

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

TEXAS INTERAGENCY COUNCIL  
FOR THE  
HOMELESS

Via GoToWebinar

January 25, 2022  
1:35 p.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

MICHAEL DOYLE, Chair  
VALINDA BOLTON  
BROOKE BOSTON  
SUZIE BRADY  
NAOMI CANTU  
SHERRI COGBILL  
HELEN EISERT  
DR. BLAKE HARRIS  
CLAIRE IRWIN  
SHIRLEY JONES  
CAL LOPEZ

ADVISORY MEMBERS PRESENT:

DAVID LONG  
ERIC SAMUELS  
MICHAEL WILT

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT:

ELIZABETH YEVICH, TDHCA  
JEREMY STREMLER, TDHCA

*ON THE RECORD REPORTING*  
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I N D E X

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
I. Welcome and Introductions	3
II. Remarks from Chair	--
III. Approval of Minutes from the October 19, 2021 TICH Meeting	8
IV. Election of TICH Chairperson	8
V. Introduction of TDHCA's Homeless Policy Advisor	5
VI. Updates from Member Agencies	
(a) Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA)	9
i. Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) annual funds and ESG through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act	
ii. Homeless Individual Camping, HB1925 Update	14
iii. HOME-American Rescue Plan (ARP)	17
iv. Emergency Housing Vouchers	21
v. Housing Stability Services Program	29
(b) Other Agency Updates	37
VII. Updates from Texas Homeless Network (THN)	
(a) VISTA project	40
(b) Texas Homeless Data Sharing Network Project	41
VIII. Guest Presenter (HHSC) - Catherine Bialick, Senior Advisor, Office of the State Forensic Director, Texas Health and Human Services Presenting on "The Texas Strategic Plan for Diversion, Community Integration and Forensic Services" and Texas' Participation in the Community of Practice: Creating Housing Opportunities for People with Complex Health Needs Leaving the Justice System	48
IX. Public Comment	68
X. Closing Comments	72
VIII. Adjourn	72

P R O C E E D I N G S

1  
2 MR. DOYLE: Well, welcome, everybody, to the  
3 January meeting of the Texas Interagency Council for the  
4 Homeless. Everybody can see their names across there, so  
5 I don't think we really have any need for introductions,  
6 unless anybody is brand-new and would like to tell us  
7 their position at the agency that they're representing.

8 Is anybody new enough that they would like to  
9 share with us [audio skip] at their agency?

10 MS. BOSTON: Yeah, I think we have a few folks  
11 who we should introduce. Elizabeth --

12 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

13 MS. BOSTON: -- do you want to introduce Sean  
14 first?

15 MS. YEVICH: I do, and that was actually an  
16 agenda item. I'd be glad to do it now, but actually,  
17 Mike, I think, if you wouldn't mind, reading into record,  
18 for purposes of the court reporter and the transcript, the  
19 TICH members who are here?

20 MR. DOYLE: Okay. I'll do that.

21 MS. YEVICH: Okay. Great.

22 MR. DOYLE: We have Mike Doyle -- and I'm  
23 looking through the list as I go here. I see Suzie. Let  
24 me check them as I go down my list, and so -- I'm just  
25 having to go -- Sherri's here.

1 I've only got seven of us, but that's --  
2 somebody tell me if I'm missing -- somebody may be  
3 representing. Is Valinda here?

4 MS. YEVICH: No, I don't --

5 MR. DOYLE: Is somebody representing -- okay.  
6 For the record, the members of the TICH that are present  
7 is -- are Mike Doyle, Claire Irwin, Sherri Cogbill, Brooke  
8 Boston, Naomi Cantu, Cal Lopez, Blake Harris.

9 Who did I miss?

10 MS. YEVICH: Did you say -- do we have --

11 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

12 MR. STREMLER: Helen Eisert --

13 MS. YEVICH: Helen Eisert --

14 MR. STREMLER: -- and Suzie Brady are both also  
15 on the bar.

16 MS. YEVICH: Yeah, yeah.

17 MR. DOYLE: Who is it, now?

18 MR. STREMLER: Helen Eisert and Suzie Brady,  
19 both from HHSC.

20 And then did you say Blake Harris? Because  
21 Blake is also a --

22 MR. DOYLE: Yeah, Blake -- I've got Blake  
23 there. Is Carissa -- did somebody substitute for her?

24 MR. STREMLER: She is technically an alternate  
25 member --

1 MS. YEVICH: Yeah.

2 MR. STREMLER: -- so she is not here.

3 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Do we have the list that we  
4 need?

5 MS. YEVICH: We do. Thank you, Mike, for  
6 bringing that in, and now --

7 MR. DOYLE: You're welcome.

8 MS. YEVICH: So one new face is very new at  
9 TDHCA -- he started just yesterday -- is Sean Lonergan.  
10 And Sean is going to be working under the Housing Resource  
11 Center, and he is the Homeless Policy Advisor.

12 At the last two meetings, I had told you --  
13 back in the July meeting, I was talking about -- in fact,  
14 this membership had decided that it was -- been 10 years.

15 It was time for the State Plan on Homelessness, otherwise  
16 known as Pathways Home, to be rewritten. We were opening  
17 up a position for that.

18 And then in October, I told you about -- there  
19 had been a shift in that. There had been some reorg, and  
20 HRC had absorbed another division, gotten some other  
21 positions. I was restructuring that position, putting it  
22 out for posting, which I did about a week after this  
23 meeting in October.

24 And I'm pleased to say that Sean was the top  
25 person, and we were lucky to have him, and again, he

1 started just yesterday, but he will be -- from now, you  
2 will see his name as being administrative support for this  
3 body, for the TICH, and then he will also be working  
4 primarily on updating the Pathways Home, so you will have  
5 a lot of contact with him.

6 And then I can go ahead and do my other update.

7 He will also be working on, as we all have talked about  
8 in previous meetings, HB 1925, which is the Homeless  
9 Individual Camping, if any plans come in on that -- to  
10 date, there have been none, so that's my update on that --  
11 that he will also be working on that, as well as, of  
12 course, being a staff member in our very busy Housing  
13 Resource Center.

14 So Sean, welcome, and I'm not going to put you  
15 on the spot and say, you know, what have you learned in  
16 the past day, but you know, feel to say anything or you  
17 can simply wave, and then we'll be turning it over to you  
18 next meeting.

19 You're on mute. You're still on mute. Uh-oh.  
20 I guess you'll just be waving. There we go. All right.  
21 So there you go.

22 MS. BOSTON: The other thing I wanted to  
23 mention -- we've had a little bit of movement around the  
24 agency -- is you guys are very used to seeing Naomi at  
25 these, and Naomi had been overseeing our homelessness

1 programs.

2 Naomi was promoted to Director of HOME-ARP, and  
3 she'll give you an update about that in a minute. And in  
4 her place, Rosy Falcon, who you see up there, she has been  
5 with the agency for quite a long time in Compliance and  
6 actually performing monitoring on a variety of different  
7 types of programs, but they included our homeless  
8 programs, so she actually has quite a bit of experience  
9 with the homeless activities.

10 So most of programs and things that you would  
11 have kind of associated with Naomi in the past are now  
12 something you should associate with Rosy, and then --

13 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

14 MS. BOSTON: -- the other kind of big shift is,  
15 some of you guys may have met Cate Tracz in the past. And  
16 Cate Tracz used to be over our Fair Housing and Data  
17 Resource section, and she was recently promoted to being  
18 our Director of Housing Stability Services, and she'll be  
19 giving you an update in a little bit too.

20 So congratulations to all three of them on  
21 their changes and movement, and we're very excited to have  
22 such a good solid core.

23 MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Brooke. And welcome.  
24 Congratulations to both you. That's a great  
25 accomplishment -- thank you -- and well deserved.

1           Any other introductions that people feel need  
2 to be made?

3           (No response.)

4           MR. DOYLE: Okay. Well, I don't have any  
5 remarks, other than everybody is busy, and so we'll get  
6 right on this. There's other things to do. But you were  
7 sent the minutes by Elizabeth, and I hope you've had a  
8 chance to read and look over those, and I would entertain  
9 a motion to approve those minutes as submitted.

10          MS. CANTU: This is Naomi Cantu. I so move.

11          MR. DOYLE: Okay. Moved by Naomi. Is there a  
12 second?

13          DR. HARRIS: Second. Blake Harris.

14          MR. DOYLE: Second by Blake. All those in  
15 favor, say aye, or wave your hand or something.

16          (A chorus of ayes.)

17          MR. DOYLE: Any opposed, say no.

18          (No response.)

19          MR. DOYLE: Are there any abstentions?

20          (No response.)

21          MR. DOYLE: There are none. Those pass. Thank  
22 you very much.

23           And then on No. IV, it's time for us to elect a  
24 chair again, as we have to do every year. So I'm going to  
25 ask that if in fact you have nominations for that [audio

1 skip] agency in 2022, send those to Elizabeth or to Sean,  
2 and we'll compose [audio skip] and they'll announce the  
3 nomination in April -- in our April meeting.

4 Everybody clear with that?

5 FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

6 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Great. Okay. And now then,  
7 for Elizabeth, it's yours for the Homeless Policy Advisor  
8 report.

9 MR. STREMLER: You're muted, Elizabeth.

10 MR. DOYLE: Elizabeth, was this -- were you  
11 going to introduce Sean?

12 MS. YEVICH: Exactly, exactly. So we've  
13 actually over covered that.

14 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Yeah. Let's go into the  
15 updates then. The Emergency Solutions Grants, TDHCA.  
16 Who's doing that one?

17 MS. FALCON: This is Rosy. That would be me.

18 MR. DOYLE: Rosy? Okay. Thank you, Rosy.

19 MS. FALCON: All right. Good afternoon,  
20 everyone. Bear with me. This is my first report.

21 So I'm going to start with the ESG CARES funds.

22 We currently have about \$46 million expended for our \$97  
23 million allocation, and that's the combined CARES I/CARES  
24 II funds.

25 That places us at about 47.80 expenditure rate,

1 which does show us behind the expected 80 percent  
2 benchmark targeted for March 31. However, we are still  
3 currently above the national average, which is at 33.59.  
4 So we're still doing good, even though we are quite a bit  
5 a ways from that 80 percent benchmark to hit in March.

6 And some things to consider too: That dollar  
7 amount doesn't take into account that we currently have  
8 about \$4 million of drafts that are going through our  
9 internal process of review and a little bit of tweaks here  
10 and there.

11 So that will bring us up a bit more within the  
12 next couple of weeks. And then also that number is  
13 actually a true number through about maybe midway 2021.  
14 We do have a group of subrecipients that is a little bit  
15 behind on submitting their drafts.

16 They do have obligations and they do have  
17 payment that they have already done, so we are very  
18 positive that we will get nearer our benchmark as we work  
19 with them. Our CARES team is diligently working with  
20 those entities that have reached out and need help so that  
21 we can get them caught up as soon as possible.

22 And we're also providing extensions. Some  
23 already are in the works and others we're discussing, so  
24 that every subrecipient has the opportunity to fully  
25 expend their awarded amount.

1           For our regular ESG allocation, we still have  
2 funds to expend in our 2020 allocation. We're at about 89  
3 percent expended there, and we're at 6.23 percent for our  
4 2021. And so we are close to complete and close out our  
5 active 2021 grants pretty soon.

6           On our regular allocation, we do have a couple  
7 of updates to give you guys, one of which is the recent  
8 waivers that had thinned out as available.

9           We are opting, as a Department, to go ahead and  
10 provide certain waivers to the 2021 funds. It is very  
11 early in the stages to kind of report on how that rollout  
12 is going to be. We're still trying to discuss how we're  
13 going to make that available to the network, as not  
14 everybody is currently working -- or using those funds for  
15 COVID response.

16           And then the last thing for our regular ESG  
17 allocation is we are looking to review and revise some of  
18 the rules for the ESG application process just in general.

19           Some are just going to be review of whether something is  
20 needed, minor edits, and then others will have some  
21 substantial changes.

22           That is still in the early stages. We just  
23 wanted to let you know, so that you can look forward to  
24 open comment and the draft being available shortly.

25           And that's all I had for our report.

1 MR. DOYLE: So let me ask you, Rosy, did the  
2 Emergency Rental Assistance Program I and II come through  
3 TDHCA, or did it go directly to the cities?

4 MS. FALCON: That came through TDHCA. MR.  
5 DOYLE: Will we have a report on those funds, since at the  
6 end, to reallocate -- at least we were told locally, if we  
7 spent 75 percent of them by a certain date, we could do  
8 housing stabilization programs. And I was just wondering  
9 if we would be getting an update from the State's  
10 perspective how we're doing on allocating those funds.

11 MS. FALCON: Yeah. I don't have an answer for  
12 you right now, but maybe -- I don't know -- I could  
13 definitely research that and get back to you, unless  
14 Brooke or Abby, you have something.

15 MS. BOSTON: I can answer that.

16 MS. FALCON: Okay.

17 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

18 MS. BOSTON: Yeah. So you were talking about  
19 the Emergency Rental Assistance?

20 MR. DOYLE: Yes.

21 MS. BOSTON: Yeah. So the State has spent all  
22 of ours, with the exception of the portions that we peeled  
23 off to do the housing stabilization services, and that  
24 portion of it is what Cate is going to report to you guys  
25 on in a minute.

1 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

2 MS. BOSTON: The rest of it, all of the rental  
3 assistance that came to TDHCA, has been awarded and paid  
4 out to households and/or landlords or utilities. That is  
5 different, though, from whatever the locals are doing.

6 We have put in two different requests. Each  
7 time there's an opportunity to request reallocated money,  
8 we have done so. We did not receive any part of the  
9 reallocated first round, although a few communities in  
10 Texas did. I want to say Harris County, and there were I  
11 think a couple others.

12 Yeah. But -- and because we did program some  
13 of our money into stability services and that has a longer  
14 spent date, we won't show kind of officially or publicly  
15 in our reports that we're done until our stability service  
16 contracts are done.

17 MR. DOYLE: So when the -- Brooke, when the  
18 report came out or the notification came out that the  
19 State was out of those funds, that's just the State. That  
20 wasn't the local -- that wasn't the cities.

21 MS. BOSTON: Correct.

22 MR. DOYLE: There was a lot of confusion of  
23 that in Tarrant County. People kept -- because we got a  
24 large portion of that at Cornerstone, and they kept  
25 saying, well, I understand you're out of money, and I saw

1 where it came out from TDHCA, but I -- it never clicked  
2 that there were two pots of money.

3 So thanks for clarifying that.

4 MS. BOSTON: Yeah, and in our communications,  
5 anyone who had been in our applicant pool who hadn't  
6 received funds or who were trying to request additional  
7 funds, they were sent a communication letting them know  
8 that we were out but that a lot of the locals did still  
9 have money.

10 And we provided them the links to every local  
11 program so that hopefully they could still pursue that if  
12 they hadn't already.

13 MR. DOYLE: Great, great. Thank you for that  
14 clarification.

15 MS. BOSTON: Yeah.

16 MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Rosy.

17 Elizabeth, are you doing to talk about the  
18 Individual Camping.

19 MS. YEVICH: All right. I'm unmuted.

20 And again, I sort of gave a very quick update  
21 on that. To date, we haven't received any plans for this,  
22 so there really isn't any update. Same as last month. If  
23 and when we do, we will certainly bring it forward to this  
24 membership and let you know.

25 MR. DOYLE: And my only question there is, are

1 you talking to the Governor's policy people about his  
2 office's opinion on the camping thing?

3 MS. YEVICH: I'm going to field that one over  
4 to Brooke.

5 MS. BOSTON: I mean, we're aware of their  
6 opinion, and, you know, we assume that localities will  
7 submit their plans in accordance with that guidance.

8 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

9 MS. BOSTON: Yeah. We have released -- to kind  
10 of facilitate the whole process for locals, Elizabeth and  
11 Jeremy released a template and guidance, and there's a web  
12 page. So it's a pretty straightforward process for a  
13 local, if they're going to try, you know, and turn in a  
14 plan to us.

15 So we've kind of done all the part we needed to  
16 do to get the whole thing rolling, and now we're just  
17 waiting to see if anyone turns one in.

18 MR. DOYLE: Okay, great.

19 MS. YEVICH: Right. Yeah. In October --

20 MR. DOYLE: When is the deadline for sending  
21 their plan to you, Brooke?

22 MS. BOSTON: There is no deadline. It's just  
23 kind of an ongoing, open process.

24 MR. DOYLE: Okay, okay.

25 MS. YEVICH: Right. And just to remind, I

1 don't think you were here last time, Brooke. We actually  
2 did show the webpage and the template and the legislation  
3 last time, and there is -- as we went through, there's  
4 also an FAQ, and I had thought that perhaps we would have  
5 that filled in.

6 That's still under executive review, the FAQ.  
7 But as we put it out last time, the template that we have  
8 that entities that would submit a plan, it is drafted  
9 straight from the rule, which is drafted straight from the  
10 legislation.

11 So you know, it goes point by point in the  
12 rule, in the legislation. So you know, it's -- I know --  
13 I remember, Mike, you had had a question about someone in  
14 your area who I believe was thinking about submitting a  
15 plan, and --

16 MR. DOYLE: Right, right. I'm going to circle  
17 back to them and see if they are.

18 MS. YEVICH: Okay.

19 MR. DOYLE: Okay, thank you. Appreciate that.  
20 And Naomi, you're going to do the HOME-ARP Program?

21 MS. CANTU: I am. I have short PowerPoint just  
22 so that you can have some visuals with this, since last  
23 time I did have a lot of talking, and so I'm trying to  
24 accommodate more of a -- all right. Which screen is  
25 showing?

1 (Discussion regarding technical matters.)

2 MS. CANTU: So yes, I am going to give an  
3 update of HOME-ARP. That's the HOME-American Rescue Plan.  
4 We are in the public comment period. It started January  
5 21 -- no -- January 14 -- we had a public hearing on the  
6 21st -- and it will end January 31, so next Monday at 5:00  
7 p.m. Austin local time.

8 And I will go over a brief outline of the draft  
9 plan. So again, none of this set in stone. It is under  
10 public comment and it's subject to change.

11 So in our draft plan, we have four activities  
12 outlined. We have non-congregate shelters, affordable  
13 rental housing, including capitalized operating reserves,  
14 nonprofit operating and nonprofit capacity building, and  
15 administration and planning.

16 Now, you'll see that non-congregate shelter and  
17 affordable rental housing is split evenly with the program  
18 funds, 56 million each. And just a brief explanation of  
19 what non-congregate shelter is, because I get this  
20 question a lot, is congregate shelter is when there's big  
21 room, and that's a more traditional shelter, with lots of  
22 beds in the room and possibly dividers or some sort of  
23 sheltering within that big room.

24 Non-congregate shelter is where there are  
25 individual rooms for the households. So each household

1 has an individual room. And for HOME-ARP, it's also  
2 necessary that there is a sanitary facility in each room  
3 for that shelter, so a sanitary facility, most likely a  
4 bathroom, although it can be a bathroom plus a shower --  
5 sorry -- like a toilet plus a shower.

6 Affordable rental housing includes capitalized  
7 operating reserves, which is an operating subsidy for up  
8 to 15 years, which is the affordability period. And then  
9 the nonprofit operating and nonprofit capacity is for  
10 application with the nonprofit -- non-congregate shelter  
11 and affordable rental housing.

12 I have one slide, each activity, and then I can  
13 take time for questions. So for HOME-ARP rental, the  
14 minimum amount is 500,000. The maximum request is  
15 10 million. They want 10 units, or 50 percent of the  
16 units, whichever is less, the lesser of that, 50 percent  
17 of the units or 10 units.

18 Funds will be made available competitively  
19 statewide, although we will have a -- we may have, I  
20 should say, not will, since it's a plan -- may have a  
21 set-aside allocation or priority for rural applications.  
22 That's rural applications.

23 And qualified populations pay up to 30 percent  
24 of their income towards rent. So qualified populations,  
25 and one reason that we are presenting this to the TICH is

1 because qualified populations include persons experiencing  
2 homelessness, at risk of homelessness, and other housing-  
3 vulnerable populations.

4 So those populations paying 30 percent of their  
5 income toward rent is severely reduced rent compared to  
6 many other rental programs without a subsidy.

7 For non-congregate shelter, the minimum request  
8 amount is about -- is \$200,000; the maximum request amount  
9 is 10 million. Again, the lesser of 50 percent of the  
10 units, or 10 units. And funds will be made available  
11 competitively statewide with a possible set-aside for  
12 rural applications.

13 One big point for non-congregate shelter is  
14 applications must show that there are sufficient non-  
15 governmental operating funds. So operating funds for  
16 shelter is not eligible through HOME-ARP.

17 And I did mention nonprofit capacity and  
18 operations assistance. Again, it's only for nonprofits  
19 that are awarded or in control of the developments for  
20 those capital investments of non-congregate shelter and  
21 rental development.

22 The maximum is either \$50,000, if they're  
23 applying for -- if the nonprofit is applying for one of  
24 those categories, or \$75,000 if they're applying for both  
25 nonprofit capacity and operating cost assistance.

1           So again, we are in the public comment period  
2 right now. It ends on 1/31/2022. A draft plan may be  
3 submitted to the Board February 10. If we do receive  
4 substantial comment, I may take it back to the Board next  
5 month for approval.

6           Once it's approved, we can submit it to HUD;  
7 they have 30 days to review, and then we anticipate  
8 releasing notices of funding availability, or NOFAs, in  
9 the spring.

10           Here is how to submit comment in case you want  
11 to, and also where to find the plan. And with that, I can  
12 take any questions.

13           MS. EISERT: Can you -- this is Helen Eisert  
14 with HHSC. Can you give an example of the capacity  
15 building, like what the funds could be used for?

16           MS. CANTU: For capacity building -- let me  
17 pull it up. I'm just pulling up my notes on capacity  
18 building so I can say the right things on that.

19           So capacity building can be compensation for  
20 new hires, staff development or education, training or  
21 travel, equipment or supplies. Technical assistance or  
22 consultants does apply under that.

23           And I did want to point out that supportive  
24 services or staff for operating costs for emergency  
25 shelters are not eligible under operating cost assistance,

1 because they're not eligible under HOME-ARP.

2 But capacity building does have a wide range,  
3 and that is to build -- to literally build the capacity so  
4 that providers that have not normally done capital  
5 investments can undertake this activity.

6 MS. EISERT: Okay. Thank you.

7 MR. DOYLE: Any other questions for Naomi?

8 (No response.)

9 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Spencer, are you going to  
10 talk about Emergency Housing Vouchers? Or Eric?

11 MR. DURAN: I am.

12 MS. GALASSO: I put my question in chat, but  
13 will you be sharing this, the PowerPoint deck that you put  
14 together, Naomi? Okay. Thank you.

15 MS. YEVICH: And this is Elizabeth Yevich.  
16 Mike, excuse me for one moment. I just wanted to read  
17 into record we've had two more members join us. We have  
18 Valinda Bolton, who is here; I don't think she has shared  
19 her camera.

20 And we have Shirley Jones, who is also here  
21 from Texas Workforce Commission. And there's Valinda  
22 waiving. Hi, Shirley and Valinda. Thanks.

23 MR. DOYLE: Hi, ladies.

24 Okay, Spencer?

25 MR. DURAN: Okay. Thanks, everybody. I am

1 Spencer Duran. I'm the director of the Section 811  
2 Program, but I'm here today to talk about the Emergency  
3 Housing Voucher Program.

4 The last update I gave to the Council was at  
5 the July 2021 meeting, and since then we've made a ton of  
6 progress, so I'm going to give you guys a snapshot as to  
7 where we are right now and kind of the direction that the  
8 program is going.

9 So this is the Emergency Housing Voucher  
10 Program. It's funded by HUD, and this is kind of a quick  
11 reminder. I'll give a quick background of the program.  
12 So it's essentially additional Section 8 Housing Choice  
13 vouchers that have been provided to public housing  
14 authorities, including the TDHCA Public Housing Authority.

15 And the Emergency Housing Vouchers are limited  
16 to four specific target populations, which include people  
17 experiencing homelessness, people at risk of homelessness,  
18 persons fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence,  
19 dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human  
20 trafficking, and then finally, those who are recently  
21 homeless.

22 So those are the four broad categories that  
23 these Section 8 vouchers have to serve. The program also  
24 requires the housing authorities to develop the program in  
25 partnership with continuum of care organizations.

1           And then the CoCs will go on -- after they have  
2 the program design, they go on to identify members of the  
3 eligible target population, provide referrals to the PHA,  
4 and then coordinate their required and some optional  
5 services to the households. So that's the background.

6           So for TDHCA specifically, we have executed two  
7 agreements with CoCs. That's the Texas Homeless Network  
8 and the Heart of Texas Homeless Coalition. Both THN and  
9 Heart of Texas are developing strategies to ensure that  
10 survivors of domestic violence and related target  
11 populations are all served.

12           And THN, they have been meeting with us, it  
13 seems like weekly, since May. We have a contract signed.

14           I think that it's a good -- it's an okay philosophy to  
15 front-load a lot of the work and problem-solving. So  
16 hopefully later on down the road, the program will offload  
17 it pretty smoothly.

18           So I think that we've, you know, got a lot of  
19 the program figured out during the contracting process.  
20 So those two contracts are fully executed. So TDHCA -- so  
21 our allocations -- we've allocated 380 of the EHV's to the  
22 Texas Homeless Network.

23           And then we currently have contracted  
24 50 vouchers to Heart of Texas, but we have a draft  
25 contract amendment for Heart of Texas that will increase

1 their allocation up to 75 vouchers. So that's 455 EHVs  
2 that have been committed to CoCs total, and that  
3 allocation to the CoCs was based mostly on the CoCs'  
4 capacity excellence.

5 So these are high-touch, you know, complex  
6 populations, that have a service requirement. And then in  
7 the case of THN, they are trying to serve that broad, you  
8 know, extremely large service, you know, geographic area,  
9 so you have the high-need population, large service  
10 footprint.

11 And then the last, you know, kind of, factor  
12 about volume is, you know, this program essentially ends  
13 at the end of the current calendar year, so we have an  
14 expedited time line as well.

15 So it's a really challenging program. So  
16 that's where we are right now. So 455 vouchers allocated.

17 And speaking with THN, that additional element, we also  
18 had to leverage some of our Emergency Rental Assistance  
19 Housing -- Emergency Assistance Round II funds, which was  
20 Housing Stability Services, which Cate will talk about  
21 here in a second.

22 So, so far, we have not served any households  
23 yet, but we do have I think 15 referrals that have been  
24 made to us from Texas Homeless Network, and our Section 8  
25 Program are reviewing those applications right now, and

1 hopefully, we'll have the vouchers issued in the near  
2 future.

3 The last thing I want to mention is, while we  
4 have committed 455 EHV's to our partners, we have a balance  
5 remaining of 343 vouchers that have not been assigned to a  
6 CoC, because essentially HUD dumped the balance of  
7 vouchers on TDHCA that were rejected by the PHAs from  
8 around the state.

9 So we're working with HUD, and we have a few  
10 different ideas about how to reallocate those vouchers so  
11 that they stay in Texas. And so we'll see how that goes,  
12 but hopefully we'll be able to provide those vouchers to  
13 Texas public housing authorities that have already  
14 demonstrated success with the EHV Program.

15 So we'll get you guys up to date on how that  
16 progresses, but we're really concentrating on, you know,  
17 watching our program and serving our initial households  
18 with the 455 vouchers we have right now.

19 So with that, if anyone has any questions, I  
20 can take them now.

21 MR. STREMLER: Spencer, there was one question  
22 submitted to the questions box. Tonya Lavelle asked: Why  
23 were the vouchers returned?

24 MR. DURAN: They haven't been returned. We got  
25 about 800 vouchers allocated to us by HUD using the HUD

1 allocation formula, and you know, those vouchers were  
2 rejected by other housing authorities that didn't even  
3 want to participate in the program at all.

4 So they haven't been returned. We're talking  
5 to other housing authorities and HUD about potentially  
6 giving those vouchers to other Texas housing authorities.

7 MS. BOSTON: And this is Brooke. Just to  
8 clarify, I mean, the most efficient way to handle it would  
9 have been for those other PHAs to receive them from HUD  
10 directly. We did ask HUD if we could do that. They told  
11 that if we gave them back, they could not assure that they  
12 would stay in the state, which wasn't okay with us, of  
13 course.

14 And so we're kind of having to take this more,  
15 you know, circuitous route to get to keeping them in Texas  
16 but get them into the hands of the PHAs who have that kind  
17 of demand. So that's why it's going to take us a little  
18 while on that front.

19 MS. EISERT: What are -- this is Helen with  
20 HHSC. What are some of the reasons the local PHAs might  
21 have declined the EHV's?

22 MR. DURAN: I don't know. It's not -- I think  
23 some of the aspects of the program are really challenging.

24 You know, you have to -- there are certain services --  
25 you know, housing search assistance is something that is

1 required to be provided.

2 You know, we had to leverage an additional, you  
3 know, outside funding source of almost a million dollars  
4 to ensure the program would have enough capacity to be  
5 served.

6 So the voucher services -- so voucher comes  
7 with \$3,500, which is amazing. I wish more -- that's a  
8 pretty revolutionary idea. But whenever you start to kind  
9 of project out the costs of the services that are needed  
10 to serve these high-need families, that \$3,500 doesn't  
11 really allow for a lot of staff time, administrative time  
12 for the service provider.

13 So it's not a great -- it's not a good deal, if  
14 you want to think of it that way. So that's why, I  
15 imagine. There's not a lot of benefit to a PHA, you know,  
16 choosing to serve this hard-to-serve population.

17 But at TDHCA, we're -- you know, we're  
18 dedicated to trying to make this happen, so you know, all  
19 I have -- our vouchers that we have, and we're going to  
20 try and make, you know, our allocation work.

21 DR. HARRIS: Spencer, I had a question. This  
22 is Blake Harris from TVC. Could you remind me, and maybe  
23 I forgot, the reason for differentiating the recently  
24 homeless from homeless in terms of the target populations?

25 MR. DURAN: Yeah. I don't know why HUD would

1 have necessarily done that, but -- and since we have THN  
2 here, if Eric -- if you want to talk about that a little  
3 bit, I can stop talking, but I think, you know, it's a  
4 pretty wide variety of folks.

5 And so you know, those who have access and are  
6 participating in services with a local service  
7 coordinator, they're going to be on a completely different  
8 situation than an individual or a household that is, you  
9 know, literally experiencing homelessness at the moment.

10 I think the approach to serving those two types  
11 of families is vastly different, so that's why I'm  
12 assuming they want to differentiate. And I think a lot of  
13 other PHAs are using this as an opportunity to create like  
14 a step-down program as well.

15 So if we could do a step-down from, you know,  
16 the scarce resources of a, you know, stabilized, post-  
17 homeless, the time-limited, you know, temporary housing  
18 situation, and then migrate the household forward to a  
19 non-time-limited option, you know, see if we could set up  
20 a housing continuum, then that would be ideal.

21 But Eric, do you want to say anything about  
22 that?

23 MR. SAMUELS: Yeah. I think what you said at  
24 the end I think is probably the most important thing, and  
25 I hate using this term, but it allows homeless response

1 systems to unclog that system, you know, free up space for  
2 someone to move into permanent housing and someone else to  
3 move into that supportive housing.

4 And then I understand that, you know, HUD just  
5 wanted to give communities a lot more flexibility, so in  
6 the Balance of State, I know one of the things that we're  
7 hoping to do is to, you know, open up spots, move people  
8 out of these systems and open up spots for others that are  
9 waiting for those precious units and beds to open up.

10 So we see it as you know, a wonderful  
11 opportunity.

12 MR. DOYLE: Anything else of Spencer?

13 (No response.)

14 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Cate, you're going to talk  
15 about housing stability.

16 MS. TRACZ: I am. I think I'm unmuted. There  
17 we go. Okay.

18 So hi, everyone. I'm Cate Tracz. I am the  
19 Director of Housing Stability Services at TDHCA. Brooke  
20 asked me to kind of give you an update about the new  
21 program.

22 We've talked a little bit about the funding,  
23 but this is part of the Department's kind of whole  
24 pandemic relief efforts. So I do -- I recognize a lot of  
25 folks from years ago, being part of the TICH. So it's

1 good to be back in this capacity.

2 So for Housing Stability Services, like Mike  
3 and Brooke had mentioned, this part of the ERA-1 and 2  
4 funding. And just to give a little kind of context and  
5 background, I just want to clarify about that funding.

6 So yes, this is all Treasury funding. The  
7 Texas Rent Relief Program is totally separate from what  
8 we're doing. We just have the same funding source.

9 So the Treasury regulations say that states and  
10 other municipalities can take up to 10 percent of their  
11 ERA funds and use them for Housing Stability Services, so  
12 that's what Texas had decided to as a state recipient, and  
13 we started planning for this early to mid last year.

14 So our Housing Stability Services Program  
15 provides grants and assistance to local nonprofits and  
16 communities and other eligible organization to assist  
17 income-eligible households to help them obtain or maintain  
18 stable housing.

19 And I just really want to make sure that it's  
20 clear that this is not a rent or utility assistance  
21 program. It's kind of all of the other housing support  
22 and stability services that are not direct rent and  
23 utility assistance, like Texas Rent Relief or the other  
24 Emergency Rent Assistance funds are.

25 What we can do through this program, some of

1 the eligible activities, include eviction prevention and  
2 diversion, case management related to housing stability,  
3 housing counseling, employment assistance, child care  
4 expenses, moving assistance.

5 We can also provide to our subrecipient  
6 organizations rent and utility deposits, landlord  
7 incentive fees, short-term hotel and motel stays. We have  
8 a whole menu of other eligible activities that kind of  
9 fall under that housing stabilization support service.

10 For eligibility, households must be at or below  
11 80 percent of AMI. They must demonstrate being either at  
12 risk of homelessness or having housing instability, and  
13 they must also have -- they must also be able to show a  
14 financial hardship due either directly or indirectly to  
15 the pandemic. So those are the three eligibility  
16 categories from Treasury.

17 So like we've mentioned, we're dividing this  
18 into two batches, ERA-1 and ERA-2. The ERA-1 allocation  
19 has a pretty quick expenditure and obligation deadline.  
20 We have to finish spending all of those funds by September  
21 of this year, September 2022, but the ERA-2 allocation has  
22 a much longer deadline. That can go through September  
23 2025, and I'll talk a little bit about that.

24 So the first batch, the ERA-1, we've already  
25 awarded these funds in a few different ways. The first

1 was through direct contracts to 27 subrecipients around  
2 the state. These are local nonprofits, mostly  
3 homelessness service providers, some community action  
4 agencies; we've got a COG in our list of subrecipients,  
5 and these contracts to these 27 organizations total just  
6 over \$51 million of Housing Stability Services support.

7 We've also taken another portion of our ERA-1  
8 funds and awarded \$20 million to the Texas Access to  
9 Justice Foundation, and they have been providing legal  
10 services: housing-related legal services, eviction  
11 diversion assistance, housing clinics where someone can go  
12 and talk to an attorney about their housing instability,  
13 or, you know, their eviction case.

14 The Texas Access to Justice Foundation has sub-  
15 awarded their funds to several legal aid providers around  
16 the state that already have a really good foothold in  
17 their local communities for legal assistance. They've  
18 really done a tremendous job in assisting low-income  
19 households navigate through the eviction process and avoid  
20 evictions and just really help them through that process.

21 And then finally, with the last chunk of our  
22 ERA-1 Housing Stability funds, I'm very pleased to say  
23 that we've provided support to the Texas Veterans  
24 Commission. We've worked closely with Blake and his  
25 office.

1           We're supporting their administration of two  
2 full-time homeless veterans coordinators within their  
3 Veterans Mental Health department. So we've just started  
4 that, and we're really excited to have that partnership  
5 with another State agency as well.

6           So far, this group of ERA-1 Housing Stability  
7 subrecipients has provided assistance to over 7,000  
8 households. So this is just pretty new in our program, so  
9 I'm excited to see our numbers grow and really see our  
10 outreach and assistance grow.

11           For the ERA-2 pot, we're still in the planning  
12 and awarding phase of the ERA-2 batch of Housing Stability  
13 funds. As Spencer and as Eric had mentioned, part of the  
14 Housing Stability ERA-2 funds have been provided to the  
15 Texas Homeless Network to help their administration of  
16 this Emergency Housing Voucher Program, so we're providing  
17 some capacity and then a small amount of Housing Stability  
18 Services, just to make sure that the EHV Program is really  
19 successful.

20           And then we do intend to continue our support  
21 of the Texas Access to Justice Foundation with up to  
22 another \$20 million, and then also we're continue our  
23 support of the Texas Veterans Commission. Those two  
24 awards are still pending, but we also will take that to  
25 the February meeting, but it is our hope and our intention

1 to continue those agreements.

2 And then for the remaining batch of the ERA-2  
3 funds, we've just completed a NOFA process. We're in the  
4 middle of scoring. We'll be taking awards for \$84 million  
5 to our March Board meeting. So it's still kind of too  
6 soon to tell who and what and where, but we're really  
7 excited that there was an overwhelming response.

8 We, you know, received almost double the amount  
9 of requests of funding that we have available. So stay  
10 tuned for that. I'm sure we can, you know, share a link  
11 or something.

12 But this is, you know, a new program; we're  
13 really excited. It's been a lot of work, but it's been  
14 really wonderful to see the impact to the community.

15 So any questions? I know that was a lot.

16 MR. DOYLE: Anything for Cate?

17 MR. SAMUELS: Yeah. Just a thank you. You  
18 know, she and Spencer have worked with us for, well, many  
19 weeks, as Spencer said, and we just appreciate the support  
20 and this support. I mean, it's so vital for our coverage  
21 area; we're covering 215 counties. So we need that extra  
22 Housing Stability Services, so thank you.

23 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Are there any other agencies  
24 that have updates?

25 MS. EISERT: I have a quick question for Cate

1 about the -- so it's actually -- you guys are funding  
2 those two divisions of Texas Veterans Commission, but were  
3 there -- was there another state agency that you mentioned  
4 that was getting 20 million or something like that?

5 MS. TRACZ: Yes. That's the Texas Access to  
6 Justice Foundation. They're not an agency. They're a --

7 MS. EISERT: Right.

8 MS. TRACZ: -- foundation. Yeah. But they --  
9 through their ERA-1 \$20 million contract had sub-awarded  
10 to 11 legal aid and legal services providers around the  
11 state.

12 MS. EISERT: That's awesome.

13 MS. BOLTON: This is Valinda Bolton. I had a  
14 question for Cate.

15 MS. TRACZ: Uh-huh?

16 MS. BOLTON: Hi. So do you have a list that  
17 you could share of the organizations that are providing  
18 these funds, like that we could share with like our  
19 caseworkers.

20 I work for DFPS. So you know, would it be  
21 possible? Is it legit? Is it feasible to share a list of  
22 those providers with our caseworkers so that they could  
23 connect clients that might be eligible with those funds?

24 MS. TRACZ: Yes, sure. I'm trying to figure  
25 out right now to draw up a link in the chat. So I'll send

1 that. I'll send a link to the main page that's got all of  
2 the, you know, program rules, and then we have a  
3 Smartsheets link that is the list of all of our awardees,  
4 their contact information, where their services are  
5 provided, and how much their contract was for.

6 So I can provide that link. I'll try to figure  
7 out how to do it in the chat, but I'll get with Elizabeth  
8 and Jeremy and make sure that's distributed to the group  
9 as well.

10 MS. BOLTON: Great. That would be super.

11 Thank you so much.

12 MS. TRACZ: Yeah. Of course.

13 MS. BOLTON: Very good.

14 MS. TRACZ: Yeah. I'll share my contact  
15 information as well. If you have any follow-up questions,  
16 you know, please feel free to reach out directly with  
17 questions.

18 MS. BOLTON: Okay. Thank you so much.

19 MS. TRACZ: Sure.

20 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Any other questions for  
21 Cate?

22 (No response.)

23 MR. DOYLE: Cate, thank you very much.

24 MS. TRACZ: Thank you.

25 MR. DOYLE: Other agency updates?

1 MS. LOPEZ: Hi. This is Cal Lopez with the  
2 Texas Education Agency. I wanted to provide some  
3 updates --

4 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

5 MS. LOPEZ: -- regarding -- so I was not at the  
6 last meeting, and so we have a lot of great news to share  
7 regarding the American Rescue Plan for the Homeless  
8 Children and Youth, or ARP HCY fund.

9 We were administered in two phases  
10 approximately \$81.3 million from the U.S. Department of  
11 Education for Phase I, which we received 20.3 million.  
12 We have disseminated it within two -- a majority of two  
13 grants.

14 The U.S. Department of Education required all  
15 states that a minimum of 75 percent of this funding go out  
16 to our school districts. And so we have -- we're in the  
17 process of awarding approximately 82 percent of these  
18 funds right now, which is about \$16.7 million, to our new  
19 competitive grant LEAs.

20 So while this was all occurring, we were in the  
21 process of our competitive grant process, in which we  
22 awarded approximately \$8.3 million to 92 new sub-grantees,  
23 and that was 85 school districts and then seven of our  
24 Regional Education Service Centers that have a shared  
25 service agreement with approximately -- with 129 smaller

1 districts.

2           So the 8.3 million is serving 214 school  
3 districts, and so now these sub-grantees are eligible for  
4 a supplemental grant, which basically doubles the funding  
5 amount that they have received this year, specifically to  
6 address the unique needs of students experiencing  
7 homelessness due to impact of COVID-19 by increasing their  
8 staff capacity and providing additional wraparound  
9 services.

10           In addition to that, the remaining funding,  
11 approximately 18 percent, we have allocated to a  
12 \$3 million grant in which all 20 of our Regional  
13 Educational Service Centers were eligible for \$150,000  
14 grant over the three-year period.

15           And that is to supplement the current \$50,000  
16 grant we provide to our Regional Educational Service  
17 Centers to provide additional technical assistance and  
18 training to the school districts within their region.

19           In addition to that, we are in the process of  
20 finalizing the second phase of the funding that we  
21 received from the U.S. Department of Education, and so  
22 that was \$61 million that we received, again with the  
23 minimum requirement to disseminate 75 percent to grants to  
24 our school districts.

25           We went above and beyond, and we have allocated

1 90 percent of the funds, which is \$55 million, to ensure  
2 that we can extend grants to the majority of our school  
3 districts across the state.

4 The U.S. Department of Education indicated that  
5 these grants -- any school districts that has an  
6 entitlement of \$5,000 or above will be able to apply for  
7 an individual grant, and any school districts that are  
8 below the \$5,000 threshold would then need to join a  
9 shared service arrangement.

10 We anticipate releasing this grant in about the  
11 next three to four weeks. All school districts are  
12 eligible to apply for this grant, either individually or  
13 through a shared service arrangement. And so we're just  
14 really excited to share that.

15 It's going to be on our e-Grant system, and  
16 we'll be rolling out a lot of training to work closely  
17 with our Regional Educational Service Centers and our  
18 school districts to ensure that as many school districts  
19 apply for these funds.

20 It will be a one-time application and one-time  
21 NOGA for this three-year grant period. So we're really  
22 excited to share this information. And then once we roll  
23 out that e-Grant, we will be working on the remaining  
24 funding that we have for statewide activities, and that  
25 also includes some grants that we'll be working on to help

1 facilitate statewide training.

2 I see one of our partners here. TNOYS is one  
3 of our partners who we've worked closely with, providing  
4 our Summit. We're going to continue that collaboration  
5 for our Summit and also work with TNOYS in developing some  
6 of this additional training, moving forward with some of  
7 this ARP funding and our statewide allocation.

8 So I just wanted to provide that update. Do I  
9 have any questions?

10 (No response.)

11 MR. DOYLE: Thanks, Cal. Questions for Cal?  
12 There's a lot of stuff going on at TEA.

13 MS. LOPEZ: Yes. Okay. Thank you.

14 MR. DOYLE: Okay, Eric? THN.

15 MR. SAMUELS: Okay. That additional money for  
16 the liaisons, that's huge. That's going to really help.

17 MS. LOPEZ: Yeah. We're really excited about  
18 it.

19 MR. SAMUELS: Yeah, yeah. I'm sure they are  
20 too. Yeah. So first of all, I'll give an update on  
21 VISTA. Nick Thompson is not feeling well today, so I'll  
22 report out for him.

23 Our VISTA project is in its last year of this  
24 grant. We're actually starting another -- I don't know if  
25 it's six years now again or not, but we're starting

1 another contract with them in May. But then we have six  
2 members. We have a VISTA leader. We have leaders working  
3 with local homeless coalitions, also folks working on  
4 coordinated entry and communications.

5 And then we should be bringing in two more  
6 right before the end of this contracts year, so early in  
7 May. And we are looking for members across the Balance of  
8 State Continuum of Care, so basically members anywhere  
9 outside of our major metro areas.

10 We typically ask those sites to pay an outside  
11 fee. In the Balance of State, we completely waived that  
12 fee, so it is at no cost to those sites. They do have to  
13 provide a place for this person to work, you know, a  
14 computer, things like that, but they don't -- they're not  
15 charged by us, not any kind of fee for that.

16 And I think in the future our new VISTA project  
17 manager, Lisa, will be joining us, Lisa Albracht, so  
18 we'll -- I'll be able to introduce you to her next time we  
19 meet. Okay.

20 So the next thing I have is the Texas Homeless  
21 Data Sharing Network, so I'm going to provide a quick  
22 update on that, where we are, and then Aubrey Fetzer, who  
23 has been working with me, she is the THDSN VISTA working  
24 with me. I'm going to provide a little update on the  
25 developmental work and some other work where trying to

1 increase our governance -- increase the capacity of our  
2 governance. And then I have one more thing and then we'll  
3 be done. Let me see if I can share my screen here.

4 (Discussion regarding technical matters.)

5 MR. SAMUELS: Okay. So just a little quick  
6 update on this. We can move you all over to the side. I  
7 think some of this could be a little -- we are in Phase 2  
8 of this project, where we're actually using this data to  
9 help clients and to gain access to services.

10 We've had reports of people who moved from  
11 eastern El Paso, and in this one report, this gentleman  
12 was a veteran, and he was able to access veteran  
13 administrative supportive housing because El Paso was able  
14 to verify that he was homeless and a veteran from the  
15 Coalition for the Homeless community.

16 And we're doing other things like that. So  
17 we're getting into that more service part of what this  
18 network can do, instead of just the reporting. And stop  
19 me if you have questions along the way.

20 Our governance, just to remind everybody, it's  
21 made up of every continuum of care. The average continuum  
22 of care has one representative and one seat available for  
23 a person with lived experience, which I will get into in a  
24 little bit.

25 And we have now seven CoCs participating, which

1 might have been the case last time we met, actually, but  
2 we have seven, which covers 90 percent of the state.  
3 We're really hoping that Austin and Brazos Valley will  
4 join soon. We've been meeting with them virtually since  
5 right before the end of the year and here early in the  
6 year.

7 And we are updating a public-facing dashboard,  
8 which Alex actually will show to you after Aubrey reports.

9 I'm going to go ahead and hand this over. You can go  
10 ahead and report out.

11 MS. FETZER: Yes. So the main things that I  
12 have to report out for the DSN is, like Eric mentioned,  
13 one of my main projects right now, trying to get up and  
14 running, is the Persons with Lived Expertise Outreach, to  
15 be on the DSN board, which, as Eric obviously showed, is  
16 part of the governance, as well as just getting anybody  
17 who wants to attend, even if they're not representative of  
18 the CoC, to attend and give their input in the board  
19 meetings.

20 I'm currently trying to get a visual resource,  
21 almost like a job flyer together to be able to send out.  
22 So you know, it is seen, it catches people's eye more and  
23 easier for somebody to -- whoever they think would be  
24 interested, or who they think would be a good fit as the  
25 representative or just attending the meeting in general,

1 and so that should be coming out within the next week or  
2 two.

3 And then the -- oh, the other main thing is our  
4 funding. The last -- over the last couple of months, we  
5 have submitted grants to -- or for the Amazon Health  
6 Equity Grant, the Meadows Foundation Grant and the Applied  
7 Materials Grant.

8 Still waiting to hear back on all of those. I  
9 think the Amazon one, we should be hearing a decision  
10 sometime soon, hopefully. And then the others, not quite  
11 sure when we'll hear back on that. But I'm also, right  
12 now, currently looking into finding more grants to start  
13 working on that we're eligible for and has ideally a  
14 relatively soon deadline, so we can get more turnover and  
15 we hear back quicker.

16 So that's, I think, it. That's all that I have  
17 to report on. Right?

18 MR. SAMUELS: Yeah, that's right. So yeah.  
19 We're applying -- the funding that we're applying for is  
20 to help us to expand the Data Sharing Network Project in  
21 the sense that we're applying for funding that we would in  
22 turn send to the contributing and participating CoCs so  
23 they could better share that data, more frequently share  
24 that data, but then also funding that would allow them to  
25 supplement a lead case manager's salary to help us

1 identify frequent users, to target those users for  
2 services in a partnership between the Homeless Response  
3 System and a public health system, most likely emergency  
4 rooms. And that's what -- if we did receive that funding,  
5 that's what it would be for.

6 I wanted to point out, before I get to the next  
7 thing, is we were lucky to receive funding from the State  
8 to help with with the data warehouse cost, and so we know  
9 we have that covered for the rest of the year, so our data  
10 warehouse will continue for the rest of the year, rest of  
11 2022.

12 We also were able to get support for hiring a  
13 project manager, so we have been receiving applications,  
14 and we will start the interviews for a new project manager  
15 next week. So I want to say thank you to Texas State  
16 Affordable Housing Corporation.

17 They were -- and Michael -- they were a big  
18 part of that support through their funding to support that  
19 project manager. That's going to be very helpful. The  
20 last thing is sometime this month -- we're hoping sometime  
21 this month, maybe early next month, we'll be making public  
22 a dashboard that you can use to look at homelessness  
23 across the state. I think you're seeing it right now.  
24 Hopefully, you are, or at least the source for it.

25 This is just a simple dashboard showing

1 aggregate numbers. These are the number who were homeless  
2 throughout 2021 from seven CoCs, so nearly 150,000 people.  
3 You can -- on the website, you'll be able to toggle with  
4 the times, so you'll be able to look at different periods  
5 of time, and then you can look at things like where people  
6 are.

7 And also, you can look at the population and  
8 break it down by subpopulation and racial composition.  
9 You can see in this case we have -- I have the racial  
10 make-up of the entire state versus that of those  
11 experiencing homelessness to show, you know, the obvious  
12 disparities in that.

13 And it goes on and on, and there's a lot of  
14 other things that you can look at and update by different  
15 types of vectors. So we hope to have that up soon, and  
16 we'll -- when we do have it up, we'll make sure that  
17 everyone sees -- that everyone has the link.

18 Yeah. That's all we have for that. Any  
19 questions?

20 MR. DOYLE: Hey, Eric, it's Mike. Why --  
21 what's keeping Austin from joining the Data Network?

22 MR. SAMUELS: Honestly it is probably more of a  
23 lack of capacity. You know, they have had other things on  
24 their plate throughout the past year, and I think that's  
25 more than -- a bit more than anything what has held that

1 up. They're definitely interested; it's just a matter of  
2 having the time to work with us on that, which I think  
3 we're at that time.

4 And then Brazos Valley, I don't know if anybody  
5 knows, but Brazos Valley has one agency that does  
6 everything, their own city rescue mission in Bryan-College  
7 Station, and theirs is also a lack of capacity, but I  
8 think we'll have them on board soon, too.

9 MR. DOYLE: Good.

10 MR. SAMUELS: As far as the other communities,  
11 San Antonio and Wichita Falls, I think it's probably the  
12 combination of lack of capacity, but also in San Antonio,  
13 it's a little bit more complex than other CoCs.

14 You have a CoC lead agency that is separate  
15 from the HMIS lead agency, something that makes it a  
16 little bit more complex. Oh, I should mention that --  
17 and, Helen, I owe you a follow-up email -- we've been  
18 working a lot with Helen and her colleagues on that.

19 I shouldn't say a lot. We've been trying to  
20 work a lot with them, on just seeing what the system can  
21 do and how maybe we can work with them. And we've been  
22 meeting with a TA provider on examining our data use  
23 agreement to see if it would work with the State, and  
24 there are some things that we need to address.

25 So Helen, I'll email you about that. And then

1 finally we are working with the MCOs to see what kind of  
2 partnerships we might be able to engage in on this  
3 project.

4 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Thank you, Eric. Do we have  
5 any other questions for Eric?

6 MS. EISERT: This is Helen. I just had one.  
7 On the grants you guys are submitting, that would -- would  
8 that kind of lead case manager position at the CoCs that  
9 are part of it? I just wasn't sure I heard you right.

10 MR. SAMUELS: Yeah. That would be -- so we  
11 would be able to supplement the -- you know, the salary of  
12 those lead case managers, one from each CoC that's  
13 participating.

14 MS. EISERT: Okay. That's awesome.

15 MR. DOYLE: Okay. Do we -- I think -- it says  
16 we have a guest presenter. It says Catherine here.

17 MS. BIALICK: Yes, I am here.

18 MR. DOYLE: There you are.

19 MS. BIALICK: Can you hear me?

20 MR. DOYLE: Uh-huh.

21 MS. BIALICK: Awesome. Good afternoon.

22 MR. DOYLE: Good afternoon.

23 MS. BIALICK: All right. Well, thanks so much  
24 for having me today. My name is Catie Bialick. I'm the  
25 Senior Advisor in the Office of the State Forensic

1 Director. My office works at the intersection of  
2 behavioral health and justice systems to improve statewide  
3 coordination and oversight of forensic services and  
4 provide justice involvement for people who have mental  
5 illness, substance use disorders, and/or intellectual  
6 developmental disabilities.

7 I'm really excited that Brooke asked me to join  
8 you all today to talk a little bit about this Texas  
9 Statewide Strategic Plan for Diversion, Community  
10 Integration, and Forensic Services. So I'm going to start  
11 my presentation to give you an update on that and try to  
12 call out, wherever possible kind of housing-specific  
13 issues that have come up through the planning process that  
14 I think might be interesting to this group.

15 And then I also want to talk just a little bit  
16 about a Community of Practice that we participated in, in  
17 partnership with the Texas Department of Housing and  
18 Community Affairs and the Texas State Affordable Housing  
19 Corporation.

20 So Helen, who is on this call, and Brooke and  
21 Michael talk a little bit about that Community of Practice  
22 as well. So you can go to the next slide, please. All  
23 right.

24 MR. DOYLE: Good afternoon.

25 MS. BIALICK: So thank you for having me today.

1       Sorry about that. Okay. So perfect.

2                       So why are we developing the Strategic Plan?  
3       So Texas, like many other states, faces a growing crisis  
4       in the number of people with mental illness, substance use  
5       disorders, and intellectual and developmental disabilities  
6       who are ending up in the criminal justice system.

7                       The best available data that we have here in  
8       Texas indicates that about 39 percent of people in Texas  
9       county jails have received public mental health services  
10       within the last three years.

11                      So that 39 percent is really just people who  
12       have been in contact with the behavioral health system. It  
13       is not necessarily representative of the total number of  
14       people with mental illness in county jails.

15                      You combine that with the number of people  
16       waiting for in-patient competency restoration services in  
17       county jails, which is more than 1,900 as of today, so  
18       nearly 2,000, and a picture emerges of a local behavioral  
19       health and justice system that are overburdened and  
20       resource-constrained.

21                      So we know the human toll of this problem is  
22       staggering, as is cost to taxpayers. Jails spend two to  
23       three times more money on adults with mental illness, yet  
24       communities often don't see improvements to public safety  
25       as a result of these incarcerations, and we know that,

1 once incarcerated, people with mental illness tend to stay  
2 longer in jail and face higher levels of physical and  
3 behavioral health risks, higher risk of suicide, higher  
4 recidivism rates, and other consequences such as loss of  
5 housing and employment.

6 Next slide, please. So the Statewide  
7 Behavioral Health Coordinating Council, which I see some  
8 folks on today's call who are representatives of that, to  
9 address this issue, have called for the development of a  
10 plan to address these challenges.

11 Their collective goal is to reduce the forensic  
12 wait list for inpatient competency restoration services  
13 and reduce and prevent justice involvement for people with  
14 mental illness, substance use disorders, and intellectual  
15 and developmental disabilities.

16 Next slide, please. So the purpose of this  
17 plan is really to develop a shared statewide vision,  
18 something that is clear, actionable, and achievable, and  
19 really addresses some of those challenges that I called  
20 out and, at the end of the day, ensure that all Texans  
21 receive access to care in the right place at the right  
22 time.

23 Next slide, please. So it was important to the  
24 Behavioral Health Coordinating Council that the Strategic  
25 Plan represent voices from across Texas. We wanted to

1 hear from mental health, substance use, and intellectual  
2 and developmental disability providers, peer specialists,  
3 justice professionals, so thinking about jail  
4 administrators, the courts, probation, parole, people with  
5 lived experience and their families, community leaders,  
6 and program and policy subject matter experts.

7           So with all of that in mind, we had a plan in  
8 place to engage a wide variety of folks. We hosted the  
9 Statewide Sequential Intercept Mapping Summit at the  
10 beginning of last year, where more than 140 justice and  
11 behavioral health experts from across the state came  
12 together to talk about opportunities, gaps in services,  
13 strategies that needed to be implemented across the state.

14           We hosted strategic planning sessions with the  
15 Statewide Behavioral Health Coordinating Council, which  
16 represents 26 state agencies that receive general revenue  
17 funding for behavioral health services, seven listening  
18 sessions with a diverse set of stakeholder groups, which  
19 I'll talk a little bit more about in a minute, and hosted  
20 a public survey, so lots of engagement have led to kind of  
21 this report that I'll be giving a preview of today. Next  
22 slide, please.

23           So HHSC hosted seven listening sessions last  
24 summer with a variety of organizations that we are really  
25 grateful for. They brought together diverse stakeholders,

1 so a few of our behavioral health providers, our local  
2 mental health authorities, West Texas Center and North  
3 Texas Behavioral Health Authority. We worked with the  
4 National Alliance on Mental Illness Texas to put together  
5 a listening session.

6 Our own HHSC Peer Services helped us host a  
7 listening session. The State Hospital System  
8 superintendents came together to talk about their needs.  
9 We worked with the Texas Indigent Defense Commission and  
10 the Judicial Commission on Mental Health.

11 And so you know, there is a number of themes  
12 that emerged as a result of these listening sessions: the  
13 importance of diversion and early intervention. So how do  
14 we keep people out of the justice system to begin with?  
15 The need for coordination across behavioral health and  
16 justice system stakeholders, both at the local level, but  
17 more coordination from state and local partners.

18 And I think that something that's really  
19 important to this group is there was a lot of discussion  
20 around the cyclical relationship between housing  
21 instability and justice involvement.

22 So participants spoke to a number of  
23 challenges, for example, law enforcement procedures  
24 contributing to arrest for behaviors associated with  
25 experiencing homelessness, such as criminal trespass.

1           There was a lot of discussion around a lack of  
2 stable housing being viewed as a risk factor for justice  
3 involvement and actually reducing courts' willingness to  
4 divert people from jail or prison. We know that criminal  
5 history serves as a barrier to housing and contributes to  
6 housing instability and homelessness.

7           And then there was a lot of discussion around  
8 the lack of stable housing upon reentry, and how that  
9 contributes to supervision failure and increases in a  
10 person's risk of recidivism.

11           And we know that all of those issues are  
12 amplified for people with mental illness, substance use  
13 disorders, and intellectual and developmental  
14 disabilities, so the combination of justice involvement  
15 with these other challenges presents significant issues.

16           The good news is, participants didn't just talk  
17 about challenges. They also shared ideas. Many of those  
18 made their way into the plan, so I'll talk a little bit  
19 about those in a moment.

20           But next slide, please. So in addition to  
21 those listening sessions, we also posted a public survey.

22           We received 571 responses from a really diverse group of  
23 stakeholders, including behavioral health service  
24 providers, people with lived experience, people who work  
25 within the criminal justice system, and just people who

1 are, you know, connected to this issue in other ways. It  
2 was geographically diverse too, both representing from  
3 across the state of Texas, but also from both urban and  
4 rural communities.

5 Next slide, please. So part of this public  
6 survey, which I don't expect you to read this slide, but  
7 my key takeaway here is we asked people to prioritize a  
8 number of strategies that supported five overarching  
9 goals.

10 And strategies ranged from things like social  
11 determinants of health to diversion, improving forensic  
12 services, you know, a number of issues. Two housing-  
13 specific strategies that received a really high number of  
14 votes, one was the recommendation that we promote  
15 collaborative work with local and private stakeholders to  
16 expand housing option, with particular attention to  
17 landlord criteria and transitions between institutions and  
18 the community, so including step-down and transitional  
19 housing, adult residential settings, and sober living and  
20 recovery home options.

21 And a second strategy that received a  
22 significant number of votes is supporting the development  
23 of dedicated positions at LMHAs, LBHAs, and LIDDAs to  
24 provide housing navigation, employment, transportation,  
25 and education services for people with mental illness and

1 substance use disorders, so there were lots of strategies  
2 voted on, but those were just two housing ones that I  
3 wanted to call out for this group.

4 Next slide, please. There were also a number  
5 of open-ended responses that have really helped shape the  
6 narrative of the Strategic Plan, many of which will be  
7 called out in an appendix, if you are interested in diving  
8 into that.

9 Next slide, please. So where are we today?  
10 The plan has not been published, but it will be this  
11 spring as a subcomponent of the Statewide Behavioral  
12 Health Coordinating Council Behavioral Health Strategic  
13 Plan.

14 So please keep an eye out for that. We'll make  
15 sure that this group gets a copy of it as soon as it is  
16 published. But really, you know, is the vision is that  
17 Texans receive care in the right time, at the right place,  
18 to prevent and reduce justice involvement for people with  
19 mental illness, substance use disorders, and IDD.

20 And the mission is to develop and implement a  
21 high-quality, data-informed and well coordinated system of  
22 services and supports across the continuum of care to  
23 improve the delivery and quality of forensic services and  
24 prevent and reduce justice involvement.

25 Next slide, please. So the plan's

1 implementation will be supported by a set of guiding  
2 principles. I won't read all of these, but a few things  
3 that really stood out for us with our discussions with the  
4 Coordinator Council, with public listening sessions, is  
5 the need for a full continuum of care from early  
6 intervention and diversion to competency, restoration,  
7 reentry, and community supervision.

8 We heard a lot about the social determinants of  
9 health, needing to address those, valuing people with  
10 lived experience and acknowledging them as important  
11 contributors to policy development and planning, and a  
12 number of other items.

13 Next slide, please. We'll skip this one, too.

14 Next slide, please. Thank you.

15 So the plan, under supporting its mission and  
16 vision, there are five overarching goals. The first goal  
17 is to support the expansion of robust crisis and diversion  
18 systems to reduce and prevent justice involvement for  
19 people with mental illness, substance use disorders and/or  
20 intellectual and developmental disabilities, increase  
21 coordination, collaboration, and accountability across  
22 systems, agencies, and organizations, enhance the  
23 continuum of care and support services for justice-  
24 involved people with mental illness, substance use  
25 disorders and/or intellectual and developmental

1 disabilities, strength state hospital and community-based  
2 funds and services, and expand training, education and  
3 technical assistance for stakeholders working at the  
4 intersection of behavioral health and justice.

5           Next slide, please. So the plan -- when it's  
6 published, you'll be able to see more on this, but each  
7 goal has a set of objectives, and each objective has a set  
8 of supporting strategies. So those strategies are  
9 recommendations for both state agencies, local  
10 stakeholders, really stakeholders across behavioral health  
11 and justice systems that really can play a role in  
12 reducing and preventing justice involvement and improving  
13 forensic services.

14           So I won't go through all of these, but the  
15 first goal is really focused on, you know, crisis and  
16 diversion. Next slide, please. The second goal on  
17 coordination, collaboration, and accountability. Next  
18 slide, please.

19           The third, the continuum of care and support  
20 services, so this is where you'll see a lot those housing  
21 strategies that are addressed. So you know, we've heard  
22 from stakeholders across the state that we really need to  
23 address the social determinants of health that increase  
24 the risk of justice involvement, and so we know that  
25 housing is an important component of that.

1           Next slide, please. Strengthening state  
2 hospital and community-based forensic services. Next  
3 slide, please. And finally, expanding training,  
4 education, and technical assistance.

5           So again, when the plan is published, you'll  
6 see these goals, objectives, and their supporting  
7 strategies, and our hope is that, you know, between the  
8 Statewide Behavioral Health Coordinating Council, its  
9 member agencies, other stakeholders at the state and local  
10 level, can see these, identify with them, and think about  
11 ways that they can implement these to really, you know,  
12 play a role in improving outcomes for Texans.

13           So next slide, please. One thing that's  
14 exciting that I just want to touch is HHSC is launching  
15 the Texas Behavioral Health and Justice Technical  
16 Assistance Center, which will be here to support the  
17 implementation of the Strategic Plan.

18           So it's really going to serve as a centralized  
19 source of support information for people who interact with  
20 forensic populations, as well as justice-involved people.

21           So a really wide variety of stakeholders, including local  
22 mental health authorities, county law enforcement, jail  
23 administrators, other communities leaders.

24           The site is set to launch sometime this spring.  
25 We will have a local expert network, where you can

1 connect different stakeholders to talk about programs and  
2 services, you know, sitting at the intersection of justice  
3 and behavioral systems, request technical assistance.

4 We're hosting Sequential Intercept Model  
5 Mapping Workshops for counties across the state, which  
6 really help counties understand how people encounter and  
7 move through the justice system who have mental illness,  
8 substance use disorders, or IDD, so we're really excited  
9 to get those going, and then we'll develop a number  
10 toolkits, webinars, and other resources.

11 Next slide, please. And we're not doing it  
12 alone. We've got some State agency partners, many of  
13 which are represented on today's call, so we are really  
14 excited, because we know that these populations -- you  
15 know, these challenges cannot be addressed by any one  
16 agency alone, and so we're really excited to work  
17 collaboratively with a number of state partners to really  
18 try to move forward and implement strategies to address  
19 some of these challenges.

20 Next slide, please. All right. Last, but  
21 certainly not least, HHSC, in partnership with the Texas  
22 Department of Housing and Community Affairs, as well as  
23 the Texas Supportive Housing Corporation [sic] -- or Texas  
24 State Affordable Housing Corporation -- so Michael Wilt,  
25 who's on the call, Brooke Boston, Helen Eisert, we joined

1 a Community of Practice hosted by the Council for State  
2 Governments Justice Center and the Corporation for  
3 Supportive Housing earlier this year to really think  
4 through strategies for expanding housing options for  
5 people with complex health needs leaving the justice  
6 system.

7 We are still waiting on our Texas report, which  
8 hopefully we'll get any day now, that lists out, you know,  
9 ideas for a number of strategies that we discussed through  
10 the Community of Practice. But there are also a number of  
11 really helpful, I would say, resources shared that really  
12 talk about housing for justice-involved populations and  
13 ways in which we can expand that through both state but  
14 also local efforts.

15 So I know that was a lot. Happy to answer any  
16 questions, or if anyone also on today's call who is part  
17 of any of these initiatives want to jump in with anything,  
18 please feel free to do so, but my contact information is  
19 here.

20 And again, thanks for having me and letting me  
21 talk about this work.

22 MR. DOYLE: Catherine, just -- this is Mike.  
23 Just out of curiosity, did you happen to get an  
24 opportunity to take a look at -- it's only been open two  
25 weeks, but the Mental Health Jail Diversion Program in

1 Tarrant County that just opened?

2 MS. BIALICK: I heard about it, and I'm excited  
3 to learn more. I was on a call the other day where folks  
4 were talking about it, but I do not -- I have not been  
5 part of that.

6 MR. DOYLE: Okay. It's quite impressive, if  
7 you get a chance to look at it. It's quite impressive.  
8 It takes people that are charged with criminal trespass --  
9 they are arrested, but they're never booked, so it never  
10 goes on a rap sheet, if you will.

11 And it's really making a big deal --- MHMR of  
12 Tarrant County is operating the facility on behalf of the  
13 county, and so there are a lot of services there that are  
14 able to hopefully get them either back on their meds or  
15 get them into treatment, and so it's really a great  
16 program.

17 It's 42 beds capacity. We're only opening up  
18 10 beds right now, but we've got those full, and it really  
19 seems to -- it's really getting great accolades from the  
20 police. It saves them a tremendous amount of time, not  
21 having to book them into jail.

22 MS. BIALICK: That's awesome. We've heard  
23 about a number of counties across the state opening up,  
24 you know, different variations of diversion centers. Some  
25 are pre-arrest, post-arrest, like you're saying in Tarrant

1 County, and we think that is just an amazing trend to see.

2 One of the biggest challenges that we hear from  
3 law enforcement is they just don't have a place to take  
4 people, and so --

5 MR. DOYLE: Right.

6 MS. BIALICK: -- their only option to arrest  
7 them and book them into jail. And so the more of these  
8 centers that exist, we're really hoping to see a reduction  
9 in arrests and increase in connection to care. So  
10 definitely would be excited to learn more about Tarrant  
11 County.

12 MR. DOYLE: Well, we're -- according to our  
13 district attorney, we have arrest them to transport them.  
14 So we arrest them and take them straight to the diversion  
15 center. They never go to jail and they're never booked  
16 into jail, never arraigned. So it's completely off their  
17 record, but we have to arrest them in order to transport  
18 them, from what I'm hearing, legally.

19 MS. BIALICK: Got you. That -- I think that's  
20 unique, I guess, to Tarrant County. But I know every  
21 community takes a different approach.

22 MR. DOYLE: Yes. Well, good work.

23 MS. BIALICK: Thank you.

24 MR. DOYLE: Do you have --

25 MS. BIALICK: You too.

1 MR. DOYLE: -- any other questions to ask me?

2 MS. GALASSO: I have a couple of questions.  
3 Hi, Catherine. This is Fedora, with TNOYS, the Texas  
4 Network of Youth Services. Did you service any special  
5 service on any special populations such as youth and youth  
6 intersections with behavioral health and justice  
7 involvement or youth experiencing homelessness, or  
8 commercial sexual exploitation of youth, and how those  
9 justice involvement can affect some of those interactions?

10 MS. BIALICK: Yes. So there were -- there's  
11 three populations specifically that are called out within  
12 this report, and youth -- children and youth is certainly  
13 one of them. And I kind of glossed over it, but there are  
14 strategies specific to reducing and preventing justice  
15 system involvement for youth.

16 And as you know, the stakeholders -- so  
17 thinking about the partners, which are schools, and --  
18 look a little bit different from the adult population.  
19 But certainly, really, really important to focus on. We  
20 heard a lot about prevention in connection to substance  
21 use services for youth as well.

22 And then veterans is another population that is  
23 called out specifically in the Strategic Plan, and, you  
24 know, we worked closely with Blake Harris and some of his  
25 colleagues, but that was another group that asked to

1 receive special attention.

2 And then we also heard a lot about IDD's. So I  
3 feel like a lot of the plan is focused on mental illness  
4 and substance use, but it was clear that there is a need  
5 for increased focus and services for people with  
6 intellectual and development disabilities, so you'll see  
7 specific strategies for that population as well.

8 MS. GALASSO: Great. Are you guys able to  
9 share the PowerPoint and the actual -- you said the  
10 Strategic Plan will be published --

11 MS. BIALICK: Well, so the plan, fingers  
12 crossed, will be published -- I'm hearing March, maybe  
13 April, so soon, very soon. But you -- I believe the  
14 PowerPoint -- I don't know if it's on the calendar invite,  
15 but I'm happy to share it and happy to talk to -- MR.  
16 STREMLER: We have a copy of it.

17 MS. BIALICK: Okay.

18 MR. STREMLER: We have a copy of it, and we'll  
19 definitely send it out to everyone on the council as part  
20 of the meeting materials.

21 MS. BIALICK: Thank you.

22 MS. GALASSO: Okay. Thanks.

23 MR. DOYLE: Can you send out Naomi's stuff as  
24 well?

25 MR. STREMLER: Yeah.

1 MR. DOYLE: Thanks.

2 MR. STREMLER: As long as Naomi has got -- it's  
3 for distribution, I assume --

4 MS. CANTU: Oh, yes. I sent it. I sent it to  
5 you for that handout. Yeah. I did -- this is Naomi  
6 Cantu. I had a question.

7 Thank you for your presentation. It sounds  
8 like you did a lot of work with collaborations and trying  
9 to find those kind of overlaps and partnerships there.

10 You did mention at the beginning of the  
11 presentation that, you know, the system is overburdened  
12 and over-resourced -- and under-resourced. I'm sorry.

13 With the new behavioral -- let me see if I can  
14 get the wording right -- Texas Behavioral Health Justice  
15 Center, are you getting an increase in funds in order to  
16 do that, or is there something else that is going to be  
17 transitioned out in order to do that?

18 MS. BIALICK: So that is -- we actually  
19 received a grant to launch the center itself, and a lot of  
20 things that we'll be focused on, which will be learning  
21 collaboratives, providing direct technical assistance on  
22 everything from, you know, developing diversion centers,  
23 to thinking about jail in-reach, system planning through  
24 strategic Sequential Intercept Mapping workshops, that's  
25 going to be led by our office, in support with, you know,

1 guidance from the state agencies that were listed.

2 But we're trying to do as much as we can with  
3 limited resources, and it's really following the federal  
4 model, which I'm sure many of you are aware of. SAMHSA  
5 has technical assistance centers. So thinking about how  
6 we can spread and share best practices when, you know,  
7 unfortunately, we can't provide funding for all of the  
8 things that we know deserve it.

9 And I think a lot of our work will also be just  
10 uplifting a lot of the amazing resources that are  
11 available through some of those state agency partners, so  
12 just making sure that people are aware of what's out  
13 there.

14 MS. CANTU: There is definitely a lot out  
15 there, and so that coordination piece is something that,  
16 you know, this council does, and we definitely see that  
17 it's in the plan.

18 You mentioned a lot of partners in those  
19 centers. Are the legal aids also going to be included?  
20 I know it's a nonprofit, but that's one of the biggest in  
21 Texas.

22 MS. BIALICK: You know, we've talked to a lot  
23 of stakeholders. That's not one of them, but I can  
24 certainly make note of that.

25 MS. CANTU: It might not be needed if it's

1 before the legal process. Right? But I was just  
2 wondering, since we do fund them at TDHCA.

3 MS. BIALICK: Right.

4 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

5 MS. BIALICK: Thank you.

6 MR. DOYLE: Catherine, very interesting. Thank  
7 you so much for your hard work.

8 Is there any public comment? I didn't hear of  
9 anybody that was going to do that.

10 MR. STREMLER: Oh, Mike, there were a couple of  
11 people that mentioned in the chat -- I think Fedora and  
12 Blake both wanted to provide an update on their respective  
13 agencies and organizations, that didn't get a chance  
14 earlier in the meeting.

15 MR. DOYLE: Okay.

16 MS. GALASSO: I'll go first. I'm Fedora with  
17 TNOYS, so I just kind of wanted to follow up. We're super  
18 excited to continue our partnership with TEA, and we'll  
19 have lots more information at our next meeting about our  
20 upcoming summit, around the Texas Education for Children  
21 and Homeless Youth Program.

22 And I just wanted to give just a couple of  
23 other updates. We collaborated with the U.S. Interagency  
24 Council on Homelessness to inform the drafting of the  
25 Federal Strategic Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness.

1 We had a listening session with 80 organizational partners  
2 who make up our -- who are part of our organizational  
3 network that provide that direct service to youth  
4 experiencing homelessness on the ground.

5 And then we also had a listening session with  
6 young people with lived experiences of homelessness. That  
7 Federal Strategic Plan will be coming out next month, and  
8 we'll also have USICH at our upcoming member meeting.  
9 We're grateful that, you know, through our work of  
10 listening and learning with youth, we are pleased that the  
11 youth population will be a priority and will be pulled out  
12 from the rest of the population for the next plan.

13 So that's really exciting. And then to follow  
14 up on that, we -- in 2018, TNOYS had our Statewide  
15 Collaborative around Youth Homelessness. And we've been  
16 on a little bit of a hiatus because of the pandemic, but  
17 we are relaunching that in February, and our upcoming  
18 meeting is February 23 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

19 And I think I sent it out to folks on this  
20 group. And that will be a way for us to really focus in  
21 on youth experiencing homelessness and the various cross-  
22 systems that really affect youth who are experiencing  
23 homelessness, such as youth who are aging out of care,  
24 youth who are exiting justice systems, et cetera.

25 As part of that, we'll be really focusing on

1 the five Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project sites  
2 here in Texas. We have one in Austin, one in Waco, San  
3 Antonio, and then our two newest ones are Houston and in  
4 Fort Worth.

5 And so that will be a time for those sites to  
6 also provide lessons learned as we work to expand that  
7 across the state, and really focus in on youth  
8 experiencing homelessness. So we really welcome everyone  
9 to join that.

10 We also have our Americorps program that we are  
11 still actively recruiting for Americorps members that are  
12 focused on working directly in youth service provider  
13 organizations, many of which are youth homeless shelter  
14 organizations.

15 And it is specifically for young people with  
16 lived experiences. So we employ young people with lived  
17 experiences that then provide that near-peer learning on  
18 the ground at our organizational host sites. So that's  
19 still out there.

20 And then another good announcement that I  
21 wanted to share and hope folks can uplift that, is that we  
22 have a position that we're posting for that is  
23 specifically a policy manager whose primary focus will be  
24 around youth homelessness and all of the intersections  
25 around youth homelessness, and really focusing on ways to,

1 you know, uplift policies and best practices to serve  
2 youth experiencing homelessness here in Texas.

3 So those are our updates. Thanks.

4 MR. DOYLE: Thank you, Fedora.

5 And, Blake, were you going to -- did you say  
6 you had one?

7 DR. HARRIS: Yes, sir, and I will be brief so  
8 that we can keep everything on track here. But as our  
9 friend Cate did mention, we were fortunate enough to work  
10 with TDHCA to bring on two Homeless Veteran Coordinators  
11 here within our Veterans Mental Health Department.

12 It's very exciting to have them aboard, and if  
13 there's any way we can be of assistance working with  
14 veterans or veteran families that are at risk or  
15 experiencing homelessness, please give us a holler. They  
16 can do quite a bit of services.

17 And we are separate from the VA. Often, I try  
18 to cover that in there. So we work closely with the VA in  
19 the local areas and then also with our local coalitions,  
20 through the Military Veteran Peer Network, through our  
21 other programs with VMHD, like our Justice-Involved  
22 Veteran program, Community Faith-Based Partners program,  
23 and so forth, so these folks can be force multipliers and  
24 really connect in with folks that are experiencing mental  
25 health and barriers to homelessness.

1           So if there's any way that they can be of  
2 assistance to you in your efforts, please give me a  
3 holler, and I'd love to introduce them to you. Thank you.

4           MR. DOYLE: Thank you. Thank you for the  
5 important work. Okay. If there are no closing -- other  
6 public comments?

7           (No response.)

8           MR. DOYLE: I've just got one closing  
9 statement, and that is, I want to thank Elizabeth for her  
10 help during the time she was doing administrative support,  
11 which is something that she did above and beyond. I  
12 really thank you for that, Elizabeth, and obviously, Naomi  
13 did it for a while, and Brooke did for a while.

14           It just takes everybody to keep me in line. So  
15 I appreciate it very much, but we'll look forward to  
16 working with Sean. And so, Sean, I'm sure I'll be talking  
17 to you between now and April.

18           And you guys, be safe. Keep up the good work.  
19 Talk to y'all next time.

20           (Whereupon, at 3:11 p.m., the meeting the  
21 Homeless was adjourned.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MEETING OF: Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless

LOCATION: Austin, Texas

DATE: January 25, 2022

I do hereby certify that the foregoing pages,  
numbers 1 through 73, inclusive, are the true, accurate,  
and complete transcript prepared from the verbal recording  
made by electronic recording by Nancy H. King before the  
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

DATE: January 27, 2021

/s/ Adrienne Evans-Stark  
(Transcriber)

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