

Report in Brief

Date: February 2022

Report No. A-02-21-02001

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL



Why OIG Did This Audit

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) awarded States \$124 million in grant funds for Federal fiscal years 2017 and 2018 (audit period) under its Projects for Assistance in Transition From Homelessness (PATH) program. PATH programs are funded to support outreach and other services to homeless individuals with serious mental illnesses (consumers). Texas was awarded approximately \$10 million in PATH grant funds and was among the largest grant funds awarded during our audit period. This audit is part of a series of audits by OIG to ensure the integrity and proper stewardship of PATH grant funds aiming to reduce homelessness.

Our objective was to determine whether Texas complied with PATH program requirements.

How OIG Did This Audit

Our audit covered \$8.7 million in PATH grant funds that Texas withdrew of the \$10 million it was awarded during our audit period. We selected a random sample of 70 consumers out of a sampling frame of 10,005 consumers and determined whether they were eligible for the PATH program. We also judgmentally selected and reviewed certain program costs for all 16 providers funded by Texas' PATH program.

Texas Did Not Ensure Documentation Supported That Individuals Met Eligibility Requirements and That Its Annual Report was Accurate Under Its Projects for Assistance in Transition From Homelessness Program

What OIG Found

Texas complied with PATH program requirements related to certain program costs and non-Federal contributions. However, it did not always comply with PATH program requirements when determining consumers' eligibility and reporting the number of consumers enrolled in its PATH program. For 7 of the 70 sampled consumers, case files maintained by PATH providers did not support that the consumers were eligible to enroll in the PATH program. Specifically, PATH providers did not maintain documentation in their case files that indicated the consumers met PATH eligibility requirements for being seriously mentally ill (4 consumers) or inappropriately enrolled consumers due to clerical errors (3 consumers). In addition, Texas overstated the number of consumers enrolled in its PATH program in its Annual PATH Reports.

These deficiencies occurred because Texas lacked adequate oversight to ensure that PATH providers maintained sufficient documentation to support that consumers met eligibility requirements to enroll in the PATH program. In addition, Texas did not ensure that PATH providers reported accurate enrollment data for the State agency's annual PATH reports to SAMHSA. On the basis of our sample results, we estimated that 1,001 consumers (10 percent) enrolled in Texas' PATH program were ineligible to enroll in the Texas' PATH program.

What OIG Recommends and Texas Comments

We recommend that Texas (1) expand the scope of its site visits of PATH providers to include reviews of consumers' case files maintained by PATH providers to strengthen its current risk assessment process and ensure that providers only enroll eligible individuals into the PATH program and (2) work with relevant parties to provide guidance and training to PATH providers to ensure that its Annual PATH Report accurately represents the number of consumers served by its PATH program.

In written comments on our draft report, Texas did not indicate concurrence or nonconcurrence with our findings or recommendations; however, it described steps that it has taken or plans to take to address the deficiencies identified in our draft report related to its compliance with PATH program requirements.