

Fort Bend County Public Safety Community Plan 2021-2022

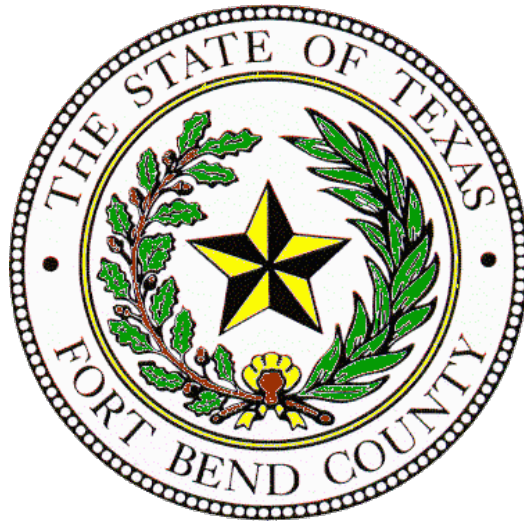


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Fort Bend County Public Safety Community Plan

What Is a Community Plan?

This plan is formally known as the Fort Bend County Public Safety Community Plan, and its purpose 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 who are concerned with closing any gaps in services to make our communities a safer places in which to live and work. The names of those involved in the process of developing the Community Plan can be found in the Community Planning Team section.

Though the final draft of this plan was completed in December 2021, 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. Fort Bend County is interested in keeping up with these changes and includes 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 this ongoing effort. Any questions you may have can be addressed to Vanessa McKeehan, Community Plan Coordinator for Fort Bend County, or to a Public Safety Program staff member of the Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC). Contact information is provided at the end of this document.

The Fort Bend County Commissioners Court supports 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 and community organizations that address gaps in services identified in the Community Plan.

Areas Represented

Incorporated Communities:

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

Unincorporated Communities:

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

School Districts:

Brazos Independent School District	Needville Independent School District
Fort Bend Independent School District	Stafford Municipal School District
Katy 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 822,779 (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2020*) 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 ethnically diverse county in the nation. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the percentage breakdown indicates Fort Bend's population race and ethnic makeup to be 0.1 percent Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, 0.6 percent Native American, 2.3 percent of Two or More Races, , 20.9percent Asian r, 24.9 percent Hispanic or Latino, 21.3 percent Black or African American, , and percent, 31.9.percent White. According to the Texas State Data Center, Fort Bend County is the fastest growing county in Greater Houston and could have a million residents in the next few years.

Fort Bend County is a 'pass through' county during evacuation in neighboring counties including Galveston and Brazoria Counties. Interstate 59 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 precinct Constables' offices, ten 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, Fulshear, Katy, Meadows Place, Missouri City, Needville, Richmond, Rosenberg, Stafford and Sugar Land.

There are eight District Courts, six County Courts-At-Law, five Associate District Courts, two Associate County Courts-at-Law, five Justice of the Peace Courts, and 18 Municipal Courts. Fort Bend County has six Specialty Courts – Drug Court, Girls Court, Infant Toddler Court, Veterans Court, a Special Sanctions Court, and a Juvenile Diversion Court. A District Attorney's Office serves the courts. There is also a community supervision and corrections 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 began with land grants from the Spanish government. The death of Moses Austin and Mexico's independence delayed the arrival of Stephen F. Austin's original colony of 300 families at the bend of the Brazos River was delayed until 1922. Ninety miles inland from the coast, the settlers built a two-room cabin called both 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 Texas Legislature created the County of Fort Bend 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, sugar, and other products were transported 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 expansion, Fort Bend saw new growth in the form of increased residential development. The master planned communities of Quail Valley, Firestone Colony and Pecan Grove came first, followed by Greatwood, New Territory, and Cinco Ranch. More recently, Sienna Plantation, River Stone, Texana Plantation, Cross Creek Ranch, Aliana, Harvest Green, and Veranda 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: Vanessa McKeehan, Program Manager – Grants, County Judge’s Office.

In developing this Community Plan, members of the team divided themselves into focus groups to narrow the scope of research and data that the Community Plan contains. Some members may serve in multiple capacities/categories. Due to the coronavirus, the Community Plan section coordinators conducted their updates virtually. Their names and agencies are below.

Juvenile Services:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Susan Bearden	Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation

Victim Services:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Peggy Wright	Fort Bend Women’s Center
Mary Flowers	Fort Bend Women’s Center

Law Enforcement:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Wesley Wittig	Fort Bend County District Attorney’s Office

Behavioral Health Services:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Dr. Connie Almeida	Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services

Local Needs

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Vanessa McKeehan	Fort Bend County Judge’s Office

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 drug use. 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 challenging 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 often have no choice but to live in motels or 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% in 2020, the U.S. Bureau of Census concluded that Fort Bend County grew at a rate of more than 40 percent in the past ten years, gaining 237,404 residents. That growth is likely to continue, and the University of Houston Hobby School of Public Affairs predicts that Fort Bend County's population will increase by more than 2.1 million people by 2050. In other words, it took 160 years for Fort Bend to gain its first 350,000 residents, but will add more than a million residents within the next twenty years.

U.S. Census Bureau Statistics

	Texas (2010)	Texas (2020)	Fort Bend County (2010)	Fort Bend County (2020)
Total Population	25,145,561	29,145,505	585,375	822,779
Population % change over previous ten years	20.6%	15.3%	65.1%	38.8%
Child population % (under age 18)	27.3%	25.5%	29.7%	27.3%
Language other than English spoken in home	33.6%	35.5%	36.0%	39.5%
Persons below poverty line	17.1%	13.6%	7.5 %	6.6%
Households	8,269,046	9,691,647	140,542	237,883
Average household size	2.81	2.85	3.57	3.19

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 strategical responses to ameliorating these community problems.

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Juvenile delinquency and children in need of supervision (status offenses), especially at-risk youth exhibiting negative behaviors.	Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2020, there were 1,054 referrals to the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department (JPD), 548 were Class A & B Misdemeanors, 57 were Class C Misdemeanors, 130 were Status Offenses and 319 were felony offenses. In 2020, the Juvenile Probation Department supervised 263 juveniles on formal probation and 349 juveniles on deferred prosecution.
<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 behavior includes children who are chronically truant, dropouts, runaways, and who lack after-school supervision and programs. These situations have been clearly identified as some 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>The following programs address youth supervision needs:</p> <p>Saved by the Bell</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The goal of Saved by the Bell is to apply pro-active casework management strategies and appropriate court involvement to address chronic truancy and ultimately reduce delinquency. Case managers work on campus with school personnel and community resources to offer prevention and intervention services to youth in all junior high and high schools in Fort Bend County. These services include counseling, mentoring, home visits, presentations and referrals to additional resources. The Juvenile Probation Department collaborated with Fort Bend Regional Council for life and substance abuse services and with Fort Bend Partnership for Youth, Inc. for financial assistance to families in need. In the 2020-2021 school year, 4,929 students received prevention and intervention services. In addition, there were 3,826 home visits attempted / completed by the case manager specialist. <p>Truancy Diversion Program</p> <p>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</p>	

Affairs in collaboration with the FBISD social workers from Student Support Services. The TDP is a preventative, information-based program for parents and students that offers: 1) an alternative to a court referral, 2) education on the consequences associated with unexcused absences for parents/guardians and students who are experiencing truancy problems, and 3) connects available and appropriate resources for families who are experiencing other issues that may contribute to the student's truancy. In the 2020-2021 FBISD school year 19,510 students were assigned to TDP and 2,460 attended.

- **Juvenile Justice Alternative Educational Program (JJAEP)**

Lamar CISD and Fort Bend ISD provide a community-based juvenile justice alternative education program (JJAEP) in conjunction with Fort Bend County Commissioners Court, Fort Bend County Juvenile Board, Juvenile Probation Department and other school districts in Fort Bend County. Students in grades 4-12 shall be reassigned to the Fort Bend County JJAEP if they have committed serious offenses and are court ordered by a Juvenile Judge, and/or have violated their school district's code of conduct and have been expelled on a mandatory or discretionary expulsion order placement.

- **Crisis Intervention Program**

The Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department's Crisis Intervention Program receives referrals from parents, schools and law enforcement agencies requesting emergency intervention for juveniles and children experiencing mental health crises. This program includes counseling, explanation of the laws regarding delinquent youth and possible consequences, and information on referral sources for psychological and/or substance abuse counseling. In 2020, (15) juveniles were counseled and only 1 was subsequently referred to the Fort Bend Juvenile Probation Department for an offense.

- **Parent Project**

Parent Project is a nationally acclaimed parent-training program. Parent Project is the only course of its kind providing activity-based curriculum in a ten chapter program. It is designed to work with strong-willed and out-of-control destructive adolescent behavior. Parents learn how to recognize 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 violence). In 2020, (133) parents successfully completed the program, which is approximately 3,192 hours of parenting classes.

- **Teen Parenting**

Instructors conduct one-on-one teen parenting instruction. Pregnant teens receive the "Baby & Me" book and other literature pertinent to their specific motherhood needs. Teen dads receive the "Maps for Dads" book and other literature on how to be involved and educated about their role as a father. The instructors refer the teens to community resources or agencies relevant to their individual circumstances. They learn about the importance of baby safety and how to baby-proof their home. In 2020, (7) juveniles benefited from the teen parenting instruction.

- **Partners in Parenting Program / Loving Solutions**

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 parents attend a ten chapter 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. Loving Solutions helps parents become actively involved in their child's education and helps set the stage for lifelong learning. In 2020, (14) parents successfully completed the program, which is approximately 336 hours of parenting classes.

- **Tattoo Removal Program**

The tattoo removal program is a partnership between the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department, AccessHealth, 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. In 2020, (1) juvenile was referred to AccessHealth for tattoo removal.

- **Canine Leadership Program**

The Canine Leadership Program is a partnership between Fort Bend County Animal Services, the Juvenile Probation Department and Fort Bend Partnership for Youth, Inc. The program focuses on finding permanent homes for dogs while teaching valuable life skills to youth 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 help promote the dogs for adoption. In 2020, (9) youth participated in the canine program.

- **Horsemanship Program and Equine Assisted Therapy (EAP)**

Students in the Horsemanship Program not only learn how to ride, they also learn about the horse's natural instincts and survival techniques. Before the students are allowed on the horses, they are taught safety, catching, tying and grooming. Then 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 important life skills.

- **Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department Mentoring Program**

This program recruits, screens, and trains volunteer community mentors to visit youth in the Fort Bend County JPD Detention Center. The juveniles who receive a mentor are usually those who: (1) do not have anyone coming to visit them, (2) are going to be there longer than average or (3) need special one-on-one visits. This program is designed for mentors to support, listen and encourage the juveniles while they are being detained or

are in the detention center's Juvenile Leadership Academy (JLA) dormitory. In 2020, (56) matches were created between the mentors and referred juveniles.

- The One-to-One Mentoring Program provides mentors to juveniles between the ages of 10 and 17 and currently live at home. Each week the mentor offers one-to-one support and encouragement by participating in activities like talking at the park, playing sports, going to the movies, having dinner, or going to the library. This program gives 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. In 2020, (18) matches were created between the mentors and referred juveniles.
- The Mentor in School Program provides a Fort Bend County JPD Staff Mentor whom visits a juvenile one-to-one during the school day on a weekly basis. The juvenile is referred to the program by a probation officer or is court ordered into the mentoring program. In 2020, (52) matches were created between the mentors and referred juveniles.

- **General Equivalency Development (GED) Program**

The Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department continues to serve the youth of Fort Bend County in a unique GED setting. There are fewer students in the class and this allows more one-on-one instruction from a teacher. The class locations are in Richmond, Sugar Land and Arcola. The majority of juveniles enrolled in this program have dropped out of regular school or were at-risk of dropping out. In addition, the department utilizes our Transitions Program to assist our graduates in finding a job or progressing to higher education. In 2020, (23) juveniles enrolled in the GED program.

- **The Bridge Program**

The Bridge Program is a collaborative effort between the court and the JPD to increase parental involvement and investment, and increase the child's success while in residential placement and once they return home. Parents are required to attend and participate in *Parent Project*, remain active and supportive in their child's lives and communicate frequently with all probation teams involved. In 2020, (9) juveniles were enrolled in the Bridge Program.

- **Lamar Consolidated ISD – Truancy Project**

This program combats poor attendance among school-age children. This agreement between Lamar CISD and Fort Bend County has achieved continued success for Lamar CISD students thanks to early intervention and meaningful consequences. The court mandates for Parent Contributing to Non-Attendance and Failure to Attend School consist of warnings, parenting classes, assigned case managers and 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 their children's non-attendance. The collaboration between Fort Bend County government, Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department and the area's 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.

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Limited availability of programs that provide adequate mental health, behavioral health and substance abuse treatment for youth.	Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Division Psychology Services in 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6,049 mental health contacts were provided to youth and families who were involved with the Fort Bend County Juvenile Detention Center and Probation Department • 3,101 counseling sessions (individual and family) were provided for youth who were detained in the Fort Bend County Juvenile Detention Center • 191 MAYSI crisis assessments and interventions were conducted for youth in distress • 654 individual counseling sessions were provided for youth who attended school at our Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program sites • 229 group counseling sessions were provided for youth who attended school at our Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program sites • 175 individual parent sessions were provided • 224 group counseling sessions were provided for youth who were detained in the Fort Bend County Juvenile Detention Center • 103 Forensic Behavioral Health Assessments/Psychological Evaluations were conducted • 112 family counseling sessions were provided for the families of youth who attended school at our Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program sites

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32 youth successfully completed the First Offender Intervention Program (FOIP) • 18 youth received services in the Sexual Treatment Offender Program (STOP) • 43 youth were referred to the Aggression and Violence Intervention Program (AVIP) • 9 youth received services in the Creating Opportunities through Rehabilitation and Empowerment program (CORE) • 39 youth received services in the Healthy Boundaries Counseling Program (HB) • 32 youth received services in the Special Needs Diversion Program (SNDP) • 20 youth were referred to the Grief and Loss program (GnL)
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Mental Health Services</p> <p>The number of youth diagnosed with mental illness In the juvenile justice system 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 (<i>Cocozza and Skowrya, 2000</i>). The most recent Fort Bend County needs assessment states that the lack of services for the mentally ill has resulted “in mental health becoming a law enforcement issue.”</p> <p>Mental health awareness education is important for people of all ages. Being aware of mental health disorders, their signs, symptoms and impacts helps young people understand that mental health is important and that they can effectively address and manage their life situation. Awareness programs that promote 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.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department Psychology Division</p> <p>In 1998, Fort Bend County JPD started the psychology division to provide psychological services to youth in its care and supervision. The psychology division provides mental health services for youth detained in the detention center and at two alternative education campuses. Psychology staff offers specialized counseling, treatment services, and forensic evaluation services for youth referred to the probation department. Forensic evaluations assist probation officers and judges in developing effective treatment plans. These services may also decrease the amount of time a youth spends in the detention center.</p> <p>The division also serves as a training site for counseling and psychology graduate students who are completing academic requirements.</p>	

First Offender Intervention Program (FOIP)

The FOIP 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 their parents/guardians followed by 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 and 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 for prosocial function in society. In 2020, (32) juveniles completed FOIP

Sexual Treatment Offender Program (STOP)

Youth adjudicated to STOP attend individual, group, and family counseling services in addition to weekly meetings with their probation officer. A probation officer monitors the juvenile's behavior during home and school visits to assess 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 of the importance of protective factors such as education, healthy sexuality, true consent, choosing positive peers, and decreasing risk factors such as drug use, pornography use, and deviant sexual urges. The goals of Sexual Behavior Treatment (SBT) 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 ability, confidence, and motivation for prosocial function in society, and teach youth problem solving skills and how to manage their emotions and sexual urges. Adolescents participating in SBT also complete homework assignments designed to increase their personal awareness and improve their decision-making skills. In 2020, (18) juveniles participated in STOP.

Creating Opportunities through Rehabilitation and Empowerment (CORE)

CORE is a specialized intervention program developed for adolescent females who are at risk of or are victims of human trafficking. The target population includes females exhibiting high-risk behaviors, and survivors of sexual abuse, sexual victimization, and sexual trauma. The program utilizes individual, family and group counseling, monthly life skills development activities and female role modeling/mentorship. Adolescent females participate in specialized interventions to attain trauma resolution, improved self-esteem, healthy sexual decision-making, improved family relationships, and prosocial behavior.

CORE 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. In 2020, (9) females received services from CORE, and 5 matches were created between a volunteer mentor and referred juveniles.

Successful Outcomes Using Resiliency for Child Empowerment (SOURCE)

SOURCE is an 1115 Waiver program for youth with behavioral health disorders to improve functioning and divert them from the criminal justice system. One case manager specialist provides case management services, psychoeducation and other interventions individually tailored to each youth and family's unique needs. Additional program staff and wrap around supports are often required to work with the number of youth and families in need. The program staff's caseload of youth and their families have fluctuated over the past year. In 2020, SOURCE served (27) individual youth and families.

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need to expand and diversify programs that identify youth development needs	<p><u>Project LEARN</u></p> <p>In 2020-2021, (247) students between birth and 19 years participated in Project LEARN.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% of 1st and 2nd graders had a 94% or above attendance record in school – COVID year• 0% of 0 to 3-year-olds were screened for developmental delays, service not available since on-site face-to-face classes were not allowed – COVID year• 100% of 0 to 3-year-olds had 1-on-1 school readiness sessions with parents• 100% of the parents received parent education classes incorporated in early childhood virtual sessions• 100% of the parents improved their oral English communication skills• 100% of the parents improved their written English communication skills
<i>Problem Identified</i>	
<p>The early years of a child's life present unique opportunities to lay the foundation for healthy development and academic success. Socioeconomic status, ethnicity, language abilities, and parent education are at-risk factors that impact young children's academic, language, cognitive and social-emotional health and development. Research shows that children from low-income households are more likely to experience behavioral and academic difficulties that negatively impact their success at school and in life. Children from low-income families also tend to have less exposure to the rich language and literacy activities at home that make obtaining academic success easier. As a result, an achievement</p>	

gap that only strategic intervention can close appears between them and children from higher income households.

Potential Response to Problem

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

Project LEARN offers services to participants with household incomes below the federal poverty level and families with linguistic needs. The family literacy program provides face-to-face synchronistic English as a Second Language (ESL) and Parenting classes for Lamar CISD families. Parents also receive guidance to further their education and career through WCJC Pathways Programs. Children participating in the program receive homework assistance, tutoring, and exposure to language-rich activities that focus on science and math concepts. Pre-kindergarten/kindergarten-age students also receive instruction through technology and/or enrichment activities. Early childhood students (ages two months through 3.5 years) are provided with a strong socioemotional and academic foundation to ensure a successful transition to pre-kindergarten. Project LEARN early childhood teachers tailor instruction focusing on the Texas Infant, Toddler and Three-Year-Old Early Learning Guidelines and the Children's Learning Institute developmental domains to ensure students are challenged at their zone of proximal development. Conferences are held twice a year to discuss the child's progress and ensure the child is being challenged. In this meeting, the staff references the child's portfolio and views authentic work samples to determine new goals to focus on and to introduce new skills.

Parent Educators facilitate opportunities for parents and children to interact in class during Parents and Children Together (PACT) Time. During this activity, parents strengthen their role in their children's social, emotional, and cognitive development. Parents have the opportunity to observe their children's learning, apply concepts they have learned together, and discuss with their children what they have learned. The communication and strong relationships that are developed through these activities lay the foundation for the type of communication required during childhood and the teenage years. For families in need of additional parenting expertise, LCISD Early Childhood Family Engagement Specialists offer family workshops to Pre-Kinder campuses throughout the district. Workshops derived from the Children's Learning Institute family workshops "Teaching Matters" series. Campuses choose from 6 different workshops and then schedule them with the Pre-Kinder teacher and the Family Engagement Specialist. The EL and Bilingual leads on campuses are encouraged to offer a workshop from this series after they have observed one presented at their campus. Family workshops include parent-child engagement through hands-on activities and age appropriate developmental resources that the CLI curriculum has included. Workshops are offered in English with Spanish translation to ensure all of our families understand and participate equitably in the events. The Early Childhood Family Engagement Specialist also supports family engagement by providing parenting classes to our families attending our district Project Learn program. Classes are created in collaboration with the Project Learn facilitator with reflection on the parent's needs.

Project LEARN is a preventive program designed to empower parents to become partners and advocates in their child's education. Through this partnership, we reduce the probabilities that the children will become high school dropouts. Studies show that the children of parents who are involved in their education do better in school. These students receive higher grades, test scores, and long-term academic achievement. Furthermore, children with involved parents exhibit more positive attitudes and behaviors in school.

Project LEARN provides its services free of charge. This gives children of low-income families the opportunity to participate in a quality pre-school program that prepares them for pre-kindergarten. The attendance costs of comparable programs means that for many families, Project LEARN is the only opportunity to give their child an educational head start. With regular program attendance and parental home instruction, these children, at the age of four-years-old, begin school above the educational level of other children facing similar obstacles.

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Need to expand and diversify programs that identify youth development needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resource programs that include problem solving skills, anger management and a range of relevant services • early intervention services before entry into the juvenile justice system • intervention programs targeting education gaps • human trafficking prevention and intervention 	<p>Resource programs serving juveniles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DePelchin Children's Center Services-to-At-Risk-Youth (STAR) Program • Goodwill Industries of Houston Training • Alternative Learning Center (ALC) • Fort Bend Regional Council • My Reading Coach Literacy Program • Transitions Work/Study Program • Texana Center • Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments (TCOOMMI) • 1621 Place • Intensive Behavior Class • Dads as Mentors • Ridgemont Early Childhood Center (RMECC)

Potential Response to Problem

DePelchin Children's Center STAR Program

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

- 1) Crisis intervention family counseling
- 2) Skills-based training that focuses on truancy prevention.
- 3) Collaboration with Lamar CISD – A therapist goes Terry High School 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 serves seven counties, one of which is Fort Bend County. The program focuses on youth between the ages of 14 and 21 who are out of school (dropped out, chronically truant, pursuing a GED, or completed high school). The program helps youth re-engage in high school, pursue a GED, or pursue vocational training at a local junior college.

Alternative Learning Center (ALC)

ALC is Lamar CISD's Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP). Lamar CISD provides a school-community guidance center to assist students with behavioral problems or students who engage in serious misconduct that interferes with their education. A structured academic and behavioral program teaches appropriate social skills and self-discipline. Parents must attend parent education and support sessions for each week of their child's ALC assignment.

Fort Bend Regional Council (FBRC)

FBRC's prevention programs understand that resilient children- children who are able to withstand difficult circumstances- are the least likely to use addictive substances. FBRC youth prevention counselors lead classroom-based programs in 36 local schools. Counselors also conduct small group exercises, one-on-one sessions and leadership building activities during summer programs and at schools. 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.

My Reading Coach Program

My Reading Coach, distributed by Mindplay Educational Solutions, is a component of Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation's Transitions: Work/Study Program. The program includes an assessment tool that tests each student to pinpoint deficiencies in the student's reading skills. In 2020, (95) youth were assessed and 33 were then enrolled and received approximately 171 hours of one-to-one programming with a Transition's Work / Study Program staff member.

Transitions Work/Study Program

Transitions: Work/Study Program provides juvenile probation youth, ages 14-18 years, with the tools that they will need to be educationally ready, job literate, and informed about higher education opportunities. Literacy is a primary focus of this program. In 2020, (46) juveniles benefitted from the Transitions Program. In addition, (29) youth received one-to-one tutoring from a Transition's staff member.

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 five 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. The Behavioral Healthcare Services provides a 24/7/365 crisis intervention program. It is the only provider in the county for crisis residential services for those who have Medicaid or are indigent. In fiscal year 2020, Texana Center Behavioral Healthcare Services served 8,457 individuals; 6,417 adults and 2,040 youth.

Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical and Mental Impairment Juvenile Project (TCOOMMI) Special Needs Diversionary Program (SNDP)

The TCOOMMI Special Needs Diversionary Program is a joint effort between Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation and Texana Center. This program offers behavioral healthcare services, in-home therapy, case management, skills training, and probation supervision for youth with a DSM-V diagnosis who are involved with the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department. The program works to strengthen families, help families develop appropriate coping skills, and build social support systems to promote healthy parenting and family support in addition to treating the youth's mental illness. The goal is to prevent further occurrences with the juvenile justice system, stabilize, and continue treatment of the youth's mental illness. In 2020, 31 juveniles received these services.

1621 Place

1621 Place is a high school choice program offered to all qualifying Lamar CISD high school students. Before placement, students apply, have their credits and STARR EOC status analyzed, and go through a testing process. Students stay enrolled on their home high school campus and when they graduate, can walk with their high school class. The home campus awards diplomas. 1621 Place is a self-paced academic center that empowers students to learn, grow and become successful members of the community.

Centralized Intensive Behavior Class (CIBC)

Lamar CISD's CIBC is a special educational program for students in grades K-12 who exhibit documented and detrimental behavior that may affect their educational quality or others' in the regular classroom environment. CIBC serves all Lamar CISD campuses. This program seeks to collaborate and coordinate with campus mental health workers to stabilize the student's mental and behavioral conditions so the student may return to their home campus.

Dads as Mentors

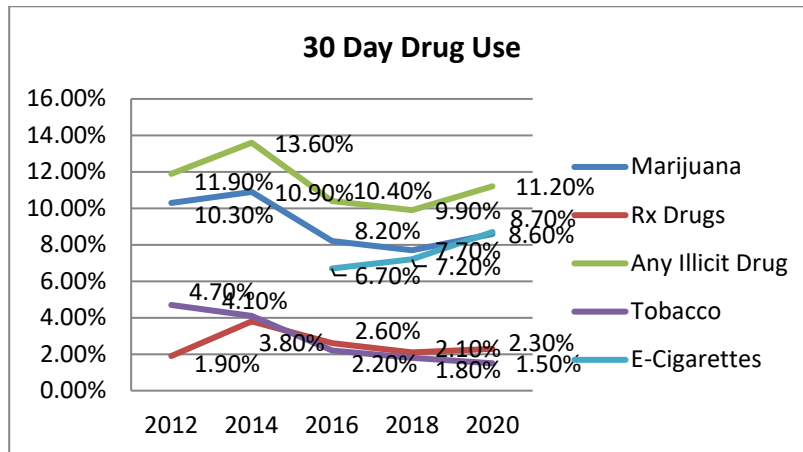
Dads as Mentors is a Fort Bend ISD initiative on all Title I campuses. The premise of this mentoring program is to encourage fathers to be positive male role models for their own children at home. Fathers keep a log of extra activities that they do with their children over one month's time. Examples 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.

Ridgemont Early Childhood Center (RMECC)

The RMECC is a multi-service learning center where children and families can grow together as a community of learners. The Center opened in 2010 on the on the Ridgemont Elementary School campus. It provides early childhood development in an economically disadvantaged neighborhood that is 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 support system:

- (1) Early Head Start/Head Start (from birth to 5 years of age) FBISD pre-kindergarten
- (2) PPCD (Special Education program)
- (3) Extended Day Program (before and after-school childcare)
- (4) FBISD Family Literacy
- (5) Adult English as a Second Language (ESL), GED, computer, health and dental services, parental classes and social work and psychological services
- (6) Teacher mentorship services

Priority #5																									
Problem Identified	Data																								
Lack of substance abuse prevention services increases juvenile crimes and reduces academic success.	<p>The following graph shows the percentage of students who reported alcohol use in the past 30 days:</p> <div><p>Past 30 Day Alcohol Use</p><table><thead><tr><th>Year</th><th>7th Grade</th><th>9th Grade</th><th>11th Grade</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>2012</td><td>3.4%</td><td>12.5%</td><td>22.8%</td></tr><tr><td>2014</td><td>6.0%</td><td>15.0%</td><td>28.1%</td></tr><tr><td>2016</td><td>4.7%</td><td>13.0%</td><td>24.1%</td></tr><tr><td>2018</td><td>4.3%</td><td>12.1%</td><td>16.1%</td></tr><tr><td>2020</td><td>4.7%</td><td>9.8%</td><td>18.5%</td></tr></tbody></table></div>	Year	7th Grade	9th Grade	11th Grade	2012	3.4%	12.5%	22.8%	2014	6.0%	15.0%	28.1%	2016	4.7%	13.0%	24.1%	2018	4.3%	12.1%	16.1%	2020	4.7%	9.8%	18.5%
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The graph above compares the percentage of middle and high students who reported drug use in the past 30 days.

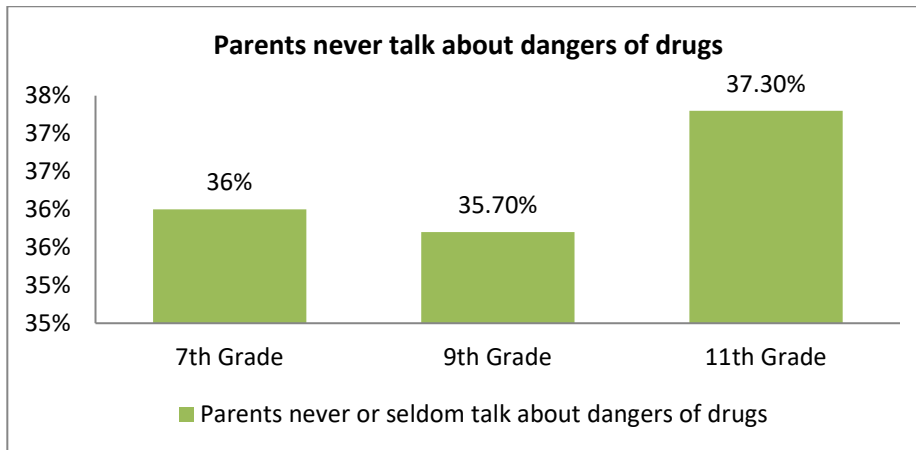
Source: FBISD PRIDE Data

Problem Details

Fort Bend County Needs Assessment Highlights

- 18.5% of 11th graders reported past 30-day use of alcohol in 2020 versus 16.1% of students in 2018.
- 2.3% of students reported past 30-day use of prescription drugs in 2020 compared to 2.1% in 2018.
- 17.4% of 11th graders reported past 30-day use of marijuana in 2020 compared to 15% in 2018.
- Substance use is higher among girls than boys. 41.4% of girls reported using alcohol compared to 31.6% of boys, and 28% of girls reported using marijuana compared to 21.7% of boys.
- Easy access to alcohol remains highly problematic. Among the students who reported drinking or using marijuana, 40.1% of 11th graders find access to alcohol to be very or fairly easy. Among the students who reported using marijuana, 41.5% of 11th grade students find access very or fairly easy.
- The perceived risk of substance use has decreased in the last two years. The number of students who report low perceived risk of using alcohol has decreased from 76.6% in 2018 to 72.8% in 2020. 41.5% of students surveyed see no risk or only a slight risk in drinking one or two drinks nearly every day. There is also decrease in the perception of risk towards marijuana. The percentages have decreased from 54.4% in 2018 to 42.8% in 2020.
- It is also important to note that perception parental disapproval of alcohol use has slightly increased from 92.1% in 2018 to 90.7% in 2020. Students also reported that 77.9% of friends think it is wrong or very wrong to use alcohol.

* Note – Students see less harm associated with marijuana use compared to alcohol use.



Further, substance abuse leads to an array of community problems, including:

- Addiction
- Child abuse/neglect
- Juvenile crimes
- Low academic success
- Domestic violence
- Homelessness

Youth and young adults have demonstrated significant usage over a documented period of time. Variables such as easy access, social norms, limited perception of risk, and low enforcement rates contribute to continued usage among the population. This population is also underserved by prevention programming. Fort Bend County has grown by more than 90% in the last decade, stretching service providers and district resources to the limit. Social service organizations have had their capacity to serve limited significantly by funding cuts and reduced philanthropic giving.

Social norms have also led to an increase in youth alcohol use. Qualitative interviews with the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office reveal that social hosting (i.e., parties hosted by parents where minors are served alcohol) is a bigger problem in the county than most would like to admit. Parents seem unaware that offering alcohol to minors, even in their own home, is a class A Misdemeanor. Fort Bend County has no county or municipal level ordinances that target underage drinking. Citations for minors in possession of alcohol remain low, despite youth reporting regular alcohol use.

PRIDE 2020 school survey data show past 30 days use of prescription drugs for 11th graders is 2.3%. Annual use of prescription drugs for 11th graders is 3.1%. Perceptions of harmfulness prescription drug use among 11th graders is 82.3% and for 7th graders it is 80.7%. The PRIDE survey also reported 19.5% of 11th graders say prescription drugs are very easy or fairly easy to obtain. 18.9% of students believe their friends think there is little or no harm in using prescriptions not prescribed to you.

The following table reports the number of LCISD students sent to alternative campuses as a result of substance abuse offenses.

	Total # of LCISD Students sent to Alternative Campuses	# of LCISD Students sent to Alternative Campuses (Substance Abuse related)
2017-2018	340	90
2018-2019	353	61
2020-2021	338	134

The following table reports the number of FBISD students sent to 2 alternative campuses as a result of substance abuse offenses.

	Total # of FBISD Students sent to Alternative Campuses	# of FBISD Students sent to Alternative Campuses (Substance Abuse related)
2013-2014	816	257
2014-2015	755	244
2015-2016	695	255
2016-2017	745	255
2017-2018	643	237
2018-2019	596	259
2020-2021	172	82

Potential Response to Problem

Fort Bend Community Prevention Coalition (FBCPC)

The Coalition is dedicated to identifying and addressing issues in the community that contribute to substance use among youth and young adults. Coalitions promote coordination, collaboration, and efficient use of community resources among:

- Parents
- Youth
- School
- Law enforcement
- Healthcare
- Faith community
- Business
- Young adults
- Media
- Civic leaders
- Non-profits
- Local/State Government

FBCPC believes it can change the environment, social norms and perceptions regarding substance abuse through seven proven strategies that affect community change: (1) providing information, (2) enhancing skills, (3) providing support, (4) enhancing access/reducing barriers, (5) changing consequences, (6) changing physical design, and (7) modifying/changing policies.

Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse

FBRC's prevention programs are based on the idea that resilient children- those who are able to withstand difficult circumstances- are the least likely to use addictive substances. Skilled youth prevention counselors lead classroom based curriculum programs, small group exercises and one-on-one sessions on school campuses across Fort Bend County. Students learn life skills like communication, healthy stress management, peer interactions, handling adversity and positive decision making.

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Limited access to available emergency shelters and basic human needs	<p>Fort Bend Women's Center (FBWC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2020, FBWC served 1711 family violence and sexual assault victims, women, and children. In 2020, FBWC referred 752 callers to other shelters due to lack of space at the shelter. <p>Missouri City Police Department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In FY 2020, the Missouri City Police Department Victim Assistance Program aided 109 victims of domestic violence, nearly 30% more than in FY 2019. <p>Daya, Inc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2020, Daya received 1,496 calls from Fort Bend County and served 82 domestic violence/sexual assault survivors from Fort Bend County.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>The Fort Bend Women's Center (FBWC) shelter is the only provider of emergency shelter services for domestic violence and/or sexual abuse survivors in Fort Bend County. The shelter provides emergency shelter for up to 65 survivors at a time. Entrance into the shelter is limited to victims who are actively fleeing domestic violence and sexual assault and their children.</p> <p>The development of the Fort Bend County Domestic Violence High-Risk Taskforce (DVHRT) in 2020 created a community partnership among The Fort Bend Women's Center (FBWC), Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office, Fort Bend County law enforcement, and Texas Forensic Nursing Examiners (TXFNE) to assist victims of intimate partner violence who are at a high-risk for lethality. The FBWC provides immediate emergency shelter to high-risk victims who are referred to the agency through local law enforcement on the scene of an intimate partner violence incident. If the shelter is at capacity, FBWC has limited hotel funds reserved for these high-risk clients in need of immediate shelter. FBWC also provides priority non-residential new client intake appointments for high-risk clients identified by local law enforcement with the aim of expediting victims into non-residential services.</p> <p>Daya provides culturally specific, non-residential services to South Asian and other similar immigrant groups who are survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Daya meets immediate, basic needs for clients including access to shelter, emergency hotel stays,</p>	

<p>transportation, food and financial assistance for food, housing, medical needs, and legal services.</p> <p>There is limited emergency shelter space available to victims of family violence. Local police departments regularly struggle to find adequate resources for victims in the area.</p>
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>
<p>Staff refer people to alternative shelters when they are not eligible for the FBWC's services or when there is insufficient space. However, local resources are limited and most referrals must be for sources outside Fort Bend County.</p>

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Need for additional resources for prosecution and follow-up investigation of protective orders and criminal cases involving family violence</p>	<p>Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In FY 2021 the Fort Bend County DA's Office – Family Violence Division received nearly 2,500 law enforcement case referrals for possible prosecution.
<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 District Attorney's Office vigorously prosecutes these cases, but it needs support from existing grants to make this possible.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>State and federal funding is crucial to be able to continue to conduct these important exams to victims of domestic violence.</p> <p>Texas Forensic Nurse Examiners (TxFNE) conducts medical forensic exams on victims of domestic violence. TxFNE has partnered with Fort Bend for the Domestic Violence High-Risk Team (DVHRT) in order to expand services/ exams for victims of domestic violence. These exams not only assist with evaluating the victim's health and trauma, they also link victims of domestic violence to crucial community partners and provide a valuable medical forensic record that can assist the Fort Bend County District Attorney's office with additional evidence. They provide the opportunity for expert witness testimony for these cases. TxFNE is unable to bill insurance for medical forensic exams for domestic violence since they are not currently a billable exam.</p>	

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Victim/witness services for adults within the criminal court system	Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In FY 2020, the Victim Witness Division provided services to 7,565 victims and through September 2021, 8,388 services were provided.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Fort Bend County continues to be one of the fastest growing counties in the nation. That increase requires additional personnel to work the growing caseload and provide victims with not only mandated assistance, but also 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 case information, status, and support. Other important duties include addressing a victim's specific needs and making appropriate referrals for counseling and other resources. It is imperative that crime victims in 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 liaisons to address victim rights during the probationary period	Fort Bend County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victim Services Program assisted 968 assaultive and monetary crime victims in FY 2020. Sugar Land Police Department (SLPD) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In FY 2020, the Victim Assistance Program aided 4,550 victims of family violence.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>In the criminal justice system, victims often feel disconnected from the process when they try to obtain assistance or information. The Victim Services Program provides a linkage whereby victims can obtain assistance. Without these services, victims of assaults as well as of property crimes will not receive proper notification of probation status, updates, and/or monetary compensation.</p>	

Potential Response to Problem

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. However, maintaining the personnel to provide the mandated services for victims is essential.

Priority #5	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of adequate affordable housing for crime victims in Fort Bend County	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019• The Fort Bend Women's Center (FBWC) provided 126 housing units impacting 263 individuals in 2020 and referred 752 victims to other shelters for lack of space.• Daya provided three apartment units with 12-month leases in Fort Bend County in 2020.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>The Missouri City Police Department Victim Assistance Program has found numerous incidences of a lack of affordable housing for victims who are attempting to relocate in order to escape their abusers. In certain cases, the Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Fund will reimburse victims for relocation. However, the maximum reimbursement is \$1,800.00 for three months of rent and \$2,000.00 for moving expenses. From 2015-2019, the median monthly gross rent in Fort Bend County was \$1,451, making it prohibitive for many victims to relocate within the county. Finding affordable housing in other counties creates an unnecessary burden on victims because they must travel back to Fort Bend County to cooperate with investigations, attend court dates, and apply for protective orders. In other cases, victims may not receive reimbursement approval through the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund, and must pay for relocation themselves. Further, Hurricane Harvey and other recent flooding events have reduced housing in the area as residents relocate into temporary apartments. Additionally, there has been a marked increase in rents across the county since COVID began. In 2020 there was an increase of 6.69% adding to the county's lack of affordable housing. Even with the assistance of federal housing programs, the rent is not affordable nor sustainable giving the earning potential of our clients. Further, there is a dearth of housing options for clients with severe mental illness, often resulting in homelessness. Homelessness places this vulnerable population in danger, often, grave danger.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Although domestic violence and sexual assault affect people of all socioeconomic status, the majority of Daya and FBWC clients earn less than \$10,000 per year. Children raised in violent homes are more likely to grow up to be abusive or abused as adults. Lack of</p>	

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 are essential components of a successful self-sufficiency program for this population. Daya and FBWC have experienced that multiple clients must leave Fort Bend County to find affordable housing. Rapid Rehousing can provide clients up to 24 months of subsidy, however, a vast majority of this population require longer assistance due to the trauma endured over time. There are also limited permanent housing programs in Fort Bend County and none for the severely mentally ill.

Priority #6																																					
Problem Identified	Data																																				
<p>Continuing need for support services for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking and their children</p> <p>Lack of dedicated bed space and transitional housing for adult victims of human trafficking</p>	<p>Fort Bend County Women’s Center (FBWC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2020 Texas Department of Public Safety’s Crime in Texas Report indicated that 4,415 family violence offenses and 200 sexual assault offenses were reported to law enforcement in Fort Bend County. <table> <tr> <td>FORT BEND COUNTY</td><td>4,415</td></tr> <tr> <td>ARCOLA PD</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr> <td>FORT BEND CO SO</td><td>3,129</td></tr> <tr> <td>FULSHEAR PD</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr> <td>MEADOWS PLACE PD</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr> <td>MISSOURI CITY PD</td><td>264</td></tr> <tr> <td>NEEDVILLE PD</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr> <td>RICHMOND PD</td><td>98</td></tr> <tr> <td>ROSENBERG PD</td><td>489</td></tr> <tr> <td>STAFFORD PD</td><td>171</td></tr> <tr> <td>SUGAR LAND PD</td><td>218</td></tr> </table> <table> <tr> <td>FORT BEND COUNTY</td><td>200</td></tr> <tr> <td>FORT BEND CO SO</td><td>128</td></tr> <tr> <td>MEADOWS PLACE PD</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr> <td>MISSOURI CITY PD</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr> <td>RICHMOND PD</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr> <td>STAFFORD PD</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr> <td>SUGAR LAND PD</td><td>17</td></tr> </table>	FORT BEND COUNTY	4,415	ARCOLA PD	8	FORT BEND CO SO	3,129	FULSHEAR PD	21	MEADOWS PLACE PD	7	MISSOURI CITY PD	264	NEEDVILLE PD	10	RICHMOND PD	98	ROSENBERG PD	489	STAFFORD PD	171	SUGAR LAND PD	218	FORT BEND COUNTY	200	FORT BEND CO SO	128	MEADOWS PLACE PD	1	MISSOURI CITY PD	25	RICHMOND PD	11	STAFFORD PD	18	SUGAR LAND PD	17
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2020, the FBWC served 1711 victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. • FBWC is the only known victim service provider that provides Neurofeedback for abuse survivors. • <u>Neurofeedback Program Metrics and Outcomes from Oct. 2020-Sept. 2021</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Total Neurofeedback-Related Sessions Completed: 1265 ○ Neurofeedback Training Sessions: 947 ○ Quantitative EEGs: 86 ○ Videotaped Interviews: 76 ○ Mental Health Assessments: 87 ○ Results Review Session with Client: 71 • Overall average percent change in score from pre-neurofeedback to post-neurofeedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0: -20% ○ DSM-V Cross-Cutting Symptom Measure: -48% ○ DSM-V Severity Measure for Depression: -57% ○ DSM-V Severity Measure for Generalized Anxiety Disorder: -53% ○ DSM-V Severity Measure for Posttraumatic Stress Symptoms: -53% ○ DSM-V Level 2 Measure for Substance Use (Adult): -89% <p>The Missouri City Police Department Victim Assistance Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In FY 2020, the Missouri City Police Department Victim Assistance Program aided 27 adult and 4 child victims of sexual assault. <p>Elijah Rising Restoration Campus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2018, Elijah Rising's Fort Bend intervention teams contacted 354 females actively being trafficked in Fort Bend County. • In 2018, Elijah Rising located 42 sexually oriented business with either confirmed or highly probable instances of sex trafficking and sexual exploitation occurring on a regular basis. <p>Daya, Inc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2020, Daya supported 74 South Asian clients from Fort Bend County with culturally-specific services.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>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, they experience extreme financial hardships related to the cost of relocating and restoring a standard of living independent of their</p>	

abuse. Victims often lose their jobs because they miss work to hide scars, seek medical attention, and attend police interviews and court dates. As is the nature of domestic violence, abusers use power and control to get victims fired from jobs by filing false complaints and causing disturbances at the 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.

The 2014 Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force Report found that finding and providing appropriate services for victims of human trafficking was a challenge statewide. Texas has recognized this as a unique population of victims in need of specialized therapeutic services. Adults 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, childcare, and job skills training. Devotion of resources by the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office and law enforcement agencies in the county in 2019 to the time intensive investigation of human trafficking related offenses will result in a significant increase in the number of victims of human trafficking related offenses needing services. These individuals often have no home other than that provided by the perpetrator.

Potential Response to Problem

[The Fort Bend Women's Center](#) serves women, men, and children who are domestic violence and sexual assault victims. Available services include emergency shelter, crisis intervention, case management for shelter and housing clients, individual and group counseling, neurofeedback for adults and children, legal advocacy, hospital and court accompaniment advocacy for sexual assault victims, child mentorships, housing placement, and job a life and wellness skills program that includes education guidance, employment skill training, and an employment program through a partnership between FBWC, Pennywise Resale Stores, and Express Employment Professionals,. These and other support services are key to the success of survivors trying to begin self-sufficient lives for themselves and their children in an environment free from abuse. The Fort Bend Women's Center plans to increase the staff by the end of 2022 to provide more quality, intensive case management to those clients experiencing the greatest trauma.

FBWC serves underserved populations including survivors with a disabling condition (mental health disorder diagnosis or potential traumatic brain injury), lower socioeconomic demographic and minority populations (African Americans and Hispanics). Clients with traumatic brain injury, especially those from lower SES, are often unable to obtain traditional medical or mental health treatment because it is unaffordable and /or inaccessible. FBWC is one of the few agencies (if any) that are providing neurofeedback therapy to survivors. The clinical services are provided in English and Spanish at three different locations.

[The Elijah Rising Restoration Campus](#) is a dedicated therapeutic facility for adult victims of trafficking in Fort Bend County. It is an 18-24 month, trauma-informed restorative program built on evidence-based practices. The International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS) guidelines informs its practices for Complex PTSD, as well as the Substance Abuse

and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The program also features case management, mental health services, mentorship, and job skills training. The Elijah Rising Restoration Campus currently has the capacity to house six survivors of sex trafficking in the restoration program and plans to increase available bed space for adult survivors and their children by the end of 2021.

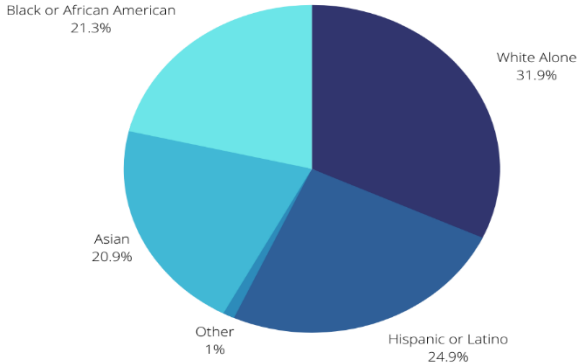
Daya provides trauma-informed, culturally specific mental health services such as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in a variety of South Asian languages. It also provides legal advocacy and related financial assistance for family and immigration law. Daya is a Department of Justice accredited organization and can prepare immigration paperwork for clients seeking immigration relief due to abuse.

Fort Bend County must prioritize development of the Office of the Governor’s mandated CARE Coordination initiative to implement trauma-informed services for victims of human trafficking related offenses.

Fort Bend County must create partnerships with local businesses that recognize the dynamics of domestic violence and are willing to employ victims who are attempting to be financially independent of their abusers. More outreach with corporate managers, business owners, and human resources departments is necessary to raise awareness about the consequences of domestic violence and the workplace. Businesses must incorporate proactive policies that advocate and help victims recover from trauma.

Priority #7	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Domestic violence and sexual assault prevention programs need to be in place in all Fort Bend County educational institutions, from elementary school through post-secondary educational and vocational programs	<p>Fort Bend County Women’s Center (FBWC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the Texas Council on Family Violence 183 women were killed by their intimate partners in 2020. This represents the highest number of deaths recorded in the last decade. The number of women killed by their male intimate partners increased 22%, from 150 deaths recorded in 2019. • In 2020, Seven fatalities occurred in Fort Bend County, a 75% increase from four deaths in 2019. • According to the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, 53.7% of total victimizations occur between the ages of one and twenty-four, and 70% of victimizations are perpetrated against females. • National Coalition Against Domestic Violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1/3 of women and 1/4 of men have been victims of intimate partner violence; ○ women between the ages of 18-24 are most commonly abused by an intimate partner;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ one in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence each year; and ○ 90% of these children are eyewitnesses to this violence.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>The Fort Bend Women’s Center (FBWC) has taken a holistic approach to address domestic violence and sexual assault in our community:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) In 2020, more than 800 12 to 18-year-olds heard conversations about healthy relationships through Fort Bend ISD Leadership 101. Each student in the group attends a different district high school and is in charge of awareness activities in their specific school. In 2020 FBWC assisted the students with launching awareness months at each school for April (SAAM) and October (DVAM). The students put together infographics, activities, events and social media engagement as well as putting together a committee to continue this into following years. FBWC also helped launch the Katy ISD “Classmates for Consent” club. (2) Continued the work of the Student Athlete Awareness division, which raises awareness of sexual assault using a curriculum that addresses issues specific to student athletes. In 2020, FBWC spoke to approximately 285 student athletes about consent laws, sexual assault, and Bystander Intervention strategies. (3) Presented on topics such as healthy relationships, teen dating violence, sexual assault awareness/consent, and bystander intervention to approximately 540 high school students in Fort Bend ISD, Pearland ISD, Katy ISD, and Lamar Consolidated ISD in 2020. (4) FBWC partners with college campuses including University of Houston, Houston Community College in Stafford, Rice University, and Texas State Technical College for presentations to students on topics such as healthy relationships, sexual assault/consent, and stalking. <p>Daya follows a two-pronged approach to end the cycle of abuse in the South Asian community. Along with direct services, Daya educates the community in an effort to prevent domestic violence. Daya provides training about the dynamics of dating and sexual violence, explores the intersections of violence in the South Asian community with cultural and faith groups, and initiates projects to promote empowerment and healthy relationships among young adults through training to student groups and student collectives.</p>	

Priority #8													
Problem Identified	Data												
Lack of culturally sensitive resources for crime victims	<p>U.S. Census Bureau Fort Bend County Demographics:</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Fort Bend County Demographics Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Ethnicity</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>White Alone</td> <td>31.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Black or African American</td> <td>21.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>20.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hispanic or Latino</td> <td>24.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>1%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Missouri City Police Department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In FY 2020, the Missouri City Police Department assisted 21 Asian, 144 Black/African American, and 79 White or Hispanic/Latino victims. <p>Daya</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2020, Daya supported 367 clients, 80 of whom resided in Fort Bend County. Daya also produced 6 awareness and education events and six educational publications, reaching more than 2,959 Fort Bend County residents. In 2020, Daya engaged 24 volunteers from Fort Bend County. <p>Fort Bend Women's Center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FBWC employs staff who are bilingual or multilingual in Spanish and various Asian languages. All program staff who work directly with clients are required to receive training to improve cultural awareness and sensitivity. 	Ethnicity	Percentage	White Alone	31.9%	Black or African American	21.3%	Asian	20.9%	Hispanic or Latino	24.9%	Other	1%
Ethnicity	Percentage												
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Hispanic or Latino	24.9%												
Other	1%												
Problem Details													
<p>Fort Bend County is one of the largest and most diverse counties in Texas. Recent census data indicates almost equal representation of the nation's four major ethnic communities — African American, Asian, Hispanic, and White. Violent crimes such as domestic violence and child abuse are prevalent in all societies, regardless of ethnicity. Fort Bend county's services must be culturally sensitive to serve its diverse population. Cultural and language barriers can keep crime victims from reporting crimes and seeking assistance.</p>													

Since 1996, Daya has supported South Asian victims facing unique barriers when navigating mainstream systems. Some challenges are more apparent, such as limited English proficiency. However, victims also face a distrust of law enforcement that stems from experiences in their home country. They experience violence from their in-laws and lack family support due to distance and cultural taboos. A victim's immigration status is often tied her abuser and used as a tool of control. Abusers threaten deportation and fail to file the proper paperwork, depriving their partners of the ability to learn about valid immigration relief. These challenges compound an already complex system for South Asian victims who need safety and recovery. South Asian victims do not readily access mainstream services. Domestic and sexual violence is underreported and underestimated. Cultural taboos cause victims to minimize their abuse. Worse, traditional danger assessments do not capture the unique vulnerabilities faced by victims in this community.

Victims of domestic minor sex trafficking are often detained for crimes committed in the process of their captivity (drugs, truancy, theft, assault, etc.). They are often not aware they are victims of a crime, 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 be in and out of jail throughout their lives.

FBCWC works with many clients who are not proficient in the English language. This barrier creates an issue if there are no staff members who can connect with that client. Translators are a widely used resource, but that can lead to distrust from clients who worry that something may get lost in translation particularly when there are cultural differences. Translation applications are not always appropriate or effective for use with the victim population.

Potential Response to Problem

Daya is a trusted cultural expert for South Asian survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Daya provides crisis and ongoing counseling, including innovative approaches for trauma. Sessions are conducted in the victim's native language with mental health experts who understand cultural nuances. Advocates assist victims throughout the criminal justice process to ensure a timely and knowledgeable experience. They assist in police interviews, criminal justice notifications, and the protective order process. Daya also supports clients throughout their family and immigration legal processes. They provide in-depth legal advocacy, financial assistance, and court accompaniment. They serve as a liaison with attorneys for language and cultural expertise. As a Department of Justice accredited agency, Daya plays an active role in assisting clients to prepare their immigration cases. By partnering with mainstream shelters, Daya bridges the gap to help victims access immediate safety. They provide transportation to shelter, food to meet cultural dietary restrictions, case management, and emergency accommodation. They then assist clients in transitioning into one of two culturally specific housing programs. Daya also provides community awareness and education at cultural events and trainings to reach untapped victims. They lead a grassroots program in which volunteers speak privately

about victims services to groups in their homes or places of worship. Once the victim has safely fled, advocates also provide mobile advocacy.

Print and electronic materials should be translated into the major spoken languages. Further, an effort must be made to partner with agencies such as Daya and [Boat People S.O.S.](#) to provide culturally sensitive resources. Agencies can also raise awareness about the services they provide and encourage victims to seek help by hosting outreach efforts with culturally specific populations.

The Fort Bend County Women's Center works to link clients with staff who are culturally sensitive and capable of providing services in the native language of agency clients. Through partnership with translators or recruiting staff that is bi-/multi-lingual FBWC has been able to accommodate more diverse clients in FY 2021, than in the past. The agency currently employs multilingual staff in the positions of counselors, case managers, hotline advocates, residential advocates, and neurofeedback clinicians.

Since the inception of the neurofeedback program in 2014, there has been a gap for FBWC's non-English speaking clients requesting neurofeedback therapy due to the program not having bi/multilingual staff. As of fall 2021, the neurofeedback program has recruited staff to close this gap for Spanish, Hindi, Urdu, Kannada, and Tulu-speaking clients. As a result, the Neurofeedback waitlist for Spanish speakers was entirely eliminated. In addition to providing therapy in client's native languages and translating Neurofeedback documents explaining the process, the clinicians have offered translation services for agency-wide intakes and assessments. Additionally, the clinicians have assisted clients by translating forms such as food stamps, disability paperwork, immigration forms and other forms necessary for self-sufficiency. The bi/multilingual clinicians have connected with other staff to create a collaborative, multi-disciplinary framework and to enhance cultural sensitivity.

Since most agency South Asian clients require legal assistance for immigration purposes, clinicians have collaborated with nonprofits like Tahirih Justice Center and other specialized immigration agencies to provide VAWA letters and supportive documentation that are required for Asylum cases. Additionally, clinicians have facilitated the navigation of cultural barriers when communicating with attorneys and supportive legal staff working on these complex cases.

FBWC clinicians have also collaborated with other multicultural agencies such as Alliance for Multicultural Community Services and continue to keep other supportive agencies engaged in the services provided for FBWC clients. In addition, FBWC has also been conducting outreach in small social gatherings especially in the South Asian community with the purpose of educating South Asian survivors about domestic violence and providing culture-specific resources in order to alleviate barriers so that these survivors are more likely to seek the help they need.

Priority #9	
Problem Identified	Data
<p>Lack of free or low-cost legal services.</p> <p>Abusers are more likely to pursue sole custody.</p> <p>Domestic violence custody cases tend to be lengthy and costly.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survivors who are represented by an attorney can be 2.5 times as likely to successfully obtain a protective order than those who do not have a lawyer. (<i>Jane Murphy, Engaging with the State: The Growing Reliance on Lawyers and Judges to Protect Battered Women, 11 Am. U. J. Gender Soc. Pol’y & L. 499, 511-12, 2003</i>). Women who obtain protective orders report feeling safer and more empowered, better about themselves, and a sense of overall life improvement. (<i>Karla Fischer & Mary Rose, When “Enough Is Enough”: Battered Women’s Decision Making Around Court Orders of Protection, 41 Crime & Delinquency 414, 417, 1995</i>). In general, having an attorney’s assistance with ancillary legal matters further helps women achieve greater economic self-sufficiency (and perceptions of self-sufficiency), which in turn makes leaving their relationships a more realistic option. (<i>Supporting Survivors: The Economic Benefits of Providing Civil Legal Assistance to Survivors of Domestic Violence, Rosenberg & Grab, July 2015</i>). According to a <u>2011 report</u> by Mary Przekop in the <i>Seattle Journal of Social Justice</i>. Abusive fathers are “more than twice as likely” to petition for sole custody of their children as non-abusive fathers. Since December 2020, Fort Bend Women’s Center Legal Department has received nearly 362 requests for legal services.
Problem Details	
<p>When victims leave abusive relationships, they are often in need of legal services for protective orders, divorce, custody, enforcement of custody orders, immigration, and various housing related issues. Because victims are often not allowed by their abusers to have a job and/or because abusers often maintain control over the financial assets in an abusive relationship, victims typically cannot afford legal counsel. Pro bono legal representation is often limited and sparse, and Fort Bend County is no exception. Domestic violence custody cases can be lengthy, complicated, and costly further</p>	

limiting a victim's ability to retain affordable counsel or find a pro bono attorney. Additionally, since the Covid-19 outbreak, there has been a substantial increase in domestic violence cases. As such, there is a growing need to assist victims in divorce, custody, and protective order cases.

Potential Response to Problem

Increase in state and federal funding.

The Legal Department of the Fort Bend Women's Center was created in July of 2020 and offers representation for clients in divorce, custody and protective order cases. Since the inception of the legal department, there has been an overwhelming demand for legal services. An increase in state and federal funding is needed to increase legal staff including additional attorneys, paralegals, and legal advocates for court accompaniment in order to meet the anticipated needs of incoming clients.

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Issues for abused/neglected children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued need for additional appropriate, specialized trauma treatment services for abused and neglected children Continued need for additional, specialized treatment services for non-offending caregivers Continued need for additional system and facility to meet acute and non-acute pediatric sexual assault exam needs Lack of appropriate, specialized treatment services for alleged adult and juvenile offenders Lack of a program for reunification services for adolescent offenders and their sibling victims Lack of mentoring program for child victims of abuse/neglect who are not in foster care 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 Lack of appropriate emergency material needs 	<p>Child Advocates of Fort Bend, 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Served 2,690 clients 1,774 forensic interviews of child victims 394 criminal court advocacy clients Case management coordination for 1,533 clients <p>Fort Bend Community Partners Rainbow Room, 2019-2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Served 1,935 CPS clients 4,792 assigned cases <p>Texas Forensic Nurse Examiners (TxFNE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seventy-six of the 912 victims that TxFNE served in FY 2020 were Fort Bend County cases. Twenty-nine were pediatric and adolescent. <p>Fort Bend County Women's Center (FBWC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2020, FBWC provided play therapy to 60 child victims and witnesses of abuse. <p>U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 2019 One-Year Estimates of Language Spoken at Home found that 17.2% of Fort Bend County residents are native Spanish speakers.

for abused and neglected children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for all of the above services to be available for Spanish-speaking clients 	
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>The American Medical Association has found that 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, and substance use problems. Left untreated, abused children can spend a lifetime battling the effects of their childhood trauma. According to Dr. Nancy Kellogg, M.D. at the University of Texas Health Science Center of San Antonio Department of Pediatrics, 40% of abused children suffer abuse again before their eighteenth birthday.</p> <p>Fort Bend County's Hispanic/Latino population is growing alongside the rest of the County's populations. Seventeen-point-two percent of Fort Bend County residents speak Spanish as their native language, and they need and deserve access to culturally sensitive Spanish language services.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p><u>The Children's Advocacy Center (CAC)</u> offers specialized, trauma-focused therapeutic services in English and Spanish for child victims and their non-offending family members. Among other barriers, lack of transportation and the caregiver's work schedules prevent clients from accessing CAC services. The therapy department has increased the number of therapists to accommodate its clients' needs. Efforts are ongoing to connect with trauma-informed community clinicians who can be referral sources to address the growing need for access to services.</p> <p><u>The Fort Bend Women's Center (FBWC)</u> offers specialized, trauma-focused therapeutic services in English and Spanish for child victims. Also offered are family therapy, individual therapy, group therapy, and parenting classes for non-offending family members. The agency has seen a drastic increase in the need for services to child victims, and funding is needed to hire and train therapists who specialize in trauma-focused therapy for children.</p> <p>Additionally, FBWC is able to provide shelter to minors experiencing family or dating violence in emergency situations. In Texas, family violence shelters can provide shelter or care for 15 days to an unaccompanied minor in an emergency that constitutes immediate danger to physical health and safety of the minor, which includes family violence or dating violence. When certain conditions are present, this service can be longer as needed. After 15 days, shelter can be continued to be provided if the minor is 16 years old or more, resides separate from the parent/guardian (regardless of parent/guardian consent), and manages own finances (regardless of source of income). In addition, shelter can be continued after 15 days if the minor at any age is unmarried and pregnant or is the parent of a child.</p>	

(Sections 32.201 & 32.202, Texas Family Code)

The Fort Bend Women's Center is able to provide counseling to minors without parent/guardian consent under the provisions of the Texas Family Code. Agencies can provide counseling from a licensed or certified professional to minors for any duration if it is related to a few topics, including physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, and there is no court order prohibiting the sessions. (Section 32.004, Texas Family Code)

The Fort Bend Women's Center provides mentorship to minors experiencing family or dating violence to help break the cycle of violence and provide support, as well as neurofeedback peak performance services for children ages 6-17 years old.

There is limited access to medical facilities in Fort Bend County that provide full service forensic nursing services for child victims of sexual and physical abuse. In 2019, Harris Health System secured space at AccessHealth's Richmond location to provide forensic nursing services to children locally on a part-time weekly basis. Additionally, [Texas Forensic Nurse Examiners \(TxFNE\)](#) has four locations in Fort Bend County that provide forensic nursing services for children and adults, in addition to mobile services.

Professionals in the child abuse system have observed an increase in the number of adolescent offenders and a corresponding strain on the availability of specialized treatment providers for this population. The CAC collaborates with CPS, law enforcement, and the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office to seek out the best course of action to ensure child safety and treatment. When adolescent offenders have completed a sex offender treatment program, there needs to be a structured, therapeutic reunification program for those families seeking reunification between adolescent offenders and their sibling victims.

The CAC has implemented a mentoring program for child victims who are no longer at risk of abuse in the home but still need extra support to help them heal from their experiences. The volunteer mentors, under supervision of a social worker, meet with children at the home, school and events to provide support and guidance. Families and children must opt-in to the program.

Because of the complexity of child abuse cases, all of the agencies that investigate and prosecute these cases must collaborate to lessen the trauma children experience from the system, and when appropriate, to strengthen cases. The CAC facilitates communication, coordination, and collaboration between CPS, law enforcement, the District Attorney's Office, and community providers. Regular meetings among these agencies to ensure that the focus remains on the child.

During prosecution, child witnesses and their non-offending family members must stay engaged in the criminal justice process. The CAC provides criminal court orientation, accompaniment and support to families as they go through this system. The support helps families understand the process and helps child witnesses build resiliency and strength.

The CAC is the designated care coordinator for child sex trafficking victims. The CAC will need to collaborate with community groups to provide specialized services for those victims.

The [Fort Bend 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 serves children aging out of the system or attending college. The Rainbow Room is a resource room stocked with snacks, diapers, school supplies, clothes, toiletries, toys and other items that families in crisis may need. Only new items are stocked. Receiving new items can have a significant impact on how well children feel cared for and fit in with their peers. The Rainbow Room is available to caseworkers 24/7.

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Issues for children in foster care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of trauma-informed care training for professionals working with children in the foster care system • Lack of available licensed foster care homes, adoptive homes and shelters • Lack of funding to assist family/kinship placements for children in foster care • Lack of parent/child visitation programs • Need to expand customized programs serving “at-risk” children in foster care • Absence of transitional housing and services for children aging out of foster care • Lack of child abuse and neglect prevention programs in schools • Lack of collaborative efforts to meet needs of abused/neglected children 	Child Advocates of Fort Bend, 2019 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 222 children in foster care in Fort Bend County served by Court-Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers Fort Bend Community Partners Rainbow Room, 2019-2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,935 CPS clients served • 4,792 assigned cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

Problem Details

Children in care of the state face many difficulties, both because of the original abuse and because of the lack of permanency in their lives. Too many must live in a succession of different homes and shelters and remain in care for the rest of their childhood. Children who suffer from abuse and neglect are much more likely to grow up with unmet medical, emotional, mental health, and social needs.

Research has found that foster children face roadblocks that other economically disadvantaged children do not face. Children in foster care reported that they had concerns about maintaining ties with their biological parents and caring for siblings that distracted them from school. Foster children reported that they often avoided social interactions with peers in order to keep their foster care status hidden. Loss for a foster child means loss of family, community, friends, and traditional support systems. All foster children, to some degree, have experienced trauma through physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, or sexual abuse. The effects of trauma for the child are cumulative and often lead to social and learning problems. Most foster children struggle to trust adults who can help and support them. When a child is placed in foster care, their chance at academic success immediately decreases. Students lose 4 to 6 months of academic progress every time they change schools and attend an average of 6 different schools in their K-12 experience. Children in long-term foster care average 10 different moves during their first 3 years in care. Low academic performance creates serious long-term consequences. Roughly, 50% of these children repeat at least one grade, are below grade level, or never finish high school.

In FY 2019, there were 482 children placed in foster in Fort Bend County and 82 children removed from their homes. Only twenty-eight of these children were placed in Fort Bend County foster homes, meaning that 2/3 of the children removed from Fort Bend County homes were placed in other counties, and less than six percent of the children who resided in Fort Bend County foster care during FY 2019 were from Fort Bend County. This displacement adds to the trauma children incur when they come into care.

Potential Response to Problem

[Child Advocates of Fort Bend](#) is a non-profit agency serving abused and neglected children in Fort Bend County. When children are in foster care, they go to court and judges must make important decisions that greatly impact their lives. *Court Appointed Special Advocates* (CASA) is a program under the umbrella of Child Advocates in which a volunteer is appointed to every child in protective custody. Volunteers generally carry only one case, have the opportunity to spend more time with the children than other parties involved in the case, and serve as an extra set of eyes and ears for the judge.

[The CASA program](#) has two specialized staff members dedicated to supervising volunteers who are on the infant-toddler court team. CASA has an infant and toddler team that trains volunteers to work with this special population. However, there is an ongoing need for specialized programs that provide more hands-on training for parents.

There is a gap in specialized services and targeted support for children aged 6-13 years. These children are at a critical age as they establish their values, character, educational performance, self-esteem, peer connections and adult role models. Child Advocates provides a program called *Nurturing Education and Social Triumphs* (NEST) that focuses on education, social skills and health.

Participating youth may attend *WINGS Life Skills* trainings where they visit local businesses to learn about different fields of work and learn how to interview for a job, manage a budget, rent an apartment, get a car and open a checking account. Expanding the learning environment beyond the classroom setting has proven that hands-on learning is effective. These youth also participate in *WINGS Campus Crawls* to visit post-secondary education sites and experience college life by visiting campuses and interacting with college students.

The CASA program also has two Trust Based Relational Intervention Practitioners (TBRI, a trauma-informed care model) on staff that have received training to work with children from hard places that have experienced trauma. These staff members are able to provide training in TBRI to CASA volunteers as well as other community partners.

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Lack of programs to prevent child victimization</p> <p>Need to expand and diversify programs that identify youth development needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESCAPE Family Resource Center (closed 2019) • Texas Department of Family and Protective Services • Texas Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2019 • Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2018

Problem Details

Research indicates that yelling and other harsh discipline practices put children at risk for maltreatment and stunt the development of necessary social and emotional competencies. Findings from “*Tuning In*,” a national parent survey conducted by Zero to Three, show that the “exception gap” between what children are able and expected to do in early childhood is a significant source of frustration for parents. This lack of understanding can result in parents using harsh discipline methods instead of regulating their emotions and helping their children learn to do the same.

In 2019, 37.6% of Texas high school students seventeen years and younger reported ever having had sexual intercourse. In Fort Bend County, there were 254 births to mothers aged 15-19 years in 2018. Parenting classes could help these young parents support their children’s development, prevent child maltreatment and additional unplanned pregnancy, and avoid other risk-taking activities. There is a great need for no-cost and low-cost parenting classes in Fort Bend County.

Potential Response to Problem

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 are primarily responsible 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 may need some support to do so.

Scientific research indicates that the first five years of life are critical to a person’s physical, emotional and intellectual development. ESCAPE Family Resource Center was a program designed to increase parents’ knowledge about child development. The Center’s closure has left a void in the community. Providing funding to establish an agency or supplement existing agencies so that they may provide parenting classes to this population could fill the gap left by the closure of ESCAPE Family Resource Center.

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Prevalence of child victims of juvenile sex offenders <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued need for a specialized prosecutor to handle cases involving Juvenile sex offenders• Lack of appropriate reunification counseling and services for Juvenile offenders	Fort Bend County District Attorney’s Office <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In FY 2020, 96 juveniles have been referred to the Fort Bend County Juvenile Courts for sexual based offenses. This number does not reflect multiple offenses or multiple victims. The number of victims in need of appropriate counseling and treatment services is significantly higher.

<p>and related victims cohabitating in the same residence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Licensed Sex Offender Treatment Providers to provide appropriate counseling services for offenders 	
<p><i>Problem Details</i></p>	
<p>Juvenile sex crimes tend to fall into the category of opportunistic offenses. Juveniles offend when they are unsupervised or improperly supervised. As a result, it is common for the victims of a juvenile's sex offense to be a member of the victim's family or household. The juvenile justice system has a strong preference for rehabilitation, and the juvenile offender may receive intensive sex offender treatment and rehabilitation while residing in the same home as their victim.</p> <p>In preparation for the juvenile offender's reintegration into the home, the victim should have the opportunity to receive appropriate counseling and therapeutic services to minimize further emotional trauma. Because the victims and offenders are often both minors in the care of an appropriate parent or legal guardian, the entire family unit is affected by the juvenile offender's return into the residence. (See "Juvenile Issues, Priority #2, The STOP Program")</p> <p>There is a strong need for appropriate and specialized counseling and therapeutic services to address the unique issues and needs of these families. Juvenile sex offenders often have unique issues involving their potential rehabilitation that are very different from the rehabilitation approach taken with adult sex offenders. 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 for more LSOTPs who have the additional education and training required to successfully treat juvenile sex offenders. Successful rehabilitating these offenders prevents new victimizations and re-victimizations from occurring.</p>	
<p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p>	
<p>The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office has two staff attorneys dedicated to handling felony level sex crimes committed by juveniles (legally as young as ten-years-old). Generally, sex offenses require lengthy and sophisticated investigation. For prosecutors, this equates to dedicating more time to ensure a proper review of the cases to make appropriate and thoughtful charging decisions. These cases also generally involve younger victims. On average, it takes four months to a year for each of these cases to move through the juvenile justice system. Additionally, supervision of these youth during the course of their respective sex offender treatment programs is rarely less than two years. Maintaining specially trained prosecutors focused on juvenile law and sex offense prosecution benefits the victims and offenders. The victims' and the offenders' rehabilitations can be better supervised and connected to the appropriate services.</p>	

Priority #5	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Inadequate crisis intervention programs and shelters for juveniles Inadequate programs for runaways/ “unwanted” teens and at-risk teens	Parks Youth Ranch is the only emergency shelter for at-risk youth or homeless youth in Fort Bend County.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p><u>The Fred and Mabel R. Parks Youth Ranch</u> was established in response to a gap in community services for the at-risk and homeless youth population. In the 2019-2020 school year, 1,579 McKinney-Vento homeless youth registered with the Lamar Consolidated and Fort Bend independent school districts. Accessing services locally allows homeless youth to continue their education in their home school, which increases the chance that they will complete their high school education. Having 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 makes family reunification more plausible. It also offers youth stability in a familiar environment.</p> <p>The 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 from the community. Constituency served includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abused, homeless and troubled youth ages seven to seventeen in Fort Bend County and the Greater Houston area. CPS may refer youth from outside Region 6. Parks Youth Ranch serves boys and girls of any ethnicity, from families of any income level. • 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. <p>Youth referred to the shelter receive services for up to 90 days with the possibility of two additional 90-day extensions. The services support at-risk, unaccompanied, or homeless youth and their families to continue toward conflict resolution. Services focus on creating a stable living environment, continuing education, and connecting to collaborative community-based social services.</p>	

Priority #6	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of transportation for child victims and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Department of Family and Protective Services • Child Advocates of Fort Bend • Texas Forensic Nursing Services (TxFNE)
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>When Child Protective Services (CPS) 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 services to attempt to address and resolve the issues present when the child came into the care of the state. The community service providers are located across the Fort Bend County. It is frequently an issue in CPS cases that the parents have limited or no transportation to complete these court-ordered services. There are few community resources to help families obtain transportation. Although the county has a transportation service, either parents cannot afford the cost (albeit minimal) or the providers are located outside the transportation service zones.</p> <p>It is imperative that transportation be accessible to families and children in Fort Bend County. The services that are provided to parents trying to make positive changes and to children who are victims of abuse are the keys to making progress towards eradicating child abuse and neglect in Fort Bend County.</p> <p>In addition to children in the foster care system, 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. They bear the burden of the trauma of the abuse itself, coupled with remaining in an environment 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 that lack transportation and have limited resources.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Fort Bend Transit receives federal, state, and local dollars and provides public transportation within Fort Bend County as well as commuter services to and from several stops in Harris County. Fort Bend Transit is currently exploring possible partnerships with other counties to provide evening and weekend transit utilizing cabs and/or private operators.</p> <p>Texas Forensic Nursing Services (TxFNE) offers Lyft services for families that struggle with transportation issues to/from a medical forensic exam. TxFNE staff will assist with coordination of this service when needed. AccessHealth offers clients a limited number of</p>	

complimentary Uber Health rides for patients who need transportation to and from medical visits, therapy sessions, and nutritional service appointments.

Priority #7	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for victim/witness services for children in the criminal court system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Advocates of Fort Bend • Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p><u>The Children's Advocacy Center (CAC)</u> provides specialized criminal court advocacy services to children. Children who are victims of crime or witnesses to acts of violence require special assistance to understand and participate in the criminal justice system without experiencing further trauma. The CAC provides information on legal procedures, emotional support, referrals, court orientation and court accompaniment.</p> <p>In cooperation with the CAC, the Victim Witness Division of the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office also aids parents, guardians, and family members of child victims. These adult witnesses often need support, referrals, and court accompaniment as well. The Victim Witness Division also provides information regarding legal procedures and court orientation.</p>	

Priority #8	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for additional resources to investigate and prosecute criminal cases involving physical and sexual abuse of children, including offenses involving sexual exploitation of children such as Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) and human trafficking.	<p>Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In FY 2020, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office received 302 child abuse-related cases from law enforcement for review and possible prosecution. One hundred and eighty-eight of those cases were for sexual offenses. This number does not reflect when multiple offenses were committed in an ongoing course of conduct, nor does it reflect when a case involved multiple victims in a Continuous Sexual Abuse of Young Child/Children charge.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>There has been a significant increase in the number of computer-related crimes against children being submitted for prosecution. Since 2019, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office and other law enforcement agencies in the county have devoted significant resources toward the time intensive investigation of human trafficking related</p>	

offenses. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of human trafficking related offenses involving children being submitted for prosecution.

Potential Response to Problem

The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office has had an Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Investigator since 2013. The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office continues to vigorously prosecute child injury, child sexual abuse, and sexual exploitation cases, but it needs additional resources for prosecution. The time, demand, and specialized knowledge required to effectively investigate and prosecute sexual offenses committed against children is considerable. Therefore, 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.

In 2019, the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office implemented a Human Trafficking Unit within its Child Abuse Division to pursue investigation and prosecution of human trafficking offenses, especially those involving sexual exploitation of children.

Priority #9	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of reasonable accommodations for CPS caseworkers to stay within Fort Bend County while waiting to obtain placement for children when they initially come into conservatorship	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Fort Bend Community Partners Rainbow Room 2019 - 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPS clients served 1,935 Assigned cases 3,617
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Since Region 6 has split, Harris County comprises Region 6A and the outlying counties are in 6B. There is not a local office or facility with adequate accommodations to house Fort Bend County children. The outlying counties need a facility or community resource where staff who take children into custody can stay until placement is obtained, rather than driving to Montgomery or Brazoria Counties to utilize their office spaces.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (Texas DFPS) is aware that staff drive all the way to Harris County, sometimes stay overnight, drive back to Fort Bend, and repeat until they obtain a placement. Other resources such as the Region 6 Child Welfare Board and the Fort Bend Rainbow Room Board, among others, are collaborating to come up with a solution to assist staff and keep children in Fort Bend County. (Please see Victim Issues – Child, Priority #1 for a description of the Fort Bend Rainbow Room)</p>	

Priority #10	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of funding and site for resource for drug testing facility	Texas Department of Family and Protective Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80-90% of cases involved with Texas DFPS involve substance use issues
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>The cases that come into the Texas DFPS involve investigating child abuse and neglect. In many instances, assigned caseworkers go into the homes and find a parent incoherent, under the influence, or passed out.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Texas DFPS will seek out resource opportunities and agencies that can conduct drug testing in the Rosenberg area. They would contract to provide the drug testing site and possible treatment services for the clients instead of sending them to Sugar Land or Harris County to be drug tested.</p>	

Priority #11	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Prevalence of unidentified, unserved child victims of trafficking within the criminal justice system	Elijah Rising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Because this population is unidentified, credible empirical data is difficult to find. Anecdotal evidence demonstrates this is a regional issue. Texas Forensic Nurse Examiners (TxFNE) is part of the Southwest Division of the Human Trafficking Rescue Alliance (HTRA) and provides on-scene exams during coordinated HTRA operations.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Victims of domestic minor trafficking are often detained for crimes committed in the process of their captivity (drugs, truancy, theft, assault, etc.). They are often unaware that they are a victim of a crime, so they rarely self-identify. Additionally, this class of victims is generally uncooperative with authorities due to trauma bonds with their perpetrators. As a result, they are underserved by the justice system and by appropriate social services. This increases the likelihood they will return to their trafficking situation upon release and be in and out of jail throughout their lives.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>See “Juvenile Issues – Priority #4” and “Victim Issues – Adult – Priority #6”</p>	

Law Enforcement (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 proportionate to the growth of Fort Bend County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fastest growing large county in the US, 2013-2016 (US Census Bureau 2020). • Current population of 900,000 (Fort Bend Economic Development Council). • Population increase over 40% across last decade (US Census Bureau 2020) • Highest net domestic migration rate for 3-county region of Harris, Fort Bend and Montgomery counties (US Census Bureau 2020). • 8th in the US, 3rd in TX, 1st in Greater Houston for business growth (SmartAsset, 2019). • Violent crime has increased over 7% statewide and all crimes increased in Fort Bend County's largest cities 3.7% (Texas DPS Crime in Texas 2020 Report). • Fort Bend County law enforcement agencies employ over 1,400 certified peace officers and over 400 additional public safety professionals (Fort Bend County Public Safety Training Needs Assessment).
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>According to the U.S. Census Bureau estimates from 2010-2019, Fort Bend County is the seventh fastest-growing county in Texas, and since 2010 the population has increased over 40%. Whether responding to reports of crime or increasing a positive presence through community policing, all law enforcement agencies within the county have a common need for additional officers and 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 determine the law enforcement needs for their municipality. Most law enforcement agencies use a workload analysis that examines the time each officer spends on various law enforcement tasks and factors in a number of other variables, like the number of calls for service. This analysis determines the number of officers, investigators, and support staff they need.</p>	

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
A need for equipment and technology in the areas of investigations, patrol, tactical, communication, radios, surveillance, identification, prosecution, and evidence gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fastest growing large county in the US, 2013-2016 (US Census Bureau 2020). • Current population of 900,000 (Fort Bend Economic Development Council). • Population increase over 40% across last decade (US Census Bureau 2020) • Highest net domestic migration rate for 3-county region of Harris, Fort Bend and Montgomery counties (US Census Bureau 2020). • 8th in the US, 3rd in TX, 1st in Greater Houston for business growth (SmartAsset, 2019). • Violent crime has increased over 7% statewide and all crimes increased in Fort Bend County's largest cities 3.7% (Texas DPS Crime in Texas 2020 Report). • 90 different languages and dialects are spoken within the Fort Bend ISD school district (FBISD).
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Fort Bend County gained almost 27,000 residents in 2020. Considering this population increase and technological advances, a proportionate amount of equipment, updated equipment, and technology is crucial to assist law enforcement in the performance of their duties. Items including body cameras, MDCs, mobile and portable radios, mobile and stationary videos, ATVs, bicycles, vehicles, surveillance cameras, drones, evidence gathering technology, and electronic data management systems. This includes equipment and protective gear for K9 units and their handlers, and most recently needs for PPE such as biohazard suits, respirators, gloves, etc. for a biological or chemical event.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Equipment must be replaced or upgraded to maintain technical efficiency in modern policing. Communication technologies that bridge the gap caused by language barriers will improve communication between law enforcement, the community, and victims.</p>	

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for specialized and skills-based training and exercises for law enforcement and other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County law enforcement agencies employ over 1,400 certified peace officers and over 400

public safety professionals	additional public safety professionals (Fort Bend County Public Safety Training Needs Assessment).
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Fort Bend County conducted a year-long public safety training needs assessment of Police, Fire, and EMS agencies over five years ago. 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.</p> <p>According to the Sugar Land Police Department, the primary entities training at a regional level are CISM, HNT, and SWAT, all of which would benefit from continuing and expanding their programs, including but not limited to: ALERRT, instructor courses, background investigations, CID skills and techniques, role-specific ICS courses, mental health contacts and de-escalation, and large-scale regional scenarios (i.e., HazMat, terrorist attack, natural disaster response).</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>The most cost-effective solution to this problem is to conduct training and exercises regionally. Many fast-growing communities around the nation have solved similar problems by pooling resources on a regional level. The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC) is in a unique position to provide both funding and leadership toward the problem area.</p> <p>CISM, the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, has held one of their 4-5 annual regional conferences in the Houston area three times in the past five years. Subsidizing and hosting one of these trainings would reduce travel and lodging costs while providing critical training to outlying counties not consumed by Houston.</p>	

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Need for an effective means for Fort Bend County law enforcement agencies to address mental health calls for service and mental health commitments</p> <p>Need for a means to address mental health of first responders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1115 Waiver Community Survey. • In FY2020, the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) made 49 transports to mental health facilities following judicial authorization, wrote 828 Emergency Detention Orders and had 1,808 total contacts. FY2021 saw 64 transports, 590 detention orders, and 1,827 total contacts. The CIT is comprised of only 13 peace officers (this data does not include contacts and actions taken deputies outside of CIT).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 368 mental health contacts between the 3 largest school districts in 2020 (FBISD, Katy ISD, Lamar CISD).
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Trained responses to persons with mental illness remains a significant issue. Specific policies and procedures that aid in recognizing these types of incidents at their onset increase public confidence. Evidence of this is sustained by an increase in calls specifically requesting trained officers.</p> <p>First responders routinely encounter traumatic events. This repeated exposure to trauma can produce incident-specific and cumulative stress exposure responses, including PTSD. Fort Bend County is not immune, having lost officers to suicide or experiencing PTSD events.</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. In April 2014, the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office formed the CIT with 1115 Waiver funding. This team is crucial, but it is only part of the overall problem response. First responders from all agencies share the potential for being the initial contact with a mentally ill person; therefore, all officers need training as part of the response enhancement initiative.</p> <p>For first responders, there are proactive, peer-oriented critical incident stress management strategies and reactive, therapeutic strategies specifically to assist first responders.</p>	

Priority #5	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
A need for personnel, equipment and technology to meet the demand for investigations of internet and computer related crimes against children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Houston Metro Internet Crimes Against Children (HMICAC) Task Force. 13 active online solicitation of a minor cases and 55 child pornography charges as of November 2021 (Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office). According to the Texas Department of Public Safety's Sex Offender Registry, 668 registered sex offenders reside in Fort Bend County as of November 2021.

Problem Details

There is a substantial need for increased training and personnel for investigative law enforcement agencies countywide to investigate Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) 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.

The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office has one detective assigned to ICAC, who left the office leaving no resources dedicated to child pornography investigations or ICAC task force participation. These cases require constant attention to identify, research and investigate. These cases are either generated by patrol taking reports from the public or come in through the CyberTipline generated by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

ICAC proactively investigates crime by utilizing undercover networks to locate people distributing child sexual abuse content over the internet. These are cases of Possession/Promotion of Child Pornography. ICAC also conducts undercover online chat operations to combat Online Solicitation of a Minor/Sexual Assault of a Child cases. The workload is limitless, and any additional personnel for ICAC investigation would aid the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of these crimes.

Internet and computer facilitated crimes 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 require a computer component to thoroughly investigate.

Potential Response to Problem

The National ICAC Data System (NIDS) 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. The NIDS 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 (HMICAC) Task Force is comprised of an eight-county area of operation that includes Fort Bend County. With additional resources, law enforcement agencies within Fort Bend County could affiliate with the HMICAC Task Force.

Priority #6	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for personnel to investigate and prosecute human trafficking crimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 98 Human Trafficking cases have been investigated in Fort Bend County year to date for 2021, over 80 cases in 2020, and over 70 cases in 2019 (Fort Bend District Attorney's Office).
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Human trafficking is at the forefront of criminal law and recognized to be of mass proportion. As a contiguous county to Harris County, and directly between there and the border, the potential for stash houses, travel routes, and "pass-through" offenses are high in Fort Bend County. Additionally, human trafficking investigations are initiating locally, and not just a pipeline from the border.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Dedicated law enforcement personnel, training, and equipment are necessary to make a concerted effort to effectively reduce and eliminate this threat. This is best addressed locally with focused resources.</p>	

Priority #7	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
A need for school resource officers with specialized training and equipment for youth delinquency prevention and community policing programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The three largest school districts in Fort Bend County report 19 Aggravated Assaults, 16 Assaults on a Public Servant, 496 drug/alcohol charges, 269 CPS referrals, 355 Thefts, 4 Human Trafficking investigations, and 37 gang or domestic violence investigations in 2020. Over 120 K9 searches were conducted (FBISD, Katy ISD, Lamar CISD). 1,054 juvenile referrals in 2020 and 612 formal or deferred probations; 1,836 juvenile referrals in 2019 and 855 formal or deferred probations (Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department). During the 2018-2019 school year, the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Juvenile Outreach Unit, made 541 "Kids and Cops" presentations to 28,310 students in 114 area schools – an increase over the previous year.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>The six school districts in Fort Bend County are experiencing consistent growth in student population, increasing the need for police resources to address youth delinquency.</p>	

Fort Bend ISD is one of the six school districts in Fort Bend County and the 10th largest district in the state. The second-largest district in the county, Lamar Consolidated ISD, recently formed their own police department, alleviating the burden on a local municipality.

Potential Response to Problem

The Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office's Juvenile Outreach Unit sends school resource officers to present award-winning program to school-aged Fort Bend County youth. The presentations include popular *Now That You're 10*, *Before It's Too Late*, and *Legal Terms* programs. The Kids and Cops deputies also teach the *Stranger Danger Awareness* program to children in kindergarten through fifth grade. Fifth graders also participate in an eight-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 for teamwork to students ages ten through twelve years.

The three districts conducted over 1,400 on-campus community policing events and 114 community events in 2020. These are instrumental to reduce negative police-citizen contacts.

Priority #8	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for traffic safety enforcement and education for DWI, Teen Driver Issues, Texting while Driving, and Distracted Driving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2020, there were 8, 027 crashes reported in Fort Bend County and 2,339 crashes resulting in 2,996 injuries and 31 deaths. 733 crashes were attributed to distracted driving and 256 were attributed to DWI/alcohol (TxDOT Motor Vehicle Crash Statistics 2020). 2021 has already seen 20 traffic fatalities (Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office).
<i>Problem Details</i>	
In Fort Bend County, people are more likely to die in a motor vehicle crash than as a result of violent crime. Traffic infrastructure investment improves transportation but a traffic safety plan was not increased to handle the excessive traffic flow and at higher speeds.	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
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 has already helped to reduce the number of incidents, especially during the holiday periods. Additional personnel are needed to help educate the public, especially young drivers.	

Priority #9	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Community Policing and Crime Reduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Report of The President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, 2015. • Houston Region Grows More Racially/Ethnically Diverse, With Small Declines in Segregation (Kinder Institute for Urban Research). • The 37th Annual Kinder Houston Area Survey (Kinder Institute for Urban Research).
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>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, President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing made 57 recommendations for improving this relationship. Some of the distrust rests within ethnically and culturally diverse communities. 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.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Create and strengthen constructive partnerships with the 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.</p> <p>Police agencies within Fort Bend are currently performing many of the aforementioned recommendations with the future implementation of strategies for compliance – often exceeding all recommendations. Fort Bend County’s unique diversity presents a distinctive opportunity to engage a complex, multicultural community. 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.</p>	

Priority #10	
<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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>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 Fort Bend County, both foreign and domestic. Fort Bend County's close location to Houston, as a center of energy and distribution, is a target for terrorism and contains vital roadways, railways and population centers.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>This effort in concert with the Houston Regional Intelligence Service Center (HRISC) is accomplished through a coordinated network of intelligence analysts from different law enforcement agencies within Fort Bend County. The creation of a Fort Bend Satellite Center that would serve as an extension of HRISC and 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 is not possible without an increase in personnel, equipment, training and technology.</p>	

Priority #11	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Continuing need for additional resources for investigation and prosecution of criminal cases involving physical and sexual abuse of children and child deaths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The District Attorney's Office received 343 child abuse related cases from law enforcement for review and possible prosecution in 2020 and 370 cases in 2021 as of November. Consultation occurred regarding many other cases not submitted for prosecution.

<i>Problem Details</i>
<p>The Fort Bend County District Attorney’s Office continues to vigorously prosecute child injury and child sexual abuse cases, but it 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, the strain on the system will only become more problematic.</p> <p>The time and demand to effectively investigate sexual offenses committed against children is considerable. The cases are complex and time-consuming relative to the investigation and prosecution of other types of crime. In the majority of cases, numerous offenses are committed against the child victim over a period of time.</p>
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>
<p>Successful investigation and prosecution require specialized training and skills, as well as information gathering 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 as well as in child serious injury and death cases. Investigators must receive specialized training to obtain admissions in these cases.</p>

Priority #12	
<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"> According to the Texas Department of Public Safety’s Sex Offender Registry, 668 registered sex offenders reside in Fort Bend County as of November 2021.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Texas state laws regarding documenting sex offenders and maintaining a database require staff to continually review data and update 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>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Local law enforcement consistently reports that they do not have the manpower to properly investigate these crimes. Tasked with multiple investigations, more serious</p>	

cases present themselves, relegating sex offender registration to the back burner. Dedicated civilian and law enforcement personnel could proactively address faulty registrations before they manifest as a sexual assault upon our residents.

Priority #13	
<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"> • Identity theft has been the top consumer complaint for 15 of the past 19 years, surpassed only by Fraud since 2018 (Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book 2020). • Texas ranked 16th nationally for fraud and related complaints in 2020 with 238,251 complaints, up from 23rd in 2019 (Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book 2020). • Texas ranked 12th nationally for identity theft in 2020 with 134,788 complaints, down from 4th in 2019 (Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book 2020). • In a 2019 ranking of the largest metropolitan areas (population of 100,000 or more), the Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land metroplex ranked 23rd for identity theft with 724 complaints per 100,000 population, down from 9th in 2019 (Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book 2020).
<i>Problem Details</i>	
As technology progresses, so do related crimes, often employing phones and computers for fraudulent activity and targeting a vulnerable population. Financial crimes require more resources because the offenders often operate remotely and across multiple jurisdictions. But the victims are here, and justice is best sought by local law enforcement.	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
Because these criminals often relocate their operations before an investigation can identify them, dedicated resources and manpower would reduce the response time and maximize efforts on asset recovery to bring offenders to justice. Regional task forces that are popular for drug trafficking, human trafficking and child pornography would make great strides by networking to catch these elusive perpetrators.	

Priority #14	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for personnel to document gangs and their members, as well as investigate gang-related crimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2018 recorded over 238 gangs with over 1,853 members in Fort Bend County and increased gang crime in major urban areas (Texas DPS Gang Threat Assessment).
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Documented gang members are responsible for numerous crimes in the area and several gangs are actively recruiting at schools and within the Fort Bend County Jail. New gangs continue to form locally and law enforcement relies on area partners to gather intelligence and forward to them. However, there is a lack of area partners to gather this intelligence. The District Attorney's Office's newly created Special Crimes division will focus some efforts on gangs, utilizing one dedicated gang investigator (grant-funded).</p> <p>Texas state laws regarding documenting gang members and maintaining an intelligence data base require law enforcement agencies to continually review the data and update the members' last involvement with the agency or purge that data entirely.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Fort Bend County's gang population is large enough to warrant a fully functioning anti-gang unit. It is underreported for lack of law enforcement resources dedicated to address it. Funding personnel would also allow integration into the Texas Anti-Gang Center (TAG) in Houston as a force-multiplier against gang activity in the county.</p>	

Priority #15	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for investigators assigned to specifically investigate family violence cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 2,500 family violence cases were referred to the District Attorney for prosecution during FY2021. • Family violence cases rose 25% from February to March 2020 and 50% from March 2019 to March 2020, largely due to the Covid-19 pandemic precautions (Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office). • The 2018 Crime in Texas Report reported a total of 4,065 family violence cases in Fort Bend County. This is an increase of 760 from 2017 (Texas DPS).

<i>Problem Details</i>
Currently, some agencies have no investigators specifically assigned to investigate family violence cases. Statewide, more than 71% of victims of family violence are female. Trends show that simple assaults now often increase in severity and can end in death without intervention.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>
If more investigators were assigned to investigate these cases, violent offenders would be removed from society, preventing more victims from falling prey to them. Simultaneously, we need to educate the public about resources available to help victims of family violence, including prevention and de-escalation techniques.

Priority #16	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for investigators assigned to specifically investigate the violent crimes against women cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fastest growing large county in the US, 2013-2016 (US Census Bureau 2020). • Current population of 900,000 (Fort Bend Economic Development Council). • Population increase over 40% across last decade (US Census Bureau 2020) • Highest net domestic migration rate for 3-county region of Harris, Fort Bend and Montgomery counties (US Census Bureau 2020). • Violent crime has increased over 7% statewide and all crimes increased in Fort Bend County's largest cities 3.7% (Texas DPS Crime in Texas 2020 Report). • Population 50.9% female in 2019 (US Census Bureau)
<i>Problem Details</i>	
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 and a victim group that is disproportionately affected by family violence and sexual assault.	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
Increasing the number of qualified investigators to target these crimes would bring attention to law enforcements efforts to curb this behavior and provide a sense of security to county residents that their complaints are heard and fears are being addressed.	

Priority #17	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for an automated system and sufficient staff to process and maintain emergency protective orders, temporary ex parte orders and formal protective orders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 (two years) from a Judge, who signs it. Then, a Constable or District Attorney Investigator serves the order.</p> <p>Temporary ex parte orders are grounds for arrest and fill the gaps between the emergency protective order and the short period of time before a formal protective order can be filed. These are also generated on paper.</p> <p>There are costly delays between issuance of an order and service, at a time when victims are most vulnerable.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>While protective orders are entered into TLETS, digitizing the process to remove the delays naturally associated with the paper process would result in more efficient notification and enforcement of violations that are currently difficult to prove.</p>	

Priority #18	
<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 incident throughout the entire justice process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the past year, the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Crime Victim Liaison has provided aid and individual advocacy to 4,129 persons in 2020 and at least 2,906 as of September 2021.

<i>Problem Details</i>
In all areas of criminal and juvenile justice, the role of a trained victim liaison is valuable to inform 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. Crime Victims Liaisons do numerous presentations on victim service topics, and many are members as well as past officers of CVRT (Crime Victims Response Team). Some also help put on the only victim service conference training in the area once per year.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>
The number of crime victim liaison positions need to increase proportionately with the increasing referrals and caseloads. This is one area where we should be proactive, and not reactive, to numbers of victims that cannot be adequately helped due to a lack of resources.

Priority #19	
<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"> Approximately 142 defendants are currently released on ankle monitors pre-trial, and over 95% of those are for felony crimes (Fort Bend County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD)). Violent crime has increased over 7% statewide and all crimes increased in Fort Bend County's largest cities 3.7% (Texas DPS Crime in Texas 2020 Report). Population 50.9% female in 2019 (US Census Bureau)
<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 any adjudication that would place the perpetrator on a monitoring system.</p> <p>When the perpetrator is subject to bond conditions or placed on probation, the Fort Bend County CSCD issues ankle monitors. These systems of electronic monitoring are focused on the perpetrators, rather than on the victims. The law provides for notice to victims but there is not an adequate system to do so.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>A need exists for a coordinated system, software, or database to monitor and track pre-trial activity during a time when victims are most vulnerable. CSCD performs pre-trial supervision with increasing regularity but is not funded by the state for those duties. Funding a victim service coordinator for CSCD to establish victim communications during pre-trial supervision could close the gap.</p>	

Priority #20	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for a fully accredited regional crime and forensic lab, including DNA testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Public Safety Academy Study. • Sugar Land Police Department (SLPD).
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>The Texas Department of Public Safety's (DPS) Crime Labs are severely overloaded. As a result, DPS has limited submissions based on types of crimes. In addition, Texas law 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 labs outside the county. 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 ongoing investigation.</p> <p>Most law enforcement agencies within Fort Bend County submit DNA evidence to the Texas DPS Crime Lab. 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 FY2020, the Sugar Land Police Department (SLPD) submitted 1,190 items to the Texas DPS Crime Lab for analysis, averaging almost 99 items per month (not just DNA).</p> <p>SLPD currently has a fingerprint analysis lab. On August 23, 2019, the SLPD Crime Scene Unit (CSU) earned accreditation in Forensic Inspection through the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB). This type of forensic accreditation is based on ISO 17020 standards and applies to the discipline of Crime Scene Investigation and Friction Ridge (fingerprint analysis). Currently, the SLPD CSU is the only agency within Fort Bend County to earn this accreditation. Due to this in-house service for FY2020, SLPD CSU has maintained a monthly average of 91% of requests for service completed within five days. SLPD is confident that they could continue to add accreditations and services to their lab to support the growing need for these various services in Fort Bend County.</p> <p>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.</p>	

<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>
Fort Bend County desperately needs a regional crime lab to handle local needs and requests for analysis from surrounding counties. There is only one Texas DPS lab in the greater Houston area, with Harris County as the 3 rd largest county in the nation. It disproportionately receives more requests for analysis than other labs, often prioritizing tasks or outright refusing them. Funding the development of a local accredited lab would relieve the strain and provide quicker results for efficient prosecution and disposition of criminal charges by conviction or dismissal.

Priority #21	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for county-wide electronic filing capabilities between criminal justice system partners and the District Attorney's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office received over 15,000 charges for review from local law enforcement in 2018, over 13,300 for review in 2019, and 11,500 in 2020. They have considered over 11,100 as of November for 2021.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
Law enforcement agencies lack a fast, secure, inexpensive option to file cases with the District Attorney. Relying on paper submissions, the cost and potential security issues increase (i.e., misplaced or damaged/destroyed).	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
Providing a law enforcement portal to accept criminal charges into the District Attorney's database would securely and quickly address this need with fiscal responsibility.	

Priority #22	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for disaster response equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee. Sugar Land Police Department. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration lists 2020 as the most active hurricane season on record since 1851.

<i>Problem Details</i>
<p>The southeast region of Texas, including Fort Bend County, has suffered several major flood events in recent years. Catastrophic flooding occurred twice in 2016, Hurricane Harvey in 2017, torrential rains in May 2019, and Tropical Storm Imelda in September 2019. Local law enforcement agencies need special equipment to effectively patrol, protect, and rescue residents within their jurisdiction.</p> <p>Sugar Land has had three flood events in the past 6 years and each one required the use of high-water vehicles to extract citizens, provide supplies, and respond to calls for service.</p>
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>
<p>Providing small, portable equipment (i.e., Jon boats, ATVs, generators) to local law enforcement for quick deployment in flood events will maximize response times, provide access, and successfully negotiate high-water threats.</p> <p>The need for aerial surveillance during a flood event is crucial. Drones are a necessity to quickly survey and evaluate the landscape in order to formulate a plan for high water rescues. They are also much more cost effective option than helicopters or fixed wing aircraft for targeted data collection.</p> <p>High water rescue vehicles, while not used consistently, are of extreme value and importance during a flood event. Access to high-water vehicles is critical in the event of a flood event.</p>

Priority #23	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for modern indoor firearms range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>The largest law enforcement agency in the county does not have a firearms range.</p> <p>Many law enforcement agencies within the county use the Rosenberg PD firearms range to qualify with their duty weapons. This range is too small and does not provide modern technology for best practices, or longer distances, for shotgun and rifle qualification and training. Due to the many agencies that rely upon this range, there is limited space and only a few days per month that sworn personnel may qualify with their duty weapons, or receive training or qualify with shotguns and rifles. Other agency ranges are also very limited in space and can only accommodate the agency that owns it. Due to limited availability and space, there are insufficient numbers of available days for training, practice, or qualification.</p>	

<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>
The county needs an indoor firearms range for improved training and qualification for all area agencies, but more urgently for FBCSO personnel.

Priority #24	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need to develop an expert explosives team and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Fort Bend County (FBC) is one of the largest counties in the state and growing rapidly. There is no explosives unit to respond to investigations of explosives and bomb threats. FBC must rely upon Houston PD or Harris County SO for a response to a suspected explosive threat. The delay that comes with an out-of-county response, if available, creates dangerous scenarios in FBC that could easily result in fatalities.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
The county needs a county-wide explosives response team and develop training on the subject matter for all law enforcement personnel.	

Priority #25	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
A need for personnel, equipment and technology to meet the demand for autopsies and the investigative support they provide law enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FY2018 recorded 329 autopsies at a cost of \$583,150 to Fort Bend County. In FY2019, 376 autopsies were performed at a cost of \$695,510. Calendar year 2020 records 605 autopsies and 628 to date for 2021 (Fort Bend County Medical Examiner).
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>In December 2019, Fort Bend County opened a Medical Examiner's Office. The goal is to control rising costs of autopsy services and to provide quicker results for law enforcement agencies, thereby positively affecting criminal investigations. The facilities were funded by a bond, and the Fort Bend County Medical Examiner's Office must seek funding to close unforeseen gaps and now expand the office.</p>	

Potential Response to Problem

In order to meet its goal of quicker autopsies with more efficient reporting to appropriate agencies, the Fort Bend County Medical Examiner's Office must maintain adequate staff, equipment and up-to-date technology. The workload has increased exponentially as full compliance with the law on death investigations is met and surrounding counties demand timely services.

Priority #26	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need for a Crime Data/Information Sharing Initiative (Interoperability) linking all county law enforcement agencies• Need for standardized electronic Records Management Systems (eRMS) in all county law enforcement agencies	<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 easily. A survey was sent to eight selected law enforcement entities in Fort Bend County in 2018: Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, Stafford, Sugar Land, Missouri City, Katy, Richmond, Rosenberg and Needville. Five agencies responded. 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>An integrated system would provide interagency telecommunications and information services, i.e., centralized indices of people, materials, and events of interest to more than one agency submitted 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,</p>	

criminal suspects, criminal methods of operation, reported crime, reported arrests, and to share crime bulletins about major crimes.

Priority #27	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for a 24-hour District Attorney intake system based on the growth of the county's population and after hours / weekend referrals to the District Attorney's Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County Law Enforcement Community Plan Committee. • The Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office received over 15,000 charges for review from local law enforcement in 2018, over 13,300 for review in 2019, and 11,500 in 2020. They have considered over 11,100 as of November for 2021.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>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 prosecutors. 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.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>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 that 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.</p>	

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of timely access to services that prevent incarceration and support recovery and reintegration for persons with mental illness and co-occurring disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AccessHealth • Fort Bend County Emergency Management Services (EMS) • Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) • Fort Bend County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD) • Fort Bend County Public Defender - Mental Health Division (MHPD) • Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office • Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse • National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Fort Bend • Texana Center
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>The Fort Bend County Jail identifies and treats inmates with mental illness. As of December 14, 2020, 61.8% of the jail population had mental health needs and received services. In addition, many have co-occurring substance use disorders, although that data is not readily available. The percentage has increased from 40.8% in 2019 due to a decrease in total population and an increase in the number of inmates receiving services.</p> <p>The Fort Bend County Public Defender – Mental Health Division (MHPD) provides competent legal defense for indigent mentally ill defendants. In FY 2020, the MHPD represented 474 defendants in 655 cases. Approximately 50% had a co-occurring substance abuse disorder. Anecdotally, increase in substance abuse due to corona virus pandemic. Finding treatment for this population has become more difficult because inpatient treatment waitlists are 10-12 weeks long, quickly overwhelming local outpatient services.</p> <p>Fort Bend County does not have a residential chemical dependency treatment facility, so those who require inpatient care or hospitalization cannot access it and funding constraints restrict the length of stay. Fort Bend County has two outpatient, brief-stay treatment providers despite a marked increase in prevalence of substance use disorders.</p> <p>Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse (FBRC) is the county's largest state-funded outpatient treatment facility. To qualify for outpatient treatment, the substance use severity must be treatable in a non-medical, relatively stable home environment. If a client lacks adequate housing, requires medical detoxification, or needs a residential care structure, they are referred to the appropriate service and then may return to continue their care at FBRC. In 2019, FBRC admitted 820 individuals into their substance use disorder</p>	

treatment program. Of these individuals, 31% were African-American, 31% were Hispanic/Latino, 30% were White, 5% were Asian-American, and the remaining 2% were multiracial, Native American, or Pacific Islander. The most prevalent drug clients reported using was alcohol (43%), followed by marijuana (33%). Seventeen percent sought treatment for cocaine and stimulant abuse, and four percent sought treatment for opioids. Other drugs identified during the admission process included PCP and sedatives.

Twenty-six percent of clients were female and 74% were male. Twenty-one percent of FBRC's clients were 18 to 25 years, 34% were 26 to 35 years, 25% were between 36 and 45 years old and 13% were between 46 and 55 years of age. Six percent of clients were greater than 55 years of age.

There is also a need for more 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. Unfortunately, the families of people with untreated mental illnesses are often the victims of the offense that leads to the individual's criminal justice involvement. Therefore, the families of these victims also need community intervention and support. More and more young women with histories of abuse are entering the criminal justice system. Many of them are at risk of victimization and sexual exploitation if left without appropriate services.

People reintegrating into the community face various complexities and challenges. Although the available resources and options in Fort Bend County have expanded, there are still specific areas for improvement. Upon release, clients do not have immediate access to public assistance programs like Medicaid, SNAP, or Social Security. Clients also have limited or no housing options or are at risk of losing present housing. Many clients also lack transportation to critical appointments, like probation and medical appointments. Furthermore, there is often a long waitlist to access psychiatric care upon release, which delays timely care and support. These situations leave the clients vulnerable and susceptible to reoffending.

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 services still fall short of the demands and needs of the target population in the county. The 1115 Waiver Recovery & Reintegration program has identified gaps in the following service areas: inpatient substance use disorder treatment (clients are still being referred to other counties for treatment); group homes and transitional housing options (available options are too costly for clients, fully booked, and/or have criteria that disqualify clients for residency, e.g. Their offense); and specialized support for clients who experienced human trafficking victimization. Many clinicians have PTSD and trauma-based therapy training, but there are not enough therapists in Fort Bend County who can address this specific issue.

Potential Response to Problem

[Texana Center](#) is Fort Bend County's Local Mental Health Authority and Local Intellectual

and Developmental Disabilities Authority. It is the main service provider 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.

Texana operates a 24/7/365 crisis intervention program. It is the only residential crisis services provider in the county for those who have Medicaid or are indigent. In FY 2020, Texana received 5,909 calls on its Fort Bend County Crisis Hotline, and its MCOT crisis staff activated to resolve 2,138 crisis calls in Fort Bend County.

[AccessHealth](#) is a Federally Qualified Health Center that has expanded its behavioral health services in the past year. It provides integrated health care services without regard to income or circumstance and serves more than 20,000 patients per year. It has four locations in Fort Bend County. Available services include adult and pediatric primary care, women’s health, HIV, behavioral health, nutrition and dental services. Recent program expansions include Medication Assisted Treatment, Access Increase in Mental Health Services, and focus on social determinants of health. AccessHealth has also strengthened its partnerships with the criminal justice system in Fort Bend County to provide access to physical and behavioral health care.

In October 2010, Fort Bend County established Behavioral Health Services (BHS). BHS coordinates with the courts, adult and juvenile probation departments, emergency medical services, and health and human services to improve the care for persons with mental illness and addictions that interact with the local justice system.

In 2013, Fort Bend County received approval for an 1115 Waiver Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) Project. The project’s directive was 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. In a county with limited options for these patients, first responders have become the default interveners in behavioral health crises. Unfortunately, many persons with mental illness ended up in the emergency room for several hours waiting for an evaluation or transport to the county jail. The Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Crisis Response and Intervention Project enhances the safety net and provides necessary intervention and diversion services. As a result, it serves as the main gatekeeper to EMS transports, admissions to the emergency room, and incarcerations.

An 1115 Waiver project was approved to develop a “recovery and reintegration” program for persons with mental illness at risk of recidivism. Since implementation in January 2015, the Recovery & Reintegration Project has served 255 individuals and developed services and systems to support community reintegration. The project monitors in-program progress and provides post-discharge follow-up. The program works closely with the Mental Health Public Defender, the District Attorney’s Office mental health division, Fort Bend County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD), Fort Bend County Social Services, and community providers. This program has identified housing, unemployment and transportation as some of the major challenges for individuals receiving intervention.

The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) has been a core component of this system since it began operation in 2014. Formed out of the Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office, it responds to mental health crises received through the 911 system, and interfaces and supports all other police departments in the county. The CIT works closely with Texana, public and private hospitals, and Fort Bend County EMS and BHS to coordinate access to care and provide follow-up to prevent future crises. From April 1, 2014 through September 30, 2020, the CIT diverted 1,492 individuals from admission/readmission to the Fort Bend County Jail, provided 9,803 individuals with crisis intervention and/or follow-up services, and made 13,449 contacts for services.

Fort Bend County's specialty courts have been another successful intervention. These specialty court programs unite the community in a strong collaborative to support participants and help them achieve independence from criminal justice involvement. These programs create a multi-disciplinary team (probation officer and judge) to supervise the client and treats the substance use and/or mental health disorder. Three examples are the Fort Bend County Drug Court (2002), the Mental Health Initiative (2009), and the Veterans Court (2015).

The Fort Bend County Drug Court has served more than 880 individuals through its *Closing Addictions Revolving Door* (CARD) program. In FY 2020, it served 83 individuals in the specialty felony drug court and 22 in the misdemeanor drug court. The Mental Health Initiative served 187 individuals in FY 2020.

Fort Bend County CSCD safeguards the flow of information between the courts, jail and treatment providers. This work has improved treatment coordination and case processing. Expanding this process to include residential options and increased coordination of care would more effectively serve a greater number of people and maximize the existing community systems.

Fort Bend County has made significant strides in the development of a system that responds to crisis and directs persons to the right care. However, in order to prevent people from chronically cycling through the justice system, it must develop an adequate array of clinical services and supports that meet the ongoing needs of this population. Beyond access to appropriate mental health and substance use treatment (medication, therapies, assertive community treatment, and hospitalization), this system must offer wraparound services, housing, and employment opportunities. These supports are critical to recovery and ultimately breaking the cycle of recidivism. Social determinants of health in this program found unmet needs in housing and employment.

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Additional behavioral health service needs for children at	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FBISD Pride Survey, 2018

<p>risk/involved in the juvenile justice system include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of inpatient psychiatric beds • Lack of crisis stabilization services • Limited access to behavioral health services • Increased need for trauma focused interventions • Limited access to family and wraparound supports • Limited access to continuity of care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services (BHS) • Fort Bend County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD) • Fort Bend County Health & Human Services (HHS) • Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department • Fort Bend County Women’s Center (FBWC) • Tools for Putting Social Determinants of Health into Action, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<p><i>Problem Details</i></p>	
<p>The Fort Bend County juvenile justice system continues to be a major mental health services provider 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 (<i>Cocozza and Skowrya, 2000</i>). There is agreement between both mental health and corrections systems that many of these youth achieve better outcomes in community-based programs with clinically appropriate interventions and supports.</p> <p>In Fort Bend County, the lack of comprehensive and coordinated services for youth with serious mental illness has resulted in the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department and its Detention Center becoming the assessment, stabilization, and even treatment center for many of these youth. The most recent needs assessment stated that the lack of services for the mentally ill has resulted in “mental health becoming a law enforcement issue.” 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 with complex behavioral health needs, especially those with no insurance or on Medicaid, are a significant need in Fort Bend County.</p>	
<p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p>	
<p>Many children involved in the juvenile justice system are at a high risk for adult criminal behavior. However, successful interventions and prevention can make a difference. Many of the processes and services developed for adults can also benefit Fort Bend County’s youth. For example, additional law enforcement training on how to respond to mental illness, development of crisis intervention teams, crisis stabilization services, intensive treatment services, wraparound services and aftercare are necessary for both adults and children.</p> <p>Fort Bend County has also developed a “behavioral health juvenile diversionary” project as part of the 1115 Waiver initiative. The program helps divert youth with complex behavioral</p>	

health needs from initial or further involvement with the juvenile system. Examples of these needs are serious mental illness, a combination of mental illness and intellectual developmental disabilities, substance abuse, and physical health issues. To support the youth in their communities, the program provides individualized and community-based services. These services include assessment, multidisciplinary treatment planning, crisis stabilization services, family supports, respite, specialized therapies, medication management, case management, and wraparound supports. The county also needs to expand mental health intervention teams that work with high-risk students and crises in the schools and communities. Teams should have the capacity respond to crisis and then support the recovery process.

Fort Bend Regional Council (FBRC) receives Texas Health and Human Services Commission funding to provide counseling services in 36 schools. They are concentrated in the alternative program campuses and collaboratively intervene with truant youth. The [Fort Bend Community Prevention Coalition \(FBCPC\)](#) is an FBRC program that serves a vital role in protecting the health and welfare of youth, families, and community members within the Fort Bend Independent School District service area, but needs funding to expand its reach to larger portions of Fort Bend County.

In recent years, there has been increased attention to the importance of trauma –focused services. Fort Bend County BHS, Juvenile Probation, and several other departments have increased staff awareness of trauma and introduced services to address the complex trauma experienced by many of the children in their care. Fort Bend County BHS has also expanded training and services around Trust Based Rational Interventions (TBRI) for children who have had traumatic experiences.

Another area of critical importance and focus has been Social Determinants of Health (SDOH). Recent data from Center for Disease Control illustrates the importance of social and environmental factors on health outcomes. This attention to SDOH has been a key component of the 1115 Waiver programs as well as of several Fort Bend County departmental programming.

Moving forward, service providers must give more attention to building resiliency in children and families, assessing and addressing SDOH and providing trauma-informed services.

Priority # 3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of transitional supportive housing for vulnerable populations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of adequate housing services for offenders with 	Fort Bend County Women’s Center (FBWC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2019, the FBWC referred 1,970 callers to other shelters due to lack of space. In 2019, FBWC provided 156 housing units. Texas Education Agency (TEA)

<p>co- occurring mental health and substance use disorders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of transitional housing and services for children aging out of foster care • Lack of housing for persons with physical and intellectual disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,641 youth were reported homeless in the 2019-2020 school year for the following school districts: 1,012 in Fort Bend ISD; 567 in Lamar CISD; 6 in Needville ISD; and 56 in Stafford MSD. <p>Fort Bend County Consolidated Plan, 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a great need for housing for persons with special needs, which includes non-homeless “elderly, the frail elderly, persons with disabilities, persons with alcohol/drug addictions, and persons with AIDS” <p>Annual Disability Statistics Compendium Texas Report for County-level Data: Prevalence, 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2018 American Community Survey found that there were 55,947 persons with a disability in Fort Bend County.
<p><i>Potential Response to Problem</i></p>	
<p>Vulnerable populations include the mentally ill, the elderly, homeless youth, youth aging out of foster care, victims of crime, victims of natural disaster, individuals with developmental disabilities, children and families in the child welfare system, and previous offenders.</p> <p>There is limited emergency shelter space available for victims of family violence. The Missouri City Police Department, along with other local police departments, struggles to locate adequate shelter for victims. A dearth of affordable housing, and other factors including broken leases due to fleeing, are major barriers to the success of survivors.</p> <p>The Fort Bend County Women’s Center Shelter is the only provider of centralized emergency shelter, and it has capacity 65 survivors at a time. Entrance into the shelter is limited to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault and their children. In 2019, they turned away more than 1,970 callers due to lack of space.</p> <p>The Rosenberg Housing Authority seeks to include services for those who are “homeless, elderly, disabled, or handicapped” (“Administrative Plan for the Housing Choice Voucher Program,” p. 1-2, 2018). The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) “Developers and Builders” website provides resources for companies that are interesting in creating affordable housing for people with disabilities. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has released notices of funding opportunities for developers who wish to target these populations.</p>	

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of stable, affordable housing in Fort Bend County for offenders suffering from mental illness and co- occurring disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AccessHealth • Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services • Fort Bend County Community Supervision and Corrections Department (CSCD) • Fort Bend County Mental Health/Public Defender • Fort Bend County Sheriff's Office • Fort Bend County Social Services • Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse • NAMI Fort Bend • Texana Center • Texas Department of Health and Human Services • Texas Department of Transportation
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Fort Bend County CSCD Mental Health Initiative served 187 offenders in FY 2020. Many of the offenses involve assaults, injury to a child/elderly, robbery, possession of a controlled substance, or burglary of a habitation/building. The nature of these offenses often creates barriers for offenders returning to their home to live with family. Research has shown that decent, safe, affordable housing can improve the recovery of the mentally ill and offenders with co-occurring disorders. Fort Bend County currently lacks adequate housing services for offenders with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.</p> <p>It is through Fort Bend County's enduring collaborations and networking that the lack of resources to address the behavioral needs of the criminal justice and veteran reentry populations has been determined. These populations need safe and stable housing that provides comprehensive case management, behavioral health, healthcare, brief financial, and social services, as well as substance use disorder treatment. These populations require considerable reentry assistance and the county lacks a coordinated, co-located resource to stabilize them, help prevent criminal justice recidivism and address specific health and wellness concerns.</p> <p>Further, 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 use disorder treatment and (4) wraparound supports. Housing and case management are also essential to community reintegration. Fort Bend County's current housing process is seriously impeded due to seriously limited and unreliable resources.</p> <p>The Fort Bend County Homeless Coalition conducted a survey to determine causal factors, available services and deficits, immediate needs, and the impact these services may have on preventing homelessness. Survey results indicate:</p>	

- Thirty seven percent of the clients reported job loss/eviction as the reason for homelessness, 15% reported domestic violence, seven percent reported medical expenses, and six percent reported divorce/separation as their causal factor.
- Five percent of respondents identified behavioral health or criminal justice reasons for homelessness.
- 21% shared other reasons, many which implicated the lack of housing resources in Fort Bend County

Further survey analysis revealed that of the respondents, 56% identified a lack of preventative wraparound services as a casual factor. These preventative services included, but were not limited to, a lack of centralized emergency shelter, legal aid, food and rental assistance, veteran specific services, and 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 these residents are under the supervision of the Fort Bend County justice system. Many probationers or parolees experience struggle with addiction, mental illness, or both.

Fort Bend County must prioritize funding to offer medications and transition services for up to ninety days after release from jail. Funding is also needed to implement evidence-based practices like “peer mentoring” to assist with reintegration and ongoing recovery. Fort Bend County should also develop “[Housing First](#)” programs and other evidence-based housing programs to meet the critical requirements of persons with behavioral health needs who are transitioning from incarceration. Enhancing efforts to prevent and curtail substance use, mental health and co-occurring disorders is critical because these disorders are the primary reasons these individuals become justice-involved.

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, the Recovery & Reintegration Project, and ongoing service coordination with local substance use disorder treatment and mental health providers and advocacy groups. It has also enhanced inmate mental health services. The Public Defender’s Office, CSCD and Texana provide continuity of care for many people re-entering society, and as a result assist in services coordination. Fort Bend County BHS provides court-ordered evaluations, mental health consultations, wraparound supports assistance and coordination, follow-up, clinical oversight, and training on evidence-based practices. BHS also provides the Recovery & Reintegration program (see Behavioral Health Services- Priority #1 for an in-depth description).

Fort Bend County Social Services has spearheaded the Fort Bend County Homeless Coalition. This entity’s goal is to coordinate county organizations that provide homeless services, identify service gaps, and then strategize to meet client needs with limited or collaborative funding.

Fort Bend County received several 1115 Waiver projects to address this need: Behavioral

Crisis Response and Intervention Project, Juvenile Jail Diversion Project, a Recovery & Reintegration program for persons at risk of recidivism, and an integrated behavioral/physical health project. The latter includes the Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment project. This project houses a behavioral health counselor in AccessHealth, the local federally qualified health care center, to 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 persons with severe mental illness, mental illness and physical health conditions, and veterans who are high risk of recidivism due to housing instability, substance use disorders, lack of access to services, complex trauma, lack of family supports, and/or lack of integrated care. The target population is the Medicaid and uninsured population.

Unfortunately, many of the individuals helped by these efforts return to situations that cannot support their progress and they revert to destructive behaviors. The most effective response to this problem would be implementing a local "Housing First" program that integrates primary and behavioral health care (treatment for substance use and mental illness, PTSD, etc.) with a full array of wraparound support services. Fort Bend County would benefit from retaining a housing specialist, who could build a comprehensive housing resource portal on the most up-to-date housing options, locations, eligibility criteria and support services.

Priority #5	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Unemployment of individuals with mental health and substance use disorders	<p>Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) In FY 2020, CIT data indicated that employment was the most frequently cited unmet need in the "other" category for persons receiving crisis response services.</p> <p>Fort Bend County CSCD Offender Revocation Profile Approximately 53% of FY 2020 probationer's revocations were unemployed or employed less than full time. Studies have shown that the root cause of many of the problems probationers encounter is their inability to obtain or keep steady employment.</p> <p>Fort Bend County Public Defender – Mental Health Division (MHPD) FY 2020 MHPD data indicated that 90% of defendant revocations of probation were those without employment or underemployed. Again, anecdotally, increase in unemployment and underemployment due to corona virus pandemic.</p>

Potential Response to Problem

An Employment Coordinator who connects resources and training opportunities to individuals involved in the justice system and others with mental health and substance use disorders would be invaluable. Examples of these resources and opportunities include the [Texas State Technical College \(TSTC\)](#), [Workforce Solutions](#), [SER Jobs](#), and the [United Way THRIVE Center at Fort Bend](#), among other unidentified partner agencies and local businesses willing to hire individuals with mental illnesses or disorders. All the information for potential training and job opportunities could be available to these individuals on an easily accessible, centralized, and bilingual website.

Priority # 6	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Unmet demand for mental health services including screening and assessment, mental health nursing services, treatment planning, continuity of care, substance abuse services, and psychiatric services for people who have suffered Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).	<p>Fort Bend County Women’s Center (FBWC) In FY 2020, The average percent changes in assessments scores of negative symptoms before and after neurofeedback training (338 participants and 6,165 sessions):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHODAS -23% • Cross-cutting symptoms -46% • Depression -60% • Generalized Anxiety Disorder -55% • PTSD -53% • Substance Abuse -96%
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>The Fort Bend Women’s Center (FBWC) mental health services include screening for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and subsequent neurofeedback training to all clients who screen positive for TBI.</p> <p>Women who suffer abuse often have TBI-inducing injuries to their head, neck, and face. The high potential for women who are abused to develop mild to severe TBI is of growing concern, since the effects can cause irreversible physical and psychological damage. As injuries accumulate, the likelihood of recovery decreases dramatically. Further, sustaining another head trauma before the first injury heals can be fatal.</p> <p>A woman with TBI who enters the justice system may appear aggressive, confused, disorganized or temperamental. If her behaviors are misunderstood or misdiagnosed as indicating a mental health disability, which often happens, she may have difficulty obtaining custody or establishing credibility with law enforcement when she reports her abuser or in court during witness testimony.</p>	

Potential Response to Problem

FBWC's Direct Service staff have all received training on a basic understanding of TBI which resulted in increased sensitivity, screening, neurofeedback and counseling referrals, accommodations and ultimately, better outcomes for women who are abused.

FBWC first began using the HELPS TBI screening instrument to determine eligibility for a neurofeedback program with a board-certified neurofeedback clinician. Experts recommend that domestic violence advocates and program staff consistently screen women entering shelters and programs for TBI-related symptoms.

After determining eligibility, clients are assessed with a multitude of instruments, listed in the Data table that accompanies this section. Each client is additionally assessed with a Quantitative Electroencephalograph (qEEG) and a videotaped interview. The clients repeat all assessments at the completion of the training to measure their progress.

The largest obstacle has been training completion. Since 2017, the FBWC has employed three child mentors/neurofeedback technicians and two mobile neurofeedback clinicians. These additional positions have lowered non-completion due to lack of transportation and other difficulties abuse victims face like lack of childcare, multiple jobs, court appearances, etc. Clients often cite these challenges as obstacles that interfere with their ability to attend sessions.

Adding the child mentors/technicians has allowed the FBWC to conduct peak performance neurofeedback training on the shelter children. Peak performance training is a simplified form of neurofeedback in which only one brain site receives training. Evidence-based research suggests that it typically yields significant improvements in focus, memory, concentration, etc. The FBWC mentors track academic progress with grade reports and track behavioral progress using Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL).

In an attempt to quantify the effects of neurofeedback training on survivors of intimate partner violence (IPV) and/or sexual assault, FBWC partnered with Michigan State University researchers to analyze the initial pilot data. [The study was published in 2019](#). The data shows highly statistically significant changes in overall anxiety, depression, disability, posttraumatic stress, and qEEG changes. Additional work with Michigan State University researchers is underway to conduct a long-term evaluation of the program's effectiveness.

The global pandemic, COVID-19, resulted in a drastic pause in providing neurofeedback therapy specific services due to shelter-in-place mandates. Furthermore, given that neurofeedback therapy is a hands-on modality and warrants stricter safety precautions, the program paused services for a few months to cater to safety precautions outlined by the CDC. As of August 2020, the neurofeedback program resumed services with strict adherence to CDC guidelines. Continuing to assess the pandemic, practice safety measures, cater to health of staff and clients have been ongoing challenges this year to the SNRP Project implementation.

Independent of COVID-19, our greatest challenge continues to be the barriers that keep our clients from attending sessions. Lack of reliable client transportation is one of the greatest of those barriers. FBWC has addressed this challenge through a multi-pronged plan:

- 1) Deployed mobile neurofeedback clinicians who travel to clients' homes for therapy.
- 2) Trained some of the child mentors as neurofeedback technicians for adult neurofeedback sessions. A partnership with Upbring Krause Childrens' Center allows us to continue servicing minors with a focus on trauma.
- 3) A partnership with Fort Bend Transit has eased some of the transportation barriers for clients that reside within the Fort Bend County limits.
- 4) Acquired a 29-acre facility to house Permanent Supportive Housing clients on-site.
- 5) Investing in more vans so that we can expand in-house transportation options.
- 6) Set up neurofeedback capabilities at the United Way satellite office in Stafford. This location is more convenient for clients residing in Houston city limits. Changes in United Way satellite office hours due to COVID-19 have limited client services.

Priority # 7	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of specialized mental health services and family-centered services for children in CPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 30% of children entering foster care in FY 19 were in the birth to three years population. (AFCARS Data, FY 2019) • The national percentage of parental alcohol and other drug use as a reason for removal was 39% (AFCARS Data, FY 2019) • Practice & Policy Brief: Healing the Youngest Children: Model Court-Community Partnerships (ABA Center on Children and the Law and Zero to Three Policy Center, March 2007)
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Very young children continue to be the fastest growing cohort in the child welfare system. Since approximately 85% of the child's brain develops during the first three years of life, these children's vulnerability places them at the greatest risk for long-term harm. Therefore, early and appropriate interventions are critical to improving these children's well-being and life outcomes. Early relationships are the foundation for a young child's development.</p> <p>Unfortunately, mental health issues and parental AOD are frequently factors in child welfare cases that interfere with the parent's ability to form healthy relationships with their young children. Research has shown that relationship-oriented, family-centered services are critical to teach parents how to respond to their children's emotional and behavioral needs, help children develop corrective attachments, heal trauma. Unfortunately, it is difficult to find available services for these children. Their age, provider availability, and providers with the right specialty are all obstacles. Relationship based services, such as visit coaching, and other family-centered services have positive outcomes for this population.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>The Fort Bend County Infant Toddler Court (ITC) focuses on early interventions for abused and neglected birth to three-year olds and their families.</p>	

The purpose of the Fort Bend County's ITC treatment model is to address the unique and urgent needs of very young children in the foster care system. It utilizes relationship-based and family-centered services, like visit coaching, and offers a treatment program for the substance abuse, co-occurring disorders, and trauma needs of the offending parents. In FY 2020, VOCA funding through the Governor's Office continued to support service enhancement for these victims. Fort Bend County BHS provided services to 28 children and their families. The average child's age was three years.

Of the children who participated in services; 100% completed a parent-child assessment; 82% received TBRI visit-coaching services; 36% received case management and wrap-around support services.

Local Needs (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Need for the development of affordable housing for moderate to low income families	<p>The Rosenberg Housing Authority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In FY 2020, 9 homeless families received services. <p>Fort Bend County Social Services (FBCSS) assisted 188 clients with emergency shelter in FY 2020.</p> <p>U.S. Census Bureau, 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Bend County is the tenth most populous county in Texas. It has a population of 811,688 and 237,883 households. Seventy-seven percent of the population in Fort Bend County are homeowners, and the median household income is \$97,743. The median gross monthly rent from 2015-2019 was \$1,431. <p>FEMA, “Direct Housing Assessment DR-4272-TX: Severe Storms and Flooding,” (July 14, 2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post heavy rain from a thunderstorm complex, Fort Bend County demonstrated a housing deficit of 186 units when considering “the amount of available resources compared to the number of applicants identified for potential direct housing assistance” Fort Bend County is cited as having the greatest housing needs of those affected by natural disasters: “due to the large population of applicants eligible for direct temporary housing assistance in ratio to the significantly low amount of available resources” Fort Bend County demonstrated a need for direct housing assistance because there was a significant shortage of rental resources available. <p>Affordable Housing Online, 2020</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently there are 3,036 affordable apartments in Fort Bend County: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 210 income-based rental units, 12 project-based Section 8 HUD subsidized units, and 2,826 low-income units that do not offer rental assistance. 38% of renters are overburdened, or spending more than one-third of their monthly income on rent.

	<p>Coalition for the Homeless 2020 Homeless Count & Survey: Reporting Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fort Bend County contains 76 literally homeless people: 19 unsheltered and 57 sheltered. <p>Housing Conditions, Understanding Houston</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The American Community Survey, 2017 1-year Estimates reported that 2.6% of households in Fort Bend County were overcrowded.
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>There is a great need for affordable housing for persons and households with incomes below 80 percent of the HUD Annual Median Family Income. As of June 1, 2020, the Fort Bend County Consolidated Plan found that “the 80% percent income category maximum was \$63,050 for a four person household.” The majority of housing in Fort Bend County is “single-family, owner-occupied housing,” and there is “a great need for safe, decent, affordable rental housing for single persons, families and seniors.”</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) provides “Competitive (9%)” and “Non-Competitive (4%)” tax credit incentives “for the production or preservation of affordable rental housing” (“Competitive (9%) Housing Tax Credits.” There are grants available for the building or preservation of multifamily rental housing, for homeownership assistance, and for developing affordable, accessible, integrated homes for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Through strategic leveraging of public and private dollars, New Hope Housing has been successful in creating attractive, affordable housing priced at \$455-\$701 per month and offering support services for over 9,000 people in the Houston area, and may be available to provide such housing and services in the Fort Bend County area. The Houston/Harris County Continuum of Care (CoC) coordinates HUD competitive housing assistance programs funds for homeless persons and families and persons and families at-risk of homelessness in Fort Bend County.</p>	

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Limited public transportation within Fort Bend County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fort Bend County Public Transportation Department, 2020
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Although public transportation services are available in Fort Bend County, there are still gaps in the types of transportation services and hours needed. Fort Bend Transit currently offers Demand Response service, which is a shared ride, curb-to-curb service that requires advance reservations. Reservations can be made one day in advance and up to 30 day in advance. Fort Bend County residents wishing to access services outside of Fort Bend County have difficulty finding affordable, reliable service into adjoining counties. Providers within other counties often do not provide services for non-residents and/or do not offer services when the person needs them.</p> <p>Some local Fort Bend County services (i.e. parenting classes, therapy, forensic nursing exams, etc.) are beyond the immediate access to children and families due to limited availability and Fort Bend Transit operating hours, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.</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 at a low cost. Fort Bend Transit receives federal, state, and local dollars to provide shared rider service within Fort Bend County.</p> <p>Demand Response</p> <p>Fort Bend County currently offers countywide, shared bus ride services to the residents and guests of Fort Bend County. The trips must begin and end within Fort Bend County. Reservations must be made at least one day in advance. To connect to neighboring counties, Fort Bend Transit has a Mobility Coordinator on staff to assist those in need.</p> <p>Commuter Service</p> <p>Fort Bend County also offers commuter services known as Fort Bend Express. Services are available from three park and ride locations: near the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds in Rosenberg, the AMC Theater in Sugar Land, and University of Houston in Sugar Land. These routes provide service to the Texas Medical Center, Greenway Plaza and the Galleria in Houston. In 2020, Fort Bend Transit will expand service to include Downtown Houston as well as an additional Park and Ride lot located off the West Park toll road.</p> <p>Fort Bend Transit is currently exploring possible partnerships with other counties to provide evening and weekend service via taxicabs and private operators.</p>	

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of available and affordable medical care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2015-2019 American Communities Survey 5-Year Estimates • Texas KIDS COUNT Center for Public Policy Priorities, 2018 • Houston Public Media, September 30, 2020 <i>“About a Million Texans Could Gain Health Insurance This Year If Texas Expands Medicaid, Study Finds,”</i>
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>Texas continues to have the highest rate of uninsured residents in the nation at 18.4%, or approximately five million uninsured Texans. This figure is greater than the combined populations of Dallas, Houston and San Antonio. In Fort Bend County, 8.1% of children and 15.7% of adults (18-64 years) are uninsured.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Fort Bend County Clinical Health Services has expanded to offer health screenings, immunizations, STD testing and treatment, and tuberculosis prevention services. AccessHealth is a Federally Qualified Health Center that provides primary adult and pediatric, behavioral, and women’s health care in addition to dental services and nutritional assistance for families below 200% of the poverty level of Fort Bend County.</p> <p>In Fall 2019, the San Jose Clinic opened a permanent location at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Rosenberg. The San Jose Clinic offers primary and specialty healthcare, dental and pharmacy services for the uninsured and under-insured on a sliding scale.</p> <p>If Texas expanded Medicaid, approximately 1,200,000 Texans would gain access to affordable health insurance.</p>	

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Limited affordable and available child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Solutions – Gulf Coast Workforce Board • BakerRipley
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>BakerRipley partners with Workforce Solutions to offer child care financial aid to a 13-county region that encompasses Fort Bend County. Due to restricted funds, the current wait time to receive childcare assistance is two to three months.</p>	

BakerRipley also administers the [Head Start and Early Head Start](#) program in Fort Bend County. These programs serve pre-school age children (birth to five years) and their low-income families. There are a dozen centers in Fort Bend County: four locations in the Richmond/Rosenberg area and eight locations in east Fort Bend County.

Priority #5	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Limited bilingual services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates and 2019 1-Year Estimates • Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 39.5% of Fort Bend County residents speak a language other than English at home.</p> <p>Today, Fort Bend County has the ethnic diversity predicted for the rest of the nation in 2050. In 2020, the estimated population was 21 percent Asian and Pacific Islander, 24.9 percent Hispanic or Latino, 20.5 percent Black or African American, 0.4% Native American and 21.7 percent White</p> <p>As the proportion of Asian and Hispanic/Latino families increases rapidly in Fort Bend County, relevant language services must become available and accessible. Court interpreters, law enforcement interpreters, counselors, and every person that provides services in the justice field need to be able to communicate to pursue justice and support victims and their families. Spanish is the first priority, as the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 8,733 Spanish-speaking households in Fort Bend County have zero residents who speak English “well” or “very well”. An additional 8,461 households that speak languages other than Spanish fall into this category as well, including 2,710 Chinese (incl. Mandarin and Cantonese) speaking households.</p>	

Priority #6	
Problem Identified	Data
<p>At least one in four Fort Bend County residents are functionally illiterate</p> <p>Low rates of literacy have relationships to higher rates of incarceration, lower levels of educational attainment, and poorer health outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literacy Council of Fort Bend County, 2017-2018 • U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates • National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 2003 • Literacy Council of Fort Bend County, 2017-2018 • Texas Learns, 2005 • National Council for Adult Learning, 2014 • ProLiteracy, Adult Literacy Facts • Literacy, Learning Disabilities and Their Association with Imprisonment, Barnard-Brak & Sulak, 2010 • 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
Problem Details	
<p>In 2003, the last time the National Center for Education Statistics conducted the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 24% of Fort Bend County residents lacked basic literacy. The statewide rate was 19% and neighboring Harris County was 21%.</p> <p>According to <i>Barnard-Brak & Sulak, 2010</i>, there is an inverse relationship between literacy and imprisonment. The study concluded that incarcerated people have lower rates of literacy than the general population. Lower levels of literacy decrease the likelihood of acquittal and lighter sentencing during the justice process and decreases participation in programs or therapy that may result in earlier parole once in prison.</p> <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 less likely to understand written and oral information given by physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and insurers. They also visit doctors less and hospitals more than people do with adequate health literacy. Nearly 36% of adults in the U.S. have low health literacy, with higher rates found among low-income adults who are eligible for Medicaid. 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>	

Unproductivity in the workplace, loss of tax revenue, crime, and unemployment resulting from low literacy costs the United States at least \$225 billion per year.

Potential Response to Problem

[The Literacy Council of Fort Bend](#)'s mission is to improve family, community, and professional lives through adult education. It is the only [Pro-Literacy](#) accredited literacy provider in Fort Bend County. The Literacy Council has an average of 350 active volunteer tutors every year and served more than 750 adult learners during the 2017-2018 school year. Each tutor provides one to three hours of classroom instruction per week to adult students at all locations. Tutors attend and complete a six-hour onboarding before they may volunteer.

They have outreach programs at eleven partner sites across Fort Bend and collaborate with [Fort Bend Hope](#) to offer adult ESL classes to non-native speakers at all levels.

The Literacy Council demographics indicate that 75% of its students are female and 25% are male. The student body's ethnicity is 40% Hispanic/Latino, 39% Asian, 14% White and 7% African-American.

Priority #7	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to provide GED classes and transitions to post-secondary education to prepare adult students for the workforce and higher education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates Literacy Council of Fort Bend, 2017-2018 The David H. Murdock Institute, 2007 Accelerate Texas, 2012 Thornburg Center for Professional Development, MultiMedia Schools, January/February 2001
<i>Problem Details</i>	
<p>In Fort Bend County, 9.4% of residents 25 years or older do not have a high school diploma. However, there are some communities within Fort Bend County that have much higher rates of low educational attainment. In 2018, Texas ranked last in the nation by percentage of residents ages 25 and older who have a high school diploma or GED.</p>	
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>The Literacy Council began its GED program in 2005. The curriculum includes multiple class levels so that students have the opportunity to succeed regardless of their initial proficiency. All GED instructors are paid staff and earn a stipend for each class. To date,</p>	

164 students have graduated from the Literacy Council's GED program. There is a waiting list for GED, Basic Literacy, ESL, and Basic Computer Skills classes.

Available Resources

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

Juvenile Justice:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department	Governmental	Serves juveniles ages 10 to 17 referred from 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	Reduces youth involvement with the juvenile justice system with mentoring and educational programs. Supports a variety of programs for justice-involved youth and their families.
Youth for Christ	Faith Based	Spiritual counseling and religious services for youth in the juvenile detention center.
Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston Special Youth Services	Faith Based	Spiritual counseling and religious services for youth in the juvenile detention center.
Parks Youth Ranch	Nonprofit	Providing shelter, counseling and life changing services to at-risk and homeless youth in Fort Bend County.

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.
County Court at Law 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.
Justice of the Peace Courts	Governmental	Serve all citizens, law enforcement agencies, merchants, school districts, and various other county and state regulatory agencies that file either civil or criminal actions.
Law enforcement: cities, county and school districts	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: Provides a voice to speak on behalf of abused and neglected children who are involved in the legal system through trained, court appointed volunteers. CAC: Lessen the emotional trauma of child victims by coordinating investigation, assessment, prosecution, and treatment of sexual and serious physical abuse.
Daya, Inc	Nonprofit	Provides temporary housing and other wraparound services to South Asian victims of family violence and their children
Fort Bend Women's Center	Nonprofit	Provides temporary housing and other wraparound services to women, and their children 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.
Texas Forensic Nurse Examiners	Nonprofit	Provides forensic nursing exams in a culturally competent, linguistically appropriate atmosphere at clinic or requested mobile location
Parks Youth Ranch	Nonprofit	Shelter, counseling, and support services doe at-risk and homeless youth in Fort Bend County.

Health / Medical / Substance Abuse:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Fort Bend County Behavioral Health Services	Governmental	Behavioral health support resource for at-risk individuals with behavioral health disorders involved in the criminal justice system
Fort Bend County Health & Human Services	Governmental	Clinical Health Services Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Social Services Veterans Services Animal Services Environmental Health Public Health Emergency Preparedness
AccessHealth	Nonprofit Community Health Center	Comprehensive healthcare services, including prenatal and pregnancy care, family planning, pediatrics, WIC, adult care, social services, and behavioral health 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)
Hope Fort Bend Clubhouse	Nonprofit	Housing, education, community support services, and paid work opportunities for people living with mental health conditions
Planned Parenthood of Fort Bend, Inc.	Nonprofit	Outpatient medical care; counseling, referral and community programs on reproductive health and sexuality.
Texana Center	Governmental	Provision of a comprehensive array of quality, cost effective services focused on consumer choice and satisfaction for people with intellectual disabilities 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 service members 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.)
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.
YMCA of Greater Houston	Nonprofit	Fort Bend Family YMCA serving east Fort Bend and T.W. Davis Family YMCA serving west Fort Bend
Girl Scouts of the USA	Nonprofit	Scouting programs for girls ages 5 to 17.
Literacy Council of Fort Bend	Nonprofit	Adult literacy education, GED preparation, basic computer skills, U.S. 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, the Community Planning Team conducts a series of meetings throughout the year following the submission of the Community Plan. The topic and invitation list of each of these meetings should 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 Judge's Office hosts one formal meeting each fall, and agency and community representatives typically submit suggestions and changes via e-mail to the Community Plan Coordinators. Each of these coordinators then submits an updated draft to the Community Planning Coordinator.

It is the intent of the Community Planning Group to improve outcomes for Fort Bend County families struggling with the issues described in the Plan's focus areas. Many Fort Bend County agencies and organizations are making efforts to address these problems with local funds as well as grant funds from multiple state, federal, and private sources. To the extent that funds are available, the Community Planning Team will continue to encourage agencies to provide programming that addresses the outlined focus areas.

Contact Information

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This Plan is available online at the following URL address:
<https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/your-county/community-plan>