

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

HOUSING AND HEALTH SERVICES
COORDINATION COUNCIL MEETING

VIA WEBINAR AND TELEPHONE

April 14, 2021
10:00 a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

BOBBY WILKINSON, Chair
DONI GREEN, Vice Chair
SUZANNE BARNARD
SUZIE BRADY
MICHAEL WILT
DIANA DELAUNAY
JENNIFER GONZALEZ
CLAIRE IRWIN
MICHAEL GOODWIN
DONNA KLAEGER
DERRICK NEAL
JOYCE POHLMAN
BARRETT REYNOLDS

ON THE RECORD REPORTING
(512) 450-0342

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MR. WILKINSON: Good morning, everyone. Thanks
3 for everyone joining us today at this quarterly meeting of
4 this Housing and Health Services Coordination Council.

5 Let's begin with the panelists. Just quickly
6 introduce yourself and remind us which organization you are
7 with.

8 I am Bobby Wilkinson. I am the Executive
9 Director of Texas Department of Housing and Community
10 Affairs, TDHCA.

11 MR. GOODWIN: Michael Goodwin. I'm a governor
12 appointee, representing developers.

13 MS. BARNARD: I'm Suzanne Barnard with the Texas
14 Department of Agriculture Community Development Block Grant
15 program.

16 MR. WILKINSON: Morning, Suzanne.

17 MS. POHLMAN: Good morning. This is Joyce
18 Pohlman with the Health and Human Services Commission.

19 MR. WILKINSON: Good morning, Joyce.

20 MS. BRADY: Good morning. This is Suzie Brady.
21 I'm also with the Health and Human Services Commission,
22 adult mental health. Thank you.

23 MS. IRWIN: This is Claire Irwin, also with HHS,
24 with the Aging Services Coordination Office.

25 MR. GREEN: Hi. This is Doni Green with the

1 North Texas Council of Governments, with the Area Agency on
2 Aging, and Aging and Disability Resource Center. I am a
3 governor appointee, representing the late great Promoting
4 Independence Advisory Committee.

5 MR. WILKINSON: Diana, you're up.

6 MS. DELAUNAY: Hi. Diana Delaunay. Good
7 morning.

8 MR. WILKINSON: And your organization, for
9 anybody watching.

10 MS. DELAUNAY: I am with Texas Regional Bank.

11 MR. WILKINSON: Great.

12 MR. STREMLER: And Derrick, I have unmuted you.
13 If you can hear us, you can unmute yourself, and
14 participate, if you would like.

15 (No response.)

16 MR. WILKINSON: Moving on. Michael, would you
17 introduce yourself.

18 MR. WILT: Yes. Michael Wilt. Texas State
19 Affordable Housing Corporation.

20 We have a Board meeting that starts at 10:30, by
21 the way. I told Jeremy. But I am going to have to hop off
22 for that, because I have to present.

23 MR. WILKINSON: Well, you have an excused
24 absence, sir.

25 MR. WILT: Thank you both.

1 MR. WILKINSON: Any other panelists who haven't
2 introduced themselves?

3 (No response.)

4 MR. WILKINSON: Okay. I think we have --

5 MR. NEAL: Can you hear me?

6 MR. WILKINSON: Yes, sir.

7 MR. NEAL: I am sorry. This is Derrick Neal. I
8 am a governor's appointee. I am the Executive Director of
9 the Williamson County Entities Health District.

10 I apologize if you can't see me, but I'm here.
11 Hello.

12 MR. WILKINSON: Thank you, sir. Thanks for
13 being here. And so, yes, that is ten; we do have a quorum.

14 Jeremy, do you want to do the housekeeping,
15 please.

16 MR. STREMLER: Yes. So this is for those of you
17 who are watching the meeting as attendees. Your screen
18 should look similar to this. Where it says Webinar
19 Housekeeping, you should see this slide.

20 Your control panel will be on the right side of
21 your screen, where you can adjust your audio settings and
22 ask questions, and raise your hand when the time comes to
23 be able to speak publicly. Zooming on that control panel,
24 you can select your computer audio, or if you select phone
25 call, a phone number will appear for you to call in, to be

1 able to participate and listen to the meeting.

2 And there will be a questions box, as well as a
3 chat box, where you could ask questions during public
4 comment. Or if you have questions on any of the topics
5 that are spoken about here today, you can ask those
6 questions in the chat, or in the questions box, and I can
7 then relay them to the Council on your behalf as well.

8 If you are unable to hear us, or maybe having
9 issues on your end, always please do the sound check at the
10 top of the control panel, to make sure that your computer's
11 audio is working. And if you have -- if you get
12 disconnected for some reason, if you are on the phone,
13 please wait a few minutes before calling back in. It takes
14 the system a minute to recognize that you are no longer
15 there, before it will let you back in.

16 In order to participate, if you want to ask the
17 question verbally, please use the raise your hand function
18 on your control panel. This is for attendees, not
19 panelists, of course. And then that is the spiel on that.

20 MR. WILKINSON: Thank you, Jeremy. Appreciate
21 it.

22 Moving on, the next Agenda Item would be the
23 approval of the January 27, 2021 HHSCC meeting minutes.
24 Does anyone have any amendments or comments regarding the
25 minutes?

1 (No response.)

2 MR. WILKINSON: If not, I will entertain a
3 motion to approve.

4 (No response.)

5 MR. WILKINSON: Somebody.

6 MR. GOODWIN: So moved. I can find mine, but I
7 read them when they came in. They were good. Mike
8 Goodwin.

9 MR. WILKINSON: Thank you. And a second?

10 MR. WILT: Second.

11 MR. WILKINSON: Michael. All in favor, say aye.

12 (A chorus of ayes.)

13 MR. WILKINSON: Any opposed?

14 (No response.)

15 MR. WILKINSON: The ayes have it. The minutes
16 are adopted.

17 Next up, Brooke, who is now on camera again,
18 will give us an update on Texas Rent Relief, our
19 programming from the CARES Act from last spring, and the
20 forthcoming American Rescue Plan update.

21 We have been flooded with money and new
22 programs, and she will tell you all about it. And I am
23 sure you might have some questions as well. Thank you,
24 Brooke.

25 MS. BOSTON: Thank you, Bobby. Let's see.

1 Okay. I am getting a loud echo. Let's see. Can you guys
2 still hear me? Okay. Good.

3 So first I am going to start talking about the
4 CARES Act. So with the CARES Act, we got several different
5 allocations of funds.

6 The first of those was Community Services Block
7 Grant. That is a grant from HHS that we get annually,
8 anyway, so this was a supplemental allocation. It goes out
9 to the Community Action Agencies across the state. They
10 cover all 254 counties.

11 In addition to 90 percent of the funds going to
12 them for helping households who have been affected by the
13 pandemic, we also programmed 2 percent of the funds to the
14 Texas Homeless Network, to help with reaching services in
15 the balance of state where there are not other continuum of
16 care providing services.

17 And they also put 7 percent of the funds towards
18 an eviction diversion pilot program. At this point, that
19 pilot has been completed, and the funds have been spent,
20 and we are now doing eviction diversion through another
21 program that I will tell you about in a minute.

22 So the CSBG-CARES program, we had roughly \$27
23 million -- excuse me. We had about \$48 million, and it is
24 about halfway expended.

25 Also under the CARES Act, we got LIHEAP funds.

1 LIHEAP is a utility assistance program like CSBG. It is
2 one that we have normally. This was a supplemental
3 allocation of about \$95 million. That is about maybe 30
4 percent of the way spent.

5 That one is spending a little slower, primarily
6 because they also have their whole annual allocation that
7 they are spending at the same time. But that is going to
8 assist households affected by the pandemic with utility
9 assistance.

10 Also under the CARES Act, we got Community
11 Development Block Grant funds that came in three different
12 phase. Across the three phases, that was \$141.8 million.
13 We have done a variety of different activities with that,
14 although I will say that each activity we decide to do with
15 it ends up having some additional federal funding down the
16 pipeline later.

17 So we originally planned to rental assistance
18 with almost all of it. And then subsequent rental
19 assistance funds that I will talk to you about in a minute
20 were made available. We do still have 44 contracts with
21 cities and counties for rental assistance, because we had
22 already committed to do that activity with them, and they
23 still wanted to proceed.

24 We then programmed a good chunk of the funds for
25 mortgage assistance, so the households basically who own

1 their home, and are struggling to pay their mortgage
2 because of the pandemic. The deadline for that was the
3 12th. And we had requests for a little over \$30 million,
4 so that is great.

5 Unfortunately, one of the areas that we needed
6 to assist and get funds out to, which is non-entitlement
7 areas of the state, so think of small rural areas, we did
8 not get a significant amount of applications. And so we
9 will still have to program about \$37 million back into
10 trying to serve those areas.

11 We also are dedicating funds from this pot of
12 CDBG for legal services for people with disabilities.
13 We're giving funds for providers of people with
14 disabilities for like group homes, for their eligible costs
15 being reimbursed, and then broadband planning.

16 And then, we had had about \$21 million
17 programmed for Food Bank activities as match. But then the
18 match was no longer required, which is great, so we're
19 needing to reprogram that as well. So we will probably
20 take something to our Board in May or June for the
21 reprogramming of that \$21 million as well as the non-
22 entitlement activity.

23 Let's see. The last pot of -- well, it's not
24 last. The next pot with CARES was ESG, which is Emergency
25 Solutions Grant funds. These came in two different

1 allocations.

2 The first allocation was about \$33 million.
3 That went to 101 contracts across the state, primarily to
4 existing ESG providers, as well as legal service providers.

5 They are about 30 percent of the way through their
6 contracts.

7 The second allocation of ESG we targeted a
8 little bit more specifically to homelessness prevention and
9 rapid rehousing, instead of all activities. And with that,
10 that happened more recently, and so we have contracts out
11 for all of those funds, but they are just starting to spend
12 on those contracts.

13 And last but not least, we also received 15
14 additional mainstream voucher program vouchers from HUD.
15 As most of you know, TDHCA is a small PHA, and one of the
16 programs that we run is the mainstream voucher program. We
17 use that to assist folks in our Project Access program.
18 And so it was nice we got 15 additional under the CARES Act
19 that we were able to issues those vouchers to people on the
20 Project Access waiting list.

21 So the next thing I want to talk to you about is
22 the Texas Rent Relief program. And you may hear this
23 nationally, or in documents you see, called Emergency
24 Rental Assistance program, ERA. And most things refer to
25 either ERA 1.0 or 2.0.

1 1.0 is the funds that came through the
2 Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2021-22, and that
3 program, which was ERA 1.0, we turned around and couched
4 that as the Texas Rent Relief program. It's about \$1.3
5 billion, and it can provide up to 15 months of rent and
6 utility assistance, including arrears.

7 Households have to reapply every three months if
8 we still have funds available. The program is being run by
9 TDHCA, and our vendor, or vendors, but we are not using
10 subrecipients.

11 And then there is a 10 percent set-aside, so
12 over \$100 million specifically for eviction diversion.
13 Eviction diversion cases are ones in which a landlord has
14 already filed for eviction on the household. Then we
15 prioritize those, and that is supposed to get reviewed
16 first, so hopefully we can actually divert the eviction.

17 The nice thing about that program is that if the
18 landlord and tenant participate, then eviction is sealed on
19 their record, so that it doesn't show up the next time they
20 go looking for another unit.

21 That program has gotten a kind of slow start.
22 But we rolled it out on February 15th. We had some slow
23 startup because of some system challenges, but we are now
24 drawing -- or paying out more than a million a day. And we
25 are seeing kind of an exponential curve and are excited to

1 see everything finally moving. As of today, we have paid
2 out about \$7.7 million to more than 1,100 households. So
3 we're on our way.

4 The last thing I wanted to mention to you is the
5 American Rescue Plan. A lot of people -- in the news, this
6 is being called ARPA. So TDHCA we think is getting five
7 different programs through that, through the Rescue Plan.

8 The first of those is a second allocation of
9 rental assistance. So this is ERA 2.0. Like the first
10 one, we think it is going to be around a billion, but we
11 don't have an amount yet from Treasury.

12 The rules on it are a little different, in terms
13 of how long we have to spend it, how long we can assist a
14 household. But overall, it's the general same theme. And
15 assuming things are going well with our ERA 1.0, we will
16 most likely channel that through the same system and reach
17 Texans that way.

18 The second activity under ARPA is called the
19 Homeless Assistance and Supportive Services Program. And
20 it actually is coming through kind of the conduit of HOME
21 funds from HUD, but it has activities that aren't typical
22 of HOME funds that can be used typically for tenant based
23 rental assistance, or developing affordable housing. But
24 then atypically they can be used for supportive services,
25 non-congregate shelter, permanent supportive housing, and

1 operating expenses for nonprofits. And so it is a really
2 neat, creative pot.

3 Right now, HUD has not released guidance. They
4 have let us know that they are planning on issuing
5 guidance, which kind of puts us in a spot of having to
6 wait.

7 The amount for that is \$132.9 million, and
8 essentially we are just going to be waiting to see what HUD
9 releases. And then when they do, we will need to take a
10 plan amendment to our Board before we can proceed.

11 The third activity under ARPA that we think is
12 coming to us is also coming from Treasury, like the rental
13 assistance activity. It is the Homeowner Assistance Fund,
14 and it essentially kind of looks and smells like the rental
15 assistance program, but it is for folks with mortgages. It
16 can be used for mortgage payment assistance, principal
17 reduction, interest rate reduction. It can include
18 utilities, flood insurance, HOA fees. They were really
19 thorough in thinking through the types of expenses
20 households would have, so it's nice that it is pretty
21 comprehensive.

22 That one, we still have not heard an amount from
23 Treasury. We think it might be about \$500 million. And we
24 have not received guidance, so we are not quite sure yet
25 kind of how we are proceeding with that.

1 And then the last two pots under the Rescue
2 Plan, another round of LIHEAP, which I had mentioned,
3 utility assistance. We think that is going to be about
4 \$234 million.

5 And then the last one is something called
6 LIHWAP, Low Income Home Water Assistance Program. And
7 this -- we actually got two pots of this. One came under
8 the Appropriations Act, at the same time we got ERA 1.0.
9 And then the second pot is under Rescue Plan.

10 In neither case have we heard an amount, has HHS
11 issued any guidance. They have implied in a few things
12 that they may try and mimic LIHEAP. But then at the same
13 time, they have alluded to making payments directly to
14 water providers, which would not be quite like LIHEAP.

15 So unfortunately, we are not at a point where we
16 can even really plan for the funds yet, because we haven't
17 seen enough guidance from HHS. So I think the real tone of
18 things with the Rescue Plan actually is there's a lot of
19 still wait and see going on. Any questions?

20 MS. GREEN: Yeah, Brooke. This is Doni Green.
21 I have got a couple of questions. The first, on LIHEAP.
22 We get a fair number of calls from people who are looking
23 for utility assistance. And I think, you know, the
24 programs that are available tend to be less recognized than
25 some of the rental relief programs.

1 So can you talk a little bit about how those
2 funds will be used? I believe that, you know, you use a
3 network of local contractors for LIHEAP. Is that correct?

4 MS. BOSTON: Yes.

5 MS. GREEN: Some discretion to establish their
6 own policies.

7 MS. BOSTON: Good question.

8 MS. GREEN: I know with reports over the years,
9 you know, this provider told me I got help with my utility
10 bill 15 years ago, and it is one time only. So we kind of
11 walked into kind of different program requirements,
12 eligibility requirements, kind of going from one contractor
13 to another.

14 MS. BOSTON: Yes. And that shouldn't be the
15 case a whole lot with LIHEAP utility assistance. The rules
16 are pretty specific.

17 For households at 150 percent of poverty or
18 below -- and we did change the rules recently to
19 accommodate for Winter Storm Uri. We know people were
20 having some really outrageous bills coming in, and we
21 didn't want to see that kind of suck up all of the
22 assistance for someone, so we increased the state limit for
23 households.

24 There's not a prohibition that they can only be
25 helped once. With weatherization, that is true. With

1 weatherization, once the house is weatherized, we wouldn't
2 generally go back. But with utility assistance, they are
3 allowed to get assistance every program year, up to a
4 certain limit.

5 MS. GREEN: Okay. Good to know.

6 MS. BOSTON: Yes. And just to -- as Doni
7 pointed out, the program is run by a network of nonprofits
8 and local governments and regional organizations who
9 service all 254 counties. And you know, they have the
10 infrastructure to do this because they receive LIHEAP, you
11 know, year after year.

12 MS. GREEN: And then I also have a question
13 about the rental assistance through the various pots. Is
14 assistance available to folks who are living in hotels?
15 We've had a number of folks in hotels, who come to us
16 seeking assistance, and we are just not sure what the rules
17 are.

18 MS. BOSTON: Yeah. We can assist people in
19 hotels. They just need to be able to show a pattern of
20 payments, you know, a recurring basis. So it is not just
21 someone who is there today. It needs to be their only
22 residence. So, but yes, we can assist in that case.

23 And our policies are just about to be updated on
24 our website. But the policies explain kind of exactly what
25 a household would need to be able to receive payments.

1 MS. GREEN: Okay. And then I said I would have
2 one; I actually have three. So my last one, and I am sure
3 that things have just been crazy there for you guys. But
4 do you have a summary of this information that I might be
5 able to share with my staff and with the Aging and
6 Disability Resource Centers?

7 And if not, might it be possible to schedule a
8 brief webinar, just to make sure that again, the folks who
9 are fielding the calls and providing referrals are familiar
10 with the various services.

11 MS. BOSTON: Definitely. Jeremy, if you could
12 send the group the Board report that we sent the Board in
13 the last Board book; that's what I was looking at, as I was
14 talking to you guys. It talks through everything that we
15 have done that is COVID related.

16 And, Bobby, were you going to say something?

17 MR. WILKINSON: The person the hotel may have to
18 show that they are late with the payment and the risk of
19 losing the room.

20 MS. GREEN: Good deal.

21 MS. BOSTON: They would either have to show that
22 they are late, or that if they aren't late, that if they
23 move, they would be at risk of being put in an unhealthy
24 situation.

25 MS. GREEN: Yes. One of the other issues that

1 we are running into -- and I am sure that this is beyond
2 the scope of these programs -- we have some landlords who
3 will not accept payment, because they would just prefer to
4 evict the resident, or issues other than nonpayment.

5 And you know, we have told folks, no one can
6 compel a landlord to accept assistance. And even when the
7 moratorium was under effect, you've still got to comply
8 with the terms of your lease. So if you are running a meth
9 lab from your apartment, you know, you are not guaranteed
10 that the landlord, you know, has to allow you to remain
11 there.

12 MR. WILKINSON: Good point. We can't compel
13 landlords. But I guess we can only work the messaging to
14 say that you are not going to get paid [inaudible].

15 We do believe, the way the bill is written is,
16 we are supposed to pay landlords directly. But after a
17 certain time, if they don't want to accept payment, we can
18 pay the tenant to then pay the landlord. Of course, if you
19 are already in eviction, it's hard to control from this
20 angle.

21 MS. GREEN: Could you kind of summarize for us
22 where we are in terms of the eviction moratorium?

23 MR. WILKINSON: It's not something that we're
24 able to enforce or anything. The short answer is, CDC
25 extended, but the Texas Supreme Court rules were not

1 extended in such a way as to compel JPs to enforce the
2 moratorium.

3 So typically there is not really a statewide
4 eviction moratorium in place as of March 31st. So now it's
5 jurisdiction by jurisdiction that has a more comprehensive
6 list of who is doing what.

7 You know, some of the big cities we know, like
8 to -- we don't know statewide, who is under protection of
9 moratorium and who isn't. But hopefully soon.

10 MS. GREEN: Thank you. And with that, I am
11 going to silence.

12 MR. WILKINSON: So Brooke laid out a bunch of
13 programs. We have been in the paper for Texas Rent Relief.

14 So anybody else have any other questions or comments, or
15 stuff you are hearing about us, or programs -- we are open
16 ears.

17 MS. POHLMAN: This is Joyce at HHSC, and I had a
18 question about the Homeless Assistance and Supportive
19 Services Program. And I may have missed this. But by its
20 name, it sounds like it funds the services as well as the
21 housing. Is that correct?

22 MS. BOSTON: It can, yes. It has a pretty long
23 list of what we can do with it. So it can fund, actually,
24 the construction or purchase of non-congregate shelter. It
25 can be permanent supportive housing, it can be development

1 of affordable housing. But then additionally, it can be
2 supportive services.

3 So when we put together our draft plan, which
4 may still be several months out, considering that HUD isn't
5 releasing guidance yet -- but when we do, we will let you
6 guys all know, so that there is an opportunity for you guys
7 to make comments on that plan for our Board.

8 MS. POHLMAN: And that has a fairly long period
9 of allocation. Is that correct? It is not something that
10 has to be spent in two years?

11 MS. BOSTON: That's correct. Yeah. I know we
12 would like to see it used quickly; quickly being a relative
13 term. I think federally it has like five or six years.
14 But we would like to see it, you know, being helpful in
15 communities as quickly as possible.

16 MS. POHLMAN: Okay. Thank you so much.

17 MS. BOSTON: Yeah. All right. Thanks,
18 everyone.

19 MR. WILKINSON: All right. No one has any more
20 comments on that item. We will move on to an update on the
21 Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program.

22 Spencer Duran.

23 MR. DURAN: Hi. Good morning, everybody. Thank
24 you, Bobby, for the intro. Spencer Duran, TDHCA 811
25 Program Director. I just have kind of a quick overview of

1 how we've been doing the program so far. And then I will
2 leave plenty of time for questions, if anybody has any, at
3 the end.

4 We try and keep this group kind of current on a
5 little more detail of what is going on in all things 811.
6 And just to kind of report some high level numbers, to
7 start off, currently we have 88 properties that are
8 actively housing people. So that is up from the last time
9 we checked in.

10 We had a wave of new constructions that opened
11 their door, starting at the end of the last calendar year.

12 So 88 properties are housing folks. We're super excited
13 about that. You know, we feel like we are always kind of
14 struggling against this narrative of being a small marginal
15 program, which we kind of are. But 88 properties
16 participating is pretty great.

17 So we actually have 148 properties that have
18 come into the program overall. And those unused
19 properties, we're kind of keeping around for future
20 funding, future interests, things like that.

21 We currently have 436 households that are in
22 units right now and have assisted 551 households throughout
23 the lifetime of the program. And currently we have 2300
24 households on our waiting list.

25 So in general, our program has been a story of

1 just growth, growth, growth. We are starting to get a
2 little more flat in our move-ins, as the new construction
3 properties, they are no longer -- we don't have new
4 constructions opening their doors all of the time.

5 So a new construction property comes along, you
6 know, we get ten families housed pretty quickly. You know,
7 ten families, ten families, because they open up those
8 units kind of all at once, with initial move-ins. So we
9 are going to be a little more flat.

10 We are also getting a little more flat because
11 we have seen less churning in our little rental market.
12 During 2020, obviously with the pandemic, people are
13 generally staying put.

14 And they are also flattening out a little bit
15 because we've been doing a little bit of attrition; not
16 filling units that become vacant as we monitor our
17 spending. We want to make sure that we don't overcommit
18 our funds.

19 So whenever we house a family today, we're going
20 to make sure that we have funding available for the next
21 five years. So we try to reserve funding to support that
22 family for five years. And after that fifth year, the
23 funding comes from just annual appropriations.

24 So the budgeting is a little bit tricky, and
25 we've been pretty conservative, so that we are not over

1 committing our funds.

2 Also, we have been tracking this pretty closely:
3 we're are still at 92 percent of the families that are
4 being served are coming from the local mental health
5 authorities, that are persons with serious mental illness.

6 And the majority of those folks are people who are exiting
7 out of homelessness. So 92 percent are those with serious
8 mental illness, and the majority of those are people
9 existing homelessness.

10 We have 6 percent served coming from nursing
11 facilities. Two percent are youth aging out of the foster
12 care system. And then 1 percent are folks that are exiting
13 out of the developmental disability institutions.

14 And then lastly, I just want to get kind of a
15 little 811 shoutout to our rock star referral agents out
16 there. So Integral Care, here in Austin, they housed 109
17 families with our program. Metro Care in Dallas has housed
18 73 families with our program. The Harris Center in Houston
19 has housed 65 families with our program. And the Center
20 for Health Care Services has housed 58 families with our
21 program, and they're in San Antonio.

22 So I feel really good about the program overall.

23 You know, we are hoping that we are not going to be as
24 flat with our move-ins. But we also might be kind of
25 hitting our stabilization point as well, so we will just

1 kind of see what the budget holds for us.

2 Lastly, we do not yet have our third grant, what
3 we call the FY '19 grant. We are just -- we were awarded;
4 we got our award letter, but we haven't gotten our contract
5 from HUD, so we are just kind of waiting around for HUD to
6 give us our \$7 million, so we can start serving more
7 families.

8 So what is happening, just so you all know, we
9 have properties that were scheduled to absorb that FY '19
10 funding. And we had to turn down filling some of those
11 units, because we don't have the grant money that we
12 thought we would, because we didn't think that it was going
13 to take this long to get a contract from HUD.

14 I was willing to use that grant money to wrap up
15 the program at the end of the last calendar year. So we're
16 basically two quarters out from when I thought I would have
17 money. So that is the situation that is going on. So kind
18 of ending it on a negative note, but if you have any
19 questions, please let me know.

20 MR. WILKINSON: Some questions for Spencer on
21 the 811 program?

22 (No response.)

23 MR. WILKINSON: Hearing none, we will move on to
24 the HHSCC Project update from Jeremy.

25 MR. STREMLER: Yes. And this is a quick update

1 on just two things. First, an update on our service-
2 enriched housing database project.

3 You know, with Spencer's help, we found a
4 spreadsheet on the HUD exchange website that we were
5 directed to that lists kind of all of the supportive
6 housing developments, whether it's 811 or 202, or other
7 contracts through HUD funding for the entire country.

8 And so we are going to work with that
9 spreadsheet to whittle it down to Texas and then, you know,
10 work more on getting that freshened up and looking really
11 nice, so that we can figure out how exactly you want to
12 present that on the website and what we want to do with
13 that information. So that is something that, you know, in
14 the coming meetings we might discuss more to get Council
15 feedback, once I have kind of whittled that down to just
16 Texas information.

17 And then secondly, you all should, over the last
18 couple of months, been receiving the emails after our Board
19 meetings, with the information that is out for public
20 comment from TDHCA: things that have been approved for
21 public comment by the Board, whether that is rules, plans,
22 you know, reports, things of that nature that are out for
23 public comment and, you know, have the opportunity to do
24 that.

25 And so that will continue to be what happens

1 every month, unless there is some objection from anyone on
2 the Council. That seems to be working. If you wish to
3 make public comment or, you know, let me know if anyone
4 feels the Council as a whole needs to make public comment,
5 and I can set those policy and planning subcommittee
6 meetings up.

7 But those have been going out for the last few
8 months, and so I hope you have been receiving it. If you
9 have not been receiving it, please let me know, so I can
10 make sure you do get it.

11 But, yeah, that's all of the updates on
12 projects. If anyone has any questions?

13 MR. WILKINSON: Any questions for Jeremy?

14 (No response.)

15 MR. WILKINSON: Okay. Next up, Elizabeth Yevich
16 is going to give up a legislative update.

17 MS. YEVICH: Good morning. And well, I thought
18 I was -- there we go again. Hi, again. This is Elizabeth
19 Yevich. I am the Director of the Housing Resource Center.

20 I'm going to provide an update on House Bill
21 1225. And if you recall, Chair Wilkinson briefed this
22 Council on this bill at the end of the January meeting.

23 Now, at that time, Bobby provided an overview of
24 the bill language, noting that it would have this Council
25 do an annual review and evaluation of the 211 Texas

1 Information and Referral Network, which is operated by
2 Health and Human Services, stating at that time, I believe
3 he used the words it was a bit awkward, seeing as this
4 Council has a large component of Health and Human Services
5 members.

6 Annd he concluded, adding that if TDHCA were
7 called upon to produce a fiscal note, that it was probably
8 going to be a hefty one, and that we would keep the Council
9 updated if there was any bill movement through this
10 legislative session.

11 So the bill has ended up getting legs, so to
12 speak. First, not too long ago, on March 26, TDHCA was
13 asked to provide a fiscal note. And as is typical, we were
14 given about a day to provide it. But that's par for the
15 course.

16 So Jeremy Stremmler and I, we were tasked to
17 write up a note. And we based it off of previous type
18 studies, which the Housing Resource Center, HRC, has
19 produced. And as Bobby had alluded to, it came with a
20 hefty price tag.

21 We estimated that it would total \$350,000 per
22 year for such a comprehensive study to be outsourced. And
23 as the legislation stated, it had to be for five years,
24 each year, annually, 2022 through 2026, the five-year
25 impact was going to be \$1,750,000.

1 So then the bill inched further along. And it
2 was to be heard on March 30th at the House Human Services
3 Committee. So TDHCA was, interestingly enough, not called
4 upon to be a resource witness by the bill's author. But I
5 was asked to attend a hearing just on an in-case basis.

6 Before attending, I was informed by TDHCA senior
7 legislative affairs advisor Elena Peinado that the analysis
8 that was given over to be heard that day did reflect our
9 cost estimates.

10 So it was a curious hearing. It turns out TDHCA
11 was not even named all during the testimony.
12 Representative Campos, the bill author introduced the bill
13 and immediately mentioned a Committee substitute.

14 Now, TDHCA had not been apprised of a Committee
15 substitute, and nor did she state what the difference was
16 between the Committee substitute and the originally filed
17 version.

18 Anyway, there was one person who testified in
19 support of the bill. This was Ashley Harris, part of the
20 United Way of Texas. And of course, United Way of Texas,
21 for those of you who are unfamiliar, partners with 211.

22 She stated all the support of 211, basically
23 praising the system, pointing out a few things that were
24 needed, which in some way sort of begs the question, why is
25 the study needed when they seem to agree on what is needed.

1 Anyway, no one else testified. And curiously,
2 nothing was mentioned about the fiscal note. So the bill
3 was left pending. We -- the remains of what is going to
4 happen, we do not know. It could get voted out.

5 Now, just earlier this week, two days ago,
6 Michael Lyttle, TDHCA's Director of External Affairs,
7 reached out to Representative Campos's office and was
8 informed that they are still working on the Committee
9 substitute, which is curious. So that is my report on the
10 curious and curiouser saga of HB 1225.

11 MS. GREEN: Elizabeth, do you have any insight
12 into what motivated this legislation? And I appreciate
13 your term "curious," because it just seems odd that TDHCA
14 would be charged with evaluating a program that has limited
15 responsibilities for providing a little bit of housing
16 information. But the vast majority of calls that are
17 handled by 211 have nothing to do with housing benefits.
18 So, you know, I would just question it in terms of kind of
19 jurisdiction. So any insight into why?

20 MS. YEVICH: That's a great question, Doni. And
21 I think at this point, only assumptions can be made. And,
22 Doni, you and Mike Goodwin have been here since the
23 beginning. This Council, HHSCC -- and not to be confused
24 with HHSC, and that is another assumption: We are
25 wondering actually has HHSCC gotten confused with HHSC.

1 MS. GREEN: Yes. Because you know, 211 is
2 managed by HHSC. But it is not -- you know, it's not
3 administered directly by HHSC. It utilizes the network of
4 providers. So, you know, it does have jurisdiction.

5 MS. YEVICH: Well, the other thing is, back in
6 2014, this Council did support a very small two-month look
7 into 211.

8 So, again, only an assumption can be made, but
9 it could be that someone had maybe looked back and seen
10 that the Council had done that. I went back and rewound
11 the tape two or three times, and I could have sworn that I
12 thought that when Representative Campos was speaking, she
13 referenced, oh, well we haven't looked back since 2014.

14 Now again, another assumption, but maybe somehow
15 there has been confusion on what that study was: HHSCC,
16 HHSC. They thought that that was the body that maybe
17 looked at it every few years. Again, only assumptions,
18 Doni.

19 MS. GREEN: Yeah.

20 MS. YEVICH: So I didn't know if Bobby wanted to
21 add anything further to that.

22 MR. WILKINSON: I know it is an enthusiastic
23 freshman trying to cause some good bills. And right now,
24 it is left in Committee. It might be written out of
25 Committee. So we don't know yet; there's nothing posted

1 online.

2 Anybody have any questions about this bill? Or
3 really, the item is opened up. And if you want to just ask
4 me any questions about the session in general from TDHCA's
5 perspective, I'll do my best.

6 (No response.)

7 MR. WILKINSON: No takers.

8 Thanks, Elizabeth. I appreciate it.

9 MS. YEVICH: Welcome.

10 MR. WILKINSON: Cool. Does someone have a
11 question?

12 (No response.)

13 MR. WILKINSON: No. Never mind.

14 Okay. Next up, Diana is going to tell us about
15 Texas Regional Bank.

16 (Pause.)

17 MR. WILKINSON: Diana, you are muted.

18 MS. DELAUNAY: There we go. Good morning, and
19 thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to share
20 some of my work. Things that I have done here in the past
21 15 plus years.

22 So as you can see, I have been in banking for
23 many, many years. And my experience as a banker has been
24 from helping the customer establish their banking
25 relationship to helping them with all their lending needs:

1 business lending needs as well, including mortgages.

2 I had been very fortunate to help customers.
3 Maybe they didn't qualify at that time for that particular
4 loan and guiding them and teaching them how they could get
5 into that loan.

6 So with all that experience, one of the things
7 that I started doing was, I really started getting involved
8 in delivering financial literacy. And I think that it is
9 very important because you know, it's crucial to our every
10 day life. Right? We have got to make responsible choices.

11 And really, no matter what your income level is,
12 I think there is a need for that. And it is just very
13 rewarding to be able to in front of a group of individuals,
14 whether they are elementary, middle school, high school,
15 college kids, or even adults, and just helping them with --
16 or giving them, you know, just a curriculum on financial
17 literacy.

18 So some of the topics -- can we go to the next
19 slide, please. Some of the topics that most individuals
20 want to hear is -- you know, there is always this talk
21 about well, I am on a very limited income. I don't have
22 enough. I live paycheck to paycheck.

23 So we talk about the importance of budgeting.
24 We help them understand what is the difference between
25 needs and wants, and we really work on creating a budget.

1 Others are intimidated. People don't want to
2 come into a bank. They don't understand banking. So I
3 will go into detail about what the bank offers; what will
4 they need to establish a checking account; what are some of
5 the tools that are available to help them avoid a lot of
6 those fees. Right?

7 We also spent a lot of time talking about why
8 good credit is important, especially if they want to get
9 into a home. I help them understand what is a credit
10 report; what goes into a credit report; and how to actually
11 obtain a free copy of their credit report on an annual
12 basis. This is something -- good credit is a hot topic.

13 The other one, teaching children the benefits of
14 savings. We actually go into elementaries and we spend a
15 lot of time with these kids.

16 And this one is always a fun one, because it is
17 literally kindergartners, first graders, second graders.
18 And we do a lot of math. We talk about, you know, the
19 different denominations of coins, money, and it's always
20 very rewarding to be front of these kids.

21 Also, I work with a lot of teens and their
22 monies. We talk about, you know, once they start working,
23 the importance of saving, setting some of that money aside,
24 and also incorporating the credit portion.

25 One of my favorite topics that is just -- I just

1 like really having and hosting these presentations -- is
2 the keys to home ownership. I think everybody deserves the
3 right to own their home.

4 A lot of folks, you know, they don't understand
5 that, you know, they are paying rent to someone else, but
6 with maybe just a few, couple more hundred dollars, they
7 can actually own their own home. And we talk about the
8 benefits of home ownership, what it is that they need to do
9 to get prepared.

10 Normally, when I had this workshop, I will
11 invite our mortgage rep. I will invite a realtor. And so
12 everybody talks a little bit about their roles and what is
13 the process.

14 The keys to home ownership starts with, of
15 course, the budgeting. We talk about that. We talk about
16 saving and setting money aside.

17 We talk about what is going to be involved, not
18 only with the down payment, closing cost fees. And then of
19 course, based on their income situation, we also talk
20 about, you know, some of the other programs that are out
21 there that can help them with either down payment
22 assistance or just some other programs to help them get
23 into their home.

24 Even if they don't have good credit, I always
25 tell them, the best thing is let's take a look at your

1 credit score; let's see where you are at. We always want
2 to ensure that they have a higher credit score, because of
3 course the pricing will be much better.

4 But we don't discourage them. If you don't have
5 that FICO score, there are still some organizations out
6 there that will help you get into that home.

7 We also talk about identity theft. I think that
8 is something that is really big: identity theft and how,
9 you know, to protect their accounts; rebuilding good
10 credit.

11 I want people to understand that you don't have
12 to go out and pay credit repair companies hundreds of
13 dollars to rebuild your credit. So one of the things that
14 I do is, I teach them how they can rebuild their credit and
15 save all those monies.

16 Okay. We can go to the next slide. Some of the
17 agencies and nonprofits that I have partnered with is the
18 Brownsville Independent School District, the adult
19 continuing education.

20 Every month, there are two whole days of
21 presentations, and I am in front of about 400 adults. And
22 there is always a lot of questions. And so it's really
23 neat. I am glad that I have that partnership, because once
24 again, I have been doing this for the last three or four
25 years with the ISD, and it's very rewarding when I have

1 people come up to me and say, hey, you know, I finally got
2 into that home. Thank you so much for the advice that you
3 gave. So that's really neat.

4 UT-RGV, partnered with a trio of student support
5 services. This is our first-generation kids, normally from
6 low-income individuals. So I talk to them about early how
7 important it is to save money, to have good credit, and
8 just to be prepared, you know, as they, you know, graduate
9 and then of course start earning wages.

10 The home ownership workshop, those normally take
11 place in here, in the bank. I do those on a quarterly
12 basis. Of course, with COVID, we had to halt that, but
13 normally, I will do -- the presentations are in Cameron
14 County, and I will do presentations in Harlingen and
15 Brownsville, rotate. We really get a full house. We get
16 anywhere between 50 to 60 families that come in. So they
17 are very, very good workshops.

18 I have been in front of the Youth Build kids,
19 teaching them also again, you know, everything there is to
20 know about financial literacy. And these kids are great
21 kids, because, you know, they are not only getting educated
22 and earning their GED, but they are also out there working
23 and building. So really neat.

24 The Tip of Texas Family Outreach, this is
25 parenting classes. I also provide financial literacy to

1 them, as well as the UT-RGV Gear Up group. And with the
2 UT-RGV Gear Up, we start from seventh graders, all of the
3 way to freshmen in college.

4 Gladys Porter Zoo, we have done their summer
5 camps. They have got summer camps between June and August.
6 And they are elementary kids that I go out, and I also
7 present to them.

8 The Brownsville Affordable Home Ownership
9 Corporation, my partnership with them has been with the
10 financial literacy class that a lot of their customers must
11 take. This is something that I provided. Of course, now
12 with COVID, all these classes are now done via Zoom.

13 Habitat for Humanity has been all labor work,
14 just going out there and really helping building these
15 homes.

16 We can go to the next slide. Very pleased with
17 what TRB has done. I joined TRB about three years ago, and
18 of course, as I was interviewing with them, one of the
19 things that I told them was that I had these partnerships
20 with a lot of these agencies, in conducting the financial
21 literacy.

22 And on days, I said, I may be out for one or two
23 days. Are you all going to be okay with that? And they
24 said, absolutely. So this is something that we have really
25 implemented.

1 There has always been a lot of volunteering that
2 has been done with the bank. But in the last three or four
3 years, we have really focused on financial literacy
4 presentations. And so these are just some of those
5 volunteer hours, all CRA. And so, very pleased for what we
6 have done.

7 And once again, you can see that for '20 and
8 '21, because of COVID, we really have not been very active.
9 All of the 431 hours that you see there have all been
10 Zoom. You will also see some CRA-eligible donations.

11 And if you go to the next slide, some of those
12 donations have been for Habitat for Humanity. The
13 Affordable Homes of South Texas with the Smart Savings
14 Program -- and this was a really neat program, because we
15 helped ten families.

16 And basically, the goal there was that families
17 who wanted to get into their home, the goal was to get them
18 into setting up a savings account, having the discipline of
19 setting that money aside, and we matched those funds. So
20 very pleased with that program.

21 The other one was again, with the Affordable
22 Home of South Texas, Inc. When the hurricane had a hit,
23 there were a lot of families, that because of power outages
24 or flooding in their home, had lost a lot of their, you
25 know, their foods, and of course, the necessities, so we

1 were able to help some families and give back some relief.

2 And one of -- the last initiative has been with
3 the City of Brownsville. And of course, now with COVID,
4 the broadband initiative, making sure that everyone in our
5 community, especially those areas that are less fortunate,
6 have connectivity and they are able to connect, you know,
7 especially with a lot of these kids that are not being able
8 to attend school. And so I have been very happy with what
9 we have been doing.

10 Let's see. The next slide. One of the -- and
11 once again, one of the things that I really like about
12 Texas Regional Bank was that, you know, they are really
13 involved with their community. And of course, one of their
14 core values is community.

15 And as I said, we take pride in contributing our
16 time and resources to make our communities a great place to
17 live and work. And we are successful when our communities
18 are successful.

19 And I really appreciate everything that they
20 have done for our community, that they will continue doing.

21 And of course, the support, not only to me, but really,
22 encouraging a lot of participation from all of our team
23 members, and all our 21 branches, to really go out and make
24 a difference and start teaching them young.

25 And that is all I have. Thank you so much for

1 your time. Any questions for me?

2 MR. WILKINSON: I would just [inaudible] some of
3 the same agencies. CDBC, and [inaudible] Habitat in there,
4 we can promote. So it's great that we're are working with
5 the same people.

6 MS. DELAUNAY: Yes. And I will have to say that
7 now that I am part of this Council, it has been -- when I
8 am meeting with families now, I have just got more
9 resources than I can refer them to. So it really has been
10 really a great learning for me. So thank you so much for
11 the opportunity.

12 MR. STREMLER: And there was one question, just
13 based on -- you know, I guess it's kind of based around
14 where you are located, what regions you cover. Is it just
15 Brownsville Cameron County, Hidalgo County area, or is it
16 other parts of the state, as well?

17 MS. DELAUNAY: So, no, it is other parts of the
18 state. We are in the Hill Country, as well as Hidalgo and
19 Cameron and Willacy. Those are the areas.

20 And I go wherever they need me. If I have a
21 branch manager who is in San Marcos, who says hey, you
22 know, we have a presentation, can you assist? Of course,
23 with Zoom, I am able to assist somebody in Blanco or
24 wherever they may be. So pretty much everywhere.

25 MR. WILKINSON: Thanks, Diana. I also like how

1 you train them while they are young. You need to come to
2 talk to my kids. They always want to --

3 MS. DELAUNAY: Oh, yeah, we got to do that.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. WILKINSON: Thanks, Diana. Let the record
6 show that Jennifer Gonzalez joined us, another Board
7 member. She just missed roll call, so she has been with us
8 for a while now.

9 MS. GONZALEZ: Yes. Sorry about that.

10 MR. WILKINSON: No worries. Glad to have you.

11 If there is no more questions for Diana, we will move on
12 to public comment.

13 So I am going to ask anyone who is watching, if
14 you have public comment, to raise your hand, and then
15 Jeremy can unmute you for a brief comments.

16 MR. STREMLER: I have got one question here.

17 Marilyn, it looks like you are self-muted. If
18 you will unmute yourself, you can make comment. Please
19 state your name and who you are with.

20 MS. HARTMAN: I am Marilyn Hartman. I'm a
21 member and advocate for the National Alliance on Mental
22 Illness -- that's otherwise known as NAMI -- and out of the
23 Central Texas affiliate, which is here in Austin.

24 One of our very high priorities is a step-down
25 program for people with serious mental illness that have

1 been in the state hospitals for more than a year. And many
2 have been in there for more than -- much more than a year.

3 And right now we have just two pilot programs
4 going on in the state: one out of Bluebonnet Trails, and
5 another from the Farabee Center, I believe it is. And we
6 desperately need much more of that and are wondering if
7 some of the housing dollars that you have or expect to get
8 in will be able to support more of those kinds of programs.

9 I believe that right now we have -- oh, gosh, I
10 think I have lost track of the numbers -- but quite a high
11 number of people that could be out of the state hospitals,
12 providing beds for somebody else. We have a very long
13 waiting list for people to get into the state hospitals
14 because we don't have enough beds.

15 But we could move out some people that have been
16 there long term if we had the step-down programs with a
17 very high level of support for them. So, again, I'm asking
18 if there is a possibility of more step-down programs
19 through your funding.

20 MR. WILKINSON: Brooke, do you want to address
21 that? I mean, 811 is a fit. And then Project Access, and
22 then I guess ESG with casework could be used as well.
23 Anything else to add?

24 MS. BOSTON: No. Those are the ones.

25 Marilyn, I don't know that any of the new

1 funds -- really, it's pandemic response -- would be
2 tailored for what you are suggesting.

3 MS. HARTMAN: Yeah. I think that those programs
4 also are not high powered enough, have enough strong
5 support services.

6 One thing that we were looking at -- and I know
7 it was a rider on the Senate side in this session -- was to
8 repurpose some of the excess beds in the SSLCs, the state
9 supported living centers, for this population.

10 And I don't know that that is going to be going
11 forward. I don't believe that the House side put that in
12 their provisions. But that would be ideal, because those
13 campuses already exist. They already have strong support
14 systems there. And we were looking at that as a
15 possibility.

16 But as I said, I am not sure that it can go
17 forward, at least this year. But that is kind of support
18 and campus situation that we are looking at until the new
19 rebuilds of state hospitals will have step-down facilities
20 on campus itself.

21 But thank you. I think that, as I said, your
22 programs are probably not sufficient to take into
23 consideration what I am talking about. It might be
24 something to look at for you all. We would appreciate it,
25 because that's a big hole for us.

1 MR. WILKINSON: Thank you. I would say one more
2 thing is we have a tax credit program, where we subsidize
3 affordable housing statewide. We have a few projects per
4 year that are supportive housing that I think might be a
5 fit, with some supportive services for folks that are
6 exiting state hospitals.

7 MS. HARTMAN: Yes. And I know that Foundation
8 Communities here in Austin is one of your big recipients
9 over and over again. They are phenomenal. They are
10 heroes, in my way of thinking. So thank you for that.

11 MR. WILKINSON: They get an award every other
12 year or so. And I think as they build capacity, it would
13 be nice to be every year.

14 MS. HARTMAN: They are taking care of many
15 people with mental illnesses. I do appreciate that. Those
16 people tend to be a little more functional than the group
17 that I am talking about. The group that have been in the
18 state hospital for more than a year are really needing a
19 lot more support than that.

20 MR. WILKINSON: Thank you.

21 Jeremy, do you have any other hands raised?

22 MR. STREMLER: Let's see. It does not appear
23 so.

24 MR. WILKINSON: Next meeting, July 21. And at
25 the bottom of your agenda, all the Council meetings for

1 fiscal year 2021 are listed, so you can plan out your
2 calendar, et cetera.

3 Do we have any suggested items to talk about for
4 the next meeting? Email it to Jeremy, and we will throw
5 them on the agenda. Any comments from the panelists?

6 (No response.)

7 MR. GOODWIN: This is future shock: Have you
8 all looked at anything that's pending in this gazillion
9 dollar infrastructure?

10 One thing that kind of concerns me that I saw a
11 snippet, that one of the key points of the housing
12 development part of that is putting new low-income
13 multifamily properties in affluent neighborhoods. And I
14 would just encourage people to go back and read the
15 history. I believe it was during the Cuomo secretariat
16 when they tried to do that, it just didn't work because
17 they didn't have clients to move into the housing they
18 built, because it was not near jobs. You know, they were
19 putting them in suburbs and almost gated communities, and
20 there was no way for people to get to work.

21 MR. WILKINSON: We don't have a thorough
22 analysis of the new Jobs Act or Infrastructure Bill,
23 whatever they're calling it. I have someone looking at it
24 now, so maybe it is something we can talk about at a later
25 time.

1 We are at a place housing is -- it is complex,
2 right. So we currently in our QAP for the 9 percent tax
3 credits incentivize proximity to jobs. That is a big point
4 item.

5 So, you know, it is something we definitely take
6 into account, in addition to poverty levels, quality of
7 schools, et cetera.

8 Suzanne, were you -- it looked like you raised
9 your hand.

10 MS. BARNARD: Yes. I just wanted to take a
11 chance and plug the Active Program for the Community
12 Development Fund. Applications are due next month, but it
13 is not going to be a highly competitive round this year.
14 So a housing project could be very competitive and actually
15 get funded this year.

16 Time is short. You would have to be really
17 highly motivated to get an application in on time. But if
18 you have got a project, please give me a call.

19 MR. WILKINSON: Thanks, Suzanne.

20 Okay. It is 11:11 a.m., Texas time, and we are
21 adjourned.

22 (Whereupon, at 11:11 a.m., the meeting was
23 concluded.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

MEETING OF: Housing and Health Services Coordination
 Council

LOCATION: Austin, Texas

DATE: April 14, 2021

I do hereby certify that the foregoing pages,
numbers 1 through 48, inclusive, are the true, accurate,
and complete transcript prepared from the verbal recording
made by electronic recording by Latrice Porter before the
Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

DATE: April 20, 2021

(Transcriber)

On the Record Reporting &
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