must be utilized to provide grants to counties and municipalities to combat homelessness. The act further requires TDHCA to adopt rules governing applications for grants from the Fund, and the issuance of those grants.

During TICH's October 2017 meeting TDHCA staff provided an update on the Texas Ending Homelessness Fund. Beginning January 1, 2018, Texans can donate to the Texas Ending Homelessness Fund ([www.txhomelessfund.org](http://www.txhomelessfund.org)) when they register or renew registration for their vehicle.

Donations to the fund will help:

- Enhance the number and quality of emergency shelters
- Prevent families and individuals from becoming homeless
- Encourage self sufficiency
- Secure stable housing

TDHCA is in the process of developing rules to administer the funds. TICH members were informed on how to provide input and spread the word about this new funding source to address homelessness in Texas.

#### *Homeless Housing and Service Program (HHSP)*

HHSP was established during the 81st Texas Legislature through an appropriations rider and codified during the 82nd Texas Legislature. Through HHSP, the state provides funding to the eight largest cities in support of services to homeless individuals and families. Cities currently served through HHSP include Arlington, Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio. (Note: During the development of this report, the City of Plano reached the population threshold to be eligible for HHSP funds. Thus, there are now nine recipients and Plano will receive an allocation of PY 2019 HHSP funding starting on September 1, 2018.)

Allowable activities include construction, development, or procurement of housing for homeless persons; rehabilitation of structures targeted to serving homeless persons or persons at-risk of homelessness; provision of direct services and case management to homeless persons or persons at-risk of homelessness; or other homelessness-related activity as approved by the Department. As reported in the 2018 SLIHP, the HHSP program expended \$6,031,804 and served 7,849 individuals in SFY 2017.

#### HHSC

HHCS staff provide information on several programs available to support collaboration of services and to help people with mental illness who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless find and keep housing.

#### *Healthy Community Collaboratives (HCC)*

HHCS staff provided updates throughout 2017 on the HCC program, which was created by the Texas Legislature to establish or expand community collaboratives bringing the public and private sectors together to provide services to persons experiencing homelessness and mental illness.

Senate Bill (S.B.) 58, 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, established the HCC program and required DSHS

to award a maximum of five grants to the most populous municipalities in this state located in counties with a population of more than one million. The 2016-17 General Appropriations Act, House Bill (H.B. 1), 84th Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, required DSHS to allocate up to \$25 million in general revenue over the biennium to fund community collaborative grants pursuant to Texas Government Code, Chapter 539.

The HCC program utilizes the Coordinated Assessment Model, focusing on aligning the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness with referrals to services addressing their needs. Providers conduct coordinated assessments to rapidly and effectively match a participant's needs to available housing and services. Further, the coordinated assessment system standardizes the access and assessment process and coordinates referrals across the local service area. According to a January 2017 report by HHSC, available at <https://hhs.texas.gov/reports/2017/04/healthy-community-collaborative-program-fiscal-year-2016>, since the implementation of the HCC program, a total of 30,901 coordinated assessments have been completed. Of those individuals assessed, 1,742 homeless individuals were rapidly re-housed, 747 were placed in permanent supportive housing, and another 575 were placed in affordable housing.

#### *Permanent Supportive Housing Program*

The Permanent Supportive Housing Program helps people 18 and older who are at high risk of becoming homeless find safe, affordable housing. It also helps them learn skills to keep housing and live independently. Persons eligible for the Permanent Supportive Housing Program must be eligible for services by the local mental health authority (“LMHA”) or local behavioral health authority (“LBHA”).

#### *Supportive Housing Rental Assistance Program*

Twenty agencies – a combination of LMHAs and LBHAs - in Texas help people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless with temporary rent subsidies, utility payments and move-in costs. They also work on homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing to keep people housed or move them quickly into housing. This includes deposits as well as rental and utility expenses. This program is for people who are eligible to receive mental health services at the LMHA or LBHA and are homeless and willing to apply for Section 8 public housing (although the assistance is not Section 8 assistance).

#### TEA and Texas Homeless Education Office (“THEO”)

TEA and THEO provided updates on the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (“ESSA”), previously the No Child Left Behind Act. ESSA made changes to the McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth Assistance Act and information was provided to the TICH on new definitions of homelessness, data reporting requirements, training mandates, and new roles for school homeless liaisons.

#### DFPS and TJJD

##### *Preparation for Adult Living (PAL)*

DFPS and TJJD staff provided updates on the PAL program at DFPS which ensures that older youth in substitute care are prepared for their inevitable departure from DFPS care and support. At any given time, there are about 3,500 youth 16 years of age and older in substitute care. PAL program staff strive to provide each of these youth with skills and resources they will need to be healthy, productive adults and reduce the likelihood of future homelessness. TJJD partners with DFPS to provide PAL to eligible youth who are in TJJD custody or on probation.

## TDCJ

### *Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments (TCOOMMI)*

TCOOMMI provides pre-release screening and referral to aftercare treatment services for special needs offenders releasing from correctional settings, local jails, or other referral sources. TCOOMMI contracts with Local Mental Health Authorities across the state to provide continuity of care services for persons on probation or parole by linking them with community based interventions and support services. TDCJ staff updated TICH on continued efforts to monitor progress made in meeting the treatment, rehabilitative, and educational needs of special needs offenders in adult and juvenile criminal justice system.

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

The ongoing work of the TICH and its execution of statutory requirements results in greater flow of information to providers and authorities. Again, TDHCA support to TICH is the essential means enabling improved communication.

Through the development of *Pathways Home*, TICH has facilitated more dialogue among independent service providers, both at the state and local level. State Infrastructure, on pp. 66-70 and pp. 78-79, describes strategies for continuing to increase the flow of information among service providers and appropriate authorities.

As the subtitle to *Pathways Home* suggests, the framework focuses on the possibility of achieving stronger coordination between state agency programs and local CoC systems. A CoC acts as the core entity for organizing resources at the local level for homelessness assistance. The size of CoCs varies, from a single county like Travis County, to a multi-county network like the Texas Balance of State, which covers a swath of 215 rural and non-metropolitan counties in Texas. HUD is increasingly recognizing the CoC as the hub for coordinating service delivery. Through new regulations, HUD requires heightened integration between agencies receiving HUD funds and local CoCs. As a result of these new regulations, TDHCA and TICH have increased their level of communication with CoC leadership across the state.

In 2017, the TICH was informed that lead agencies from each of the 11 CoCs intended to be more involved with the Council's work. TICH leadership encouraged participation in quarterly meetings and tasks of the Council. There was CoC participation in each of the Council's quarterly meetings in 2017 and this involvement serves to increase the flow of information from the state to local communities.

In 2017, THN presented a report to the Council of HUD CoC Point in Time ("PIT") and Housing Inventory data for all Texas CoCs that THN had aggregated. In 2018 this report will be updated and presented to TICH membership again. THN will utilize these research findings to encourage the use of a common PIT survey instrument in Texas beginning in 2018.

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

In *Pathways Home*, TICH issues guidance on monitoring the delivery of services to persons experiencing and at

risk of homelessness. For a proposed Housing Status Continuum, see p. 68. For a discussion on strategies for establishing a common definition of “at risk of homelessness”, see Homeless Prevention, beginning p. 54. Objective 2 of Data, Research, and Analysis, pp. 63-65, provide guidance on developing metrics for monitoring the delivery of services to persons experiencing homelessness. Objective 1 of State Infrastructure, pp. 66-68, discusses the need for coordinating the definition of “homeless” that state agencies use for data collection and assessment.

Nonetheless, due in part to the intricate patchwork of funding sources and varied service delivery needs of persons experiencing and at risk of homelessness across Texas, TICH has found it challenging within available resources to develop comprehensive and integrated guidelines for quality monitoring of the complex manner of Texas-wide efforts to combat homelessness.

In accordance with Texas Government Code §2306.905(a)(5), TICH will continue to work towards effective monitoring of the provision of services for the homeless and the methods of delivering those services in coordination with THN the network of Texas’ CoC leaders.

#### **(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 TICH, including representatives of TDHCA, on the homeless population and its various subpopulations, including those with special needs. Notably, THN has over 20 years of experience conducting research and data analysis utilizing sensitive information from people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. THN will provide technical assistance in the area of data collection, analyses, and the dissemination of research to TICH and the Multifamily Program Division, as needed. The Multifamily Program Division is responsive to issues relating to homelessness, encourages the development of permanent supportive housing in the programming of its funds, and is collaborative in responding to suggestions for rule and policy changes made by developers of permanent supportive housing in Texas.

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

With the support of the TICH, THN has partnered with TWC on a project to fulfill the requirement of the 7th statute, “Coordinate with the Texas Workforce Commission to Provide Homeless Individuals Information to Assist them in Obtaining Employment and Job Training”. The AmeriCorps VISTA Project manager, overseen by THN, is working with CoCs and local workforce boards to facilitate the coordination of employment assistance delivery to persons experiencing homelessness. The project is funded by the TWC contribution of \$10,000 for this TICH goal, and overseen by TDHCA as administrative support to the TICH.

CoCs are responsible for coordinating the programs that serve people experiencing homelessness as well as work to end homelessness in their local community, be it city, county, or region. Local Texas Workforce Development Boards are responsible for helping people seeking employment find work.

Ideally, the CoC and Workforce Development Board would work together in each community and coordinate services for homeless clients, who often need to increase income for housing stability. Some areas have already

built such a partnership. Houston is a community in which the local CoC includes Workforce Solution offices in the community's coordinated response system designed to assist people experiencing homelessness. HUD has actively begun to encourage the use of funds from the Workforce Opportunity and Investment Act to collaborate with local CoCs to enhance programs for people experiencing homelessness.

This project, led by THN, aims to understand the CoC perspective of and relationship to local Texas Workforce Development Boards and identify better ways to coordinate on behalf of clients experiencing homelessness. A short survey was sent to representatives of 10 Texas CoCs. THN did not include the CoC TX - 700 - Houston/Ft. Bend, Harris, & Montgomery Counties because of their current partnership with THN for this project. THN received five responses: TX - 611 - Amarillo, TX - 701 - Bryan/College Station/Brazos Valley, TX - 624 - Wichita Falls/Wise, Palo Pinto, Wichita, Archer Counties, TX - 503 - Austin/Travis County, TX - 601 - Fort Worth, Arlington/Tarrant County CoC.

The survey results indicate that each responding CoC has some type of relationship with the local workforce solutions office(s), but each would like to see better coordination of services directed towards people experiencing homelessness. Each of the CoCs had varying degrees of coordination and satisfaction with their local workforce solutions. All CoCs had an agency referring people to Workforce Solutions, but only Wichita Falls and Tarrant County received referrals from Workforce Solutions.

Both CoCs and Workforce Development Boards are individualized to the community and offer different services. However, since none of the surveyed CoCs have a close working relationship with their local Workforce Development Board, it is likely that these organizations are unaware of all the programs offered by each other.

People experiencing homelessness can have barriers to employment beyond the stigma and challenges of homelessness itself. In the survey each of the CoCs reported "Criminal Background" as a barrier to employment. Each community also cited lack of education as a barrier through either "Lack of Occupational Training" or "Lack of High School Diploma/GED." While unemployment among the overall population is low in each of these counties, the rate of unemployment of those experiencing homelessness who were surveyed in the annual point in time count is much higher (with exception of Amarillo). However, employment and income is not always the most significant barrier to housing. Every area but Amarillo said that there are bigger barriers to housing than employment including lack of a living wage, affordable housing, and disabilities.

Coordinated entry, a process that assesses and prioritizes the most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness for housing assistance and services, is currently being developed and implemented in the surveyed communities. Each community implements it in a different way and Bryan/College Station and Amarillo have chosen to incorporate employment services and referrals in their process. These counties also listed the availability of jobs as a barrier to employment, which indicates a more competitive market and need for more intensive job search assistance.

Each CoC survey respondent expressed a desire to improve the referral process between CoCs and Workforce Development Boards. Following the surveys, each of the respondents were asked if they would participate in a brief interview to gather more data on: 1) the workforce readiness needs of people experiencing homelessness; 2) the current level of coordination between the workforce solution office and CoC; 3) the needed components that would improve that collaboration; 4) the local industries and training that offer the most benefit to the target population; and 5) the CoC representatives perception of the community's level of support for a project

to strengthen coordination between workforce solution office(s) and CoCs.

Each of the 5 respondents was sent a request for an hour long interview, to which 4 responded and scheduled calls with THN staff. A set of 10 questions, providing a deeper examination into how the CoCs and Workforce Development Boards worked together and what could be done to improve the relationship, were asked. In interview responses, participants provided THN staff with some data specific to their community, but the majority of responses followed common themes among each of the participating CoCs. Lack of formal coordination between CoC and the local Workforce Development Board, difficulty navigating workforce services, and transportation difficulties were the most common barriers.

In spite of these barriers, every CoC saw value in the potential of working directly with their local Workforce Development Board for their unique set of resources. Interviewees also thought that local Workforce Development Boards had more concrete employer connections and services than other agencies assisting with employment. However, two of the CoCs did not realistically envision this project being a good fit at this time. The remaining two CoCs - Austin and Tarrant County - were asked if each would like to participate. Both accepted and THN's VISTA Program Manager began coordination with each to recruit VISTA members for the 2018-19 project year.

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

2-1-1 Texas currently serves as the state's central resource and information center for persons experiencing and at risk of homelessness. TICH will continue to work with 2-1-1 to ensure that this system maintains comprehensive and accurate information on current resources.

HUD required CoCs to restructure their methods of case management, resource delivery, and information distribution. This restructured system is called Coordinated Entry and implementation is required by all CoCs. In regulations issued for the ESG Program and CoC Grant Program, HUD has set a deadline for projects funded from either program to begin using a coordinated entry process as the basis for all service delivery in 2018. CoCs will use a coordinated entry assessment to both determine client eligibility for assistance and to refer clients to local resources that best fit their needs.

THN assists the TICH with the compilation and synthesis of data on homelessness on a statewide level. The most common source of this data is collected each year through a PIT count by CoCs during the last ten days of January. In 2017 THN staff provided results of the 2017 PIT count that showed a 31% decline in homelessness among Texans over the past 6 years, based on PIT count data from 2012 through 2017.

#### **(9) Council Responsibilities Executed by Other Entities**

The TICH works closely with THN, a nonprofit organization that provides assistance to Texas communities to end homelessness through training, technical assistance, and advocacy. THN has the following statutory authority to supplement the TICH's work pursuant to Section 2306.905(b) of the Texas Government Code: "The council and each of its represented agencies may seek program or policy assistance from the Texas Homeless Network in accomplishing the council's duties."

THN provides support to agencies and communities that are building systems to end homelessness in Texas

through education, resources, and advocacy. This is the umbrella under which all programs and staff operate at THN, and it's under this directive the staff and board derive the agency's purpose and role.

Advocates, nonprofits, and state agencies formed THN to meet the unmet needs they identified in their efforts to end homelessness on the community and state level. Twenty-six years later, THN continues to evolve and is meeting these needs through two primary focus areas, the Texas Balance of State CoC and Statewide Initiatives.

The Texas Balance of State CoC initiative serves 215 counties in Texas, 85% of the state, through technical assistance, training and development of a coordinated response to end homelessness. The Statewide Initiatives program serves all of Texas in the areas of advocacy, community support through VISTA and Social Security Insurance/Social Security Disability Insurance Outreach, Access and Recovery ("SOAR"), representation in state agency and council planning, and through organizing an annual conference on ending homelessness. These two initiatives intersect and complement each other as THN strives to meet its goal of ending homelessness.