

Texas A&M International University Consultants Report:
Laredo Homeless Coalition Continuum of Care Plan
2017-2022
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|------------|--|
| AHAR | Annual Homeless Assessment Report |
| AHEC | Area Health Education Center |
| CASA | Casa de Misericordia |
| CDBG | Community Development Block Grants |
| CE | Coordinated Entry |
| CoC | Continuum of Care |
| DES | Decentralized Entry System |
| ESG | Emergency Shelter/Solution Grant |
| FMR | Fair Market Rent |
| HCC | Holding Institute Community Center |
| HDX | Homelessness Data Exchange |
| HEARTH Act | Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition Housing |
| HIC | Housing Inventory Count |
| HMIS | Homeless Management Information System |
| HOME | HOME Investment Partnership Grant |
| HUD | U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development |
| HUD-VASH | HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing |
| LHA | Laredo Housing Authority |
| LHC | Laredo Homeless Coalition |
| LISD | Laredo Independent School District |
| NAEH | National Alliance to End Homelessness |
| NLIHC | National Low Income Housing Coalition |
| PIT | Point in Time |
| SCAN | Serving Children and Adults in Need |
| TAMU | Texas A&M International University |
| TDFPS | Texas Department of Family and Protective Services |
| THN | Texas Homeless Network |
| TVC | Texas Veterans Commission |
| TWC | Texas Workforce Commission |
| Tx BoS CoC | Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care |
| UISD | United Independent School District |
| USICH | U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness |
| UTB | University of Texas at Brownsville |
| VA | Veterans Affairs |
| VAWA | Violence Against Women Act |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

Executive Summary

Homelessness is a problem that bridges all walks of life and affects the entire community. The ability to quantify the problem to satisfy federal municipal, private and nonprofit funding entities is challenging. Ensuring that strengths and gaps are identified will allow the Laredo Homeless Coalition, the City of Laredo, and all agencies serving the homeless population to prioritize solutions and seek appropriate funding sources.

Through the scope of work outlined by the Laredo Homeless Coalition (LHC), a detailed assessment and inventory of agencies was conducted. In addition, the development of a Continuum of Care Process and Plan, and a Continuum of Care Memorandum of Understanding was undertaken. The execution of the deliverables outlined by the LHC was accomplished by a research team created for the purpose of developing the Texas A&M International University Consultant Report: Laredo Homeless Coalition Continuum of Care Plan 2016-2020.

The methodology used by the research consultants included an initial review of the literature scoping the state of the science in terms of homelessness, which was later expanded to include types of entry systems. In addition, an initial investigation (using a published copy of the 211 directory) was conducted to identify local community agencies and organizations providing services for the homeless population. Prior to contacting the identified agencies, the research consultant group modified a questionnaire to ensure a thorough collection of data.

An inventory of services was conducted for the identified community agencies serving the veterans and homeless populations by using the following methods: interviews via face to face and/or by telephone, organization website, email, and verified social media accounts. The research consultant group interviewed key personnel from 52 agencies and inventoried 23 local agencies for the purpose of creating a service directory.

In further analysis of the data collected (from the literature and interviews) the research team focused on defining and providing a comparison of the multiple definitions of homelessness developed and utilized by different agencies and/or organizations. This analysis includes a needs assessment that forms a basis for understanding the current delivery system of care for homeless individuals and families at risk for homelessness in the city of Laredo.

How an organization or coalition is structured will determine the ability to respond successfully to its vision, mission, and strategic agenda. When the organization is a coalition or a collaborative structure, function must reflect the best practices for large interagency work. Gaps and an unclear organizational structure were identified. Recommendations for a revision of the coalition to a collaborative (including a suggested name change) resulted in reimagining how the different services, housing and funding agencies interact and relate to one another.

This report highlights detailed information and comparisons of demographic statistics regarding homelessness within the city of Laredo, Texas. The results of interagency gaps identified via a detailed inventory of services and recommendations are outlined by the research consultants (to improve the areas of service and address the aforementioned gaps) are provided.

Finally, the strategic planning process is a significant undertaking. The initial first steps are slated for mid-January 2017. It is anticipated that the mission, vision, and organizational structure will be evaluated. The findings and recommendations of this report will be considered in developing goals and objectives for a three-year plan. It is suggested that additional funding be invested in completing the Strategic Planning process over the next three to six months.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

The City of Laredo's 10-year plan to eliminate chronic homeless has come to an end and with the release of the 2015-2016 City of Laredo Consolidated Plan report, now is the ideal time for the Laredo Homeless Coalition (LHC) to evaluate the work they do towards ending homelessness in the community. The LHC has determined that a community cannot end homelessness until they work to improve the coordination and delivery of services they provide while also working with officials to address the social and economic conditions which contribute to a housing crisis for individuals. Members of the LHC, working closely with city officials, have partnered with researchers from Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) to address the issue of homelessness, to identify area service providers, promote collaboration among community partners, and develop a Continuum of Care (CoC) plan that is aligned with the goals of the Texas Balance of State CoC.

The purpose of this report is to provide a written Continuum of Care plan that includes identified gaps and strategic goals and objectives by supportive services in the years 2016-2020. The report will (1) provide an updated inventory of services, (2) define the problem of homelessness, (3) discuss the organizational structure of the LHC, (4) provide best practices to support effective coalitions, (5) provide evidence based solutions related to coordinated entry systems, (6) present the results of the inventory of services, (7) outline a strategic planning process, and (8) provide final recommendations based on the research conducted. This report will also outline how the unique demographics and the social determinants of health have a direct and lasting impact on the progress made by the LHC, policymakers, advocates, and leaders. It is the work of the TAMIU team to support the LHC, area policy makers, advocates, and stakeholders as they undertake a systematic approach to address the needs of the community, the agencies which serve them, and the data which supports the requirement for a systematic, sustainable organizational change.

Consultant Group Members

The Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) research consultants included Dr. Gwen George, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Programs in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences and Dr. Monica Urdiales Alleman, Assistant Professor in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences. Dr. John Kilburn, Associate Vice President for Research and Sponsored Projects, functioned in an advisory capacity. In addition to the above mentioned TAMIU faculty, there are two graduate research assistants: Maria Vinegar and Jeannette Johnson. This consultant group was given the charge to:

1. Inventory agencies and services in the various supportive service areas including but not limited to basic and essential living, housing programs, transportation, medical health, substance abuse treatment, mental health, case management, jobs and life skills, Veteran-

specific, and other mainstream services (See Appendix A).

2. Assess the service components including but not limited to Planning and Coordination of group outreach, education, assessments, prevention, and housing (emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing).

3. Development of a Continuum of Care Process and Plan, including a comprehensive strategy, objectives, and tasks for 2016-2020 period.

4. Draft of Continuum of Care Memorandum of Understanding that can be executed by participating agencies (See Appendix B)

In addition to the aforementioned deliverables, through initial and continued correspondence, the LHC requested the scope of our work to include: determining the appropriate methodology for PIT count, request for developing local expertise, and recommendation on whether a centralized or decentralized entry system would be better able to serve the community.

Data Methodology

The research consultants started with a two-prong approach: initiating the review of the literature (ROL) to understand the state of the science in terms of homelessness and to identify and inventory agencies and organizations that provide services to individuals who are homeless or at risk for becoming homelessness. The initial review of the literature was related to homelessness and how it was defined for a variety of purposes with an emphasis on funding. This review was expanded to include types of entry systems for organizations encountering homeless persons and families, and the count methodology for counting and reporting data to multiple sources (i.e., government agencies, grant funding organizations, etc.) The results of the reviews of the literature are included in this report (See PART IV).

The types of questions addressed through the review of literature included:

1. What is the prevalence of homelessness in Laredo, Texas and surrounding areas?
2. What are the definitions of homelessness that guide the creation of policies in each agency/organization?

The TAMIU research consultants used a variety of methods to collect the data required for an inventory of services directory. These methods included the evidence found in the literature, a review of the service directory questionnaire used previously by a local agency and through a review of other service directory questionnaires used regionally and nationally. Although the team identified several service inventory questionnaires which could be utilized for the project, many questionnaires were either too time intensive or not generalizable to the group of stakeholders in the area. Therefore, the team decided to use the questionnaire provided by a local agency for several reasons: (1) it was easy to understand, (2) it was easy to use (3) the information requested could be modified slightly in order to make it more generalizable to the

group of stakeholders and (4) the questions would be similar to those asked of the stakeholders in previous interviews so it would establish a level of trust between the TAMIU research consultant group and the individuals they interviewed. The types of questions addressed through the modified questionnaire included:

1. What agencies are currently providing services or referrals to the homeless or at risk for homelessness in the area?
2. How are the aforementioned agencies identifying those who are homeless or at risk for homelessness and how does the current delivery system address their needs?
3. What are the strengths, challenges, gaps, and barriers within the current care delivery system that are supporting or limiting the organizations and the system's ability to respond to a housing crisis effectively?

To ensure thorough data collection, the team identified additional strategies which included:

1. Document review including grant proposals, LHC and city council meeting minutes, LHC bylaws, LHC website, agency websites, provider intake forms, point in time survey results, and internal referral directories
2. Literature review of best practices related to entry systems
3. Literature review of definitions of homelessness and chronic homelessness

The TAMIU team identified 82 agencies or organizations providing services to the homeless population in Laredo which became the inventory contact list. Initially, many of the organizations on the inventory contact list were obtained from a published copy of the 211 directory which was published several years prior and from the 211 website which was last updated in 2015. Some of the information was found to either be out of date or the individual listed as the contact person was no longer affiliated with the organization. Of the 82 agencies on the inventory contact list, 52 provided information by phone and ten agencies provided information during face-to-face interviews (with key members of the organizations). There were 14 organizations on the inventory contact list that the TAMIU team was unable to contact despite considerable efforts made to contact the organization by telephone, through electronic communication and finally, by making a visit to the address listed for the organization. There were multiple organizations contacted by telephone but agency representatives were unable to provide any additional information beyond what was readily available on the organization's website. A team leader and the student research consultant were successful in speaking with or meeting with agency representatives to collect data on: (1) services provided, (2) involvement with the homeless persons, homeless veterans, veterans, and/or those at risk for homelessness, (3) methodology of count, (4) data entry software, (5) identify key members of each organization, as well as, (6) organizational challenges and successes. The majority of the data was made readily available by the key members of the organizations after a relationship was

established via a face-to face interview or through a telephone interview. It should be reported that as the TAMIU team conducted the service directory inventory, there were several team challenges identified which included:

(1) coordination of conflicting schedules between research team members and key stakeholders, (2) lack of accountability for members of the research team due to either lack of training or communication issues, and (3) difficulty of the research team in determining where best to utilize their time (literature review related to the methodology for the point in time count, literature review of best practices for entry system, or meetings with key stakeholders).

To summarize, the service directory inventory conducted by the TAMIU team resulted in the following:

1. Identified 82 agencies that provide services or referrals for homeless population (See Appendix C).
2. Interviewed key personnel from 52 agencies at the local and regional levels.
3. Inventoried 23 local agencies to provide a service directory.
4. Identified project time constraints which prevented interview and inclusion of an additional 20 community agencies and 72 faith-based organizations identified by the team (See Appendix D).
5. Identified the need to include correctional facilities and probation officers for inclusion in a future directory.
6. Identified the need to include both area hospitals, all area health clinics, the health department, school systems, colleges, and universities.
7. Identified the need to include the economic sector and business development sector.

PART II: DEFINING THE PROBLEM

In this section of the report, the researchers will provide the definitions and costs of homelessness. Additionally, there will be an overview of the demographics of the City of Laredo. The needs assessment will be discussed and data supporting the scope of the problem of homelessness at the national, state, and CoC level will be provided. In addition, the service components (planning and coordination, outreach and education, assessment and prevention, and housing) will be described to include any gaps identified. As mentioned in the introduction, this section of the report will provide information regarding the social determinants of health which greatly influence the health of the population.

Homelessness Overview

The way in which homelessness is defined is important in securing funding at the federal, state and local level. Therefore, understanding and correctly applying the different definitions based on the program type and funding request is paramount to success. For example, if an agency seeks to secure funding related to the healthcare needs of homeless persons or families, they would want to utilize the definition provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

In December 2015, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) published a final definition of “chronically homeless” in the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Final Rule which will be utilized by HUD’s CoC Program and by the Consolidated Submissions for Community Planning and Development (CPD) Programs (HUD, 2015c). The previous definition of HUD’s “chronically homeless” has been adopted by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness and the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The final definition states that chronic homelessness regards “an individual who is homeless and lives in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; and has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least 1 year or on at least four separate occasions in the last 3 years, where the cumulative total of the four occasions is at least one year. Stays in institutions of 90 days or less will not constitute as a break in homelessness, but rather such stays are included in the cumulative total; and can be diagnosed with one or more of the following conditions: substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability (as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002), post-traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability. An individual who has been residing in an institutional care facility, including a jail, substance abuse or mental health treatment facility, hospital, or other similar facility for fewer than 90 days and met all of the criteria in

paragraph (1), before entering that facility; or a family with an adult head of household (or if there is no adult in the family, a minor head of household) who meets all of the criteria in paragraph (1), including a family whose composition has fluctuated while the head of household has been homeless” (HUD, 2015c).

Health centers funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) use the following definition found in section 330(h)(5)(A) of the Public Health Service Act: “an individual who lacks housing (without regard to whether the individual is a member of a family), including an individual whose primary residence during the night is a supervised public or private facility (e.g., shelters) that provides temporary living accommodations, and an individual who is a resident in transitional housing. A homeless person is an individual without permanent housing who may live on the streets; stay in a shelter, mission, single room occupancy facilities, abandoned building or vehicle; or in any other unstable or non-permanent situation. [Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C., 254b)]. An individual may be considered to be homeless if that person is “doubled up,” a term that refers to a situation where individuals are unable to maintain their housing situation and are forced to stay with a series of friends and/or extended family members. In addition, previously homeless individuals who are to be released from a prison or a hospital may be considered homeless if they do not have a stable housing situation to which they can return. A recognition of the instability of an individual’s living arrangements is critical to the definition of homelessness” (NHCHC, 2016).

This McKinney-Vento Act definition defines a homeless person as an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This definition expands to include children and youth. This Act is used for funding related specifically to elderly, handicapped persons, families and children. The research consultants identified multiple definitions of homeless person, “doubled up”, at-risk for homelessness, and chronic homelessness (See Appendix E).

Needs Assessment and Rationale

A needs assessment is a tool that can help an organization, group, or coalition determine the extent of the problem, gather information related to all services currently available to the target population, and what gaps in these services exist. With this type of data, informed decision making can be developed regarding the addition of services, enhancing current services, and bridging any identified gaps. A needs assessment was conducted to form a basis for understanding the current delivery system of care for homeless individuals and families at risk for homelessness in the city of Laredo. A complete summary of all 22 agencies surveyed can be found in Part V of this report.

Demographics of Laredo

Laredo, Texas is a city with a population of 255,473 located in South Texas on the border to Mexico (Texas Association of Counties, 2015). Citizens of both cities have crossed the border

for personal and economic reasons since the city of Laredo was founded in 1755 (Texas State Historical Association, 2010). The City of Laredo is located within Webb County and is the only metropolitan city within the county (Texas Association of Counties, 2015). The 2015 U.S. Census estimated that the population of Webb County was 269,761 (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2015). According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 96.8% of citizens in Laredo are of Hispanic origin, 3.6% identified themselves as White, and 1.5% of respondents identified with two or more races. For 90% of the population living in Laredo, the primary language spoken at home for individuals (ages 5+) is Spanish. Although 65% of citizens have obtained a high school diploma, those statistics are not reflected in the percentage of individuals with a bachelor's degree or higher.

A 2015 study conducted by Methodist Ministries found that the citizens of Laredo consist of a close knit community where individuals feel connected by strong cultural ties to family and are actively engaged in civic duty (Methodist Healthcare Ministries, 2016). In addition, the majority of residents reported their religious affiliation as Catholic (50%) compared to the Texas average of 23% (Pew Research Center, 2015). A large portion of the population (31%) lives in poverty, which is significantly higher when compared to other cities in Texas that are comparable in geography and size (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). The city of Laredo is home to citizens actively engaged in the politics of their community on a local and regional level. Many residents are third and fourth generation locals who have developed deep bonds with their community and who strive to function within the political lens and expected norms of their community. They are a population strongly connected to their families and the long-standing traditions which connect the people with their culture and the social and physical environments which greatly influence their lives.

Homelessness in the United States

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides an Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress to provide national and state estimates of homelessness in America and to help understand the nation's capacity to serve them. The 2016 AHAR report included information related to community's point in time estimates, housing inventory counts, and CoC level data. The 2016 report identified a decline in homelessness by three percent between 2015 and 2016. According to the 2016 AHAR, the number of individuals who were identified as homelessness in the U.S. has decreased in 13 states with Texas reporting one of the largest decreases with 16,666 fewer individuals. Even with these decreases, in January of 2016 there were approximately 550,000 individuals experiencing homelessness in the United States (U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016, p.1). The majority, 68% of those identified, were staying in emergency shelters, transitional housing programs or safe havens with 32% of those individuals located in unsheltered locations. Sixty-nine percent of those identified as homeless were over the age of 24, nine percent were between the ages of 18 and 24, and twenty-two percent of homeless individuals under the age of 18. All CoC's showed a decrease in homeless individuals in all categories in the nation (p. 58).

In 2016, there were 867,102 beds available for homeless individuals and families in emergency shelters, safe havens, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, and other permanent housing (p. 72). The 2016 AHAR reported that for the first time since HUD began tracking the information, a larger share of beds was dedicated to permanently housing people who were formerly homeless (53%) than to temporarily housing people in homeless shelter projects (47%).

Overall, Texas reflected a decline in the number of homeless persons, reporting 15,959 individuals experiencing homelessness in 2016. However, the 2016 report outlined that although the numbers are decreasing, the Texas Balance of State CoC has one of the largest numbers of people experiencing homelessness, 6,048 (p.17). Nearly one third of people experiencing homelessness in families with children were Hispanic or Latino (31%) which was nearly double the Hispanic share of people experiencing homelessness as individuals (17%). Overall, this report shows that the nation is making progress towards ending homelessness with decreases noted in Texas and in several CoC areas.

| | 2016 Point in Time Data | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------|---------------|
| Location | U. S. | Texas | Texas BOS | Laredo |
| People experiencing homelessness | 549,928 | 23,122 | 6,048 | 168 |
| Individuals who are experiencing homelessness | 355,212 | 15,959 | 3,829 | Not reported |
| Families with children | 194,716 | 7,163 | 2,150 | Not reported |
| Unaccompanied youth | 35,686 | 1,309 | 457 | Not reported |
| Veterans | 39,471 | 1,768 | 64 | Not reported |
| Chronically homeless individuals | 77,486 individuals* | 3,534 | 823 | 19 |

Note: * 8,646 persons with families with children with chronic patterns of homelessness in the U.S.

Service Components

Assessing the magnitude of the problem of homelessness at the national, state, and local level gives a picture of the overall extent of the problem. To complete the needs assessment and understand what services are currently provided and where gaps in services exist is the next step. During the agency inventory data was gathered related to types of services offered, challenges in

providing services, and identified gaps. In Part V of this report every agency inventoried is listed and a description of the agency as well as, the services provided, are categorized and evaluated based on the following service components: planning and coordination, outreach and education, assessment, prevention, and housing. A table was created to demonstrate the link between the service components and the organizations presented in Part V (See Appendix F).

Planning and Coordination

The purpose of the planning component is to provide a vision for the future and address how those experiencing homelessness can be better served through the coordination of services. In order to expand partnerships and improve coordination, there should be meetings facilitated by the Mayor's office with plans to build working relationships amongst federal, state, and local agencies. Also, develop process changes that will be sustainable despite variations in staffing on the agency level. There should be focused areas or "teams" related to street outreach, housing (expanding housing stock and ensuring housing retention), counseling (including peer support), data sharing; therefore, coordination can be considered a key service component in not only addressing homelessness but in ending it.

Outreach and Education

Outreach is defined as an act of reaching out to people in homeless situations and disseminating information about available services in order to engage people in services. Outreach components in Laredo include, but are not limited to, meals, assessment, and/or disease management through agencies such as Bethany House, the South Texas Aging and Disability Center, Family Endeavors, the American Red Cross (fire/disaster victims), Department of Veterans Affairs, the Laredo Health Department, the Holding Institute and the many faith-based organizations. For example, Bethany House provides 12,000 meals per week to individuals through various social service programs in the area. The Laredo Health Department provides community outreach services through a binational Tuberculosis (Tb) program which provides daily medication and treatment for individuals identified as having active Tb in Laredo and Nuevo Laredo.

In the area of education, there were multiple entities in Laredo providing education services to individuals identified as homeless (both adults and youth). However, there did not seem to be a mechanism in place to coordinate the assessment and identification of this population among service providers.

Assessments and Prevention

Assessment is a collection and analysis of information to ensure that homeless persons are referred to the most appropriate service(s). All agencies utilize an assessment tool but, there is no mechanism in place for the sharing or review of these documents. There exist no meetings nor committees who gather the agency representatives to, (1) review one another's assessment

tools, (2) conduct a comparison of such tools, to tools used in other models of care, and (3) work together to identify gaps and strengths of the assessment tools in place. Within each agency, there did not appear to be allocated time to proactively review and refine internal assessment tools and processes. As internal agencies revise existing assessment tools, they tend to do this in isolation of the other service providers and therefore, are not aware of how their assessment tool will impact the system of care in Laredo.

Homelessness prevention includes activities and/or programs designed to prevent the incidence of homelessness. These activities and/or programs may include: housing relocation, housing stabilization services, and rental assistance, (which can range from three to 24 months) (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016a). There are multiple agencies providing assessments and prevention services such as: The Laredo Housing Authority, Bethany House, Family Endeavors, the City of Laredo Health Department, and the Veterans Affairs (VA) Outpatient Clinic. However, there are no set weekly or monthly conferences (among all agencies and stakeholders) to review assessments and prevention activities of agencies providing the similar services, i.e., assessment, prevention, etc. Questions which arose during interviews which could be addressed through case conferences included: “How are agencies identifying the rate of recidivism? What happens when a disabled person presents with no income? Is the person turned away? Which agency would be the best one to refer this person to? If my agency cannot help this person, what would be the best area agency to refer to? If I refer this person to an agency such as the Salvation Army, how do I know if that agency has time limits? What if I have an elderly client who was recently with no transportation present to my agency, once I determine that my agency cannot help him/her? How can I secure transportation for this individual to another area agency? How can I know which agency I should refer him/her to first?” Questions such as these could be addressed through LHC committee meetings with service providers providing the same service component in the area.

Housing

Housing is one of the most significant service components when addressing homeless issues. There are several different types of housing: emergency shelters, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and other permanent housing. This section will address each type of housing.

Emergency Shelter

Emergency shelters are defined as facilities equipped to provide temporary or transitional shelter for those experiencing homelessness (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016a). Although emergency shelters service the homeless population, most serve subpopulations that may include: youth, pregnant, survivors of domestic violence, families with children, and single adults.

Transitional Housing

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines transitional housing as a program that not only provides a place to stay but, one that is combined with supportive services for up to a 24-month period. (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016a). Transitional housing is designed to provide interim stability and support to homeless individuals. This is considered the next step for a homeless person in obtaining assistance and getting their needs met. This type of housing is augmented with supportive services that include but are not limited to: case management, job training, life skills training, child care, substance abuse treatment, mental health care, housing placement, and health care. Individuals being serviced by this program are required to have a lease or an occupancy agreement in place.

Permanent Supportive Housing

Permanent supportive housing (PSH) is permanent housing with indefinite leasing, rental assistance, and supportive services established to serve those with a disability or families with an adult and/or child with a disability in order to achieve housing stability (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016a). Disability is a requirement for eligibility into a HUD McKinney-Vento-funded program. Therefore, the majority of the persons serviced under PSH have disabilities. (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016a).

Permanent Affordable Housing

Affordable housing are properties that are built to provide a below-market rent for low-income people, persons with disabilities and/or seniors. Table 5.1 and 5.2 demonstrate agencies providing housing in Laredo by housing category. The literature suggests that a stepwise approach includes using emergency shelter to transitional housing and then permanent supportive or other permanent housing based on the individual needs of the client. There is a deficit in affordable housing in Laredo with the Laredo Housing Authority reporting a waiting list for public housing and section 8 units.

| Housing Inventory | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Emergency Shelter (ES) | Provides temporary or nightly shelter beds to people experiencing homelessness |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bethany House: Beds: 28 men, 22 women • Salvation Army: Beds: 18 men, 8 women • Casa de Misericordia: 42 Beds: Domestic Violence • Serving Children and Adults in Need (SCAN) - youth |
| Transitional Housing (TH) | Provide homeless people with up to 24 months of housing and supportive services |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bethany House: 17 units, 65 beds • SCAN |
| Safe Haven (SH) | Provides temporary shelter and services too hard to serve individuals |

| Laredo Housing for Formerly Homeless People |
|---|
| <p>Rapid Rehousing (RRH) Provides short term and medium term rental assistance and housing relocation and stabilization services to formerly homeless people experiencing homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bethany House |
| <p>Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Provides long term housing with supportive services for formerly homeless people with disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Westcare Next Steps: Beds: 16 male, 4 female |
| <p>Other Permanent Housing (OPH) Provides housing (with or without supportive services) that is specifically for formerly homeless people and in which disability is not a requirement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laredo Housing Authority: 962 units (low rent housing), 1189 units (Section 8) including 35 certificates issued through the family self-sufficiency program. • City of Laredo Community • Development Department • Laredo Municipal Housing • NeighborWorks Laredo |

Costs of Homelessness

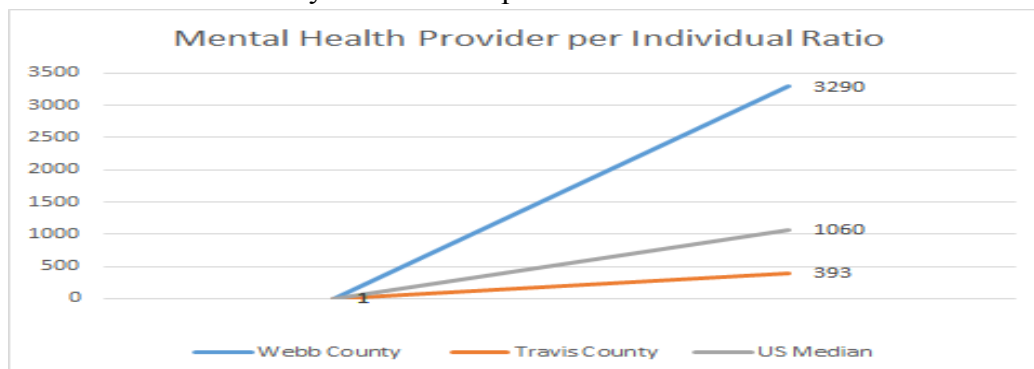
When taking the cost of homelessness into consideration, HUD reports an average homeless system cost for individuals (\$1,634 to \$2,308) lower than those for families (\$3,184 to \$20,031). It was also noted that 10% of individuals incurred up to 83% of total cost and 50% of individuals incurred 2-3% of the total cost (Spellman, Khadduri, Sokol, Leopold, Abt Associates Inc., 2010). According to the Federal Targeted Homeless Assistance Expenditures Sources, until the HEARTH Act in 2009, the homelessness assistance approximated \$2.5 billion and in 2014 exceeded \$5.4 billion in adjusted 2011 dollars (Lucas, 2016). According to Housing First, the average chronic homeless individuals' annual social cost is between \$40,000 and \$50,000 and expected to be higher for the non-chronic homeless. Evidence suggests that the majority of permanent supportive housing units go to non-chronic homeless individuals. This implies that the costs of federal homelessness policy are much higher than they appear (Lucas, 2016).

According to Fair Market Rent (FMR), the rent for a two-bedroom apartment is \$864. It must be noted that in order to afford this rent, a household is expected to earn \$2,880 monthly and/or \$34,563 annually (National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC), 2015). In Laredo, Texas the average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment in 2016 was reported as \$756 and is set to increase to \$815 in 2017. Therefore, taking into account the \$14.94 minimum wage in Laredo, TX, the annual income needed to afford this apartment, is \$31,080 making it evident that 2.1 full-time jobs at minimum wage are needed to afford this cost (NLIHC, 2015).

Social Determinants of Health

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2013), “the social determinants of health are the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work, and age, as well as the systems put in place to deal with illness. These circumstances are in turn shaped by a wider set of forces: economics, social policies, and politics”. The WHO recognizes that the social determinates of health are greatly shaped by inequitable distribution of power, and wealth, which exert great influence on people’s lives and determines their risk of illness and ability to achieve health. Jepson, Harris, Platt, and Tannahill (2010) stated, “given the importance of the socio-economic determinants of health and illness and their impact on morbidity, it is crucial that interventions designed to improve health take account of those very factors that may work against positive outcomes” (p.10). Research has found that poverty and homelessness are inextricably linked and it is the role of the systems of care in Laredo to work with policymakers and community leaders to prevent homelessness and work together to address a housing crisis when it occurs. Community leaders, advocates and policymakers recognize that the ability of Laredoans to achieve their optimum level of health is directly related to the social and environmental conditions in which they live. However, it should be stated that the citizens of Laredo face challenges which are not reported extensively in the literature. Consequently, these challenges may not be readily apparent to individuals that live outside of the area. There are challenges related to social determinants which can contribute greatly to the health and wellbeing of a population such as, high poverty rates, high rates of self-reported poor or fair health, and a lack of access to mental health and substance use providers. Currently, Webb county has 42% of children living in poverty (compared to the Texas average of 25%) and 33% of households (compared to Texas average of 18%) report one or more housing problems related to unaffordable housing, overcrowding, or housing which lacks adequate kitchen or plumbing facilities. Webb County also suffers from a severe lack of mental health providers with an average of 3,290 individuals per mental health provider or ratio of 1: 3,290. This ratio is startling when it is compared to Travis County, which has one mental health provider per 393 individuals or a ratio of 1:393, and to the U.S. median, which is 1:1060.

Table 2.2: Webb County’s Ratio of Population to Mental Health Providers



(University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, 2016).

Local, regional, and national policy makers find themselves in the unenviable position of attempting to address public health issues of a vulnerable population that are related to homelessness such as, mental health conditions, severe mental illness, substance abuse, tuberculosis, hepatitis C, and HIV while addressing the social factors which may contribute to the housing crisis. Policymakers address these public health issues with the use of budgetary allocations while simultaneously working with area representatives who find themselves in an accelerated technological setting. The policy makers and agency representatives in Laredo are working within a system that has productive individual agency processes. However, as an entire system it fails to view their work as part of a coordinated system; instead of the grouping of individual agencies that happen to co-exist within a much larger system of service delivery. When they begin to view the other agencies within the LHC, not as impediments or interruptions of their work but instead, as their best opportunity to improve the systems of care, then the system itself will become more aligned with their goals of ending homelessness. Data received from the inventories of stakeholders suggest regular inclusion, invitation, and participation in the LHC by the broad of community stakeholders. This could be one strategy toward strengthening collaboration in the city. Furthermore, it is important that policy makers weigh the costs and benefits of the programs they support and allocate their funds towards improving the systems of care which implement those programs. Policymakers may want to focus on policies and programs that will: (1) benefit the overall health of the community, (2) are based on the most current evidence, (3) are cost-effective, and (4) can promote health equity. Following the interviews with the area stakeholders, it is clear that the LHC is well poised to assist policy makers with this task if the LHC begins to work as a system and incorporate systems level changes to support the work of the group.

PART III: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Organizational structure is important to the success of any individual agency but is essential to a coalition or collaborative. The US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Community Planning and Development (2009), offered a guide for Coalition Development in the report *Building Effective Coalitions*. A coalition is an alliance between individuals and organizations that can be temporary or permanent, to achieve goals and objectives that no one individual or organization could accomplish on their own. The term *coalition* is commonly utilized but other terms such as Collaborative and Continuum of Care (CoC) are often used as well. However, using “CoC” language may result in a community misperception that the LHC is an independent CoC when it is currently within the TX BoS CoC.

The concept that the sum is greater than the individual parts is important but, the reality is that an effective coalition will provide benefits that incentivize stakeholder organizations to invest their time and efforts in the coalition. For example, one benefit for stakeholder participation in the LHC should be, the assistance the LHC would provide (while working closely with TX BoS staff) in reviewing and providing guidance based on system and individual agency data and performance reports. Benefits to the stakeholders can be achieved when a coalition or collaborative is strong. Benefits of building a strong effective coalition are: (1) coordination of services and process to enhance efficiency and avoid duplication of services, (2) improving overall communication, enhance information and data sharing, (3) full appreciation of community needs, (4) enhanced networking opportunities, and (5) increase funding opportunities (HUD, 2009).

Building an Effective Coalition

A coalition is not simply a group of organizations but instead, an *organization* of organizations where all participants share a common vision, mission, and goals with a clear understanding of the structure and expectations for participation. A coalition should have strong leadership, adequate staffing, effective management, and ongoing evaluation. Evaluation of the complex issues will address and develop a systematic, evidence-based, community wide approach to addressing those issues. To be most effective it is important to ensure that each organization in the coalition coordinates work so that everyone benefits from the resulting efficiency. Because of the number of organizations involved in any coalition, team building will allow for the development of partnerships and mutual goal achievements. The strategic planning that will begin this process of creating a successful coalition is the initial step. This process, will begin identifying ways to coordinate services and ways of linking agencies and resources in measurable ways. This coordination of care planning can improve the communication among the stakeholders and facilitate data sharing processes. An effective coalition will hold regular meetings that plan and complete the work of the coalition. Minutes of the group should reflect

discussion, action and accountability. Improved communication requires regular updates to the entire coalition. Members have to hold the group accountable for the mission, goals and objectives of the coalition (HUD, 2009).

Laredo Homeless Coalition (LHC) Historical Background

What began in the 1990's as a group of passionate and dedicated individuals advocating for those facing homelessness eventually evolved into a local organization known as the LHC. The visionaries that established the LHC in 2000 identified the need to provide better services to the homeless population in Laredo. As the needs of homeless in Laredo have evolved, so too, have the processes and workflows within the service agencies. These adaptations have resulted in multiple conflicting forms, internal policies, and processes that make coordination difficult. Each agency has different mission and vision statements, goals and objectives, and rarely meets to discuss a common vision and goal. Another challenge is the rapid advancement in technology since the Coalition was established 16 years ago. Regional and federal funding agencies are requiring the implementation of software and technology related to assessment, prioritization, identification, and management in order to receive funding. This funding will become increasingly dependent on the individual organizations' ability to meet quality metrics and performance standards. Implementation of technology has been slow and difficult due to limited resources for training and capacity. These challenges have resulted in staff working in different agencies finding it difficult to keep up with competing requirements of funding agencies while continuing to utilize outdated processes and an increased client need. Frequently, the policies and processing of their workflow may not reflect the complexity of the work or allow time to update policies and procedures. Evidence-based solutions are needed to identify best practices and plan the implementation of these policies across agencies so that day-to-day operations run smoothly and individual organizations have the ability to respond to crisis. There are agencies throughout the community working very hard, but without better coordination and sharing among all organizations, individual organizations will continue to experience a perpetual cycle of impediments and delays in the appropriate data collection and data reconciliation. These obstacles affect the agency's ability to meet quality metrics and performance measures. This is the complex system of assessment and service delivery that has evolved organically in Laredo, which is challenging to navigate. The LHC is in a place where the traditional way of providing care cannot meet the needs of the population nor the stakeholders within the LHC. The LHC currently functions as a housing emergency crisis response system but, it lacks the policies and organizational structure of a planning body that shares the goal of ending homelessness. The LHC will need to develop the organizational capacity in order to effectively address the complex and interrelated issues that result in homelessness. It is the aim of the authors of this report to assist the LHC in those efforts.

Laredo Homeless Coalition (LHC) Organizational Structure

The LHC was incorporated in 1999 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and has established bylaws, which outline a structure, that includes an executive director, a board of directors and committees. The number of individuals on the board of directors should be 18. The board of directors includes the president, vice-president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, treasurer, and chaplain. According to the LHC's bylaws, there should be an executive committee consisting of the following: the officers of the board of directors, the chair of the Finance committee, the chair of the Programs committee, and the chair of the Property committee. While the Coalition was originally established as a 501(c)(3), this designation was not continued and today the LHC does not function as a protected nonprofit organization. Its executive director position is a voluntary one. There is an informal core group of individuals identified within the website. However, a list of organizations participating in this coalition group are not easily identified or readily available for the community. There are approximately 20 organizations identified as members of the coalition. Within the intranet of the website the following list of coalition members are: Area Health Education Center (AHEC), Bethany House of Laredo, Border Region, Casa de Misericordia, City of Laredo Health Department, Family Endeavors, Holding Institute Community Center (HCC), Laredo Housing Authority (LHA), Laredo Independent School District (LISD), Serving Children and Adults in Need (SCAN), South Texas Development Council, South Texas Food Bank, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS), Texas Homeless Network (THN), Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), United Independent School District (UISD), Veterans Affairs (VA), Westcare Foundation and Workforce Solutions.

There are multiple organizations providing services in Laredo, such as nonprofit homeless assistance providers, victim service providers, public housing agencies, mental health agencies, government based organizations, city organizations, and nonprofit homeless assistance providers. The Laredo Homeless Coalition is a working group whose mission is to “determine and provide for the basic needs of homeless individuals and families,” (Laredo Homeless Coalition, 2017). The group also works to provide programs and services related to housing, mental and physical health, nutrition, clothing, and education.

Balance of State: The Texas Homeless Network (THN)

Texas Homeless Network (THN) is a non-profit membership-based 501(c)(3) organization helping Texas communities prevent and end homelessness. This organization is partially funded through Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs and Texas Department of State Health Services. THN provides training and technical assistance around the state of Texas helping service providers and communities better serve the homeless population with the end goal of preventing and ending homelessness.

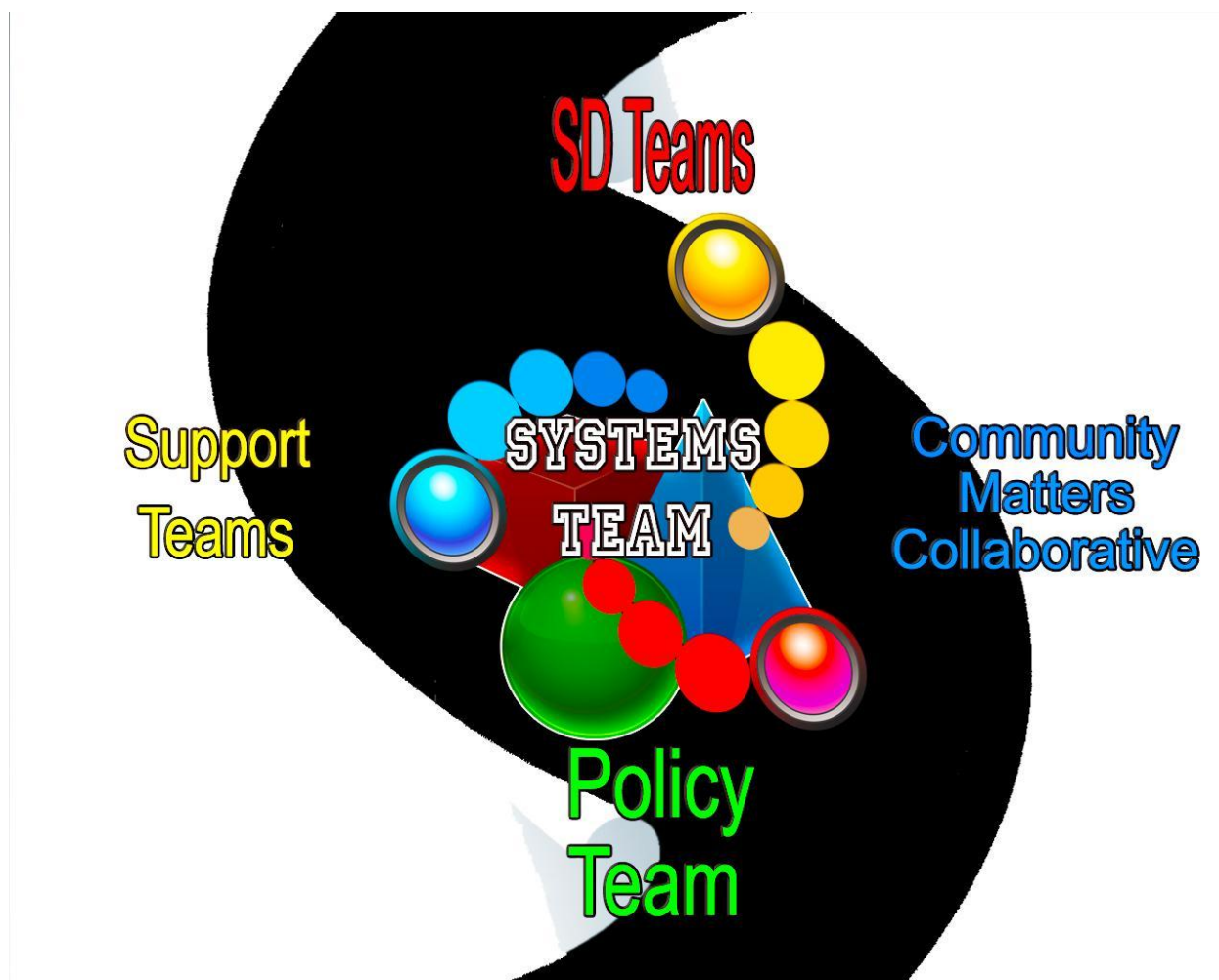
THN identifies local homeless coalitions as groups that plan and deliver homeless services, housing, and supportive services in communities that have a goal of preventing and

ending homelessness (Texas Homeless Network, 2016b). Since 2000, the LHC has been the lead organization addressing the issue of homelessness in Laredo, Texas and has worked with public and private agencies to address the issue of homelessness. In years past, the agencies and individuals working with the LHC developed strategies to secure funding for services provided in the area specifically those related to housing, workforce, and other supportive services. Each agency functioned as independent service providers, each with specific goals and objectives aimed at providing the highest level of service to their specific client populations. Each agency may have utilized a different definition of homelessness in order to determine eligibility criteria. Some agencies provided assistance to the homeless population in Laredo depending on which agency the individual interacted with at any given time and based on whether the individual met eligibility criteria. Currently, there are at least four agencies providing shelter to specific populations and several area agencies providing case management but, many providers view their work as distinct and separate of the work done by colleagues and peers. When community agencies function in silos, they tend to become attuned to the processes and protocols specific to their agency and rarely have the ability to completely understand the processes and protocols for other area service providers. This results in each agency and provider possessing only one perspective of a community wide problem.

Organizational Chart

At present, there is no organizational chart or flowchart that outlines how the agencies and organizations within the coalition interact. A flowchart is proposed using a modified version of the United Way's leadership Team Structure. The name "Community Matters" Collaborative is a name place holder for a restructuring of the Laredo Homeless Coalition. Since the LHC no longer holds 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, changing the name and restructuring the roles and responsibilities of member organizations may help to activate new partnerships and reinvigorate others. It is anticipated that the strategic planning process can determine if this is the right course of action or if continuing with the same name and a modified structure works best.

Exhibit 1. Community Matters Collaborative Team Structure Flowchart



The *Community Matters Collaborative* is a name coined to reflect a reimagined Laredo Homeless Coalition. The Collaborative should seek membership from public and private funders as well as, service providers. Thereby, pooling resources for reaching the goals of the Collaborative, which relate to developing local agency infrastructure and human capacity as well as, implementation of a coordinated entry system.

The leadership structure in Exhibit 1 is intended to guide the work. A general description of each aspect of the structural components is provided in the final recommendations section.

PART IV: EVIDENCED BASED SOLUTIONS

Entry Systems

A systematic response to a housing crisis may prevent homelessness. However, if and when homelessness arises it should be of short duration and should not recur. A community's response to a housing crisis may range from homeless shelters, field outreach, and crisis interventions (THN, 2016a). Providing community members with basic survival needs is crucial; yet, the ultimate objective should be to ensure permanent housing. Shifting from tertiary to primary prevention is key in avoiding and perhaps ending homelessness. Overall, CoC's should be accountable and develop a centralized (single) or decentralized (multiple/coordinated) entry system, which assesses the necessities of each individual and family requiring housing services (THN, 2016a). However, regardless of the type of entry system utilized, a systematic response is vitally necessary. The question lies in identifying the rationale for the housing crisis response entry system current evidence-based literature recommends.

Review of Literature

Literature was reviewed to identify and interpret the findings of comprehensive evidence-based data related to entry systems. A focus was placed on centralized vs. decentralized entry systems to populate relevant literature for the basis of this report. By utilizing a systematic approach, the literature reviewed served as evidence to guide the researchers' recommendations. The process involved searching for relevant literature, critiquing, evaluating, and synthesizing the results with a possibility of encountering gaps in the current literature that may serve as a guide for further research studies. The objective of this section is to provide a thorough review of what has been published pertaining to entry systems. In the following section the methodology, search strategy, results, and discussion will be addressed.

Methodology

Entry systems was selected as the topic and focus of the literature review in order to guide the researchers' recommendations with evidence-based data. After conducting a literature search using the TAMIU Library search engine EBSCO, sufficient literature was retrieved to provide evidence for the researchers.

Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted by utilizing the Texas A&M International University Sue and Radcliffe Killam Library resources. The keywords "homeless persons" and "programs" and services" and "effectiveness or efficacy or effective or success" and "United States" were searched in Health Source: Nursing/Academic (Hits 15), MEDLINE (Hits 5), CINAHL (Hits 4), ERIC (Hits 140), Academic Source (47), SocINDEX with Full Text (Hits 30), Education Source

(Hits 0), Education Full Text (Hits 0), and Criminal Justice (Hits 4) to identify homelessness definitions, and centralized versus decentralized entry systems. The number of “hits” are non-duplicated sources. The inclusion criteria included full-text, peer-reviewed, academic journals, English language and United States. The publication dates were auto generated from the years 2011-2016. However, articles that were either duplicates, irrelevant, or did not clearly fit the criteria were excluded. After these exclusions the final sample totaled 164 articles. The articles selected identified entry systems as a central theme with either centralized or decentralized entry as its focus and those that focused on a theme closely related were avoided. The results of this review are addressed below.

Background: Homelessness Entry Systems

A homelessness system response requires an entry system or point, much like a front door, that utilizes a tool to assess homelessness and utilizes the data collected to comprehensively guide individualized, referral decisions (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2011). However, that is solely *one* entry system or point. Furthermore, the referral decision should be based on comprehensive knowledge of each program’s specific requirements, population for which they serve, and their availability (NAEH, 2011). Considering that homelessness entry systems are referred to in various ways, the authors felt compelled to provide the terms that are used at a national (National Alliance to End Homelessness; HUD), state (THN), and local (LHC) level.

National Terms

The U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) organizes and accelerates the national response to homelessness (2015a). USICH uses the term decentralized entry (2015a). The U.S. Department of Housing Urban Development (HUD) uses the terms “centralized, decentralized entry, and coordinated process” which are used interchangeably (HUD, 2015a). The National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH), a nonprofit, nonpartisan, organization, goes on to say that entry systems that use the *same* processes can be termed as having a “decentralized entry process”; “decentralized entry system” (NAEH, 2011, p.1). Moreover, NAEH separates entry system or process into different models: centralized and decentralized (2011). Centralized entry refers to one specific location and decentralized entry has multiple sites (NAEH, 2011). Uncoordinated entry systems are unfavorable considering that they result in duplication of data and inefficient use of supportive services. A comparison of centralized and decentralized entry points is provided (See Appendix H). It is important to note that for clarity of this report we utilized National Alliance to End Homelessness definition of centralized and decentralized entry systems.

State Terms: Coordinated (Decentralized) Entry

Texas Homeless Network (THN) utilizes an entry system they refer to as Coordinated Entry System (CES). Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care Coordinated Entry Written Standards Version 0.1 Draft, defines coordinated entry system as “an intake, assessment, and referral/housing placement system that uses standardized tools and processes to assess housing needs and match people to the most appropriate and least intensive intervention needed to end their housing crisis” (p. 6).

According to Texas Homeless Network (2016), a Coordinated Entry System (CES) allows persons experiencing homelessness or those at-risk for homelessness to easily and quickly navigate through their housing crisis and acquire assistance immediately. Prompt and appropriate individualized, referrals for housing interventions are vital to the process. It is important to note that CES is “a powerful process [but] not a program” (p.7). The hallmark of CES is that individuals are prioritized based on need and assigned to the appropriate intervention almost immediately. The goal of CES is to “standardize the access, assessment, and referral process” (p.7). THN states that if communities implement CES, operate simultaneously, and respond systematically to homelessness; it is then, that homelessness can be ended as opposed to simply managed (2016).

According to HUD, there are minimum requirements for a CES: (1) complete coverage of the geographic area, (2) easily accessed by individuals and families seeking housing or services, (3) well-advertised, and (4) includes a comprehensive and standardized tool (THN, 2016). Some qualities for an effective CES are “prioritization, low barrier, person-centered, fair and equal access, emergency services, standardized access and assessment, inclusive, referral to projects and protocols, outreach, ongoing planning and stakeholder consultation, informing local planning, leverage local attributes and capacity, safety planning, using HMIS and other systems for CE, and full coverage of a geographic area,” (THN, 2016, p. 7).

Local Terms

The Laredo Homeless Coalition currently does not utilize either a “coordinated” or “decentralized/centralized” (HUD, 2015a; USICH, 2015a; NAEH, 2011) entry system. The current entry is a fragmented, uncoordinated system. Homeless individuals, families, and children in need of assistance access services through self-selection. How and where any homeless individual will choose to access services, is primarily based on individual choice and knowledge of what is available. Also, there are currently only five agencies utilizing the HMIS software to track and identify new homeless persons and follow previously identified homeless clients. In order for a service delivery system to work efficiently, each agency needs to know the eligibility criteria, intake process, and policies for interagency referrals. While an inventory directory of services is a necessary first step, it is not enough. One approach would be to expand the directory to include details about eligibility, intake processes, and protocol for inter-agency referral and follow-up. Although an expanded directory will be helpful, it will not be the solution

to improving the fragmented system which currently exists in the community. In the future, all CoC funded agencies will need to determine if they will utilize a centralized or decentralized entry system. Ultimately the LHC's leadership will be vital in the decision making process and the effective implementation of an entry system that best fits the organizations and community they serve. The advantages and disadvantages of centralized versus decentralized entry systems will be described in the following section and recommendations related to the type of entry system will be found in PART VI.

Advantages & Disadvantages of Decentralized Entry System

A decentralized entry system (DES) is a coordinated multi-site approach to collecting data and provide services as homeless persons access different agencies. Decentralization requires multiple locations across the community to provide intake and assessment. Ideally each location would have the ability to make connections with diversion, prevention, and rapid re-housing resources as well as provide referrals for other services. Decentralized entry systems are best designed for large communities that are spread out geographically.

Disadvantages of a DES are related to loss of consistency, financial burden, and additional resources. Providing coordinated entry at multiple locations may result in a lack of consistency across agencies in terms of provision of services, referrals, and data management.

Another disadvantage is the potential increased financial burden placed on the local agencies. The implementation across multiple sites may require more staff, enhanced and ongoing training and additional physical space.

In addition to the loss of consistency and financial burden, there is the ability to attract and retain qualified staff to support the additional workload. The ability of supplying sufficient resources, both financial and other support, should not be underestimated. While there are significant disadvantages, there are also advantages to adopting a DES.

Texas Homeless Network identifies multiple advantages for employing a decentralized entry system. These advantages can be classified as benefits related to function, households experiencing housing crisis, service providers, and the housing service response system. The advantages are described below but must be analyzed based on the current organization's capacity and resources necessary to participate in a decentralized system.

According to Texas Homeless Network (2016), a decentralized entry system does offer some functional advantages such as, aiding with community planning and the ability to quickly and effectively distribute resources based on severity of needs of homeless individuals. This in turn, ensures that those that require immediate assistance can be prioritized. Any information gathered through DES can be inputted into HMIS which can help guide community decisions based on objective, rather than subjective, possibly biased, inaccurate data. (THN, 2016).

Other benefits of DES identified by THN for households with a housing crisis are: (1) regardless of where an individual seeks help, they receive standardized but individualized access to services and housing (equality), (2) those experiencing a housing crisis will make less phone

calls and undergo less eligibility screenings (saves time and effort), (3) those experiencing a housing crisis will be given a definitive answer whether they will or will not receive housing resources (THN, 2016).

The benefits of DES identified by THN for service providers are: (1) promotes collaboration within providers and fosters transparency, (2) augments the appropriateness of referrals, (3) saves time by reducing the time spent answering household calls, eligibility household screening, household waitlist management, and household unit filling (THN, 2016).

Finally, the benefits of DES identified by THN for a housing crisis response system are: (1) provides full advantage for existing finances and resources, (2) creates system flow and decreases waitlists, (3) narrows the focus of shared goals, (4) increases effectiveness/decreases ineffectiveness, (5) increased data accuracy and comprehension, (6) continuous HMIS gap analysis, (7) reduce costs by using efficient services, (8) reduce relapse, and (9) decrease the amount of households experiencing homelessness (THN, 2016).

Advantages & Disadvantages of Centralized Entry Systems

A Centralized Entry System (CES) can be both advantageous and disadvantageous. As previously mentioned in Table 4.1 some drawbacks can be: the need for multiple referrals, face to face assistance, and the center not be equally accessible to all. An advantage to a CES may be that it is easier to handle a great amount of clients and fewer sites are necessary. This in turn, will result in less time spent training and coordinating multiple providers.

Ann Thoreson, Director of Atlantic Homeless Alliance, has implemented New Jersey's Single Point of Entry program in Atlantic County which required a 10-year preparation plan. The program is funded by a social service block grant funding and the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA). Thoreson decided to implement a single point of entry system (centralized) since it was identified as best practice. Services were fragmented and there was a lack of communication and connection to services in a timely manner. Thoreson stresses that data collection is extremely important in order to drive allocation of services and resources. An advantage mentioned by this author was the potential for its success and the reduced frustration for the individual and the system. However, coordination is difficult and finding affordable housing and lack of resources were disadvantages noted (Lahey, 2014).

Count Methodology

Quantifying the population of homeless is a challenge nation-wide. Communities across the country big and small struggle to comply with increasing government regulation tied to funding. A limited literature review found that there are two acceptable methods approved by HUD for counting the homeless population. A description of the type of counts and recommendations outlined by HUD follows.

Developing Appropriate Count

It is necessary to approach the goal of ending homelessness in communities with strategies that are based on the best evidence currently available, while recognizing the specific needs of the communities and populations they serve. There exists multiple methods and tools (mandated by HUD) to determine an accurate count of the number of individuals experiencing homelessness within a geographic area. For example, the Homelessness Data Exchange (HDX) is an online tool designed for the submission of data by Continuum of Care (CoC) groups nationwide. The HDX includes: Housing Inventory Count (HIC), PIT Count and Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR). According to HUD, HIC is a point-in-time inventory of provider programs within the CoC that provide beds and units dedicated to serve persons who are homeless and are categorized by the following five program types: (1) emergency shelter, (2) transitional housing, (3) safe haven, (4) rapid re-housing, and (5) permanent supportive housing (2016). The AHAR is a report based primarily on the HMIS data and prepared by HUD, to provide the United States Congress with an outline of the extent and nature of homelessness in America. This report is designed to provide: nationwide estimates of homelessness, demographic characteristics of homeless persons, service use patterns, and the capacity for housing homeless persons (HUD, 2016).

Tool for Decentralized Entry System (DES)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recommends three strategies for successful DES: utilization of the Housing and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) software product, Housing Inventory Count (HIC) and Point-In-Time (PIT) survey. There are other tools utilized for special populations such as the veteran population; HUD- Supportive Housing vouchers (HUD-VASH), OSNIUM (a Texas Council on Family Violence software for domestic violence population), and the VI-SPDAT for street outreach.

Homeless Management Information Systems (HMIS)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has designated the Housing and Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) as its recommended resource for data collection, management and reporting by continuums of care (CoC). HMIS data is used to not only inform policy at the federal, state and local levels but, it is used to produce an unduplicated count of individuals experiencing homelessness, identify patterns of service use, and measure program effectiveness. HUD expects the use of HMIS data by Continuums of Care to be used for tracking progress in meeting performance goals, community-wide planning and allocation of resources to prevent and end homelessness (HUD, 2016). The HEARTH Act required HUD to establish standards related to HMIS, including standards related to encryption of the data collected and the rights of persons receiving services under the McKinney-Vento Act. Although CoC's are not required to utilize the HMIS software system, it is a software management system that complies with HUD's data collection, management and reporting

standards, and is the system currently utilized by lead agencies in Laredo such as Bethany House, Westcare, and City of Laredo. The HUD-VASH program utilizes a different software to collect data for their population and Casa de Misericordia utilizes a separate software data system as well. Although several area organizations utilize a shared HMIS system, very few have issued intra-agency policies and procedures on how to access, update, and otherwise utilize their HMIS system.

Organizations Using HMIS in Laredo

The results of the interviewing process revealed that Laredo currently has 18 user licenses for access to the HMIS software program among five different organizations. The organizations currently using the HMIS system are: Bethany House, Border Region WestCare/Next Step Program, Catholic Social Services, and Family Endeavors. There may be other organizations also licensed to input data but it has been difficult to confirm. Another local organization, Casa de Misericordia, does not input data into HMIS due to concerns of violating the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) which would result in a loss of funding. Casa de Misericordia works to ensure that their clients have access to the VAWA applications and that the data is uploaded into a software data management system which ensures the information is aggregate, de-identified data. The coalition is working with Casa de Misericordia to collect data from their clients in a way that maintains compliance with all funding requirements.

Studies conducted to assess outcomes related to transitional housing, community-based rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, and subsidies, determined that housing choice vouchers had a greater impact on ending family homelessness and housing subsidies and rapid rehousing were the most cost-effective homelessness interventions (HUDb, 2015). With the exception of Bethany House, currently no other temporary shelter is inputting data into HMIS. Representatives of local agencies report that there are few policies or protocols within each facility to explain the steps of how to appropriately input the data into the HMIS system. Also, the use of HMIS comes with a financial cost in order to obtain the software licensure for organizational use. This cost will need to be considered when determining centralized or decentralized entry and data collection.

Housing Inventory Count (HIC)

One of the Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs is the Housing Inventory Count (HIC). HIC is conducted annually during the last days in January. It provides a snapshot of the CoC's inventory of housing services. The HIC report tallies the number of beds and units available on the night designated for the count by program type (emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing, safe haven, and permanent supportive housing), and includes beds dedicated to serve individuals who are homeless.

Vulnerable Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT)

VI-SPDAT is the convergence of two evidence based tools used for street outreach assessments. This assessment tool is comprised of the following domains: history of housing and homelessness, risks, socialization and daily function and wellness. The assessment offers

recommendations based on an accurate needs measurement, thus ensuring appropriate referrals for assistance in addressing homelessness.

VI-SPDAT in Laredo

Three area agencies interviewed reported their use of VI-SPDAT, which is a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool. These agencies were: Bethany House, Westcare, and Family Endeavors. There are reports of an additional two agencies utilizing this tool in Laredo. However, this was not able to be confirmed prior to submission of this report to the area stakeholders; so those agencies were not listed in the January 2017 report. The HUD-VASH representative reported their agency uses a similar but more comprehensive assessment tool. The next steps for the city would be to determine the lead agency for the LHC, which many stakeholders identified as Bethany House and designate the lead agency work closely with representatives from the TX BoS CoC. The lead agency must have a staff person allotted work release time to work with the agency and coalition. This responsibility cannot be added onto current work duties required. The agency and its representative would work closely with the Texas Balance of State to identify and implement a comprehensive standardized assessment tool such as the VI-SPDAT and Family VI-SPDAT to identify and prioritize clients for services with the goal of doing so by mid 2017. Identification itself will not be sufficient. Agencies must also prioritize their waiting lists to reflect the implementation of this tool into their day to day workflow. This process should be done in accordance with TX BoS CoC written standards, toolkit, and in close collaboration with the TX BoS CoC staff.

Point -in-Time (PIT) Survey Tools

The PIT count, which is conducted annually on sheltered and biannually on unsheltered populations, helps identify a community's needs. While not required, the Texas Balance of State CoC conducts both counts annually. The data collected from the PIT count is used to measure homelessness on a local, regional, and national level. This data is used to inform the general public, policymakers, and Congress of the extent of homelessness in the United States. Therefore, it is vital for communities who receive federal funding or anticipate applying for future CoC funding; to ensure they are accurately collecting the PIT count and communicating their data effectively. Collecting an accurate PIT count for Laredo would be pivotal to helping the community in their program planning for the fiscal year 2017 and beyond. However, research has demonstrated that there is often a variability in how communities are collecting the PIT and this variability can result in undercounting. Therefore, the LHC must work to obtain the most accurate PIT data. Often, the PIT count is conducted by a lead agency serving the homeless in the community, which in the case of Laredo would be Bethany House.

The Point-in-Time Mobile Application Tool is a mobile application that was developed by HUD as an optional resource for assistance in improving the accuracy of the PIT count beginning 2015. Evaluation of the use of this application has shown a benefit in improving the quality and accuracy of the data collected. It also integrates well with the HMIS data. An

additional benefit of using the application is that it can analyze data related to geographical location. The mobile application was not utilized in 2016 but, stakeholders interviewed expressed interest in moving to the mobile application based on best practices and the improvement in accuracy. HUD now provides the mobile application as open source through December, 2018.

Point-in-Time Count Current Procedure

The process for conducting the 2016 PIT count consisted of approximately ten volunteer teams. Each of these teams consisted of three members who identified a geographic area (within the City of Laredo) which was strategically visited to either interview the individuals or extrapolate the information based on the evident number of individuals in a given location. In Part II of this report the demographics of the 2016 PIT count are provided. A table was created to compare select common demographics from the Laredo Homeless Coalition (2016, 2015) *Homeless Count and Characteristics Survey Results* (2015) and Point-In-Count (2016) (See Appendix I).

By viewing the table of data submitted for the 2016 PIT count in Laredo, it becomes apparent that the process of utilizing the PIT paper assessment resulted in the challenges with the accuracy of the data collected. For example, for the category of “individuals who are experiencing homelessness,” the 2016 PIT report for Laredo states, “not reported.” After interviewing stakeholders who participated in the 2015 and 2016 PIT count, potential solutions suggested include: (1) increasing the number of volunteers who participate in the PIT count, (2) improve training of PIT volunteers, and (3) utilize the free mobile HUD PIT application.

It is a recommendation of the authors of this report that a diverse team of PIT volunteers (from several city organizations) plan and coordinate the 2017 count by: (1) dividing the city of Laredo by council districts (this has been done in other cities such as San Antonio, TX), (2) assign zones within each district, and (3) assign teams to each zone. It is important for communities to refine and improve their PIT data collection processes to more accurately reflect the numbers of unaccompanied youth for 2017. This is of importance due to the fact that HUD and federal partners have decided that PIT counts conducted in January 2017 will serve as the baseline through which HUD and its federal partners will measure future trends. Furthermore, the researchers recommend the LHC work with city and county officials to develop a plan to include a countywide PIT count in the future that would include surrounding areas such as the colonias.

2017 PIT Count

Initially, the authors considered broadening the 2017 PIT count to include Webb county. However, because the decentralized entry system (DES) may need to be implemented during the January 2017-May 2017 timeline and due to the need to conduct the strategic planning during that same time frame, it was decided that the 2017 count would only include the city. Therefore,

it was decided that broadening the PIT count in January 2017 could overtax the system that is currently in place. Many of the same individuals would potentially be working on the PIT, DES, and LHC changes concurrently. Therefore, the team determined that the highest priority tasks should be strategic planning, establishing the process for the city wide PIT count, and working to implement the DES system.

PART V: INVENTORY OF SERVICES

Service Directory Organizations

The result of the inventory of services is the creation of a service directory. A list of the agencies and organizations inventoried and included in the directory is provided in this report (See Appendix A). The directory has been created with the dual purpose of providing a synopsis of the organization, outlining the services provided and the hours of operation, and to provide the agency's information on a printable flyer or brochure. The directory is presented in an electronic book format and as a one-inch binder containing each organization's information (within 2 pages) printed in color and inserted into page protectors. The following will provide a summary of the organizations and identify the service component (or components) each agency provides within the community. Below is a map that plots the location of services accessed by the homeless.



Association for the Advanced of Mexican Americans

Association for the Advanced of Mexican Americans (AAMA) Concilio Hispano Libre, also known as, Concilio Hispano Libre, is a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center with a primary focus on substance abuse treatment and services. This center provides pharmacological treatment such as methadone and methadone detoxification services for individuals with opiate addiction.

AAMA Inc. was founded in 1970, and its drug prevention programs began in 1976 with a mission to inspire and empower at-risk Latinos to pursue their potential and achieve success by focusing its efforts on education, workforce readiness and leadership development. It was not until 1994 that AAMA established a center along the Texas/Mexico border. Today the center provides outpatient care as well as, services and programs for persons with co-occurring mental and substance abuse disorders, pregnant and postpartum women, criminal justice group, counseling, and life skills training.

The service components addressed by this organization include education, assessment and prevention. The organization addresses the education service component by providing counseling services to their clients. The AAMA addresses assessment and prevention by providing services which includes treatment, outpatient care, partial hospitalization as well as, detoxification services and preventive services. However, the AAMA does not address the planning, coordination and outreach and housing service components.

Asociación Pro Servicios Sociales, Inc.

Asociación Pro Servicios Sociales, Inc. (APSS) was established in 1973 in Laredo, Texas and was chartered as a non-profit corporation in January, 1975. Since its foundation APSS has provided services to migrant and seasonal farm workers, supported the residents of the Azteca neighborhood by assisting in the organization of the Azteca Economic Development and Preservation Corporation and the Neighborhood Housing Services program. The services provided are carried out by knowledgeable, bilingual/bicultural personnel, with the awareness of the community's needs.

APSS is a 501(c)(3) private non-profit organization that advocates for and represents those of low socioeconomic status. APSS provides services specific to the needs of migrant-seasonal farm workers, provides social services and conducts activities to reduce hunger. The types of services provided by this organization are: social work services, utilities assistance, rental assistance, food, business services, immigration services, tax preparation services, entrepreneurial services, consortium of charitable organizations and technical support.

This organization addresses the planning, coordination, education, assessment and prevention components by the provision of the following services: social work services, utilities assistance, rental assistance, food, business services, immigration services, tax preparation services, entrepreneurial services, consortium of charitable organizations, and technical support. APSS does to address the outreach and housing service component.

Bethany House

Bethany House is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, that assists the homeless and other indigent throughout Laredo and Webb County. Bethany House is comprised of four separate facilities: (1) Barbara A. Kazen Center for Hope, (2) Community Shelter Complex & Resource Center, (3) Dining Kitchen and, (4) Vintage Store.

Since its establishment in 1982 by Father Charles McNaboe, Bethany House has evolved from serving seventeen individuals to presently serving over 2000 individuals (homeless, at risk persons in need and families). By 1984, Bethany House officially received non-profit status. In 2009 with the help of Maria Bruni Leyendecker, Bethany house gained its permanent home at 817 Hidalgo Street. In 2014, Bethany House celebrated the completion of the Barbara A. Kazen Center.

Bethany House of Laredo addresses the following service components: planning, and coordination, outreach and education, assessment and prevention, and housing. The planning and coordination components, are addressed through the provision of case management services and referrals to community agencies. For the outreach and education components, this agency provides street corner meals, homebound meals, Kids Cafe, job-skills, life-skills, Luz De Esperanza-Learning Program, after school tutoring, and faith-based services. As for the assessment and the prevention components, this organization provides needs assessment evaluation and a food pantry. This organization addresses the housing component by the provision of an emergency shelter and transitional housing.

Border Region

Border Region Behavioral Health Center, originally known as *The Laredo State Center*, was established in 1979 and operated from the former Air Force-Base Hospital providing mental health and mental retardation services to the citizens of Webb, Jim Hogg, Starr, and Zapata counties. In 2001, The Laredo State Center transitioned into a community center. It was not until 2011 that Border Region MHMR decided to change its name to Border Region Behavioral Health Center. Today, the center services over 3500 clients in the South Texas region. Its mission is to promote independence by provide cost-effective services that improve the quality of life.

Border region addresses the following service components: planning, coordination, outreach, education, assessment and prevention. For the planning and coordination components, this organization provides case management services for adult and intensive case management services for children. For the outreach and education components, this organization has an established mobile crisis outreach team, medication training, skills training, and rehabilitation. As for the assessment and the prevention components, this organization provides pre-screening and evaluations, counseling, crisis interventions, continuity of care, medication support, peer and parent support services, and crisis respite. This organization does not address the housing service component.

Community Action Agency (CAA)

The Webb County Community Action Agency (CAA) serves the community of Laredo by providing case management, support services and agency referrals. This agency has four neighborhood service centers “concellios,” which include a caseworker, who coordinates services and intakes for their clients. Some of the programs offered by this agency are: utility assistance, rental assistance, meals, grocery bags, home visits for those in need of assistance, outreach services, and referrals for emergency, legal, social and health services.

This agency addresses the planning and coordination, outreach and education, and assessment and prevention service components. For the planning and coordination components, this agency carries out comprehensive anti-poverty plans, provides caseworker assistance to its clients, links to community based services, and transportation services. It addresses the outreach and education components, by providing outreach efforts to low-income seniors, meals on wheels’ program, clean-up campaigns, financial literacy classes, construction classes and energy conservation education. For the assessment and prevention components, this agency carries out community wide assessments, financial and non-financial resources, advocacy for those in need and partnerships with other community agencies. This organization does not address the housing service component.

Casa De Misericordia

Casa de Misericordia (CASA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which provides secure, temporary residential services to victims of domestic violence. Casa de Misericordia opened its doors on July 7, 1998. CASA’s goal is to provide secure, temporary residential services to victims of domestic violence. It offers comprehensive, holistic services and consistent long-term support as well as, an emergency shelter which provides services beyond those of shelter, food and clothing. CASA provides information on possible alternatives for the future of the victims, e.g. housing, education, counseling and more. CASA services victims of domestic violence without regard of race, origin, age, handicap, religion or sexual orientation.

CASA addresses the planning and coordination components by providing community referrals and legal assistance. For the outreach and education components, CASA provides outreach education, non-residential outreach services, legal assistance, and assistance with the judicial system. It addresses the assessment and prevention components with the provision of a residential shelter with a 24-hour crisis line, and counseling services for adult and children. CASA addresses the housing service component by the provision of temporary residential services for victims of domestic violence.

Catholic Social Services

Catholic Social Services of Laredo, Inc. (CSS) is a non-profit organization under the auspices of the Diocese of Laredo. As a multi-program human services agency, CSS is a community-based organization focused on serving the people of the Diocese of Laredo. Since

the 1970's CSS has served the following counties: Webb, Zapata, Maverick and Jim Hogg. Catholic Social Services of Laredo, Inc. was originally established as Laredo Family Counseling Services, providing services to local families. Today, CSS offers a wide range of services and programs focused on serving individuals and families who live in economically distressed areas. All program services are provided without regard of religion, race, income, disability, and/or sexual orientation.

This organization addresses planning, coordination, education, assessment and prevention service components. For the planning and coordination components this agency provides consultations for immigration services and immigration preparation & processing. For the outreach and education components this agency provides document translation. For the assessment and prevention components this agency provides financial and non-financial assistance, prescription medication assistance, senior center program, free meals, activities and exercise. This organization does not address the housing service component.

Children's Advocacy Center

The Children's Advocacy Center of Laredo-Webb County (CAC) is a non-profit organization established in 1995 to service child victims of domestic violence and/or abuse. This agency provides a secure child-sensitive environment for victims of domestic violence and/or abuse, and their families. The type of services this center provides include: counseling, assessment, forensic interviewing, multidisciplinary team meetings, child advocacy, victim assistance services, social services, and community outreach programs. Since its establishment, the CAC has serviced over 7000 clients. Today, CAC offers a full range of services and is dedicated to meet the needs of child victims and their families.

The service components that this agency addresses are: planning, coordination, outreach, education, assessment and prevention. The planning and coordination components are addressed by the provision of social services and child advocates who familiarize the patient with the interview, investigation treatment and services. The outreach and education components are addressed by community outreach programs and victim education. The assessment and prevention components are addressed by the execution of forensic interviews, by the provision of counseling and assessment services, provision and access to a licensed psychologist, ongoing-treatment for victim and family. This organization does not address the housing service component.

Dismas Charities Inc.

Dismas was founded in 1964 and headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky. Dismas Charities Inc. is a national, non-profit organization currently operating 27 facilities and 9 support offices in twelve states. Dismas serves as an entry point for men and women returning to society from state and federal prison by providing residential and non-residential supervision and treatment services. Some of the services provided are: education (focused on increasing the

individual's' re-adaptation to society), employment, employment training, and support services (clothing, family counseling, medical assistance) and also volunteer opportunities. Dismas is "committed to reducing victimization in communities through high-technology software development, systems integration, industry research, and fee-for-service government contracted reentry services for offenders."

The service components that this agency addresses planning, coordination, outreach, education, assessment and prevention. The planning and coordination components are addressed by the provision of case management services and medical assistance. The outreach and education components are addressed by the provision of religious studies, anger management, women's programs, Alcoholics-Narcotics-Cocaine Anonymous, parenting, marriage enhancement, employment, job skills, GED courses, college courses and money management. The assessment and prevention components are addressed by support services which includes evaluations, residence, clothing and counseling services. Dismas addresses the housing service component by the provision of residence for their clients.

Family Endeavors

Family Endeavors is a non-profit agency with a mission to provide comprehensive, effective, and innovative services that empower people to build better lives for themselves, their families, and their communities. Family Endeavors, Inc. was founded in 1969 in order to meet the most pressing needs of the San Antonio community. Currently, Family Endeavors provides its services throughout 21 locations across six states. In June of 2015, Family Endeavors established its presence in Laredo, TX and serve the Veterans in our community.

Locally, Family Endeavors provides an array of services that target Veterans experiencing homelessness and/or those at risk of homelessness. These services include: case management, emergency financial assistance for rent & utilities, street outreach, assistance in obtaining VA benefits, and referrals to other agencies in the community.

The service components addressed by this agency are: planning, coordination, outreach, education, assessment and prevention. For the planning and coordination components this agency provides case management services, development of housing stability plan, assistance in obtaining veterans benefits and referrals to community agencies, financial counseling and legal assistance. The outreach and education components are addressed by the provision of street outreach services. For the assessment and prevention components this agency provides a needs assessment and financial assistance. This organization does not address the housing service component.

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity of Laredo-Webb County is 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International. Habitat for Humanity of Laredo-Webb County was incorporated and chartered in April 1995. This organization aims to demonstrate the love of

Jesus Christ by manifesting God's love through the creation of opportunities for individuals and families to have a durable shelter to abide in. Habitat for Humanity is an active advocate for affordable housing, a promoter of dignity and hope. Successful work encompasses a "positive, lasting social, economic and spiritual change within our community."

This agency addresses the following service components: planning, coordination, outreach, education, assessment and prevention. The planning and coordination components are addressed by the provision of construction process. The outreach and education components are addressed by the provision of volunteer opportunities, and informational services once a week and its Restore facility which is used for the sale of furniture, appliances, home decor and building material. The assessment and prevention components are addressed by support services such as assessment of low income status and down payment assistance. This organization does not address the housing service component.

Holding Institute

The Holding Community Center also known as Holding Institute and originally known as Laredo Seminary, is a non-profit organization located in downtown Laredo, Texas. It was founded in 1880 by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The school was founded for the instruction of Mexican children by A. H. Sutherland and Joseph Norwood. By 1945, over 35 percent of the students who had attended the school were from Mexico. Unfortunately, due to insufficient funding the school closed its doors in May of 1983. In 1987, under the supervision of a division of the national Methodist Church, the Holding Institute reopened as a community center. Some of the classes offered at that time were: carpentry, upholstering, cake decorating, sewing, English as a second language and occupational skills. Today, in collaboration with the United Methodist Women and other community partners, the Holding Institute responds to the needs of women, children, youth, and families. Its focus is primarily on health & wellness, education, discipleship and the improvement of the community.

This agency addresses the following service components: planning, coordination, outreach, education, assessment and prevention. For the planning and coordination components this agency provides referrals to community agencies. The outreach and education components are addressed by the provision of GED classes, college and vocational school guidance, ESL classes, computer courses, citizenship classes and life skills workshop. For the assessment and prevention components this agency provides preventive health care, spiritual health, social health, nutrition courses and counseling. This organization does not address the housing service component.

Laredo Housing Authority

Laredo Housing Authority (LHA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which provides, housing assistance to include public housing, section-8 and farm labor. LHA also provides family self-sufficiency instruction, senior/disabled services and residential council opportunities.

Since its establishment in 1939, the Laredo Housing Authority (LHA), has diligently worked with community partners to provide supportive services and self-sufficiency classes with a goal to improve the community's quality of life by serving, collaborating and empowering. LHA currently owns and manages 994 public housing units and administers the Housing Choice Voucher Program for over a 1000 families in Laredo, Zapata and Asherton.

This organization addresses the following service components: planning, coordination, outreach, education, assessment, prevention and housing. The planning and coordination service components are addressed by the provision of supportive services and referrals to other community agencies. The outreach and education components are addressed by the provision of resident councils, self-sufficiency instruction which includes ESL courses, English literacy and Civic education, and GED courses. For the assessment and prevention components this agency provides supportive services and referrals to community agencies. This organization addresses the housing service component by the provision of the housing assistance (public housing, Section-8 and farm labor).

Laredo Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic - HUD-VASH

HUD-VASH is a collaborative program between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This programs' key component is case management services. The frequency and length of time the services are provided depend on the Veterans' functional and economical abilities. Through these case management efforts Veterans can attain various services. These services include: eligibility screening services, referrals to VA primary care, mental health and/or substance abuse treatment, disability benefits, income assistance, employment support, money management skills and permanent housing subsidies (for Veteran participants and their immediate families) through its Housing Choice Voucher Program. This program was designed to service the VA's most vulnerable homeless Veterans by prioritizing the individuals they serve.

This program addresses the following service components: planning, coordination, outreach, education, assessment and prevention. Through its case management, social work efforts, specialty care referrals and referrals to other community agencies, this agency addresses the planning and coordination service components. The outreach and education components are addressed by the provision of street outreach. For the assessment and prevention components this agency provides primary care services, mental health services, nutritionist services, podiatry services, and rental assistance vouchers. This organization addresses the housing service component by the provision of the HUD-VASH program.

Laredo Workforce Center

Texas Workforce Solutions is comprised of the Texas Workforce Commission and a statewide network of 28 Workforce Development Boards committed to providing services that help workers find and maintain employment as well as, assist employers in hiring the right

candidate for their business. Texas Workforce Solutions' success in the delivery of its services depends on the collaboration and coordination of all its partners, which allow for further development of the Texas workforce. This organization is dedicated to the prosperity of Texans by leading a market-driven workforce system that meets the needs of Texas employers and workers.

The service components addressed by this agency are: planning, coordination, outreach, education, assessment and prevention. For the planning and coordination components this agency provides recruitment assistance and employer services. The outreach and education components are addressed by the provision of job training services, apprenticeship training, career counseling, work experience training, school listing, vocational training, occupational skills training, resume assistance and job preparation classes. For the assessment and prevention components this agency provides an occupational assessment, child care services, career counseling and planning. This organization does not address the housing service component.

Literacy Volunteers of Laredo

Literacy Volunteers of Laredo was founded in 1986 by the City of Laredo, Webb County and United Way. LVL is a major community-based organization that utilizes instructional strategies to teach basic skills that help adults read signs, prescriptions, time cards, checks, and affords them other survival skills that are necessary to be part of today's workforce. Literacy Volunteers of Laredo (LVL) provides confidential, student-centered instruction and assistance, by trained volunteers free of charge. LVL provides instruction to adults with limited reading, writing, and/or English proficiency skills.

This agency addresses the education service components. The education components are addressed by the provision of courses for English as a second language, reading, writing, speaking, and volunteer training. The service components not addressed include: planning, coordination, outreach, assessment, prevention, and housing.

Serving Children and Adults in Need (SCAN)

Serving Children and Adults in Need (SCAN) is a non-profit organization whose work focuses on individuals and families in need of resources in order to develop to their full potential. SCAN was officially formed in 1982 as Stop Child Abuse and Neglect in Laredo, Texas. This organization has provided a variety of comprehensive, culturally sensitive services to the population along the Texas-Mexico Border in Southwest Texas. SCAN has more than 30 programs providing services in 15 different counties: Cameron, Dimmit, Duval, Frio, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, LaSalle, Maverick, Real, Starr, Uvalde, Val Verde, Webb, Zapata and Zavala. SCAN provides programs focused on prevention, intervention and treatment for children, adolescents, adults and families.

The service components addressed by this agency are: planning, coordination, outreach, education, assessment, prevention and housing. The planning and coordination components are

addressed by the provision of the Mujeres Sanas/Specialized Female Outpatient Program for Adults, Students Taking Action Negating Drugs (STAND) Program, and Youth Recovery Home Adolescent Male Residential Program (Laredo, Eagle Pass & Harlingen/San Benito). The outreach and education components are addressed by the provision of HIV Early Intervention Program, Parenting Awareness & Drug Risk Education (PADRE), Pregnant and Post-Partum Intervention Program, Runaway & Homeless Youth (RHY) Program, Rural Border Intervention (RBI) Program, Sexual Assault Services & Information (SASI) Program, SASI Education Program, SASI Counseling Program and Services to At-Risk (STAR) Youth Program. For the assessment and prevention components this agency provides project HOPES, Safe Haven program, and TAMIU-SCAN prevention project. The housing component is addressed by the provision of an emergency shelter for children and adolescents, adult outpatient treatment program, Esperanza Recovery Home Adolescent Female Residential Services and the Serenidad Recovery Home-Adult Male Residential Services.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army, is a faith-based non-profit 501(c)(3) organization created in 1865 by William Booth, an ordained Methodist minister. With the aid of his wife, he formed an evangelical group dedicated to preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. In addition to preaching, Booth became involved in feeding the hungry and sheltering the homeless and the rehabilitation of alcoholics. Today The Salvation Army operates over seven-thousand centers across the United States.

Its message and ministry are based on the Bible and motivated by the love of God. The mission is described in four words: "Doing The Most Good." These four words encompass the feeding, clothing, comforting and caring for those in need.

The Salvation Army addresses the following service components: planning, and coordination, outreach and education, assessment and prevention, and housing. The planning and coordination components are addressed through the provision of case management services and referrals to community agencies. For the outreach and education components, this agency provides youth camps and recreation opportunities, scholarships, summer camps and faith based services. As for the assessment and the prevention components, this organization provides needs assessment evaluation, soup kitchen, food pantry and emergency financial assistance. This organization addresses the housing component by the provision of an emergency shelter for single men and women.

Texas Veterans Commission - Veteran Employment Services

In 1927, The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) was created to assist and advocate for Texas veterans of the Indian wars, Spanish-American War and World War I. The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) provides its services through four programs: Claims Representation and Counseling, Veterans employment Services, Veterans Education Program, and Texas Veterans

Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance. The Veteran Employment Service Program focuses on providing services to low-income, unemployed persons with no high school diploma or GED. Clients in this program are placed on an employment plan which consists of a three step process: (1) resume, (2) interview and (3) keeping employment. Other services offered include: resources to increase chances of getting hired as well as, addressing barriers not limited to: transportation, utilities, food, and housing.

This program addresses the following service components: planning, coordination, outreach, education, assessment and prevention. Through its employment services, referral to community agencies, and statewide hiring events for veterans, this agency addresses the planning and coordination service components. The outreach and education components are addressed by the provision of employer outreach, Veteran Resume Job Club, Veterans Interview Job Club, and Veterans Keeping the Job Club. For the assessment and prevention components this agency provides the veterans with a needs assessment and continuity of care for up to 60 days. This organization does not address the housing service component.

Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP)

The Texas Veterans Leadership Program is under the Texas Workforce Commission. This program's focus is on resource and referral networking, which connects returning veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan with the resources and tools needed to lead productive lives and enjoy the full benefits of the society they have willingly served. One Veterans Resource and Referral Specialist is assigned to each of the 28 workforce development areas, to work closely with Workforce Solutions office staff and Texas Veterans Commission staff who are co-located in Workforce Solutions offices. The Veteran Resource and Referral Specialists focus on outreach to seek out the Veterans in need and serve as resource and referral agents.

The service components that this agency addresses are: planning, coordination, outreach, education, assessment and prevention. The planning and coordination components are addressed by the provision of referrals to community agencies for employment, medical care, mental health, counseling and veteran benefits. The outreach and education components are addressed by outreach services, employer outreach, vocational guidance, and College Credit for Heroes. The assessment and prevention components are addressed by the execution of a needs assessment of the veteran and veterans support group. This organization does not address the housing service component.

Volunteers Serving the Need (VSTN)

Volunteers Serving the Need (VSTN) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) dedicated to serving Webb County veterans and/or their surviving spouses in financial need. VSTN provide the eligible families with supplemental groceries, frozen foods and personal hygiene products each month. Volunteers Serving the Need, also known as The Veterans Project, was founded by Gigi M. E. Ramos to address the special needs of military veterans. The VSTN thrift store opened its doors

January 2010. VSTN is funded by the sale of donated items and by financial gifts and grants. All funds are used to support the Veterans Project's cost to purchase products for distribution to eligible Military Veterans in Webb County and to cover operational expenses.

The service components that this agency addresses are: planning, coordination, outreach, education, assessment and prevention. The planning and coordination components are addressed by the provision of The Veterans Project. The outreach and education components are addressed by outreach services provided by the organization to bring awareness of services to the community and to the veterans in need. The assessment and prevention components are addressed by the execution of a needs assessment of the veteran, provision of personal hygiene items, household items, food items (frozen and nonperishable). This organization does not address the housing service component.

West Care

Westcare Next Step is a non-profit organization which provides permanent supportive housing to single disabled adults experiencing homelessness and are willing to participate in treatment programs. Westcare Foundation was established in 1973 in Las Vegas, Nevada under the name Fitzsimmons House. It was not until 1988 that the organization was renamed WestCare. The original focus of the organization was serving male heroin addicts. The program was soon expanded to serve men and women abusing alcohol and other drugs. Today WestCare provides services in seventeen states and three U.S. territories. The WestCare Next Step program in Laredo, Texas was established in 2012. Today, this program provides an array of services to assist participants in obtaining permanent housing, increasing skills and/or income to achieve independence, and achieving a greater sense of determination.

The service components that this agency addresses are: planning, coordination, outreach, education, assessment, prevention and housing. The planning and coordination components are addressed by the provision of case management services, establishment of service plan, coordination of treatment programs and referrals to other community agencies. The outreach and education components are addressed by life skill programs and the Fair Share Program. The assessment and prevention components are addressed by the execution of a needs assessment, alcohol and drug outpatient treatment services, mental health services, transportation tokens for medical appointments, job interview and to other supportive service agencies. This organization addressed the housing component by the provision of permanent supportive housing.

Cities Visited

In addition to identifying and collecting information from local organizations that may provide services to known, unknown or at risk homeless persons, the team visited four cities in order to learn how other communities were working to end homelessness. The cities visited included: (1) Brownsville, TX (2) San Antonio, TX, (3) Austin, TX, and (4) New Orleans, LA. Brownsville. was selected because it is a border town located in the Texas Balance of State CoC

geography and the local community faces challenges in fighting homelessness that do not exist in other places and have not been captured in the literature.

The following information was gathered during each of the visits made to organizations in all four cities: (1) services provided, (2) methodology of count for homeless persons, and (3) continuum of care and best practices.

1. **Ozanam Center, Good Neighbor Settlement House and the Homeless Youth Project.**

A. Ozanam Center – Visit to Ozanam Center completed on Monday, 8/29/2016.

Met with Victor Maldonado, Ozanam Center Director and Adriana Campos.

Hours of Operation: Ozanam Center is open 365 days a year/24 hours per day.

Services provided: case management, housing for up to 30 days, dorms for women housing 86, dorms for men housing 86, large dorm available for overflow population, five family units and three transitional homes, tutoring for children, transportation, food pantry, daily meals, clothing and shoes at no cost.

The Ozanam Center is also known as “Casa Romero.” The methodology of count is the point in time. The Ozanam Center coordinates care with Good Neighbor Settlement House. Good Neighbor Settlement House provides transportation to and from their center to residents (overflow) at the Ozanam Center. These residents are provided with breakfast, lunch and dinner as well as clothes. Residents work with caseworkers to determine work history, which may allow them to qualify for rapid re-housing program through HUD. This program assists person by providing help with a rental deposit and 3 months of rent. Barriers addressed are the lack of medical services.

B. Good Neighbor Settlement House – Visit completed on Monday, 8/29/2016.

Met with Belinda Bradford (956) 542-2368, Bellieswtpea@yahoo.com

Non-profit multi-service agency in Brownsville, TX

Hours of Operation: Office hours: Monday –Saturday 8:00am – 6:00pm

Services provided: Showers, hygiene kit, vouchers, breakfast and lunch programs, “La Posada” dinner program, weekend meals, thrift shop, emergency food pantry, information and referrals, after hour transportation to Ozanam Center, mailing address and telephone for homeless, Mothers Club – sewing, quilting, fellowship, free income tax preparation, educational programs, AA meetings, arts and crafts, outreach services, and computer lab.

The methodology of count used by this organization is the meal count. The individuals are registered with full name and given a meal card. Services are provided to all and are not specific to homeless. Good Neighbor Settlement House coordinates care by provides transportation to and from the Ozanam Center. This organization relies on the help of volunteers. Therefore, coordination of services is established with volunteers for meals, classes, clothes, vegetable garden and all the other services provided. Currently it is in need of medical services. Ms. Bradford voiced that UTB was providing a medical mobile every 4 months. However, those services stopped. This organization is currently

working on identifying an organization that can provide medical services to this agency.

C. Homeless Youth Project – visit completed on Monday, 8/29/2016.

Met with Diane Clough - Director (956) 544-6612

Students serviced: 2515 (2015-2016) and 929 (to date)

Hours of Operation: Monday –Saturday 8:00am – 5:00pm

Services provided: enrollment assistance, after school tutorials, counseling, referrals, emergency clothing and shoes, medical services (physicals, screenings, blood work, immunizations, female and male exams provided), vouchers, Kids Café, uniforms and sneakers for students, emergency food, Soup Kitchen, college level assistance, storage, fire reports, free prescriptions, transportation to school of origin, and free haircuts for children.

This organization's methodology of count is the point in time. Currently this organization coordinates care with many local organizations: American Red Cross, Salvation Army, School districts, Catholic Services, Ozanam Center, Walmart, Academy, Friendship of Women, Good Neighbor Settlement House, Restauracion y Poder Church, Cameron Works Child Care, Communities in Schools, Carlotta K. Petrina Cultural Center, Region One Education Service Center, Su Clinica, Brownsville Community Health Center, Tropical Texas Center, Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid Inc., Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Tip of Texas Family Outreach and Brownsville Literacy Center. This organization's' current challenges identified are: education/training of school staff and community members trained to identify signs of children experiencing a loss of housing. Current medical services do not include a TB exam. The plan for improvement: train staff and community, continue to disseminate information about the program and services provided. Currently working on partnering with organizations/agency that can provide TB serum for administration during their visits from health care providers.

2. **Unity and the Thompson Rebuild Center** in New Orleans, Louisiana.

A. The Rebuild Center– a day shelter consisting of three organizations (The Harry Thompson Center, Lantern Light and Depaul USA) in collaboration with St. Joseph Catholic Church. Contact phone number: (504) 273-5577

Visit to The Harry Thompson Center completed on 9/7-11/2016

Population serviced: 4,978 total homeless persons identified in 2016; 900 (chronic homeless)

Hours of Operation: Monday –Saturday 8:00am – 2:30pm

Services provided: showers, phone room, case management/housing placement services, legal aid, medical services, computer classes, hygiene kits, reading glasses, restroom facilities, haircuts and socks as supply allows.

The methodology of count for this organization is the yearly Point in time survey.

Currently this organization coordinates care with two other organizations: Lantern Light and Depaul USA. The current challenges and/or barriers identified are regarding funding.

3. **Haven for Hope and The Center for Health Care Services-** 1 Haven for Hope Way, San Antonio, Texas.

Contact number: (210)220-2100

- a. **Services provided:** Rapid Re-housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, financial assistance, medical, dental, vision services, in-house Wellness Program for mental health, in-house Recovery Program for addiction, faith based services, child care services, peer support services, aftercare-up to 12 months, connection to community resources, job training programs, job placement, counseling, Education Programs, life skills, legal services

The methodology of count for this organization is the point in time survey.

This organization coordination care with the following community agencies: Street Outreach, Courtyard, Prisons/Jails, Schools, Hospitals, Faith Community, and mental health centers.

4. **Tiny House Austin** - also known as the Community First Village- project started by charity Mobile Loaves and Fishes. Located in far East Austin, Texas (9301 Hog Eye Rd.)

Phone number: (512) 328-7299

Population serviced: 1,834 homeless people (2015)

Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday 8:00am – 5:00pm

Services provided: An innovative mix of affordable housing options, places for worship, study and fellowship, memorial garden, columbarium and prayer labyrinth, medical facility for health screenings, and other support services including hospice and respite care, walking trails, community gardens, outdoor movie theater, community market, bed & breakfast for overnight visits, capital metro bus stop and Wi-Fi.

The methodology of count is the point in time summary. This organization coordinated care with the following community agencies: Community First! Resident Care, Community First! Volunteers, Genesis Gardens, Community Forge, Community Art House, Community Inn, Community Market, Community Cinema, Catering & Concessions, and volunteer opportunities. The challenges and/or barriers are that Austin has seen a 20% increase in homeless people since 2015, reaching 2197 all over the city.

PART VI: STRATEGIC PLANNING PROPOSAL

Strategic planning must be the cornerstone for success in developing a comprehensive strategy for preventing and achieving an end to homelessness. Finding solutions to homelessness requires cooperation, a mutual vision, and a commitment from different organizations with different methods of funding, numbers of staff, and diverse missions; to work together for a common coordinated approach to identify and utilize solutions. In an era of budget cuts and having to do more with less, it is important to maximize individual organization services, personnel, and time. One of the ways to achieve an effective, well-organized approach to a complex problem is to utilize the services of an expert in strategic planning. The benefit of bringing in an expert is twofold: (1) the consultant is *neutral*, and (2) the consultant can bring together key personnel from various organizations and negotiate common values and goals. A strategic planning consultation can assist stakeholders to determine the best way to organize, establish overarching goals, and plan objectives and measureable outcomes that are both time sensitive and will hold everyone accountable to one another. With a comprehensive plan in place, work can begin to continue to enhance the PIT count, maximize funding opportunities, and ensure compliance mechanisms are in place going forward.

The LHC website shares the coalition's mission related to the homeless. A vision statement of Advocate-Lead-Collaborate. There is disagreement about whether a vision statement and mission statement is the same thing or if they can be used interchangeably. The vision statement is a memorable description of what the desired outcome for the organization is; that will energize and move the target forward. A formal strategic planning session with a variety of stakeholders will be held with Sam Woodard of Woodard Nichols and Associates, a community strategic planning consulting firm, from Austin, Texas. Sam Woodard has successfully guided community members in Austin/Travis County to develop a local homeless coalition nonprofit, leading to the annual Austin/Travis County Continuum of Care process resulting in a \$1.5 million increase in funding. She is scheduled to lead a two-day strategic planning session on January 11th and 12th 2017. The results of these meetings will be provided in a report from the Woollard Nichols Associates that will be added as an addendum to this report and will be available January 17, 2017.

Strategic Planning Proposal

On November 9, 2016, the research team received the proposal requested from Sam Woollard Nichols & Associates to meet with members of the Laredo Homeless Coalition (originally planned for November 21 and 22nd), and to determine if LHC would proceed with the creation of a coalition that would meet HUD standards for a Continuum of Care as well as, a five-year plan to end homelessness. This proposed activity includes:

1. Preparation for meeting
2. Participate in discussions with Laredo Homeless Coalition Homeless members
3. Follow-up

Project Cost: \$1,500 plus travel reimbursement and lodging. The entire proposal is provided in Appendix J.

10-year Plan 2006-2016

According to the City of Laredo 10-year action plan titled, “Identify, Assist and Control: A ten-year plan to eliminate Chronic Homeless 2006-2016,” the working group sought to identify the homeless population, assist the population by providing supportive services, control the homeless population by providing job training, access to housing, and education. The group also sought to collaborate and partner with intergovernmental agencies to facilitate transitioning homeless population while also exploring additional local government resources. Upon review of the plan, it is readily apparent the extensive amount of work the group has accomplished in the previous ten years. They increased capacity among service providers and continued collaborative relationships among agencies even in the case of continued staff turnover within multiple agencies. They expanded services related to emergency housing, meals, education and counseling. For example, area service providers now provide case management, and life skills such as computer education and training to youth and adults. They have also increased the number of daily meals provided through multiple programs in the city. They have implemented a computerized software management system to more accurately identify and track the number of homeless individuals in the area as well as, work towards meeting performance levels of current funding requirements. As the population of homeless individuals has been further defined and categorized, the LHC, the City of Laredo, and community service providers have adapted and revised the focus of their work and the processes for how the work is completed. The City, the LHC and the community agencies should be commended for their progress, passion, and commitment to the people of Laredo.

City of Laredo 2016-2017 Consolidated Plan

The report published by the City of Laredo in 2015 outlined a plan to improve the lives of the people of Laredo by partnering with local, regional, and national partners to address housing and non-housing needs. The report included an extensive needs assessment with input from community members and partners, as well as, a thorough housing market analysis. The report also provided the City of Laredo Department of Community Development's strategic plan which outlined their function as one to, “provide for a better quality of life for low and moderate income citizens...by creating housing and economic development opportunities, facilitating public improvements, and promoting a clean, healthy and safe environment”. With this vision, the City of Laredo is clearly demonstrating their commitment to creating a healthy community, not only for the vulnerable populations but, for all the people of Laredo.

Continuum of Care Process and Plan

One method of providing systems level community-based solutions to end homelessness is through what is known as a Continuum of Care (CoC). A CoC is a community-based planning group that provides the systems level structure and organization necessary to carry out the delivery of services necessary to streamline, coordinate, and optimize the work done by the communities, agencies and organizations, which serve a group within a geographic area. In Texas, THN is the lead agency in the Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care (Tx BoS CoC) and provides services to assist areas not located within the geographic region, served by a smaller independent CoC. As of 2016, there are currently 11 CoC jurisdictions within the state of Texas. The Tx BoS CoC is the lead CoC agency providing assistance to 216 counties in Texas with ten smaller CoC jurisdictions covering the remaining counties. Currently, Laredo and the LHC are part of the BoS CoC jurisdiction TX 607 and in FY 2016, Laredo agencies, such as Bethany House, and WestCare Next Steps, received CoC program funding in the form of Continuum of Care (CoC), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Shelter/Solutions Grant (ESG), and HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) grants. Moving forward, it is recommended that all LHC's located in the TX BoS CoC implement a DES to ensure that there is a systematic response in place to provide immediate access to shelter and crisis services without barriers to entry or utilization of services for those who may experience homelessness. The CES system must be developed based on guidance, tools, and standards from the TX BoS CoC. The LHC can determine some of the components per TX BoS CoC guidance. However, the components must all be reviewed and approved by the CoC. HUD to participate in and implement CE mandates ESG and CoC programs. Following the literature reviews and the interviews with local and regional stakeholders, it is the recommendation of the authors of this report that the LHC remain as part of Tx BoS CoC 607 for the immediate short term of one to two years, while the LHC works through: (1) their strategic planning and anticipated restructuring, (2) piloting and strengthening the PIT methodology (City of Laredo Jan.2017, County of Webb Jan 2018), and (3) implementing a DES within the City of Laredo (May 2017-May 2018). If it is successful, subsequently implement in Webb County (May 2018-May 2019). By May 2019, the LHC can look towards determining if becoming an independent CoC would be to their benefit. Until that time, the LHC should attend TX BoS CoC meetings regularly, submit LHC minutes as required, request training and technical assistance when needed and ensure grantees are in good standing with TX BoS CoC.

PART VII: NEXT STEPS, GAPS AND FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This report is a comprehensive examination of the scope of the homeless problem from a national, state and local perspective. A thorough review of the literature was completed to understand the State of the Science in regards to entry system options and count methodology. A comprehensive inventory of organizations known to interact with or provide services to homeless individuals or families, was completed as part of a needs assessment and directory inventory. Additionally, other organizations were identified but were not contacted. These organizations are provided in the appendix (See Appendix D). Finally, a review of previous Strategic planning was completed. Goals and objectives will be generated based on the results of the two-day strategic planning meetings scheduled for January 11th and 12th 2017. The report generated by the planning process conducted by Sam Woollard of Woollard Nichols & Associates, will be delivered January 17, 2017 and will incorporate the mission, vision, goals, objectives and tasks list for next steps.

Based on the outcome of this strategic planning meeting, the work for the coming year will be determined and an overarching timeline that includes work across all agencies should be developed. Identifying what each organization's priorities and projects are will help to ensure that duplication of effort (when not intentional) does not occur. This will also help to identify organizations who lack sufficient resources and infrastructure; both financial and personnel to support day to day operations while developing projects and grants. New initiatives and grant opportunities that have the potential to add fiscal and personnel resources, should be balanced with the limitations of individual agencies and what collectively can be achieved.

There is a need for a full-time paid position that should be funded by all participating organizations in the coalition. This person would be a navigator or liaison across agencies. This Navigator position would likely work closely with Texas Homeless Network, the Coalition and local government to access technical support, work to increase both infrastructure and financial resources to accomplish the goals and objectives identified during the strategic planning process. The relationship between the navigator and the THN will be critical to ensure that THN provides the technical and educational support required for Laredo's participation in the TX BoS CoC.

This Navigator position requires a person with excellent oral and written communication skills. The navigator should also have experience in grant writing, the ability to work collaboratively with a diverse group of people and organizations, as well as, be a strong advocate for what is best for the community as a whole rather than any one organization or agency.

The Collaborative Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) could help to ensure the required commitment, duties and responsibilities of all the organizations. Allocation of funding for this position may be difficult but, it is important to the building of infrastructure and human capacity for the work that is needed in an environment that requires increasing accountability,

and asks that more be accomplished with less funding. In the literature related to Homeless Coalitions and Collaborative there is evidence that MOU's can help organization accountability, but may in some instances be too inflexible. The challenge will be to establish buy-in and craft a document that allows for accountability while remaining flexible.

Final Recommendation

The summary of recommendations is presented in the following categories: organizational structure, entry system, count methodology, and service components.

Organizational Structure: Gaps Identified

1. Identity of Laredo Homeless Coalition has changed (no longer 501(c)(3) and original role has shifted over time and organizational structure is now unclear.
2. Funding for Organizational Restructuring and Strategic Planning

Recommendations:

- March-April 2017-Redesign/restructure LHC into a more effective coalition to function as lead agency.
- Develop organization chart with clear roles and responsibilities for all organizations. A leadership structure is recommended in the Organizational structure section of this report.
- The organizational structure could look something like this:
- **Community Matter Collaborative**
- **Service Delivery Teams:** The Service Delivery Teams should include representation from formerly homeless individuals and personnel from agencies representing all service components: Planning and Coordination, Outreach and Education, Assessment, and Housing.
- **Support Team:** Texas Homeless Network and any consultants such as the TAMIU research team would be considered part of the support team
- **Systems Team:** Led by Navigator and composed of manager-level staff from lead agencies, housing providers, Border Region, SCAN, City of Laredo Health Department, Laredo VA Outpatient Clinic (HUD-VASH program), Laredo Veterans Coalition, Laredo Housing Authority, Family Endeavors, Westcare, Other Permanent Supportive Housing Advocate.
- **Policy Teams:** Smaller group of executive-level decision makers from major organizations in services and housing. This team would be responsible for resolving any policy and funding barriers as well as coordinating funding resources.

This leadership structure is modified from a similar structure used successfully in another city to implement a Coordinated Entry System. The structure is having flexibility for growth and expansion as the Collaborative is developed (The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, 2015).

- Develop a mechanism for interagency case conferences to improve workflow processes across organizations or agencies. Regularly agreed upon meetings will allow problems to be addressed rapidly while the group continues to strengthen and define new organizational structure.
- LHC agency providers meeting to review their intake and eligibility procedures to identify and remove barriers for clients and streamline all agency processes for the staff.

Funding:

- Long term strategic planning for the Coalition (estimated cost of 3-6-month strategic planning process) **\$30,000** with final outcome of restructured coalition with recommendations for roles, responsibilities, committees and subcommittees necessary to carry out coalition duties and implementation of a Coordinated Entry System (CES).

Navigator Coordinator Position:

- The salary range is likely \$30,000-\$50,000 annual salary plus 30% fringe benefits (this would be entry level to middle range) depending on job responsibilities, educational preparation and skills. If the position is to ultimately be the Director and compliance officer for the Coalition the salary would be higher, approximately \$70,000 or more.
- This position will need the authority to work with the key stakeholders, serve as the primary point of contact to the TX BoS CoC and ensure routine and ongoing compliance with performance measures and the policies and training required of all participating agencies.

Entry Systems: Gaps Identified

1. There is currently no specified method of entry for homeless individuals and families to seek services. How services are accessed is dependent largely on the individual's personal knowledge. Further, what happens next is not predictable or replicated.

Recommendations:

- Move to a coordinated entry system.
- Implement a navigation system.
- Improve database and system software to facilitate data sharing among service providers

Funding:

- Identify funding to improve technology both in terms of infrastructure and personnel development.

Count Methodology: Gaps Identified

1. Few organizations uploading information to HMIS
2. Challenges with PIT count
3. Challenges in obtaining appropriate documents for homeless population such as birth

certificate and DD214

4. Lack of systematic process for data collection

5. Need for improvement of process to identify homeless students in the Laredo Independent School District and United Independent School District

Recommendations:

- Invest in training for all staff responsible for HMIS input and provide a regular schedule of refresher training annually
- Include a comprehensive and standardized assessment tool using the VI-SPDAT and Family VI-SPDAT for use to identify and prioritize clients for services by May 2017 as mandated by Texas Balance of State standards
- Determine what agency or committee will coordinate and advertise the DES program in the geographic area
- The recommendations regarding improving the Point in Time (PIT) count are divided into first steps in 2017 and then next steps to be implemented in 2018. Ideally, the PIT would include the city of Laredo and eventually, all of Webb County. However, due to the short time period before the 2017 count, it is recommended that an enhanced count of the City of Laredo occur in 2017 and a countywide PIT count occur in 2018
- To improve the accuracy of the PIT count beginning in 2017 the following is recommended:
 - Utilize the Texas Homeless Network *2017 Point in Time Coordinator Manual* (<http://thn.org/balance-of-state-continuum-of-care/coc-resources>)
 - Plan for two PIT counts during the final ten days of January 2017 (if possible). The first count will be a practice count to troubleshoot any problems. The highest count will be the reported count.
 - Create a committee to work with Bethany House representatives to plan for a larger team of volunteers.
 - Identify a minimum of 120 volunteers (expect 100 may participate)
 - Utilize the Texas Balance of State CoC Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) smartphone application to ensure accurate data collection and decrease the amount of time required to manually upload all the data and decrease the time in which data reaches THN and can be analyzed.
 - Utilize a wide range of community volunteers to assist with the PIT count. This will build local capacity in conducting the PIT count and will increase the probability that the count may be more accurate.
- Ensure that all those surveys submitted meet the HUD definition of homeless so that they will be included and high data quality is exhibited
- **Future Endeavor:** County wide PIT count to potentially better position the community for prioritization of projects on the local and regional level. Figure 5.1 shows the area that would be included in a countywide count

Funding:

- Solicit private funders to donate money to purchase incentives to give to the homeless to aid in cooperation with the PIT count (i.e. blankets, flip flops, socks, chap stick, sunscreen, etc.)

Service Components: Gap Identified:

1. Limited stock of transitional housing (can stay up to 2 years by HUD guidelines)
2. Limited stock of permanent supportive housing (case management services and can stay indefinitely)
3. Limited capacity of non-profit homeless service providers handling housing and case management issues.
4. Challenges encountered when crossing territorial boundaries such as service providers with other service providers or city versus county agencies or city/county versus state agencies or committees
5. Lack of consistent policies and procedures across organizations
 - Inconsistent eligibility criteria
 - Impedes referral process
6. Lack of resources for adequate execution of outreach services
7. Lack of sufficient numbers of local health centers which provide integrated primary and behavioral health care
 - Lack of detoxification center

Recommendations

- Land is needed to develop sufficient permanent supportive and other affordable housing units designated for homeless and low income residents.
- Invest in Safety Net Homeless clinic.
- Work with local colleges and university medical, nurse practitioner and physician assistant programs to help with provider coverage.
- Accountability for when barriers are encountered among service providers
- Expand job services
- Continue work with the current Service directory and expand to include the faith-based and community organizations identified in the Appendix D.
- Expand the service directory to include details about eligibility, intake processes, and protocol for inter-agency referral and follow-up.

Funding:

- Utilize a variety of funding sources for land acquisition and construction of all types of housing.
- Seek HRSA/SAMHSA grant money to develop Safety Net clinic and detoxification

center.

- Seek federal, private and nonprofit grant funding for projects that meet the triple aim of improving care provided to clients, improving population health, and decreasing the per capita costs of healthcare to the system (community).

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Appendices

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Appendix A: List of Agencies Inventoried

- Association for the Advanced of Mexican Americans (AAMA) Concilio Hispano Libre
- Asociación Pro Servicios Sociales, Inc. (APSS)
- Bethany House
- Border Region
- Casa De Misericordia
- Catholic Social Services
- Children's Advocacy Center
- Community Action Agency (CAA)
- Dismas Charities Inc.
- Family Endeavors
- Habitat for Humanity
- Holding Institute
- Laredo Housing Authority
- Laredo Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic
- Laredo Workforce Center
- Literacy Volunteers of Laredo
- Serving Children and Adults in Need (SCAN)
- The Salvation Army
- Texas Veterans Commission (TVC)
- Texas Veterans Leadership Program (TVLP)
- Veterans Organizations
- Volunteers Serving the Need (VSTN)
- West Care

Appendix B: Collaborative Memorandum of Understanding
Memorandum of Understanding
between Laredo Homeless Coalition,
XXXX, XXXX, and
the XXXXX to create the
Laredo Area Homeless Services Continuum of Care Group

This Memorandum of Understanding is hereby entered into by and between Laredo Homeless Coalition, and (hereinafter called “Coalition”), XXXXX (hereinafter called “Partners”), and collectively known as the Laredo Area Homeless Services Continuum of Care Group, (hereinafter referred to as “HSCCG”).

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, the Coalition and Partners each have existing service facilities suitable for the delivery of services of the HSCCG; and

WHEREAS, the Partners are an integral part of the Laredo community and desires can sufficiently support the mission of the HSCCG; and

WHEREAS, the University has received a grant to provide financial support for the partner agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Group shall have an Administrative Board to facilitate communication among and between the Coalition’s, a Leadership Team has final executive authority for all matters relating to the Partner. and

WHEREAS, these ### entities wish to work collaboratively to benefit both the supportive, social and housing services of the Laredo community through programs to help increase access for homeless populations related to planning and coordination, outreach and education, assessment, healthcare and housing.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises, mutual covenants, and agreements contained herein, the parties hereto hereby agree as follows:

STATEMENT OF GENERAL DUTIES AND OBLIGATION

1. Coalition RESPONSIBILITIES

a. This section would list all the roles and responsibilities the coalition would be required to provide.

b. For example: The Coalition will provide Partner with access to select office facilities and equipment as mutually agreed upon. Such access may include, but is not limited to, furnished offices, conference rooms, meeting rooms, computers, copiers and fax machines.

c. This Agreement does not create a partnership or a joint venture between the parties hereto, nor does it authorize either party to serve as the legal representative or agent of the other. Neither party will have any right or authority to assume, create, or incur any liability or any obligation of any kind, expressed or implied, against or in the name of or on behalf of the other party

2. PARTNER RESPONSIBILITIES

a. XXXX will continue to operate as a 501(c)(3), tax exempt organization so that funds given to XXXX shall be eligible for charitable contribution receipts as allowed by law.

b. Here would be a list of roles and responsibilities of the individual partner agency.

3. INDEMNIFICATION

To the extent authorized by law, in consideration of the performance by all parties of this agreement, each party does hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless all agents, servants, and employees of the other parties from and against any and all claims and liabilities from any acts or omissions of the other parties, their agents, servants, or employees in the performance of this agreement, except that no party shall indemnify the others for claims or liabilities arising solely from the negligence, act, or omission of the other parties.

4. AMENDMENT

The Parties to this MOU understand that it may be necessary to amend and modify this MOU from time to time in order to address additional concerns or issues; however, no amendment, modification, or alteration of the terms of this agreement shall be binding unless the same be in writing, dated subsequent to the date hereof and duly executed by an authorized representative of the parties hereto.

5. TERM, RENEWAL, AND TERMINATION OF AGREEMENT

This MOU will be in effect beginning February 1, 2017 through February 1, 2020. After this date, the MOU will be reviewed on an annual basis and the parties may mutually agree to renew the MOU for successive one (1) year terms. The Coalition, and Partner reserve and have the right to terminate this MOU upon service of 90 days' written notice to the other parties.

6. SEVERABILITY

If any clause or provision of this agreement is determined to be illegal, invalid, or unenforceable under present or future laws effective during the term of this agreement, including any renewals, then in that event it is the intent of the parties hereto that the remainder of this agreement shall not be affected thereby, and it is also the intent of the parties to this agreement that in lieu of each clause or provision of this agreement that is illegal, invalid, or unenforceable there be added as part of this agreement a clause or provision as similar in terms to such illegal, invalid or unenforceable clause or provision as may be possible and be legal, valid and enforceable.

7. NON-DISCRIMINATION

This MOU shall comply Civil Rights Protections and Compliance.

The Coalition will provide equal opportunity for employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout the system.

Any act of illegal discrimination by any party or their agents or employees shall be reported to the University and appropriate Partner and investigated by the University, per its standard administrative procedure. The investigative report shall be delivered to the named University and Partner point of contact for review, should the claim be substantiated it shall be considered non-compliance with this agreement and may result in the immediate termination of the Partner's participation in this MOU.

8. NOTICES

Any notice required or permitted under this Agreement must be in writing, and shall be deemed to be delivered (whether actually received or not) when deposited with the United States Postal Service, postage prepaid, certified mail, return receipt requested, and addressed to the intended recipient at the address set out below. Notice may also be given by regular mail, personal delivery, courier delivery, facsimile transmission, email or other commercially reasonable means and will be effective when actually received. The University, College and Philharmonic can change their respective notice address by sending to the other parties a notice of the new address. Notices should be addressed as follows:

To Laredo Homeless Coalition:

Laredo Homeless Coalition
Attn: Director
Address:
Laredo, Texas, 78041

To Partner 1:

To: Partner 2 Name:

9. TEXAS LAW TO APPLY

This agreement shall be constructed under and in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas and all obligations of the parties created hereunder are performable in Webb County, Texas.

10. FORCE MAJEURE

No party to this agreement shall be required to perform any term, condition, or covenant in this agreement so long as performance is delayed or prevented by force majeure which shall mean acts of God, strikes, lockouts, material or labor restrictions by a governmental authority,

civil riots, floods, and any other cause not reasonably within the control of either party to this agreement and which by the exercise of due diligence such party is unable, wholly or in part, to prevent or overcome. If by reason or force majeure, any party is prevented from full performance of its obligations under this agreement, written notice shall be provided to the other parties within three days.

11. CAPTIONS

The captions contained in this agreement are for convenience of reference only and in no way limit or enlarge the terms and conditions of this agreement.

12. AUTHORITY

The signers of this agreement hereby represent and warrant that they have authority to execute this agreement on behalf of each of their respective entities.

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the parties have duly approved this Memorandum of Understanding, executed in triplicate originals on this _____ day of _____, 2017.

Laredo Homeless Coalition

By: _____
Insert name

Insert Partner Agency Name

By: _____
Insert name

Insert Partner Agency

By: _____
Insert name

Appendix C: Total Agencies Reviewed

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| AAMA | First Presbyterian Church of Laredo (EPC) | Lulac Council #12 |
| Adult Basic Education Program | First United Methodist Church | Lulac Council #624 |
| American Legion Post 59 | Grace Bible Church | Lulac Council #7 |
| Arbol de Vida Iglesia Cristiana | Habitat for Humanity of Laredo Inc. | Lulac Haven |
| Area Health Education Center | Heights Baptist Church | Mines Road Baptist Church |
| Asociacion Pro Servicios Sociales Aztlan | Holding Institute | National Association of Hispanic Elderly |
| Bethany House of Laredo | Iglesia Adventist del Septimo Dia Church | New Beginning House of Worship |
| Bethel Lutheran Church | Iglesia Bautista | New Vision Community Church |
| Big Brother-Big Sister of So. TX | Iglesia Isaías 35 | Organizational Name |
| Casa de Misericordia | International Good Neighbor Council | Presbyterian Church Sinai |
| Catholic Social Services of Laredo | Jehovah's Witnesses | Rio Grande Missionary Help S.C.A.N. |
| Catholic War Veterans of Laredo | Jehovah's Witnesses | Safe Haven |
| Centro Familiar Cristiano | Jehovah's Witnesses Central | Sisters Of Mercy Of The Americas, Inc. |
| Child Care Management Services | Korean Baptist Church - Laredo | South Texas Afghanistan Iraq Veterans Association |
| Children's Advocacy Center | Korean War Veterans 1908 | St. Vincent de Paul Society |
| Church of Jesus Christ of LDS | La Trinidad United Methodist | Templo Bethel del CLADIC |
| City of Laredo Department of Community Development | Laredo Chamber of Commerce | The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - day Saints |
| Communities in Schools | Laredo Christian Union Church | The Universal Church |
| Community Action Agency | Laredo Development Foundation | The Universal Church |
| Community Action Agency-Elderly Nutrition Program | Laredo English 7th Day Adventist | Turning Point Assembly |
| Congregation of St. John | Laredo Housing Authority | United Baptist Church |
| Disabled American Veterans | Laredo Transportation Association | United Way of Laredo |
| Episcopal Christ Church | Laredo VA Outpatient Clinic | Universal Church |
| Eucharistic Missionary Society | Laredo Veterans Coalition | Vietnam Veterans of Laredo Association |
| Faith Lutheran Church Inc. | Latin American Lutheran Mission | Volunteers Serving The Need |
| First Assembly of God | Literacy Volunteers of Laredo | Zion Lil Kingdom |
| First Baptist Church | LOVED | |
| First Nazarene Church | | |

Appendix D: Community and Faith Based Organizations

Future Contact (Community)

| | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| American Legion Post 669 | Kidney Foundation of Laredo |
| American Red Cross | La Azteca Neighborhood |
| Border Area Nutrition Council Inc. | Laredo Independent School District |
| Boys & Girls Club of Laredo | Laredo Main Street/Farmers Market |
| Catholic Daughters of America | Laredo Medical Center |
| Dismas Charities | Leadership Laredo Association |
| Doctors Hospital of Laredo | Leadership Texas Association |
| Families for Autism Support and Awareness | March of Dimes |
| Gateway Community Health Center | United Independent School District |

Future Contact (Faith Based)

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Arkansas Avenue Church of Christ | Iglesia Cristiana Emmanuel | Santa Margarita de Escocia Catholic Church |
| Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church | Iglesia Cristiana Misericordia | Santo Niño Catholic Church |
| Bridge Ministries | Iglesia De Cristo | Seventh Day Adventist Church |
| Buen Pastor Asamblea De Dios | Iglesia De Cristo Misionera | Seventh - Day Adventist Church |
| Casa De Oracion (House of Prayer) | Laredo Church of Christ | Sisters Of Mercy Of The Americas, Inc |
| Christ Miracle Center | Light of the World Church | Spanish Assemblies of God - Cristo Rey A - D |
| Christ The King Catholic Church | Lighthouse Assembly of God | St Vincent De Paul Church |
| Christ Worship Center | Maranatha Church of Laredo | St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Church |
| Cristo Terapia Ministries Inc | Ministerios De Fe Y Poder | St. Joseph Catholic Church |
| Diocese of Corpus Christi | Mision Bautista Hefziba | St. Jude Catholic Church |
| Diocese of Corpus Christi | New Vision Community Church | Templo Bethel del CLADIC |
| Diocese of Corpus Christi | Northside Church of Christ of Laredo | Templo Cristiano Piedra |
| Diocese of Laredo | Nuestra Sra Del Rosario Catholic Church | Templo Vida Nueva |
| Diocese of Laredo Pastoral Center | Our Lady Guadalupe Catholic Church | Texas Mcallen Msn Church - Jesus |
| Divine Mercy Catholic Church | Presbyterian Church Sinai | The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter - day Saints |
| Dunamis Ministries | Primera Iglesia Bautista | The Universal Church |
| El Buen Pastor Assembly of God Church | Primera Iglesia Bautista Laredo | The Universal Church |
| First Christian Church | Rio Bravo Community Church | Turning Point Assembly |
| Holy Family Catholic Church | Rio Grande Missionary Help | United Baptist Church |
| Holy Spirit Retreat Center | Saint Patrick Catholic Church | Universal Church |
| Iglesia Bautista - Loma Alta Church | Saint Peter the Apostle Catholic Church | Zion Lil Kingdom |
| Iglesia Bautista Loma | San Francisco Javier Catholic Church | |
| Iglesia Bautista Nueva Vida | San Luis Rey Catholic Church | |
| Iglesia Bautista Nuevo | San Martin De Porres Catholic Church | |

Appendix E: Homelessness Definitions

| Type | Definitions related to Homelessness and Risk for Homelessness |
|---|---|
| P e r s o n | <i>A homeless individual is defined in section 330(h)(5)(A) as “an individual who lacks housing (without regard to whether the individual is a member of a family), including an individual whose primary residence during the night is a supervised public or private facility (e.g., shelters) that provides temporary living accommodations, and an individual who is a resident in transitional housing.” A homeless person is an individual without permanent housing who may live on the streets; stay in a shelter, mission, single room occupancy facilities, abandoned building or vehicle; or in any other unstable or non-permanent situation. [Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C., 254b)] (NHCHC, 2016) homeless” as “a person sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation (e.g. living on the streets, for example) OR living in a homeless emergency shelter (HUD, 2007, p. 3).</i> |
| D o u b l e - u p | <i>An individual may be considered to be homeless if that person is “doubled up,” a term that refers to a situation where individuals are unable to maintain their housing situation and are forced to stay with a series of friends and/or extended family members. In addition, previously homeless individuals who are to be released from a prison or a hospital may be considered homeless if they do not have a stable housing situation to which they can return. A recognition of the instability of an individual's living arrangements is critical to the definition of homelessness. (HRSA/Bureau of Primary Health Care, Program Assistance Letter 99-12, Health Care for the Homeless Principles of Practice) (NHCHC, 2016). An individual or family who will imminently lose their housing, including housing they are sharing with others, as evidenced by credible evidence indicating that the owner or renter of the housing will not allow the individual or family to stay for more than 14 days, and who has no subsequent residence identified; and who lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing (HEARTH ACT, 2009).</i> |
| A t r i s k | <i>(A) has income below 30 percent of median income for the geographic area; (B) has insufficient resources immediately available to attain housing stability; and (C)(i) has moved frequently because of economic reasons; (ii) is living in the home of another because of economic hardship; (iii) has been notified that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated; (iv) lives in a hotel or motel; (v) lives in severely overcrowded housing; (vi) is exiting an institution; or (vii) otherwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness (The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 2009)</i> |
| C h r o n i c | <i>(i) is homeless and lives or resides in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter; (ii) has been homeless and living or residing in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter continuously for at least 1 year or on at least 4 separate occasions in the last 3 years; and (iii) has an adult head of household (or a minor head of household if no adult is present in the household) with a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability (as defined in section 102 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15002)), post-traumatic stress disorder, cognitive impairments resulting from a brain injury, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of 2 or more of those conditions. (The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 2009). Either (1) an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR (2) an unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.” This definition is adopted by HUD from a federal standard that was arrived upon through collective decision making by a team of federal agencies including HUD, the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (HUD, 2007, p. 3).</i> |

Appendix F: Service Components

| Agency | Planning & Coordination | Outreach & Education | Assessment & Prevention | Housing |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| Association for the Advanced of Mexican Americans | + | + | + | |
| Asociación Pro Servicios Sociales, Inc. | + | + | + | |
| Bethany House | + | + | + | + |
| Border Region | + | + | + | |
| Community Action Agency | + | + | + | + |
| Casa De Misericordia | + | + | + | + |
| Catholic Social Services | + | + | + | |
| Children's Advocacy Center | + | + | + | |
| Dismas Charities Inc. | + | + | + | |
| Family Endeavors | + | + | + | |
| Habitat for Humanity | + | + | + | |
| Holding Institute | + | + | + | |
| Laredo VA Outpatient Clinic | + | + | + | |
| Laredo Workforce Center | + | + | + | |
| Literacy Volunteers of Laredo | | + | | |
| Serving Children and Adults in Need | + | + | + | + |
| Texas Veterans Commission | + | + | + | |
| Texas Veterans Leadership Program | + | + | + | |
| Volunteers Serving the Need | + | + | + | |
| West Care | + | + | + | + |

+ Services Provided Non-Sufficient ++ Services Provided Moderately Sufficient +++ Services Adequate

Appendix G: Current LHC Membership

A brief summary of each organization's structure, purpose, and primary services provided. In other sections of this report additional information related to specific organizations will be specified to provide clarity. Information provided was obtained in some instances through multiple sources (personal communication, interviews, telephone calls, and websites) and was verified to the extent possible.

Area Health Education Center

The Area Health Education Center of the Mid Rio Grande Border Area (MRGB AHEC) is an outreach program under the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and is a 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to enhance the quality of life in our communities by increasing the number of well-trained health care workers; enhancing academic resources; and fostering a healthy lifestyle through community education programs.

Bethany House

Bethany House is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, that assists the homeless and other indigent throughout Laredo and Webb County. Bethany House is comprised of four separate facilities: (1) Barbara A. Kazen Center for Hope, (2) Community Shelter Complex & Resource Center, (3) Dining Kitchen and, (4) Vintage Store.

Border Region

Border Region Behavioral Health Center is a non-profit organization, that services individuals with mental and health illness. Through the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness Program (PATH), Border Region Behavioral Health Center, extends its services to the citizens of Webb, Jim Hogg, Starr, and Zapata counties.

Casa de Misericordia

Casa de Misericordia (CASA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization which provides secure, temporary residential services to victims of domestic violence. It offers comprehensive, holistic services and consistent long-term support as well as, an emergency shelter which provides services beyond those of shelter, food and clothing.

City of Laredo Health Department

The City of Laredo Health Department, provides an array of services to the community and the homeless population. These services include: health promotion and prevention, preparedness, disease control, and health care access.

Family Endeavors

Family Endeavors is a non-profit agency with a mission to provide comprehensive, effective, and innovative services that empower people to build better lives for themselves, their families, and their communities. Locally, Family Endeavors provides an array of services that target Veterans experiencing homelessness and/or those at risk of homelessness.

Holding Institute Community Center

Holding Institute Community Center is a non-profit organization located in downtown Laredo, Texas. In collaboration with the United Methodist Women and other community partners, Holding Institute responds to the needs of women, children, youth, and families. Its focus is primarily on health & wellness, education, discipleship and the improvement of the community.

Laredo Housing Authority

Laredo Housing Authority (LHA) provides quality housing and resident services for those with limited incomes through programs such as subsidized rental assistance funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Laredo Independent School District

The Laredo Independent School District (LISD) is made up of 33 educational institutions, yielding a yearly average of 25,000 enrolled students and over 4,500 employees. LISD has established agreements with multiple community agencies for the purpose of addressing the student's needs.

City of Laredo Community Development Department

The City of Laredo Community Development Department manages funds from the 2016 Emergency Solutions Grants (ESG) Program, Community Development Block Grants (CBDG), and 2016 Home Investment Partnerships Program (HOME) (City of Laredo Action Plan, 2015). The City of Laredo Municipal Housing Division falls under the umbrella of services provided by the City of Laredo Community Development Department.

Serving Children and Adults in Need (SCAN)

Serving Children and Adults in Need (SCAN) is a non-profit organization geared at individuals and families in need of resources to develop their full potential. SCAN provides programs focused on prevention, intervention and treatment for children, adolescents, adults and families experiencing substance abuse, homelessness, child abuse, developmental disorders, delinquency, among others.

South Texas Development Council

The South Texas Development Council (STDC) was organized in 1956 to serve local governments in its four county region (Webb, Jim Hogg, Starr, and Zapata). The primary focus of STDC is to serve as advocate, planner, and coordinator of initiatives that, when undertaken on a regional basis, can be more effective and efficient.

South Texas Food Bank

The South Texas Food Bank is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that seeks to end hunger in South Texas by mobilizing any and all available resources to fight hunger in our area. By conducting hunger education and awareness campaigns on the realities of hunger in our area, the Food Bank also seeks to energize the community to get involved and support hunger relief

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) works with communities to protect children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. It also works to protect the health and safety of children in daycare, as well as foster care and other types of 24-hour care. This is accomplished through investigations, services and referrals, regulation, and prevention programs.

Texas Veterans Commission-Veterans Employment Services

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) was created to assist and advocate for Texas veterans of the Indian wars, Spanish-American War and World War I. It provides its services through four programs: Claims Representation and Counseling, Veterans Employment Services, Veterans Education Program, and Texas Veterans Commission Fund for Veterans' Assistance.

Texas Workforce Commission-Texas Veterans Leadership Program

The Texas Veterans Leadership Program is under the Texas Workforce Commission. This program's focus is on resource and referral networking, which connects returning veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan with the resources and tools needed to lead productive lives and enjoy the full benefits of the society they have willingly served.

Texas Workforce Solutions

Texas Workforce Solutions is comprised of the Texas Workforce Commission and a statewide network of 28 Workforce Development Boards committed to providing services that help workers find and maintain employment as well as, assist employers in hiring the right candidate for their business. Texas Workforce Solutions' success in the delivery of its services depends on the collaboration and coordination of all its partners, which allow for further development of the Texas workforce.

United Independent School District

The United Independent School District (UISD) is made up of 42 educational institutions serving over 42,000 students. UISD provides an array of services to identified homeless students that are coordinated by a homeless education and foster care liaison.

Veterans Affairs-HUD-VASH Program

HUD-VASH is a collaborative program between HUD and VA that combines HUD housing vouchers with VA supportive services to help Veterans who are homeless and their families find and sustain permanent housing. Partnerships with HUD and VA case managers work to connect these homeless Veterans with support services.

Westcare Next Step Program

Westcare Next Step is a non-profit organization that provides permanent supportive housing to single disabled adults experiencing homelessness and are willing to participate in treatment programs. The WestCare Next Step program in Laredo, Texas was established in 2012. Today, this program provides an array of services to assist participants in obtaining permanent housing, increasing skills and/or income to achieve independence, and achieving a greater sense of determination.

The Texas Homeless Network is the organization through Texas Balance of State to provide support in terms of technical expertise, planning, assessment and evaluation. A representative from THN attends some of the meetings of the LHC. Both organizations would benefit from strengthening this relationship.

Appendix H: Comparisons of Entry Points

| | Physically Geographically Centralized | Centralized Telephone (i.e. “211”) | Decentralized |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Physical Requirements | A single location building, room, or space | Space for phones/hotline staff | Multiple coordinated locations throughout the community |
| Ideal Community | Physically small communities or communities with reliable public transit systems | Any; may be particularly useful in physically large or spread-out communities | Physically large or spread-out communities |
| Ideal Staffing | Workers who can handle intake and assessment (may or may not be case managers) | Workers who can handle intake and basic assessment | Workers who can handle intake and assessment (may or may not be case managers) |
| Ideal Services | Intake and assessment connection to diversion, prevention, and rapid re-housing resources; referrals to other services; other services as decide by the community | Intake and assessment referrals to other services; other services as decided by the community | Intake and assessment; connection to diversion, prevention, and rapid re-housing resources; referrals to other services; other services as decided by the community |
| Drawbacks | Center may not be equally accessible to everyone | Need for additional referrals/in-person help may slow down the process of getting services/housing | Less control over consistency of services and data management; potentially more costly (may require more staff, more space than physically centralized model) |
| Advantages | Fewer sites necessary; no time/training needed to work on coordinating multiple providers | Easier to handle a larger number of clients | More locations available to clients |

Appendix I: Comparison of 2015 and 2016 Point-In-Time Count Select Common Data Points

| Point-In-Time Data | 2015 | 2016 |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| Number of surveys recorded | 173 | 129 |
| Number of adults in households | 178 | 133 |
| Number of children in households | 31 | 35 |
| Total number of people | 209 | 168 |
| Total number of homeless people | 156 | (Not Reported) |
| Chronically Homeless Households | (Not Reported) | 19 |
| Male | 120 | 91 |
| Female | 44 | 37 |
| Transgender | 1 | 0 |
| White | 149 | 117 |
| Black or African American | 7 | 3 |
| Asian | 1 | 0 |
| Two or more (race) | 0 | 6 |
| Hispanic | 133 | 106 |
| Nighttime Residence of Households | 159 (17 categories) | 129 (4 categories) |
| Household Makeup | 161 | 129 |
| 1st time homeless in the past 3 years | 77 | 60 |
| 2-3 episodes in the past 3 years | 20 | 30 |
| At least 4 episodes in the past 3 years | 18 | 19 |
| Continuously homeless for a year or more | 40 | 15 |
| Reasons for Homelessness | 301(13 categories) | 317 (27 categories) |
| Able to work (yes) | 103 | 85 |
| Able to work (no) | 57 | 42 |
| Physical/Mental Disability | 215 | 160 |

Laredo Homeless Coalition (2016, 2015).

Appendix J: Woollard Nichols Strategic Planning Proposal

PROPOSAL

To: Monica Alleman, TAMIU

From: Sam Woollard, Woollard Nichols & Associates

Date: November 9, 2016

Re: Proposal for meeting with Laredo Homeless Coalition members the afternoon of November 21 and morning of November 22nd

Monica: Per our conversation, the following is proposal for a meeting with members of the Laredo Homeless Coalition to determine if they want to proceed with creation of a coalition that will meet the HUD standards for a Continuum of Care as well as a five-year plan to end homelessness. The proposed activities include:

1. Preparation for meeting:

- Review any previous planning work and organizational materials of the Laredo Homeless Coalition
- Meet with Dr. Alleman to review itinerary and critical conversations
- Provide Dr. Alleman with materials pertinent to HUD requirements for a CoC

2. Participate in discussions with Laredo Homeless Coalition members:

- Share experience with CoC's in Austin and San Antonio
- Outline HUD requirements and expectations for CoC's
- Discuss community's willingness to create a formal CoC and the steps that will need to be taken

3. Follow Up:

- Debrief with Dr. Alleman to assess the coalition's strengths and challenges and determine whether there is commitment for moving forward.

PROJECT COST: \$1,500 + one-night hotel stay and travel reimbursement (mileage at federal rate if take own car)

About Woollard Nichols and Associates:

WNA was formed in 2013 by Sam Woollard and Kelly Nichols as a firm with a mission to be trusted stewards serving their clients' needs and producing results; and a vision to create, grow and sustain initiatives that result in positive social outcomes. The company provides guidance and support for organizations and initiatives in the areas of Strategy and Decision Making; Coalition Support, and Resource Development.

Support to be provided by:

Sam Woollard. Sam has spent over twenty years working in and around the non-profit sector in Central

Texas. At WNA and in her previous work with Knox-Woollard Professional Management, Sam leads and coordinates strategic planning efforts, serves as a project manager, conducts research, and compiles community reports. Sam currently provides strategic support and guidance to One Voice Central Texas, leads the annual HUD Continuum of Care application for ECHO, and is coordinating a community substance use planning initiative for Austin Travis County Integral Care. She has provided strategic planning support for many local organizations and their Boards, including, the YWCA of Greater Austin, Meals on Wheels Texas, Meals on Wheels and More, Best Single Source Plus, and the Aging Services Council.

Please contact me at 512-217-6862 or sam@woollardnichols.com with any questions.

<http://www.woollardnichols.com/>

Appendix K: Strategic Planning Final Report

Laredo Housing Coalition Strategic Discussion Report

January 2017

On January 11th and 12th 2017, key members of the Laredo community gathered to discuss the Laredo Housing Coalition, its' purpose, and how to move forward to effectively address homelessness in the Laredo area. Following are the results from the strategic discussion, which was facilitated by Sam Woollard of Woollard Nichols and Associates.

Goals for the Strategic Discussions

Based on previous discussions, the original goals of the planning session were:

- ☐ Receive update of TAMIU report
- ☐ Outline HUD requirements and expectations for homeless Continuums of Care
- ☐ Discuss strengths, challenges, and opportunities of Laredo Homeless Coalition
- ☐ Discuss pros and cons of becoming a formal Continuum of Care
- ☐ Identify next steps

Participants also outlined the following as their goals for the planning session:

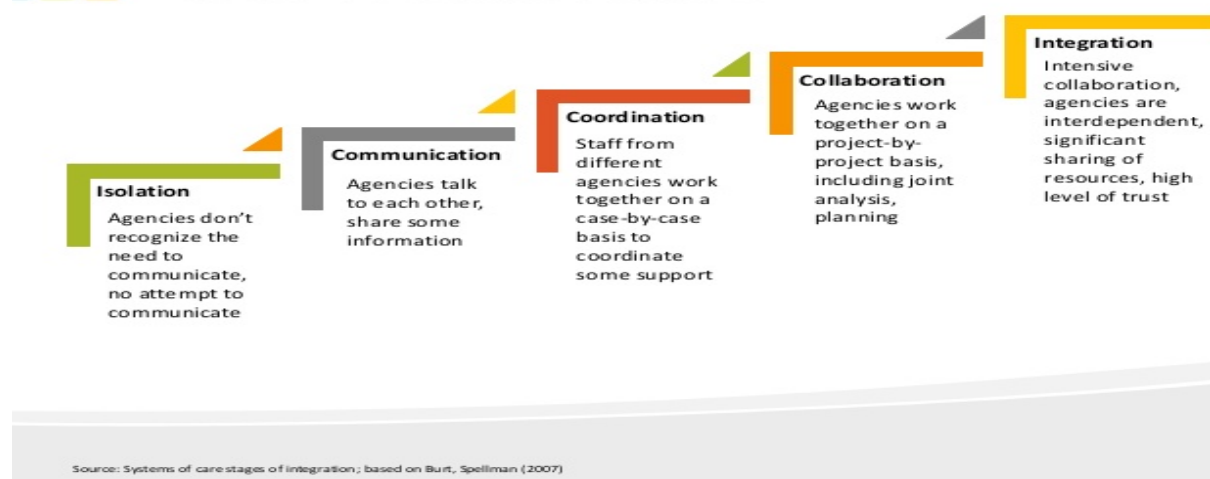
- ☐ Create a clear direction for the Laredo Homeless Coalition with unified concrete goals and strategies for moving forward
- ☐ Commit to an action oriented, integrated, systemic approach with common goals and a commitment to working together
- ☐ Identify how to increase resources, better connect and build the continuum of care to include initiatives related to: mental health, affordable housing, substance use, seniors, legal advocacy, after-school support
- ☐ Build the structure than needs to be built to be successful
- ☐ Engage leaders who are part of transitions and develop leadership within the coalition
- ☐ End the criminalization and victimization of individuals who are homeless
- ☐ Create a healthy community

Current Status of the Laredo Homeless Coalition

On January 11th, 2017, the participants reviewed HUD requirements and expectations for a homeless continuum of care (see power point addendum). Participants discussed the current status of the Laredo Homeless Coalition. Based on the continuum below, no members felt the coalition is isolated, 8 felt it mostly communicates, 14 felt it reaches the coordination level, 4 believed collaboration is occurring, and one felt the coalition is integrated.

So...Are we Collaborating?

Levels of Collaboration



Based on group discussion (5 groups), the following was identified as current functioning of the coalition:

| Strengths | Challenges |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration and Communication among partners (3 groups) <input type="checkbox"/> Passion/ Compassion of members (2 groups) <input type="checkbox"/> Core partners are at the table <input type="checkbox"/> Desire to find a solution <input type="checkbox"/> Expertise in the group <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation/Share knowledge/moderate collaboration occurring <input type="checkbox"/> History/projects already undertaken <input type="checkbox"/> Convener <input type="checkbox"/> Data compiler <input type="checkbox"/> Visibility <input type="checkbox"/> Critical issues identified <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive public officials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of Funding (5) <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of resources (detox, mental health, substance use, emergency shelter, affordable permanent housing) (4) <input type="checkbox"/> Need to increase member participation (2) <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of HMIS participation (2) <input type="checkbox"/> Public safety <input type="checkbox"/> Stereotypes <input type="checkbox"/> Need to Adapt to change/new things <input type="checkbox"/> Need to be inviting to new members <input type="checkbox"/> No centralized facility for homeless resources <input type="checkbox"/> Need resources to fund studies <input type="checkbox"/> Data issues <input type="checkbox"/> Need to add IT systems <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of accountability <input type="checkbox"/> HUD/state and federal limitations and definition of homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> High cost of living |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Navigating different eligibility criteria |
| Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Commitment of members (2) <input type="checkbox"/> Homeless coalition website (2) <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing in place (2) <input type="checkbox"/> In-kind support <input type="checkbox"/> Limited funding is available <input type="checkbox"/> Access to physical spaces is available <input type="checkbox"/> Maximizing City resources and public support <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge and expertise of coalition members <input type="checkbox"/> Funding from entitlement/non entitlement is available <input type="checkbox"/> Services: Funding for medication, behavioral screenings, substance abuse treatment is available | Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Secure new resources (2) <input type="checkbox"/> Take advantage of parity for vulnerable populations in ACA <input type="checkbox"/> Create a one stop village <input type="checkbox"/> Embrace change and new ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Establish new leadership <input type="checkbox"/> Recommitment of members <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt a local homeless preference <input type="checkbox"/> Move toward integration between community organizations <input type="checkbox"/> Implement the CoC plan <input type="checkbox"/> Identify clear roles <input type="checkbox"/> Take advantage of Mayoral/leadership support <input type="checkbox"/> Take advantage of collective commitment <input type="checkbox"/> Engage new leaders and create new relationships |

Planning for the Future

Participants identified the following factors that need to be in place for the coalition to be successful:

- ☐ Committed leadership
- ☐ Paid Coordinator
- ☐ Agreed common goals, objectives, and projects
- ☐ Formal agreement/MOU among members
- ☐ Results oriented
- ☐ Attainable short-term goals
- ☐ Accountability
- ☐ Open minded and welcoming
- ☐ Honest discussion
- ☐ Public policy/Advocacy strategy
- ☐ Strong IT that can produce measurement and outcomes

Participants drafted vision and mission statements as well as an identity statement for the coalition, set goals, discussed structure, and identified leaders willing to help with next steps.

DRAFT VISION STATEMENT: *Homelessness in our community is a rare occurrence but when it does occur, there is a clear and coordinated pathway to services and universal care.*

DRAFT MISSION STATEMENT: *The Laredo Homeless Coalition provides an effective framework for addressing homelessness in our community by:*

- *Increasing knowledge and awareness of successful strategies*
- *Engaging the public, providers, policy makers, and the private sector in solutions*
- *Coordinating services and resources*
- *Building a barrier-free service system*
- *Eradicating root causes of homelessness*
- *Advocating for humane policies*

In order for the coalition to meet its goals the following must be in place:

- ☐ Individuals are identified and engaged rapidly in prevention, diversion, and homeless services
- ☐ Sufficient safe affordable housing options are available
- ☐ Economic stability and physical/behavioral health services are available
- ☐ Hunger is addressed
- ☐ A safe location is available for those who don't wish to be housed
- ☐ Support is provided from public officials and the community at large

Participants created a draft identity statement for the coalition:

| The Laredo Homeless Coalition | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Advances its mission of: | <i>providing an effective framework for addressing homelessness in our community (DRAFT)</i> |
| By impacting | <i>A reduction in homelessness, hunger, and poverty; increased community engagement; and integration of homeless services</i> |
| With our customers | <i>Primary customers are the homeless and those at risk of homelessness/vulnerable populations; Secondary: Stakeholders and funders; and Tertiary the community at large</i> |
| With our partners | <i>Coalition members, other service providers, funding entities, donors, public officials, community leaders, private sector, homeless and formerly homeless</i> |
| In | <i>Laredo initially with plans to phase in expansion to Webb and surrounding counties once we are established</i> |

| | |
|---|--|
| With the following programs or services | <i>Coordination, integration, and navigation of services that impact the homeless: Basic needs, housing, food/hunger, transportation, mental health/substance abuse, medical/healthcare/dental, clothing, vocational training, transition out of poverty, crisis intervention, counseling, case management, financial literacy, and assistance with applying for benefits. Advocacy for humane policies and education of the public about homeless experiences, needs, and services.</i> |
| Using our competitive advantage | <i>Integration, commitment, passion, expertise, caring philosophy, and collaboration of LHC members. Leadership and philanthropic commitments</i> |
| And being sustainable through | <i>Diversifying and increasing funding as well as combining, leveraging, and integrating LHC funding and resources. Creating framework that includes: accountability, commitment, and involvement of members</i> |

GOALS

Three Year Goal: There was consensus amongst the group that in three years the goal is to create a centralized one stop location or service village for homeless services. The village should have sustainable funding and could include:

- access to affordable housing,
- service navigation,
- vocational training
- medical/health care, including a detox facility and substance use treatment

Exact service provision will have to be determined through a planning process.

One Year Goals: Participants were asked to identify, through group discussion, one year goals. Each group was asked to identify one goal that could be completed with additional resources and one goal that could be completed without additional resources. The results are below:

| | |
|---|--|
| One Year Goals With Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund a coordinator position (4) whose tasks include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Keeping coalition on track ➤ Assisting with a needs assessment ➤ Creating a navigation system ➤ Help identify funding opportunities | One Year Goals With No Additional Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement organizational framework for the coalition establishment • Begin to piece together funding for one stop shop (3 year goal) • Market and brand the LHC • Create a leadership and organizational commitment to on- |
|---|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for 501(c)(3) designation • Create organizational infrastructure including leadership structure • Implement a navigation system (building on COG centralized list of services) • Explore creation of a needs assessment • Identify IT framework and greater HMIS participation | <p>going services and integrated housing and health project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a sustained public dialogue about homelessness • Begin to identify additional funding sources for homeless services and the coalition • Increase community engagement in homeless issues and services |
|--|--|

STRUCTURE

Participants discussed the pros and cons of the Laredo Housing Coalition reapplying to become a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

DECISION: It was agreed by consensus (all five groups agreed) that the Laredo Housing Coalition should apply to restore its 501(c)(3) status.

Below are the items that were discussed for this decision to be made.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Pro's for becoming a 501(c)(3) organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential access to other funding sources/grants (5) • Would provide structure including board, bylaws, procedures, accountability for reaching goals (4) • Tax exempt status (3) • Validity/legitimacy of organizational infrastructure (3) • Include organization, community, consumer representation (2) • Transparency • Single point of contact • Road to sustainability • Qualify for insurance and other protections • Availability to do more • Increase stakeholder commitment • Hire staff • Brings coalition to the next level | <p>Cons of becoming a 501(c)(3) organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative costs (3) • Increased liability (3) • Management of accountability and a new organization, including policies and procedures, staffing, tax referrals, monitoring and reporting) (3) • Less flexibility • Franchise tax • Reporting to IRS • Potential for competition for grants and funds • Need to ID if the organization would be its own fiscal agent • Requires dedicated funding • Board/stakeholder commitment and manpower • Potential lack of interest • Busy work of being a convener |
|---|--|

Committees: Participants discussed the desire to not overcommit and keep the structure moving forward as simple as possible. Committees that could be considered moving forward include:

- **Organizational Structure Committee:** charged with forming the 501(c)(3), reviewing bylaws, identifying the role and funding for a coordinator, and identifying leadership
- **System Integration:** Committee could build on the work of the Veterans Committee and outreach committees and create flow charts for services, identify opportunities to integrate services, and identify how to better incorporate coordinated entry and HMIS.
- **Policy and Communication:** charged with both identifying and advocating for humane policies that impact homeless individuals and those at risk for homelessness and identifying messaging for the community regarding homeless issues and the coalition.

Immediate Next Steps

Jose Ceballos agreed to send out a meeting invite to the individuals who identified that they would be willing to serve in a leadership role with the renewed LHC. The first meeting will be a formation meeting to:

- Review the results of the strategic discussions
- Finalize vision and mission for the coalition
- Review and revise bylaws
- Identify leadership and structure

Mike Smith with the United Methodist Church agreed to lead the meeting. It is anticipated that this group will have its recommendations for the formation structure complete by February 28th, 2017. A subsequent meeting will be held with coalition members to review the structure as well as the results of the TAMIU report.

List of Strategic Planning Attendees

1. Dr. Hector Gonzalez, City of Laredo (Day 1 & 2)
2. Juan Rodriguez, STDC (Day 1 & 2)
3. Juan Villa II, Border Region (Day 1)
4. Jerry Alvarado, Border Region BAC (Day 1 & 2)
5. Juan Guerra, PATH/ Border Region (Day 1 & 2)
6. Jennifer Roby, VA (Day 1 & 2)
7. Melissa Ortiz, Laredo Housing Authority (Day 1 & 2)
8. Jennifer Barrientos, Laredo Housing Authority (Day 1 & 2)
9. Jesus Torres, Laredo Police (Day 1 & 2)
10. Arturo Garcia (Day 1 & 2)
11. Lyzette ShROUT, Family Endeavors (Day 1 & 2)
12. Charles McDaniel, Family Endeavors (Day 1 & 2)
13. Pete Saenz, Mayor of Laredo (Day 1 & 2)
14. Karen Martinez, Casa se Misericordia, (Day1 & 2)
15. Waldo Lopez, City of Laredo Health System (Day 1 & 2)
16. Nora Murillo, United ISD (Day 1 & 2)
17. Jose Ceballos, LHC, LHA (Day 1 & 2)
18. Javier Garcia, Bethany House (Day 1 & 2)
19. Israel Reyna, Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid (Day 1)
20. Jaime Arizpe, Westcare (Day 1 & 2)
21. Mary Gaona, Bethany House (Day 1 & 2)
22. Diana Garcia, AHEC (Day 1 & 2)
23. Roxana Rivera UTHSCSA (Day 1 & 2)
24. Michael Smith, Holding (Day 1 & 2)
25. Ricardo Hinojosa, Next Step (Day 1 & 2)
26. Francis Atwell, Congressman Cuellar (Day 1 & 2)
27. Victoria Sandoval, Congressman Cuellar (Day 1 & 2)
28. Roland Gutierrez, Border Region (Day 1 & 2)
29. James Flores, Webb County (Day 1 & 2)
30. Rogelio Trevino, South Texas Workforce (Day 2)
31. Yolanda Mendoza, Laredo ISD (Day 2)

Leadership Team


1. Mary Gaona, Bethany House
2. Maria Vinegar, TAMIU Research Team
3. Nora Murillo, USID Homeless Liaison
4. Melissa Ortiz, LHA
5. Jose Ceballos, LHC, LHA
6. Jennifer Roby, VA
7. Lizette Shrout, Family Endeavors
8. Rogelio Trevino, South Texas Workforce
9. Roland Gutierrez, Border Region
10. Jerry Alvarado, Border Region
11. Charles McDaniel, Family Endeavors
12. Ricardo Hinojosa, Next Step Westcare
13. Jaime Arizpe, Westcare
14. Juan Rodriguez, STDC
15. Michael Smith, Holding
16. City Ad Hoc (person to be determined)
17. County Rep (person to be determined)

Slides from First Day of Strategic Planning Meeting

Slide 1

Laredo Homeless Coalition Strategic Discussion


January 11th, 2016



Slide 2

AGENDA

- Welcome & Introductions
- Goals for strategic planning
- Update of TAMIU report
- HUD CoC Expectations
- HUD areas of impact
- Discussion: Status of Laredo Homeless Coalition
- Discussion: Determination on how to Proceed



Slide 3

Ground Rules

- Mute cell phones: check at breaks
- All voices heard
- Communicate respectfully
- Be candid/speak your mind (silence = agreement)
- Debate the issue not the person
- Stay focused
- Respect confidentiality
- Have some fun

Slide 4

Goals for strategic discussion

- ❑ Review key findings from TAMIU report
- ❑ Outline HUD requirements and expectations for CoC's
- ❑ Discuss strengths, challenges, and opportunities of existing coalition
- ❑ Discuss pros and cons of becoming a formal CoC
- ❑ Identify next steps

Slide 5

HUD GOALS

- End veteran homelessness by 2015
- End chronic homelessness by 2017
- End family and youth homelessness by 2020
- Other priority populations: Veterans ineligible for VA services and Homeless Youth, Individuals fleeing human trafficking

Slide 6

HUD Community Goals

- Decrease the number of homeless individuals
- Increase the number of beds dedicated to the chronically homeless
- Increase the percentage of individuals who remain in permanent housing
- Increase % who increase their income from employment
- Increase % who increase their income from other sources
- Increase % who obtain non-cash benefits

Slide 7

Definition of Homelessness

1. People who are living in a place not meant for human habitation, in emergency shelter, in transitional housing, or are exiting an institution where they temporarily resided (90 days or less).
2. People who are losing their primary nighttime residence, which may include a motel or hotel or a doubled up situation, within 14 days and lack resources or support networks to remain in housing. HUD had previously allowed people who were being displaced within 7 days to be considered homeless. The proposed regulation also describes specific documentation requirements for this category.
3. Unaccompanied youth and families with children and youth who are defined as homeless under other federal statutes who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition;
4. Individuals and families who are fleeing, or are attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member.

Slide 8

Chronically Homeless

An individual or head of household who meets the definition of "homeless individual with a disability" from the [McKinney-Vento Act, as amended by the HEARTH Act](#) and has been living in a place not meant for human habitation, in an emergency shelter, or in a safe haven for the last 12 months continuously or on at least four occasions in the last three years *where those occasions cumulatively total at least 12 months*; A break in homelessness is defined as 7 days

Slide 9

Who Is Not Considered Homeless

- Persons or families living in motels.
- Persons doubled up, living with relatives, and moving frequently.
- Persons living in substandard housing.
- Persons that are paying an excessive amount for housing.
- Wards of the state.
- Persons being discharged from an institution that is required by the State to provide or arrange for housing upon release.

Slide 10

Rates of Homelessness

- National Rate of Homelessness 17.7% per 10,000
(= 452 Laredo or 477 Webb County)
- 2016 Laredo PIT 168 individuals identified of which
19 were considered chronically homeless (11%
compared to 15% nationally)

Slide 11

Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities for a Continuum of Care are outlined in the 2011 CoC Interim Rule

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT 24 CFR Part 578 [Docket No. FR-5476-I-01] RIN 2506-AC29 Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing: Continuum of Care Program

Slide 12

HUD CoC participation requirement

CoC's should include representatives from relevant organizations including :

- nonprofit homeless assistance providers,
- victim service providers,
- faith-based organizations,
- governments,
- businesses, advocates,
- public housing agencies,
- school districts,
- social service providers,
- mental health agencies,
- hospitals, universities,
- affordable housing developers,
- law enforcement, and
- organizations that serve veterans and homeless and formerly homeless individuals.

Slide 13

CoC Responsibilities

- ☐ Establish a Board of Directors
- ☐ Operate the Continuum of Care
- ☐ Designate and Operate a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- ☐ Conduct Continuum of Care Planning
- ☐ Prepare an application for funds

Slide 14

Responsibilities of a CoC: **Establish a Board**

The board must:

1. Be representative of the relevant organizations and of projects serving homeless subpopulations; and
2. Include at least one homeless or formerly homeless individual.
3. comply with the conflict-of-interest requirements at § 578.95(b).

Slide 15

Responsibilities of CoC. Operate the Continuum of Care

- ❑ Hold meetings with full membership and agendas, at least semi-annually
- ❑ Invite people to join at least annually
- ❑ Adopt and follow a process to select a Board – review process at least every 5 years
- ❑ Appoint committee, subcommittees, and work groups
- ❑ Develop, follow, and annually update a governance charter
- ❑ Establish performance targets
- ❑ Evaluate project outcomes
- ❑ Establish and operate centralized coordinated assessment

Slide 16

Responsibilities of CoC. Operate the Continuum of Care cont.

Establish and consistently follow written standards for providing Continuum of Care assistance that includes: Policies and procedures for:

- ❑ Evaluating individuals' and families' **eligibility** for assistance
- ❑ **Determining and prioritizing** which eligible individuals and families will receive **transitional housing assistance**
- ❑ Determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive **rapid rehousing assistance**;
- ❑ Determining and prioritizing which eligible individuals and families will receive **permanent supportive housing assistance**
- ❑ Standards for determining what percentage or amount of rent each program participant must pay while receiving rapid rehousing assistance;

Slide 17

Responsibilities of a CoC. Designate and Operate a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

- ❑ Designate a single HMIS for CoC
- ❑ Identify an eligible HMIS lead
- ❑ Review, revise, and approve a privacy plan, security plan, and data quality plan for the HMIS.
- ❑ Ensure consistent participation of recipients and subrecipients in the HMIS; and
- ❑ Ensure the HMIS is administered in compliance with requirements prescribed by HUD.

Slide 18

Responsibilities of a CoC: **Continuum of Care Planning**

- Coordinate implementation of a housing and service system
- Plan for and conduct, at least biennially, a point-in-time count of homeless persons within the geographic area
- Conduct an annual gaps analysis of the homeless needs and services available within the geographic area;
- Provide information required to complete the Consolidated Plan(s) within the Continuum's geographic area;
- Consult with State and local government Emergency Solutions Grants program recipients on the plan for allocating Emergency Solutions Grants program funds and reporting on and evaluating the performance of Emergency Solutions Grants program recipients and subrecipients.

Slide 19

Responsibilities of a CoC: **Prepare an application for funds**

- Design, operate, and follow a collaborative process for the development of applications and approve the submission of
- Establish priorities for funding projects in the geographic area;
- If more than one application will be submitted, designate an eligible applicant to be the collaborative applicant that will collect and combine the required application information from all applicants and for all projects within the geographic area that the Continuum has selected funding. The collaborative applicant will also apply for Continuum of Care planning activities. If the Continuum is an eligible applicant, it may designate itself;
- The Continuum retains all of its responsibilities, even if it designates one or more eligible applicants other than itself to apply for funds on behalf of the Continuum. This includes approving the Continuum of Care application.

Slide 20

CoC Overview

Programs funded by the Continuum of Care (CoC) grant should:

- Promote community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness
- Provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers to rehouse homeless individuals and families rapidly while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness
- Promote access to effective use of mainstream programs
- Optimize self-sufficiency

Slide 21

COC's MAY FUND

- **Permanent Housing** - community based housing without a designated length of stay. Includes **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** (for individuals and families with a disability) and Rapid Re-housing. Does not allow for permanent housing without support services.
- **Transitional Housing** – no longer a preferred category, except for youth
- Supportive Services only – only if focused on Coordinated Assessment
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- Prevention (high performing communities only)

Slide 22

HUD AREAS of FOCUS in 2016

- Reallocation of lower performing projects and categories, especially Transitional Housing and Services Only
- Ranking and Rating based on objective performance criteria
- Housing First Principles Followed
- Homelessness Reduced
- Resources Targeted at Those with the Highest Needs

Slide 23

Other areas of emphasis

- Access to transportation and community amenities
- Access to healthcare
- Client choice
- Coordinate entry
- Rapid movement from transitional to permanent housing
- Partnerships with Housing Authorities

Slide 24

For Organizations to be Eligible

- 501(c)(3) or government entity
- Submit or willingness to submit data into HMIS or equivalent data management system (domestic violence only)
- Participation or willingness to participate in Coordinated Assessment
- Participation in Continuum of Care committee
- Participation in annual Point in Time Count and Housing Inventory
- Active SAM registration
- DUNS number

Slide 25

Permanent Housing

- Permanent Supportive Housing
- Rapid Re-Housing

Slide 26

Permanent Supportive Housing

- Long term community-based housing (no time limit).
- Only for homeless persons with disabilities.
- Programs should be designed to enable persons to live as independently as possible.
- Supportive services are required to be offered and can be provided by the grantee or another agency.