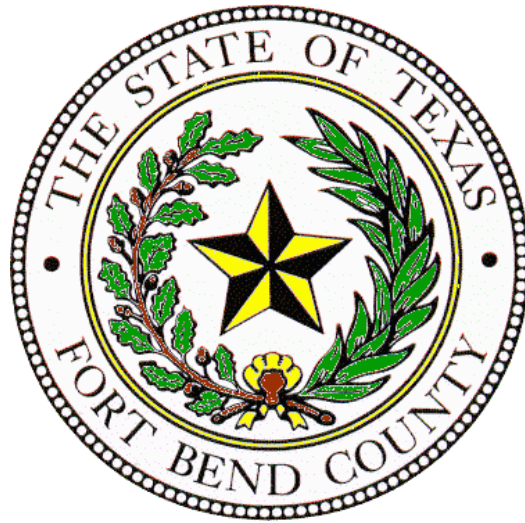


Fort Bend County Public Safety Community Plan 2016-2017



Fall 2016

Fort Bend County Criminal Justice Community Plan

What Is a Community Plan?

This plan is formally known as the Fort Bend County Public Safety Community Plan, the purpose of which is to identify gaps in services regarding public safety issues. The Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office (CJD) requires that Public Safety Community Plans be developed and maintained by counties and regions throughout Texas.

The document that is represented here reflects the efforts of many in Fort Bend County that are concerned with assuring that any gaps in services are closed, thus making our communities safer places in which to live and work. It is with grateful acknowledgement that the names of those involved in the process of developing this Plan are listed in the section entitled Community Planning Team.

Though the final draft of this Plan was completed in December 2015, this is a work in progress. New criminal justice goals are identified, the Planning Group changes as a result of individual and agency circumstances, and requirements concerning the makeup of the Plan are subject to change from year to year. Thus, Fort Bend County is interested in keeping up with these changes, and including them in updates that will be posted from time to time.

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 Jenetha Jones, Community Plan Coordinator for Fort Bend County, or to a Public Safety Program staff member of the COG. Contact information is provided at the end of this document.

The Fort Bend County Commissioners Court supports the concept of community planning by providing staff support and resources for development and implementation of the Fort Bend County Public Safety Community Plan. Additionally, the Commissioners Court supports grant applications from county departments as well as community organizations that address gaps in services identified in this Community Plan.

Areas Represented

Incorporated Communities:

Arcola	Beasley	Fresno	Fulshear
Houston	Katy	Kendleton	Meadows Place
Missouri City	Needville	Orchard	Pleak
Richmond	Rosenberg	Simonton	Stafford
Sugar Land	Thompsons	Weston Lakes	

Unincorporated Communities:

Longpoint	New Territory	Pecan Grove	Crabb
Fairchilds	Guy	Mission Bend	Fresno
Town West			

School Districts:

Fort Bend Independent School District	Stafford Municipal School District
Katy Independent School District	Needville Independent School District
Lamar Consolidated Independent School District	

Brief description and history of Fort Bend County:

Fort Bend County is a direct bordering county of Harris County, located on the southwest side of Houston. The county has a population of 716,087 (Greater Fort Bend Economic Development Council 2015) and a land area of 875 square miles. Fort Bend County leads the Houston region, as well as much of the state and nation, in demographic excellence. A recent Rice University study declared Fort Bend County the most diverse County in the nation with the percentage breakdown representing 19 percent Asian, 24 percent Latino, 21 percent African-American and 36 percent Anglo. According to the U.S. Bureau of Census, Fort Bend County is the fastest growing county in Greater Houston with the 2018 population projection of 749,243.

Fort Bend County is a ‘pass through’ county during evacuation in neighboring counties including Galveston and Brazoria Counties. Interstate 69 traverses the center of the county from northeast to southwest, while U.S. 90A crosses from east to west. State highways (SH) 6 and 36 also provide important north-south routes. Neighboring counties include Austin, Brazoria, Harris, Waller and Wharton.

Law enforcement agencies include the Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office, four (4) precinct Constables’ offices, ten (10) municipal police departments, Department of Public Safety investigators and troopers, and officers of the Texas Rangers, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Besides Houston, the municipalities with police departments are Arcola, Katy, Meadows Place, Missouri City, Needville, Richmond, Rosenberg, Stafford and Sugar Land.

There are (7) District Courts, (5) County Courts-At-Law, (5) Associate District Courts, one (1) Associate County Court-at-Law, (5) Justice of the Peace Courts, (19) Municipal Courts; and (3) Specialty Courts – Truancy, Drug and Special Sanctions. A single District Attorney’s Office serves the courts. In addition, the system includes an adult probation department, a juvenile probation department and juvenile detention facility, and a county jail.

History:

Fort Bend County holds a prominent place in Texas history. In the early 1820s, the Anglo-American colonization of Texas under grants from the Spanish government was initiated. The arrival of Stephen F. Austin’s original colony of 300 families at the bend of the Brazos River was delayed until 1922 by the death of Moses Austin and the independence of Mexico. Ninety miles inland from the coast the settlers built a two-room cabin that was known both as Fort Settlement and Fort Bend. Fifty-three of the land grants to the early settlers were in Fort Bend.

In 1837, the Congress of the Republic of Texas incorporated Richmond and eighteen other towns. Later in the same year, the County of Fort Bend was created from portions of Austin, Harris and Brazoria County. Notable citizens of the county included Jane Long, Mirabeau B. Lamar, and Samuel May Williams.

Richmond became a prosperous trade center for the surrounding agricultural region. Cotton and sugar and other products were sent down the Brazos River to the Port of Galveston. The early sugar cane plantations and farms supplied the Imperial Sugar industrial complex and its company town evolved into the current City of Sugar Land. When the railroad from Galveston through Richmond was built in the 1850s, the county became a ready provider of agricultural products and raw materials to coastal markets and beyond. Much of the early prosperity based on the plantation system ended with the Civil War.

Additional railroads further opened the county to new settlers, many from central Europe. Small productive family farms formed the central focus of the economic and social life from the 1880s through World War II. Ranching and cotton production then began to replace the small farms. Missouri City, Stafford, and Rosenberg developed along the rail lines.

Discovery of oil and gas at Blueridge in the early 1920s, followed by discoveries at Orchard and Thompsons, and then later at Katy, signaled the beginning of Fort Bend's petroleum industry.

Beginning in the early 1970s with Houston's expansions, Fort Bend saw new growth in the form of increased residential development. The master-planned communities of Quail Valley, First Colony and Pecan Grove were followed by Greatwood, New Territory and Cinco Ranch. More recently, Sienna Plantation, River Park and Texana have joined the ranks.

In recent years, Fort Bend has experienced tremendous growth and increased diversity. Although these changes bring new challenges, the long standing partnerships among local government, businesses, organizations and volunteers within the community allow Fort Bend County to manage challenges and sustain quality of life. Fort Bend has a long and richly varied history and an exceedingly bright future as it continues to build on the foundations established by the original settlers of Texas and the persistence and dedication of its current citizens.

Community Planning Team

Community Plan Coordinator for Fort Bend County: Jenetha Jones, Grants Coordinator, County Judge.

In developing this Community Plan, members of the team were divided into focus groups for the purpose of narrowing the scope of research and data that are incorporated into the Plan. Some members may serve in multiple capacities/categories.

Juvenile Services:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Susan Bearden	Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation
LoriAnn Belin	Commissioner, Precinct 3
Carol Berry	Unveiling the Darkness Ministry
Tammy Edwards	Stafford Municipal School District
Rhett Gray	Lamar Consolidated ISD
Susan G. Lowery	Judge, County Court at Law #3 (Juvenile Board)
Cheslee McLean	Fort Bend County Truancy Court
Wole Olowolayemo	River Pointe Church
J.C. Whitten	Texana Center

Victim Services (Adult/Child):

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Susan Gray	Fort Bend Co. Community Supervision/Corrections
Marjorie Hancock	Fort Bend County Attorney's Office
Tonya Lewis	Fort Bend Rainbow Room
Metoyer Martin	Child Advocates of Fort Bend
Karen Ortiz	Kendleton Farms/Elijah Rising
Alison Parker	Fort Bend Women's Center
Dua Quraishi	Missouri City Police Department
Leslie Roberio	Fort Bend Women's Center
Alisha Saxon	Unveiling the Darkness Ministry
Christy Serrano	ESCAPE Family Resource Center
Deborah Vanlerberghe	Kendleton Farms/Elijah Rising

Law Enforcement:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Gary Adams	Richmond Police Department
Michael A. Berezin	Missouri City Police Department
Lance Bothell	Missouri City Police Department
Bruce Campbell	Fort Bend County District Attorney
Justin Crocker	Rosenberg Police Department
James Davis	Sugar Land Police Department
Jeremy Eder	Rosenberg Police Department
John Hermann	Constable, Precinct 4
George Holub, Jr.	Fort Bend County District Attorney
Robin McGuire	Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office
David Rider	Fort Bend ISD Police Department
Dwayne Williams	Missouri City Police Department
Wes Wittig	Fort Bend County District Attorney

Behavioral Health Services:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Connie Almeida, PhD	Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services
Rocky Glass	Fort Bend County Mental Health Public Defender
Kevin Hedges	Fort Bend County Attorney's Office
Laura Jenkins	Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse Inc.
Brandy Leonhardt	Greene Behavioral Health
Anthony Mayshack	Fort Bend County Community Supervision/Corrections
Stan Polk	Fort Bend County Community Supervision/Corrections
John Robson	Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse Inc.
Sheena Timberlake	Texana Center
Diana Turner	AccessHealth
Peggy Wright	Fort Bend Women's Center

Other Issues

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Kelli Metzenthin	Literacy Council of Fort Bend
Paulette Shelton	Fort Bend County Public Transportation

Identification of Community Problems

General Public Safety Needs and Issues

Through a process of information sharing and statistical data collection, the governmental agencies, school districts, law enforcement agencies and non-profit agencies in Fort Bend County continue to highlight significant problems faced by children, youth and families.

Continued improvement in the communication and cooperation among various agencies must occur when addressing the contributing factors of crime, e.g., poverty, child abuse, truancy, and teen pregnancy. Also cited were insufficiencies in pro-active areas such as crisis management, conflict resolution, effective parenting, and literacy training.

Lack of access to public transportation in Fort Bend County, which has a land area of 875 square miles, is a major contributing factor in a multitude of problems faced by residents. Access to service providers and parent involvement in school activities is impeded when transportation is unavailable.

Affordable, habitable housing often proves to be inaccessible for many of our residents. Currently, there is a two-year waiting period for families needing housing assistance in this County. Families are often forced to live in sub-standard housing with faulty wiring, plumbing, and other unsafe conditions.

The continued rapid growth of Fort Bend County exacerbates all the problem areas. While the state of Texas grew at a rate of 1.8%, the U.S. Bureau of Census concluded that Fort Bend County grew at a rate of 6% in 2001 and 2002. That growth is predicted to continue - Woods and Poole Economics ranks Fort Bend as second in growth for all U.S. counties with more than 250,000 in population for the years 2003-2025. According to the U.S. Bureau of Census, Fort Bend County's population by 2018 is projected at 749,243. In other words, it took 160 years for Fort Bend to gain its first 350,000 residents, but will add more than 350,000 residents within the next 20 years.

STATS PER 2010 US CENSUS

	Texas	Fort Bend County
Total Population – 2010	25,145,561	585,375*
Population % change from 2000	20.6%	65.1%
Child population % (under age 18)	27.3%	29.7%
Language other than English spoken in home	33.6%	36.0%
Persons below poverty	17.1%	7.5 %
Households	8,269,046	140,542
Average household size	2.81	3.57

**2015 Population 716,087*

In each of the areas on the following pages, problems are identified and data is included that supports both the existence and severity of gaps as they are found in Fort Bend County.

Below the description and data are 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.

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Juvenile delinquency and children in need of supervision (status offenses), especially at-risk youth exhibiting negative behaviors.</p>	<p><u>Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department</u> In 2015, there were a total of 1,742 referrals to the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department (JPD). Misdemeanor and status offenses (Children in Need of Supervision cases) comprised 1,486 of the total and 256 of the total were felony offenses.</p> <p>In 2015, the Juvenile Probation Department was responsible for supervising a total of 418 juveniles who were placed on formal probation. In addition, the Department supervised a total of 620 juveniles in 2015 that were placed on deferred prosecution.</p> <p><u>Lamar Consolidated ISD –Truancy Project</u> During the 2015-2016 school years, 158 truancy related cases were heard in the Justice of the Peace Courts Place 1 and Place 2 for Lamar Consolidated ISD.</p>
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>The lack of adequate and consistent supervision by the family and the community is a major contributing factor to delinquency and anti-social behavior among Fort Bend County’s youth. Poorly supervised children are exposed to danger and risk, and are more likely to engage in anti-social, high risk behavior. This includes chronic truant conduct, dropouts and runaways as well as children who lack after-school supervision and programs. These behaviors have been clearly identified as one of the early warning signs of students headed for potential delinquent activity, social isolation or educational failure due to suspension, expulsion or dropping out.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Saved By The Bell “Saved By The Bell” is a program that began in 2008 funded with a Texas Criminal Justice Division grant. The program started with four schools within Fort Bend Independent School District and all Katy Independent Schools under the jurisdiction of the JP Court, Precinct 3. The program expanded in late 2011 to include all junior high and high schools in Fort Bend County. The goal of this innovative program is to apply pro-active casework management strategies together with appropriate court involvement in order to address chronic truancy issues and ultimately reduce delinquency. Case Managers work on campus with school personnel and community resources in offering prevention and intervention services to youth through counseling, mentoring, presentations and referral to additional resources.</p>	

The Juvenile Probation Department has partnered with Fort Bend Regional Council for life and substance abuse services, Strides Youth Services for psycho-educational services, and Fort Bend Partnership for Youth for financial assistance to families in need.

Lamar Consolidated ISD – Truancy Project

This program was established in 1982 to combat poor attendance among school age children. This agreement between Lamar CISD and Fort Bend County has achieved continued success for Lamar CISD students due to early intervention and meaningful consequences. The court mandates for Parent Contributing to Non-Attendance and Failure to Attend School, consists of warnings, parenting classes and assigned case managers to various community service projects.

Fort Bend Courts Hearing Truant Conduct Cases

These Courts hear truancy conduct referrals for students who have failed to attend school or parents who have contributed to the non-attendance of their children. The collaboration between Fort Bend County government, Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department and Independent School Districts allows for a consistent and timely response to truancy issues.

These courts utilize various intervention methods and have several dispositional alternatives available to address truancy conduct. Parents may be ordered to participate in parenting classes. The courts may place the student on remedial orders and into the Saved By The Bell program. Case Managers in the Saved by the Bell program are assigned to school campuses to help students through prevention and intervention services. The Case Manager meets with assigned students each day; checks attendance, discipline records, and grades; speaks to school personnel; and of course, meets with parents.

Truancy Diversion Program

Fort Bend ISD offers the Truancy Diversion Program (TDP) to students and parents who are experiencing truancy issues. The program is presented by the Office of Student Affairs in collaboration with the FBISD social workers from Student Support Services. The TDP is an information-based program offered for parents and students as a preventative measure to provide: 1) an alternative to a court referral, and 2) to educate parents or guardians and students who are experiencing truancy problems and the consequences associated with unexcused absences. In addition, the program identifies available and appropriate resources for families who are experiencing issues that may be contributing to a student's truancy. The TDP is offered to students and parents with truancy issues once during each school year.

Juvenile Justice Alternative Educational Program (JJAEP)

Lamar CISD provides a community-based juvenile justice alternative education program (JJAEP) in conjunction with Fort Bend County Commissioners Court, FBC Juvenile Board, Juvenile Probation Department and other school districts in Fort Bend County. Students in grades 4-12 who have committed serious offenses and who have been expelled as mandated by Texas Education Code shall be reassigned to the Fort Bend County Alternative School (FBCAS). Students who have violated the district's Student

Code of Conduct may also be expelled to this program. FBCAS serves students from Katy ISD, Needville ISD and Lamar Consolidated ISD. Uniform dress is required. The setting is referenced as a Juvenile Justice AEP as defined by Texas Education Code and has been cooperatively developed as specified in an inter-local agreement. The length of assignment is determined by the judicial system and/or by Lamar CISD as specified by the memorandum of agreement with the Fort Bend County Juvenile Justice Authorities.

Crisis Intervention Program

The Crisis Intervention program at the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department receives referrals from parents, schools and law enforcement agencies requesting emergency intervention for juveniles and children experiencing mental health crisis. Included in this program are counseling, explanation of the laws regarding delinquent youth and possible consequences and information on referral sources for psychological and/or substance abuse counseling.

The Parent Project

The Parent Project is a nationally acclaimed parent training program. Thirteen years in development, the Parent Project is the only course of its kind, providing activity-based curriculum in a ten-week program. Parent Project is designed to work with strong-willed and out-of-control destructive adolescent behavior. Parents who attend Parent Project have an intense ten weeks of classes to learn and change negative generational parenting. The curriculum teaches concrete identification, prevention, and intervention strategies for the most destructive of adolescent behaviors (poor school attendance and performance, alcohol and other drug use, gangs, runaways and violent teens). In 2015, a total of 98 families entered the program and 77 of those families successfully completed the program, which comes to just over 3,240 hours of parenting classes.

Teen Parenting

In addition to the Parent Project, the instructors conduct one-to-one teen parenting instruction. Pregnant teens are given the book, “Baby & Me” and other literature pertinent to their specific needs on motherhood. Teen dads are given the book, “Maps for Dads” and other literature on how to be involved and educated about their role of becoming a father. The teens are also referred to community resources or agencies that pertain to their individual circumstances. They are also instructed on the importance of safety for the baby, as well as baby-proofing their home. In 2015, 13 juveniles have benefited from the teen parenting instruction.

Partners in Parenting Program

Partners in Parenting is an early intervention program which deals with truancy issues of children ages 6-12 and provides essential parent training for their parents. Lamar Consolidated ISD refers students and parents to Partners in Parenting to address truancy issues that have resulted from inadequate parenting skills. The program coordinator visits each child regularly at school to oversee attendance, grades and discipline issues, as well as becoming a mentor for the child. The parents attend a 10 week activity based parent training program called Loving Solutions, also known as Parent Project, Jr. The Loving Solutions curriculum uses a behavior model which is based on cooperative learning norms with group learning activities targeting concrete answers, behavioral

interventions, emotional/practical support and ADD/ADHD applications. The focus of the program is on creating positive home and school communication, learning activities for the home, and appropriate classroom behavior. Loving Solutions helps parents become actively involved in their child's education and helps set the stage for lifelong learning. In 2015, Partners in Parenting has served 42 families.

Tattoo Removal Program

The tattoo removal program is a partnership between the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department, Access Health, Dr. Tolbert S. Wilkerson and the Houston Endowment Foundation. The Texas Gulf Coast Tattoo Obliteration by Infrared Light (TOBIL) is an inexpensive tattoo removal method for juveniles and other appropriate candidates in the Texas Gulf Coast region. The sliding scale fee is based on a client's income. In 2015, 12 clients attended the initial orientation and sent to Access Health to receive this service.

Canine Leadership Program

The Canine Leadership Program is a partnership between Fort Bend County Animal Services, the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department and Fort Bend Partnership for Youth, Inc. The program focuses on finding permanent homes for dogs from Fort Bend County Animal Services while teaching valuable life skills to Fort Bend County youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system. They learn to care for the dogs, train them in basic obedience and teach some cute tricks. At the end of the training period, they assist in promoting the dogs for adoption. The Houston Humane Society donates their services to spay/neuter, vaccinate and provide heartworm preventative. In 2015, 29 youth participated in the canine program.

Horsemanship Program

Students in the Horsemanship Program not only learn how to ride, they also learn about the horse's natural instincts and survival techniques. Safety, catching, tying and grooming are taught before the students are allowed on the horse. Once they are on the horse, they learn to ride through different patterns and at different gaits. The students must listen, be patient and use decision-making skills. Learning to communicate with, and control such a large and powerful animal, is an enjoyable way to improve self-esteem and self-control. Cadets from the Juvenile Leadership Academy attended the program every week during the summer.

In 2015, 12 juveniles participated in the Horsemanship Program. Equine Assisted Therapy (EAP) integrates natural horse and herd behavior as a model for human mental and emotional health. In EAP activities, the horse acts as a metaphor for relationships. The horse provides the vehicle for the projection of a participant's unconscious worries and fears. EAP offers the opportunity to take responsibility for recognizing how personal actions affect others. There were no juveniles referred to this program in 2015.

Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department Mentoring Program

The Mentoring in Detention Program consists of adult volunteer mentors from the community. They are recruited, screened and trained to provide visitation to male or female youth in the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department Detention Center.

The juveniles chosen to receive a mentor are usually those who: do not have anyone coming to visit them, are going to be there longer than average or just need special one-to-one visits. This program is designed for mentors to provide support, listen and encourage the juveniles while they are being detained in the detention center. In 2015, 62 juveniles received a detention center mentor.

The One-to-One Mentoring Program began in May 2015. An adult volunteer mentor is matched by gender with a male or female juvenile currently involved with the juvenile probation department. These juveniles are between the ages of 10 and 17 and are currently living at home. Each week, the mentor will offer one-to-one support and encouragement by participating in activities such as: talking at the park, playing sports, going to the movies, having dinner or going to the library. This program provides the juvenile an opportunity to spend quality time with a positive adult role model. The goal of the program is to build the youth's self-worth by developing healthy, thriving behaviors and to deter any further involvement with the justice system. Community one-to-one assignments began in July 2015, and 8 juveniles received a community mentor during the remainder of 2015.

Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department Staff Mentor visits a juvenile one-to-one during the school day on a weekly basis. The juvenile is either referred by a probation officer or is court ordered into the mentoring program. If a one-to-one community mentor is not available or appropriate for the juvenile, then the youth can be seen by the staff mentor during school hours. Personal attention is given by a positive adult male figure to listen, encourage, problem solve and redirect to avoid further interaction with the justice system. The Redirecting Adolescent Male Mentoring Program (R.A.M.M.P.) was eliminated in May 2015 with the development of the new mentoring programs. During the transition process, 17 juveniles that were previously enrolled in R.A.M.M.P. were able to continue with a one-to-one probation mentor. In addition, 16 additional juveniles were referred and benefitted from having a one-on-one probation mentor.

General Equivalency Development Program (GED)

The Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department continues to serve the youth of Fort Bend County in a unique GED setting. The class is small in size and allows for the youth to receive more one on one instruction from a teacher. The majority of juveniles enrolled in this program has either dropped out of regular school or were considered at-risk of dropping out. In 2015, 13 juveniles were enrolled in the GED program.

The Bridge Program

The Bridge Program is a collaborative effort by the court and the Juvenile Probation department to effectively utilize the resources and services of the department, to increase the involvement and investment of the parents and to increase the level of success of the child while in residential placement and when they return home. The program consists of responsibilities of the probation department and the parent throughout the placement process.

Priority #2

Problem Identified

Data

Limited availability of programs to provide adequate mental health, behavioral health and substance abuse treatment for youth.

Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department, Psychology Division Statistics (2015)

- 2,627 counseling sessions (individual or family) were provided for youth detained in the Fort Bend County Juvenile Detention Center
- 865 individual counseling sessions were provided for youth attending school at Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program sites
- 438 counseling sessions were conducted at local schools in Fort Bend County
- 303 group counseling sessions were provided for youth attending school at Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program sites
- 233 youth were referred to the Psychology Division for counseling and intervention services as a condition of their Probation
- 189 crisis assessments and interventions were conducted
- 170 group counseling sessions were provided for youth who were detained in the Fort Bend County Juvenile Detention Center
- 118 family counseling sessions were provided for the families of youth attending school at Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program sites
- 115 Forensic Behavioral Health Assessments/Psychological Evaluations were completed
- 38 youth were referred to the Anger Management Counseling Program
- 25 youth received services in Sexual Behavior Treatment
- 23 youth successfully completed the First Offender Intervention Program
- 12 youth were referred to counseling in the Intensive Supervision Program (ISP)
- 331 youth received psychiatric evaluations and medication follow-up evaluations

Problem Details

Mental Health Services

In the juvenile justice system, the number of youth diagnosed with mental illness is significantly greater than in the general population. It is estimated that up to 70% of the youth in the juvenile justice system have at least one mental health disorder and

approximately 20% have a serious mental illness (Cocozza and Skowyra; 2000). The most recent Needs Assessment of Fort Bend County conducted by the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs in 2011, states that the lack of services for the mentally ill has resulted in “mental health becoming a law enforcement issue” (www.rgkcenter.org).

Mental health awareness education is important to young people as well. Knowledge of mental health disorders, their signs, symptoms and impact helps young people understand that mental health is important and that they can effectively address and manage their life situation. Awareness programs that promote an open dialogue and educate youth about where to seek help, and increased availability of youth programs for co-occurring mental health/substance abuse disorders will benefit this community.

The Psychology Division was created in 1998 to provide psychological services for youth detained in the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department and at two alternative education programs. Psychology staff also provides specialized counseling and treatment services for youth referred to the probation department and forensic evaluations for youth and families who are involved with the juvenile justice system. Forensic evaluations assist probation officers and judges with rehabilitation treatment planning, and the evaluation services may also decrease the duration a youth spends in the detention center.

Potential Response to Problem

First Offender Intervention Program (FOIP)

The First Offender Intervention Program (FOIP) with the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department is a program specifically designed for youth who have been referred to the juvenile justice system for the first time. The intervention program consists of an intake session with the youth and the parents/guardians and four weekly group counseling sessions. The educational curriculum addresses choosing peers, decision making skills, empathy skills, and safety plans during high risk situations. The intervention program utilizes homework assignments designed to foster personal insight and awareness as well as role play interventions to improve youth competency, understanding, and skill level. Program goals strive to hold youth accountable for their behavior choices and increase their ability, confidence, and motivation to function prosocially in society.

Sexual Behavior Treatment (SBT)

Youth adjudicated to Sexual Behavior Treatment (SBT) attend individual, group, and family counseling services as well as weekly meetings with their Probation Officer. A Probation Officer monitors the juvenile’s behavior during home and school visits assessing safety and any signs of inappropriate behavior. The Probation Officer also speaks with teachers and school officials about the youth's behavior, rule compliance, and academic performance. Individual and group counseling sessions focus on increasing the juvenile’s awareness about the importance of protective factors such as education, healthy sexuality, true consent, and choosing positive peers and decreasing risk factors such as drug use, pornography use, and deviant sexual urges. The goals of Sexual Behavior Treatment include (1) no more victims, (2) teaching youth appropriate sexual

boundaries, (3) emotion regulation skills, (4) sexual arousal awareness skills and self-control skills, and (5) communication skills. The rehabilitation program is designed to increase the youth's ability, confidence, and motivation to function prosocially in society, and the program teaches youth effective skills at solving problems and at managing their emotional urges and sexual arousal. Adolescents participating in SBT also complete homework assignments designed to increase their personal awareness and improve their decision making skills.

The S.T.O.P. Program (Sexual Treatment Offender Program)

The Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department is committed to the protection of the public by rehabilitating delinquent youth with a team and system approach. Intervention strategies are designed to be therapeutic, rehabilitative, and community-based while fostering responsibility and accountability for both the youth and parent.

The STOP Team Strives To:

- Create safer communities by monitoring and assessing juvenile behavior in the home, school, and community
- Hold juvenile offenders accountable for their actions
- Challenge criminogenic attitudes and beliefs
- Teach juvenile offenders about healthy sexual relationships
- Provide opportunities for healing in families
- Serve as a change agent and resource for families and youth

The CORE Program (Creating Opportunities through Rehabilitation and Empowerment)

The CORE Program is a specialized intervention program developed for adolescent females who are at risk or victims of human trafficking. The target population includes females exhibiting high risk behaviors, survivors of sexual abuse, sexual victimization, and sexual trauma. The program utilizes individual, family and group counseling as well as experiential learning activities and female role modeling and mentorship. Adolescent females participate in specialized interventions striving toward trauma resolution, improved self-esteem, healthy sexual decision making, improved family relationships, and prosocial behavior. The CORE program strives to empower adolescent females and their families with the inner strength to heal from the past, the confidence to share their journey, and the courage to make a change in their lives.

Successful Outcomes Using Resiliency for Child Empowerment (S.O.U.R.C.E.)

S.O.U.R.C.E. is an 1115 waiver funded program for youth with behavioral health disorders to improve their functioning and divert them from the criminal justice system.

Currently, one critical care coordinator is managing 20 individual cases and is providing case management services, psychoeducation and other interventions individually tailored to each youth and family's unique needs. Additional care coordinators would be required to work with the large number of individual youth and families in need. Continued expansion of wraparound supports for these families is also needed.

Priority #3

Problem Identified

Data

Need to expand and diversify programs that identify development needs of youth

Project LEARN

In 2015-2016, 150 students between the ages of 0-19 years participated in LEARN. Participants in LEARN must be at-risk. And, without early intervention services of Project LEARN, 223 students would have been involved in the judicial system. The following successes were accomplished:

- 98% of program 1st and 2nd graders had a 95% attendance record in school
- 100% of program participants were promoted to the next grade level
- 100% of 0-3 year olds were screened for development delays
- 100% of 0-3 year olds with development delays were referred to resources
- 100% of the Parents enrolled in the program improved their Parenting Skills and provided a better environment for their child
- 95% of Kindergarten – 2nd graders met or achieved the district reading assessment level
- 100% of 4 year olds mastered 20 upper and lower case letters of the alphabet
- 100% of 4 year olds enrolled in program improved their expressive vocabulary and word retrieval for Standard American English
- 100% of the parents improved their Oral English Communication skills
- 100% of the parents improved their Written English Communication skills

Problem Details

The early years of a child’s life present unique opportunities to lay the foundation for healthy development. Neighborhood characteristics and family income can be risk factors that impact young children’s social-emotional health and development. Young children from households of low-income neighborhoods are more likely to experience behavioral problems that negatively impact the development and success. Project LEARN serves only participants with a household income of equal to or less than federal poverty level.

Potential Response to Problem

Project LEARN (Let’s Eliminate At-Risk Needs)

Project LEARN is a family literacy program offering Adult Basic Education (ABE), GED and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for parents. Children receive homework assistance and tutoring, Pre-kindergarten/ Kindergarten instruction or early childhood education. The components of Project LEARN are Adult Education, Early Childhood Education, Parent Education, Parents And Children Together (PACT) time, and Home Instruction. The program works on the belief that increasing parental involvement in a child’s education is good for the kids, for the school system, and for the parents.

PACT time is a component of LEARN, which involves parents and their children completing a literacy-based activity in school under the supervision of district teachers. This strengthens the role of the parent in their children’s social, emotional, and cognitive development. During the PACT time the parents observe their children’s learning, apply concepts they have learned and discuss with their children what they have learned together.

Because eligible participants of LEARN are at or below federal poverty level, children 0-3 years are not attending pre-school due to the cost. LEARN services are free. Children 0-3 years participate in an early childhood program to prepare them for district pre-kindergarten. Regular attendance in the program and home instruction by the parent enables these children at the age of 4 years to begin school above the educational level of the children in their class facing the same obstacles.

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Need to expand and diversify programs that identify development needs of youth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resource programs that include problem solving skills, anger management and a range of relevant services; • provide early intervention services before they enter the juvenile justice system; • intervention programs targeting education gaps; and 	<p><u>Resource programs serving juveniles</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DePelchin Children’s Center STAR Program • Goodwill Industries of Houston Training • Alternative Learning Center (ALC) • Fort Bend Regional Council • My Reading Coach Literacy Program • Transitions Work/Study Program • KUDER Navigator • Texana Center • TCOOMMI • Traffick911 • 1621 Place • Intensive Behavior Class • Dads as Mentors • Ridgemont Early Childhood Center (RMECC)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prevention of and intervention for human trafficking victims 	
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Potential Response to Problem

DePelchin Children’s Center STAR Program

The STAR program is a state funded grant designed to serve at-risk youth and families. To qualify for services the family must live in Fort Bend County and have a youth, age 17 or under, that is experiencing runaway issues, truancy or family conflict. STAR provides:

- 1) Crisis Intervention Family Counseling – Short-term crisis intervention counseling offered at no cost.
- 2) Skills-based Training – The STAR Program provides Responsible Decision Making Groups. The focus for these groups is Truancy Prevention, which includes problem solving skills, anger management and a range of other relevant topics.
- 3) Collaboration with Lamar Consolidated ISD – A therapist goes to Terry High School in Lamar CISD once a week to obtain referrals on students who could benefit from free individual and family counseling.

Goodwill Industries of Houston Training Young People for Jobs Program

This program is provided in a seven county area including Fort Bend County, targeting 15 youth from the Fort Bend County area. The program focuses on youth between the ages of 14 and 21 who are out-of-school (dropped out or chronically truant, pursuing a GED or completed high school). The program assists youth in re-engaging in high school, pursuing a GED or pursuing vocational training with a local junior college. An Education Counselor facilitates the Dare to Dream segment, where the youth are guided to dream about their future and develop concrete life goals. They are then assisted to work backwards to see what steps they need to take to reach those goals. Ultimately, with this educational and employment assistance, these young people are better prepared for job placements in high-skill, high-growth occupations.

Alternative Learning Center (ALC)

ALC is Lamar Consolidated ISD’s Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP). LCISD provides a school-community guidance center to assist students with behavioral problems or those who engage in serious misconduct that interferes with their education. Students who engage in serious misconduct that mandates removal to a DAEP are reassigned to the ALC. Students in grades 6-12 assigned to the ALC can be assigned for 20 days, 45 days, or 90 days for discretionary and mandatory offenses. Students in grades K-5 can be assigned for three weeks to six weeks. ALC collaborates with local law enforcement agencies, the Fort Bend Truancy Project, the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department, Fort Bend Regional Council, Texana Mental Health Authority, and other agencies serving youth and parents to identify and correct factors that adversely affect the education of students assigned. A structured academic and behavioral program is provided to teach appropriate social skills and self-discipline. Uniform dress is required. Parents are required to attend parent education and support sessions for each

week of their child's ALC assignment.

Fort Bend Regional Council

Since 1976, Fort Bend Regional Council (FBRC) has impacted the lives of many Fort Bend County students. FBRC's prevention programs understand that resilient children who are able to withstand difficult circumstances, are the least likely to use addictive substances. Youth prevention counselors lead classroom based curriculum programs in 39 local schools. Counselors also conduct small group exercises, one-on-one sessions and leadership skill building during summer programs and on school campuses. As a result of Texas House Bill 2398, local school districts will expand the scope of students served in prevention programs to include students who are demonstrating unexcused absences. FBRC's curriculums based programs will serve as a preventative intervention to help school districts curb unexcused absences.

My Reading Coach Literacy Program

The My Reading Coach Program is a literacy program for law-involved juveniles that assists youth with a reading deficiency. The program includes an assessment tool that tests each student to pinpoint deficiencies in the student's reading skills. This reading program focuses on phonics, grammar, reading comprehension and reading fluency. Objectively verified data indicates that the program teaches children to read at their appropriate reading level in 30 to 50 hours. In 2015, 32 juveniles participated in the program.

Transitions Work/Study Program

Transitions work/study program provides juvenile probation youth, ages 14-18 years of age, with the tools that they will need to be educationally ready, literate in all areas of job readiness and informed about higher education opportunities. This combination enables the juveniles to begin stepping forward toward a successful personal future. Educational readiness places a priority on one-to-one tutoring for those requiring remedial assistance in reading and math. Specialized computer programs, DVDs and other learning materials are provided to assist in the tutoring effort. A primary emphasis of the program is on literacy. In 2015, 68 juveniles benefitted from the transitions work/study program. In addition, 81 juveniles were provided with one-to-one tutoring.

KUDER Navigator Program

Fort Bend Juvenile Probation Department has obtained a license for the KUDER Navigator which is an online career guidance assessment. It provides college and career guidance which is based on the students interests and skills. Juveniles that are released from JLA and Residential Placement will be assessed with this program, as well as youth ordered by the court to undergo an assessment.

Texana Center

Texana Center is a local non-profit organization that is designated by the State of Texas as the Local Mental Health Authority and Local Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Authority for Fort Bend County and 5 other surrounding counties. The Center is the main provider of services to individuals with behavioral healthcare issues and/or intellectual and developmental disabilities in the County. Texana serves as the

“gatekeeper” to the state hospital system and to local psychiatric facilities, as well as for individuals and families seeking services for those with intellectual disabilities.

Texana Center also provides services to those with Medicaid, private insurance, and managed care, and is the largest provider of Home and Community-based Services in Texas. The Behavioral Healthcare Services provides a crisis intervention program that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and is the only provider in the County for crisis residential services for those who have Medicaid or are indigent. For fiscal year 2015, Texana’s Behavioral Healthcare Services served 8,211 individuals, including 6,015 adults and 2,196 children.

Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical and Mental Impairment Juvenile Project (TCOOMMI)

The Juvenile Project, called the Turnaround Program, is a joint effort with Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation offering behavioral healthcare services, intensive in-home therapy with the youth and family, probation supervision and wrap around services for youth who are first encountering the juvenile justice system. The thrust of this program is to strengthen families, develop appropriate coping skills, and build support systems to promote healthy parenting and family support to treat the youth's mental illness. The goal is to prevent further encounters with the Juvenile Justice system and stabilize and continue treatment of the youth's mental illness.

Traffick911

Human sex trafficking is the second largest and fastest growing criminal activity in the world. Texas ranks second in the nation for the number of cases. It is estimated that a child is sold every two minutes and the average age of entry is 12-13 years old. Risk factors for domestic minor sex trafficking include runaways from home, involvement in child protective services, and in the juvenile justice system. Traffick911 takes its interactive TRAPS youth prevention program into the Fort Bend County Juvenile Detention Facility monthly for presentation to youth to help prevent and avoid the tricks, traps, and lures of human traffickers while building relationships and identifying victims. Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation is a partner with Traffick911 and its programs.

1621 Place

1621 Place is a high school program of choice offered to all Lamar Consolidated ISD high school students who qualify and wish to attend. Students apply, their credits and TAKS status are analyzed, and then they go through a testing process before placement. Students stay enrolled on their home high school campus and when they graduate, will have the opportunity to walk with their high school class. Diplomas are awarded by the home campus. 1621’s design is that of a self-paced academic center that assists students to learn, grow and become successful members of the community.

Intensive Behavior Class

Lamar Consolidated ISD’s Intensive Behavior Class (IBC) is a special educational program for LCISD students in grades 6-12 who exhibit documented and detrimental behavior that may affect the quality of education provided to the individual or others in the regular classroom environment. IBC serves all 11 LCISD Secondary Campuses. This

program seeks to collaborate and/or coordinate with campus mental health workers to stabilize a student's mental and behavioral conditions so the student may return to the home campus.

The IBC unit will attempt to make contact with any known case workers, psychiatrists, or other mental health workers to further collaborate an exchange of information during the time a student receives services in the IBC classroom. Placement is available only after it is demonstrated that all options (specialized support/resource, staffing, PASS, IPC, etc.) on the home campus have been considered or have proven to be unsuccessful. Students who are returning to the district after a two or more week stay at a residential psychiatric facility may be considered for IBC if they are in grades 6-12 and an emotional or behavioral disability is established. School district personnel will work with the treatment facility to determine the least restrictive environment for the student.

Dads as Mentors

Dads as Mentors is a Fort Bend ISD initiative on all Title I campuses. The premise of this mentoring program is to have fathers as well as positive male role models working with their own children in the home. Fathers are asked to keep a log of extra activities that they engage with their children over one month's time. Activities include spending extra time playing a board game with their child or turning off the television for one night and having a family meeting. The program encourages fathers to pay extra attention to their children in the home. During the evaluation of its first year, fathers found the program to be very helpful in engaging their children in more conversations about learning, school and life.

Ridgmont Early Childhood Center (RMECC)

The Ridgmont Early Childhood Center (RMECC) is a multi-service learning center where children and families can grow together as a community of learners. Located on the property of Ridgmont Elementary School, the Center opened in 2010 to provide early childhood development in an economically-disadvantaged neighborhood located south of Beltway 8 and west of State Highway 288. The Center is designed to address the multi-faceted needs of children and their parents, with a dynamic interconnected system of support.

With support from business and community partners, the RMECC provides a variety of educational, social and health services to participating families, including Early Head Start/Head Start (from birth to 5 years of age) FBISD pre-kindergarten, PPCD (Special Education program), Extended Day Program (before and after-school childcare) FBISD Family Literacy, adult English as a Second Language (ESL) adult GED classes, computer classes, parenting classes, health and dental services, social work and psychological services, teacher mentorship program.

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Limited accessibility and available emergency shelters and access to basic human needs</p>	<p><u>Fort Bend County Women’s Center</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2015, the Women’s Center served 258 domestic violence/sexual assault victims, women and children in its shelter. • In 2015, the Women’s Center Hotline received 23,624 calls; 921 callers were referred to other shelters due to lack of space at the Shelter. • In 2015, the Women’s Center serviced 26,751 meals at the Shelter and provided food boxes for 194 non-Shelter families including 565 individuals. • In 2015, the Missouri City Police Department Victim Assistance Program aided 439 victims of family violence.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>The Fort Bend Women’s Center Shelter is the only provider of emergency shelter services for survivors of domestic violence and/or sexual abuse in Fort Bend County. The Center provides emergency shelter for up to 65 survivors at a time. Entrance into the Shelter is limited to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children.</p> <p>There is limited emergency shelter space available to victims of family violence. Missouri City Police Department among other local police departments struggle to find adequate resources for victims in the area.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Referrals to alternative shelters are given to people who do not qualify for agency services or for whom there is insufficient space in the Shelter. However, resources are limited and most referrals must be made to sources outside Fort Bend County due to lack of emergency shelters available in the county.</p>	

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Continuing need for additional resources for prosecution and follow up investigation of protective orders and criminal cases involving</p>	<p><u>Fort Bend County District Attorney’s – Intake Division</u></p> <p>From September 2014 to October 2015, the DA’s Office received approximately 1,600 domestic violence related cases from law enforcement for possible prosecution.</p>

family violence	
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>As Fort Bend County's population continues to grow rapidly, there is a continued strain on the criminal justice system and specifically in the area of family violence. The Fort Bend County DA's Office continues to vigorously prosecute these cases but needs continued support from existing grants to make this possible.</p>	

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Victim/Witness services for adults within the criminal court system	<p><u>Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office</u> From September 2014 to August 2015, the Fort Bend County DA's Office Victim/Witness Division assisted 4,081 crime victims.</p>
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Fort Bend County continues to be one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. Along with population growth, comes an increase in crime. That increase requires additional personnel to work the increasing caseload and provide victims with the assistance that is mandated as well as the additional services they need and deserve.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office Victim/Witness Division assists crime victims with court setting notification, case status, court accompaniment, Victim Impact Statements, Crime Victims Compensation, court procedure, referrals, follow-up and other services.</p> <p>The District Attorney's Office strives to assist victims with information, status, and support regarding their cases. Other important duties include addressing a victim's specific needs and making appropriate referrals for counseling and other resources. It is imperative that the crime victims of Fort Bend County have these services available on a consistent basis.</p>	

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Continued need for Crime Victim Liaison to address victim rights during the probationary period	<u>Fort Bend County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD)</u> CSCD Victim Services Program assisted 840 assaultive and monetary crime victims from September 2015 to August 2016
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>In the Criminal Justice System, victims often feel disconnected from the process when it comes to obtaining assistance and information. The Victim Services Program provides a linkage whereby victims can obtain assistance. Without these services, victims of assaults as well as property crime will not receive proper notification of probation status, updates, and/or monetary compensation.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Fort Bend County has experienced rapid growth and with that growth the crime rate has increased. Maintaining the personnel to provide the mandated services for victims is essential. The response to the problem is to continue supporting the crime victims; to assist the victims in understanding the criminal justice system; to liaison between the probation officer and the community counterparts with the victims' problems, concerns and to keep the victims updated with the offender's case.</p>	

Priority #5	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of adequate affordable housing in Fort Bend County	<u>Fort Bend County Women's Center</u> In 2015, the Women's Center provided 134 housing units.

Problem Details

Missouri City Police Department Victim Assistance Program has found numerous incidences of lack of affordable housing options for victims of domestic violence who are attempting to relocate in order to escape their abusers. In certain cases, the Crime Victims Compensation, through the Texas Office of the Attorney General, will reimburse victims for relocation. However the maximum amount reimbursed is \$1,800.00 for three months of rent and \$2,000.00 for deposits/moving expenses. With the median rent price of \$1,825.00 per month in Fort Bend County (www.zillow.com), it becomes increasingly difficult for victims to relocate within the county. Thus finding affordable housing in other counties creates an unnecessary burden on victims as they must travel back to Fort Bend County to cooperate with investigations, attend court dates, and apply for protective orders. In other cases, victims might not be approved or even eligible for Crime Victims Compensation and have to foot the bill of relocation out of their own pockets, this again begs the need for affordable housing in Fort Bend County.

Potential Response to Problem

Although domestic violence and sexual assault affects people of all ages, races, and socioeconomic status, the majority of Fort Bend Women’s Center’s clients have income levels below \$10,000 per year. Children raised in violent homes are more likely to grow up to be batterers or battered themselves. Lack of affordable housing and other factors, including broken leases due to fleeing, are major barriers to the success of survivors trying to start safe, self-sufficient lives for themselves and their children.

Rapid Rehousing and permanent housing through Tenant Based Rental Assistance is an essential component of a successful, self-sufficiency program for this population. Although Fort Bend Women’s Center provides housing units, the need continues to grow.

Priority #6

Problem Identified

Data

Continuing need for supportive services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children

Fort Bend County Women’s Center

The Texas Department of Public Safety’s Crime in Texas Report indicated that in 2015, 3,129 incidents of family violence and 226 rape offenses were reported to law enforcement in Fort Bend County.

In 2015, the Fort Bend Women’s Center served 839 women, men and children who were victims of domestic violence and 324 sexual assault victims.

	<p><u>ESCAPE Family Resource Center</u> ESCAPE provided 4 programs at Fort Bend Women’s Center to 106 women and children from September 2015 to August 2016.</p> <p><u>Kendleton Farms</u> Data on incidents of sex trafficking in Fort Bend County is difficult to capture due to multiple and overriding charges. And, the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force has called the provision of services “the most difficult challenge facing anti-trafficking efforts” in the state. Anecdotal evidence and data collected by local outreach organizations suggest hundreds of women around the county are in need of such services.</p>
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Problem Details

The Fort Bend Women’s Center serves women, men, and children who are survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Providing safe haven and support services to these survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault is essential to helping stop the cycle of violence.

Victims of domestic violence face a major disruption in their lives, going beyond just physical health and emotional well-being. As victims rebuild their lives after an incident they experience extreme financial hardships, as there is a monetary value attached to the cost of relocating and restoring a standard of living independent of their abuse. Often times victims are laid off from jobs as they miss work to: hide scars, seek medical attention, and attend police interviews and court dates. As is the nature of domestic violence, where an abuser uses power and control, victims get fired from jobs as abusers file false complaints and cause disturbances at work place to sabotage victims’ employment. The Missouri City Police Department Victim Assistance Program has documented such incidences, and recognizes a major need in Fort Bend County for adequate employment options for victims of domestic violence, so that they can be financially independent of their abuser.

According to the ESCAPE Family Resource Center, violence against a partner or a child is a crime in all states. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 7 men ages 18 and older have experienced domestic violence in their lifetime. Children exposed to domestic violence experience heightened levels of toxic stress and trauma. Research has found that children exposed to violence, including violent crimes, are more likely to suffer from attachment problems, regressive behavior, anxiety, and depression, and to have aggression and conduct problems. Children exposed to violence are more likely to become victims or perpetrators of further violence. Victims of dating violence are considerably more likely to engage in sexual activity and other risky behaviors (binge drinking, suicide attempts, and physical fights) than are non-victims.

Further, finding and providing appropriate services for victims of human trafficking was identified as a challenge throughout the state in the 2014 Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force Report. Texas has recognized this as a unique population of victims in need of specialized therapeutic services. Adult women coming out of trafficking situations need not only secure shelter, but also trauma-informed mental health counseling and skilled social work, legal services, life skills training, education, child care, and job skills training.

Potential Response to Problem

Services such as emergency shelter, crisis intervention, case management, counseling, legal advocacy, medical services (including hospital accompaniment advocates), job and housing placement and other supportive services are very important to the success of survivors trying to start self-sufficient lives for themselves and their children in an environment free from abuse.

Partnerships need to be built with local businesses in Fort Bend County who recognize the dynamics of domestic violence and empty victims who are attempting to be financially independent of their abusers. More outreach needs to be done with corporate managers, business owners, and human resources departments to raise awareness about the consequences of domestic violence and the workplace so that they can adopt policies that advocate for victims and provide them the necessary resources to recover from the trauma.

During FY 2016, ESCAPE Family Resource Center provided two deliveries of *Building Confident Families* and two deliveries of *Empowered for Motherhood* at the Fort Bend County Women's Center. These deliveries served 106 women and children). The goals of the programs are to reduce the incidence of family violence and help adults fulfill their parental responsibilities.

Kendleton Farms is a Fort Bend County-based therapeutic facility for adult victims of sex trafficking. In addition to its residential campus, Kendleton Farms also provides outpatient services to adult survivors of sex trafficking and the commercial sex industry, including emergency crisis care, case management, mental health services, mentorship, and job skills training. Its founding organization, Elijah Rising, has operated in Harris County since 2011 and has reached more than 1,000 victims of sex trafficking in that time.

Priority #7

Problem Identified

Data

Domestic violence and sexual assault prevention programs need to be in place in colleges and secondary schools in Fort Bend County

Fort Bend County Women’s Center

The Texas Department of Public Safety’s Crime in Texas Report indicated that in 2015:

- 80% of total victimizations occur between the ages of 0-24
- 87% of victimizations were perpetrated against females
- 84% of sexual assaults did not include alcohol or drugs

Potential Response to Problem

The Fort Bend Women’s Center was targeting youth through college aged individuals for violence prevention programming due to the magnitude of sexual violence in our community. The Center created an awareness curriculum titled “Creating Healthy Relationships” targeting middle school and high school.

The Fort Bend Women’s Center has also worked with the Office of Attorney General and Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA) to expand Primary Prevention Programming to help prevent the root causes of sexual assault. The agency added to the primary prevention curriculum (titled “Impact, Empower and Engage”) the EXPECT RESPECT Safe Teens Youth Leadership curriculum which was presented to middle school and high school aged children, both in school, after school and during summer day camps. These programs are designed to engage individuals, both male and female, to become integral actors in the prevention of, not only sexual violence, but violence in general.

Fort Bend Women’s Center assisted in the development of the University of Houston’s (UH) “Coogs for Consent” program; our agency also worked with UH to revise policies and procedures regarding their campus response to sexual assault, harassment, and prevention to help ensure compliance with Title IX requirements. We participated in an orientation video mandatory for UH students currently at the main campus (soon to be implemented throughout the UH System) addressing these issues. We have presented a required orientation for select staff, faculty and dorm students at Wharton County Junior College regarding bystander intervention, consent, Title IX and Healthy Relationships. Prevention programs, such as these, should be expanded into all secondary schools in Fort Bend County.

Priority #8	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for parenting classes that provide hands on training to improve wellness, family reunification, and prevent child abuse	<u>ESCAPE Family Resource Center</u> ESCAPE provided 21 child abuse prevention programs to 462 participants in Fort Bend County from September 2015 to August 2016.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>ESCAPE specializes in parenting programs and workshops for the entire family as well as professional development trainings for staff on preventing child abuse and neglect. ESCAPE has provided parenting education programs in eleven community sites throughout the Fort Bend County area. ESCAPE’s parent education programs are evidence informed and include pre and post assessments to measure client outcomes. Families are given opportunities to work on communication, stress management, and problem solving skills throughout the parenting program in efforts to create a stable family environment.</p> <p>All ESACPE curricula offer both adult and child components and are delivered in both Spanish and English.</p>	

Priority #8	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of dedicated bed space and transitional housing for adult victims of sex trafficking	<u>Kendleton Farms</u> Data on incidents of sex trafficking in Fort Bend County is difficult to capture due to multiple and overriding charges. Moreover, because sex trafficking necessarily involves prostitution, it is likely many prostitution charges involve trafficking victims. Anecdotal evidence and data collected by local outreach organizations suggest hundreds of women around the county are in need of such services.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>The 2014 Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force Report recognized that a specialized therapeutic environment is required to rehabilitate sex trafficking victims. The report also identified a lack of available facilities for this population.</p> <p>Adult women coming out of trafficking situations first need secure housing, which drives many of them to domestic violence shelters. However, a more specialized type of</p>	

care better suits their needs and reduces the likelihood they will return to trafficking situations or the criminal justice system. One national advocacy group estimates there are 40 such facilities around the country.

Kendleton Farms is Fort Bend County's only dedicated residential facility for adult victims of sex trafficking. The campus can house up to 50 adult women and provides the specialized wraparound care this population requires before reentering society. Its founding nonprofit organization, Elijah Rising, has operated in Harris County since 2011 and has referred more than 30 sex trafficking victims to out-of-state aftercare facilities in that time.

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p><u>Child Abuse/Neglect:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidence of child abuse/neglect in Fort Bend County • Violence against children • Lack of appropriate, specialized treatment services for abused and neglected children • Lack of appropriate, specialized treatment services for non-offending caregivers • Need for system and facility to meet acute and non-acute sexual assault exam needs for children • Lack of appropriate, specialized treatment services for alleged adult and juvenile offenders • Lack of mentoring program for child victims of abuse/neglect but not in foster care • Continued need for collaborative efforts to meet needs of abused/neglected children • Number of children serving as victims/witnesses in criminal court system and the associated trauma • Need for trained personnel to assist families with Crime Victim Compensation applications • Need for improved screening and 	<p><u>Child Advocates of Fort Bend (2014)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 986 alleged victims of abuse and neglect served • 691 forensic interviews of child victims • 2,330 free therapy sessions provided at The Children's Advocacy Center • 277 criminal court advocacy clients <p><u>Texas Department of Family and Protective Services</u></p> <p><u>Fort Bend County Attorney's Office</u></p> <p><u>ESCAPE Family Resource Center</u> ESCAPE provided 21 child abused prevention programs to 462 participants in Fort Bend County from September 2015 to August 2016.</p> <p><u>The Rainbow Room (2015)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,605 CPS clients served • 3,086 CPS initial intakes • 2,270 CPS assigned cases • 3,426 CPS alleged victims of abuse/neglect

<p>identification of children with disabilities in early childhood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for programs focused on prevention of child abuse and neglect in order to reduce the incidence of serious injuries and child fatalities • Need for all of the above services to be available for Spanish speaking clients 	
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Problem Details

According to the American Medical Association, the lasting effects of childhood sexual abuse are associated with a significantly higher lifetime prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety disorders including panic attacks, as well as drug and alcohol problems. Left untreated, abuse children can be subjected to a lifetime of battling the effects of their childhood trauma. Additionally, according to Nancy Kellogg, University of Texas Health Science Center of San Antonio/Department of Pediatrics, 40% of abused children will be re-abused before their eighteenth birthday.

Fort Bend County is one of the largest growing populations in the state and the Hispanic population is also growing. Many residents of Fort Bend County speak Spanish as their primary language and they need to receive services that are in Spanish as well as being culturally sensitive. The Children's Advocacy Center provides all of its services in Spanish in order to meet the needs of the Spanish speaking/bilingual population.

Of Fort Bend County's 200,969, children 0-18, largest demographic is Hispanic/Latino children at 61,458, followed by Anglo and African American (55,363 and 43,655 respectively). Hispanic/Latino (.46%) and African American (49%) children were more likely than their white (21%) counterparts to experience abuse and neglect (DFPS Databook 2015).

There were 3,086 reported cases of child abuse, 2,713 of which were assigned to investigations by CPS. Of those completed (2,270), 19.5% were confirmed cases. When case action was determined, CPS was 8 times more likely to keep families intact. Three children died from child abuse and neglect related injuries (DFPS Databook 2015).

Potential Response to Problem

Child Advocates of Fort Bend Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) works with children who are alleged victims of serious physical abuse, sexual abuse and are witnesses to violent crimes including homicide. The CAC works together with Children's Protective Services (CPS), law enforcement and the District Attorney's Office to collaboratively meet the needs of child abuse victims in the county. In 2014, the CAC served 986 alleged victims of abuse and neglect. All of these children were referred by CPS or law enforcement. Services provided include specialized forensic interviews of child victims, crisis intervention and case management services to non-offending family members and criminal court orientation and accompaniment.

The CAC also offers specialized trauma focused therapeutic services for child victims and their non-offending family members. The CAC provides individual, group and family therapy including caregivers groups for the non-offending caregivers. These services are available to all child victims served by the CAC but unfortunately some families cannot come to the CAC for treatment due to lack of transportation/gas money or inability to take time off from work. In these situations CPS and the CAC refer families to community providers but families can often struggle to pay for these services and often do not follow through with gaining treatment for their child victims.

Currently, there is no medical facility in Fort Bend County that provides specialized acute and non-acute sexual assault exams for child victims of sexual abuse. Currently, children in need of exams must travel to Harris County to be evaluated. The CAC works with the Harris Health System to coordinate exams for children.

Professionals in the child abuse system have seen an increase in the number of adolescent offenders. They are offending on known victims including siblings. The CAC can treat the child victims of adolescent offenders but do not treat the offenders themselves. There remains a need for a stringent reunification program for adolescent offenders and their familial victims.

The CAC has implemented a Mentoring Program for child victims who are no longer at risk for abuse in the home but need an extra support person in their lives to help them heal from their experiences. The volunteer mentors meet with the children at home, school or events to provide support and guidance to them. Families and children agree to the program and the volunteers are supervised by a social worker.

Because of the complexity of child abuse cases, all of the agencies who investigate and prosecute the cases must collaborate to work towards lessening the trauma to children going through the systems and also work toward strong cases when appropriate. The Children's Advocacy Centers helps to facilitate the coordination among Children's Protective Services, law enforcement, the District Attorney's Office and community providers to facilitate the communication and collaboration among the agencies. Forensic interviews conducted at the CAC help to begin this collaboration among the partner agencies. Working together helps to ensure that the focus of the professionals' remains child focused.

For cases where the alleged offender is being prosecuted, child witnesses and their non-offending family members need to remain engaged in the criminal justice process. The Children's Advocacy Center provides criminal court orientation, accompaniment and support to families as they go through this system. The support helps families understand the process so they remain engaged and child witnesses are stronger for the justice system.

Families whose children are victims of a crime need to be connected to the Crime Victim Compensation fund so they can be reimbursed for expensed incurred as a result of the crime. The CAC, law enforcement and District Attorney's Office all have victim advocates who assist families through this process, therefore reducing the burden to them. Abuse and neglect can lead to children who are delayed in their functioning. There needs to be an improvement in identification and screening of children with disabilities that are either abuse related or general disabilities.

ESCAPE Family Resource Center's primary goal is to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect in the Greater Houston area by addressing the root causes of this epidemic and working with families at-risk for experiencing child maltreatment.

ESCAPE specializes in parenting programs and workshops for the entire family, as well as professional development trainings for staff on preventing child abuse and neglect. ESCAPE has provided parenting education programs in eleven community sites throughout the Fort Bend County area. ESCAPE's parent educational programs are evidence informed and include pre and post assessments to measure client outcomes. Families are given opportunities to work on communication, stress management, and problem solving skills throughout the parenting program in efforts to create a stable family environment. All ESCAPE curricula offer both an adult and child component and are delivered in both English and Spanish.

The Rainbow Room provides emergency and transitional supplies for the unmet material needs of children and families involved with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The Rainbow Room is a resource room stocked with snacks, diapers, school supplies, clothes, toiletries, toys and other items frequently needed to meet the emergency needs of families in crisis. Our philosophy is that abused and neglected children do not deserve used items, so only new items are stocked. Getting new items can have a significant impact on the children in helping them feel cared for and fit in with their peers at school. The Rainbow Room is available to caseworkers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Prior to the establishment of the Fort Bend Rainbow Room, local caseworkers frequently used their own funds to meet these needs while waiting for permanent funding solutions. Many of these expenditures were not reimbursable nevertheless, most caseworkers could not refuse to feed or clothe hungry children that had just been rescued from abusive and/or neglectful homes.

Priority #2

Problem Identified

Data

Children in Foster Care:

- Lack of available licensed foster care homes and shelters
- Lack of funding to assist family/kinship placements for children in foster care
- Lack of parent/child visitation programs (training, facility, protocol, volunteers, etc.) to create emotional and physical bonding between parents and children
- Need for expanded programs to serve “at risk” teens transitioning to adult life
- Need for customized program to improve graduation rates, training in life skills, budgeting, employment
- Need for expanded program for “at risk” infants and toddlers (0-5 years) in foster care to improve wellness, family reunification, and adoption rates
- Need for customized program for “at risk” children ages 6-13 to improve health, education, and social well-being
- Need for parenting classes that provide hands on training to improve wellness, family reunification, and

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services 2015

200,969 child population
670 confirmed victims of abuse
253 children in DFPS legal custody (9/2014 to 8/2015)

Fort Bend County Attorney’s Office

Child Advocates of Fort Bend (2015)

280 children in DFPS legal custody (1/2015 to 12/2015)
146 active Court Appointed Special Advocates

ESCAPE Family Resource Center

ESCAPE provided 5 *Child Abuse Prevention 101* training workshops to 183 child care, non-profit and school professionals in Fort Bend County from September 2015 to August 2016.

The Rainbow Room (2015)

- 1,605 CPS clients served
- 3,086 CPS initial intakes
- 2,270 CPS assigned cases
- 3,426 CPS alleged victims of abuse/neglect

<p>prevention of child abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of prevention programs in schools to educate children and school personnel about symptoms, protocols, and services available in Fort Bend County for child abuse and neglect • Number of children needing adoptive homes • Lack of collaborative efforts to meet needs of abused/neglected children • Absence of available and affordable transportation for children in foster care system and child victims of abuse who live at home and their non-offending caregivers • Absence of available and affordable transportation for parents of abused children in which to assist parents in participating in community programs to assist in making changes to effectively reach family reunification • Absence of transitional housing and services for children aging out of foster care • Need for more foster homes in Fort Bend County • Need for customized programs to assist with credit recovery for children that do not maintain placement and 	
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transfer to multiple schools while in foster care	
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Problem Details

The problems of the child welfare systems are magnified when infants and toddlers are involved. Nationally, they comprise the largest cohort of young children in care, accounting for one in three admissions. Once they have been removed from their homes and placed in foster care, infants and toddlers are more likely than older children to be re-abused and neglected. Infants and toddlers are the most vulnerable to the effects of maltreatment. The effects of this maltreatment can have lifelong implications if not addressed properly. Research shows that young children who have experienced physical abuse have lower social competence, show less empathy for others, have difficulty recognizing others' emotions, and are more likely to have deficits in IQ scores, language ability and school performance than children who have not been maltreated. Infants and toddlers are disproportionately at risk for maltreatment.

Potential Response to Problem

Child Advocates of Fort Bend is a non-profit agency serving abused and neglected children in Fort Bend County. As part of the process when children are in foster care, they go to court where judges must weigh the evidence available to make important decisions that greatly impact their lives. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is a program under the umbrella of Child Advocates who are appointed to every child in protective custody in Fort Bend County. Generally volunteers carry only one case, have the opportunity to spend more time with the children than other parties involved in the case, and by representing the child's best interest in court, serve as an extra set of eyes and ears for the judge.

The CASA program has two specialized staff members who are dedicated to supervising volunteers who are involved in the Infant and Toddler Court Team Project. CASA has developed an infant and toddler team to train volunteers to work with this special population; however, there continues to be a need for specialized programs to provide more hands on training for the parents. The CASA program continues to seek funding to provide specialized services for children and parents to 1) educate parents about the importance of early relationships and development of their children; 2) ensure that the children receive appropriate developmental screenings; 3) increase visits with parents and their children while they are away from home; and 4) connect families to services in their community that will help them work through their court issues, and reunification/relative conservatorship or adoption.

Over the past 25 years in our work with abused children in Fort Bend County, it has become apparent that we need to provide children aged 6-13 with specialized services and targeted support. These children are at a critical age in establishing their values, character, educational performance, self-esteem, connections with their peers and with adult role models. In 2011, Child Advocates of Fort Bend piloted and implemented a

new, targeted program called *N.E.S.T. - Nurturing Education and Social Triumphs* that incorporates three areas of focus: education, social skills and health.

- *Educational Achievement* - setting solid academic foundations to put elementary and middle school children on the path to graduate from high school and pursue higher education with a college or technical school degree;
- *Social Skills* - building high self-esteem, making good choices, peer pressure, involvement in extracurricular and service activities; and
- *Health* - setting in place habits for healthy lifestyles, including nutrition, exercise and hygiene.

Child Advocates of Fort Bend launched the WINGS program in 2005 to better equip CASA volunteers to prepare foster youth, ages 14 and older for the transition from the foster care system into independence. Participating youth are provided with the opportunity to attend WINGS Life Skills trainings where they learn how to interview for a job, manage a budget, rent an apartment, purchase and/or lease a car, open a checking account, and visit local businesses to learn about different fields of work. Expanding the learning environment beyond the classroom setting has definitely worked well and continues to prove that hands on learning and training are effective. These youth also participate in WINGS Campus Crawls to visit post-secondary education sites. The youth are able to experience college life by visiting the campuses and interacting with college students.

The implementation of the WINGS program and collaboration with community and state partners has improved the outcomes for youth transitioning out of the foster care system. Child Advocates will continue to seek funding to enhance the WINGS program and provide better and more intense services for the youth aging out of care.

ESCAPE Family Resource Center offers training services to personnel in schools, daycare centers and other organizations. This includes Child Abuse Prevention 101 workshops, in addition to workshops on other child abuse prevention topics. ESCAPE's Child Abuse Prevention 101 meets the state's requirement for training for recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect. In addition to these programs, ESCAPE provides child abuse prevention services to relative caregivers at-risk for child maltreatment.

In addition, the Rainbow Room provides emergency and transitional supplies for the unmet material needs of children and families involved with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The Rainbow Room also assists children aging out of the system or attending college with needed supplies.

Priority #3

Problem Identified

Data

Lack of programs to prevent child victimization

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

ESCAPE Family Resource Center

ESCAPE Family Resource Center provided 13 workshops on The First Five! at 3 program sites (Bush High School, Hightower High School, and Willowridge High School) for 71 clients from September 2015 to August 2016.

Problem Details

The DFPS Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) Five Year Strategic Plan emphasizes goals and activities related to prevention and early intervention programs which include improved parenting skills. PEI's strategies are rooted in the understanding that families have primary responsibility for creating a safe and nurturing environment for their children, and that almost all families want to do what is best for their children but often need some form of support to make it happen.

Potential Response to Problem

Yelling and other harsh discipline practices not only put children at risk for maltreatment, but also contradict efforts to help children develop the social and emotional competencies that enable them to successfully navigate the world around them. Findings from "Tuning In," a national parent survey conducted by Zero to Three, tell us that the "exception gap" between what children are able and expected to do in early childhood is a significant cause of frustration for parents of young children. This gap in understanding can result in parents using harsher discipline methods instead of regulating their emotions and helping their children learn to do the same.

The good news is that approximately half of parents who answered the "Tuning In" survey said that they want to learn how to better control their emotions and actions. Half also state that they want to learn more about child development, which will help parents close the "exception gap" and promote age appropriate problem-solving skills in their children. Parenting education can help parents respond appropriately to challenging behavior in children and foster social emotional learning at each stage of their development.

Scientific research indicates that the initial five years of life are critical in a person's physical, emotional and intellectual development. ESCAPE's The First Five! program is designed to increase parents' knowledge about child development and to address many of the frustrations that parents with young children experience. The curriculum teaches families with young children (ages 0-5 years old) the fundamentals of safety, early childhood development and promotion of protective factors, such as building nurturing bonds with their infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

Priority #4

Problem Identified

Data

Prevalence of child victims of Juvenile sex offenders

- Continued need for a specialized prosecutor to handle cases involving Juvenile sex offenders
- Lack of appropriate reunification counseling and services for Juvenile offenders and related victims cohabitating in the same residence
- Lack of Licensed Sex Offender Treatment Providers to provide appropriate counseling services for offenders

Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office

Since January 2012, 244 juveniles have been referred to the Fort Bend County Juvenile Courts for sexual based offenses. This number, however, does not reflect multiple offenses or multiple victims, which is significantly higher in identifying the number of victims in need of appropriate counseling and treatment services.

Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department

Problem Details

Juvenile crimes, and more specifically, juvenile sex crimes, tend to fall into the category of opportunistic offenses. Juveniles offend during time frames when they are unsupervised or not properly supervised. As a result, it is not uncommon for the victims of a juvenile's sex offense to be a member of the victim's family or household. Because the Juvenile Justice system has a strong orientation towards rehabilitation, more often than not, in conjunction with following the intervention of the Juvenile Court, the Juvenile offender may receive intensive sex offender treatment and rehabilitation while maintaining residence in the home where the victim also resides. In preparation for the juvenile offender's reintegration into the home, the victim should have the opportunity to receive appropriate counseling and therapeutic services in preparation for the placement in order to minimize further emotional trauma by the victim. Because the victims and offenders tend to both be minors under the care of an appropriate parent or legal guardian, the entire family unit is affected by the juvenile offenders return into the residence. **(See Juvenile Issues – Priority #2)**

There is a strong need for appropriate and specialized counseling and therapeutic services to address the unique issues and needs of these families so that the rehabilitation process can be successful for every victim member and victim support member of the family unit. The result is a continued and growing need for appropriate Licensed Sex Offender Treatment Providers (LSOTP) who specialize in working with Juvenile offenders. There remains a need to have professional relationships with LSOTP's who have the additional level of education and training required to successfully treat juvenile sex offenders. The successful rehabilitation of these offenders results in preventing new victims and the re-victimization of existing victims.

There is a growing need for Licensed Sex Offender Treatment Providers (LSOTP) who specialize in working with Juvenile offenders. Often, Juvenile sex offenders have unique issues involving their potential rehabilitation that are very different from the rehabilitation approach taken with adult sex offenders. There is a continuing need to have LSOTP's that have the additional level of education and training required to properly treat juvenile sex offenders. The successful rehabilitation of these offenders results in preventing new victims and the re-victimization of existing victims.

Potential Response to Problem

In 2013, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office added a felony-graded staff attorney to assist in handling referrals from law enforcement agencies alleging sex offenses committed by Juvenile perpetrators. By 2015, the number of referrals by juvenile offenders, along with the creation of County Court at Law #5 (also sitting as a Juvenile Court), necessitated the addition of another staff attorney to handle the intake and prosecution of juvenile offenders. Generally speaking, sex offenses are the types of cases that require more lengthy and sophisticated investigation. For prosecutors, this equates to dedicating more time to insure a proper review of the cases that will result in appropriate and thoughtful charging decisions. These cases also generally involve younger victims and always younger offenders (legally, as young as 10 years old). On average it takes four months to a year for each of these cases to process through the Juvenile Justice system from intake review through resolution. Additionally, supervision of these youth during the course of their respective sex offender treatment programs is rarely less than two years. By continuing to maintain prosecutors with specialized training specifically focused on juvenile law prosecution and sex offense prosecution, the result is a better facilitation of outreach services for the victims' and the offenders' rehabilitation through accountability and often times, as a last resort, prosecution.

Priority #5	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Inadequate crisis intervention programs and/or shelters for juveniles</p> <p>Programs for runaways/ "unwanted" teens and at-risk teens</p>	<p><u>Parks Youth Ranch</u> The Parks Youth Ranch is the only emergency shelter for at-risk youth or homeless youth in Fort Bend County. Since opening the doors in March 2011, Parks Youth Ranch has provided over 6,000 nights of shelter to over 300 homeless youth.</p> <p><u>ESCAPE Family Resource Center</u> ESCAPE Family Resource Center provided 1 program of <i>Building Confident Teens</i> to 18 homeless/at-risk teens in Fort Bend County from September 2014 to August 2015.</p>

Potential Response to Problem

The Fred and Mabel R. Parks Youth Ranch was established in response to a gap in community services for the homeless and at-risk youth population. For the 2014-15 school years, 594 at-risk and homeless youth have registered with Lamar Consolidated and Fort Bend independent school districts. Being able to provide services to homeless youth locally allows them to continue their education in their home school which in turn provides a greater chance that they will complete their high school education. The availability of a youth shelter in Fort Bend County allows families living in or near Fort Bend to participate in family counseling and visit on a more frequent basis, which in turn makes family reunification more plausible. It also offers youth stability in familiar surroundings.

The Fred and Mabel R. Parks Youth Ranch houses three facilities: The George Counseling Center, The Fort Bend Junior Service League Recreation Center and Parks Emergency Shelter. Referrals come from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Juvenile Probation or voluntary, private placement from the community. Constituency served includes:

- Abused, homeless and troubled youth ages 7-17 in Fort Bend County and the Greater Houston area. CPS may refer youth from outside Region 6. Youth of both genders, of any ethnicity, from families of any income level are served.
- Youth involved in Class C misdemeanor cases or status offenses.
- Youth referred by law enforcement for a cooling off period when there is a threat of violence in the home.
- Other Fort Bend County youth who request available services

Youth referred to the shelter receive services for up to 90 days with the possibility of two additional 90-day extensions. Services offered enable the at-risk, unaccompanied, or homeless youth and their families to continue toward problem resolution. Services focus on creating a stable living environment, continuing education and connecting to community based collaborative social services.

ESCAPE Family Resource Center offers its *Building Confident Teens* program at Parks Youth Ranch and continues to work in collaboration to implement pertinent programming to at-risk teens living on the ranch and throughout Fort Bend County.

Priority #6	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of transportation for child victims and families	<u>Texas Department of Family and Protective Services</u> <u>Child Advocates of Fort Bend</u>

Problem Details

When Child Protective Services is involved with a family due to findings of abuse and/or neglect in the home, the courts order parents to utilize community resources and complete services in the attempt to address and resolve the behaviors and concerns which were present when the child came into the care of the state. These service providers in the community are located across the county of Fort Bend. It is a frequent issue in CPS cases that the parents have limited, if any, transportation to complete these court-ordered services. There are minimal community resources that assist with helping families obtain transportation, and although the county has initiated a transportation service, there is a cost (although minimal) that our parents cannot afford or providers are not located in the transportation service areas.

It is imperative that transportation be accessible to the family and children of Fort Bend County as the services that are provided to parents trying to make changes in their parenting abilities or children who are victims of abuse and greatly benefit from therapeutic services are the key to making progress towards eradicating child abuse/neglect in Fort Bend County.

In addition to those children who are in the care of the state in the foster care systems, there is a largely separate group of children who are victims of sexual abuse and serious physical abuse. Many of these children continue to live at home with non-offending family members. These children bear the burden of the trauma of the abuse itself, coupled with remaining in an environment (home, neighborhood, school, etc.) that gave rise to the trauma in the first place. These children often need transportation to get to and from therapy services provided by the Children’s Advocacy Center. They are often in home environments where there is a lack of transportation and limited resources.

Priority #7	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Victim/Witness services for children in the criminal court system	<u>Child Advocates of Fort Bend</u> <u>Fort Bend County District Attorney’s Office</u>
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
In 2007, the Children’s Advocacy Center began providing specialized criminal court advocacy services to children. Children who are victims of crime or witnesses to acts of violence require special assistance in order to understand and participate in the criminal justice system without being further traumatized. The criminal court system, with its often confusing language and procedures, was not designed with children in mind. Parents and guardians are also confused and overwhelmed by the intricacies of the legal system. But if perpetrators of crimes against children are to be held accountable, children must be prepared to testify in criminal proceedings. The Children’s Advocacy	

Center provides information on legal procedures, emotional support, referrals, court orientation and accompaniment to court.

In cooperation with the Children’s Advocacy Center, the Victim/Witness Division of the Fort Bend County District Attorney’s Office also assists with parents, guardians, and family members of child victims. These adult witnesses often need support, referrals and court accompaniment as well.

Even in cases where there is no child victim, children are sometimes witnesses to other types of crime, such as murder or domestic violence. When a case goes to trial, those children are sometimes needed to testify in court. The Fort Bend County District Attorney’s Office Victim/Witness Division provides support and court accompaniment to child witnesses. Special care is given to help the child witnesses understand their role and participate in the trial process. The Victim/Witness Division also provides information regarding legal procedures and court orientation.

Priority #8	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Continuing need for additional resources for investigation and prosecution of criminal cases involving physical and sexual abuse of children, including Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) and child deaths</p>	<p><u>Fort Bend County District Attorney’s Office</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From January 2014 to December 2014, the District Attorney’s Office received 301 child abuse related cases from law enforcement for review and possible prosecution. • From January 2015 to August 2015, the District Attorney’s Office received 269 child abuse related cases from law enforcement for review and possible prosecution. • Projections for January 2015 to December 2015, assuming the average number of cases per month for the remaining four months of 2015 will be 18 to 33 cases, suggest the 2015 total cases will be between 345 and 403, and could be higher.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>A significant increase in computer related crimes against children being submitted for prosecution occurred from 2014 through August 2015. An additional increase is anticipated in 2016 for ICAC and all types of child abuse cases.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>In 2013, an Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Investigator position was implemented in a joint collaboration between the Houston Metro Area ICAC Taskforce</p>	

and the Fort Bend County District Attorney’s Office. In addition, the Fort Bend County DA’s Office continues to vigorously prosecute child injury and child sexual abuse cases but needs additional resources for prosecution. There is a substantial need for increased training and personnel for investigative law enforcement agencies countywide to investigate child sexual abuse (including ICAC cases), and child injury and death cases. Significant personnel turnover in the investigative units responsible for investigating these types of cases exacerbates this need.

The time, demand, and specialized knowledge required to effectively investigate and prosecute sexual offenses committed against children is considerable. The cases are complex (and therefore very time-consuming) relative to investigation and prosecution of other types of crimes. Successful investigation (and therefore prosecution) requires specialized training and skill of investigators and gathering of information and consultation with medical professionals, children’s protective services investigators, victims and prior victims, parents, school personnel, various forensic experts, and others.

Skillful interrogation is critical to successful prosecution in sexual offenses committed against children and in child serious injury and death cases and requires training of investigators to obtain admissions in these types of cases. Internet crimes committed against children involve a high level of specialized and constantly changing technical knowledge. Continual training is critical for those involved in these types of investigations. In our technology driven world, many crimes involving identified “hands on” victims also entail a computer component to achieve thorough investigation and successful prosecution.

Priority #9	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Reasonable accommodations whether in the office or outside the office within the community for CPS caseworkers to be able to stay within Fort Bend County while waiting to obtain placement for children when they initially come into conservatorship</p>	<p><u>Texas Department of Family and Protective Services</u></p> <p><u>The Rainbow Room</u></p>
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Since Region 6 has split, Harris County comprises Region 6A and the outlying counties are in 6B. The outlying counties are in need of a facility or community resource to</p>	

accommodate staff who takes children into custody to be able to remain at the office rather than driving into Harris County to utilize their Youth Service Center until placement is obtained. DPS staff often have to drive in to Harris County with Fort Bend children until a placement is obtained.

Potential Response to Problem

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services staff has created an awareness of the issue with staff driving all the way to Harris County sometimes to stay overnight then driving back to Fort Bend, and continue this each night until a placement is obtained. We will look into our local boards - Child Welfare Board, Rainbow Room Board, and other community resources to see how we can collaborate together to come up with a solution to assist staff as well as keeping our children in Fort Bend County.

The Rainbow Room is available to caseworkers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for clients. The Rainbow Room can provide a duffle bag containing toiletries, clothing, a blanket, snacks, and a stuffed animal for children having to remain at the office until placement is obtained.

Priority #10

Problem Identified

Data

Lack of funding and site for resource for drug testing facility

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
80-90% of cases involved with TDFPS involve substance abuse usage

Problem Details

The cases that come into the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) involves investigating child abuse and neglect. In many instances assigned caseworkers are going into the homes to find a parent incoherent, under the influence, or passed out. Currently there is no facility located in the Rosenberg area where the clients can be tested immediately to make the best decision possible for the safety and well-being of the child.

Potential Response to Problem

DFPS will seek out resource opportunities or agencies that can conduct drug testing in the Rosenberg area that will be willing to contract to provide the drug testing site and possible treatment services for the clients instead of sending them to Katy or Harris County to be drug tested.

Priority #11	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Prevalence of unidentified, unserved child victims of sex trafficking within the criminal justice system	<p><u>Kendleton Farms</u> Because this population is unidentified, credible empirical data is difficult to find. The FBI has estimated the typical age of entry into prostitution at 12-14. If this is to be believed, it is likely many girls in detention are victims. Anecdotal evidence demonstrates this is a problem around the region and a significant driver of adult prostitution.</p>
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Victims of domestic minor sex trafficking often are detained for crimes committed in the process of their captivity (drugs, truancy, theft, assault, etc.). They are often not aware the crime of sex trafficking of a child has been committed against them, so they rarely self-identify. As a result, they are underserved within the criminal justice system and by appropriate social services. This increases the likelihood they will return to their trafficking situation upon release and remain in and out of jail throughout their lives.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>See Juvenile Issues – Priority #4</p>	

Priority #12	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need to expand and diversify programs that identify development needs of youth	<p><u>ESCAPE Family Resource Center</u> ESCAPE provided 13 parenting workshops to teen students at Bush High School, Willowridge High School, and Hightower High School from September 2015 to August 2016.</p>
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Teen pregnancies and teen births are a proxy for risky sexual activity. Over one-third of high school freshmen surveyed in Fort Bend by the Texas Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System in 2011 reported ever having had sexual intercourse.</p> <p>In Fort Bend, there were 328 births to mothers, ages 15-19 years in 2015. While parenting classes will help these young parents better support their children's</p>	

development and prevent child maltreatment, these teens and their peers would benefit from receiving sexual education on how to prevent teen pregnancy and avoid other risk-taking activities.

Potential Response to Problem

ESCAPE offers special social, emotional and physical health education to teens and their parents. These courses are *Building Confident Teens* and *How to Talk to your Children Regarding Sexuality*. These programs are offered in both English and Spanish.

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need to expand law enforcement personnel and associated prosecutorial resources with the proportionate growth of Fort Bend County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Fort Bend Economic Development Council • 2010 U.S. Census Bureau - Estimates July 1, 2015 (v2015) • DOJ/BJA Data Analysis • U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015 • Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC)
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Fort Bend Ranks No. 4 among the fastest growing counties in the nation. From 2010-2015 there has been a population growth of 22% throughout the County. Currently, Fort Bend County’s population is 715,087. The Texas State Data Center estimates that the population could reach 845,058 by the year 2020. Per the 2014 Crime in Texas publication distributed by the Department of Public Safety, the statewide ratio is 1.6 officers per 1,000 populations. All law enforcement agencies within the county have a common need for additional officers/personnel.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>In Fort Bend County, the majority of the police departments apply their own subjective formulas to this ratio to determine the law enforcement needs for their municipality. For instance, the majority of law enforcement agencies use a workload analysis that examines the time each officer spends on various law enforcement tasks and factors and a number of other variables, such as the number of calls for service. This analysis will determine the number of officers, investigators and support staff they need.</p>	

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
A need for equipment, updated equipment and technology in the areas of investigation, patrol, tactical, communication, radios, surveillance, identification, prosecution and evidence gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee • Greater Fort Bend Economic Development Council • 2010 U.S. Census Bureau

Problem Details

Fort Bend County continues to grow at approximately 30,000 residents per year. The present estimated population is 716,087. A proportionate amount of equipment, updated equipment, and technology is needed to assist law enforcement in the performance of their duties, e.g. body cameras, MDCs, mobile and portable radios, mobile and stationary videos, ATVs, bicycles, vehicles, surveillance cameras, evidence gathering technology, electronic data management, etc. In addition, communication equipment and technology is needed to help bridge the gap with language barriers and help improve communication between law enforcement, the community and victims.

Priority #3

Problem Identified

Data

Need for specialized and skills-based training and exercises for law enforcement and other public safety professionals in this region

- Fort Bend County Public Safety Training Needs Assessment
- Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee

Problem Details

Fort Bend County conducted a year-long public safety training needs assessment of Police, Fire, and EMS agencies. Collectively, these agencies employ over 1,200 full time law enforcement and over 300 additional public safety professionals. The most glaring deficiency noted by the committee involved a lack of joint multi-disciplinary training and exercises in general and specialized and skills-based training for law enforcement in particular. The single largest obstacle is funding.

Potential Response to Problem

According to the committee's findings, the most cost-effective solution to this problem is to conduct this type of training and exercises on a regional level. Many fast growing communities around the nation have solved similar problems by pooling resources on a regional level. The Houston-Galveston Area Council is in a unique position to provide both funding and leadership toward the problem area.

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Need for an effective means for Fort Bend County law enforcement agencies to deal with mental health calls for service and mental health commitments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee • 1115 Waiver Community Survey
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Trained response to persons with mental illness remains a significant issue. Specific policies and procedures being developed that aid in recognizing these type incidents at their onset indicate an increase in public confidence. Evidence of this is sustained by an increase in calls where trained officers are specifically requested.</p> <p>In 2015, the Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office made 668 transports to mental health facilities as a result of judicial authorization. Additionally, the Sheriff’s Office Crisis Intervention Team, comprised of 10 deputies, made 2,817 total contacts, 1,761 unique individuals were identified as some sort of mental health call for service or follow-up service.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>By a consensus of agencies within Fort Bend, enhancement of the mental health program includes advanced training and coordinated protocols for response to persons in mental crisis. A Crisis Intervention Team at the Sheriff’s Office was established in April 2014, and is a crucial component yet only part of the overall problem resolution. First responders from all agencies share the potential for being the initial contact with a mentally ill person; therefore, all officers will be trained and part of the response enhancement initiative.</p>	

Priority # 5	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Community Policing and Crime Reduction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee • Final Report of The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing • Houston Region Grows More Racially/Ethnically Diverse, With Small Declines in Segregation (Kinder Institute for Urban Research)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 34th Annual Kinder Houston Area Survey (Kinder Institute for Urban Research)
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Problem Details

The relationship between local law enforcement agencies and their respective communities continues to evolve, in both service and expectations. The national discussion includes themes such as legitimacy, trust, oversight, crime reduction, and community policing. In a final report published in May 2015, a task force commissioned by President Obama made 57 recommendations for improving this relationship. Some of the distrust rests within ethnic and cultural diversities within the community. Fort Bend County presents an exclusively diverse community and, according to the Kinder Institute at Rice University, Fort Bend County is the most ethnically diverse county in the United States.

Potential Response to Problem

Create and strengthen constructive partnerships with our community, improve community relations, and seek novel approaches to identify and solve community problems. Additionally, initiate and support a collaborative effort between law enforcement and our community that identifies problems of crime and disorder and searches for solutions to these problems. Emphasize our community’s active participation in the process of problem solving alongside law enforcement.

Police agencies within Fort Bend are currently performing many of the aforementioned recommendations with an eye for future implementation of strategies for compliance, often exceeding all recommendations. The unique diversity of Fort Bend County’s community presents a distinctive burden for accommodating this complex diversity. Programs of engagement, policy development, publication of information (including by social media), and technology improvements requires personnel appropriately situated, trained, and philosophically consistent with community and agency culture and expectations.

Priority #6	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Need for a regional Medical Examiner’s Office based on the region’s population and number of referrals requiring autopsy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee During FY 2015, there were 222 autopsies performed at a cost of \$369,786 to Fort Bend County. Currently, in FY 2016, there have been approximately 278 autopsies at a cost of \$517,568. (Fort Bend County Auditor’s Office)

Problem Details

The region, including Fort Bend County, does not have a medical examiner and contracts with outside sources in two other counties (Harris and Galveston). This consequently causes delays in investigations. As an example, final autopsy reports may take up to 60 days to receive. The law enforcement agency is forced to wait for results to be sent back to them from the outside source, which can severely hinder an on-going investigation.

Priority #7

Problem Identified

Data

A severe need for school resource officers with specialized training and equipment for youth delinquency prevention and community policing programs

- Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee
- Rosenberg Police Department
- Fort Bend Independent School District Police Department

Problem Details

The six school districts in the Fort Bend County area are experiencing consistent growth in student population, increasing the need for police resources in youth delinquency. According to the Rosenberg Police Department, in the 2015-2016 school year at Lamar Consolidated Independent School District, there were 81 Assaults, 2 Gun cases, 95 Drug cases, 2 Gang incidents, 63 Arrests, with a total of 146 cases actually filed.

Data from the Fort Bend Juvenile Probation Office shows that during 2015, there were 1,742 referrals. The total juveniles placed on probation (formal and deferred) from January to December 2015 were 1,038.

Potential Response to Problem

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office has two units composed of school resource officers that provide award-winning programs to school-aged youth in Fort Bend County. During the 2015-2016 school years, the Juvenile Outreach Unit Deputies made 200 presentations to 15,887 students in 94 area elementary, middle, junior high and high schools. The presentations include the highly requested *-Now That You're 10*, *-Before It's Too Late* and *-Legal Terms* programs. Likewise, the Kids and Cops Unit deputies teach the very popular *Stranger Danger Awareness* program to grades K-5. Fifth graders are also exposed to an 8 week curriculum that covers peer pressure, resistance techniques, consequences, stress, gang awareness and alternatives to drug abuse. The four-day *Kids and Cops Summer camp* promotes leadership skills, boosts

self-esteem and advocates teamwork to students ages 10-12.

Priority #8	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for traffic safety enforcement and education as it pertains to DWI, Teen Driver Issues, Texting while Driving, Distracted Driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office • Houston-Galveston Area Council • Fort Bend Independent School District Police Department
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Statistical data shows that when it comes to the realm of law enforcement, people are more likely to be injured or killed as a result of a motor vehicle crash than crime. The total number of crashes resulting in injury or death in Fort Bend County in 2015 was 1367. Of those, 85 were alcohol related crashes, 52 were speed related crashes and young drivers (16-20) accounted for 201. Fort Bend County suffered 38 fatality motor vehicle crashes in 2015. During the first 9 months of 2016, Fort Bend ISD PD presented Fatal Vision/DWI training to 460 of its nearly 73,000 students.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Dedicated law enforcement personnel and training are necessary to make a concerted effort to effectively reduce and eliminate this threat. Increased DWI Task Force participation would help reduce the number of incidents, especially around the holiday periods. Additional personnel are needed to help educate the public, especially young drivers.</p>	

Priority #9	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need to continue developing a network of intelligence and information-sharing relating to the detection and prevention of terrorism	Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee

Problem Details

Funding for analysts positions and the needed technological hardware and software are critical to developing and sharing actionable intelligence for the detection and prevention of terrorism within the County.

Potential Response to Problem

This effort in concert with the Houston Regional Intelligence Service Center (HRISC) is accomplished through a coordinated network of Intelligence Analysts from the different law enforcement agencies within Fort Bend County. The creation of a Fort Bend Satellite Center that would serve as an extension of HRISC would allow for improved intelligence and information sharing for Fort Bend County and the jurisdictions within. This would also improve information sharing with our regional partners through HRISC. This cannot be accomplished without an increase in manpower, equipment, training and technology.

Priority #10

Problem Identified

Data

A need for personnel, equipment and technology to keep up with the demand for investigations of internet and computer related crimes against children

- Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee
- Houston Metro Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force (ICAC)
- Fort Bend County District Attorney’s Office
- According to the Texas Department of Public Safety’s Sex Offender Registry, approximately 521 offenders were observed in Fort Bend County as of November 2016.

Problem Details

There is a substantial need for increased training and personnel for investigative law enforcement agencies countywide to investigate Internet Crimes Against Children cases. In addition to specialized child abuse investigation training, successful investigation of Internet and computer related crimes against children requires complex training in an ever-changing technical field to maintain competence.

Internet and computer facilitated crimes committed against children involve a high level of specialized technical knowledge, and training is critical for those involved in these types of investigations. In a technology driven world, many crimes involving live victims also entail a computer component to thoroughly investigate.

Potential Response to Problem

The Child Protection System is an evolutionary step in the pursuit of innovation. "Operation Fair Play" is a solution allowing law enforcement to target those who traffic images of child sexual abuse. Operation Fair Play finds a minimum of 100 offenders observing multiple child pornographic sites every month. Child Protection System builds on top of the success of Operation Fair Play to bring open access to investigators around the world.

The Houston Metro Internet Crimes Against Children’s Task Force (HMICAC) is comprised of an 8 county area of operation including Fort Bend County. With additional resources, law enforcement agencies within Fort Bend County could affiliate with the HMICAC Task Force.

Priority #11	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Continuing need for additional resources for investigation and prosecution of criminal cases involving physical and sexual abuse of children and child deaths</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From January 2015 to October 2016, the District Attorney's Office received 304 child abuse related cases from law enforcement for review and possible prosecution. (Consultation occurred regarding many other cases not submitted for prosecution.) • Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>The Fort Bend County DA's Office continues to vigorously prosecute child injury and child sexual abuse cases but needs additional resources for prosecution. There is a substantial need for increased training and personnel for law enforcement agencies countywide to investigate child sexual abuse and exploitation, and child injury and death cases. As Fort Bend County's population continues to grow rapidly, there will be a continued strain on the system.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>The time and demand to effectively investigate sexual offenses committed against children is considerable. The cases are complex (and therefore very time-consuming) relative to investigation and prosecution of other types of crimes. In the majority of cases, numerous offenses are committed against the child victim over a period of time. Successful investigation (and therefore prosecution) requires specialized training and skill of investigators and gathering of information and consultation with medical professionals, children's protective services investigators, victims and prior victims, parents, school personnel and others.</p> <p>Skillful interrogation is critical to successful prosecution in sexual offenses committed against children and in child serious injury and death cases and requires training of investigators to obtain admissions in these types of cases.</p>	

Priority #12	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Need for personnel to investigate and prosecute Human Trafficking crimes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee • Fort Bend District Attorney's Office - Since October 2016, 10 human trafficking cases have been tracked in Fort Bend County

<i>Problem Details</i>
<p>Human Trafficking is among the forefront of criminal law legislation as the problem was recently recognized to be of mass proportion. As a contiguous county to Harris County, and directly between them and the border, the potential of stash houses, travel routes, and “pass-through” offenses are high in Fort Bend County.</p> <p>Dedicated law enforcement personnel, training, and equipment are necessary to make a concerted effort to effectively reduce and eliminate this threat.</p>

Priority #13	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Continued need for law enforcement personnel to register sex offenders, monitor them for compliance and work cases as investigators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Department of Public Safety Database • Fort Bend County District Attorney’s Office • As of November 2016, the Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office shows there are 307 registered sex offenders currently residing within the unincorporated areas of Fort Bend County.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Because of the State’s laws regarding documenting sex offenders and maintaining a database, there is a requirement to continually review the data and update the information. Fort Bend County currently has a growing population of sex offenders and there is a need for the County to have additional personnel to monitor and register these offenders.</p> <p>Currently, one deputy is conducting an average of 16 appointments per week, 36 compliance visits per week, filing violations, investigating cases, and completing administrative duties.</p>	

Priority #14	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for personnel to investigate and prosecute financial fraud crimes to include Identity Theft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee • Federal Trade Commission • Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book 2014

Problem Details

According to the Federal Trade Commission, identity theft has been the top consumer complaint for 15 straight years. In 2014, Texas was ranked 10th in per capita complaints for identity theft and 7th for fraud and related complaints.

In a ranking of the largest metropolitan areas (population of 100,000 or more), Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land ranked 37th for identity theft with 112.1 complaints per 100,000 population.

Priority #15

Problem Identified

Data

Need for personnel to document gangs and their members, as well as investigate gang-related crimes

- Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee
- Texas Department of Public Safety database

Problem Details

According to the Texas Department of Public Safety database reports, there are over 200 gangs documented with over 2,000 members within Fort Bend County. Many of these documented members are responsible for numerous crimes in the area. Several gangs have been identified that are actively recruiting in many of the schools.

Because of the State's laws regarding documenting gang members and maintaining an intelligence data base, there is a requirement to continually review the data and update the members' last involvement with the law enforcement or purge that data entirely. Fort Bend County currently has a large population of gang members and there is a need for the County to have a fully functioning gang unit.

Priority #16

Problem Identified

Data

Need for investigators assigned to specifically investigate family violence cases

- Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee
- 2014 Texas Department of Public Safety Crime Statistics Report

Problem Details

According to the 2015 Texas Department of Public Safety Crime Statistics Report, there were a total of 3,129 family violence cases reported in Fort Bend County. This does not include data from the Houston Police Department, part of which extends into Fort Bend County.

Currently, some agencies have no investigators specifically assigned to investigate family violence cases. In the past four years, family violence offenses have increased by more than 349 cases in Fort Bend County. If more investigators were assigned to investigate these cases, violent offenders would be removed from society, preventing more victims from falling prey to them.

Priority #17

Problem Identified

Data

Need for investigators assigned to specifically investigate the violent crimes against women cases

- Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee
- Greater Fort Bend County Economic Development Council
- Forbes Magazine (9/26/2013)

Problem Details

In 2015, Fort Bend County's population was approximately 716,087. The female population accounted for over 50% of the county population. Fort Bend County is currently listed as fifth in the nation and third in the state of Texas among the fastest growing counties.

Currently, many agencies have no investigators that are specifically assigned to investigate violent crimes against women. Dedicated investigators to violent crimes against women would target a victim group comprising more than 50% of the county population.

Priority #18

<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for a Crime Data/Information Sharing Initiative (Interoperability) linking all Fort Bend County law enforcement agencies • Need for standardized electronic Records Management Systems (RMS) in all county law enforcement agencies • Need for county-wide electronic filing capabilities between criminal justice system partners and the DA's office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Currently the law enforcement agencies in Fort Bend County do not have the ability to share information. A survey was sent to eight selected law enforcement entities in Fort Bend County (Sheriff's Office, Stafford, Sugar Land, Missouri City, Katy, Richmond, Rosenberg and Needville) with five agencies responding. Their responses indicated that every participating agency supports interagency data information sharing and further believes information or data sharing can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all police agencies in prevention and detecting crime.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Having an integrated system would provide interagency telecommunications and information services, i.e., centralized indices of people, things and events of interest to more than one agency, through a central repository. It would enhance agencies' ability to communicate with each other to identify missing persons, known criminal offenders, and people/property involved in crime. The impetus of this initiative is to link the different records management systems to a central repository enabling local law enforcement to query people and property involved in crime, members of criminal gangs, stolen property, criminal suspects, criminal methods of operation, reported crime, reported arrests, and to share crime bulletins about major crimes.</p>	

Priority #19	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for an automated system for handling Emergency Protective Orders, Temporary Ex Parte Orders and Formal Protective Orders and sufficient staff to process and maintain all the orders	Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>At this time, all Emergency Protective Orders (temporary orders for 30 to 90 days) are generated on paper in the Fort Bend County Jail upon the arrest of the alleged abuser. The District Attorney's Office requests the formal Protective Order (2 years) from a Judge, who signs the Order, which is then served by a Constable or the District Attorney Investigations Division.</p> <p>Temporary Ex Parte Orders fill in the gaps between the Emergency Protective Order and the short period of time before a formal Protective Order can be filed. As of January 1, 2008, Temporary Ex Parte violations are grounds for arrest. This means additional paper to process.</p>	

Priority #20	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
A need for Crime Victim Liaisons and Coordinators in criminal justice areas to handle all aspects of the victims' rights from the time of the incident throughout the entire criminal justice process	Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>In all areas of criminal and juvenile justice, the role of a trained victim liaison is invaluable in informing the victim and family of the various proceedings. In addition, these crime victim liaisons can be responsible for ensuring that crime victims receive financial restitution as ordered by the courts.</p>	

The number of Crime Victim Liaison positions need to increase proportionately with the increasing referrals and caseloads.

Priority #21	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
In cases of domestic violence, sexual abuse, robbery and homicide there is an insufficient victim protection system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee • Fort Bend County Community Corrections and Supervision Department
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>There is a heightened awareness regarding the lack of protection for victims of violent crime, in particular women who have separated from their abusive partner and have filed a charge of domestic violence against them. This is prior to adjudication that would place the perpetrator on any kind of monitoring system.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>When the perpetrator is subject to bond conditions or placed on probation, the Community Corrections and Supervision Department issues ankle monitors but these systems of electronic monitoring are focused on the perpetrators rather than on the victims.</p>	

Priority #22	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for a fully accredited regional crime lab, forensic lab (including DNA) based on growth of the regional population and felony crimes against persons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Public Safety Academy Study • Sugar Land Police Department

Problem Details

The Department of Public Safety’s Crime Lab is severely overloaded. As a result, DPS has limited submissions based on types of crimes. In addition, Texas Law (CCP Article 38.43) now mandates DNA testing of all biological evidence collected in a Capital Offense. With the growing population of the region comes a proportionate increase in criminal activities that requires specialized investigative techniques. At the present time, all lab work is sent to outside agencies. The law enforcement agency is forced to wait on results to be sent back to them from the outside source, which can severely hinder an on-going investigation.

Most law enforcement agencies within Fort Bend County submit DNA evidence to the Texas DPS Crime Laboratory. The turn-around time for this analysis is approximately 9-30 months. The turn-around times for these requests varies greatly depending on current caseload. For example, in FY 2015-2016 the Sugar Land Police Department submitted 482 items to DPS for analysis, averaging almost 40.2 items per month.

Texas Law (CCP Chapter 38) and the industry standard for crime laboratories require crime laboratories to obtain accreditation in all analytical disciplines applied through the American Society of Crime Laboratory of Directors (ASCLD/LAB) for International Accreditation.

Priority #23

Problem Identified

Data

Need for a 24-hour District Attorney intake system based on the growth of the county population and after hours / week-end referrals to the District Attorney’s Office

Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee

Problem Details

The Fort Bend County District Attorney’s Office currently has a prosecutor available on call after business hours available to law enforcement agencies to answer intake/charging questions and assists officers in drafting search and arrest warrant affidavits. Once an offender is booked into the county jail, the arresting officer must draft an affidavit which contains sufficient facts to justify the suspect’s arrest to a magistrate. This affidavit is read, and occasionally supplemented by that prosecutor. However, the ultimate decision to accept or reject the case is made several days later, after reasonable time is given to the officer to fully document his offense report. This can ultimately lead to the possibility of a person being incarcerated, only to later have

the District Attorney's Office reject the charges.

Potential Response to Problem

A potential response is the example of the Harris County system, which provides several Assistant District Attorneys who are physically present 24/7. Officers are required to provide the Assistant District Attorneys with sufficient information over the phone prior to booking the suspects in city jail, which will substantiate the charge. Further, these departments must complete their offense reports prior to transferring the suspects to county jail. This is usually required within forty-eight hours. This ultimately accelerates the intake process as it relates to the work of the police agency and the District Attorney's Office.

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Need for access to services for persons with mental illness and co-occurring disorders to prevent incarceration and to support recovery and reintegration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office • Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services • Emergency Management Services (EMS) • Texana Center (Mental Health Authority of Fort Bend County) • Fort Bend County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD) • Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse • Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Crisis and Response Intervention Team: Mapping and Gap Analysis (September 2013) • National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) • Mental Health America of Fort Bend • Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Crisis: Action Plan (September 2013) • Fort Bend County Recovery & Reintegration Program Update (September 2015)
<p><i>Problem Details</i></p> <p>Fort Bend County EMS responded to 1,610 mental health crisis calls in 2013; this represented nearly a 200% percent increase in 8 years (650 calls in 2005). Further analyses of these data, indicated that in many cases multiple entities respond to mental health emergency crisis, which often result in transportation to an emergency room or the Fort Bend County jail. Many of these situations involve non-violent offenses that could be redirected to less restrictive clinically appropriate services if available. These trends were also noted in the Needs Assessment of Fort Bend County, conducted by the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs (Summer 2011), stating that the lack of services have resulted in “mental health becoming a law enforcement issue.”</p> <p>Texana Center is the Local Mental Health Authority and Local Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Authority for Fort Bend County. The Center is the main provider of services to individuals with behavioral healthcare issues and/or intellectual and developmental disabilities in the County. Texana serves as the “gatekeeper” to the state hospital system and to local psychiatric facilities, as well as for individuals and families seeking services for those with intellectual disabilities. The Center provides a crisis intervention program that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and is the only provider in the County for crisis residential services for those who have Medicaid or are indigent. For fiscal year 2014, Texana’s Behavioral Healthcare Services served 4,040 individuals, including 2,934 adults and 1,149 children. The Center employs over 500 staff in Fort Bend County.</p>	

Although progress has been made, mostly attributed to 1115 Waiver funded projects, Fort Bend County continues to lack adequate stabilization, intervention and recovery services for persons with mental illness and substance abuse disorders. Fort Bend County residents continue to have limited access to substance abuse treatment.

The Fort Bend County jail like many other jails identifies and treats inmates with mental illness. As of April 2013, between 27% and 30% of the jail population have identified mental health needs and are receiving medication. In addition, approximately 30% of the inmates with mental illness have a co-occurring substance abuse disorder. Between September 2013 and April 2014, 491 inmates were identified as having a mental illness and receiving mental health services. The majority of these are repeat offenders, which supports several outcome studies indicating that without adequate supports and treatment the likelihood of recidivism is high.

There is also a rapidly emerging need for trauma informed specialty behavioral health services for veterans and female offenders. Many of these offenders are victims of domestic violence, victimization, or war related trauma. These populations require specialized trauma related services. Unfortunately, the families of persons with untreated mental illnesses are often the victims of the offense leading to the individual's criminal justice involvement, necessitating community intervention to support families as well as victims. There is an increasing number of young women with histories of abuse entering the criminal justice system. Many of them are at risk of victimization and sexual exploitation if left without appropriate services.

Availability of timely resources and options - Transition from jail and reintegration into the community is marked by various complexities and challenges; therefore, it is critical to provide a continuum of support for these individuals. Although the available resources and options have expanded in Fort Bend County, there are still specific areas for improvement. Upon release, clients do not have immediate access to benefits, including Medicaid, food stamps, and social security benefits. Clients also have limited to no housing options upon release from incarceration or are at risk of losing present housing. Many clients also lack transportation to necessary appointments, which are crucial to maintain in the community (e.g., probation appointments, medical appointments). Furthermore, there is often a long waitlist to access psychiatric care upon release from incarceration, thus delaying timely care and support. This includes outpatient treatment as well as ongoing medication management. These situations leave the clients vulnerable and susceptible to reoffending.

Inadequate array of services - The service array for individuals with complex mental and behavioral health needs, particularly those at high risk for recidivism, has increased and expanded; however, the current availability of services still does not match the demands and needs of the target population in the county. In particular, the 1115 Waiver Recovery & Reintegration program has identified gaps in the following service areas: Inpatient substance abuse treatment (clients are still being referred to extended counties for treatment, provided they qualify and have openings), Group homes or transitional housing options (available options are too costly for clients, fully booked, and/or have criteria that disqualify clients for residency, including their offense), and

specialized support for clients who experienced prostitution victimization (many clinicians are trained in PTSD and trauma-based therapy, but there is a lack of available therapists to address this specific issue in the county)

Potential Response to Problem

In October 2010, Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services was established to work alongside the courts, criminal justice departments (adult and juvenile), emergency medical services, and health and human services to improve the coordination of systems for persons with mental illness and addictions that come into contact with Fort Bend County courts.

As a result of increased community collaboration and communication among departments, Fort Bend County has made significant strides towards the development of a criminal justice/mental health system that is more integrated, provides specialized legal representation, support systems, case coordination and specialized interventions. Components of this system include specialty mental health courts, specialized dockets, processes for the early identification of mental illness when individuals are incarcerated, multidisciplinary team meetings in the jail, increased collaboration and communication among Texana, the Sheriff's Office, probation, medical and clinical staff, specialized public defender and Behavioral Health Services. By working together and enhancing jail based mental health services, specialized legal representation, specialized supervision, psychological services, and case management services, Fort Bend County has seen a significant reduction in the length of incarceration for persons with mental illness.

In 2013, Fort Bend County received approval for an 1115 Waiver delivery system reform incentive payment (DSRIP) project to develop a crisis system to better identify people with behavioral health needs, respond to those needs and link persons with their most appropriate level of care. The goal of this project is to keep individuals healthy and safe, develop processes and interventions to manage challenging behaviors, and avoid unnecessary use of the emergency room, hospitalization or incarceration. First responders have become the default interveners for behavioral health crises in the county with limited options for these patients. Unfortunately, many persons with mental illness end up in the emergency room for several hours waiting for an evaluation or transported to the county jail. The Fort Bend County behavioral health crisis response and Intervention project enhances the safety net, provide necessary intervention and diversion services and as a result serves as the main gatekeeper to EMS transports, admissions to the emergency room, and incarcerations. The Fort Bend County project includes: (1) enhancement of 911 dispatch system to identify and respond to behavioral health crisis, (2) development of a specialized crisis intervention team (CIT) within Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, and (3) implementation of cross systems training and linkages to appropriate services and supports. An 1115 Waiver project was also submitted and approved to develop and evaluate a diversionary program for youth with mental illness and other complex behavioral health needs as well as evidence based interventions (including wraparound supports) for these youth. An additional 1115 Waiver project was approved to develop a "recovery and reintegration" program for

persons with mental illness at risk of recidivism. The Recovery & Reintegration project has served 26 individuals during the first 9 months of the program as well as developed services and systems to support reintegration into the community. The program monitors outcomes while in the program and provides post discharge follow-up. Early results indicate improvement in functioning and reduction in recidivism (as compared to population in the jail without the intervention). The expansion of this program offers great promise for supporting reintegration into the community. The program works closely with the Mental Health Public Defenders Office, the Mental Health unit from the District Attorney’s office, probation department, Fort Bend County Social Services and providers in the community.

A core component of this system is the implementation of a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), formed out of the Fort Bend County Sherriff’s Office that not only responds to mental health crises received through the 911 system but interfaces and supports all other police departments in the county. The CIT works closely with Texana, the local mental health authority, public and private hospitals, EMS, and the Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services to coordinate and access care and provide follow-up as needed to prevent future crisis.

The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) has been in operation since April 2014. Between April 1, 2014 and September 30, 2015, the Behavioral Health Crisis Response and Intervention Team has been collecting data on each incident involving a CIT officer and a consumer in need of crisis intervention services. In DY4, (1) 200 individuals were diverted from admission/readmission to the Fort Bend County jail in DY4; and (2) 1,943 individuals received crisis intervention and/or follow-up services by the specialized county CIT. In addition, CIT made 3,059 contacts for services in DY4. These data exceed DY4 metrics.

Fort Bend County has made significant strides in the development of a system that responds to crisis and directs person to the right care. However, in order to prevent the recycling of persons in the criminal justice system, we need to develop an adequate array of clinical services and supports to meet the ongoing needs of this population. This system needs to include not only access to appropriate mental health and substance abuse treatment (medication, therapies, assertive community treatment, and hospitalization) but wraparound supports, housing and employment opportunities, which are critical to recovery and to ultimately breaking the cycle of recidivism.

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Fort Bend County lacks a collaborative “housing first” model that provides integrated social services for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County Behavioral Health • Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office • Fort Bend County Community Supervision and Corrections Department

<p>county residents with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders. This would provide a safe place for individuals, families, the reentry population and veterans to receive comprehensive case management services including: permanent supportive housing, behavioral health services, substance abuse treatment, healthcare services, brief financial and social services assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County Mental Health/Public Defender • Fort Bend NAMI • Texana Center • Fort Bend County Social Services • AccessHealth
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Problem Details

It is through Fort Bend County’s enduring collaborations and networking that the lack of resources to adequately address the behavioral needs of the criminal justice and veteran reentry populations has been determined. These populations require considerable reentry assistance including housing and the county lacks a coordinated, co-located resource to stabilize them, to help prevent criminal justice recidivism and address specific health and wellness concerns.

Fort Bend County lacks the capacity to address both the housing and the behavioral needs of the criminal justice/veterans populations as they return to their community. Major gaps include: (1) transitional and long term housing, (2) mental health services (medication management), (3) substance abuse treatment and (4) wraparound supports. Housing and case management are essential to community reintegration.

Fort Bend County’s current housing process is far too slow because resources are unreliable and seriously limited. In the last year Fort Bend County Social Services assisted 190 individuals with emergency shelter, 18 were assisted with transitional supportive housing and 341 clients were assisted with rent.

The Fort Bend County Homeless Coalition conducted a survey to determine causal factors; available services and deficits; immediate needs and how these services may have prevented homelessness. Survey results indicate:

- Thirty seven percent of the clients reported job loss/eviction as the reason for homelessness while 15% reported domestic violence, 7% reported medical expenses and 6% of the clients reported divorce/separation as their causal factor.

- Five percent of respondents identified behavioral health or criminal justice reasons for homelessness while 21% shared other reasons, many of which spoke to the lack of resources for housing in the county.

Further survey analysis revealed that of the respondents 56% of the clients identified varied wrap around services to prevent homelessness were lacking including, but not limited to, a homeless shelter, legal aid, food and rent assistance, veteran specific services, vocational training and placement.

This clearly demonstrates the lack of community supports that may prevent or allow an individual to overcome their homeless status. A confounding factor is that many of the county residents are supervised by the Fort Bend County's criminal justice system. Many probationers or parolees experience substance use, mental health, and co-occurring disorders. Substance abuse disorders are prevalent among our criminal justice population. Approximately as high as 60% of the persons in the criminal justice system have a co-occurring mental health and substance use disorder.

Funding is needed to provide transition medications and services for persons released from jail for up to 90 days following discharge. Funding is also needed to implement evidence based practices such as "peer mentoring" to assist with reintegration and ongoing recovery. "Housing first" programs and other evidence based housing programs should also be developed to meet the critical needs of persons with behavioral health needs released from jail. Special focus on these disorders must be enhanced to prevent and curtail them because these problems are primary causes for individuals to become involved in, and remain in the criminal justice system. The 1115 Waiver funded Recovery & Reintegration program, within Behavioral Health Services, has provided support in many of these areas as well as evidence based interventions but the need exceeds current program capacity.

Because Fort Bend County does not have a residential chemical dependency treatment facility, those who require inpatient care or hospitalization cannot access it and funding constraints restrict the length of stay possible in outpatient environments. Fort Bend County offers only two funded outpatient, brief-stay treatment providers to address a serious and growing chemical abuse problem.

The need for substance use disorder treatment in Fort Bend County increases as the county grows. Fort Bend Regional Council is Fort Bend County's largest state funded outpatient Substance Use Disorder Treatment facility. In the last fiscal year (09/01/2014-08/31/2015) the facility completed 638 distinct admissions, of these 33% were admitted for problems related to alcohol use; 39% for problems related to marijuana use; 9% for cocaine; 4% for Opiate use; 6% for a combination of drug/alcohol use; 3% for amphetamine use; and the remaining 6% for other substances. Clients assessed by this provider must be appropriate for outpatient treatment, requiring substance use severity that can be effectively addressed in a non-medical environment and a relatively stable home environment to even marginally support treatment efforts. Clients who do not have adequate housing, require medical detoxification or a residential care structure are referred to Harris County providers.

In total, the lack of housing, mental health services, supports, healthcare and transportation are additional risk factors associated with criminal justice involvement and recidivism.

Potential Response to Problem

Fort Bend County has implemented multiple measures including in custody screening, Mental Health/Public Defender representation, Mental Health Felony and Misdemeanor Courts, Behavioral Health Services Recovery & Reintegration program, and ongoing service coordination with local substance abuse and mental health providers and advocacy groups (NAMI and MHA) as well as enhanced jail based mental health services. The public defender's office, CSCD and Texana provide continuity of care for many people being released from jail and as a result assist in the coordination of services. Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) provides court ordered evaluations, mental health consultations, assistance with wraparound supports and coordination, follow-up, clinical oversight, and training on evidence based practices. BHS also provides the Recovery & Reintegration program, funded through the 1115 Waiver. This is relatively new program (started in January of 2014) but served 26 clients with complex needs and at risk for recidivism. Although we have seen an increase in collaboration and services, housing continues to be a major need.

Fort Bend County Social Services has spearheaded the Fort Bend County Homeless Coalition. This entity's goal is to assemble county organizations that provide homeless services, identify service gaps and strategies to best meet client needs with limited or collaborative funding. Service providers include Fort Bend Family Promise, Salvation Army, Second Mile Mission, St. Laurence Catholic Church, Sugar Grove Church of Christ, Project Lift, AccessHealth, United Way of Greater Houston (Fort Bend), Fort Bend EMS, Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office and Fort Bend County Behavioral Health.

Fort Bend County has recently been awarded several 1115 Waiver projects to address this need: Behavioral Crisis Response and Intervention Project (which includes a CIT), Juvenile Jail Diversion Project, a Recovery & Reintegration program for persons at risk of recidivism, and an integrated behavioral/physical health project. The latter includes Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment project that houses a Behavioral Health Counselor in the local federally qualified health care facility, AccessHealth, to more efficiently address potential negative health outcomes related to substance use. These projects represent, Fort Bend County's progress toward achieving an evidence based continuum of care for targeted groups (persons with severe mental illness and/or mental illness and physical health conditions/veterans) identified as high risk for recidivism due to homeless/lack of stable housing, substance use disorders, lack of access to services, complex trauma, lack of family supports and/or lack of integrated care to address complex needs. The target population is the Medicaid and uninsured population.

Another successful intervention is Fort Bend County's continued utilization of specialty

courts; these programs create a multi-disciplinary team to supervise the client (probation officer and judge) while addressing and treating the substance abuse/mental health disorder. Two examples are, the Fort Bend County Drug Court (2002), the county's first specialty court and the current Mental Health Initiative (2009). The Fort Bend County Drug Court Program has served over 664 individuals in the "Closing Addictions Revolving Door" (C.A.R.D.) program. In FY 2015, a total of 106 individuals were served in the specialty felony drug court and 66 in the misdemeanor drug court. In addition, the CSCD's Mental Health Initiative Caseloads served at total of 1,030 from 2012 to the present. In 2015, 241 individuals were served.

In 2015, a veteran's court was developed. These specialty court programs unite the community in a strong collaborative to support participants in achieving independence from criminal justice involvement. The Veteran Court is now fully functioning and has served 5 clients in FY 2015. The expansion of this court will continue to serve the needs of veterans and support their reintegration into the community.

Fort Bend County CSCD ensures the flow of information between the courts, jail, and treatment providers. This function has improved treatment coordination and case processing. CSCD has also contracted with a private residential facility to provide housing for mentally ill offenders discharged from jail. This program works closely with CSCD staff to provide appropriate supervision and treatment. This has been essential to discharge planning and successful community reintegration. Expansion of these programs to include a residential option and increased coordination of care would more effectively serve a greater number of people and would maximize the existing community systems. Specialty court models are evidence based solutions that provide sound behavioral health components within a criminal justice model. The Drug Court model is proven over 20 years of practice and is gaining frequency in replication. Its success has encouraged the implementation of other specialty courts such as those in Fort Bend County; this is an effective model and any funding provided to support its continuation, expansion or enhancement certainly benefits the community.

Unfortunately, many of the individuals helped by these efforts return to situations that cannot support their progress and they revert to destructive behaviors. The best potential response to this problem is a local "housing first" program that integrates primary and behavioral health care (substance use and mental illness, PTSD, etc.) with a full array of wraparound supports to offer the strongest chance of permanent success.

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Ongoing training and coordination of criminal justice mental health processes, caseload and special populations (e.g.,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend District Attorney's Office • Fort Bend Office Mental Health/Public Defender Department • Fort Bend Behavioral Health Services • Fort Bend County (CSCD)

<p>veterans, victims of domestic violence, sexual exploitation/trafficking, developmental disabilities, children in child welfare system)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judicial Administration (District Courts)
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Problem Details

Persons with mental illness present many challenges to the criminal justice system and often remain incarcerated for longer periods of time for less violent offenses than persons without mental illness. This national trend has influenced the development of specialized mental health dockets and courts, specialized defense attorneys and specialized prosecutors who work together as a team to expedite the processing of cases to provide adequate representation and coordinate case management.

In Fort Bend County, the 268th Judicial District and County Court at Law #1 handle the mental health caseload. Currently, the county has a Mental Health Public Defender’s Office with 3 attorneys, 1 administrative assistant, 3 caseworkers and 1 social worker. The Social Services staff refers individuals for a variety of community based services and provides case management services. Each defendant with mental illness receives quality representation as well as help finding treatment options and other available social services in their community. The Public Defender’s office handles the majority of the mental health cases, but other attorneys are also assigned to these types of cases. In addition to the Mental Health Public Defender’s office, there is also a wheel of defense attorneys who receive appointments to mentally ill defendants; and mentally ill defendants can hire their own attorney. In 2015, Fort Bend County Commissioners Court approved additional staff for this office given the increased demand and outcomes achieved.

There is also a special Mental Health division in the District Attorney’s office that focuses on mental health cases and the mental health courts Behavioral Health Services works alongside these departments to provide court ordered evaluations (competency, psychological, risk assessments) to expedite the processing of cases and direct persons to the right care. Behavioral Health Services also provides additional interventions and assessments such as substance abuse assessments if requested by the court or probation. However, the county continues to be challenged with the complexity of cases returning from the state hospitals competency restoration programs and the need for expedited processing of those cases. In addition, many cases required coordination between criminal and civil processes as well as extensive coordination with CSCD, defense attorneys, service providers, and defendants/families. We are also recognizing that many individuals have intellectual developmental disabilities that interfere with their competency to stand trial as well as understanding or probation, etc. Behavioral Health Services estimates that approximately 20% of the individuals’ referred for competency evaluations have a co-occurring intellectual developmental disability. This appears to be evident in both adult and children population (the percentage in youth juvenile

population may be higher). Data is being collected to further identify this issue and address as needed.

During the past year, Behavioral Health has added one licensed psychologist which has significantly enhanced the department's capacity to provide court ordered evaluations in a timely manner and reduce the number of days defendants are waiting for evaluations. This also allows the courts and the various criminal justice entities to access specialized psychological services and consultation.

We also have emerging needs with special populations involved in the criminal justice system such as persons with IDD, veterans and victims of crime (including sex crimes) and youth in the foster care and criminal justice systems. Many of the persons we are working with have complex needs, multiple incarcerations and hospitalization, difficulty accessing services and/or are resistant to intervention. It should be noted that the complexity of mental health cases increases the burden on several aspects of the criminal justice including the "judicial system." Judges, court coordinators and bailiffs are all impacted by increased workloads and the challenges of these cases.

Potential Response to Problem

The potential response is to continue to work collaboratively to develop standardized processes and orders for mental health courts, competency evaluations, and other mental health court related processes. Continue activities to provide training to attorneys and other law enforcement entities on behavioral health issues (mental health and substance abuse) and intellectual developmental disabilities. Fort Bend County BHS provides a critical role in the coordination of services, the training, as well as the provision of mental health services to the courts including competency to stand trial evaluations. The addition of a licensed psychologist has enhanced the timeliness of evaluations as well as the ability to respond to court ordered requests. The referrals have increased drastically and after six months, the capacity has already been exceeded. Data is being collected as well as continuous quality improvement processes being developed to guide future expansion of services and programs. Support and training for judiciary and court staff is also needed.

To address the increasing concern of human trafficking, Fort Bend County representatives from Fort Bend County Judge's Office, Precinct 3 Commissioner Andy Meyer's Office, County Attorney's Office, District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Office, Juvenile Probation Department, Community Supervision and Corrections Department, and Behavioral Health Services work collaboratively to increase awareness and resources. This group has worked throughout the year to bring increased awareness to the community on this important issue and to discuss how we can work together to address this growing problem. Training has been provided to juvenile probation staff, adult probation, child advocates, law enforcement, legal professionals, community members, educators and providers.

Continued collaboration among the criminal justice system is essential to ensure that efficient and effective processes are developed and support is provided to components of

the system (Judges, court personnel, law enforcement, CSCD, DA, attorneys, etc.).

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Limited access to Behavioral Health Services for children at risk of involvement or involved in the juvenile justice system including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of inpatient psychiatric beds • Lack of crisis stabilization services • Limited access to behavioral health services (substance abuse and mental health) • Increased need for trauma focused interventions • Limited access to family supports • Limited access to continuity of care • Lack of wraparound supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United States Department of Health and Human Services, et al (1999) Otto et al, 1992, Edens & Otto, 1997. • Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department • Fort Bend County Community Supervision and Corrections Department • Fort Bend County Health & Human Services • Fort Bend County Women’s Center • “A Needs Assessment of Fort Bend County,” LBJ School of Public Affairs at University of Texas and The George Foundation (2006 and 2011) • “Community profile – Fort Bend County Homeless and Marginally Housed,” Office of Community Projects, Graduate School of Social Work, University of Houston • Datas treatment outcomes study, 1997 • FBISD “Pride Survey” 2009 • FBISD 2011 police data (gang involvement) • LCISD Safe and Drug Free Schools Survey, 2007 • Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Juvenile Diversion Project: Needs Assessment Report (September 2013)
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>The Fort Bend County juvenile justice system continues to be a main provider of mental health services to children. In the juvenile justice system the number of youth diagnosed with mental illness is significantly greater than that in the general population. It is estimated that up to 70% of the youth in the juvenile justice system have at least one mental health disorder and approximately 20% have a serious mental illness.¹ There is agreement among both mental health and correction systems that many of these youth would be better served in community based programs with clinically appropriate interventions and supports.²</p>	

¹ 1. Joseph J. Coccozza and Kathleen R. Skowrya, “Youth with Mental Health Disorders: Issues and Emerging Responses,” *Juvenile Justice*, 7 (April 2000): 6; available at www.ncmhjj.com/pdfs/publications/Youth_with_Mental_Health_Disorders.pdf.

² National Health Policy Forum: Mental Health and Juvenile Justice: Moving Toward More effective Systems of Care ; available at http://www.nhpf.org/library/issue-briefs/IB805_JuvJustice_07-22-05.pdf

In Fort Bend County, the lack of comprehensive and coordinated services for youth with serious mental illness has resulted in the juvenile probation department (including the detention facility) becoming the assessment, stabilization and even treatment center for many of these youth. The most recent Needs Assessment of Fort Bend County states that the lack of services for the mentally ill has resulted in “mental health becoming a law enforcement issue.”³ The same study also indicated the scarcity of mental health services especially for the poor as a priority need for the county. Mental health services for youth, especially those with no insurance or on Medicaid, and with complex behavioral health needs is a significant need in Fort Bend County.

Over the past decade, Fort Bend County Probation Department has experienced a significant increase in the number of youth with mental health issues. Although the total number of juvenile cases has slightly decreased over the last several years, it is estimated that the number of cases involving mental health disorders, has nearly doubled. A study completed by the Fort Bend Juvenile Probation Department (FBJPD) found that 18% to 22% of the youth in juvenile detention (between 2005 and 2009) were on psychotropic medication. The most recent data obtained from FBJPD indicated that 40% to 45% of the youth in detention are on psychotropic medications. The juvenile justice system, much like the adult criminal system, has become the default system for providing mental health services to youth. Unfortunately, this is often the start of a cycle with the criminal justice system leading into adulthood.

As part of the 1115 Waiver Behavioral Health Juvenile Diversion project, a needs assessment was conducted to identify the needs of youth with complex behavioral health needs and to develop community-based interventions that are effective at diverting youth from incarceration as well as improving functional outcomes. For purposes of this needs assessment, information was gathered using a multi-method, multi-informant data collection process, which began with a review of previous mapping, needs assessment, and community plan reports to examine the current capacity and utilization patterns of behavioral health services for youth in the juvenile justice system in the county. The results of the needs assessment indicated that:

- Approximately 70% of juvenile justice-involved youth have a mental illness. Mood disorders, anxiety disorders, and disruptive behavior disorders are among the most common mental illnesses.
- Co-occurring disorders are common. Recidivism rates among juveniles are alarmingly high, particularly among youth with mental illness.
- Fort Bend County is faced with similar trends and challenges compared to state and national trends.
- There are currently very limited options for crisis intervention services for juveniles with mental illness in Fort Bend County.

The majority of youth have multiple diagnoses (mental health, substance abuse, learning

³ http://www.rgkcenter.org/sites/default/files/file/research/FB%20Report_for_posting.pdf

Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Juvenile Diversion Project: Needs Assessment Report (September 2013)

disabilities, and developmental disabilities) and multiple stressors. The interventions that are most needed to address youth’s needs include: individual and family counseling services, trauma-focused interventions, and prevention and early intervention services.

Potential Response to Problem

We know that many children involved in the juvenile justice system are at high risk for adult criminal behavior. We also know that successful interventions and prevention can make a difference. Many of the processes and services developed for adults can also benefit the youth in Fort Bend County. For example, additional training of law enforcement on how to respond to mental illness, development of crisis interventions teams, crisis stabilization services, intensive treatment services, wraparound services and aftercare are necessary services for both adults and children.

Fort Bend County has also developed a “behavioral health juvenile diversionary” project as part of the 1115 Waiver initiative. The program will divert youth with complex behavioral health needs such as serious mental illness or a combination of mental illness and intellectual developmental disabilities, substance abuse and physical health issues from initial or further involvement with the juvenile system and to support them in their communities. Services are individualized and community based and include assessment, multi-disciplinary treatment planning, crisis stabilization services, family supports, respite, specialized therapies (trauma focused interventions, cognitive behavioral interventions), medication management, case management and wraparound supports. In addition, expand mental health intervention teams that work with high risk students and crisis situations (in the schools, communities). Teams should have the capacity to respond to crisis as well as support the recovery process.

Fort Bend County is also the site of the *Infant Toddler Court Initiative* for abused/maltreated infants and toddlers. This specialty court focuses on early interventions for abuse and neglected birth to 3-year olds and their families. This court initiative recognizes the importance of early intervention, healing trauma and repairing the relationship between a child and their parent and improving the odds for the youngest and most vulnerable victims. Ultimately, this specialty court focuses on breaking the cycle of abuse and the cradle to prison pipeline.

Priority #5	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Increased demand for mental health services including screening and assessment, mental health nursing services, treatment planning,</p>	<p><u>Fort Bend Women’s Center</u> Fort Bend Women’s Center has provided neurotherapy to clients with TBI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 37 total participants have completed some or all of the neurofeedback program (16 in housing, 16 in non-resident, 5 in shelter).

<p>continuity of care, substance abuse services and psychiatric services for domestic violence victims and persons on probation and in jail that have suffered Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average percent changes in scores of assessments, measured before and after neurofeedback training (reductions indicate a lowering of negative symptoms): WHODAS 2.0 -28% DSM-5 Cross Cutting -47% DSM-5 Measure for Depression -68% DSM-5 Measure for Generalized Anxiety -64% DSM-5 Measure for PTSD -55% DSM-5 Measure of Substance Use -100% (only 1 participant reported using illicit substances before Neurofeedback)
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Potential Response to Problem

The Fort Bend County Women’s Center is seeking increased mental health screening and treatment in regards to Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) as it affects victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Women who are abused often suffer injury to their head, neck, and face, which results in TBI. The high potential for women who are abused to have mild to severe TBI is a growing concern, since the effects can cause irreversible psychological and physical harm. Women who are abused are more likely to have repeated injuries to the head. As injuries accumulate, likelihood of recovery dramatically decreases. In addition, sustaining another head trauma prior to the complete healing of the initial injury may be fatal.

The Women’s Center uses the HELPS TBI screening instrument as a tool to determine eligibility for a Neurofeedback program with a Board Certified trained clinician in Neurofeedback. The Center is also training two counselors to be board certified. After determination of eligibility, we assess using a multitude of instruments that include the World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0 (WHODAS 2.0), the DSM-5 Cross Cutting Symptom Measure, DSM-5 Severity Measure for Depression, DSM-5 Severity Measure for Generalized Anxiety Disorder, DSM-5 Severity Measure for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and the DSM-5 Measure of Current Illicit Substance Use.

A woman with TBI who enters the criminal justice system may face additional challenges. She may appear to be disorganized, aggressive, temperamental, or confused. If her behaviors are misunderstood or misdiagnosed as indicating a mental health disability, which often happens, she may have difficulty obtaining custody or being credited as a victim or reliable witness. An increase in awareness of TBI among advocates and program staff will result in increased sensitivity, screening, referrals, accommodations and ultimately, better outcomes for women who are abused.

Domestic violence advocates and program staff should consistently screen women entering shelters and programs for TBI-related symptoms.

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Teaching adults how to read and provide basic literacy skills to function in society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy Council of Fort Bend County, 2015-2016 • National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 2003 • Texas Learns, 2005 • National Council for Adult Learning, 2014 • ProLiteracy, Adult Literacy Facts
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Literacy is defined as the ability to read, write, compute and use technology at a level that enables an individual to reach his or her full potential as a parent, employee and community member. Functional illiteracy is a term used to describe reading and writing skills that are inadequate "to manage daily living and employment tasks that require reading skills beyond a basic level." Functional illiteracy is contrasted with illiteracy in the strict sense, meaning the inability to read or write simple sentences in any language. Adult low literacy can be connected to almost every socio-economic issue that exists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Literacy is an over-reaching issue that affects each of the categories detailed in the Fort Bend County Community Plan; juvenile services, victim services, law enforcement and health/behavioral health.</i> 	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>The mission of the Literacy Council of Fort Bend County is to improve family, community, and professional lives through adult education. The organization serves an average of 1,500 adult students per year and has been serving the Fort Bend community for 29 years. The Literacy Council of Fort Bend County is the only literacy provider in Fort Bend County accredited by ProLiteracy, the recognized accreditation provider.</p> <p>During the 2015-2016 school year, the Literacy Council of Fort Bend County served more than 1300 adult learners in the 2015-16 school year and engaged over 350 volunteers as adult literacy tutors. In addition to the Council’s main location in Sugar Land, classes were held at 17 different Outreach Sites throughout Fort Bend County.</p> <p>Adults need strong literacy skills to <i>raise children to have strong literacy skills</i>. Learning to read begins long before a child enters school. It begins when parents read to their children, buy their children books and encourage their children to read. The research is clear: parents who are poor readers don’t read as often to their children as do parents who are strong readers; children who are not read to enter school less prepared for learning to read than do other children.</p>	

By teaching adults, we reach the child:

- Adults need strong literacy skills to be good employees.
- Adults need strong literacy skills to be active in their communities.

Further, political campaigns often stress the need for “informed voters.” However, an individual cannot be well informed if he or she cannot access written campaign literature, read newspapers or understand television coverage of the issues and candidates.

- One in four Fort Bend County residents lacks functional literacy skills.
- English is never spoken in 31 million homes across the United States.
- Children have a 72% chance of being at the lowest reading level if their parents have low literacy skills.
- 43% of adults with the lowest literacy levels live in poverty, and 70% of welfare recipients have low literacy levels.
- Adult low literacy causes an annual excess of \$230 billion in health care costs.
- Due to non-productivity in the workplace, loss of tax revenue, and crime, and unemployment, low literacy costs the United States at least \$225 billion per year.

Priority #2

Problem Identified

Data

Teach adults how to read, write and speak English serves varied demographics in Fort Bend County

- Literacy Council of Fort Bend, 2014-2015
- U.S. Census 2014
- 2010 U.S. Census

Problem Details

Literacy Awareness:

- A language other than English is spoken in 37.9% of Fort Bend County homes. This compares with 34.7% in Texas.
- In 2009, Fort Bend County was reported with a 24% rate of individuals lacking basic literacy skills. This compares to Texas at 19% and neighboring Harris County at 21%. It also compares to surrounding counties, which report the following rates: Wharton - 20%; Waller - 20%; Brazoria - 13%; Galveston - 13% and Montgomery - 11%.
 - *This means that approximately 1 in 4 residents of Fort Bend County lack basic literacy skills. In 1998, the rate was 1 in 5. This is a trend that continues to worsen.*

Potential Response to Problem

Fort Bend County is a county with 875 area miles. The Literacy Council of Fort Bend County has expanded to include an Outreach Program with approximately 17 partner sites, strategically located in all major population areas in Fort Bend County: Sugar Land (main campus), Richmond, Rosenberg, Missouri City, Katy (Cinco Ranch), Fulshear, Stafford, Arcola and Needville. This is an effort to reach as many students seeking our services as possible *where they live*. Outreach sites help decrease the wait list for services at the Sugar Land campus, decreases the transportation costs for students and tutors, and ultimately serves to increase literacy instruction for students.

The Literacy Council of Fort Bend County engages an average of 350 active volunteer tutors every academic year. Each tutor provides 3-6 hours of classroom instruction each week to adult literacy students at all locations. Tutors attend and complete a 6 hour tutor onboarding in order to provide their volunteer service. Since 1987, volunteer tutors have returned nearly \$18 million dollars of volunteer time to the Fort Bend County community.

Literacy Council of Fort Bend County demographics indicate:

- Our adult students are predominately women (78% vs. 22% male).
- Current total program ethnicity is: 42% Latino/Hispanic; 39% Asian American; 9% African American; 10% White.
- There is a waiting list for Basic Literacy, English as a Second Language (ESL), and Basic Computer Skills classes at the Literacy Council of Fort Bend County.

To provide services countywide, additional resources are needed, including continued tutor training, additional student materials, and teaching equipment, which is costly. With volunteers already in place, financial support provided to the Literacy Council ensures that the return on investment to Fort Bend County is significant.

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Illiteracy and crime are closely related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Department of Justice, 1993 • Thornburg Center for Professional Development, MultiMedia Schools, January/February 2001 • Texas A&M Today, 2016
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p><u>Law Enforcement:</u> Adults need strong literacy skills to avoid crime. There is a clear correlation between adult illiteracy and crime.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two thirds of students who cannot read proficiently by the fourth grade will end up in jail or on welfare. 	

- Over 70% of inmates in America’s prisons cannot read above a fourth grade level.
- Dropouts cost Texas \$9.6 billion per year.

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Adults need strong literacy skills to be healthy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center for Health Care Strategies, Health Literacy Fact Sheet, 2013 • Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Understanding Health Literacy, 2016 • National Network of Libraries of Medicine, Health Literacy
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Health literacy includes the ability to understand instructions on prescription drug bottles, appointment slips, medical education brochures, doctor's directions and consent forms. It also involves the ability to negotiate complex health care systems. Individuals with low health literacy are unable to read a prescription bottle to administer medicine to their child or family member.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly 36% of adults in the U.S. have low health literacy, with higher rates found among low-income adults eligible for Medicaid. • People with low functional health literacy are less likely to understand written and oral information given by physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and insurers. • When self-reported health status is taken into account, patients with low health literacy skills had fewer doctor visits but used substantially more hospital resources. • Low health literacy costs the United States up to \$236 billion per year in medical errors, increased illness and disability, wage loss, and compromised public health. <p>Particularly among immigrant populations, it is vital to recognize that culture plays an important role in communicating about health literacy. Although culture is only one part of health literacy, it is a critical component of the complicated topic.</p> <p>Health literacy is not simply the ability to read. In today’s patient-centered healthcare environment, it requires complex reading, listening, analytical, and decision-making skills, and the ability to apply these skills to health situations. In a growing elderly population, health literacy becomes increasingly more important.</p>	

Priority #5

Problem Identified

Data

Need to further education; provide GED classes and transitions to post-secondary education to better prepare adult students for workforce skills and further their education

- The 2010 U.S. Census Bureau
- Literacy Council of Fort Bend, 2015-2016
- 2007 Needs Assessment of Fort Bend County
- The David H. Murdock Institute, 2007
- Accelerate Texas, 2012

Problem Details

In many areas of Fort Bend County, the percentage of the population age 25 and older without a high school diploma is as high as over 20%. There are over 5 million adults in Texas without a high school diploma. And, Texas has slipped from 45th to last among states ranked by percent for citizens age 25 and older who have a high school diploma or GED.

Potential Response to Problem

The Literacy Council began its GED program in 2005. Registration for the program has continued to rise over the past 11 years. To meet the increasing demand, the GED curriculum has expanded to include multiple class levels, ensuring students have the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their proficiency upon entrance. Unlike other literacy classes that are led by volunteer tutors, all GED instructors are paid Literacy Council staff. Instructors earn a stipend per class due to the nature of the curriculum, the structure of the program and the common goal of the students. To date, the Literacy Council of Fort Bend County has seen 152 GED graduates.

Workers must be able to read safety regulations and warnings so they and their co-workers can stay safe on the job. Working in a team means that employees must also be able to communicate clearly with one another.

Literacy and economic development have endless companionship. Some of the benefits of literacy on economic development include the following:

- Literacy develops a sense of responsibility among the common man, by which one can become a good citizen.
- Literacy helps to enhance the communication skills among the people. Developed communication skills help an individual contact more employers in order to get better job opportunities. Developed communication skills also help to maintain pleasant relationships between the employer and employees, which reduces the conflicts among them and in this way, the productivity of the firm.
- Along with the development of professional and communication skills, literacy and education develop social skills by which an individual learns to move in the society.
- By enhancing the skills among the workers, the organization can get maximum

productivity.

Literacy and economic prosperity are directly proportional and have a great influence on each other. As people are literate, they will work much better to satisfy their own needs; simultaneously, the economy will grow and develop. As the workforce is educated and skilled, an economy will prosper. Literacy does not automatically generate socio-economic development, but because literacy can enable individuals to have a wider range of choices in terms of education and skills-development, literacy can lead to greater knowledge and skills and can therefore permit individuals to enter into higher-paid forms of employment.

Literacy is the pillar on which the major part of an economy stands. If the pillar is strong enough to hold the economy, problems can be reduced and the economy will stand. If literacy is weak, the economy may be pushed downward or fall.

For continued economic development it is important to strengthen the pillar of literacy. It requires strategic planning and financial resources to facilitate literacy programs. The financial resources required for the development of literacy programs may not be considered an expense; in fact, it is an investment which gives fruitful results in the future. By breaking the cycle of illiteracy, individuals can have a positive impact on themselves, their families, their community and the workforce.

In essence, literacy is the foundation on which all other personal learning, growing and development takes place. By realizing a sense of urgency for providing basic skills to those in need in a quickly expanding diverse population, Fort Bend County will continue to be a premier place to live, work and raise a family. Currently, there is a waiting list of GED students awaiting class availability.

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Limited public transportation within Fort Bend County	Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Even with the public transportation services available in Fort Bend County and the addition of the point deviation route services listed below, there are still gaps in the types of transportation services needed. Currently the Fort Bend County, County Wide Demand Response service is denying approximately 160 trips per day because the buses are booked. Fort Bend County residents wishing to access services outside of Fort Bend County have difficulty finding affordable reliable service into adjoining counties. Often providers within those counties will not provide services for a non-resident and/or the provider does not offer services during the hours or days in which the service is being requested.</p> <p>Even local Fort Bend County services are often beyond the immediate access to children and families. These services include parenting classes, therapy, sexual assault exams, and drug and alcohol assessments and other court ordered requirements that are held in the evenings and on weekends, when Fort Bend County’s public transportation service is not operating.</p> <p>Lack of transportation is a continued hindrance for individuals seeking community services. This includes seniors, medical patients, Fort Bend County Women’s Center clients and other low-income individuals.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Fort Bend County officially formed a Public Transportation Department in June 2005 to provide residents with safe and efficient public transportation services while maintaining service quality and customer satisfaction.</p> <p>Demand Response Fort Bend County currently offers county-wide shared ride bus services to the citizens of Fort Bend County. The Transportation service provides trips that begin and end within Fort Bend County.</p> <p>Rides must be scheduled in advance. Rides can be scheduled up to thirty days in advance or within 1 business day in advance of the needed trip. Reservations are accepted between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday (excluding County holidays). Rides are scheduled for first drop-off by 8:00.a.m. and last pick up at 5:00 p.m. Services are offered Monday through Friday excluding County</p>	

holidays. Trip fares are \$1.00 per person each way. This is a curb-to-curb service; however, persons with disabilities can request door-to-door service.

Commuter Service

Fort Bend County also offers commuter services known as Fort Bend Express. Services are offered from three (3) park and ride locations along the I-69 Corridor. Routes serving the Texas Medical Center, Greenway Plaza and Galleria areas of Houston can be accessed from these park and ride lots. No advance reservations are needed to access these services. Schedules are available on the County website. Services are not offered on weekends or holidays. Discounted ticket books are also offered.

Richmond/Rosenberg Point Deviation Route Service

Fort Bend County also offers a 3 point deviation routes operating within the cities of Richmond and Rosenberg. No advance reservations are needed for individuals accessing the routes from designated pick up/drop off locations. Individuals living within ¾ of a mile of the routes who cannot access the designated stops due to a disability can request that the bus deviate from the route for their pick up. Route deviations must be scheduled in advance. Schedules are available on the County website. Services are not offered on weekends or holidays. Discounted ticket books are also offered.

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of available and affordable medical care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Census Bureau’s 2002 Current Population Survey, as reported by “Families USA in November 2003 • TexCare Partnership • Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) • AccessHealth
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>The TexCare Partnership handles the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) providing health coverage to low-income children in Texas. However, as of 2001, approximately 973,000 low-income Texas children remained uninsured according to the U.S. Census Bureau.</p> <p>The Census Bureau released data in October 2004 that reported that Texas has the highest rate of uninsured residents in the nation at 25.1%. As far as Fort Bend County is concerned, 22% of children (under age 18) have no insurance coverage and 23.4% of Fort Bend County adults (over 19 years of age) have no health insurance.</p> <p>Fort Bend County does not have a traditional public health care delivery system or a public transportation system in most of the county that can assist individuals without</p>	

transportation to get to medical visits. Fort Bend County Health & Human Services does not provide primary health care services.

AccessHealth provides primary health care services for the poor and near poor (family income below 200% of poverty) of Fort Bend County. They are the only provider of sliding fee scale health care services for people of all life cycles in the service area.

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Limited affordable and available child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WorkSource – Gulf Coast Workforce Board • William S. Smith Sr. Tri-County Child Development Council, Inc.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Neighborhood Centers, Inc. has contracted with The WorkSource to provide childcare services. In a 13-county region including Fort Bend County, more than 20,500 children receive subsidized childcare each day. However, there are 8,500+ children on the waiting list.</p> <p>The William S. Smith Sr. Tri-County Child Development Council, Inc. Head Start Programs serve the child development needs of pre-school children (birth to 5 years) and their low-income families. They have 12 centers in Fort Bend County: 4 locations in the Richmond/Rosenberg area; and, 8 locations on the east side of the county. They currently serve a total of 834 children at these sites, with a waiting list of up to 600.</p>	

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Limited bilingual services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Census – 2000 • Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce • Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>According to the U.S. Census Bureau, profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000 in Fort Bend County, Texas, 30.7% of the population speaks languages other than English in the home.</p> <p>Today, Fort Bend County has the ethnic diversity predicted for the U.S. in 2050. In 2005, the population was 11.2% Asian/Pacific Islander, 19.8% Black, 21.1% Hispanic, 46.2%</p>	

Anglo, and 1.7% Other. Fort Bend County is one of the first minority/majority counties in the United States, where no one ethnic group is more than 50% of the population.

An example of limited bilingual services is the Psychology Department at the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department. One of the two staff psychologists is bilingual; however 80% of this professional's time is spent in crisis intervention and evaluation. Therefore, this individual can only have a caseload of 3-5 families. Additionally, there are very few bilingual therapists associated with the law enforcement agencies throughout Fort Bend County.

With a growing number of Asian residents comes the growing need for services to be provided in the Asian dialects. The ever-increasing Hispanic population also creates a greater demand for services to be provided in Spanish.

From court interpreters to law enforcement interpreters who work directly in the field to counselors, every field is finding an increase in demand for bilingual services.

Resources Available

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

Juvenile Justice:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
County Court at Law Courts (5 courts)	Governmental	Administers justice for major criminal cases, major civil action, juvenile dispositions and detention, probate and mental health cases.
Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office	Governmental	Represents the people of the State of Texas in all felony and misdemeanor criminal cases, represents the State in juvenile matters, asset forfeiture cases, Department of Human Services matters, and Victim Assistance Coordinator.
Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department	Governmental	Handles juveniles between the ages of 10 and 17 referred by law enforcement agencies, schools and parents for delinquent conduct and conduct indicating a need for supervision. The department's mission is to rehabilitate delinquent children.
Fort Bend Partnership for Youth, Inc.	Nonprofit	Mission is to reduce youth involvement with the juvenile justice system through the support of mentoring and educational programs. Supports a variety of programs for youth and families involved with the juvenile probation department.
Youth for Christ	Faith based	Provides spiritual counseling and religious services for youth in the juvenile detention center.
Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Special Youth Services	Faith based	Provides spiritual counseling and religious services to youth involved with the juvenile probation department, e.g., detained youth
Parks Youth Ranch	Non-profit	Providing shelter, counseling and life changing services to at-risk and homeless youth in Fort Bend County.
Fort Bend County Truancy Court	Governmental	Established to process the filings of persons who have failed to attend school, or who are a parent who is contributing to the non-attendance of a student which is required by law.

Law Enforcement:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Community Supervision and Corrections Department	Governmental	Arm of the County Courts of Law and District Courts of Fort Bend County. Supervises felony and misdemeanor adult offenders in the community and provides tools for rehabilitation.
Fort Bend Sheriff’s Office	Law Enforcement	To protect the lives, property and rights of all people in Fort Bend County.
Justice of the Peace Courts (5 in Fort Bend County)	Governmental	Must act in a neutral capacity to serve all citizens, law enforcement agencies, merchants, school districts and various other county and state regulatory agencies that file either civil or criminal actions. As coroner, the JP must accurately and with efficiency and consideration to all parties, determine cause of death and decide what outside agencies to employ to assist in this responsibility.
Law enforcement: cities, county and schools	Law enforcement	To protect the lives, property and rights of all people in the various jurisdictions and students in the school district.

Victim Services:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Child Advocates of Fort Bend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) • Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC) 	Nonprofit	CASA: To provide a voice to speak on behalf of abused and neglected children who are involved in the legal system through trained court appointed volunteers. CAC: To lessen the emotional trauma to child victims by coordinating the investigation, assessment, prosecution and treatment of sexual and serious physical abuse.
Fort Bend County Women’s Center	Nonprofit	Provides temporary housing and other wrap-around services to women (and their children, if any) who have been victimized. Crisis intervention counseling. Rape crisis program.
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services	Governmental	Child protective services; child abuse prevention; assessment of suspected abuse/neglect; services to families involved in abuse/neglect cases.

Parks Youth Ranch	Nonprofit	Providing shelter, counseling and life changing services to at-risk and homeless youth in Fort Bend County.
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Health / Medical / Substance Abuse:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Community Resource Coordination Group (CRCG) for Children & Youth	Governmental, school districts, and nonprofits	This group is comprised of representatives of various community agencies such as Texana MHMRA, the school districts, the juvenile probation department and some nonprofits. They staff specific cases in order to come up with resources and a plan for the child including residential placement.
Fort Bend County Health & Human Services	Governmental	Clinical Health Services: Immunizations; Screening (blood pressure, glucose, HIV): Disease Treatment (Tuberculosis, sexually-transmitted diseases) Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Social Services Veteran’s Services Animal Control Environmental Health Public Health Preparedness
AccessHealth	Nonprofit	Screening for citizen eligibility. Prenatal care, delivery services, family planning, pediatrics, WIC, adult care, psychotherapy and social services.
Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse, Inc.	Nonprofit	Education, assessment, counseling, youth & adult services, certified offender programs (DWI, MIP, Drug Offender and Tobacco)
Mental Health Association of Fort Bend County	Nonprofit	Education; information; community resource directory; annual screenings for alcohol abuse, anxiety, depression, eating disorders.
Planned Parenthood of Fort Bend, Inc.	Nonprofit	Outpatient medical care; counseling, referral and community programs on reproductive health and sexuality.
Pregnancy Resource Center of Fort Bend County	Nonprofit	Crisis pregnancy center; free pregnancy tests with information regarding fetal development and alternatives to abortion; information and referrals.
Texana Center	Governmental	Provision of a comprehensive array of quality, cost effective services focused on consumer choice and satisfaction for people with mental retardation, development delays and mental illness.

Prevention / Intervention:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
American Red Cross	Nonprofit	Assist people with recovery from disaster, assist servicemen and their families, transportation services to medical and social service appointments.
Boy Scouts of America	Nonprofit	Scouting programs for boys 6 or 7 years to 21 years of age.
Boys & Girls Club of Fort Bend County	Nonprofit	Recreational facilities and programs for high-risk boys and girls in the East End of Fort Bend County.
East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry, Inc.	Nonprofit	Full service food pantry and rent, mortgage, utilities assistance. (By appointment only.)
ESCAPE Family Resource Center	Nonprofit	Parenting programs for families.
Family Outreach East Fort Bend	Nonprofit	Volunteers trained to prevent child abuse; parenting classes.
Family Service Center	Nonprofit	Preventive, supportive and therapeutic services for individuals, families and communities.
Fort Bend Dispute Resolution Center		Mediation training, peer mediation in schools, and mediation services for family, business, church, neighbors.
Fort Bend Family YMCA	Nonprofit	Serving East Fort Bend County
Fort Bend Independent School District	School District	In addition to regular academics for kindergarten through 12 th grade, they have literacy services for adults and Extended Day programs at elementary schools.
Girl Scouts of the USA	Nonprofit	Scouting programs for girls ages 5 to 17.
Gulf Coast Careers		Job listings, job market information, career counseling, job search resources, skills training, and employer services.
Lamar Consolidated Independent School District	School District	Provides education for grades kindergarten through 12.
Literacy Council of Fort Bend	Nonprofit	Adult literacy education and various programs such as GED preparation, basic computer skills, US citizenship preparation and career certification.

Interagency Cooperation

The following is a description of how the various resources listed in the previous pages could cooperatively work together to accomplish the goal of closing identified gaps in services:

By using the Community Plan structure, a series of meetings could be held throughout the year following the submission of the Plan. The topic and invitation list of each of these meetings would be very specific, focusing on one of the priority issues and those agencies that have linkage to that issue. Discussion could be developed on how the participating agencies could work together to try to eliminate some of the identified gaps in service.

Long-Range Plan Development, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Fort Bend 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 Fort Bend 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 typically 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 by e-mail with requests for comments, changes, etc. Wherever possible e-mail is used to reduce the need for meetings, printing, postage, etc.

It is the intent of the Community Planning Group to improve outcomes for Fort Bend County families struggling with problems described in the Plan's focus areas. Efforts are being made by many Fort Bend 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 encourage agencies to provide programming that addresses the outlined focus areas.

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This Plan is available on-line at the following URL address:

<http://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/index.aspx?page=1005>