

TX BoS CoC Board Nominations – Seat 8 – Health/Medical

Leslie Stalnaker

Organization (if applicable): University of Texas Medical Branch

Job Title (if applicable): Public Health Program Manager

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?

Galveston

Which seat are you seeking?

Seat 8 -- Health/Medical

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

No

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?

Unsure

If yes, indicate your role:

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.

In my current position at UT Medical Branch, I work in the public health program to facilitate public health practice efforts and facilitate practice-based learning among our students. I help teach courses that introduce students to the social determinants of health and the concept of "Health in All Policies". I also introduce them to various community-based organizations/agencies that meet various needs, including housing, food access, transportation, and health care. I'm also the public health practice representative for the program. I work closely with our community partners to coordinate projects and facilitate partnerships. Examples include: coordinating the PIT Count for the students on our campus, helping conceptualize a mobile health clinic that will be used to serve the homeless, starting conversations on increasing shelter capacity, and improving service delivery to individuals in shelters in Galveston.

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

My participation up to this point has been limited. While I've been passionate about working to end homelessness for several years, only recently have I begun focusing on this issue. The projects that I have listed above have introduced me to several organizations and individuals who are more directly involved. However, I am hoping to work on this issue for many years to come. I am currently pursuing a Doctorate in Public Health, and am hoping to work on a project around homelessness and Housing First policies for my dissertation. Working closely in the community over the past three years has afforded me the opportunity to understand how important it is to address homelessness and service delivery to people experiencing homelessness.

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).

Again, my experience with these programs has been limited to this point. However, I am learning a lot about them from various community partners and am hoping to maximize the capacity to which they can use them in the Galveston County area.

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

I am currently a member of the advisory board for the Moody Early Childhood Center (MECC) in Galveston, TX. I was appointed by the Superintendent of Galveston ISD to speak to early childhood education from the public health perspective. MECC is a center that educates children from 6 months-K4 and approximately 60% of the families there are on some type of subsidized tuition program and about 94% of the families are considered to be economically disadvantaged. I'm also the president-elect and treasurer of the Delta Nu chapter of the Delta Omega Honorary Society of Public Health at UT Medical Branch. In this role, I help coordinate and facilitate service efforts among chapter members (approximately 40 faculty, staff, alumni and current students).

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

I have no direct experience managing grants. However, during my Master of Public Health (MPH) coursework, I took a course on Grant Writing & Management where I wrote a grant for a non-profit organization. Recently, I was involved in a small grant from a church in Galveston to provide hygiene and cleaning items to some of the economically disadvantaged families at MECC. The grant was small (around \$6,000), but I helped make sure we stayed in budget and helped with the data collection and analysis portion of the project. I also have been involved with several small community-based grant-funded projects at UTMB. While I haven't directly been involved in grant management, I developed monthly reports to update the funding group on the program's progress. In the future, I will be taking a community-based grant writing workshop where I hope to fine tune some of these skills since I know that as a public health professional, grants will be a part of my life forever.

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

Coming from a public health background, I am knowledgeable about data collection practices, data analysis, stakeholder engagement, and community-based practice. I am also well-connected with community partners, foundations, government agencies, and other entities that serve various health and social services functions. My knowledge of health issues at a community level is also something that I think would benefit the CoC. While I work closely with medical students and have worked at hospitals myself, my perspective of health and social issues is at the community and population level, which I think is very important when discussing a broad issue such as homelessness. I have the knowledge and skills to be able to assess an issue, plan a program or policy that can address the issue, and evaluate its effectiveness. As I pursue my doctorate degree, my knowledge and abilities will continue to grow.

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

I want to serve on the CoC Board so that I can impact homelessness in the state of TX. The work that the CoC does is important and I believe that my connections, passion, and knowledge around health and social issues will benefit the CoC. I also selfishly want to join the board to be able to build my network so that I can make a more significant impact in my own community and to learn. I see this as a great learning opportunity for me to learn from different individuals who are also passionate about homelessness but have different perspectives from my own. I believe that when different people with different skillsets and are passionate about the same issues come together, that real, long-lasting change can occur. Serving on the board will help me better serve my community, be a better public health professional, understand the issue of homelessness in a different way, and make a lasting impact in TX.

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

Simply put, I plan on helping reduce homelessness in TX. I want to work to create programs and policies that increase employment and income for these populations and improve access to social services. I want to help create communities where if homelessness has to exist, that it exists only temporarily because the community has the capacity to provide services that can help all individuals have a good quality of life. I want to advocate for change and I want to help improve the capacity of organizations and agencies to meet the needs and bridge gaps in service delivery to the homeless population.

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

I'm originally from Delaware, moved here about a month of Hurricane Harvey in October of 2017. I knew no one in Texas when I moved here, but the decision was the best one that I have made.