



Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
Quarterly Meeting – July 28, 2014

Chair, appointed by the Office of the Governor: Mike Doyle

Members present:

Department of State Health Services (DSHS): Anna Sonenthal
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA): Brooke Boston, Michael DeYoung (representing Sharon Gamble)
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS): Beth Engelking
Texas Veterans Commission (TVC): Pam Maercklein
Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ): Erin McGann (by phone)
Texas Workforce Commission (TWC): George McEntyre
Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC): Fedora Galasso
Texas Education Agency (TEA): Anita Villarreal (by phone)

Advisory Members present: David Long, Texas State Affordable Housing Corporation (TSAHC)

Others: Molly Woodard, Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV); Carissa Dougherty, by phone (DSHS); Charlie Leal (TSAHC); Laura Gold, Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS); Michael Lyttle (TDHCA); and Megan Sylvester (TDHCA).

Administrative support: Naomi Trejo (TDHCA), Cate Taylor - Backup (TDHCA)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mike Doyle called the meeting to order at 10:15am. It was determined that a quorum was not present, so **Mike Doyle** adjourned the Council meeting and called a committee meeting of the whole to order at 10:16am.

II. New Members

Mike Doyle introduced new TICH member **Fedora Galasso** from HHSC. **Fedora Galasso** is lead for the Community Resource Coordination Groups and Faith and Community Based Initiatives at HHSC.

III. Status of Funding Request from TICH Participating Agencies

Mike Doyle reported that, to date, three responses have been received from the funding request letter. TWC responded with a \$10,000 commitment to the TICH. The Texas Youth Commission and TDCJ declined to provide funding to the TICH. **Mike Doyle** suggested that the next step should be to send a reminder letter to TICH Participating Agencies, including a thank you to the TWC for their commitment and the 2013 TICH Report to highlight what work the TICH was doing.

Brooke Boston added that the letters should include an emphasis on TICH membership; all vacant spots should be filled. **Mike Doyle** ended this discussion with call for TICH members to keep pushing for support from their TICH Participating Agencies.

IV. Appointment of members

Michael Lyttle reminded members that there are two vacant spots on the TICH; one from the Office of the Lt. Governor and one from the Speaker of the House of Representatives. With transitions in both of these offices coming with the next Legislative session, it was recommended that the TICH reach out one more time for appointments to these vacant positions. If appointments are not made by mid-November, TICH members will have to reach out to new chiefs of staff in the Lt. Governor and the Speaker's offices. This opened up a broader discussion on the current members and vacant positions. **Megan Sylvester** gave an update on the member issues that the TICH is currently facing. The TICH statute appoints

members from agencies that are no longer on existence. There was a discussion on what current agencies absorbed these non-existent agencies. To understand which agencies should have members appointed to the TICH, **Megan Sylvester** will do a review of the statute and will reach out to legal staff at HHCS. Following the review, a recommendation will be made.

V. Discussion on TICH Advisory Members – Mike Doyle (TICH)

Mike Doyle questioned the roll of advisory members and whether the council's current use of advisory members was in line with the TICH statute. **Megan Sylvester** clarified that advisory members do not count towards a quorum and she will look into the formal structure of appointing advisory members and their rolls. Advisory members can be appointed by the Chair of the TICH, but they would not have voting privileges and cannot be compelled to serve. Ultimately, **Mike Doyle** would prefer to have a process in place to vet and approve advisory and committee members. Currently anyone with input is listed as an advisory member, but many do not participate on a regular basis.

During the discussion, many questions were raised by members present: Is there someone willing to find a sponsor to make changes to the TICH statute through a clean-up bill? Are advisory members needed for certain areas that are missing on the TICH?

Megan Sylvester offered that from a federal perspective, a homeless or formerly homeless individual would be a member. Without this member, it would be difficult to write an application for grant funding. **Brooke Boston** offered that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Grant required an "Interagency Council for the Homeless" with its own membership requirements. **Mike Doyle** asked if the formerly homeless member could sit on an advisory committee? **Megan Sylvester** replied that he/she could be advisory.

Naomi Trejo also reminded the TICH that there are advisory members and also committee members listed below the members on the membership list. **George McEntyre** suggested having a formal process to select advisory or committee members. Following the discussion, **Mike Doyle** reminded all that, with whatever membership the TICH is composed of, the ultimate goal is to coordinate the state's resources and services to address homelessness.

VI. Establishment of TICH as "authority" source for the Texas Legislature

Michael Lyttle recommended that the TICH increase its role as an authority on homeless issues for the Texas Legislature. The TICH has a broad spectrum of members to aid its authority status. If Legislative staff requests information on homeless issues from the TICH, it would not be seen as a lobbying position. **George McEntyre** raised the point that TWC may have hesitation as a direct representative on issues and that any communication from the TICH should come from the chair speaking as the voice of the TICH, not specific member agencies. **Mike Doyle** agreed that it would be most appropriate for the chair to speak of the whole and that he would be available during session. The Texas Homeless Network (THN) is also an authority figure on homeless issues.

VII. Consolidated Plan Needs Assessment and Market Analysis Input Requested

Naomi Trejo gave an overview of the Draft 2015-2019 State of Texas Consolidated Plan development and consultation process. Members were invited to provide their input on Needs Assessment and Market Analysis topics. **Mike Doyle** spoke about unsafe housing conditions he has frequently seen in and around Hondo, such as gas lines that have been run through garden hoses. He also talked about the oil boom and that many people experiencing homelessness in oil boom areas would be considered middle-income in other areas. **Erin McGann** echoed the observations about substandard housing, mentioning that TDCJ staff inspects housing for parolees, and had witnessed many substandard housing conditions, noting that there were also very few housing options for ex-offenders statewide because of the lack of landlords who will rent to an ex-offender. As a result of their limited options, many ex-offenders occupied substandard homes. **Naomi Trejo** thanked members for their input and reminded all consultations on the drafting of the Plan may also be provided online through a discussion forum or by email until July 31, 2014. The Draft Plan will go to the TDHCA Board on September 4, 2014, after which an opportunity for public comment will be available.

VIII. Update on Pilot Program with Tarrant County Continuum of Care

Mike Doyle reported that the Request for Proposals (RFP) is out for the pilot program and all involved are excited about the program moving forward.

IX. Update on Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Discretionary Funds

Michael DeYoung informed the members that award recommendations for CDBG Discretionary Funds are going to the TDHCA Board of Directors meeting for approval this coming Thursday, July 31, 2014. The recommendations include two awards for THN. One award is in the amount of \$300,000 to a Statewide Homeless Initiative, with a focus on increasing the availability of services addressing homelessness in rural and non-metropolitan areas of the State by increasing the capacity of organizations to participate in competitive applications for Federal Continuum of Care funds from HUD. Overtime this will allow increased draw down from rural areas of the State. The other award for THN in the amount of \$100,000, will utilize resources in a way that maximizes the ability of TICH to meet its statutory duties. A contract between THN and TDHCA will be executed after the Board approval.

X. Approval to submit the 2013 TICH Annual Report

Mike Doyle indicated that the 2013 TICH Annual Report is ready for submission but without a quorum present, the members cannot vote to submit the plan at this time. Members then agreed that the report should be provided from **Mike Doyle** to the offices that are required by statute to receive the report with a cover letter indicating that the report is being provided by the Chair.

XI. Update on Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Grant: *Cooperative Agreements to Benefit Homeless Individuals (CABHI - State)* – Brooke Boston (TDHCA)

Brooke Boston and **Carissa Dougherty** provided an update on the CABHI grant opportunity and lead a discussion on the logistics of applying with the administrative assistance of TDHCA. The grant will enhance state infrastructure for homeless vets and chronic homeless persons with substance abuse and mental disorders. Twenty-seven entities are eligible nationwide to pursue this grant and DSHS is the only entity in Texas that can apply. Fifteen percent of the funds can be used for a statewide plan, though it is not clear if this is a requirement or an option. The CABHI grant requires participation of an Interagency Council for the Homeless, but has its own membership requirements for this council.

Discussion included several questions. Because the TICH is not a fiduciary body, can TICH enter into an agreement? This was an unanswered question. Can TICH meet membership requirements? TICH's membership may qualify if advisory members specified in the CABHI grant could be added. A possible advisory committee could be created. The TDHCA Board would hear from the advisory committee. TDHCA could do the administrative work for the grant and it could be signed by the TICH or Mike Doyle. Would the funds run through the Continuum of Care? **Carissa Dougherty** said that it would run through certain Local Mental Health Authorities, depending on which ones had appropriate capacity. If this was the case, **Megan Sylvester** said that Pathways Home may have to be updated to include more on Local Mental Health Authorities. Was there a matching requirement? No, no matching requirement.

TDHCA and DSHS would continue to work on the possibility of applying for the grant. The grant application would be available in 2015.

XII. TICH Committees and Status of 2013 Annual Report Update

(a) Homelessness Prevention -- *Chair: Beth Engelking*

Beth Engelking reported that, while a lengthy survey was done for Pathways Home, homelessness is not a primary mission for some agencies. The Homeless Prevention Committee would like to determine which agencies collect what data and if there can be one definition of homelessness for TICH. There was some discussion about the various homeless definitions. Mike Doyle said that for TEA and TWC, being "doubled up" is homeless. George McEntyre referred to Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) works in addition to McKinney Vento to include children and youth. He suggested it may be helpful to survey service providers. **Brooke Boston** said that maybe the survey should remove the definition of homelessness and instead ask "does your agency define homelessness?" and "if yes, do you serve homeless populations?" **Molly Woodward** offered to help with a definition of homelessness in VAWA.

(b) Housing and Supportive Services -- *Chair: David Long (Interim)*

David Long said that Charlie Leal will now be the new chair of the Housing and Supportive Services Committee. David Long also said that all committee chairs met; **Ken Martin** and **Eric Samuels** were absent, but **David Long** could provide an update. He passed out a draft survey that his committee proposes to send out (this draft survey is included in the last two pages of these notes). **Beth Engelking** suggested that all committees should work together on a survey.

Brooke Boston gave some input that, because of varying funding sources, the answer to “do you do this activity” would be “sometimes”. While TDHCA may collect some data, other data is available only at the subrecipient-level.

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

An update was provided in Housing and Supportive Services Committee.

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

An update was provided in Housing and Supportive Services Committee.

XIII. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on October 1, 2014 in San Antonio, in conjunction with the 2014 Texas Conference on Ending Homelessness. **Mike Doyle** asked if a vote could be taken through email. **Megan Sylvester** said she would check on that question, but thought it would not be allowed unless specifically mentioned in the bylaws.

XIV. Public Comment

None.

XV. Adjourn

The committee meeting of the whole was adjourned by **Mike Doyle** at 11:40am.