

Freestone County Community Plan 2010

What Is a Community Plan?

The Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office (CJD) requires that each county in Texas have a Criminal Justice Community Plan in order to identify gaps in services regarding criminal justice issues.

This document reflects the efforts of Freestone County community agencies concerned with assuring that any gaps in services that are addressed to the benefit of the entire county. The names of those involved in the process of developing this plan are listed in the following pages, under "Community Planning Team."

Though the final draft of this plan was completed in December 2009, this is a work in progress. As new criminal justice goals are identified, the constituency of the planning team and priorities in the plan are subject to change. Such updates may be reported to the Freestone County Community Planning Coordinator throughout the year, and the plan amended accordingly.

If you are reading this plan and have not been involved in its development, you are invited to join in this ongoing effort. Any questions you may have can be addressed to the Criminal Justice Program of the Heart of Texas Council of Governments. Contact information is provided within this document.

The Freestone County Commissioners Court supports the concept of community planning by providing staff support and resources for development and implementation of the Freestone County Community Plan. Additionally, the regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) and the Heart of Texas Council of Governments' Governing Board (Executive Committee) invite grant applications from county departments as well as community organizations which address gaps in services identified in the Community Plan.

Areas Represented

Incorporated Communities:

Fairfield	Wortham	Kirvin	Teague
Streetman	Oakwood		

School Districts:

Dew ISD	Teague ISD
Fairfield ISD	Wortham ISD

Brief Description and History of Freestone County:

Freestone County is comprised of a land area of 885.2 square miles or 556,528 acres. Freestone County is listed amongst the top ten counties in beef cattle numbers. Our growing season averages 263 days a year. Freestone County is characterized as hot, humid summers and moderate winters. Rainfall is distributed throughout the year with peak accumulations in the spring and fall seasons. Ag commodities that dominated sales are beef cattle, hay, fruits, timber, and hunting leases. Current market trends and weather patterns complicate production. Beef cattle and hay production continue to dominate all other agriculture enterprises in the area.

Absentee landowners continue to buy pasture and range land for alternative/recreational land usage or for beef/hay production. A large percentage of these absentee landowners have limited knowledge pertaining to agriculture. There is a definite need and priority amongst all the landowners to preserve traditional agriculture land usage and to educate all concerned parties with new technology, management practices, marketing options, and remain as a source of technical information. With the current high price paid for beef cattle, there is added interest and money being spent on the development and improvement of forages and beef cattle. Freestone County is home to over 60,000 beef cows.

<http://freestone-tx.tamu.edu/>

Community Planning Team

Community Plan Coordinator for Falls County: Cindy Rafter is the Environmental and Criminal Justice Planner for the Heart of Texas Council of Governments.

In developing this Community Plan, members of the team worked together to provide updates and changes to the previous plan. Many members serve in multiple capacities and address several categories.

Juvenile Services, Victims Services & Law Enforcement:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Linda Grant	Freestone County Judge
JoLeen Eiklenborg	DSHS Region 7
Karen Oliver	Freestone County Juvenile Probation
Frances Collier	Volunteer
Alfornette Holloway-Timms	Catholic Charities of Central Texas
Judy Chambers	Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children
Sarah Anderson	Health in Action Coalition
Buck Bonner	Freestone County Constable
Bill Madding	Freestone County
Joy Borjes	Family Abuse Center
Stephanie Redding, MD	Cornerstone Family Care
Loren Miller	OEM, Freestone County
David Davis	Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children
Kay Barger	Freestone County

Identification of Community Problems

Health and Community Needs and Issues

Freestone County is a medically underserved, rural setting, approximately 1.5 hours from any major city. The population is 19,048 with 70.8% Caucasian, 18.6% African American, and 9.9% Hispanic/Latino. The per capita personal income is \$22,468. The largest employer is state and local governments. Over 41% are unmarried mothers of which 7.5% are adolescent mothers. 25% of individuals 0 – 64 years have no health insurance.

Freestone County residents are concerned about challenges facing families and preparing youth for the challenges of the 21st Century. High-quality programs that address the needs of Freestone County youth and adults are needed. Priority areas include programming focused on improving the health, nutrition, financial literacy, and life skills of Freestone County youth and adults.

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 23.9 percent of Texas youth live in poverty, compared to the national average of 18.3 percent. In Freestone County, almost 23% of the children under 17 live below poverty level.

Although the average 21-year-old in the U.S. will spend more than \$2.2 million in their lifetime, many have limited financial management skills. In the *2008 Jump\$tart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy's* biennial national survey, high school seniors correctly answered only 48.3 percent of the questions. Texas seniors fared only slightly better than the national average by correctly answering 49 percent.

Of 208 deaths in 2005, 68 were due to cardiovascular disease, 52 heart disease, 12 stroke, 41 cancer, 14 chronic lower respiratory diseases, and 10 due to diabetes.

Poor physical fitness is a concern for both adults and youth. The FITNESSGRAM TEST indicates that as youth move into the high school years, physical fitness declines. Facilities to support improved physical fitness are limited or non-existent in Freestone County cities and communities.

Nationally, 19 percent of children ages 6 to 11 years are obese (95th percentile for body mass index [BMI] by age/sex). In Texas, 23 percent of fourth-grade children are obese (95th percentile for BMI by age/sex). Texas ranks 6th as the state with the highest childhood overweight rates. Childhood obesity is associated with increased risk for diabetes, high blood pressure, and adult overweight/obesity. The percentage of obese students in Texas is higher among minority populations. Youth in Freestone County are also facing the challenges of obesity and the associated risks. Better food choices, knowledge of nutrition and increased physical activity will all have an impact on obesity.

Improved diet (nutrition) and physical activity can play a role in reducing many preventable hospitalizations, as well as reducing obesity levels. The preventable hospitalization rate for bacterial pneumonia of Freestone County adults were at least 50%

higher than the state average for 2005 – 2007; furthermore, there were no preventable hospitalization conditions that had low rates of hospitalization. In 2005, 190 admissions for bacterial pneumonia, CHF and COPD were anticipated; 300 actual admissions occurred resulting in excess charges of over \$1.7 million. <http://fcs.tamu.edu>

General Public Safety Needs and Issues

Crime is a complex and multifaceted problem, and crime control requires the constant and coordinated efforts of a wide range of public and private agencies. Countywide criminal justice planning is an essential precursor to the effective coordination of all varieties of crime amelioration activities in the county. The agencies that compose the Freestone County criminal justice system jointly strive to enforce lawful standards of conduct, protect individuals and communities, assist victims, improve institutional capabilities, and engage the community and its citizens in crime prevention while preserving individual civil liberties and protecting basic human rights.

It is necessary to strive toward these goals by helping to facilitate the collaboration of community groups, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, courts and correctional agencies throughout the County. A broad approach to defining the crime problem and designing methods for its control has been identified as a priority. Issues related to crime have been studied and analyzed on a continuum from the overall social environment to post-crime responses, including community structure and dynamics, crime prevention, early intervention, and various types of criminal and juvenile justice agency responses. Within these parameters, this planning process develops, implements, and refines the community criminal justice plan to help meet the emerging needs of Freestone County. The goal of this planning process is to achieve a significant reduction in the frequency and severity of crime to facilitate a sense of pride, health and safety in all our communities by:

- Promoting the planning and implementation of comprehensive strategies to prevent and control crime in general and violence in particular, throughout the community;
- Identifying philosophical principles that will promote the participation of law enforcement, judiciary, prosecution, corrections, victims, treatment providers, educators, media, business and citizens throughout the community in the development of strategies to prevent, reduce and control crime and violence in the community;
- Promoting the fairness, effectiveness and efficiency of all segments of the criminal and juvenile justice system.

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

The building of assets in youth and the community is an important component of a community plan. Therefore, it is imperative that prevention issues take precedence over those based on incarceration and deterrence, if the long-term impact of crime control spending is to be maximized. Nonetheless, the control of known delinquents who present a clear threat to public safety must also remain an important strategy.

In each of the areas below, problems are identified and data is included that supports both the existence and severity of the problems as they are found in Freestone County. Below is a discussion of the problems, the manner in which the problems are being addressed, and strategically how responses to these community problems could be improved. In some problem areas identified, there is not current data to support the problem areas, due to the funding and program cuts taking effect within the last few months. The data collection will be added to the plan as the problem area statistics become available throughout the year.

Criminal Justice Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

1. Specialized Equipment

There are significant pressures being placed on the Justice Information Systems in use by Federal, State and local governments. These pressures have resulted from the post-September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, which caused a major emphasis to be placed on sharing justice information, along with ongoing, significant changes in technology. Compounding the problem is that these pressures are being placed on systems that are frequently old, have limited functionality, and lack the flexibility to address new functional or technical requirements.

There is a major movement underway in Texas counties to improve their Justice Information Systems (JIS). The new generation of systems is frequently referred to as Integrated Justice Information Systems (IJIS).

This integration occurs at two levels:

- (1) a comprehensive system architecture that serves the needs of all justice related and law enforcement agencies within a county, government and
- (2) the ability to integrate a county's justice information with other governments, including other local, State, and Federal agencies within that county. By the single entry of data in a county's IJIS system, the information is made available to all agencies within the county boundaries, and state and federal government justice agencies.

For example, a police officer making a traffic stop could have immediate access to the vehicle registration data, and determine if the driver is wanted within the county, in another city or county, or by state and federal agencies.

Problem Statement

Information systems operated by Texas justice agencies have been proprietary, and incapable of linking and exchanging information; consequently, the justice community must address new strategies to deliver effective and efficient information related services throughout the State of Texas. During the past year, federal and state agencies, urban counties, rural counties and municipalities from across Texas have been discussing the need to join together in the development of an integrated justice information system. Although justice agencies need the same information, they have historically been focused on capturing and using information necessary for their own processes- legacy systems.

Although Freestone County government and the majority of cities throughout Freestone County have justice information management systems, Freestone County is one of 254 Texas counties that does not have the resources currently available to develop an integrated justice information system that can effectively share information between, the federal, state, county, local governments and communities.

Data Collection:

- Radio communication interoperability
- Thermal imaging equipment
- Insufficient funds to purchase basic law enforcement equipment for smaller jurisdictions (i.e. vests, weapons, vehicles, etc.)

Problem Statement

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During Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Freestone County did not have the capability to communicate with other communities.

Recommendations:

- Equipment must be updated or replaced
- Support and seek funding that will enable jurisdictions to purchase/replace basic equipment
- Coordination/cooperation among agencies

Resources/Successes:

- Radio communications are a centerpiece to the regional homeland security plan. Based upon funding availability, future equipment acquisition will fit into the regional interoperability plan to maximize the county’s communication effectiveness.

2. Insufficient Funding for Staff

Data Collection:

- Not enough funded positions to meet the optimal needs of the community
- Low salary – not able to pay competitive wages for more qualified personnel

Recommendations:

- Funding for qualified personnel, as well as competitive pay for existing employees to reduce turnover rate inside departments
- Enhanced recruitment efforts
- Incentive programs for officers
 - Give free rent to officers in return for services after duty hours
- Improved coordination among agencies

Resources/Successes:

- Funding for Victims Advocate Coordinator
- History Club Volunteers

3. Training for Law Enforcement

Data Collection:

- Training opportunities hindered due to not having backfill, or funds to travel to training.
- Mandates for training coming state. Funding needed to bring training in locally, and to accommodate shift personnel.

Recommendations:

- Search for additional funding in the next grant period to allow for sufficient training of staff.
- Coordination among agencies
- Training on domestic violence and substance abuse

Resources:

- Advocacy Center
- Family Abuse Center
- Wortham PD-Family Violence Unit
- East Texas Crisis Center
- SANE Hospital-Athens/Palestine

4. Increase in Domestic Violence Calls

Domestic violence is the number one cause of injury to women in the U.S. – more than muggings, rapes and auto accidents combined. The escalation of violence in families has become a justice, public health and economic problem for the families themselves as well as society as a whole. Domestic violence and violence between intimate partners is a problem for Freestone County because the county lacks a cohesive and implement able plan for reducing the number of incidents and the resources to mediate the damage done to the victim families. Domestic violence crosses all racial, ethnic, economic, social, and religious barriers. Violence between intimate partners continues to be a perpetual cycle leading victims into feelings of hopelessness and despair.

Domestic violence is not only a problem within the adult population, but is increasing within the youth population. Date rape, violence between dating partners, and sexual assault of teen boys and girls continues to increase. Intervention during the school years may help to prevent the incidence and acceptability of acquaintance violence.

Data Collection:

Domestic violence is the number one cause of injury to women in the U.S.

Source Book: Surgeon General's Workshop on Violence and Public Health

Gaps in the community

The following issues require a concerted effort by all entities involved in the victim and criminal justice arena.

- Programs needed for outreach, local resources not available
- Need for stable victim resource revenues threatens the ability of organizations to maintain core services
- Need for resources and accessibility to resources for victims with physical handicaps
- Need for support groups for male victims
- Need for awareness and process for obtaining a protective order
- Need for training for judges granting protective orders
- Need for training for law enforcement
- Need for specialized services and awareness for elderly victims of domestic violence
- Need for non-English speaking resources for victims of domestic violence
- Need for outreach among minority groups, cultural groups, immigrants, gay, lesbian and male victims
- Need for awareness of available resources in the community
- Need for transportation
- Need for affordable and accessible childcare
- Need for comprehensive case management, job training, transportation, and job search services
- Need for seamless continuum of care

- Need for improved collaborative relationships among service providers, law enforcement and other local agencies
- Need for safe house for victims
- Need for public awareness of problem

Recommendations:

- Support efforts to address gaps, as well as, establishing safety zones in the county (for instance in the hospital) where victims can stay until victims services can come to transport them to shelter
- Increase prevention services for domestic violence and sexual assault
- Acquire local safe house
- Media campaign to increase public awareness

Resources:

- Family Abuse Center
- Advocacy Center
- Domestic Violence Liaison (grant required to hire liaison for two year period)

5. Substance Abuse

In recent years the overall crime rate has decreased; however, studies show that a record number of crimes being committed today are driven by drugs and/or alcohol. Drug driven crimes can be defined as an offense committed for the sole purpose of obtaining monies for the purchase of illegal substances or the sale of such substances.

Data Collection:

- Continues to be a problem
- No specialized unit to respond to the manufacturing of illegal drugs

In a study conducted by the Department of Justice – Bureau of Justice Statistics, 61,000 convicted prisoners reported that their offenses were committed in order to obtain money for drugs. The study also revealed that of 12,658 homicides committed, 4.5% of the homicides were related to narcotics. Since the mid 1980's, almost every state and federal court system has experienced an overload of drug offenses on its dockets.

The high recidivism rates associated with drug-related offenses has proven that prosecution and incarceration alone will not break the cycle of recurrence of drug related offenses. Based on the belief that drug abuse treatment is demonstrably more effective in reducing both drug addiction and drug-related crime, jurisdictions developed an alternative approach to the traditional adjudication process.

Recommendations:

- Need for local support groups, prevention and treatment
- Need for local treatment facilities
- Pursue funding streams and resources to support prevention and treatment. Support Drug/Alcohol Court Programs requiring mandatory participation.
- Seek medically supervised alcohol detoxification services for offenders suffering from acute alcohol abuse.
- Affordable residential and supportive outpatient services for offenders needing longer term care.
- Utilize Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) that provide affordable and appropriate treatment services for employees with alcohol problems.
- Ensure supervision of all DWI offenders who are required by law to have an ignition interlock
- Need mental health transport officer

Resources/Successes:

- MADD Prevention Programs – Victim Impact Panels for 1st/2nd DWI with child endangerment
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
- HOTCADA

6. Transportation

Data Collection:

Transport of mental health individuals strains law enforcement. There are limited personnel to transport mental health individuals.

This causes a financial burden on law enforcement due to the long processing times required to screen and assist individuals who have mental health issues. Processing and transport often require many hours of staff time.

Resources:

- County mental health transport officer
- Public transit system
- Volunteers who transport patients for health care and treatment

Juvenile Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

1. First Offenders Program

Data Collection:

Recommendations:

- Support funding for programs that provide education and skills to first time offenders to prevent entering further into the criminal justice system.

Resources:

- None available.

2. Youth Alcohol and Substance Abuse

Data Collection:

- Need for services for teen alcohol and drug abuse prevention or treatment programs
- Need for in-house treatment
- Need for follow-up care
- Need for prevention alternatives and education

Recommendations:

- Seek and acquire funding sources to allow for prevention, treatment and follow-up care for juveniles struggling with addictions and peer pressure.
- Develop a tracking system to follow a child through juvenile justice, mental health and/or substance abuse treatment programs
- Develop programs that address anger management for children and adolescents
- Develop programs that address goal-setting for children and adolescents
- Develop early identification and intervention programs that can divert children and adolescents into treatment
- Begin CIS program – parenting program

Resources:

- Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center Trauma Services – TeenSafe Program
- MADD – Alcohol and drug prevention and intervention programs available to include Minor in Possession classes, outlet for those needing to do community service, Youth in Action Programs, Free School Programs and provision of speakers for various needs or events.

3. Counseling Services: Patients have to travel out of the area to receive counseling

Data Collection:

- Counseling services are limited due to juvenile and/or family members having to travel out of the area to receive counseling.

Recommendations:

- Support for local resources available for more than just on-call basis.
- Begin Communities in Schools (CIS) program
- Recruit counselors

Resources:

- Advocacy Center with limited eligibility (counseling for victim)
- Family Abuse Center – Start First Program
- Central Texas Youth Services Bureau (CTYSB)
- Utilize Hanna's House for counseling parenting, anger management, and mediation.

4. Delinquent Behavior

Truancy is one of the minor juvenile crimes and is often the least enforced in most communities within Freestone County. There is substantial evidence that youth who become truant will eventually dropout of school and put themselves at high risk of becoming disadvantaged unproductive citizens. The linkages between truancy, tobacco, alcohol and other drug use can lead to other chronic delinquent behaviors and possibly other violent behaviors. Truancy is the first sign of trouble. Coupled with academic failure, these two indicators may be the initial signs that a young person is giving up and dropping out. For example, according to the Department of Education/National Center for Education Statistics, over the past decade between 347,000 and 544,000, 10th through 12th grade students left school each year without a high school diploma. Status dropout rates for 16 to 24 year olds were reported at 11% nationally. (The Condition of Education 2001, National Center for Education Statistics.)

The high percentage of students dropping out of high school jeopardizes the future economic security of the target area, increases the number of individuals with low educational attainment levels and indicates a definite need for academic and prevention services.

Data Collection:

- Truancy
- Vandalism
- Theft
- Sexual aggression
- Date violence
- Aggression/anger management
- Substance abuse
- Schools are generally understaffed with regard to student-teacher and student counselor ratio and find it difficult to address individual needs. Sometimes, students are able to establish a pattern of non- attendance and are no longer eligible for credit before anyone identifies the problem and takes action.
- The school, family and community at large must continue to work together to tighten communication regarding the importance of school attendance, academic success and graduation.
- There is limited focus on the importance of education and its life long impact at the lower grade levels such as middle and junior high school.
- First-generation citizens are unable to navigate the complex systems of barriers for attending school.
- Communities need to provide the full range of services to youth. In order to meet needs of youth involved in the juvenile justice system, targeted mental health and substance services must be available at all levels of need. Services that target this population of youth, from early intervention and prevention programs, diversion programs, services in detention, and aftercare treatment need to be developed and implemented.
- Risk factors in children should be identified as early as possible with services include evaluations in all domains.
- Limited availability of intervention services for youth not involved with the juvenile justice system.
- No easily accessible and coordinated programs for youth experiencing co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders.
- Limited access to program and services for youth attending alternative schools
- Need for interim services for youth on waiting lists.
- There is a Need for communication and coordination between the involved systems. The absence of good communication means restricted access to services and programs, duplication of services, missed identification of youth, philosophical barriers and ineffective intervention/treatment strategies

- Services are often provided in a piecemeal fashion or they address only a fragment of the problem. Strategies should include intensive service plan coordination as well as a “wrap around” approach that targets all domains (psychological, academic, physical, family, social, economic, mental health/substance abuse)
- Problem - Instances of delinquency, violence, and persistent misbehaviors children and youth continue to increase.

Recommendations:

- Support programs that will allow for the aftercare services that provide extended support, treatment and prevention.
- Expand stay-in-school, after school and school appreciation activities.
- Expose youth to the value of pursuing higher education through college visit programs.
- Provide information to youth and parents regarding financial assistance for pursuing advance training opportunities or education.
- Educate youth and parents on the value of completing high school by exposing them to career opportunities related to school completion.
- Continue programs that reduce risk factors associated with delinquency and strengthen protective factors that prevent such behavior; supporting prevention programs addressing youth issues including a range of behaviors such as impulsivity, bullying, and racial name-calling and threats, as these are precursors to more violent and aggressive behaviors; encourage prevention programs addressing coping skills, social competency skills, enhancement of personal responsibility, and respect for others.
- Ensure availability of services, both inpatient and outpatient, for children and adolescents who have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder.
- Develop mechanisms for improving communication and collaboration among providers who serve juvenile offenders.
- Raise awareness among policy makers of funding needs to develop new services or enhance existing services.
- Educate the general public about the behavioral health needs of children and adolescents.
- Develop a tracking system to follow a child through juvenile justice, mental health and/or substance abuse treatment programs.
- Support programs addressing Anger Management for children and adolescents
- Develop programs addressing goal setting for children and adolescents
- Foster outpatient counseling programs for children and adolescents
- Implement after school program and summer camps for school age children
- Provide positive activities

Resources:

- Family Abuse Center
- Advocacy Center
- HOTCADA
- MHMR

5. Referrals to MHMR

Data Collection:

Limited resources, if the juvenile doesn't qualify for MHMR services. Freestone County Juvenile Justice Division coordinates with MHMR for client mental health needs and assessments. However, at times the resources are stressed due to the Need for counselors to accommodate Freestone and surrounding counties. Additional staff and mental health resources are needed. Due to recent mandated state laws persons previously eligible for MHMR services have been reclassified as non-eligible. There remains, however, the need to address these individuals' needs.

Recommendations:

Funding of additional staff and mental health resources to be supported as well as resources for those individuals that do not qualify for MHMR.

Resources:

None available.

6. Residential Treatment Facilities

Data Collection:

- Limited local treatment facilities

Recommendations:

- Support programs that will allow for treatment facilities to operate, and support beds for in-house treatment

Resources:

- Pleasant Hill Children's Home

7. Aftercare Programs

Data Collection:

- Long term
- Short term
- Residential in-house
- Out patient

Recommendations:

- Agencies that provide these types of services are encouraged to bridge the gaps between their services and law enforcement, to ensure law enforcement are well aware of the agencies' services to assist law enforcement as well as the victims.

Resources:

- None available.

8. Adolescent Sexual Health and Parenting

Early sexual activity is extremely common in the state of Texas. The consequences of early sexual behavior are negative not only for the teen, but also for the family, the community and the state as a whole. Negative consequences include disease (which may be incurable and/or fatal), early pregnancy (which may result in dropping out of school and negative health consequences for the baby before and after birth), parenthood with limited or no skills and support. Teens that become pregnant or father a child are more likely to experience negative life consequences. Teen parents are more likely to drop out of school, acquire less education, have fewer job/career opportunities, and receive local, state and federal support paid for by tax dollars. Prevention of early sexual activity and the delay of parenthood is positive for all concerned.

Data Collection:

- School Districts
- Health Care providers

Recommendations:

- School-based programs focusing on sexual health issues including pregnancy/disease prevention and relationships beginning in 4th grade
- Church-based programs for youth and parents focusing on sexual decision making, relationships with others, morality, values and pregnancy/disease prevention

- Parenting programs for parents of school-age children and youth focusing on talking with kids about sex, sexual decision making, pregnancy/disease prevention, sharing of values, etc.
- In-school programs for pregnant and parenting teens (both males and females) which include information on contraception to prevent second pregnancy
- In-school programs to assist teen parents (both male and female) in caring for infant/toddler (guidance, self-esteem, communication, physical care, health issues, nutrition, etc.)
- In-school programs for pregnant and parenting teens (both males and females) focusing on financial management, importance of education, job skills, career development, assistance available, etc.

Resources:

- Few if any available

9. Child Safety

Child safety concerns in Freestone County range from lack of appropriate after school care to child abduction and sexual assault to environmental hazards. Deserted, crumbling houses provide areas for homeless and drifters to congregate; provide an area to “cook,” use, and distribute drugs; increase incidence of mosquitoes, rats, and stray animals carrying diseases; are a public health issue as well as a nuisance to residents. Lack of sidewalks, walking and bike trails, and neighborhood parks mean that children ride their bikes, skate and rollerblade in the streets. In addition, children have limited safe areas to play within their neighborhoods. Lack of safe bike and walking routes to school results in reduction of physical activity for children and adds to parental stress in transporting children. Inadequate pedestrian and school crossings result in dangerous environments for children. There is a need for a county wide examination of safety issues.

Data Collection:

- Law enforcement
- Health care providers
- School officials

Recommendations:

- Tear down deserted and crumbling houses, garages, and other buildings
- Build sidewalks
- Put in crosswalks, pedestrian crossings and safety lights in areas that are dangerous to children and other pedestrians.
- Develop bike and walking trails which are safe, well-lighted and monitored for safety.
- Increase number of neighborhood parks
- Increase and fund positive activities for youth after school, evenings and weekends.

Resources:

- Churches with youth facilities/gyms

10. Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Programs

Tobacco use is a common problem in Texas and Freestone County. Although some small progress has been made in the number of “smoke-free” facilities, smokeless tobacco continues to be a problem. Tobacco usage among children and youth continues to be a problem.

Data Collection:

- Health Care Providers
- School Districts

- Health Department

Recommendations:

- Implement tobacco cessation programs
- Media campaign
- Point of purchase education and enforcement

11. Health Care

Lack of health care and access to health care is a significant problem in Freestone County. Challenges include insufficient number of health care providers (currently there are 4 doctors and 3 nurse practitioners), lack of health insurance, inability to pay for health care, lack of education regarding the importance of health care. Improved nutrition, decrease in obesity and increase in physical activity would make inroads into this problem.

Data Collection:

- ETMC and other medical facilities in county
- Health care providers
- School Districts

Recommendations:

- Increase the number of health care providers through active recruitment
- Increase funds to support those with no health insurance for both preventative, well care and specific needs
- Increase education related to importance of physical activity and nutrition in regards to health
- Implement programs to increase physical activity
- Implement programs to reduce obesity and improve nutrition
- Increase literacy related to medications and health care

Resources:

- ETMC and other health care facilities
- Local physicians
- Lott's and other fitness facilities
- Schools

Victim Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

1. Support Services

Data Collection:

Child Abuse

- Need for foster parents and adoptive parents
- Shortage of mental health services at a low cost or sliding scale
- Limited number of police, social workers, etc. with second language capabilities for intervention
- Need for resources and accessibility to resources for victims with physical handicaps
- Need for affordable childcare
- Need of school age child care, after school and summer programs for youth
- Need for comprehensive mental health case management services for child victims
- Need for programs for children who witness violence
- Need multidiscipline investigation and response to child abuse, Children's Advocacy Center

Domestic Violence

- Need for stable victim resource revenues threatens the ability of organizations to maintain core services
- Need for resources and accessibility to resources for victims with physical handicaps
- Need for support groups for male victims
- Need for standardized requirements for obtaining a protective order
- Need for training for judges granting protective orders
- Need for specialized services and awareness for elderly victims of domestic violence
- Need for non-English speaking resources for victims of domestic violence
- Need for awareness among minority groups, cultural groups, and immigrants
- Need for awareness of available resources in the community
- Need for transportation
- Need for affordable and accessible childcare
- Need for awareness of cultural differences and needs
- Need for services specific to lesbian/gay population
- Need for comprehensive case management, job training, transportation, and job search services
- Need for seamless continuum of care
- Need for improved collaborative relationships among service providers, law enforcement and other local agencies
- Limited services for victims of sexual violence

Sexual Violence

- Lack of local SANE response
- Need for local volunteers
- Need for training
- Need for outreach
- Need for counselor/case management
- Need for multidisciplinary Sexual Assault Response Team

Secondary victims

Post suicide services for family members affected by suicide or homicide.

Secondary victims of crime often go unnoticed. However, they may experience severe trauma as a result of the crimes.

- Services specific to dealing with traumatic grief
- Education and intervention services concerning traumatic grief
- Resources for adults dealing with issues of grief
- Need for services for mental health issues
- Need for organized, identified emergency response team
- Need for specific training for service providers in trauma issues

- Need for non-English speaking services
- Need for awareness of services to address victim rights
- Need for improved collaborative relationships among service providers, law enforcement and other local agencies
- Need for suicide prevention program

Aftercare for victims

- Increase law enforcement awareness of services and persons willing to respond to on-scene incidents
- Agencies that provide these types of services are encouraged to bridge the gaps between their services and law enforcement, to ensure law enforcement is well aware of the agencies' services to assist law enforcement as well as the victims
- Need for suicide prevention program

Recommendations:

- Continue to support programs that address support services for victims of violence and crime

Resources:

- MADD
- Family Abuse Center
- Advocacy Center
- Victims Assistance Coordinator
- Domestic Violence Liaison (grant received to hire liaison for 2 years)
- Child Protective Services
- Adult Protective Services

2. Underutilization of On-Scene Victims Services

Data Collection:

- None available

Recommendations:

- Increase law enforcement awareness of services and person willing to respond to on-scene incidents
- Agencies that provide victims services are encouraged to bridge gaps between their services and law enforcement, to ensure law enforcement and schools are made aware of the victims services programs available
- Victim services groups must collaborate and create a crisis intervention resource list for Limestone/Freestone jurisdictions and schools (Plan to call it a Bi-Stone County Resources List)
- Agency collaboration is critical. Agencies are encouraged to network and bridge the gaps that exist between the agencies that provide services for victim support, prevention and treatment
- Develop volunteers properly for crisis response; cross-training for sexual assault and domestic violence

Resources/Successes:

- Family Abuse Center
- Advocacy Center
- Child protective services
- Adult protective services

Emergency Management Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

1. Mandates to school districts concerning emergency planning

Data Collection:

- None available

Recommendations:

- The school districts have begun and will continue to work with the County Emergency Coordinator as well as law enforcement and other first responders to prepare the school and school-aged children for potential catastrophic events.

Resources/Successes:

- None available.

2. Involvement of the public/residents to work together and participate in neighborhood groups that will assist law enforcement and other first responders in the community.

Data Collection:

Homeland Security Strategic Plan includes private citizen involvement in emergency response and assisting in public needs. Including, but not limited to:

- Community Emergency Response Team
- Neighborhood Watch
- Volunteers in Policing
- Protect Texas
- Fire Corps

Recommendations:

- The HOTCOG will work with jurisdictions and the County Emergency Management Coordinator to develop and/or build upon programs in all areas of the region.

Resources/Successes:

- None available

3. Need for HazMat team

Data Collection:

Due to legislation dissolving the Regional Drug Task Force, extensive training and education, as well as equipment for responders and law enforcement will be needed in the counties to safely break down Meth Labs, as well as responding to chemical hazards and spills caused by transportation accidents and accidental releases.

Recommendation:

Support programs and funding that will allow for the training and equipment to all first responders and law enforcement in the county.

Resources:

None available.

Resources Available

Included below are resources identified by the Freestone County Community Planning Team that are available to provide services that could potentially help in closing criminal justice gaps:

Juvenile Justice:

Name of Agency	Agency Type	Description
MADD	Victim Services	Alcohol and drug prevention and intervention programs available to include Minor in Possession classes, outlet for those needing to do community service, Youth in Action Programs, Free School Programs and provision of speakers for various needs or events
The Freeman Center	Substance Abuse Treatment	Individual/Group counseling; relapse prevention, education and life skills training.
MCYC	School Social Work	Work with students in schools who are at-risk for dropping out. Also work with students who are in juvenile detention.
ESC Region 12	Education	College preparedness for students, student leadership forum
Heart of Texas Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse	Non-profit, 501 C-3, State/Grant Funded	HOTCADA provides screening, assessment, referral and short-term counseling services for pre and adjudicated adolescents and their families
Central Texas Youth Services Bureau (CTYS)		Provides full services to Bell, Coryell, Lampasas, Falls, McLennan, Milam, Limestone, and Freestone counties. Each county has local CTYS offices except Falls which is served from Waco and Freestone which is served from our Groesbeck office.
HOTRMHMR	Mental Health	Provide a full array of mental health services to children involved in the criminal justice system. Provide truancy court support, provide assessment and treatment services to children in detention facilities, provide cross referencing of all children booked into detention with the State data system, provide specialized intensive casework services to children on Probation in McLennan County.
Family Abuse Center	Non-Profit Domestic Violence Shelter	Start First Violence Prevention Program available to all school districts within the counties. Counselors are made available for group and individual counseling. In servicing is also available to teachers and administrators.
Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center Trauma Services Teen Safe	Hospital	The Teen Safe Youth Traffic Safety Educational program focuses on teen traffic safety, driving responsibility, underage drinking, substance abuse, and driving under the influence. The program also educates parents on the laws relating to teen traffic safety. This prevention program is a combination of videos, simulations and written materials along with

		computer-based simulations. This program is FREE.
Advocacy Center	501C3 Non-Profit	Advocacy Center provides 24-hour hotline services, sexual assault nurse examination, counseling and case management, legal advocacy, and assistance in filing Crime Victims Compensation and VINE registration through its Victim Center program. Forensic interviews are available to children from each county upon request of CPS, and the Court Appointed Special Advocates program serves foster children in Hill and Limestone counties.
Heart of Texas Workforce	Workforce Center	Adult and Youth: The HOT Workforce Center can provide monies for training, counseling, transportation and childcare. Work with students in schools who are at-risk for dropping out.

Law Enforcement:

Name of Agency	Agency Type	Description
TX Dept of Public Safety	Law Enforcement	All crime victims in region are eligible for services: crisis intervention; personal advocacy; assistance filing for crime victims compensation; court accompaniment;
Heart of Texas Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse	Non-profit, 501 C-3, State/Grant Funded	HOTCADA provides screening, assessment, referral services for individuals with pending charges or currently incarcerated
HOTRMHMR	Mental Health	Provide training and consultation services for law enforcement through workshops, jail personnel training, academy trainings and through on-going discussions with line staff. Provide emergency services which include 24-hour crisis supports, inpatient services, evaluation unit placements, and information and referral. Work with jail staff in all six counties providing services to inmates while incarcerated who have mental health issues. Provide specialized intensive casework services in Hill and McLennan Counties pairing mental health staff with probation and parole officers. Provide regional screening and continuity of care services for all inmates in TDC in the Central Texas area.
Family Abuse Center	Domestic Violence Shelter	Domestic violence shelter, counseling services (short and long term), case management, advocacy, Legal advocacy, outreach, Educational presentations, On-scene crisis intervention, Crisis hotline, Law enforcement training, Start First Violence Prevention program, transitional housing, emergency cell phones, and other services.
Advocacy Center	501C3 Non-Profit	Advocacy Center provides 24-hour hotline services, sexual assault nurse examination, counseling and case management, legal advocacy, and assistance in filing

		Crime Victims Compensation and VINE registration through its Victim Center program. Forensic interviews are available to children from each county upon request of CPS, and the Court Appointed Special Advocates program serves foster children in Hill and Limestone counties.
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Victim Services:

Name of Agency	Agency Type	Description
MADD	Victim Services	Free victims services to those families who's loved one was killed or injured by an intoxicated driver including failure to stop and render aid and child endangerment cases. Some services include crisis counseling, personal advocacy, help finding financial assistance, assistance filing crime victim's compensation, emotional support, resource and service referrals, court accompaniment, assistance through the legal process and support groups.
TX Dept of Public Safety	Law Enforcement	All crime victims in region are eligible for services: crisis intervention; personal advocacy; assistance filing for crime victims compensation; court accompaniment;
Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children	501c3 non-profit organization	Advocacy Center provides 24 hour hotline services, sexual assault nurse examination, counseling and case management, legal advocacy, and assistance in filing Crime Victims Compensation and VINE registration through its Victim Center program. Forensic interviews are available to children from each county upon request of CPS, and the Court Appointed Special Advocates program serves foster children in Hill and Limestone counties.
Area Agency on Aging HOT Benefits Counseling/Legal Awareness	HHSC	Educational events regarding prevention. Education regarding Texas Law and Elder Law Assistance with filing complaints and making reports to abuse. Links to Texas Legal Services Center and victim's compensation.
HOTRMHMR	Mental Health	Full array of mental health services to people who have been victimized who fall into our targeted population identified by State Health Services which include individuals with a diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective Disorder or Major Depression.
Family Abuse Center	Non-Profit Domestic Violence Shelter	Domestic violence shelter, counseling services (short and long term), case management, advocacy, Legal advocacy, outreach, Educational presentations, On-scene crisis intervention, Crisis hotline, Law enforcement training, Start First Violence Prevention program, transitional housing, emergency cell phones, and other services.

Catholic Charities of Central Texas	Faith-based	Homeless prevention and rapid re-housing, application assistance with state benefits
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Health / Medical / Substance Abuse:

Name of Agency	Agency Type	Description
MADD	Victim Services	Free Alcohol and Drug Prevention Programs for both youth and adults. Intervention programs are through Victim Impact Panels and Minor in Possession classes.
The Freeman Center	Substance Abuse Treatment	Detoxification Services- Medically monitored detoxification, relapse prevention, education; individual counseling; referrals. Residential Services-gender specific counseling, relapse prevention, education and life skills training; referrals, supervised living. Outpatient services- Individual/Group counseling; relapse prevention, education and life skills training. COPSD services- individual/group counseling; referrals
Area Agency on Aging HOT Benefits Counseling/Legal Awareness	Health and Human Services	Educational events regarding health and wellness, public benefits, health insurance, prevention and resources in the HOT region. Legal documents to protect rights of health care choices
Heart of Texas Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse	Non-profit 501 C-3, State/Grant Funded	HOTCADA provides outreach, screening, assessment, referral services for individuals (including those dual-diagnosed, Child Protective Services clients) and short-term counseling services,
HOTRMHMR	Mental Health	Provide specialized substance abuse services to people who also have a co-occurring psychiatric disorder.
Waco-McLennan County Public Health District	Public Health	HIV/AIDS STD Clinic
Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center Trauma Services Teen Safe	Hospital	The Teen Safe Youth Traffic Safety Educational program focuses on teen traffic safety, driving responsibility, underage drinking, substance abuse, and driving under the influence. The program also educates parents on the laws relating to teen traffic safety. This prevention program is a combination of videos, simulations and written materials along with computer-based simulations. This program is free.
Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children	501c3 non-profit organization	Advocacy Center provides 24 hour hotline services, sexual assault nurse examination, counseling and case management, legal advocacy, and assistance in filing Crime Victims Compensation and VINE registration through its Victim Center program. Forensic interviews are available to children from each county upon request of CPS, and the Court

		Appointed Special Advocates program serves foster children in Hill and Limestone counties.
Catholic Charities of Central Texas	Faith-based	Homeless prevention and rapid re-housing, application assistance with state benefits

Prevention / Intervention:

Name of Agency	Agency Type	Description
MADD	Victim Services	Free Alcohol and Drug Prevention Programs for both youth and adults. Intervention programs are through Victim Impact Panels and Minor in Possession classes.
ATIC Cooperative Ministries	Faith Based	Working toward coordinating local thrift stores to improve & expand services, reduce expenses and improve management to better serve indigent and low income families and many who fall through the cracks.
The Freeman Center	Substance Abuse Treatment	Provide drug/ alcohol education and intervention as needed.
Area Agency on Aging HOT Benefits Counseling/Legal Awareness	HHSC	Educational events regarding, Prevention of ID Theft, Scams, Financial Abuse. Education regarding Texas Law and Elder Law Assistance with filing consumer complaints and making reports of abuse.
Klara's Children's Center ECI	Early Childhood Intervention	Early intervention services to children ages birth to 3yrs who have developmental delays. Services are community based and family focused.
HOTRMHMR	Mental Health	<p>Mental Retardation Services (254-757-3933) MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (254-752-3451) Eligibility: Adults (18+) Serving persons w/ severe and persistent mental illnesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schizophrenia • Schizoaffective • Bipolar and • Severe Major Depression <p>Fee: Based on monthly maximum fee schedule; accepting insurance, Medicaid and Medicare</p> <p>Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information/referral • Screening/assessment • Crisis services (day/night) • Crisis respite • Psychiatric/pharmacological • Jail-based assessment/ diversion services • Probation/Parole assessment and treatment • Case Management • Service Coordination

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported Employment
MCYC-CIS, PACES	School Social Work	Work with students in schools who are at-risk for dropping out. Also work with students who are in juvenile detention.
Heart of Texas Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse	Non-profit 501 C-3, State/Grant Funded	HOTCADA provides evidenced based prevention/intervention programs, family counseling and outreach services to promote community and family involvement in the reduction of substance abuse
Family Abuse Center	Non-Profit Domestic Violence Shelter	Domestic violence shelter, counseling services (short and long term), case management, advocacy, Legal advocacy, outreach, Educational presentations, On-scene crisis intervention, Crisis hotline, Law enforcement training, Start First Violence Prevention program, transitional housing, emergency cell phones, and other services.
Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center Trauma Services	Hospital	The Teen Safe Youth Traffic Safety Educational program focuses on teen traffic safety, driving responsibility, underage drinking, substance abuse, and driving under the influence. The program also educates parents on the laws relating to teen traffic safety. This prevention program is a combination of videos, simulations and written materials along with computer-based simulations. This program is FREE.
Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children	501c3 non-profit organization	Advocacy Center provides 24 hour hotline services, sexual assault nurse examination, counseling and case management, legal advocacy, and assistance in filing Crime Victims Compensation and VINE registration through its Victim Center program. Forensic interviews are available to children from each county upon request of CPS, and the Court Appointed Special Advocates program serves foster children in Hill and Limestone counties.
Department of State Health Services	Public Health	<p>Health Service Region 7 is one of eleven health service regions of the Department of State Health Services, the state governmental agency responsible for bringing comprehensible public health services to the citizens of Texas. Health Service Region 7 serves a 30 county area in Central Texas.</p> <p>It is our mission that we commit, through personal and organizational excellence, to be an agent of change dedicated to achieving a healthier Texas.</p> <p>Programs and Services:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Birth Defects Monitoring Division 2. Children With Special Health Care Needs 3. Consumer Health Protection

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Epidemiology 5. Field Office Locations 6. Immunization Program 7. Public Health Improvement 8. Public Health Nursing 9. Sexually Transmitted Diseases 10. Tobacco Prevention and Control 11. Tuberculosis Elimination Division 12. Vision and Hearing Services 13. Zoonosis Control Program 14. Nutrition <p>Public Health Improvement Program: The mission of DSHS Division for Regional and Local Health Services is to serve the needs of Local Public Health Agencies, DSHS Health Service Regions, and local communities in building and maintaining capacity to provide essential public health services responsive to local needs.</p> <p>Contact: JoLeen Eiklenborg Program Specialist III Public Health Improvement Program Phone: 254-771-6716 joleen.eiklenborg@dshs.state.tx.us</p>
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Interagency Cooperation

The Freestone County Community Planning Team agencies were proactive in their approach to identifying the needs of the communities and by putting their own special interests aside, they succeeded in developing a plan to aid in prioritizing and closing the identified gaps in the community.

The Planning Team shared the different services they offer, as well as services offered by agencies and individuals that were unable to attend the planning meeting. The team maintains a cooperative working relationship.

Law enforcement, juvenile justice, victims services, and social services groups continue to work together to reach the overall objectives of making the Freestone County communities a safer environment, as well as increasing awareness through intervention, prevention, and education.

Long-Range Plan Development, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Freestone County Community Planning Team works in conjunction with other planning groups in the county to ensure a regular exchange of ideas. Individuals active in the planning process generally serve on many of these committees and share mutual concerns.

The Freestone County Community Planning Team strives to meet periodically to review the plan and make necessary additions and deletions. At least one formal meeting of the entire group is held each fall, but agency and community representatives may submit suggestions and changes via telephone and e-mail throughout the year to the Community Planning Coordinator.

Drafts and annual updates of the Community Plan are circulated via e-mail with requests for comments, updates, and changes. Wherever possible, e-mail is used to reduce the need for meetings, printing, postage, etc.

It is the intent of the Community Planning Team to improve outcomes for Freestone County families struggling with problems described in the plan's focus areas. Efforts are being made by many Freestone County agencies and organizations to address problems with local funds as well as grant funds from multiple state and federal sources. To the extent that these funds are available, the Community Planning Team will continue to urge agencies to provide programs that address issues in the outlined focus areas.

Contact Information

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