

Modernization Workgroup Report

What we heard, what we learned, and what comes next

About This Report

In 2025 and early 2026, the Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care (TX BoS CoC) convened a Modernization Workgroup to take a focused look at three core CoC functions — governance, Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and use of data, and Coordinated Entry (CE)— to determine how each of these could adjust to better support local communities.

When the workgroup first started, the CoC was exploring whether to split into two CoCs to bring more Planning grant funding to local communities. By summer 2025, federal funding uncertainty and shifting HUD priorities made a split risky. The group reframed the work to explore how the CoC could better support Local Homeless Coalitions (LHCs) and local programs within the current structure.

This report summarizes what came out of those conversations. It is written for the full CoC including board members, CoC committees, community leaders, LHC members and anyone whose work it impacts.

Who Participated

The workgroup met across seven sessions from February 2025 through April 2026, with attendance ranging from roughly 15 to 36 participants per meeting. Participants came from across the TX BoS CoC's geography and represented many different parts of the homelessness response system. Relevant CoC Committees were invited to attend sessions where the topic fit their committee work.

Communities represented

Abilene / Taylor County, Atascosa County, Brazoria County, Brown County, Brownsville, Concho Valley / San Angelo, Corpus Christi, Denton County, Ellis County, Galveston, Gregg, Harlingen / RGV, Hidalgo County, Kerrville, Kaufman / Killeen / Bell County, Laredo/Webb, Lubbock, Midland, Navarro County, New Braunfels / Comal County, Nueces County, Odessa, Orange / Southeast Texas, Panhandle, San Marcos / Hays County, Sherman / Grayson County, Temple,, Victoria / Victoria County, Weslaco, Williamson County

Roles and perspectives at the table

LHC leads, co-chairs, and members; CoC and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)-funded direct service providers — shelter, rapid re-housing, permanent supportive housing, joint transitional housing/rapid reh-housing, street outreach, and case management; local government partners; Lived Experience Committee (LEC) members; CoC Board members; Coordinated Entry Planning Entity (CEPE), CE Steering Committee (CESC) representatives, and CE Participating and Receiving Agencies; HMIS users; Texas Homeless Network (THN) staff across the Engagement, Planning, Data, and Systems Change teams; and technical assistance providers from The Cloudburst Group.

Takeaways by Topic Area

Each topic was discussed across two sessions — first to surface needs and context, then to refine priorities. Below are the key takeaways from each.

Governance

- Balance standardization with local flexibility. Larger LHCs may benefit from more performance standards; smaller, volunteer-run coalitions need flexibility. The group landed on THN-supported best practices and locally-set goals rather than uniform requirements.
- Move from top-down to continuous feedback. CoC processes should be shaped with local communities, not pushed onto them. THN was asked to invest in consistent, relationship-based ways to understand what's actually happening on the ground.
- Case management showed up as a system-wide gap. Both content training (how to do the work) and process training (HMIS, CE, CoC standards) are needed. The workgroup suggested a centralized THN resource or "case management institute."
- Tier the support. New LHC leads need a "101" guide and mentorship; established LHCs need content that goes beyond the basics. Cohort-based meetings were suggested.
- Build peer learning into how the CoC works. Revive a THN-moderated discussion board, surface success stories in LHC leads meetings, and create structured space for advanced LHCs to mentor newer ones.

HMIS & Use of Data

- Communities want local data they can actually use. Raw HMIS reports aren't enough. Data needs context, plain-language definitions, and a THN walkthrough so it's usable for elected officials and newcomers, not just HMIS specialists.
- Adopt the HUD System Performance Measures (SPMs) as the starting framework for community-level data reporting. The 7-measure template drafted by THN was well received.
- Address HMIS access as a sustainability issue. Several communities flagged that agencies losing ESG funding may lose HMIS licenses, and that some counties (e.g., Ellis) still lack HMIS access. THN was asked to explore licensing flexibility and outreach.
- Plan for the wind-down of Emergency Housing Vouchers (EHVs). Communities want clear ways to track returns to homelessness and first-time homelessness as EHVs expire.
- Coordinate the feedback ask. LHCs experience "feedback fatigue" when multiple THN teams reach out separately. The group asked THN to consolidate requests and let LHCs choose how to respond.

Coordinated Entry

- CE infrastructure is uneven. Some regions have tight integration between the LHC, the CEPE, and the CESC representative; others have CEPEs that operate completely separately from the LHC, which creates miscommunication and conflict.

- Communities want a visual blueprint. A clear picture of how the CEPE, LHC, CESC representative, and coalition fit together with the flexibility to fit different community structures.
- Diversion support in some communities is an unmet need. The definition is unclear (general diversion vs. shelter diversion vs. Homeless Prevention Services), and several CE regions are struggling to launch or relaunch it. THN is developing diversion materials, including a one-pager and infographic.
- Strengthen CESC representative communication. A single point of contact per region is fragile. The group asked for clearer communication expectations and broader regional distribution of CE updates.
- Focus training where staff turnover hurts most. Referral, prioritization, and case conferencing are complex processes that degrade quickly when institutional knowledge leaves.

Themes Across the Workgroup's Work

Three themes ran through every topic area, regardless of whether the conversation was about governance, data, or Coordinated Entry.

1. Communication and information flow

Across every topic, communities described communication that was inconsistent, one-directional, or concentrated in a single person. They told us:

- Information from THN is hard to find or scattered across the website. Newer LHC leads especially struggle to know what's available.
- THN often communicates with LHCs through multiple teams in parallel, and the asks add up. Communities want THN to coordinate internally before reaching out.
- In Coordinated Entry, communication often depends on a single CESC representative per region. When that person is unavailable or turns over, CE regions lose touch with system-wide updates.
- Communities want two-way feedback — not just THN explaining to them, but THN consistently understanding what's happening locally.

2. How communities get established and stay strong

Whether the topic was forming a new LHC, standing up a CEPE, or relaunching diversion, the workgroup kept returning to the same question: what does it look like to get established and to stay established through staff turnover and capacity shifts?

- Newer LHC leads asked for a clear, tiered onboarding pathway, a "LHC 101", with mentorship from more experienced LHCs.
- CEPEs that are separated from their local LHC tend to struggle with communication and coordination. The group asked for tools that help communities see how the pieces should fit together while respecting that there's no single right structure.
- Complex CE processes (referral, prioritization, case conferencing) lose functionality quickly when staff turn over. Training has to be ongoing, not one-time.

- Communities consistently asked for relationship-based engagement from THN rather than periodic or crisis-driven contact.

3. A systems-level lens, applied locally

The workgroup pushed back on a binary between local autonomy and CoC-wide standards. What they asked for instead was a systems-level lens applied at the local level:

- Data tools designed not simply to feed reporting up to HUD, but to assist local communities to make data-driven decisions.
- Best practices set at the CoC level, with goals and metrics that adapt to local conditions and capacity.
- Implementation pilots in ready communities that can then mentor others rather than one-size-fits-all rollouts.
- Recognition that what works in a large LHC like Denton looks different from what works in a small volunteer-led coalition in Navarro County — and that both are legitimate.

For CoC Board Leadership

Six themes surfaced across nine months of workgroup conversation — including direct feedback from the final session — that have clear implications for board leadership.

MODERNIZATION AS ONGOING PRACTICE, NOT A ONE-TIME PROJECT

The workgroup affirmed this shift. The Board has a role in protecting that framing and resourcing it accordingly.

DIRECT CONNECTION BETWEEN THE BOARD AND LOCAL COALITIONS

Participants valued the workgroup precisely because it was a direct, sustained line of engagement. The Board has a role in building and modeling that kind of connection with LHCs.

TWO-WAY, COORDINATED COMMUNICATION

Feedback fatigue surfaced often. Communities want to be heard as much as informed. The Board has a role in pushing for coordination across THN teams and modeling communication that flows both ways.

GEOGRAPHIC AND RESOURCE DIVERSITY AS A GUIDING LENS

LHCs across the BoS vary drastically in capacity and size; what works in one place won't necessarily work in another. The Board's planning and decision-making benefit from keeping this diversity front and center.

LOCAL DATA AS A DECISION-MAKING TOOL

Communities asked for data they can actually use — context-rich, accessible, and grounded in local realities. The Board benefits from this same picture. Pairing LHC-level and regional data with system-wide measures gives the Board a clearer view of what's happening across the BoS and supports decisions that account for local context.

INVESTMENT IN LOCAL CAPACITY BUILDING

The Board should support tiered training, peer mentoring between LHCs, and case management resources at the CoC level. Individual agencies and small coalitions can't build this infrastructure alone.

Next Steps & Looking Forward

The Modernization Workgroup wrapped up its formal meeting series in April 2026. The workgroup's discussion is already woven into the 2026 CoC Action Plan and will continue through existing CoC structures.



Integration with the 2026 CoC Action Plan

The workgroup's themes map directly onto the CoC's three 2026 priorities:

CoC Priority	What the workgroup contributed
Priority 1: Local Focus	Tiered LHC support, peer mentoring, LHC-level data portfolios, and a stronger feedback loop between LHCs and the CoC.
Priority 2: Service & Housing Outcomes	SPM-based community data reports, peer learning, and case management training as a CoC-level investment.
Priority 3: Best Practice & Person-Centered Implementation	CE Assessment & Prioritization redesign, diversion materials, a CEPE/LHC/CESC blueprint, and refreshed training on referral, prioritization, and case conferencing.

[Click here to view the 2026 CoC Action Plan and Progress Reports.](#)

What happens next

- Modernization becomes ongoing practice. Rather than a standalone workgroup, it will be embedded in existing CoC committees, board work, and the CoC's action plan.
- Ongoing input continues. Workgroup members were invited to participate in a quarterly action planning advisory group. Several have already said yes; the invitation is open to others.
- Reporting and feedback. Updates will continue through CoC General Membership meetings, the THN newsletter, and quarterly board reports.
- THN team alignment. Recommendations are being integrated into the Engagement, Planning, Data, and Systems Change teams' 2026 priorities including training opportunities, the LHC data portfolio template, and CESC communication improvements.

In motion already

THN quickly acted upon some of the recommendations before the final report including refreshing LHC resources on its website, contracting for case management training, developing diversion materials and a CEPE/LHC blueprint, and building LHC-level data visualization tools. The work captured in this report is part of an already-active practice.

The work captured in this report reflects the contributions of the variety of participants who showed up across seven workgroup sessions and the THN teams supporting the process. It will continue to shape how the CoC moves forward in 2026 and beyond.