

Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
Meeting Notes
September 10, 2010

Members participating via phone: JoAnn DePenning, Ricky Garcia (HHSC), Chan McDermott (HHSC), Teresa Tod (TNOYS), B.J. Wagner (TDCJ)

Members participating in person: Mike Doyle (Cornerstone Assistance Network), Mindy Green (TSAHC), Lance Hamilos (DARS), Ron Hieser for Philip Cochran (TEA), Barbara James (THEO), Karen Lashbrook (TYC), David Long (TSAHC), Josh Martin (DSHS), Ken Martin (THN), Melissa Mason (TCFV), Eric Samuels (THN)

Staff support: Stuart Campbell (TDHCA) and Mary Dodson (TDHCA)

Welcome and Introduction

Stuart Campbell: TDHCA will have a VISTA member for TICH through the generosity of the Texas Homeless Network (THN) via their VISTA Liaisons Project. The position starts in November.

Subcommittee Reports

Prevention and Outreach—Beverly Donoghue: The committee met 09/07/2010. For prevention, the committee is (1) defining homelessness prevention activities (Mary Dodson will help with this); (2) identifying state agencies' current prevention activities; (3) identifying gaps in services and how to fill them; and (4) coordinating among agencies. One idea is to implement a "housing status" assessment within some mainstream programming intake forms.

For outreach and education the committee is (1) researching best practices (JoAnn and THN are working on this); (2) publishing a document about best practices; (3) educating state employees about which homeless services activities the agencies are doing; and (4) broadening the target audience the plan identifies.

Statewide Definition—Ken Martin: The committee met 09/07/2010. Ken distributed the Texas Housing Status Continuum draft document that describes various housing statuses that are considered to be "homeless" or "at risk of homelessness." The committee will add a column describing which state agencies are serving people in the various housing statuses.

Beverly asked that someone distribute to the TICH members the latest version of *Within Reach*. Mary Dodson will do so.

Data Integrity—Eric Samuels: The committee met 09/09/2010. They discussed a 2005 survey that asked state agencies which data on homelessness they are already gathering. They will consider using a similar survey in the near future. From this they will learn which data is already being collected, and identify

gaps in data. This raises the question, how do we fill the gaps identified? They are also comparing *Within Reach* to the national plan to prevent and end homelessness, *Opening Doors*, released by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) in June of 2010.

Lance Hamilos: In 2002 or 2003, we started working on the survey, but I don't know if it was ever sent out.

Beverly: The committee is working toward data warehousing and developing an annual submission process for agencies to input their data.

Stuart: Data warehousing would be very helpful for us, and we may be able to use CSBG money for that. Money TDHCA had set aside for disaster relief—whatever money is not used by the end of the hurricane season--will be made available for other projects, and data warehousing may be an eligible expense. We are investigating the possibility.

Lance: If we want to collect data annually, let's have a set timeframe for data to cover.

Beverly: We should incorporate questions about timeframe information.

Mary: Page 10 of the national plan discusses using all federal definitions of homelessness.

Supportive Housing and Discharge Planning—B.J. Wagner: B.J. left the call before this point in the meeting, so there was no subcommittee update.

U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

David Long:

- I talked with Michael German at HUD's Atlanta regional office. Mr. German suggested using the national plan as a tool to create state plans. Mr. German emphasized three populations: veterans, families, and chronic homeless.
- The Georgia ICH is having huge issues with people who are homeless and have dementia.
- The THN conference is coming up.

Stuart: I want to create a survey asking agencies if they're struggling with serving homeless persons experiencing dementia.

Texas Homeless Network and Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoS CoC)

Ken:

- I'll send questions to the coalitions, too.
- The THN conference is coming up. There will be nationally-recognized speakers, forty workshops, a networking event, and a benefit concert. Carolyn Wonderland is the recipient of the John Paul DeJoria award.

- Eric, Daniel, and Ken will attend the HUD conference in Denver.

Eric: There are three new projects for the 2009 BoS CoC competition, plus all renewals. We scored 71.25 (which is the threshold), so only three of our projects (of nine) were funded. The three that were funded will increase our points/score on the 2010 application. We've already received thirty letters of intent for projects for 2010.

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP)

Mary Dodson: We are learning from HPRP so that we can implement the new Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESGP) under the HEARTH Act. We are waiting on HEARTH Act appropriations. TDHCA's HPRP expenditure rate is 35%. The statutory requirement is to spend 60% by August 2011. TDHCA will have no problem reaching that requirement because TDHCA's HPRP contracts are two years long, so we are aiming for 100% expended by September 2011.

Member Agency Updates

Karen Lashbrook: We know that TYC has youth exiting to precarious housing situations, but we're not tracking that data right now.

Josh Martin: DSHS's PATH program was refunded, with \$500,000 more, for \$4.4 million. They serve 16,000 homeless individuals annually.

Mike Doyle: Cornerstone Assistance Network combined five divisions into one building. The medical clinic expanded from one room to five. They have an ophthalmic theater, a dental clinic, and job training. In the spring, they plan to open a restaurant to provide job training opportunities. Workforce Innovative Strategies for the Homeless (WISH) funds the job training program. The North Texas Re-Entry Council is using HMIS to track how long ex-offenders live in the community before re-offending—to catch people before they re-offend and help them re-enter successfully. It is easier to create jobs for ex-offenders and homeless folks than to find existing jobs for them.

Ken: THN is looking for new office space. We need 4,000 square feet, and we have eleven employees.

Barbara: The Texas Homeless Education Office (THEO) has seen a great increase in the number of homeless students, probably because economic troubles have finally hit Texas. As for additional funding, a new grant program will start in April; it will target schools that have not traditionally identified homeless students and, therefore, under-serve them. The National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth (NAEHCY) conference will be in Houston November 6-9.

Ron: TEA's management is working on PIEMS codes to track homeless students.

Melissa: The Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV) conference will be the week of September 20 and will have a national focus. One speaker will discuss working with victims with limited English proficiency.

Lance: DARS is preparing for the next legislative session. DARS is scheduled for a review from the Sunset Commission. Because of the consolidation of our agencies, we are compiling all data into one database system. We do still have a feature capturing applicants' residential statuses in the electronic application. I can add housing status assessment questions.

Beverley: The Texas Workforce Commission's annual conference is the week of November 15. I'll check the agenda to see if there's anything of interest to TICH members.

Karen: The Texas Youth Commission (TYC) has a re-entry plan on its website. The national symposium is Oct. 10-13—TYC will present on re-entry. TYC received a \$2.9 million grant for the CARE project.

Homeless Housing and Services Program (HHSP)

Stuart: HHSP is starting to see an uptick in expenditures. TDHCA has requested continued funding for HHSP in TDHCA's base budget.

Topics for Future Meetings

Stuart:

- I reached out to Megan Oswald-Garza at Haven for Hope in San Antonio to see if she would host TICH. Would we want to do a TICH meeting there, or do we want to simply tour the place and learn about it?
- If you are interested in hosting the December TICH meeting, let us know. We're happy to host, but we don't want it to be mandatory that we meet at TDHCA.
- What do we want to accomplish at the TICH meeting at the THN conference?

Ken: We'll have a subcommittee report.

Beverley: I think we should talk about the strategic plan.

Ken: Maybe set aside more time for all subcommittees to (together) develop some action steps.

Stuart: We don't need to have a plan written by January 4, but certainly by April. We're getting a VISTA in November who will work on the plan. Maybe we could make our December 1 meeting a longer one to hammer out some action steps.

David: What happened with the plan since the Blueprint was written in 2009?

Stuart:

- There hasn't been a person to take the lead on the plan, with TDHCA handling additional funding from the Recovery Act and with me moving to a new position within the Department.
- Perhaps we can use the USICH plan as a model for some pieces of our plan.

Beverley: Let's read the national plan thoughtfully to see which pieces to incorporate into the state plan.

Stuart: Maybe we should have a facilitator to run the meeting/working session.

JoAnn: I highly recommend using a facilitator.

Beverley: We need JoAnn to participate rather than facilitate because we need her input.

Mike: For the THN meeting, it is important to clarify what TICH does, why TICH exists, its legislative mandates, the nine principles, and the state plan. Where does TICH fit, especially in relation to THN?

Stuart: Maybe turn the meeting at the THN conference into a "hearing" kind of environment where we can get input on the state plan from THN conference attendees.

Ken: Mention the TICH forum in all the THN conference sessions, and encourage people to attend.