



**Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless
Quarterly Meeting – January 21, 2014**

Chair, Office of the Governor: Mike Doyle

Members present:

HHSC: Deborah Ballard

DADS: Steve Ashman

TJJD: Karen Lashbrook by phone

DFPS: Greg Anderson (representing Beth Engelking)

TDHCA: Sharon Gamble, Brooke Boston

TEA: Liza Lorenzo (representing Anita Villarreal)

Advisory Members present: Barbara James (THEO), David Long (TSAHC), Dianna Grey (CSH) by phone, Duncan Cormie (TNOYS), Heloise Ferguson (VA) by phone, JoAnn DePenning (JDePenning Consulting) by phone, Ken Martin (THN), and Molly Volyes (TCFV).

Others: Elizabeth Yevich (TDHCA), Jennifer Paulson (THN), Marc Gold (DADS), Megan Sylvester (TDHCA), Michael DeYoung (TDHCA), and Mindy Taylor (TSAHC)

Administrative support: Naomi Trejo (TDHCA)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mike Doyle called the meeting to order at 10:05am. Because **Marc Gold** was a visitor with limited time availability, **Mike Doyle** gave **Marc Gold** time to speak before the introductions.

Marc Gold spoke about DADS' Balancing Incentives Program which is working to improve access to community-based long-term services and supports. DADS is trying to improve www.yourtexasbenefits.com to allow the website to be an access point to all DADS programs. The updated website would allow for referrals to the appropriate programs with one assessment process. This website would be connected with the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) that are now available statewide. This approach of "no wrong door" is relevant to TICH because that improved access includes homeless persons.

After **Marc Gold's** presentation, **Mike Doyle** began the welcome and encouraged participants to introduce themselves.

II. Election of TICH Chairperson

Mike Doyle explained that a nominating committee had been selected by email. **Brooke Boston** announced that the committee had nominated **Mike Doyle** to serve as TICH chairperson and she made a motion to vote. **Liza Lorenzo** seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to re-elect **Mike Doyle**.

III. Remarks from Chair

Mike Doyle stated that the charge of the TICH was not only to write the 10-year plan to end homelessness, but to implement the plan. He went on to say that in Tarrant County Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) were reduced by 48 vouchers from the Continuum of Care (CoC) allocations last year. There continues to be significant need for resources.

IV. Approval of draft minutes from TICH Quarterly Meeting on September 25, 2013 (Voting item)

Deborah Ballard moved to accept the draft minutes and **Brooke Boston** seconded. The motion passed.

V. TICH Committees and Status of 2013 Annual Report Update

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

Greg Anderson reported that there had not been a Homelessness Prevention Committee meeting, but that the Annual Report had been updated and sent to **Naomi Trejo** to incorporate in the 2013 Annual Report. The committee was working with **Ken Martin** to adopt a universal definition of at-risk of homelessness. Also, TDCJ added 75 new case managers last year for the placement of parolees.

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

Mindy Taylor reported that there had not been a Housing and Supportive Committee meeting since the last TICH, but that she was working with **Ken Martin** to develop a survey on some issues.

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

Eric Samuels was not in attendance, but **Ken Martin** reported that the Data, Research, and Analysis Committee had not met. The Balance of State Continuum of Care application was due to HUD in early February, so that was consuming **Eric Samuels'** time. **Mike Doyle** asked to make sure that the Data, Research, and Analysis sections in the 2013 Annual Report could be updated and sent to **Naomi Trejo** by early March. **Ken Martin** agreed.

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

Ken Martin reported that all four committees wanted to put together a survey. He would be able to coordinate the effort to create one survey for all the committees.

VI. Update on TDHCA Homeless Services Programs and Initiatives – *Sharon Gamble/Brooke Boston*

Sharon Gamble referred to the handout she brought (“2014 TDHCA Homeless Initiatives”) and gave an update on the homeless initiatives at TDHCA. The most recent news was that on January 17 the Consolidated Appropriations Act had been signed and that the appropriated funding levels showed a 9% increase in Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) and CoC programs. Regarding state, THN has been awarded a technical assistance grant to rural areas for the Balance of State (BoS) CoC application. Through state appropriations, the Homeless Housing and Services Program (HHSP) was renewed. HHSP allows for augmentations of shelter, gap funding and is a very flexible source of funds.

Mike Doyle asked if HHSP could be used for transitional housing. **Brooke Boston** replied that, yes, the funds could be used to prevent homelessness. **Mike Doyle** followed up by asking if the funds could be used as matching funds for federal grants. **Ken Martin** replied that, yes, the funds could be used as match. **Ken Martin** suggested that HHSP rule require HHSP administrators to work with the CoC leaders in the cities. **Brooke Boston** said that adding this requirement would be difficult because it was the cities, not the CoCs, that fought for the funds with the legislature. However, the TICH could make such a recommendation to TDHCA's Board.

Sharon Gamble continued her update with news that the 2013 ESG contracts had been sent to sub-recipients. ESG was now working on the 2014 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) which did not have many substantial changes from the 2013 NOFA. ESG will wait until the 2015 NOFA before shifting a majority of the funds to be awarded through the CoCs. **Brooke Boston** added that the TICH meeting on September 25, 2013, helped TDHCA decide to wait until 2015 to make changes to the ESG program because during the meeting the CoCs asked many questions, such as how much administrative money would be available or how to prevent double monitoring. Because of this input, the rollout of the shift to CoCs was delayed until 2015 and will be brought up to the TICH again for input. **Ken Martin** offered that there was a THN Housing Conference in May to which ESG could bring the 2014 NOFA. **Mike Doyle** offered to change the April 22, 2014 TICH meeting date to correspond with the Housing Conference. **Naomi**

Trejo will follow up with the Housing Conference to determine if there will be a space and time for a TICH meeting.

Sharon Gamble ended her update with news of the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) Discretionary funding. This amount has traditionally been 5% of the annual allocation and dedicated to a certain cause each biennium. For the 2014-2015 biennium TDHCA had chosen to focus on homelessness issues. The CSBG funding could be used for a variety of projects, such as the coordinated intake process similar to what Marc Gold described in the beginning of the meeting for the website www.yourtexasbenefits.com. Uses of CSBG Discretionary funds for the 2013 contracts were for migrant and seasonal farm workers and these contracts have been successful.

The 2014 CSBG Discretionary funds could be released with a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Applications (RFA) regarding homeless issues. **Brooke Boston** added that the funds didn't have to be used as a grant; they could be used to procure a provider, such as a survey provider. **Ken Martin** said that he would welcome funds to work on TICH goals. **Ken Martin** went on to say that **Colin McGrath**, a Vista Volunteer who worked on the TICH for 2012, helped move the TICH goals further by working to complete Pathways Home: A Framework for Coordinating State Administered Programs with Continuum of Care Planning to Address Homelessness in Texas.

Mike Doyle noted that TDHCA was the TICH's main financial source, but in the past Mental Health/Mental Retardation (MHMR) centers had provided funding. He suggested that perhaps HHSC or TDCJ could become involved to supplement the CSBG Discretionary funds. **Ken Martin** clarified that in the past the MHMR centers had contributed funds to TDHCA and that TDHCA then contributed that money to the TICH and the BoS CoC. **Molly Voyles** said that it would be up to the TICH to build bridges to the CoCs and the funds could be used for that purpose. **Duncan Cormie** recommended that a committee be formed to determine how much money would be needed or, as a parallel strategy, approach the legislature for funds. **Mike Doyle** suggested asking each agency in the TICH to each contribute \$10,000 to fund a homelessness initiative. The TICH could demonstrate how the funds would save money in the long run because of the high cost of homelessness in Texas.

Brooke Boston said that the funds would more likely come from the other state agencies if there was a link to show how the TICH could pair one program with another program. For example, a Money Follows the Person Initiative at DADS helped create the Project Access program which utilizes federal Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers administered by TDHCA to assist low-income person with disabilities in transitioning from institutions into the community by providing access to affordable housing. **Brooke Boston** suggested identifying programs that allow other agencies to help homeless persons in order to make contributing funds to the TICH easier for those agencies. **Steve Ashman** emphasized that the state agencies had to know "what we were buying" and perhaps link the funds to a strategy.

Duncan Cormie reiterated that the TICH should make sure the estimate of funds being asked is accurate before the request is made. **Mike Doyle** said that the TICH should make sure they have a goal for the funds. **Barbara James** pointed out that the TEA had funds for homeless education and could coordinate with agencies that had other homeless services. The TICH would need to show the link between the funds and the activity. **Duncan Cormie** recommended the TICH offer to take part of the agencies' tasks along with the funds. **Mike Doyle** said it would be helpful to make sure homelessness is a priority with the heads of each agency.

Brooke Boston looked up the TICH statute and saw that in §2306.906(b) "Each agency shall contribute resources to the council." **Steve Ashman** thought that DADS had contributed in the past but **Ken Martin** said that the TICH didn't receive the funds directly. **Dianna Grey** asked if the management of the TICH was through TDHCA, or could it be managed through the Governor's Office? **Mike Doyle** confirmed that the management is through TDHCA. **Dianna Grey** suggested raising the profile of the TICH with the Governor's office.

Ken Martin wanted to know what the process would be to update the TICH legislation. **Brooke Boston** clarified that state agencies cannot ask for legislation updates and can only answer questions when asked. **Ken Martin** volunteered to ask the legislature for update. **David Long** said that changing legislature

usually requires a legislator sponsoring the bill. The TICH could ask TDHCA for suitable sponsors. **Greg Anderson** reminded the group about the Silver Haired Legislature, which was often looking for initiatives to take up.

Brooke Boston suggested creating a letter from either **Tim Irvine** or the TICH itself to refresh the agency heads on the requirements of the TICH. **Mike Doyle** offered to send the letter. **Ken Martin** agreed that the letter would probably work best if it were from the TICH. **Duncan Cormie** suggested looking at other state agencies and see how they were funded.

Mike Doyle asked for ideas of next steps. **Brooke Boston** instructed that to have input in the 2014 CSBG NOFA the emails or letters would need to be received by March. **Barbara James** asked how much funding would be available and **Brooke Boston** explained that the CSBG Discretionary fund was still being used for disaster recovery, training and migrant farm workers, so it was difficult to tell how much would be left for homeless issues after those activities had been funded. **Michael DeYoung** estimated that the amount would be around \$700,000. **Ken Martin** said that technical assistance was needed before the 2015 ESG NOFA was released, since only one CoC (Tarrant County CoC) was able to apply for ESG funds directly in 2014. **Mike Doyle** talked about possibly getting a VISTA volunteer and sharing the cost. **Ken Martin** asked if there could be a VISTA homeless program agent? **Mike Doyle** said if each agency contributed \$10,000 then the cost share of the VISTA volunteer would be covered. **Brooke Boston** offered that TDHCA would draft a letter for **Mike Doyle** to send to the agency executive directors. **Duncan Cormie** and **Ken Martin** offered to ask the legislature to obtain funding.

Mike Doyle asked when the Point In Time count would be completed. **Ken Martin** said in a few months. He reminded everyone that even though there was a 9% increase in funding this year, there was a 5% cut for the 2013 funds which are being used now. He let everyone know that HUD's 2014 CoC applications would use the same scores as the 2013 CoC applications because of the tight timeline. **Megan Sylvester** informed everyone that HUD had 60 days after the appropriations were approved to come out with a NOFA for the CoCs.

VII. Update on the coordinated intake process between Continuum of Care Representatives and 2-1-1 Texas – Mike Doyle

Mike Doyle gave the update that the 211 network and the CoCs had met to work on a node for a coordinated intake strategy for homelessness. They were working to agree on the right terminology to use to identify persons at risk of homelessness and homeless persons. **Ken Martin** said that he expected that 211 and the CoCs would not coordinate as much as they had expected.

VIII. Discussion of Federal Properties Suitable as Facilities to House the Homeless – Michael DeYoung

Michael DeYoung referred to his handout which listed federal properties suitable to house the homeless from the Federal Register for the month of December. He said that he was not sure how suitable the properties really were, since many of them were very old and could have lead paint or asbestos and because some of them required that visitors have an escort on the property. However, it was helpful to look in case there was a diamond in the rough. **Megan Sylvester** said that there was an example of federal property being used as a staging place for construction in California and for food storage in the Midwest. **Mike Doyle** offered his experience that he once went to officer quarters in a noise abatement zone. His guide said the quarters were not suitable for civilians, but just for the military. **Michael DeYoung** said he would send the link to the federal register to **Naomi Trejo** to forward to the TICH. **Brooke Boston** also suggested that the link could be put on TICH's website.

IX. Next meeting (a) April 22, 2014

Mike Doyle again suggested that the meeting be held in conjunction with the THN's Housing Conference in May.

X. Public Comment
None.

XI. Closing Comments
None.

XII. Adjourn
Meeting was adjourned at 11:25am.