

## **TX BoS CoC Board Nomination – Seat 4 – Homeless Families**

### **Katherine Bisson**

Organization (if applicable): Abilene Hope Haven, Inc.

Job Title (if applicable): Executive Director

Do you live and/or work in the TX BoS CoC's geographic area?

Yes

If yes, in which TX BoS CoC county and/or counties do you live and/or work and would you represent on the CoC Board?

Taylor

Which seat are you seeking?

Seat 4 -- Homeless Families

Do you have lived experience of homelessness? In other words, have you ever lived in a homeless situation?

Yes

Are you affiliated with a HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) Program-funded project and/or Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program-funded project operating in the TX BoS CoC?

Yes

If yes, indicate your role:

Employee

Are you the Chair of a Local Homeless Coalition (LHC)?

No

If yes, which LHC?

1. Please describe your personal and/or work experience with the population you would be representing in the designated seat, if elected.

I have 5 years experience working with homeless families in various capacities. I have connected families with housing instabilities to resources in order to resolve attendance and behavioral challenges of the children in school settings. I have also been a Rapid Rehousing case manager where I was able to meet families experiencing homelessness through street outreach and work with them in a short-to-medium term rental assistance program in order to become self-sufficient. In addition, I have 3 years experience supervising programs that serve families experiencing homelessness, including a low-barrier shelter that prioritizes families. I am a proponent of the systems theory and strengths-based approaches in working with families, as well as the importance of utilizing housing first principles, such as harm reduction, client choice, community integration.

2. Please describe how you have participated in the TX BoS CoC in the past.

I have participated as a general member for the TX BoS CoC since 2017. Additionally, I have attended the Texas Conferences on Ending Homelessness both as a participant and a presenter. I have also attended the TX BoS CoC webinars and trainings over the last 3 years.

3. Please describe your experience, if any, working with the HUD Continuum of Care (CoC) Program or similar programs focused on ending homelessness (ESG, SSVF, PATH, and RHY).

I have been the case manager, director of programs, and Executive Director involved with HUD CoC grants (both Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing). In 2019, I applied for and began managing an ESG grant through my agency.

4. Please describe your experience, if any, serving on a board of directors, including any leadership roles.

I have had leadership roles at Abilene Hope Haven, Inc. as the Director of Programs and now the Executive Director. I also served as the Chair of the West Texas Homeless Network (WTHN) in 2019 and currently serve as the Public Relations Chair for WTHN. I am also an active member of the Strategic Planning Committee through the Texas Homeless Network.

5. Please describe your experience, if any, with managing grants.

I have managed local, state, and federal level grants. Specific tasks vary dependent on each grant but generally include: monitoring client-level data, policies and procedures, project performance, match funding, financial monitoring, fidelity to the Housing First model, etc.

6. Please describe your specific skills that can benefit the CoC.

The greatest skill I bring that would benefit the CoC is my passion for the work to prevent and end homelessness. I have been told that I have a unique balance of compassion and competence. I am also data-driven and interested in evidence-based practices. I have skills related to creating momentum and drive to help communities looking to reach functional zero for sub-populations experiencing homelessness. In addition, the local homeless coalition that I

am involved with has set its next priority to achieve functional zero for family homelessness. I will be working on this goal both at an agency-level and public relations-level, I will be able to share my experience in this area.

7. Why do you want to serve on the CoC Board?

I want to serve on the CoC board because it is my calling to ensure that more individuals and families have safe and affordable housing. Housing is a basic human right and everyone deserves to have a place where they feel like they belong. By serving on the board I would get to continue this important work on a greater scale.

8. If you are elected to the board, what do you plan to work on and accomplish?

If elected to the board I plan to work on ways to better include the voices of those with lived experience of homelessness, especially families, combined with better ways to track data with this population.

9. What else would you like the CoC members to know about you?