

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

TEXAS STRATEGIC PLAN TO PREVENT AND
END HOMELESSNESS

PUBLIC HEARING

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BEFORE:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. McGRATH: Thank you. So my name is Colin McGrath and I am with the Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless. Our job, my job, and our job is to speak as little as possible today, and to hear as much as we can from you. I will just give a brief overview of what TICH's functions are, and what this plan is about.

TICH is council, that was created in 1989 by the State Legislature. Its function is to coordinate the resources of state agencies, to use our resources to better serve individuals experiencing homelessness in the State of Texas. The member agencies include the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Aging and Disability Services, Department of State Health Services, Department of Family Protective Services. The list goes on.

There are eleven agencies on the Council. We also have advisory members who have been elected or voted on to sit on the Council formally.

So the background for the plan is two things. First, the Council has been working on a State Plan for a number of a years, but has needed the staff support to get a plan out, and over the past year, I have worked with the

Council as a full-time staff to help them produce this document. You know, they needed full time staff to get it going, and how it is here.

The other bit of background is the United States Interagency Council for the homeless, which is the federal version of our Council released a federal plan, the first in the nations history, in June of 2010. The federal plan is largely going to indicate the future for homelessness in the United States. It is already guiding HUD's legislation, or HUD's regulations.

And our job as a Council is to make a plan that both response to HUD's and the USICH's future direction, but also to make the plan responsive to the needs of our communities in Texas. We are not always the same as the rest of the nation.

So we want to make this plan responsive to the unique needs of Texas. For instance, we are similar to the U.S. nationwide, in terms of say, chronic homelessness. 21 percent of persons experiencing homelessness in Texas experience chronic homelessness. About 36 percent to about 38 percent are going to families.

But in terms of family violence, in the State of Texas, 21 percent of individuals in our last point in

time count were victims of family violence. That is a bit higher than the national average. So I think it is very critical for us to recognize that and to make sure that our State's decision makers and our service providers and our agencies are cognizant of our differences.

The Plan itself is broken up into four areas. The first is affordable housing, and supportive services sections. The second addresses homelessness prevention. The third, data research and analysis. And the fourth, State infrastructure.

Each of these areas starts to bring, the agencies that belong to the Council to bring their resources to the table in a statewide effort to prevent and end homelessness, to use resources effectively together, to find strong pairings between agencies that already in some way address homelessness, and to find ways for agencies that have not in the past, but are potential partners to become bigger players in this effort.

So, affordable housing and supportive services, the background for this is that we have an extreme shortage of affordable housing in the State of Texas as well as permanent housing. Since 2000, we have seen an increase in families living below 50 percent area median income of what is it, 186,000 households. I am sorry.

495,000 households.

But the units of housing that is affordable at that income level has increased by 186,000 units. So that leaves over 300,000 households without a place that is affordable for them to live. That places more people at risk of homelessness. It also makes it difficult for people to exit homeless situations into a stable housing situation.

To address this, our goal is to increase housing options for homeless individuals and families who face multiple barriers to secure housing. We have three objectives to address this goal. The first is to identify individuals and families experiencing homelessness and prioritize their housing stability.

Second, explore options for increasing the supply and availability of affordable and permanent supportive housing units in Texas. And third, promote the strategic pairing of state agency, nonprofit and private sector resources to increase supportive services linked with affordable housing units.

Our second goal are of homelessness prevention, the goal is to develop a statewide crisis response mechanism that identifies at-risk individuals and families and prevents them from becoming homeless. We have four

objectives here.

The first is to refine and promote a definition of at-risk of homelessness that fits Texas. Second, increase awareness of opportunities for preventing homelessness among state agencies. Third, increase the coordination of state agency services to enhance the State's preventive capacity.

And finally, this involves discharge planning from the State's institutions. Increase the capacity of State institutions to prevent homelessness and to prevent instances of homelessness, and shelter use upon discharge from facilities. Third is data research and analysis. We have ways for learning about the extent of homelessness in Texas, and to better understand the population that we are trying to serve. But those resources are currently limited.

There are two areas. There is the point in time count, which is a one-time count that happens every year to assess the scale and composition of the homeless population on a single night and the other is a Homeless Management Information System which is a data system that gathers information on all individuals who use HUD funded resources, say emergency shelters or transitional housing.

Both have some limitations and we want to

address those. We want to gather better statewide point in time information as well as statewide HMIS data. The HMIS system reports directly to HUD and never aggregates at a statewide level. So we miss out on a lot of valuable information.

So along those lines, our goal is to strengthen Texas' capacity to gather, analyze and report precise data on homelessness systematically. Our first objective, evaluate the quality of homelessness related data. Second, facilitate coordinated data collection policies and procedures for all sources of data. And third, coordinate timely data collection, reporting and analysis.

For state infrastructure, our goal is increase communication and collaboration between all service providers and units of government in order to sustain TICH's planning efforts, and aid in the implementation of this plan. Our first objective is to increase coordination and communication between state agencies through promoting a common language for communicating information on homelessness.

In relation to this objective, we have two formal federal definitions that are in use in Texas, one through the Department of Education and one through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. We also have

agencies that use their own definition, or agencies that use clients' self-identification of being homeless at entry as a way of defining homelessness. We think that there are ways for us to use a more consistent definition around the State, which will make all of our agencies speak together in more consistent ways.

Our second objective is to increase coordination and communication between local, state and federal government and non-government entities. That is what an event like this tonight is about.

We want to make the state government more responsive to the need of our communities, to make state agencies recognize your needs and to find ways to fill those gaps and to also make sure that the state government is in line with what is happening at the federal level, so that we are ready to receive as much money as we can from the federal government.

Our third objective is raise awareness of homelessness among state agency boards of directors, executives and other decision makers in the State. So that is a lot of information all at once to internalize.

But we would like to hear your comments. This is the plan in a very brief nutshell. The thing is not short, 72 pages. There is a lot of information, both

demographics, trying to give an assessment of what the scope of homelessness is in the State, who is homeless.

And then at more length, it describes the need for these objectives to be carried out. But you don't have to have read the entire plan to have incredibly valuable information to share with us today. We really want to learn about what is happening in Laredo, so that we can take that information back to the Council and report it to our members.

So at this point, I am going to stop talking and ask you all to share your thoughts. And just so you know, we have handouts that have our printed summaries of the plan. So you can grab a copy and take a look at it, if you like. And we invite comments on any one of those priority areas of the plan, as well as discussion by your own experience in this city.

Sure. And also, he just -- he is going to keep me, reminding you. Please state your name when you come to speak. And also, if you have not signed up, up front, do so, so that we can make sure that your name is recorded accurately on the record.

MR. CEBALLOS: my name is Jose L. Ceballos and I am the chairperson for the Laredo Homeless Coalition. Thank you very much for coming to the City of Laredo to

hear us give you a description of what our needs are for particularly homeless and at-risk homeless populations.

I have personally been involved with homelessness since 1999, and have a background in working for a Housing Authority in different nonprofit groups. I am currently a consultant. Some of my work still is reliant on the efforts of a lot of nonprofits in town and in the region.

What I would like for you to know, this is the first time I am going to give you a history or a synopsis of what a homeless person or family looks like in our community, and I think that that is important. For the last eight years or so, we have been counting through the point in time count system.

And we have -- there has not been a year we count less than 200 people out in our community at any given night. I think the last count had 238 people that were interviewed and we conducted a survey which you all are very familiar with at TDHCA.

Twelve percent of those are veterans. Approximately, the approximate age is 39 years old. The gender is 70 percent male, and 29 percent female. 93 percent of those surveyed are white in race.

There is approximately, when listing reasons

for being homeless, at least 40 percent, which is really this last year, is probably our lowest in that, at least in my memory, declare that they have substance abuse or mental health issues. There has been some years where that number can go as high as 55 percent, 60 percent, self-declared, which is extremely high.

We know from our shelter that in the last 24 months, the length of stay has at least doubled. What we used to see at the only public shelter in town that provides men, women and families staying, we have seen an increase of at least, what used to be 90 days, now it is becoming at least a year and that is more than doubling.

For families that are five and above, we don't have a shelter for them. We don't have space for that. So we will get to affordable housing in a second.

When people list the reason for being homeless, if you have done any surveys, they will quickly tell you that it is unemployment. It is usually more than that. And it is typically a dual issue with the chronic homeless, particularly Laredo is no exception to that. For mental illness and all kinds of addiction issues.

In particular, what is real important for us here is that we know at least 38 percent roughly are Laredoans, and we know that at least every year on

average, 70 percent, sometimes up to 80 percent are Laredoans. And that is something that is extremely important for everybody in this room to note that that is a reality.

Sometimes we see on the street, we think it is not a local. That is probably one of the biggest misconceptions about homelessness. So I will give you, I want to share that with you.

In terms of the Plan that the State is looking at, we commend the State for showing the leadership with developing this plan. I think the model of sharing with other agencies that serve the population is a good one. I think it is real important fo it to be a viable plan.

And I would encourage you to look at the nonprofit groups that perhaps, they will speak up today, and share with you. But to me it is real important to empower them. I don't think the Plan is going to carry out on its own and it is real important that you hear them. I can tell you from running some of the most recent programs, such as the HPRP, and I will make a comment about it, and then go back to affordable housing shortage.

But to make it easy on those groups to administer those programs, and to facilitate some sort of

pay system that actually makes it worthy of managing. It becomes very difficult to do the things we want to do as nonprofit groups without the administrative compensation.

When you set up programs that have three to 5 percent compensation to that nonprofit, we are essentially bleeding them dry administratively and I think we need -- the State should place some attention and care for that.

The City of Laredo, for all intents and purposes has eight, what started off as transitional housing units. We recently had a new program that is permanent supportive housing. For a community of this size, we can use all of the help we can get from the State and the federal level to increase our housing capacity.

We need to look at programs that reduce that state, federal state protocol. I would encourage through the State, somehow through the strategy, that you look at funding nonprofits directly, and institute specific ways.

I would suggest for cities this size, 250,000 or over, that you look at the capacity of the local government, whether it be an agency or it be part of the city. In this case, we have both. That you look at those agencies to see if they can assist and facilitate in the creation of those units.

The second thing that I think would be

encouraging is to look at public housing authorities within cities this size, to be able to help with that and there is actually another one that I will mention. There are in some instances, nonprofits that have that capacity, and that actually serve housing.

You will find that as an example, Bethany House is an example, a nonprofit here in Laredo that tries to feed and tries to shelter, and does it very well. But when we get into housing, it is over and beyond.

And you will hear that from a couple of other agencies, I would think. So I would add that third, look for ways to fund nonprofits that are housing providers to serve in the area of addressing homelessness.

In terms state infrastructure, it appears to me that the goal is much more about connecting governments and communicating. I think you should place some goals that are really much more solid in terms of identifying potential number of units and I know that is getting into objectives of the strategy but I think it is important.

If this is going to have any teeth, that we identify what those gaps are. And I will say that the organizations, such as Texas Homeless Network, that can tell you what the bed count is, in any one of our communities, and that can establish what those gaps are.

You don't have to take it necessarily from the nonprofit. You can take it from a third-party group. So I would encourage you to put some teeth behind that last goal, the state infrastructure goal, and to identify those gaps.

I don't know if it's in the full plan, but I can tell you I think it really needs to say that certain areas, particularly along the border, have had a need for affordable, particularly transitional and permanent supportive housing. And really, I want to say, and I really -- I'll say it on the record.

I think it's really a play of words when we define permanent supportive housing and transitional housing. We don't like transitional housing anymore; we don't like saying it. But at the end of the day, it's really about getting people off the street into a unit that can provide them some sort of supportive service. So whether it's permanent, whether it's for a year, or two years, three years, makes no difference what we call it.

I think the key here is to put something that ties in with your affordable housing goal, tie in objectives to that actually -- because I see a lot of communication here. Communication is not going to build units; we need to put some teeth behind that and identify

how many units we are going to build, in which areas, perhaps what infrastructure needs to be laid.

I know the state used to have the Texas State Homebuyer Education Program. I don't know if they still do. Something similar for addressing homelessness could be set up instead of -- obviously, home ownership isn't what it used to be some years back. It seems like homelessness is now, sadly is now the in thing to be worried about. So I would encourage that.

Those are my comments. Again, I commend the State and the leadership for taking this, for making this effort, and actually coming down to our city. We welcome you to the City of Laredo. We want to see you back.

And again, put this -- we're very happy to see your plan. We are also very happy to think that we can put something in action and deliver some units for our community.

MR. McGRATH: Thank you.

MR. CEBALLOS: Thank you.

MR. McGRATH: Can I ask you one brief little question?

MR. CEBALLOS: Sure.

MR. McGRATH: And also, just one comment. We do -- we actually cite the Corporation for Supportive

Housing in the Plan, page 28 -- an estimated shortage of about 15,000 units of permanent supportive housing in the State of Texas but I accept the point that it is not a [indiscernible] articulated shortage. It's hiding within the pages here.

MR. CEBALLOS: Okay.

MR. McGRATH: And my question is, in terms of easing the ability of nonprofits to conduct their work while receiving state and federal funds, do you have any thoughts or comments about the balance between the reporting requirements, and the needs to have -- the needs for agencies to see how nonprofits are doing, but also for you guys help as much as possible to do your jobs.

MR. CEBALLOS: You are with TDHCA, so you are familiar with the application process to acquire some of these grants and let me tell you that in the last couple of years, you guys are great. But you really make it really cumbersome to get a grant.

And without even getting into requirements, just to get the grant, I mean, when you have got 100 plus points, an enormous amount of categories for one or two points over an application, we have -- I can tell you one of the nonprofits that I did work for just did not pursue it. Did not pursue and HPRP grant. It would be too

cumbersome just to prepare the application.

And of course, there was a reason. We had another option, which was to go through our local government and acquire those funds and we did. But they shouldn't have to choose that way.

We should make it as easy as possible to gain these federal funds. I don't think it is Texas Department of Housing's job to make it any more difficult beyond just making sure that funds are being used wisely and prudently, and making the nonprofit accountable.

So from that standpoint, from the application stage, from the reporting stage, I couldn't really say. I mean, there may be others in the room that can speak to that. But I can tell you from the application side, I think you could make it much easier and still hold the nonprofits accountable. I hope that answers the question.

MR. McGRATH: All right. Thank you, if you don't have any more comments.

MR. CEBALLOS: Thank you very much.

MR. McGRATH: Thanks.

(Applause.)

MR. SAMUELS: Hi. One of the points that Colin spoke about was communities identifying the population that should be at risk. The populations that we should

plan to assist, outside of just the HUD defined, you are literally homeless.

And I know that right here among balance of state communities all of the time, that we need to be helping those that may not fit that strict definition. So I am assuming someone here would like to talk about that, provide some input to that. So please feel free to do so. You are one of two balance of state communities.

And the balance of state in the area I work with, and you are in the balance of state, and that is primarily the mid-size to rural areas of Texas, outside of a major metropolitan area. So I am really hoping that you get some good input from your community, so the Plan involves that type of perspective. So please feel free to come up.

MR. McGRATH: Would you just say your name real quick.

MR. SAMUELS: My name is Eric Samuels, Texas Homeless Network.

MR. McGRATH: Okay.

MR. TATE: My name is Joseph Tate. I am also a resident of homeless --

MR. McGRATH: Can you spell your name really quickly?

MR. TATE: Joseph Tate. J-O-S-E-P-H T-A-T-E.

I reside at the Bethany House. I have been here in Laredo now for about five months. I guess this is probably my own doing being here, but identifying the individuals and families that are homeless are those that are in the past two years, of our recession and lack of work, has created a whole new pool of homelessness -- and I haven't affordable housing.

But the jobs are not offering any of us any kind of income as could we can afford to live in, no matter if you decrease it, even if you increase more housing, is it going to be affordable? Here in Laredo, \$8.50 an hour is not going to help them get an apartment.

I am a veteran, a college graduate, and also a professional truck driver. It is difficult for me to even get work and be able to still get an apartment because of affordability and time being here. I can't live in a place that you are paying for periodically.

I have been talking with a lot of people here at the shelter. A lot of them are going through the same things. I have seen families.

I see most of the problems with the families is that they can't look for work or look for housing while

they still have little children here. There needs to be some help for them, so that they can have a facility that they can leave the children at and take care of the personal needs of finding a job, a home, or even going to school part time, because a lot of them lack some of the skills or education or even ability to do any of the things to increase their lifestyle.

But I just wanted to come up here, just to speak on that, because that is the whole identity. The identity is not so much as we are coming from here or there. The whole economy is destroying everything down here, when I see places down here that can be used to help our income.

There could be construction work, if the City was here to help with that. They are just letting things rot. There is plenty of places here that could be donated, that could be used for the homeless, as in creating a small transitional place.

The people around here that want to work, there are some people that are professionals, that are still around here, that want to work. If we could get them together and coordinate that, and get the facilities operating, then it wouldn't be such an increase, but a decrease in the homelessness and an increase in them

getting jobs and being productive in society. But I just wanted to give my point of view on that.

MR. McGRATH: Thank you so much.

MR. TATE: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. McGRATH: Yes, how about we -- can we turn it halfway? That would be great.

VOICE: Would it also help if we used this microphone as well? Is that a local microphone? That sounds like that would work.

(Pause.)

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Okay. All right. My name is Homer Rodriguez, and I am the executive director for the South Texas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse and we are a nonprofit.

And I just wanted to echo the sentiments about trying to simplify the whole process of being able to apply for these kinds of programs. We are extremely blessed in the sense that we are at the starting point right now. We are starting permanent housing, supportive housing for the homeless and we provide services in the area of substance abuse and mental health.

So this is a first for us, to be able to be involved in this and it is a very exciting adventure.

However, any time that we are trying to do these things, it is always an issue of trying to find a matching funds.

We lost almost a million dollars this year -- and that we had to scale back on what was originally awarded through the HUD grant.

And through Congressman Cuellar's office, who we were very fortunate to have support from, we were able to launch at the very last minute, find the matching funds to get started. And we have staff here that is just starting this program, as I mentioned. But you know, anything that could be done to try to simplify the process and of course, the reality is, that the real challenge is always going to be about finding matching funds.

But I also wanted to thank you all for coming to Laredo. We have some very unique kinds of problems here, being on the border, and accessibility to illicit drugs and, therefore, you have higher incidence of these kinds of things happening.

But we believe that what we are doing is a beginning. It is a very small beginning. But it is significant and we are hoping to see a lot of success. We are very proud of the staff that we have on board. We in the process of putting all of the elements in place.

But I just wanted to share these thoughts with

you all, and am looking forward to seeing more of you all come down and trying to share and being able to make these goals that we have here a reality for our state. Thank you.

MR. McGRATH: Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

MS. WELCH: Good evening. My name is Sister Rosemary Welch. I'm executive director of Case de Misericordia, the only domestic violence shelter in Laredo, and for many miles around.

First of all, it's a pleasure to be here. Thank you all for coming to our wonderful community. And I think that one of the things you will find -- and thank you for your testimony. I think we need to hear from people who are actually living this.

So I apologize to those who are suffering, and do not have a home, and do not have a job, and do not have enough to eat tonight. I hope you will give permission just to speak from my heart.

You live it daily; I work with people who live it. But so I bear and ask for your indulgence to let me speak, not in your name, but just in the voices of some of the women who have gone to the shelter.

By saying that, in domestic violence, it is not

any more prevalent in our community than in is others. And when you hear the comments, that it is the machismo, it is the Mexican-American, it is the Hispanic, that there is more in this community, in one way it gives people the right to do it, because they say this is part of me and I can't do otherwise.

Plus, there is many Mexican-American men in this room who do not beat their wives and it actually is an insult to the culture. So I want to say that we don't have any more. But we do have a fair amount of domestic violence in our community.

And what happens, our shelter can house anywhere between 42 to 50 people, depending on the size of the bodies. If there are smaller kids, we can fit more in. Sometimes, we always -- we never turn anyone away. We work very closely with Bethany House. We work closely with STACADA. We work closely with SCAN. We work close with any other agency of like mind that wants to help people get a better shake in this life.

The difficulty with the domestic violence cases is many reasons. The woman, and in some instances, the men will stay in the situation because where are they going to live if they leave? And who is going to pay the bills.

And people say, well, why that fool. She just went back again. Well, that individual maybe has lived in this country for many years. Does not speak anything other than her preferred language, which is Spanish and in this community, she is better off than in others.

And her legal status, in many cases, do not have -- they are undocumented. They may have lived here for anywhere from three to five, to ten, to 15 years. In some cases, the man has kept her in bondage, because he says if you call anyone, I will call the Border Patrol or immigration, and you will be deported, and that can happen if the man is not documented also.

So it is pretty hard to get a house or home after you leave the shelter, because who is going to pay the bills? So we need, I don't know if we call it affordable or whatever. We need some place where the families can go.

We do have a small -- we are a nonprofit also, and we ask for funding. Everybody in this community has more fundraisers than Carter's Little Liver Pills. We all work together. I mean, it is a fundraiser for CASA, for Bethany, for STACADA for SCAN. But we all try to help each other.

But so we have a small amount of money to help

individuals. It's hard to get and the people from the City --

Esther, thank you for all of the hard work you do helping us. The City of Laredo needs to be --

(Applause.)

MS. WELCH: They really help a lot whenever they can. The difficulty is though, the person does not have papers. So do you encourage individuals to go out and work without papers? So who is going to pay the bills?

The children might be half U.S. citizens, and the other half, the children may be non-U.S. citizens. So if they get deported, who is going to take the kids that are going to stay here? Or they all go home?

We had a family actually where the woman is domestic violence. She has cancer and is going to die. And her entire family was deported, except for her 13 year old daughter. So they are all over there. She is here, and trying to decide what she is going to do with the rest of her life.

And who is going to help pay her bills? Before, she did work. She sold plates. She cleaned homes. She picked up cans off the street, just like everybody. But now she is not able to do that.

So we sometimes, people they get jobs, and they don't have papers. And then the transportation. If a woman leaves a place, let's say she lives in one of the colonias and she has been badly beaten, and she leaves.

And the Sheriff's Department takes her to the shelter, and we are able to find a house for five kids at maybe \$500 or whatever we have to pay, and sometimes smaller. Because people now are saying they don't want to take children. You have got to get them close to a school.

And the schools work very closely with us. They will pick them up and not at the shelter, but at a drop off point. But those are the issues, we feel. They want to -- do they stay in a violent relationship? And if -- they can't get a home if they leave.

I mean, that has got to be daunting, to pick up your little bag of clothes and leave, and where are you going to go afterwards? So in many cases, people go back and then the whole thing of the status of being documented or not. Where are they going to work? And if they work with the new rules coming down, it is harder and harder.

Years ago, this community, it is really one huge, large community that just happens to have a river running through it. For years, people walked back and

forth. We have relatives on both sides. And now for many reasons, we can't do that.

And then because of the status. So I don't know if I have added anything to the conversation. But women who have left, or men, have left a domestic violence, they are homeless.

And we need funds to try to figure out what we are going to do with that. Not taking away funds from Bethany or any of the other places, but how can we continue to collaborate?

And STACADA, I congratulate you on what you have done. Because on women sometimes, they have many other problems, which could be alcohol or drugs, or many other situations, that we work together.

We also work, and I don't see anybody here today from CPS. We work very closely with CPS also. So that is my story and I am sticking to it. Thank you all very much.

MR. McGRATH: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. DODSON: Good evening. As you are walking up, I just wanted to invite the group to, if there are any other suggestions you have about how state government agencies specifically can help, we would really love to

hear that. We did start with state government agencies in writing this Plan, only because that is who makes up the Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless.

But we absolutely want to partner with local governments and local nonprofits to see how we can all work together better. So this plan does not exclude partners on the local level. We just chose to focus on our member state agencies first. So I wanted to clarify that.

MR. MURILLO: How are you doing? My name is Julio Murillo. I am with Border Region Mental Health Services, the PATH program. We are in this area and we do serve on the program individuals that are homeless and have mental illness and the substance.

We are fortunate to provide rental assistance for a limited. But basically, the problem arises with females, with a shortage of shelters for women, and families sometimes living in their vehicles, because we don't have enough transitional housing. I do sit on the transitional committee.

But that is one of my biggest concerns is the families and the females, the ladies that are out there suffering and sometimes, I hate to say this, but sometimes they have go and prostitute so they can get a hotel for

the night and all of that. I mean, they go through a lot, and they come to us for help, and we do provide, but we are limited. And the problem here is --

MS. DODSON: I am sorry. They are asking if you could --

MR. McGRATH: The other one. Sorry.

MR. MURILLO: Basically, the issue is shelter for women and families. We have encountered a lot of individuals that are coming more and more to their city. We have locals, but we also have people from out of town that are coming, and asking for help.

And we do provide as much as we can, but we're very limited. So that's the main concern. In border region, we do cover four counties like the rest of the folks here, other agencies. We're like the catchment area for this area, but also for the homeless. We do travel 90 miles out or 50 miles, whatever. We go that extra mile.

MS. DODSON: Wow. Literally.

MR. MURILLO: Yes. So that was mainly my biggest concern.

MR. SAMUELS: Question. You are still the only outreach worker for --

MR. MURILLO: For the PATH program involved.

MR. SAMUELS: If I was making a suggestion, that would be to fund someone else to help you out. How long has it been like that? For years?

MR. MURILLO: Yes.

MR. SAMUELS: Ever since I --

MR. MURILLO: Yes. A couple of years.

MR. SAMUELS: Over ten years. Have you been seeing more families and single women on the street, during your outreach?

MR. MURILLO: Yes.

MR. SAMUELS: So out of every ten persons you encounter, what would you say? How many are women with children and how many are single?

MR. MURILLO: Maybe three to four.

MR. SAMUELS: Three to four are women with children.

MR. MURILLO: Yes. Three to four.

MR. SAMUELS: That is extremely high.

MR. MURILLO: Yes.

MR. SAMUELS: Okay.

MR. MURILLO: We, like I said, we are able to basically our funds, we kind of save it more for the females and the families. Because sometimes we can shelter the men at Bethany House or Salvation Army.

But we don't want to exhaust our funds on the -- I hate to say that, but -- the men. Because then we have the families, and then we don't have shelters for the families. So it is kind of like an assessment deal between the LPC and us.

MR. SAMUELS: And I think you already said this, but if you go five years ago, would that ratio be the same, of families?

MR. MURILLO: It was less.

MR. SAMUELS: It is less. That is what --

MR. MURILLO: It was less.

MR. SAMUELS: That is what the statistics are saying.

MR. MURILLO: Si. As a matter of fact, last year, when we had a lot of help from the HPRP program. I will say, we don't refer a lot of people through the Bethany House. But now, it is comes to an exhaust.

And some agencies, last year we were helping out and maybe it is less funds from our State and so like the bills, the light bills, the rental assistance, it is less. Very little this year.

So a lot of families are struggling and coming in through our doors and we do refer to Bethany and Catholic social services and other agencies, but they are

very limited this year. Very limited.

It would help if we had more transitional, you know, for families. Because it is a whole city. I mean, it is not just mental health services. I mean, we have a lot of people coming in and everybody has a meeting. So and then the substance abuse and the mental health.

So we are able to link those areas, and those services, but the issue is the housing part that we are having. But then we have families that are overcrowded. They are living like three, four families in one area and they are trying to share the bills and all of that.

MR. McGRATH: That would be the at-risk population, or a portion of the at-risk population?

MR. MURILLO: Yes.

MR. McGRATH: Okay.

MR. MURILLO: That is what I was talking to Bill, about the rental part.

MR. McGRATH: Okay. And when he refers to Bill, he is talking about Bill Carpenter.

MR. MURILLO: Bill Carpenter from the stakeholder, the PATH program director.

MR. McGRATH: Yes. He is the Director of the PATH program with Department of State Health Services.

MR. MURILLO: Because apparently, the State

Legislature says that we are supposed to help only people that are at risk but somehow we changed it a little bit, me and other partners from Texas. That we are not -- it is not just at-risk.

There is people out there in the parks that are at homeless, not at risk. But we have been doing this for years, so I guess it's okay. But anyway --

VOICE: Could I ask you [indiscernible] what you are saying is --

MR. MURILLO: Sure. Well, at homeless, to the PATH program. Because HUD would, they have got different definitions. But basically, homeless would be somebody that is living in the streets, in shelters, in vehicles, abandoned houses. And then at-risk would be somebody that was paying rent, and then they are going to be evicted.

VOICE: Okay.

MR. MURILLO: That is one part.

MR. McGRATH: For example, HUD does not define someone as homeless if they are say, living in a hotel week to week, or night to night. As long as they are paying for the hotel, they are not considered homeless under HUD's definition.

If a church was paying for that hotel, they would be homeless. So that's the difference there. Yes.

VOICE: That's HUD.

MR. McGRATH: If they have the funding to pay for the hotel, they are not homeless on that particular night.

MR. MURILLO: But on the PATH definition, it would be homeless, because they don't have a permanent address. It is just temporary, a couple of days, or a couple of weeks. So basically, they will all end up homeless again.

MS. LAUREL: And for example, the McKinney-Vento homeless education definition counts people who are living doubled up because they can't afford to live anywhere else. Under the McKinney-Vento definition of homeless, that counts as homeless. But under the HUD definition, it does not.

MR. MURILLO: Like For instance, on the colonias, there is little downs out there in the City, some people bought some land up there, some acres. They didn't tell them that they were in a flooding zone. So the light company can't hook up their lights, so they don't have light and some of them don't have water. So that is considered homelessness also. But HUD has a different definition.

MR. SAMUELS: Yes. Thank you. And I think,

this is the advocate in me speaking. I think the more we can put what you are seeing out there, and publicize it, I mean, I see the numbers. I see that family homelessness is increasing. But you are seeing it. You are seeing the people.

MR. MURILLO: Right.

MR. SAMUELS: You are hearing the stories. So from Texas Homeless Network's standpoint, we would love to see that type of story get out, of communities like yours.

MR. MURILLO: Right.

MR. SAMUELS: Those are -- they are strong and I think they really help people understand the issue. Even more so than numbers, percentages.

MR. MURILLO: And they just, what helps is, for us, being out there in the health fairs out there, and you hear all of these stories from people, of all of the problems, the issues that are going on. Like for instance, I mean, I am just 30 miles out and they have a lot of issues too over there, so --

There's 62 colonias apparently here in Webb County and there's 13 community centers to help out those little urban -- I think Jaime Arispe is here from the colonias also, the director. So he will talk more about that, okay.

So but basically, my concern for that, I feel real bad about it. I mean, that is why I am more involved in the Homeless Coalition for 2000, since 2000. Now I am the chairman of transitional housing. Mr. Ceballos, he nominated me.

And I liked it. And so that is why I am more involved in the committee to help these individuals and families that are suffering from mental illness and homelessness and substance -- it's a big issue, especially in the border.

I mean, there's statistics some time back that 90 percent of -- the drugs that are coming from Mexico through here, is about 90 percent. So we have a big issue as well, and there is no rehab. So that is it, I guess. Thank you.

MR. McGRATH: Thank you.

MR. MURILLO: All right.

(Applause.)

MR. ARISPE: For the record, my name is Jaime Arispe. I am with Health and Human Services Commission, Office of Border Affairs. And it is a program that started up in 2000 and I started here in Webb County in 2001.

And the focus of that program was to bring

awareness to the colonia areas of Webb County and all across the Texas Mexico border, from El Paso, all of the way down to the Rio Grande Valley, and so we have one coordinator, one regional coordinator, that is myself, for each of the border areas.

And our program, what we do is collaborate and coordinate all of the agencies that fall under the umbrella of Health and Human Services to bring resources, try to bring resources to the colonia residents, instead of the colonia residents coming to our agency offices. We have a memorandum of understanding with all of your agency partners, and also community based organizations to provide venues such as health fairs or community visits to the churches, or community centers. But county centers that are embedded in colonias to provide these resources by having calendar events for the colonia residents.

I have been doing this since 2001 to the present. The most challenges that we have is of course, they have been talking about how these families came to Texas from the interior of Mexico, from Mexico. From Southern America to just try to either break away from either their economic situation or because of their lives. Just because of politics.

And so they bought land at what we call

contract for deed from unscrupulous developers who just promised them, for \$100, I am your banker. I am your mortgage person and you can just pay me the note, and after a certain amount of years, the house is yours.

Well, there was some stipulations on that, that if they missed one or two notes, that went back to the owner. And so with the Secretary of State, I believe just recently, and the Attorney General, they made some changes to that.

And now, the Secretary of State has now defined the colonias for each of the counties along the Texas Mexico border and you can find it under the Secretary of State's website. It is a report that was done by the legislators and Senator Judy Zaffirini.

And so they defined all of the colonias along the Texas Mexico border, mainly for the purposes of trying to see where they were as far as development. Whether they still needed water infrastructure or not -- and like in our area, we have 62 colonias. And out of those 62, 57 are considered to be underdeveloped.

So just within the last five years, we have had water and wastewater that is going into the area of Highway 259, and then the area of Venitas, which is on 1472 Farm Road. And so just within the last five years,

they have now just had water. And so we are talking between 1972 to 2011, over 30 years of no water and wastewater in some of these areas.

There is areas of pockets of areas here in Webb County where they don't have water, wastewater nor electricity and so you can imagine the struggles those people face.

Our challenge has been mainly in when we do have venues of health fairs and have venues of bringing health service providers to these areas, pockets of communities, that there is a lot of mistrust, and not because of what we do, but because of the fact that they have been lied to so many years.

So thanks to our partners. Thanks to Mercy Ministries of Laredo. Thanks to Gateway Community Health Center. Thanks to a lot of the groups that are here, we have been able to open up the doors and establish a relationship so that they are more willing to come and hear about the resources and how to access those resources, instead of being afraid. So that is one of the most things that we have based within the last nine years or eight years.

And as far as homelessness, what we have is multi families living in one home because of the fact that

that is all they can afford. One of the things that we have been able to do through church groups, volunteers, is being able to either modify their homes by doing remodeling, or also through actually building homes.

And this is through an organization called Buckner Children and Family Services. They are out of the Valley and they are based in Dallas, and so they recently within the last two years have opened up a colonias initiative.

And that is to mainly help families that are living in these substandard conditions to improve their homes either by remodeling, if they can be remodeled, or if not, then build them a home. And this is through church group volunteers, that come and do a service on a volunteer basis, and the church groups provide the materials.

And then we get local volunteers to do the actual work. And it has been -- we have done about three or four homes here in El Cenizo. Two in Zapata. Because that is another area that I cover. Zapata has 40 or 41 of these colonias. We have 62 here in Webb County and so, we have been able to do a few homes that are in that area also.

And so I have also been involved with another

organization locally that is faith based, that is called New Vision Church, and what they was able to do is meet the challenge of the Congressman Henry Cuellar.

And he proposed that we would be able to get some of the Hurricane Ike's trailers from FEMA and get them for a reduced price, and then bring them to the area homes, to help families here, and provide them a temporary home which is a mobile home, and so we purchased the trailers for \$1,000. We bring them to Laredo.

It costs us more to bring them to Laredo than it is to buy them. It is about \$3,000 just to buy a trailer and then we actually place in their home, in their lots. And the whole cost is about \$6,000, once we do the whole thing, and so we have been able to do 30 homes here in Laredo within the last year, for 30 families.

And this is through a local foundation that has opened up their hearts, and given us -- the first year was \$70,000, and this year was another \$70,000 to bring in mobile homes for families that don't have a home, and that we can provide them a place, temporary for them to live in.

So my agency allows me to work with the community based and faith based because of the fact that the pockets of communities that we work with, there are a

lot of families that are undocumented. So it is one of the only state programs that allows you to work with those that are not documented, that don't have the residency or don't have the citizenship requirements.

So those are our locations, statewide and those are our coordinators. And then our Director is Mr. David Luna. So what I would suggest is that if you could increase our budget, so that we could get more money, and get more coordinators to help us with coordinating more rents for these rural communities.

And plus, maybe helping us increase our budget so that we can provide more dwellings for families that qualify, in these rural communities. Any questions?

VOICE: [indiscernible].

MR. McGRATH: Can you -- I am going to bring you a microphone.

(Pause.)

VOICE: I just have a question. Can you hear me?

MR. McGRATH: Leave that one there, please.

(Simultaneous discussion.)

MS. LAUREL: Okay. I just have a question for Jaime, because I am getting again, the at-risk population and the homeless, how do you define them.

MR. McGRATH: Could you identify yourself, please?

MS. LAUREL: I am Rebecca Laurel. I would say, volunteer at Bethany House.

MR. ARISPE: How do we define the at-risk?

MS. LAUREL: Yes.

MR. ARISPE: Versus the homeless?

MS. LAUREL: Versus the homeless in your organization.

MR. ARISPE: Well, I mean, the at-risk is the multi families that we are talking about.

MS. LAUREL: Right.

MR. ARISPE: I mean, if you have family within the family --

MS. LAUREL: Yes.

MR. ARISPE: And then you know, like for example, we have an area that is just now getting water. Okay. We have an area that is just getting water. It is on Highway 359.

And there is a lady there at this organization that I was talking about, was trying to help by providing her a new home. She wasn't able to qualify, because there was restrictions now, that they have water, they have to now plat the lot.

In order to plat the lot, they have to -- all of the families that are living there, whether it is one shack, two shacks, or however many homes that are there have to be platted, and each one has to have a separate water meter.

And so it was going to cost them over ten, \$20,000 just to do that. So where is the money going to come from? So those are the people that are at risk.

MS. LAUREL: But she is not considered homeless.

MR. ARISPE: She is not homeless, but yet, she can't get water.

MS. LAUREL: Right.

MR. ARISPE: She can't get her basic needs met.

MS. LAUREL: Yes.

MR. ARISPE: So in reality, like Mr. Murillo was saying, that is considered homeless. Because you don't have basic water and basic infrastructure. So that is -- I mean, that would be considered those that are in that category. Yes, sir.

(Simultaneous discussion.)

MR. McGRATH: Okay. If you want it on the record, you need to come up here, apparently. Yes.

MR. MURILLO: I know some people in the

colonias got some water and some of them didn't have any money to install it. Because the water was up in the street, and then you have to bring it in. But I know, I don't know if there is still applications out there for assistance to get a plumber.

MR. ARISPE: The county has, right now, it is an arrangement that because of the water meters, the water meter connection is by the City, and the County is the one that is handling the grant, so to speak. So for them to qualify, they have to have like I said, they have to have the land platted. And then you have five homes in one acre lot. Each one has to have -- each family has to have their own connection.

But I don't know if the State could help out in any way by giving more grants to the county, so that they could give out those grants to the families and then if more families would be able to get their connections easier. Because that is an issue.

Some of these families -- like that particular family, we couldn't help that lady with her home. Because of that fact. So we have to go look for another family. Any other questions?

MR. McGRATH: All right. Well, thank you.

MR. ARISPE: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Good evening. My name is Carlos Rodriguez and I am a program director at one of the nonprofit agencies in town, in our area, which is the South Texas Council for Alcohol and Drug Abuse, or STACADA, that is what we call it here.

I just don't want to reiterate what some of my colleagues have mentioned. But I think the plan that we are talking about here will need to be more comprehensive when it comes to including people with certain conditions such as HIV, AIDS, you know, disabilities, and disabilities including substance abuse as well.

I just started working in the homelessness topic just quite recently. It has been a few months. But I am working the HIV field for several years. It is clear to me that the answers to housing, whether it is emergency, transitional or permanent for people with HIV/AIDS is just not only limited, it is just not enough.

And in some areas, like in the rural areas, like in our case, I mean, it is almost nothing for the need of those people and I am just only mentioning that as an example. Because I have worked with that population closely.

And not because there is no other groups or subgroups that can be also classified as not having full access or fair access to their housing needs. A certain sort of conditions such as mental health, substance abuse or HIV/AIDS. So I think we have to be more ambitious and include initiatives or ideas about how to facilitate the access for housing needs for those people.

I also think that it is clear to me, and again, I am not criticizing the plan. But I just, it is my perception that the funding for housing in these rural areas where you don't find the same resources as in other places in our country are not enough, and where there is some funding, it is not generous. So funding needs to be more generous to try to fight about the disparities that we find in our communities.

Homelessness is a serious problem. It is not the same if you live in Austin, than if you live in Laredo. Just because the research is completely different. And I am not saying anything bad about Austin.

I am just using that example. I like Austin, by the way.

I think, when it comes to funding, sometimes I really think that sometimes when federal funding or state funding is put for competition, sometimes I think, I think that not necessarily the agencies involved in putting the

funding out are really talking to each other. This was one of your last example, that also emphasized that funding is not enough, and when there is funding, it is just not generous.

We recently applied for a program, for a housing assistance for people living with chronic, being chronically homeless and having substance abuse problems to kind of support or provide additional support for this other grant that we just got from HUD. Mr. Rodriguez mentioned that before me.

And actually, based on the feedback, my understanding is that application was very competitive. Was actually recommended for funding. You know, it wasn't sitting around. SAMSA put it for competition and we were not lucky to get that funding.

That would be a very good way to support the supportive HUD program. And -- but I learned that one of the reasons that our agency, and other agencies in the country didn't get this funding is because there were only 14 grantees that could get it in the whole country. Only one in Texas got it.

And it was an agency from San Antonio. I am glad for them, right. But again, it went to an area where there is more resources and obviously maybe the more

resources, maybe they have better grant writers than we did. But it goes back to where there is more need, you know.

And I like San Antonio too, because my people live there. There is nothing bad about San Antonio. But again, it goes back to speaking up for these rural areas in which we do not have all of the resources.

And so I think in our plans, in our ideas that we are going to do it, and going to continue to improve our ways to fight against homelessness. We have to find a way to put it so people that make decisions about where the money is going to be allocated also think about the needs of those areas.

Just like for instance, in the HIV field, now that its funding is less, monies are being put where there is more infections. Right. I think when it comes to housing, that should be also a principal. Let's put the money where there is more need.

And I am sure there are more experts than we do. There are more experts than we do know in these fields, and maybe also because you know, I am sure you have all the interests also. You have people with this problem.

You may be better connected you know, at the

state level or at the federal level maybe. If you raise those issues that we are mentioning, maybe more people will pay more attention than they pay to our proposals or to our needs here.

And I also think that being really critical about the way we address the issues. I think it is true that -- and I am not trying to be negative, let me tell you, but I think the different levels of organization, the different levels of governments are not really working together. I don't think there is really a coordination.

Maybe when we go to events and give speeches, maybe. Everybody says they work with each other. When it comes to finding ways to find and provide those resources or cover those needs for the people that are living with this problem such as homelessness, we don't necessarily find those connections. There is barriers.

We don't speak the same language. We don't say the same priorities. So I think we have to acknowledge that, and find ways to have a more comprehensive way to address these in our communities. And sometimes we have to tell the truth, and to acknowledge that we are not working together as we could be, or better than we could be.

And I know that funding is limited and maybe in

the current circumstances that we are facing in our country, we -- it is suspected that there is going to be less funding, right, coming from the government. So maybe we have to suggest other ways to be creative of other ways to find the money to support and fund this type of a program, and needs.

And I don't know. I was just thinking minutes ago about if there is some lending companies, developing companies that are building houses and making money out of that business, maybe we could find a way to put a tax there, whatever. So some money can stay in those communities where they are. Building houses and lending money as part of their business, you know.

Obviously, I don't believe necessarily that other funding is coming from the government. But maybe government can help to find a way to find those monies. And some other ideas I wanted to share have been mentioned by other people. So that is all I have to say.

(Applause.)

MR. SAMUELS: I was just wondering, you know you were mentioning differences between Austin and Laredo. For instance, I was just wondering if you -- do you have any thoughts about what those differences are?

Are there regional variations that we should be

aware of at the state level? Either in services available or the population that we are talking about?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Let me give you an example. Some of the clients that we serve in our agency have substance abuse problems, and HIV at the same time.

When it comes to, for instance, find a place where one of the clients can get residential services for detox as part of their way to recovery, there is no place here in our area that serve people with HIV AIDS. That is just an example. So we need to send it to other places, and in Austin, you can find those places.

When it comes to medical services sometimes also we need to count for people to other areas because the specialized people in these positions, you know, therapies at a certain level, you know, are not found here. That is another example.

You know, any kind of resources that sometimes are needed for our clients, sometimes are extremely limited or it doesn't exist here in some instances. I am not sure I am giving a very good example. But you know --

MR. McGRATH: Okay. Well, thank you so much. Thanks.

MR. DAVIS: My name is Brent Davis. I am basically an independent missionary here in Laredo. I am

from Austin, actually. I have lived in Laredo now for about 3-1/2 years and my wife and I primarily work with the homeless, particularly those struggling with heroin addiction.

It is a big problem in our city. I would like to just briefly address that you know, you asked a great question, how does Austin compare to Laredo? I would say that the simple answer is, Austin has a lot of money and Laredo doesn't.

We are a -- I don't know the exact statistics. But I think Laredo ranks second in the U.S. of most impoverished cities, with populations greater than 100,000. I think we are second to New Orleans, and that is in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

And I would say Laredo does have a fairly significant homeless population. I think the estimates are about 1,500 and there aren't a lot of resources in Laredo. And I think Laredo is in an amazing community, and that Laredo, the citizens of Laredo are incredibly compassionate towards those who are struggling in life, or who are homeless, as we define it in the point in time count.

But if you are a guy or a woman living on the streets, you don't have a lot of places to sleep. It is

basically, the Bethany House. That is a shelter that has 20 beds and that is only for men. Twenty eight. Okay.

Even for 40, it is just a drop in the bucket when you compare it to the volume of our homeless population. And Bethany House does an amazing job. Incredible.

You know, in Austin, you have so many places to if you are living on the streets to get a meal, to sleep.

In Laredo there aren't -- it is Bethany House, Salvation Army, I think, has twelve beds and it is \$5 a night. You are just very limited.

And most significantly of all, is if you are a woman, you are not sleeping inside. You are sleeping outside in the courtyard at Bethany House and I know Bethany House is trying to get resources in order to change that.

But my point is, I think Bethany House in Laredo could really use resources from the State to help us out, particularly with that. Especially 30 percent of our homeless in our point in time count are typically women.

And now sometimes when it does get really cold, Bethany House will let some of those women sleep inside, in the resource center or in the kitchen. But the

majority of those nights during the year, if you are a woman, you can't find a bed if you would like to and that is a very harsh reality for our city.

Joe had articulated very well earlier that it is tough to make a living on \$8.50 an hour or minimum wage and I would just like to kind of reiterate that. And in Laredo, minimum wage job, guys are often excited to get that kind of job.

I would also add that I work with guys who lose papers all of the time and it costs like \$500 to get your papers after you have lost them. So things like that kind of create this sort of cycle of hopelessness in which you feel like well, what is the point.

I mean, I can't come up with enough money to live anywhere. I can't come up with enough money for my next meal. How am I going to come up with \$500 to get the necessary documents, which I am legally entitled to, or legally have obtained, but I am not -- I can't get those documents in order to try and get a job.

Let's see. And I would just like to briefly point out the heroin problem in our city. I do think the state agencies do an awesome job, SCANS, STACADA, the methadone clinic. I mean, just really do a great job. I would say that they are probably pretty taxed and pretty

limited and I know they are struggling with cutbacks in their own funding and so that is hard.

But I think the thing Laredo needs a lot is a detox center. We don't have that. If guys want to get clean, the only option is to get arrested or to go to one of the two Christian rehab centers which you -- and heroin addicts resist doing that because you have to just kick cold turkey.

And heroin is an amazingly addictive drug. And to stop taking heroin, when you are on heroin, you are enslaved to it and it is absolutely incredible. And I have so much respect for guys who do struggle with heroin addiction and what they endure.

But the withdrawals are extremely violent and very painful for about two weeks and so most guys aren't going to kick cold turkey. And so a lot of times we will send guys to Corpus Christi.

There is a detox center there. I think it is called Charlie's, and that is where guys like to go in order to obtain medication to ease the detoxification process.

And heroin, I think, is a bigger problem in Laredo than in other cities, just because of the sheer volume that is coming through Laredo and then going on

into the rest of the country. But it is just a massive problem. And I meet guys all of the time when they don't live in Laredo. They are able to stay clean. When they are living in Laredo, it is very difficult for them.

So you know, the bottom line is, Laredo really does need resources. For my own funding, I always go back to other cities in the State of Texas, and individuals fund our ministry. But Laredo is a pretty big town, but obviously not a very affluent town.

I don't know if that fits the profile of all of the data. Anyway, I just wanted to paint a picture of kind of what I see on a pretty consistent basis. So thank you. Sorry. Thanks.

(Applause.)

MS. SALDANA: Hello. I am Beatrice Saldana, and I work over at the Bethany House. Very near to the homeless community. I have never worked in that before. I just recently have started Bethany House about three or four months ago.

But I wanted to mainly come up and inquire and just concerns that I have had from our residents, one being the families. Not all of them -- we are not able to house all of them. Just how we have been saying, there is not enough permanent supportive housing. There is not

enough transitional housing, or even affordable housing.

So with that, we do have families that come in that don't have anywhere to live. They don't have a permanent house here in Laredo. With that, they have children that are enrolled in school, and that is something that has actually happened recently with us is, the school found out that they are homeless. So they withdrew the child from school.

Not having an address means that you are not able to attend school, is one of the cases that has actually happened. Then finding housing in Mexico, because that was the alternative to now have a home that they can get in Mexico and still not able to return to school, because now they are not residents in the United States for them to attend American schools.

So those are concerns because, I am mainly curious. And I don't know if you all could answer that. Is there something to offer for American children, that if they do find housing that is affordable in Mexico, for them to be able, are they able to come to American schools. Or is there any outlet that we have here to allow them if they are homeless to still attend school.

MR. SAMUELS: They should be able to attend school. And the school should go pick them up, where they

are at, or at a different location, as someone said.

So I definitely would suggest working with the homeless liaison in the school district here. And if they don't, if they are not aware of that law, then they need to be made aware of that.

MS. SALDANA: So not having a physical address is not a reason to not be able to go to school?

MR. McGRATH: No. The No Child Left Behind Act law mandates that a school provide resources to help any student make it to class, if they are, have to -- say, go out of the city to stay in a shelter for instance, they have to pay transportation costs for that student to make it to the school. A lack of address should not be a barrier to education.

MR. SAMUELS: And so you are new to this. So it is understandable that you wouldn't know that. But they should know that, and the fact that they don't makes me think that they need to have another training from someone at the State about that.

MR. McGRATH: That said, I have also heard from our liaison or our representatives from the Council representing the Texas Education Agency that he has struggled with local education agencies to make sure that they are in compliance with No Child Left Behind. That

often, they are not so inclined to adhere to the laws, and to provide the resources that are necessary, and have had to work pretty hard to get them in line.

MS. SALDANA: Well, because even a concern that came up was that we -- they are homeless. They are not living and do not have an address here in the States.

If we say that they are staying at Bethany House, because it is a woman and child, they are not sleeping. We do not have an area for them to sleep inside. So they would be sleeping outside.

And the concern was, would then Child Protective Services get involved because their child is now sleeping outside. So they are willingly admitting that they are sleeping outside if that would become an issue. Because the mother of course, wants to take care of her child, and wants to be with her child. They don't want to be separated.

But even that seems like that wasn't a good answer for them. But it was still that they had no address. So they essentially could not come to school. And then once the child, when they did find housing in Mexico, that was not -- well then they are not residing in America. So then they still couldn't come to school here.

So that was something I was concerned about and

I have toughened while I have been there. And I am sure that it might even happen, continue to happen if this has already happened once, that that could keep happening, is to find out what exactly we could do.

But one, that is a great answer. That no, they are not able to do that. No matter where they are staying, if it is in a care or anywhere, they would still have to pick them up?

MR. SAMUELS: You need to work with Child Protective Services to determine that -- as a parent, and what we have not had to go through being a parent on the street, I can imagine that a parent would be terrified of the State taking their child, because they were sleeping outside.

I have known a lot of parents that when the school asked them that question, they said they are staying in a shelter. You know. But they may not be staying in a shelter, because they are afraid of what might happen.

MS. SALDANA: Yes.

MR. SAMUELS: So that is something that I don't think I could answer what they should do.

MR. McGRATH: That is kind of a case by case.

MR. SAMUELS: I think that is a question for

the Texas Homeless Education Office.

MS. DODSON: So there is an office on the state level called the Texas Homeless Education Office, T-H-E-O, or THEO. And they are tasked with ensuring that there is a -- of course, there are some school districts that apply for funding to specifically serve homeless students and their families. They help them to administer those funds.

But every school district in Texas is required to have a homeless liaison identified, and there are certain, as Colin was saying, certain criteria and certain actions that school districts have to take for children who are experiencing homelessness.

And one of them is that they cannot not serve a child with educational services just because that child doesn't have an address, or just because a child doesn't have a shot record or something like that. They have to go ahead and admit them, if the child and the family are in a homeless situation.

And that is a separate issue from if they are staying outside, would CPS need to become involved. That, I don't know. But I do know the school district has to serve the family. So I don't know their number offhand, but you can look them up online. THEO.

MR. SAMUELS: Afterwards, I can give you my

contact information and try and put you in touch with the people at THEO.

MS. SALDANA: And then you mentioned earlier, the McKinney-Vento Act, and what they describe as homeless. And I know that we met with the LISD. Is that who we met with?

And they said that they only had 40 students that were registered homeless. Do you all happen to know how that is asked at school? Because it seemed very far fetched that that was only 40 homeless students.

MR. McGRATH: It is notoriously undercounted and I think it is a self-report for schools. It is the parent or the child has to come forward. Or usually the parent has to come forward and say this is our situation. So the number is extremely undercounted.

MS. DODSON: I think many families don't want to admit that they are living in a homeless situation for all kinds of reasons. Certainly, with the Homeless Education Office, where they have school districts that get extra funding to serve those families, they ask them a very broad question of every family that comes through the door, where do you stay at night?

They don't say, are you homeless, or do you live in a shelter. It is like, where do you stay at

night, and from that, they can determine whether a family is in a homeless situation or not.

But based on that I am guessing Laredo ISD may not get one of those grants from THEO. But they are still required to have a homeless liaison whose job is to look out for and serve families with students who are experiencing homelessness.

MS. SALDANA: Okay. And just one more thing. And everyone is talking about the funding, and the communities that they feel that need to be helped. Speaking with our residents, not all of them have drug addictions or not all of them have mental health issues.

Some of them have degrees. They have had -- they are veterans and just them seeking for help. Because when I speak with them, it is hard to find the resources because they are like, I don't have any mental health issues. I do not have any addictions. I don't have any of these things that we ask them to have, in order for us to help them.

So I don't know, maybe finding funding for just a general homeless population. Because of course, I am going to have them go to counseling. But that is just mainly for, I guess, depression for them being homeless in the situation that they are in.

But those are concerns that have been brought up since I have been there. The children, their education, and then also just support for just a homeless person that is down on their luck or cannot find jobs, but not because of any extenuating circumstances.

MR. SAMUELS: I am really glad you brought that up about your interactions with the school district because we need to get out there and educate them, obviously, because those children should be staying in school. So we need to do some work in that area.

MS. SALDANA: I wish I would have known that, now I've -- and that was even with the police being involved and everyone. It just all went to -- yes, I am sorry.

This kid being passed down and that was the unfortunate circumstance. And the child didn't go to school for like almost three weeks now. So all right. Thank you all very much.

(Applause.)

MS. ZUNIGA: Good evening everyone. Can you hear me in the back? I am sorry, I am a little hoarse. My name is Sally Zuniga. I am a member of the general public here. I am not with any organization. But I have done some faith-based work here for a number of years.

Many years back, I was also a landlord and I had some units with Section 8. I already forgot the name of the Department. It has been a good while. But if I was to bring anything to the table, and say what could be done to help the homeless, well obviously as you all were saying, we need more affordable units. And what seems wasteful to me, is at the time, I thought to myself, I said, you know, I don't like this concept that housing just has people in the Section 8 program, has people on the program for years and years. And when is it going to Sunset? You know, they should have a certain amount of time to be on it. And then they get their job training and everything, and then it has to Sunset so that that money can be available for other people. So that is one issue.

And I thought well, if I don't write to them, somebody else will. So I ended up going to the program and, really and truly, what they pay per unit is very gracious. Too gracious. But that is the way it is. And so I think there is a lot of government waste that way. That they pay so much more for things than what they are worth. But that is, I don't know where they come up with those inflated numbers.

The other thing is, I think it is at the agency

or some other similar housing agency, could rework their numbers and provide incentives to people to build more apartments, condominiums. To give us incentives as entrepreneurs to do that sort of thing.

It would be great. Because some people don't like renting to Section 8 people, because they tear up the units. That is -- after you have done it long enough, you see that you know, the money is good, but doggone it, if you get the wrong family, it is a mess.

And so they really need to provide the right compensation. If they are going to give you an incentive to rent to people that may be a little more problematic because they have been through a lot, or they have let their family grow too large, whatever it is, they have also got to provide that safety net for you. Listen, if they tear up my unit, then here is the compensation.

So that is the only thing that I really bring to the table tonight is, it seems like these agencies have to provide some kind of incentive and make it a little easier on the prospective landlords to build more units and make them affordable. Trim the fat. Because even though as a landlord, I still feel that they could have paid me less and I would have done fine.

But I just wanted to -- the extra that they

gave me, I kind of used it like a savings thing. You know what, if my unit gets torn up, at least -- every month that they stay there is a couple of hundred more. You know, or \$150 or whatever it was. A hundred more. A hundred more. Every month. Because sometimes when they left, it was a disaster.

So there has to be those little protections there. But I think that would be a good solution, if we had some incentive.

MR. McGRATH: Thank you.

MS. ZUNIGA: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. TORRES: Good evening. My name is Rafael Torres and I am with a local nonprofit organization, Azteca Economic Development and Preservation Corporation, and we essentially have been providing low income housing for the last 15 years. We have a multi-family complex, and some HOME units. The provision of this low income housing would not be possible were it not for HUD, the City of Laredo and the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust, a pension fund, several banks. These units went up some time ago and we essentially used the Tax Code for developing the units. Under the tax credit program

operated by the State of Texas and TDHCA.

In that sense, in your objective tool under the heading of housing and supportive services, I would really implore you to really elevate that to the number one, supply and availability. And the current economic environment, I think the President Obama and the Congress have really got to restore a lot of the lost resources that are the only source of either production or for services in the community, especially here in Laredo.

And over the years, I have seen every year, the loss of CDBG, the loss of HOME, the loss of different programs that make it possible for the nonprofit community to provide a supply of affordable housing, especially for homeless. We have a number of assets in the community. If there were some brick and mortar development money, I am sure that there are a lot of local nonprofits that have the expertise for the lack of funding, they would be able to produce more units for the homeless population.

Heretofore, prior to the 80s, HUD had a number of programs that you could get a direct loan from HUD and produce housing. Now we have to basically blend private pension funds, foundation money to be able to create units for the community.

So I think that production of units is very

essential for the community here, and more than that, we need to ask the Congress and the President to fully fund a Department of Housing and Urban Development that is able to provide the necessary funds for communities to be able to provide units for low and moderate income individuals, especially homeless individuals.

Do you have any questions? I know we have gone on for a bit. But those are my comments.

MR. McGRATH: Thank you. I don't have any questions. We are running up against 7:30. But it seems like we have a few more people who want to speak.

MR. TORRES: Thank you.

MR. McGRATH: Okay. Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

MR. SANCHEZ: Hi. Good evening. My name is Juan Sanchez. I work with Congressman Henry Cuellar. I assist communities to obtain grants for different projects, firefighters. And some of the projects are for homeless projects.

And we are talking about homelessness and we are talking about a very complex issue, as you already know. I know some people may just need jobs training. Some people have mental health issues. Others just can't make it with the check that they have. So it has to be a

very comprehensive solution.

And I have seen a vast majority of the grant programs out there and each one kind of has a specific cause or a specific program. And I think that is one of the obstacles that we are facing here. We need to have more creativity and more flexibility with our funds.

I am proposing you guys include something like a Texas Homeless Matching Fund, where these funds will be specifically set aside just to help local nonprofits and local governments match the federal programs, and you can track them with the same regulations that the federal government tracks them.

So and being creative with what we allow our communities to use as matching funds. I have seen Mr. Arispe use the bubble HOME project, which is the one where they have the FEMA trailers, and they assisted 30 families. And I have seen STACADA use forfeiture funds from a drug bust to fund their drug treatment program for the homeless.

So the only thing I would like to emphasize is just more flexibility with the funds, and more creativity as far as the allowance of matching. That is it.

MR. SAMUELS: I just wanted to say thank you for all of the help with the HUD continuum of care grants

that Representative Cuellar helped with, especially with the South Texas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. Thank you.

MR. SANCHEZ: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. GARCIA: Hi. My name is Vickie Garcia and I don't represent any of the agencies. I am not affiliated with them. I am as a volunteer.

But my question also has to do with funding, and the ability for some of these organizations to tap into that funding, if they are not aware or understand all of the requirements. Now I understand of course, it is reading the directions and following carefully.

But when we take a look at workshops that are offered for grants, many times they are offered in the Austin area. In other areas, they are a little difficult for agencies that are a little smaller to reach.

So say for example, that -- say there was a matching homeless whatever program, and Mr. Davis wanted to tap into that. They are missionaries, a small group, just establishing. How is it that they can access that?

How is it that we can make Laredo more competitive when it comes to being able to apply and tap into those available funds. I understand of course, there

is a decrease, and a decrease in funding.

But that doesn't mean that reaching out to mid-size communities isn't something that the entire state or nation wants to focus on. Because a lot of times where you get the resources is in large cities, and so that actually was just my question, comment, I don't know what you want to call it. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. LAUREL: Good evening. I am Rebecca Laurel again from Bethany House, and I just want to reiterate what she had just mentioned. The fact that what are nonprofits -- are nonprofits going to be mentioned at all in your bulleted objectives. Because basically under number two of homeless prevention, you mention the increase the coordination of state agencies services.

Will the nonprofits be mentioned at all? You know, is that something you would consider? Or again, as Mr. Sanchez mentioned, the fact that would you match funding you know, with these organizations. Is that something that you would even consider?

MR. McGRATH: Absolutely. And what I would say is, we have a Council, have struggled with this issue of where the nonprofits fall within this plan? Because we are a Council that coordinates state agencies, and those

are our -- that is who we are communicating with in developing this plan.

And that is who we submit recommendations to. And so it is hard for us to conceptualize how we would incorporate them in a plan in a sense, in a way that says you know, nonprofits, should consider doing this. Because that isn't our job. And it's not our job to tell them what to do.

But what we are saying is, when we say something like increase coordination of state agencies to help with prevention, it is increase coordination of state agencies so that they are better serving those nonprofits who are doing the work on the front line, and I think that is something that we should clarify in the language of the Plan.

MS. LAUREL: Nonprofits. All right. And that could be mentioned maybe in the -- on paper and pencil. And then under four of the state infrastructure, you don't mention service providers. Would you consider more homeless liaisons within service providers?

MR. SAMUELS: As in for schools?

MS. LAUREL: No. In addition to schools. Like maybe certain agencies that have additional homeless liaisons. Because where are we going to continue that

communication if we don't have liaisons representing the homeless population? Do you see what I am saying?

MR. SAMUELS: Yes.

MS. LAUREL: Although of course, I think we just found out that some of those school districts maybe need a reteach on what their jobs are. But I am just wondering, is that a consideration in employing homeless liaisons to keep the communication open? You know --

MR. SAMUELS: No. I think I know what -- so --

MS. LAUREL: Are you following my train of thought here?

MR. SAMUELS: So, like a liaison at the mental health institutions.

MS. LAUREL: Yes. Exactly.

MR. SAMUELS: That is a great idea.

MS. LAUREL: Exactly what the school district is doing, but do it for other agencies also.

MR. SAMUELS: That is a great idea.

MR. McGRATH: Absolutely. And I would also, from the hearings a lot of what we have heard too, especially from people who have experienced homelessness or are at-risk is, there needs to be better communication between you guys, or the Council of State Agencies and us, people who actually experience this and know what you --

know first hand what you are trying to address. So absolutely. I think it is critical.

MS. DODSON: And also, I wanted to say that with Colin's involvement with the Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless, that has been a big focus, is building awareness among the state agencies that may not have people experiencing homelessness as their primary population that they serve, or homeless services as the primary service they deliver, to help them with any client who comes to them say, for SNAP or workforce development or rehab services, to say, what is your living situation? Because if we can help you with that, then our service, our other services to you are going to be much more successful, because you will be in a stable living situation.

And so again, raising just the awareness among the state agencies to say hey, you may not be serving, providing homeless services, but you may be serving people who are in homeless situations or at risk of homelessness.

And how can you help them get more stable in housing, so that they are more successful with your services?

MS. LAUREL: And I understand your focus on housing. But are you also focusing also on again, as someone mentioned, detox, organizations or mental health

facilities? Is that something that, you know where we lack here in Laredo, is that something that you are considering also?

MR. McGRATH: Yes, we are.

MS. DODSON: Yes. And we absolutely want input like that, because it is right, not only about housing, but about those supportive services that go along with the housing.

MS. LAUREL: And I do want to acknowledge, I realize that some people are homeless due to the economy that we are in now. But again, the mental health issues here in Laredo are great and, again, I thank you. We are thrilled that you are here. Thank you.

MR. McGRATH: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. LAUFER: So, I am Marisa Laufer and I am an Americorps Vista volunteer working out of the Bethany House as a Texas Homeless Network liaison. And I have some things I wrote down. It is a bit scattered. But what I was going to say, it is going to lead into what my comment is.

I lived in Seattle, Washington. And my understanding of homelessness is that 3.3 million people throughout the year that experience homelessness, but for

the point in time count, it is about 750,000. Is that correct?

MR. McGRATH: 650,000.

MS. LAUFER: 650,000 on any one night experience homelessness, and so knowing in Seattle, it is 9,000 people that are homeless at any given time, it is -- there is more homeless there in comparison to a place like Laredo.

But what I want to say is, it is systemic. So, okay. Homelessness is a systemic issue that society needs to address. Raising awareness about the root causes of homelessness, and to be able to work together in solving one of our most pressing concerns is the key to ending homelessness.

As a society, we need to prioritize our values of justice, and caring for one another, by demanding more money towards reaching the State Plan to end homelessness, to reach our goals and objectives and with the strategies.

So we need to fully fund this plan to meet the needs of all of the community members. We need to address their housing needs from affordability to prevention to sustainable economic development.

We need to work towards addressing chronic homelessness by using the housing first of all, to

stabilize their housing and to provide supportive services. The federal government needs to put more money towards the national Housing Trust Fund and I don't know if the State has a state Housing Trust Fund. But these are underfunded, or non-existent funded programs. Okay. Let me see where I am at.

Okay. Tax payers will save more money by adopting the Housing First model and providing supportive services, once we muster up a political will to do so. We need more shelters for situational homelessness. Situational homelessness for families, people discharged from institutions, veterans returning from the war, people who want to get off drugs, single women and single mothers with children. Young people, the ones that go into the Job Corps, they come out homeless.

In order to address homelessness, people have to come together, and they need a coalition to have one voice. There needs to be a way to financially support coalitions to help build capacity, so that they can address homelessness.

I had a side comment about chronic homelessness. People that are chronically homeless are exiled to a park or a bridge, or they find a way to get arrested, or they seek treatment in emergency rooms. As a

society, we can do better.

Like all towns and cities in Texas, there will be an increase in population growth as well as economic growth. So we need -- so we will see an increase in homelessness. So let's just get it right this time.

MR. McGRATH: Okay. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. WILLIAMS: I don't need a microphone. I have got a good loud voice. I have got plenty of public speaking and I can --

MR. SAMUELS: Ma'am.

MS. WILLIAMS: That history repeats itself. And I want you to understand something.

MR. SAMUELS: Excuse me. I need you on the tape, so that I can get you on the record, ma'am. I am sorry.

MS. WILLIAMS: Oh, you want me on the record?

MR. SAMUELS: Yes, ma'am.

MS. WILLIAMS: Oh well, okay.

MR. SAMUELS: Can I get your name, please?

MS. WILLIAMS: Roberta Williams.

MR. SAMUELS: All right. Go.

MS. WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you. History repeats itself. In 1909, depression. Same thing in 1929.

Third, 2009. And what happened? How did the United States come out of those depressions? War. The First World War. The Second World War. We are now, right now in the Third World War.

If you think I am kidding you, I encourage you, if you own a Bible, go to the ninth chapter of the Book of Revelation or Apocalypse, whatever you call it and read it. It is there.

And let me tell you something else. I can from a dysfunctional family. And after World War II, one year later, I graduated from high school, and I had to live with my grandmother, because my mother was a schizophrenic. And my grandmother put me in the street. I have been there.

And I have told the people. When I went to the Bethany House, pray. Ask God what am I doing here. Because he has got a purpose for your life. You are a wonderful human being that God created and there has to be an answer.

God gave me an answer. He will give everybody an answer if they will ask him. Because God created us. He loves us, and he wants the best for us.

But we have a government that has done some pretty bad things for all of us. Three World Wars that

were not necessary. And if you think that I am kidding, this war right now should not be going on in Afghanistan. It will never work.

War never, has never cured anything, and if you don't pray, there won't be any cure. The goals of this are wonderful and I will tell you why they are wonderful.

In 1964, LBJ, President LBJ signed the necessary legislation to start Americorps. Right? Okay. You have got wonderful goals here. But they are not going to be accomplished unless there is a change in the United States government.

I went in on the internet. Over a billion dollars was set aside for Americorps. But suddenly, here comes the Government, and they are just cutting it out, and cutting it out. I don't know how much has been cut out of this homeless coalition. Can you tell me?

MR. McGRATH: We have never been funded.

MS. WILLIAMS: Oh, you haven't?

MR. McGRATH: This Council that we are talking about has never been funded. And right now you are seeing the most funding it has ever experienced, because --

MS. WILLIAMS: Well, where is it coming from?

MR. McGRATH: Through Americorps Vista program

gave one staff position to this Council. Me.

MS. WILLIAMS: Okay.

MR. McGRATH: But if you are --

MS. WILLIAMS: But what happened to all, what about all of these millions that have been cut out of Americorps? What are they cutting out? I want to know.

MR. SAMUELS: Well, I can speak to that.

MS. WILLIAMS: Good. Let's hear you.

MR. SAMUELS: Americorps, unfortunately is in danger of being cut.

MS. WILLIAMS: It already has.

MR. SAMUELS: Who, what?

MS. WILLIAMS: Well, I am finding on the internet where it has already been cut by millions.

MR. SAMUELS: Well, it has been cut. It is in danger of being totally cut, and as an Americorps alumni, as someone who has seen the benefit of Americorps members, Americorps Vista members, I really hope it doesn't.

So I am definitely on your side with that. So and also as a spouse of someone who works for Americorps, I really hope it is not cut. But unfortunately, it is in danger of it right now.

MS. WILLIAMS: I know that. There is a lot of other things in danger, too.

MR. SAMUELS: Okay. Right.

MS. WILLIAMS: But if we don't get our young people out of Afghanistan, we are going to lose people like you wouldn't believe. Because this Third World War, according to the Bible, and you may not like the Bible. You may not read it. You may not care for it. But there is a lot of truth in it.

Because this war will kill one third of mankind. Do you know how many people that is? That is over two billion people. There won't be many left for the battle of Armageddon, because that is the last one. You better wake up.

And I am awake. Let me tell you. Our church is awake, too. Everything we do, we do to give back to the community. That is what we are there for. We are not there to make money for ourselves. We are there to help.

And we have about 15, I think it is 16 ministries in our church, and every one of them, they know, you have got to give back to the community. Everything we do has got to benefit Laredo.

MS. DODSON: Thank you. I wanted to point out, we had not specifically mentioned the faith based community in Texas, but that is certainly an integral

partner in all of this, as well.

MS. WILLIAMS: Right.

MS. DODSON: Local governments, state government, nonprofit organizations, state communities, individuals, and it really is going to take all of us working together.

MS. WILLIAMS: Right. But back during the last depression, the one that I lived through from '29 on up, I have been here a long time, lady. And I want you to know it was the churches that took care of it. Now when Michelle Obama went out into the yard there at the White House and told people to plant gardens, she wasn't kidding.

Because back before, when we had the depression in the 30s, it was a rural community everywhere. Anybody could plant. There was plenty of places to plant. Okay. How do you plant on a concrete jungle? Tell me. The food is going to be scarce for everybody.

I hope I haven't offended any of you. But I love you. I am here for you. I have been here since 1994, my mother, my grandmother and my grandmother were married in this city in 1904. But they had to go back to Fort Worth to live, because of the panic as they called it, it was the first great depression in the 1900s. And

there has been two more since. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. McGRATH: Any further comments?

(No response.)

MR. McGRATH: I will bring this meeting to a close.

MR. SAMUELS: Let's give them a big hand.

(Applause.)

MR. McGRATH: Thank you everyone so much for being here, for taking your evening to be here and share your thoughts. We will take this back to the Council and let everyone know what you had to say. Thank you so much.

MS. DODSON: Thank you very much.

MR. McGRATH: Yes. And I actually thank you, sir. You just reminded me. We are still in written comment period.

You can submit comments to us in writing through -- you can write directly to me at my email address. Colin, C-O-L-I-N dot McGrath, M-C-G-R-A-T-H at TDHCA.state.tx.us. And that is open until January 12th. Okay. Thank you all.

(Whereupon, the hearing was concluded at 7:55 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

IN RE: Texas Strategic Plan to Prevent & End
Homelessness Public Hearing

LOCATION: Laredo, Antonio, Texas

DATE: December 5, 2011

I do hereby certify that the foregoing pages, numbers 1 through 90, inclusive, are the true, accurate, and complete transcript prepared from the verbal recording made by electronic recording by Joseph Schafer before the Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs.

(Transcriber) 12/09/2011
(Date)

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