

Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care

Seat 2 – Homeless Veterans

Anthony Bustos

Current Position:

Homeless Veterans Coordinator - Texas Veterans Commission

TX BoS CoC county served:

Williamson

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?

No

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 am a US Army veteran myself with 8 years of service from 2002 - 2010 with two combat deployments to Iraq. Near the end of my service, I was able to advocate for the equity and equality of servicemembers and veterans as a subject matter expert for ABC World News and really enjoyed being able to advocate for special populations, especially populations that, historically, have been silenced or unheard. This helped springboard my passion into the realm of veterans experiencing homelessness in the Austin, Texas area as a direct service provider with a local non-profit's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program and eventually leading to my current position as the Homeless Veterans Coordinator for Texas with Texas Veterans Commission (TVC).

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

While building the Homeless Veterans Statewide Initiative within TVC, I recognized the valued work and resources that the TX BoS CoC served and represented and so I set out to serve as a non-voting board member starting in the beginning of 2022 and participate in the monthly CoC Coordination calls as available.

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 started working with one of Austin's local Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) Program in July of 2019 as a case manager and eventually finished my time with that program in December of 2021 as their Healthcare Navigator before transferring to TVC's Veterans Mental Health Department (VMHD). Through this work, I have had the profound experience of serving veteran families on every spectrum of the homelessness continuum; from exiting homelessness and entering housing to stabilizing the foundation for housing security to exiting a housing unit and reentering homelessness. Each one of these focus points has valuable lessons to be learned as far as identifying the best current resources as well as identifying any resource gaps in each point.

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

I served as an uncompensated board member for the Valhalla Veterans Retreat as their Chief Researcher from 09/2015 to 00/2017. My duties included compiling appropriate data for each required step in creating a 501(c)(3) as specified by the Executive Director, specifically for evidence-based research proposals for a retreat focused on a combat veteran Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) recovery retreat that is directed & governed by combat veterans. Performing data analysis including the compilation of suicide reports from different reporting agencies to develop a more accurate perspective of where combat veterans are suffering the most, geographically & mentally, & propose activities to highlight at the retreat via evidence-based research.

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

While serving with one of Austin's local SSVF programs, I was able to ensure that all requirements were met and boundaries were maintained while utilizing TVC's Mental Health grant in a timely manner. This became especially important to ensuring audits were smooth and reapplication for the grant was efficient and successful.

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Please describe your specific skills that can benefit the CoC.

My advocacy for veterans and servicemembers formally started in 2009 while working as a subject matter expert regarding military equity and equality and honed those skills inside the realm of veterans experiencing homelessness while with one of Austin's local SSVF programs while also garnering direct service experience. By pulling from my direct service experience and coupling it with my advocacy knowledge and experience, I've been able to help contribute to TVC's VMHD's efforts on supporting veterans experiencing homelessness and helping prevention efforts across the state of Texas. I believe these combined skills and experiences will be a great contribution to the established experiences and resources already on the BoS CoC board and compliment and help progress current efforts.

Why do you want to serve on the CoC Board?

I believe in the CoC's mission to elevate the needs of those experiencing homelessness in a holistic effort as well as ensuring advocacy efforts are put forth for commonly underserved subpopulations. I would also like to ensure that the special subpopulations within the veteran community are identified when needed to best ensure that they are identified for any possible resource efforts/opportunities.

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

My goal would be to advance the already established efforts and progression to end veteran homelessness as well as bolstering resources and information regarding homeless prevention efforts along with the advancement of especially vulnerable subpopulations within the veteran community (i.e. BIPOC, LGBTQI, etc. ...).

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

Regardless of selection status, I honestly look forward to serving the CoC's in any way possible for the foreseeable future, but especially during these tumultuous and unprecedented times.

