

Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care

Seat 11 – Public Housing Agency

Ronnie Odom

Current Position: Director of Affordable Housing Programs at the Housing Authority of Texarkana, Texas

TX BoS CoC county served: Bowie

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, as a volunteer

Are you the Chair of a Local Homeless Coalition (LHC)? No

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

I've worked in affordable housing programs since 1986 and the homeless population has been a part of the overall population that we served. In addition, I have been homeless, after losing a job in the mid-2000s. I volunteered with the Las Vegas Homeless Coalition and served on the marketing committee. This was the beginning of the group's advocacy work, which later resulted in local funding as part of negotiations to work with the city on their Fremont Experience project. I worked for the Women's Development Center which provided housing and social services to homeless women with children – my main responsibilities were grant writing to build the program and case management when we were without a case manager. I worked with the City of Las Vegas where I managed the Emergency Shelter Grant, HOME, HOPWA and a local grant program funded from hotel taxes. In addition, I was part of the team that helped to build a state of the art family shelter called MASH.

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

I attend and participate in monthly meetings of the Texarkana Homeless Coalition. HATT was recently funded by HUD to administer 37 Mainstream Vouchers to local families whose households includes disabled non-elderly members. We utilized the membership to attain letters of support for funding and expansion of services to these families, including application referrals. HATT was also recently funded by HUD to administer the Family Self Sufficiency Program as part of the Housing Choice Voucher program. Through social services and local partnerships, this program offers a bridge for families to attain self-sufficiency. HATT utilized THC membership for letters of support, partnerships, and to be part of the governing body called the Program Coordinating Committee.

Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care

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).

In 1996, I led the City of Las Vegas/Clark County efforts in applying for the first Continuum of Care. A number of public meetings were conducted, nonprofit sub-applicants presented their projects and the projects were ranked by the public. We were funded for 4 projects. I worked for the City of Las Vegas as a Supervisor in the Community Development Department. I was responsible for the administration of the Emergency Shelter Grant Program, HOME, Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA), and a locally funded affordable housing program which funded nonprofits in servicing low-income clients. When I started with the Women's Development Center, we had 8 Dollar-A-Year leases. When I finished working there, we owned 24 apartments for the homeless program, 48 affordable rentals, and we have a first time homebuyer's program – full circle of services for our homeless women with children.

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

I served on the board of directors for Aid for AIDS of Nevada (AFAN). AFAN is the largest aids organization in Nevada and offers an array of social services to clients with HIV/AIDS. I worked closely with the Executive Director to write grants to extend services and housing options. I was on the board for Golden Rainbow of Las Vegas, which provide housing and housing assistance to persons with AIDS. I worked closely with the Executive Director to write grants for housing and services. Brothers for Brothers Indianapolis was another organization that I served on the Board of Directors. We provided social services and education/prevention to gay black men throughout the state of Indiana, but mainly Indianapolis. I worked closely with the Executive Director to write grants for social services and educational materials.

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

I've managed millions of dollars in grants over the years, including Continuum of Care, Emergency Shelter Grant, HOME, HOPWA, and locally funded grant for the City of Las Vegas. I have managed grants for local nonprofits, including the aforementioned grants, as well as community grants. I currently managed the Housing Choice Voucher program for the Housing Authority of the City of Las Vegas, which also includes the administration of Mainstream Vouchers and the Family Self Sufficiency Program.

Please describe your specific skills that can benefit the CoC.

My skill set includes consulting, training, critical thinking, public speaking, grant writing, grant management, administration and management. I have a wide knowledge of many affordable housing programs, including Housing Choice Vouchers, and Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

Why do you want to serve on the CoC Board?

I have always volunteered on some level to assist in serving people less fortunate than myself. I think I have a unique set of skills based on my personal and professional experiences which would benefit the organization. In addition, my company has given me their full support.

Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care

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

Based on my research, I think planning and funding would be a good fit for me. However, I am open to serving wherever there is a need that fits my skill set.

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

I have worked exclusively in affordable housing since 1986. I have a business degree from the University of Georgia. My background includes working on state and city level, as well as for nonprofits. I have lived in Texas for almost 3 years and I'm eager to work with your organization.

