THN
TEXAS HOMELESS NETWORK



Welcome to this month's Texas Homeless Network newsletter! As we count down to the **2026 Texas Conference on Ending Homelessness**, we're introducing keynote speaker **Mejean Cline**, taking you behind the scenes with conference planner Lou Cirelli, and sharing updates from the first two stops of our Road to 2027 listening tour. Plus, catch up on the latest news, announcements, and opportunities from across the Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care.

From the Field: *Stories and updates from communities across Texas, highlighting the people and programs making a real difference.*



More Than a Story of Survival: Meet 2026 Keynote Speaker Mejean Cline

From experiencing homelessness as a college student and mother of two to building a career in the space industry, Mejean Cline's journey is a powerful example of resilience and the impact of community support.

Now a Flight Software Engineering Manager for Umbra Space after spending eight years at NASA's Johnson Space Center, Cline will take the stage as the keynote speaker at the 2026 Texas Conference on Ending Homelessness, sharing the experiences that shaped her journey.

"Where we stand today doesn't define where we're capable of going," Cline said.

Stay tuned for more sneak peeks of her inspiring keynote + View session topics!

🔗 **Read Mejean's story**



Meet the Planner Behind THN's 2026 Conference

Behind every successful conference is months of planning and collaboration. Meet Lou Cirelli, founder of Meetingscouts and conference planner for the 2026 Texas Conference on Ending Homelessness.

Working alongside the THN team, Lou is helping create an experience where attendees can learn, build meaningful connections and leave with practical ideas they can bring back to their communities.

"If people go home excited about a new idea or a new connection, that's a win for us," Cirelli said.

Join us September 23–25 in Houston to experience this year's conference, From Ideas to Impact: Building Solutions Together. Registration is now open + Book Tickets for Project Row Houses.

Learn more

Road to 2027 Updates: Listening to Communities Across Texas

The first two stops of THN's Road to 2027 listening tour brought together service providers, local leaders and people with lived experience in Harlingen and Pampa to help shape homelessness policy before the 2027 Texas Legislative Session.

Conversations highlighted regional priorities, including housing affordability, behavioral health, rural homelessness, stronger collaboration, and homelessness prevention.

"This is a chance for voices that are not usually represented at the Capitol to be heard," said THN Chief Development Officer Alexandra Beckendorf.

The insights gathered will help build a community-informed legislative agenda that reflects the diverse needs of communities across Texas.

🔗 Read more about stop #2

Coordinating Change: *Updates from the Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care, showcasing statewide coordination, planning, and strategies to end homelessness*

What's Happening Across the Tx BoS CoC:

THN Collaborates with Young Adult Leadership Council on New Assessment

In July, THN's Systems Change Team began an exciting collaboration with Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS). Over three meetings, the team will meet with the Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC) to receive input, insight, and feedback on drafted questions from the new Coordinated Entry (CE) assessment.

The YALC is a paid, work-based learning program for young people to grow as leaders and be a voice for change. Members are between 17-26 years old and have experienced

homelessness, foster care, juvenile justice involvement, or other youth-serving systems. Their diverse members come from communities in all areas of Texas.

Receiving direct input from youth stakeholders and leadership in Texas is a major milestone for the Systems Change Team's Coordinated Entry Assessment and Prioritization (CEAP) redesign project. Receiving direct input from youth leadership on the new assessment has been a goal since the project began in 2023.

The YALC, supported by TNOYS, have established themselves as experts on Coordinated Entry assessments. The council has previously provided feedback on drafted assessment questions to other Continuums of Care within Texas, as well as nationally. The council has developed a scoring system to provide feedback on drafted assessment questions to ensure that questions are accessible and meet the needs of youth experiencing homelessness.

The Systems Change Team extends huge thanks and gratitude to TNOYS and the YALC for their willingness to collaborate and make the new assessment the best it can be!

More from Across the TX BoS CoC

The Temple Police Department Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Unit will educate residents on panhandling and resolving homelessness-related issues without police intervention on August 7 as part of a new community engagement initiative, and Panhandle Community Services partnered with United Way of Amarillo & Canyon to provide an eye-opening experience through its interactive poverty simulation.

In Beaumont, local news spotlighted Mae's Love Beyond the Walls, a project by resident Yolanda Reynolds to house people experiencing homelessness. The Livingston Lions Club donated to the nonprofit Our Father's House to support their food and service provision to unhoused neighbors. Hiway 80 Rescue Mission and other area nonprofits called on Longview residents to donate bottled water and other supplies to help unhoused neighbors stay safe in the heat.

Tx BoS CoC Announcements:

ROAD to Housing Act and Rural Housing

The Housing Assistance Council (HAC) has developed a summary of the provisions in the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act that directly address affordable housing in rural America. See the summary for information about how various programs may be affected and for links to additional analyses of the Act.
Source: HAC News, Home - Housing Assistance Council

Seeking Nominations for CoC Board Seat 17

The CoC continues to seek nominations for Seat 17 on the CoC Board. The person filling Seat 17 must be an elected public official of some sort, such as a City Council member, a County Commissioner, or a school board member.

Anyone interested in running for the seat is encouraged to submit an online nomination form at https://thn.wufoo.com/forms/w1pf0ql101z8ufo/. If you have someone in mind and would like THN staff to reach out to that person, please contact Mary Stahlke, Director of Engagement, at mary@thn.org or 512-861-2180.

2026 Out of Reach Report Released

The National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC) has released Out of Reach: The High Cost of Housing. The annual report compares wages and the cost of rental housing. "The report's central statistic, the Housing Wage, is an estimate of the hourly wage a full-time worker must earn to afford a modest rental home at HUD's Fair Market Rent (FMR) without spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs – the most widely accepted standard of affordability." Texas is in the middle of states, with the 25th highest housing wage; a wage of $25.51 per hour is required to afford a 1-bedroom rental home in Texas.
See more Texas facts and read the report.

TX BoS CoC General Membership Meeting

Sept. 23 from 9:00 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Save the date! The Texas Balance of State Continuum of Care (TX BoS CoC) will hold its Fall general membership meeting on Wednesday, 9/23, from 9:00 AM to noon. Join Texas Homeless Network, the CoC Board, and other CoC general members for the annual hybrid meeting of the CoC!

This meeting is a time to catch up on the state of the CoC, review the governance charter, and reflect on accomplishments from the past year. This year's meeting will also feature a disaster preparedness and response workshop with consultants from ICF, an update on the CoC Action Plan, and a chance to vote on the 2027 PIT Count date.

Who Should Attend: Anyone who lives and/or works within the Balance of State's geographic area is considered to be a member of the CoC and is invited to join.

- Members who attend in person will meet at the Houston Marriott Westchase hotel immediately prior to the 2026 Texas Conference on Ending Homelessness.
- Members who attend by Zoom should register for the meeting using this link.

If you have questions or needs prior to the meeting, contact Mary Stahlke at mary@thn.org or 512-861-2180.

Tx BoS CoC Opportunities:

Education for Homeless Children and Youth

Children and youth who are experiencing homelessness have educational rights, and schools can be a major support. The National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) will hold a webinar on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Subtitle VII-B, on September 9th from 1:00 to 2:30 PM Central Time. The Act outlines students' rights and establishes guidelines to help students enroll in, attend, and succeed in school. Attendees will learn more about the law and how to implement it.

Register for the Zoom webinar using this link.

Partnering with Schools to Increase Student and Family Stability

SchoolHouse Connection and Family Promise are hosting a webinar on school partnerships. "Meaningful collaboration between schools and community-based organizations is necessary to not only promote children's educational success, but also to keep families stably housed." The Zoom webinar will be held on September 24th from 1:00 to 2:00 PM Central Time. Learn more and register using this link.

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