



**Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
Quarterly Meeting – September 25, 2013**

Chair, Office of the Governor: Mike Doyle

Members present:

HHSC: Deborah Ballard
DADS: Steven Ashman
TDCJ: Erin McGann
DFPS: Beth Engelking

TDHCA: Sharon Gamble, Brooke Boston
TEA: Liza Lorenzo (representing Anita Villarreal)
TVC: Julie Puzan
TWC: George McEntyre

Advisory Members present: Molly Volyes (TCFV) Barbara James (THEO), Eric Samuels (THN), Ken Martin (THN), Duncan Cormie (TNOYS, for Christine Gendron)

Others: Ann Howard (ECHO), Beth Wick (HHSC), Camille Castillo (EPCH), Cathy Collingsworth (TDHCA), Cindy Crain (Tarrant County Homeless Coalition), Elizabeth Yevich (TDHCA), Greg Anderson (DFPS – APS), John Harper (City of Austin), Juan Gatica (Plainview ISD), Marilyn Brown (Coalition for the Homeless, Houston/Harris County), Michael DeYoung (TDHCA), Paula Wood (Veteran Administration), Randy Clinton (CEC), Richard Dodson (ECHO), and Teri R Holtkamp (City of Waco).

Administrative support: Naomi Trejo (TDHCA)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mike Doyle called the meeting to order at 11:16am. Because this meeting was held at the same location as the Texas Homeless Network Annual Conference, many Continuum of Care (CoC) Leads and other attendees introduced themselves. **Mike Doyle** also announced new member Anita Villareal (absent).

II. Remarks from Chair

Mike Doyle said he would make his comments at the end of the meeting.

III. Approval of draft minutes from TICH Quarterly Meeting on July 16, 2013

Beth Engelking moved to accept the draft minutes and **Deborah Ballard** seconded. The motion passed.

**IV. Update on the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs' One Year Action Plan
--Sharon Gamble, Project Manager of Planning, TDHCA**

Sharon Gamble, Manager of Planning in TDHCA's Community Affairs Division, discussed changes to the One Year Action Plan (Plan) relating to the Emergency Solutions Grant Program. She mentioned that the Plan is part of the 5-year Consolidated Planning for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The Plan is currently open for public comment and there is a public hearing on October 1 in the Clements building. If anyone had any questions, **Sharon Gamble** directed them to **Naomi Trejo**, Administrator of the Housing Resource Center, who is coordinating the hearing.

Sharon Gamble said that the largest change to the Plan was the funding distribution model for the Emergency Solutions Grant Program (ESG). In 2011, 2012 and 2013 there was a competitive application for ESG funding. The draft plan reflect that, in 2014, if the CoCs meet TDHCA and HUD's requirements, the CoCs would receive a direct allocation; there would be designated funds for each CoC region and no competition at the state level. The CoCs would then be responsible to do their own competitive funding

distribution. In this way TDHCA is taking a cue from HUD's CoC awards. For the CoCs who do not have a cooperative application, they can still compete for ESG funds. In 2015, CoCs will receive direct allocations and will be required to have coordinated assessments. Some CoCs that don't want to accept the allocation can have another entity accept on their behalf.

Marilyn Brown asked how much administrative funding would be available, since the administration, monitoring and liability would be passed down to the CoCs. **Sharon Gamble** said she did not have particulars at this time, but would welcome comments on that topic. **Marilyn Brown** said that it would be difficult to accept the proposal without specifics.

Mike Doyle asked how much was available by region. **Sharon Gamble** described that the funding is currently distributed by formula, which currently includes Point-In-Time counts and number of people in poverty. This formula would continue to distribute funding.

Mike Doyle said that homelessness prevention through CoCs by using ESG would be helpful because the CoCs wouldn't have to go directly to HUD. **Sharon Gamble** clarified that each CoC would decide how much prevention funding they would provide, making sure the amount would be within the percentage allowance defined by HUD.

Marilyn Brown commented that the State's ESG should allow the CoC to get Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS) funding. Would this change? **Sharon Gamble** said that the administrative funds would be split with the subrecipients. She also said she didn't know yet if CoCs would be able to apply directly to TDHCA for funding for HMIS.

Cindy Crain asked if CoCs would still be part of priorities for the ESG funding. **Sharon Gamble** responded that they are still writing the Notice of Funding Availability, and will still have until June or July for contracts for 2014.

Ken Martin encouraged CoC leads to comment on the amount of administrative funds needed during the public comment period. **Sharon Gamble** agreed that input would be helpful

Cindy Crain asked if other states were following this way of distributing funds. **Sharon Gamble** said that Ohio was the model.

Richard Doyle said he was in support of the CoC collaboration model for ESG awards. This would take some of the burden away from coordinating with so many CoCs. **Mike Doyle** echoed that sentiment and indicated the program change is a good step in the right direction.

V. Agency Spotlight: Health and Human Services Commission

Deborah Ballard gave an overview of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). It is the lead agency for four other agencies: Department of State Health Services, Department of Aging and Disability Services, Department of Family and Protective Services, and Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services. These departments provide community access and services, ranging from SNAP food benefits and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) to the Refugee Resettlement Program to the Family Violence Program. HHSC also runs several workgroups, such as the Community Resource Coordination Groups and Community Partners.

Deborah Ballard emphasized HHSC's 211 Program, which provides information and referrals. The 211 program has 25 regions and is statewide. Seven percent of calls are from people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Cindy Crain said it would be great to have a coordinated assessment workshop. She stated that she wished she could have the call logging software, or at least just the logging software for the homeless aspect of the 211 system.

Ken Martin said the Balance of State was exploring how to coordinate with 211 more.

Mike Doyle asked **Cindy Crain** what 211 would allow her to do that she couldn't do currently. **Cindy Crain** said she wanted to be able to give more specific help. She referenced becoming a bridge before the client was entered into HUD's HMIS. If the client is diverted from homelessness, he/she is not recorded in HMIS but it would be helpful to track the client.

Deborah Ballard elaborated that 211 is confidential and does not follow up with callers unless 211 specifically asks if it can follow up.

Marilyn Brown wants to use 211 to refer to coordinated access to several programs and not just for housing assistance. **Cindy Crain** offered to pick up the assessment piece of the inquiry if she could get access to other resources.

Ken Martin asked about the clearinghouse of resources for people with disabilities. **Deborah Ballard** responded that the database for people with disabilities will be live on Thursday.

Beth Wick told of 211's interest in partnering with local organizations. Recently 211 did a partnership with triage nurses with the H1N1 crisis; the 211 callers were transferred to a specialist to diagnose their symptoms. **Beth Wick** suggested a similar triage but with a housing team.

Mike Doyle referenced a special resource page for people with disabilities and asked if there could be a special page for people exiting prisons. **Beth Wick** said parole officers give the 211 number, but again 211 wasn't specialized for specific issues of ex-offenders. Similarly, veterans don't have their own resource page, but often they have the same needs as the rest of the population, so they don't have a "separate door" to access services. She again stressed the impact of being able to refer to a person at a local agency, instead of just to the agency's main phone line.

Mike Doyle asked if the CoCs could take referrals from 211. **Cindy Crain** answered that in a true housing crisis the CoC can take the calls.

Deborah Ballard invited the audience to tour a 211 facility, which are in several locations across the state. She suggested contacting her directly to set up a tour. **Cindy Crain** said it would be great if 211 staff could tour the local housing organizations and homeless shelters.

VI. Conversation with Continuum of Care Representatives

Mike Doyle asked CoCs how the state could better help them.

Cindy Crain said that the Department of State Health Services has a grant to help people who are homeless and have mental illness. She felt that the State needs more opportunities to see what is working on the ground.

Mike Doyle added that a recent study showed that persons who received employment assistance had a 76% employment rate, but, in reality, the rate of persons who were homeless was 30% and the others were 80%. A career is needed for the homeless; work is good, but a career is stable.

Ken Martin pointed out that many people who have lived on the streets have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). A coordinated assessment is needed and should include criminal justice staff. He stressed the need to have early assessment to make sure people have housing when they exit prisons. **Erin McGann** said that Texas doesn't allow people to parole to the streets. There are reentry case managers to work with parole officers. **Ann Howard** stressed the importance of getting ex-offenders connected with a community. **Mike Doyle** said that release managers in prisons were overworked and that local jails didn't need to ensure the offender had an address before they were released.

Terri Holtkamp said the City of Waco partnered with Baylor University to have 2 social worker students volunteer in the jails with the students. She emphasized that for the homeless offenders, if only the housing need was addressed upon release, they would not succeed. Also, sometimes shelter addresses count as a permanent address upon release.

Cindy Crain said that the United State Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) model was very helpful with their series of webinars. She suggested that a Vista volunteer could help create a webinar on 211 and specialized sessions.

Camille Castillo added that she would like to see a Quarterly Conference call started. A good topic would be on how to help sex offenders find housing. **Ken Martin** said the Texas Homeless Network may be able to set up conference calls. **Marilyn Brown** said it would be helpful to have an overview of each state agency on a conference call, since she didn't know exactly what they did.

Camille Castillo also mentioned that in El Paso the help lines 211 and 311 lack coordination so it is confusing the providers.

VII. TICH Committees and Status of 2013 Annual Report Update

(a) Homelessness Prevention -- *Co-Chairs: B.J. Wagner and Beth Engelking*

Beth Engelking reported that there had not been a Homelessness Prevention Committee meeting and the committee was waiting to review the survey that had been sent out for TICH's *Pathways Home: A Framework for Coordinating State Administered Programs with Continuum of Care Planning to Address Homelessness in Texas*.

(b) Housing and Supportive Services -- *Chair: Mindy Taylor*

Mindy Taylor was unable to attend, but had given the update to **Sharon Gamble** to relay to the TICH. **Sharon Gamble** reported that the Housing and Supportive Services Committee was working on a new survey to go to other agencies on coordinating and leveraging funds.

(c) Data, Research, and Analysis -- *Chair: Eric Samuels*

Eric Samuels reported that the Data, Research, and Analysis Committee had not met. They were considering collecting information that HUD needs, but adding what the TICH needs also. They are working to identify metrics.

(d) State Infrastructure -- *Chair: Ken Martin*

Ken Martin reported that the State Infrastructure Committee was also considering a survey, so it sounded as if that Committee should connect with the Housing and Supportive Services Committee. The State Infrastructure Committee was looking to survey state agencies to determine how many homeless people are being served by each agency. He suggested a point-in-time survey that lasted one to two weeks so that the survey would be longitudinal. State employees would ask four questions, such as "are you without housing" or "are you doubled up with another family". The survey will be requested in the spring. **George McEntyre** recommended that the survey collect information by zip code, so the information could be overlaid with socioeconomic data.

VIII. Proposed meeting quarterly meeting dates for 2014

Mike Doyle referenced the proposed dates for the 2014 TICH: January 21, April 22, July 22, and October 21. He mentioned it may be helpful to have a TICH Quarterly meeting with the Texas Homeless Network Conference again next year. **Ken Martin** said that next year the conference would be in San Antonio. The planning for concurrence would be settled next year closer to the conference date.

IX. Closing Comments

Mike Doyle said that this meeting had been very productive and he invited the CoCs to attend other TICH meetings, as they are able. Also, he reminded everyone that there would not be an October 16 meeting.

X. Public Comment

Terri Holtkamp said that she would like to see the TICH compile data on what priorities each CoCs choose. This would be helpful for planning for next year.

XI. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 12:30pm.