

**CJD GRANT YEAR 2011-2012**  
**FY 2011-2012 Hidalgo County Community Plan**  
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## **SECTION 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **I. MISSION STATEMENT**

The Hidalgo County Community Planning Group, hereinafter referred to as the Community Planning Group, was established to improve the quality of life and safety for the citizens of Hidalgo County through the availability of programs and resources.

##### **Mission Statement**

*The Community Planning Group will access funding opportunities, resources, and programs to maximize services to Hidalgo County, promoting the international/multicultural populace in order to monitor the distribution of funds for the County as well as organize, facilitate, and provide collaboration for the delivery of knowledge and social services, which in turn improves economic and social conditions in the area.*

In addition, the Community Planning Group serves as a visionary organization recognizing the gaps in services and working diligently to address the critical needs of the area by developing a viable, realistic, and action-driven plan.

#### **II. THE COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP**

The Community Planning Group was established to meet the grant submission requirements specified by the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division, with the purpose of identifying priority needs in individual communities within the county with the intention of developing strategies to address those priorities.

Representatives from non-profit agencies, educational institutions, social service agencies, law enforcement agencies, and court systems make up the group's membership. These leaders, familiar with the issues affecting criminal justice, have extensive experience in dealing with the direct and indirect concerns related to education, health, youth development, and social services, and are willing to work for positive solutions.

Yearly review of community data provides and identifies the most recent and relevant issues facing communities. Evaluation and reflection guide the implementation of programs and services to enhance the quality of life and this promotes a catalyst for positive future endeavors.

The Community Planning Group meets twice a year to analyze, plan, and update issues concerning communities. The first meeting consists of an open discussion and assessment of previous year accomplishments, progress, and outcomes. Results are compiled in a report based on those findings. Further examination and discussion follows during the second meeting with determinations made on priority targets to include in the final plan to be submitted to the Criminal Justice Division.

#### **III. PRIORITIES - MAJOR NEEDS EXPRESSED**

This list reflects the county's priorities- ALL LISTED ARE HIGH PRIORITY

- ◆ Drug Related Crime
- ◆ Violent Crime/Family Violence
- ◆ High Dropout Rate for Middle and High School Students
- ◆ Juvenile Crime / Delinquency
- ◆ Crime and Drug Prevention
- ◆ Technology / Public Safety and Equipment
- ◆ High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area

- ◆ Substance Abuse Problems
- ◆ Child Abuse and Neglect
- ◆ Mental Health and Mental Disability
- ◆ Specialized Courts

#### **IV. Organization of the Plan**

The first two sections of the plan are an introduction and a community profile / statement of the problem. These are followed by a section for each of the priorities/issues identified in the plan. The section for each priority issue contains the following elements:

- ◆ Identification of Needs
- ◆ Identification of Resources
- ◆ Coordination of Resources
- ◆ Goals and Strategies
- ◆ Gaps in Services
- ◆ Program Measures and Program Outcomes

## SECTION 2

### COMMUNITY PROFILE

#### I. Hidalgo County

The Lower Rio Grande Valley (RGV) of Texas is located in the southernmost tip of the state, and according to U.S. Census data, Hidalgo County's population is 741,152 with the McAllen Metropolitan Area reporting 132,225 in 2009. Demographic information for this area states the population since 2000 has increased by 30% with 89.8% classified as Hispanic, 83% speak Spanish at home, and of the more than 239,000 students enrolled, only 60.7% graduated high school. Twenty-point-six (20.6%) percent of this population is identified as 18 years or younger, but past statistics show only 16.1% have a college degree. The National Center for Children in Poverty shows that 10.3% of the populace is living on less than \$15,000 per year and another 10.3% exist on \$25,000 a year or less. Compared with the national per capita income of \$27,041 and median household income level of \$62,363 (2009), the per capita income for Hidalgo County is \$13,130 and the median household income stands at \$30,076. This represents a negative 49% median household income level, and an astounding negative 49% per capita income level in the region. Current U.S. Census projections indicate a 34% poverty rate, thus making the region among the poorest in the nation. Also in April 2008 the unemployment rate was calculated at 5.8% for Hidalgo County, the current rate is twice that standing at 11.3%, one point five (1.5) higher than the national average and three point one (3.1) points higher than the Texas average (8.2%).

The school districts throughout Hidalgo County serve a population of approximately 239,000 students. Of the total population of students for Hidalgo County, 96.99% are classified as Hispanic, 72.62% are identified economically disadvantaged, about 50% are limited English proficient (LEP) and 66.01% are classified at risk of dropping out of school before graduation. Students in the RGV face numerous challenges/risk factors; many deal with community, school, family, individual, and/or peer pressure, and research confirms this by juvenile crime statistics.

In 2007, the FBI reported 7,192 arrests were made for youth under the age of 18 and 14.9% were indexed as violent crimes with 72% arson cases, 43.6% for burglary as well as 64.7% vandalism cases. Another factor impacting the RGV populace deals with gangs. An article in the local newspaper (*The Monitor*, 06/25/2006) states some of the more easily recognized/well-known gangs are the 18th Street Gang, Latin Kings, Big Time Killers, and Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13. MS-13, the most violent gang in the eyes of the federal government known for their brutal slaying across the U.S., also has a presence here. The gangs in the Valley have begun to form alliances, working in connection with the drug cartels in Mexico. Many officers in local departments point to gangs like the Mexican Mafia, Texas Syndicate, and Tri-City Bombers as the most dangerous. It is also noted that the Texas Syndicate and Mexican Mafia prison gangs spawned from Valley gangs into larger organizations to illustrate how jailing violent gang members does not deter criminal activity in the long term. Local gangs that were mostly involved in petty crimes 20 years ago have now grown into full-time criminal outfits smuggling drugs, carrying out hits, and laundering money.

Other risks include poverty, which has caused many students to dropout in order to help support the family unit or to start their own family unit. Hidalgo County has the highest teen pregnancy rate in the state and one of the highest in the nation. Substance abuse and mental health issues are another problem that impacts the area. In 2001, The Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration launched a special national program "Soy Unica, Soy Latina," which, when implemented, addresses issues specific to Hispanic females, or "Latinas." Almost one in five Latinas ages 12 to 17 reported past-year illicit drug use. More than one in four reported lifetime use of an illicit drug. Almost one-third, 31%, reported past-year alcohol use, and 17% reported past-year use of cigarettes. Other studies have found Hispanic girls rank higher in rates of pregnancy, depression, and suicide than any other racial or ethnic group. Program activities involve building self-esteem, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and taking the advice and wisdom from elders and other successful Latinas. This program needs funding to register, organize, and begin implementing programming. The safe and drug free programs saw a substantial cut in their funding of local programs and many existing programs were lost as well.

Due to the proximity of the U.S. – Mexico Border, students can easily cross the border into Mexico. Students indicate that going to Mexico to drink alcohol is easy, inexpensive, and no one asks for identification. The

problem of students crossing into Mexico has been an ever-increasing problem for Hidalgo County and we have suffered the loss of many lives due to drunk driving. Hidalgo County has one of the highest DWI arrests rates in the state.

With the extreme economic, social deprivation, and lack of social services, Hidalgo County clearly demonstrates some of the most serious economic conditions within the national levels as well as the State. According to the 2006 U.S. Census, this region **ranks at the bottom** of almost every socio-economic indicator:

- ◆ The percentage of all persons (34.8%) living in poverty is over three times the national percentage (14.3%) and twice as high as the state (15.8%).
- ◆ 43.9% of all children in Hidalgo County live in poverty. The percentage of children living in poverty is 27% over the national statistics (43% vs. 16%).
- ◆ 83.1% of the county students qualify for the reduced/free lunch at school, compared to 60% (2008) in the state and 62.9% in the nation.
- ◆ Unemployment in Hidalgo County has historically been 2.5 points higher than the state as a whole, currently at 11.3% (Texas Employment Commission, October 2010).
- ◆ Approximately 89% of Hidalgo County population is Hispanic, of which 35% are under the age of 18.
- ◆ Per capita income of the county is \$ 13,130 per year.

Furthermore, this community has been impacted by a high level of impoverished immigration from Mexico, which has intensified the competition for jobs, social services, and affordable housing in the area. Many immigrants reside in unregulated rural subdivisions called *colonias* or *barrios* that exist as pockets in various areas of the county. According to the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), 958 *colonias* exist in the Hidalgo County, as compared to a total of 2,300 *colonias* within the state of Texas, thus making Hidalgo County the largest *colonia* concentration in the state. As a consequence to their situation, youth in these areas have a high probability of dropping out of school and involvement with drugs and gangs. Even though most *colonia* residents have electricity, some do not have indoor plumbing nor sewage facilities. Consider the following profile of *colonia* residents compiled by the Texas Department of Human Services (2001): 80% of the children are U.S. citizens; 86% are high school dropouts; 47% cannot read or speak English; 47% are unemployed, and 72% have no health insurance.

The lack of parental involvement has been cited by school personnel as one of the biggest problems they face in motivating students to stay in school. Many Rio Grande Valley youth come from dysfunctional families where physical and emotional abuse is common. According to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services 2009 Data Book, Hidalgo County had 252,901 children and was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state of Texas for child fatalities due to child abuse and neglect. Confirmed victims of child abuse is 2,956 and 28% of violent crimes against children go unreported. Also, according to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, in 2009 Hidalgo County had 7,379 investigations and 2,956 confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect with ten fatalities.

General issues identified by the Community Planning Group to address safety include: Public Safety/Equipment, Child Abuse, Juvenile Crime, Violent Crime, Family Violence, Drug Related Crime, Substance Abuse/Treatment, and Court Procedures. Another concern is the high crime rate. There has been an increase in thefts, homicides, spousal abuse, child abuse, and a significant emergence of gang activity in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. There are some areas of northern Hidalgo County where radio communication is difficult, so it has become imperative that residents become involved in providing information concerning illegal acts committed in their community.

#### **Statement of Problem:**

The Texas Mexican Border region is described as a unique bi-national, bi-literate, and bi-cultural community. The evolution of this area has been consistent, continuous, and the economics of each area have been strongly linked.

Hidalgo County has been identified as a "High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area," which in and of itself has generated multiple issues and challenges for the residents. With multiple international bridges, there is a high degree of drug trafficking, money laundering, and the illegal crossing of money into Mexico (and vice-versa). The county has seen an increase in human trafficking as well. With the borders tightened for homeland security, there are still a plethora of problems that are confronted daily, not only by our criminal justice and law enforcement officials, but by the citizens of the community. Many citizens are taking action in protecting their own properties that are located along this international border crossing area.

Pseudo-cops, drug-dealers, international gangs, terrorists, and illegal immigrants all increase the risk communities' face. Drug abuse and drug trafficking is a huge problem for this area. However, social services are very limited for those who are dealing with substance abuse, violent crimes, family violence, and crimes of sexual and physical assault, and/or abuse against children, as well as crimes of human trafficking, money laundering; the increase in juvenile crime has impacted the judicial and criminal justice system even more. Our current courts are already back logged with cases pending. Family counseling on Saturdays or evenings should be an option for all families in lieu of citations or fines.

According to the Hidalgo County District Attorney's Office there has been an increase in the confiscation of drugs for this county. Drug dealers are using couriers via mass ground transits to export drugs from the valley to other parts of the country. Investigators are working overtime (without pay compensation) to monitor and confiscate the drugs.

According to the District Attorney's Office, records for juveniles and adults indicated the following:

**Report to Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council December 31, 2010**

Figures provided by: James R. Wade, Developer & Systems Engineer, Office of Criminal District Attorney, Hidalgo County, Texas

CRIMINAL CASES	Adults 2005	Juveniles 2005	Adults 2006	Juveniles 2006	Adults 2007	Juveniles 2007	Adults 2008	Juveniles 2008	Adults 2009	Juveniles 2009	Adults 2010	Juveniles 2010
Assault	2363	394	2110	422	2131	535	2081	532	2298	579	2110	422
Drug	1847	330	1891	367	2169	468	2080	443	4188	478	2169	468
Burglary of Vehicle	308	111	366	76	401	168	324	116	394	112	401	168
Burglary of Building	115	127	160	96	173	156	189	85	191	118	173	156
Burglary of Habitation	354	146	364	162	392	157	392	260	561	173	392	157
Unauthorized Use of Motor Vehicle	156	71	161	41	140	36	153	35	134	22	140	36
Sexual Assault	99	8	101	10	110	3	80	9	112	6	110	3
Aggravated Sexual Assault	86	23	106	30	105	24	96	34	113	68	105	24
Capital Murder	18	0	14	8	23	4	29	4	35	1	23	4
Murder	63	4	62	1	51	8	59	20	33	10	51	8
Arson	17	27	11	12	7	46	25	25	27	17	7	46
Criminal Mischief	239	114	246	103	266	119	360	148	338	113	266	119
Graffiti	79	136	37	141	61	269	72	196	48	221	61	269
Truancy *	N/A	256	N/A	160	N/A	80	N/A	61	N/A	34	N/A	80
Driving While Intoxicated	6380	13	6561	7	5453	13	4516	8	4515	6	5453	13

\* Truancy cases shown above only include those cases received by the Office of Criminal District Attorney for prosecution and do not include those filed at the Justice of the Peace offices and disposed there without referral to the Office of Criminal District Attorney.

PROTECTIVE ORDERS	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Processed in Office	1213	1235	1533	1412	1367	1260
Filed in Court	455	406	372	305	358	328

According to Christians Against Substance Abuse (CASA) of Hidalgo County, 65%-70% of the mothers with children who are referred to the Court Appointed Special Advocates Program are using some form of substance: alcohol, nonmedical pain relievers, depression drugs (valium). Many show alcohol dependence, plus 80% of domestic violence is correlated with alcohol or drugs. Ninety percent (90%) of gang, truancy, drop-outs, organized crime, and the victims of crime are all alcohol and drug related.

According to the Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc., there are no state beds available for detoxification in this area. Our community has a huge demand for detoxification centers and inpatient care for substance abuse in this region (not just Hidalgo County). There are only 10 "specialized" female beds for this region and 14 adolescent beds for inpatient care, but these are not detoxification centers. If individuals need detoxification, the waiting time for an available bed can vary –some individuals wait for over a month, the estimated time is rarely known. Many individuals become discouraged and are sometimes lost during the waiting period. The closest detoxification beds are in Corpus Christi and Laredo, Texas.

According to the Criminal Justice Policy Council (2007), Hidalgo County remains identified as having one of the highest rates of juvenile crime in the state. Statistics show that local juveniles have increasingly become involved in robbery, theft, truancy, weapons violations, drug offenses, other violent crimes, and academic failure. According to the 2006 Texas Youth Commission (TYC) Profile, 44% of new arrivals had committed violent offenses, an increase of 33% from fiscal year 2000. Eighty-one percent (81%) of crimes committed involved youth aged 16 or younger. Another 9% of new arrivals were categorized as high risk offenders.

Statistics reveal that youth offenders are: 44% Hispanic, 69% are fourth through eighth graders (with median reading and math achievement that is four to five years behind their peers); 75% had IQs below the mean score of 100; 65% had a high need for drug treatment; 43% were severely emotionally disturbed; 77% of youth had parents who never married or who are divorced or separated. The vast majority had a history of abuse or neglect; more than one-half came from low income homes; three out of four came from chaotic environments; many had families with histories of criminal behavior and or mental impairments; 57% were in juvenile court on two or more felony level offenses before being committed to TYC. Seventy-two-percent (72%) of the youth were never reported as runaways by their families and/or legal guardian(s). Hidalgo County Juvenile Detention facility only has a 64-78 capacity. There is a waiting list for youth to be admitted into the detention center and Hidalgo County has a definite need to increase the capacity for youth detention services and to increase the number of detention and juvenile probation officers.

Another challenge facing juveniles in detention centers is their academic achievement; youth are reported to be behind at least 4 to 5 grade levels, and many are already teen parents. The county has one boot-camp style center which is located in Weslaco, Texas (Hidalgo County). This facility implements a military style approach and has an effective impact on the juvenile males who are served there. The facility has four dorms with 19 bunk style beds per dorm, meaning only 38 inmates can be served at one time. The total number of juveniles that can be served at one time countywide is only 116.

## **SECTION 3**

### **DRUG AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING RELATED CRIME**

#### **I. Identification of Needs**

Due to the area's adjacent border with Mexico, large quantities of controlled substances are routinely crossed, by various methods, into the Hidalgo County area for shipment to other parts of the State and Nation. This abundance of and easy access to narcotics has also contributed to a flourishing street level narcotics trade in the Rio Grande Valley. Drug Trafficking in the area contributes to a high incidence in related crimes such as money laundering, kidnapping, home invasions, extortion, and homicide.

The close proximity to the Texas-Mexico border makes substance abuse a serious problem for the residents of Hidalgo County and offers easy accessibility for underage youth to purchase and consume alcohol. The Centers for Disease Control has further reported for youth (age 9 and up) who live along this border region that 43% of them drank alcohol and 26% reported episodic heavy binge drinking within the past year. In addition, 12% had used cocaine and another 12% had used inhalants. According to the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (2005), the average age for first time alcohol use is 12 years old for Hidalgo County area.

Drug trafficking across the Texas-Mexico Border is extensive. Researchers estimate that 70% of all drugs smuggled in the U.S. come from across the border. The 2004 Youth Risk Behavior Survey conducted by Centers for Disease Control reported 23% of the youth from along the Texas border had used marijuana within the past month. Texas School Survey for 2002 of Students in grades 4-6 reports that Hispanic elementary students had more than doubled the rates of past year marijuana use as compared to Anglos or African Americans. Border students reported higher prevalence of lifetime and past-year marijuana use than non-border students.

In-patient and out-patient treatment services for adolescent and adults for the Hidalgo County area are very limited. Service providers and governmental agencies are overwhelmed with the tremendous work load because many substance abusers do not receive early treatment and end up in the criminal justice system or die as a result of substance abuse. Despite the population growth, intervention services and prevention programs are on the decline in Hidalgo County and are therefore unable to meet the needs of the growing population.

Prevention programs are under funded and increasingly ceasing. The general school population receives very little prevention education and the general public has little knowledge about the costs it pays for impaired driving and other substance abuse crimes. Moreover, there are no formal or consistent drug prevention programs available to school aged children or their parents. Lack of parental involvement within the schools has become an ever-increasing problem and the need to provide parenting classes is a definite need. Properties that are confiscated should be auctioned and proceeds used to help support the local social service agencies. Buildings that can be utilized as youth rehab centers or vocational and parenting centers are needed. Drug monies from this area should be made available to victim services as well. Millions of dollars are confiscated and should be put back into our community to enhance, support, and develop services for youth.

Border communities in Hidalgo County are prime locations for drug activity. As a result, our court system is constantly backlogged with an overflow of drug cases.

1. Reduce drug trafficking through investigation and apprehension of drug traffickers.
2. Prosecution of drug trafficking offenses and related crime such as money laundering, kidnapping, home invasions, extortion, and homicide.
3. Reduce drugs and contraband trafficking at different levels, from street level to major drug trafficking organizations.
4. Reduce the sale and distribution of drugs at school campuses and educational facilities.

The need for the following types of programs were identified under this category:

1. Professional development to train law enforcement in drug investigation/interdiction;
2. Determine and launch additional methods for apprehending offenders;
3. Establish additional courts, hire prosecutors, and related personnel to eliminate overload;
4. Create and develop in-patient and out-patient programs to treat substance abuse;
5. Assist law enforcement agencies in establishing and operating K-9 Units;
6. Supply equipment and technology to combat crime throughout jurisdictions;
7. Design and develop infrastructure which utilizes technology purchased for collection of data to facilitate evaluation and provide a centralized clearinghouse for data control;
8. Certify and confirm destruction of controlled substances by local Texas Department of Public Safety.

## **II. Identification of Resources**

Resource agencies that are addressing drug related crime include:

- ◆ Local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies and intelligence centers
- ◆ Hidalgo County Adult and Juvenile Probation
- ◆ Palmer Drug Abuse Program (PDAP)
- ◆ South Texas Behavioral Health Center
- ◆ Tropical Texas Behavioral Health Center
- ◆ Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc.
- ◆ All school districts in Hidalgo County
- ◆ Renaissance Behavioral Health

## **III. Coordination of Resources**

Agencies work together through communications and sharing information through the coordination of standardized forms. The following are examples of existing coordination:

- ◆ Federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in Hidalgo County combine efforts to investigate drug related crimes.
- ◆ The Rio Grande Valley Council, Palmer Drug Abuse Program, and the Tropical Texas Behavioral Health are instrumental in providing early detection of substance abuse, plus treatment, and prevention measures.
- ◆ The Hidalgo County Community Supervision and Corrections Department provides reentry programs and services to make the most effective use of available resources to protect the public, coordinating services with law enforcement agencies, court systems, the district attorney's office, social service agencies, health service providers, and employment agencies.
- ◆ Palmer Drug Abuse Program (PDAP) works closely with Hidalgo County Adult and Juvenile Probation, Mujeres Unidas, Inc., Child Protective Services (CPS), and other agencies providing a 12 step drug-counseling program, free of charge, to adults, youth, and families.
- ◆ The Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc. provides evidenced-based prevention, intervention, and treatment services for youth and adults. The Council collaborates with local, state, law enforcement agencies, Juvenile and Adult Probation Offices, community organizations and treatment providers throughout the

region, plus providing educational presentations/trainings, implementing evidenced-based curricula in schools, drug testing, and treatment services for youth and adults.

#### **IV. Goals and Strategies**

1. Establish/ enhance multi-agency drug enforcement task force.
2. Raise awareness and involvement of drug related issues in the community and in rural areas.
3. Develop professional training programs to facilitate the identification, infiltration of, and elimination of drug trafficking organizations and related crimes.
4. Establish/enhance drug impact courts to primarily prosecute drug related cases.
5. Create drug detector and human tracking K9 Units to aid in the apprehension of offenders.
6. Supply equipment and technology to combat crime in all jurisdictions.
7. Identify drug free zones and design drug free zone maps.
8. Establish/Enhance a centralized clearinghouse for data collection and program evaluation.
9. Confirm funding for additional personnel to identify, investigate, and disrupt drug crimes.
10. Locate funding for the effective and efficient prosecution of drug offenders.
11. Build additional in-patient and out-patient treatment centers.
12. Initiate efforts to develop law enforcement components in school districts.
13. Provide resources for timely evaluation of programs in measureable terms.

The strategies for addressing drug related crime are as follows:

1. Establish/enhance multi-agency drug enforcement task force.
2. Raise awareness of drug related issues in the community.
3. Establish training programs to train local law enforcement agencies.
4. Establish drug impact courts to primarily prosecute drug cases.
5. Establish/Enhance drug detector and human tracking K-9 Units.
6. Provide and/or share police and law enforcement equipment in small municipalities and rural areas.  
Identify drug free zones and create maps showing the identified drug free zones.
7. Establish/enhance in-patient and out-patient substance abuse treatment programs.
8. Establish prevention and intervention programs to deter drug related crimes and substance abuse.
9. Establish a centralized clearinghouse for data collection and program evaluation.

#### **V. Gaps in Services**

The existing gaps in services include:

1. Funding for the operation of multi-agency drug enforcement task force.
2. Funding for training of local law enforcement agencies in drug interdiction and the identification and elimination of drug trafficking organizations.
3. Funding for the prosecution of drug offenders.
4. Funding for the operation of drug courts.

5. Funding for setting up in-patient and out-patient alcohol and substance abuse programs.
6. Funding for setting up prevention and intervention programs geared toward youth and adults.
7. Funding to set-up drug detector and bomb K-9 units.
8. Funds for the purchase of police and law enforcement equipment.
9. Funds to identify drug free zones, set-up street signs, and create maps showing drug free zone.
10. Funding to set-up a county wide clearinghouse for data collection and program evaluation.

## **VI. Program Measures**

### **A. Output Measures**

1. Number of felony drug arrests.
2. Number of misdemeanor drug arrests.
3. Number of arrests involving crime with an established drug nexus (money laundering, home invasion, kidnapping, extortion, homicide).
4. Number of reports written attributed to the investigation of drug trafficking and related crime.
5. Number of persons treated for substance abuse.
6. Number of persons receiving counseling for committing drug offenses or drug related crime.
7. Number of persons attending presentations to raise awareness about drug trafficking/related crime.
8. Establish/enhance a centralized clearinghouse for data collection and program evaluation.
9. Acquire funding for additional law enforcement personnel to identify, investigate, and disrupt drug traffickers, and dismantle drug trafficking organizations, thereby reducing the incidence of drug related crime in Hidalgo County.
10. Acquire funding to hire personnel to prosecute drug offenders more effectively and efficiently.
11. Establish/enhance programs to treat substance abuse, including in-patient and out-patient treatment.
12. Assist local law enforcement agencies in the acquisition of technology/equipment, which will assist in combatting drug trafficking and drug related crimes.
13. Identify and obtain grants to assist local school districts with the enhancement or development of a law enforcement component.
14. Provide resources for timely evaluation of programs and in turn improving program implementation.

### **B. Outcome Measures**

1. Dismantle targeted drug trafficking organizations for each approved initiative.
2. Increase the number of persons receiving substance abuse counseling.
3. Increase youth/adults receiving evidence-based substance abuse prevention services.
4. Reduce the number of referrals for violations in drug free zones.

## **SECTION 4**

### **VIOLENT CRIME AND FAMILY VIOLENCE**

#### **I. Identification of Needs**

##### **Violent Crime**

According to the 2009 report of the Texas Department of Public Safety Uniform Crime Report, there were a total of 2,486 incidents of family violence reported by Hidalgo County law enforcement agencies not including unreported incidents. According to the 2009 Uniform Crime Report, there were 23 cases of murder, 81 cases of rape, and 770 cases of aggravated assault reported by 22 local law enforcement agencies in Hidalgo County including the following county/cities: Hidalgo County, Alamo, Donna, Edcouch, Edinburg, Elsa, Hidalgo, McAllen, Mercedes, Mission, Pharr, San Juan, Weslaco, UT Pan American, Alton, Progreso, Penitas, Sullivan City, La Joya, La Villa, Palm View, and Palm Hurst.

According to the 2010 report submitted by Hidalgo County agencies, there were 3 cases of murder, 119 cases of rape, 801 cases of aggravated assault, and 1,344 cases of family violence. (Not all LE agencies in Hidalgo County have submitted their reports to the LRGVDC.)

1. Domestic violence assistance
2. Dating violence
3. Child abuse investigations and support
4. Victims counseling and support services, to include secondary victims
5. Sexual assault – counseling and support services, to include secondary victims
6. Stalking
7. Elder abuse

##### **Family Violence**

The County of Hidalgo has an average of 10 women who are killed each year as a result of family violence. In the year 2009, there were 13 women who were killed by their intimate partner and 3 children were killed by a family member. For the periods of January 2009 through December 2009, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety's Uniform Crime Report, there were a total of 2,486 cases of family violence reported by Hidalgo County law enforcement agencies. This number does not include the many cases that go unreported. According to the most current data submitted by Hidalgo County Law Enforcement agencies during periods January 2010 through December of 2010 there were a total of 1,344 cases of family violence. Please note that not all LE agencies reported their UCR to the LRGVDC (refer to attachment in Section 13).

Many victims do not report crime for fear of retaliation by their abuser. In addition to fear, victims face many barriers when trying to escape their abusive environments. Barriers such as language, lack of transportation, lack of knowledge, lack of education, lack of low-income housing, and financial stability prevent many from reporting the abuse.

It is imperative that the community continues to support programs which provide services to victims and their children and must do so through the access of funding dollars earmarked for our region. It is also important that support is provided to programs which provide education to the community on issues of family violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and the effects of violence on children.

Family Violence Program, Texas Health and Human Services Commission

1. 83,349 victims and their children were served by the programs

2. 948,610 direct services were provided 80% of victims were female
3. 75% of victims were Anglo or Hispanic
4. 71% of victims were under the age of 40
5. 53% of victims reported experiencing physical and/or sexual abuse
6. 40% of victims reported experiencing psychological or verbal abuse
7. 7,201 victims and their children were denied shelter due to lack of space
8. 179,061 hotline crisis calls were received at statewide programs from or about victims of family violence

#### Training and Support

1. Law enforcement training
2. Community education and prevention programs
3. Outreach to youth
4. Long term counseling
5. Expansion of shelter sites
6. Crisis intervention services

The need for funding for the following types of programs were identified under this category:

1. Direct referral services, including treatment, to victims of violent crime.
2. Provide state certified services to victims of family violence and sexual abuse.
3. Provide state certified battery intervention, prevention, and treatment for violent offenders/sexual perpetrators.
4. Furnish housing and employment opportunities for victims of family violence.
5. Purchase workbooks, videos, pamphlets, and other outreach materials to counsel and educate victims and family members about sexual assault and family violence.
6. Schedule preventative services, individual counseling, and support groups for adult and child victims.
7. Purchase workbooks, videos, pamphlets, and educational and outreach materials for public education and awareness on prevention of child abuse and neglect.
8. Implement parenting skills training to educate families on prevention of child abuse and neglect.
9. Implement anger management, conflict resolution training, and treatment for adults and youths.
10. Offer outreach education, prevention, and intervention services to the community.
11. Education, intervention, and prevention programs to address adult and teen dating violence.
12. Schedule awareness training to address:
  - a) human trafficking
  - b) violence in the workplace
  - c) victims with disabilities
  - d) gay and lesbian community
13. Methods to increase legal advocacy staff.
14. Set up visitation centers for court ordered visitations.

15. Support methods established for court ordered protective hearings.
16. Access to legal advocacy staff for undocumented victims of abuse.
17. Promote community awareness of the threat of internet sexual predators.
18. Inform parents on ways to protect children from internet predators and from becoming victims of teen dating violence.
19. Training in dealing with victims of internet sexual predators, victims of family violence, and teen dating violence for law enforcement personnel, educators, and social workers.
20. Employment for special victims' officers to track and monitor known and registered sex offenders.
21. Funds to hire sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE nurses) to conduct forensic medical examinations of sexually and physically abused children and adults.
22. Development for forensic interviewers and specialized forensic personnel to assist with the investigation of crimes against children and adults.
23. Programs to establish forensic laboratories.
24. Program to assist all law enforcement agencies (i.e. assaults, kidnappings, murders, and other felonies) committed by individuals with ties to drug cartels, gangs, and other criminal organizations.

## **II. Identification of Resources:**

Resource agencies that are addressing violent crime include:

- ◆ All law enforcement police academies in Hidalgo County
- ◆ All law enforcement agencies in Hidalgo County, local, state, and federal
- ◆ Hidalgo County District Attorney
- ◆ Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid
- ◆ Hidalgo County Adult and Juvenile Probation
- ◆ Palmer Drug Abuse Program
- ◆ South Texas Behavioral Health Center
- ◆ All school districts and school police departments in Hidalgo County
- ◆ Mujeres Unidas-Women Together Foundation, Inc.
- ◆ Childrens Advocacy Center of Hidalgo County-Estrellas House
- ◆ Court Appointed Special Advocates-CASA
- ◆ 211
- ◆ Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council Regional Police Academy and Training Center
- ◆ South Texas Civil Rights Project
- ◆ South Texas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse

## **III. Coordination of Resources**

Many of these agencies work together as a matter of course, with sharing information and making referrals being the most common forms of coordination. The following are some examples of existing coordination:

1. Mujeres Unidas work closely with the Hidalgo County District Attorney's Office and local police departments, hospitals, schools, HUD/Section 8 Housing, Avance, Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, Adult

and Child Protective Services (CPS), Department of Human Services, South Texas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Estrella's House, MHMR, Region One Early Childhood Intervention, Salvation Army, Catholic Social Services, ARCH, South Texas Civil Rights Project, and Adult parole and probation departments.

2. The Local Police Departments coordinate with Mujeres Unidas and Hidalgo County Childrens Advocacy Center- Estrellas House and CASA and refers victims of family and sexual violence.
3. Local, state, and federal police departments that have a crime victims liasion that provide support services and information and referrals to victims of violent crime.
4. CASA provides court representation as guardian ad-litem of children currently in foster care due to abuse and/or neglect. It coordinates services with Child Protective Services (CPS), Mujeres Unidas, Inc., School Districts, and Estrella's House.
5. The Hidalgo County Family Violence Task Force multi-disciplinary team consists of the Mujeres Unidas, Hidalgo County District Attorney's Office, Estrella's House, Hidalgo County Sheriff's Department and other local law enforcement agencies, Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, South Texas Civil Rights Project and agencies from the health profession, other social service agencies, private industry, religious institutions, and community organizations.
6. The LRGVDC Regional Police Academy and local law enforcement training centers provide on-going criminal justice programs to law enforcement agencies throughout the Hidalgo County area.

#### **IV. Goals and Strategies**

##### **Violent Crime**

The goals for dealing with violent crime as follows:

1. Provide child victims with multidisciplinary team investigations and therapy and treatment services.
2. Furnish assistance to child victims of sexual abuse and family violence.
3. Development and training for law enforcement personnel in child abuse-sexual assault investigations.
4. Collaborate and network agencies in the best interest of child abuse victims and their non-offending family members.
5. Raise public awareness in family violence, violence in the workplace, schools, adult and teen dating situations, hate crimes, and human trafficking.
6. Provide assistance to child and adult victims of sexual abuse and family violence.
7. Create programs that will reduce the number of family violence perpetrators.
8. Establish supervised visitation centers for court ordered visitation.
9. Supply more employment and housing opportunities for victims of family violence.
10. Schedule individual counseling and support groups for adults and children who are victims of sexual assault and family violence.
11. Train law enforcement, public educators, and social services personnel to handle special cases.
12. Promote awareness of child abuse and neglect through prevention programs.
13. Reduce the number of homicides, assaults, rapes, and kidnappings in Hidalgo County.
14. Offer access to assistance and services, including treatment, to victims of violent crime.
15. Provide legal services to victims of violent crime.
16. Expedite the processing of protective order hearings by the court system.

17. Schedule anger management and conflict resolution training and treatment.
18. Access to legal assistance to undocumented victims of violent crime.
19. Assistance to victims of family violence, human trafficking, violence in the workplace, victims with disabilities, victims of hate crimes, victims of internet sexual predators, and victims of teen and adult dating violence.
20. Track and monitor known sex offenders in the community.
21. Development and trainings for Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE nurses) to conduct forensic medical examinations of sexually/physically abused children/adults.
22. Present trainings for forensic interviewers and specialized forensic personnel to assist with the investigation of crimes against children and adults.
23. Establish forensic laboratories in Hidalgo County.
24. Supply accurate and efficient data collection, data compilation, and data sharing.

The strategies for dealing with violent crime are as follows:

1. Seek funding sources for direct and referral services.
2. Locate avenues for funding assistance and treatment services to victims of violent crime.
3. Search methods to target programming for victims of sexual assault and family violence.
4. Request funding for community outreach and educational services.
5. Apply for funding to cover training of law enforcement to investigate child and adult sexual assault.
6. Pinpoint sources to maintain and provide ongoing technical assistance for medical records associated with sexual assault.
7. Strengthen working relationships between family violence assistance centers and the law enforcement community.
8. Schedule parenting skills programs for teen parents as well as adult parents.
9. Create intervention programming for abusive spouses and parents.
10. Conduct public information and education campaigns to raise awareness on human trafficking, internet sexual predators and methods for preventing violence in the home, workplace, school, and in dating situations.
11. Set-up programming that provides professional development for law enforcement, social services personnel, and public educators to deal with family, workplace, dating violence, human trafficking, victims with disabilities, hate crimes, and internet sexual predators.
12. Furnish housing alternatives for victims of family violence.
13. Schedule visitation centers for court ordered visitation.
14. Maintain courts for the sole purpose of conducting protective hearings.
15. Schedule anger management, conflict resolution therapy, and treatment programs for youths.
16. Establish individual counseling and support groups for victims (adults/children) of sexual assault and family violence.
17. Promote and advertise the availability of education dealing with violent crimes.
18. Create programs that teach law enforcement personnel, social service workers, and educators strategies to recognize, internet sexual predators.

19. Install security technology and facilitate the placement of security personnel at all Hidalgo County Courts and Administrative facilities.
20. Set-up and establish a comprehensive centralized clearinghouse for data collection and program evaluation.

## **V. Gaps in Services**

The existing gaps in services include:

1. Funding that provides direct and referral services, including treatment, to victims of crime.
2. Support to maintain courts for the sole purpose of conducting protective order findings.
3. Sources to secure the mental well-being of parties participating in court proceedings involving violent crime.
4. Funding for programs to address family, workplace, and dating violence, besides violence against the disabled, child abuse/neglect, human trafficking, hate crimes, as well as the threat of internet sexual predators.
5. Programming to provide anger management and conflict resolution plus mental/substance treatment for youths.
6. Support to target adult and child victims.
7. Alternate housing options for victims of family violence.
8. Opportunities for job training, job placement services for victims.
9. Establish visitation centers for court ordered visitation.
10. Funding sources to provide individual and/or group counseling services to victims.
11. Salary to hire special victims' officers to track, monitor registered sex offenders in the community.
12. Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE Nurses) stipends/vouchers to conduct forensic medical examinations of sexually and physically abused children and adults.
13. Educational workshops/programs dealing with investigation of crimes against children and adults targeting forensic interviewers and specialized forensic personnel.
14. Funding to set-up forensic laboratories in Hidalgo County.
15. Funds specifically for major crime units that would investigate homicides, assaults, rapes, kidnappings, and other felonies.
16. Establish set-up for a comprehensive centralized clearinghouse for data collection and program evaluation.
17. Coordination with outside agencies and funding sources to establish additional emergency shelters for victims of family violence and sexual assaults.

## **VI. Program Measures**

### **A. Output Measures**

1. Apply for and operate programs that provide direct and/or referral services to victims of all types of violent crime.
2. Install security systems in facilities used for providing victim assistance and other criminal justice related services.

**B. Outcome Measures**

1. Increase the number of victims provided with services.
2. Increase the number of facilities (i.e. facilities used for providing victim assistance and other criminal justice related services) with operational, functioning security systems.

## SECTION 5

### HIGH DROPOUT RATES FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

#### I. Identification of Needs

Establish and increase school-based and community-based mentoring, educational, and recreational programs and strategies to reduce the high rate of school dropouts. Schools are consistently losing one-third of their high school students per year. The Educational Service Center Region 1 area encompassing Hidalgo County has 43 districts, which in the AEIS data for 2009-2010 reported a dropout rate for the 81,312 students listed for this area at 2,119 students. These high dropout rates can be accredited to:

Substance Abuse - In 2008, about youth ages 12-17 (14.6% of this age group) reported drinking alcohol in the past month. More than 56.5% of 12th graders report having been drunk at least once in their life and 17.4% of 8th graders also reported being drunk at least once. Other startling facts report more than half (52.8%) of American young people have tried cigarettes before 12th grade. Young adults ages 18-25 had the highest rate of current use of a tobacco product, 44.3%. Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug in the nation and 14.6 million used it in the past month. Forty-six point-seven percent (46.7%) of teens have tried an illicit drug by the time they finish high school. Thirty-nine-point-eight of (39.8%) and sixty-nine-point-three percent (69.3%) of all 10th graders (consider marijuana easily accessible compared to 81.1% of 12th graders stating easy accessibility. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the nation's high schoolers – some 10.6 million – and 28% of middle schoolers (2.4 million) will go to schools where drugs are used, kept, or sold. School personnel and community social service personnel report a desperate need for training on how to handle substance abuse related issues: truancy, teen dating violence, anger management, teen pregnancy, possession of controlled substances, theft and vandalism, including the high incidence of students who are dropping out.

Teen Pregnancy - Teen pregnancy is another challenge faced by the young people in our nation and also in South Texas. Three in ten teenage girls (31%) become pregnant at least once before they reach the age of 20 – more than 750,000 teen pregnancies a year. Eight in ten of these pregnancies are unintended and 81% are to unmarried teens. Teen pregnancy costs the United States at least \$7 billion annually. Data and statistics for the Rio Grande Valley mirror these nationwide figures, and in some instances, because of our location, these numbers are much higher.

Poverty – Due to various factors such as: single parent households, economic hardships, and increase cost of living more and more students are finding the need to drop-out of school and help their families. As a result, additional opportunities for the future to include an increase of programs that provide vocational training, tutoring programs and General Education Development (GED) to students who are dropping out of school because they are expected to help their families with financial support.

Literacy - Adult and youth literacy is another major problem in the Rio Grande Valley and along the border. Although Hispanics may place a great value upon education, many valley parents lack the experience and knowledge to guide their children through school. According to the Texas Education Agency, Hidalgo County continues to have a high school dropout rate which is approximately 46%. The Lower Rio Grande Valley and the State of Texas have the highest pregnancy rates in the nation for girls 15 years of age and younger (*Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration, 2005*). Regardless of race, teens with below-average academic skills and those from poor families are five to seven times more likely to become parents than are teens with strong academic skills. In addition, a Hidalgo County student is approximately 13% less likely to graduate compared to the statewide completion rate (State: 77% vs. Hidalgo County: 63%). This is based on Hidalgo County School Districts and Census 2000 data for the county.

- ◆ Adult education attainment is below state norms for the entire border (39.3% lack a high school diploma) and higher average unemployment rate which fluctuates between 9% – 23%.
- ◆ Over 25% of the residents of Hidalgo County have less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education.
- ◆ Almost 13.7% have less than 12 years of school compared to 28% in the state and 18% in the nation.

- ◇ Only 60.7% of persons age 25 years or older are high school graduates, compared to 72% in the state and 82% in the nation.
- ◇ Hidalgo County 8<sup>th</sup> grade retention rates are .4% higher than the state's average.
- ◇ Youth Literacy is ranked amongst the lowest in the nation. (2007 Hidalgo Co. Literacy Council)

## **II. Identification of Resources:**

- ◇ Juvenile Court Conference Committee
- ◇ Boys and Girls Clubs in Hidalgo County
- ◇ Palmer Drug Abuse Program
- ◇ Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc.
- ◇ Mujeres Unidas
- ◇ Avance
- ◇ Hidalgo County Juvenile Probation
- ◇ Boys and Girls Scouts of America
- ◇ Teen pregnancy program in area schools
- ◇ Communities in Schools
- ◇ University of Texas Pan American Gear-UP and Go Center
- ◇ Cities Parks and Recreation Departments
- ◇ American Youth Football League
- ◇ Hidalgo County Justice of Peace
- ◇ Independent/Open Enrollment Charter School Districts
- ◇ United Way
- ◇ Municipal Courts
- ◇ Truancy Court
- ◇ Hidalgo County Constable Pct. 3
- ◇ A World for Children
- ◇ Region One Education Service Center
- ◇ Texas Health and Human Services Center
- ◇ Texas Valley Community Foundation
- ◇ Baptist Children and Family Services
- ◇ Workforce Solutions
- ◇ CASA of Hidalgo County
- ◇ La Union del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)
- ◇ Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone
- ◇ South Texas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- ◇ Valley Aids Council
- ◇ City and Private League Recreational Organizations

### **III. Coordination of Resources**

Many of these agencies work together as matter of course, with sharing information and making referrals being the most common forms of coordination. The following are some examples of existing coordination:

- ◇ All - Valley public school districts, as well as charter schools, have several ongoing programs that address truancy to include: special courts that enforce mandatory attendance laws that are imposed by home visits, failing grades, Saturday make-up school, and court dates which are scheduled for parents with accessed fines for non-compliance.
- ◇ School districts in collaboration with the Region One ESC, South Texas College, and Work Force Solutions offer Adult Education Programs. The programs offer classes with emphasis on Literacy/ESL/GED/and Employment Skills instruction is provided. Child care and homework assistance is also provided to students.
- ◇ Schools and community agencies such as faith-based organizations, Boys & Girls Clubs, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century programs offer homework help and tutoring to ensure on time grade progression and academic success.

### **IV. Goals and Strategies**

The goals for dealing with issues regarding youth services are as follows:

1. Increase collaboration and sharing Texas Education Agency policies and best practices with all school districts, non-profit organizations, Justice of the Peace & Municipal Courts, and local law enforcement.
2. Reduce school truancy.
3. Increase attendance and academic achievement.
4. Reduce the incidence of juvenile related crime, drug use, and delinquency.
5. Reduce the incidence of teen pregnancy.
6. Increase adult and youth literacy.
7. Increase "official" contact with parents/guardians of truant/delinquent youth being served after referrals of the Justice of the Peace and Municipal Court.
8. Raise awareness for parents and students to help in understanding school attendance laws.

The strategies for dealing with issues regarding youth services are as follows:

1. Search funding to furnish juvenile services (i.e., counseling, substance abuse treatment inhouse and outpatient, residential services).
2. Seek funding for juvenile prevention programs that will allow the schools to hire and/or enhance school law enforcement officers.
3. Locate funds for community outreach programs that target local youths.
4. Complete applications for parental involvement programs.
5. Coordinate programs to train and educate personnel on behavior disorders, drug abuse, and truancy issues.
6. Request funding for gang and juvenile offender prevention.
7. Locate funding for youth facilities.
8. Implementation of sex education and family planning programs.
8. Continue to seek funding to establish after school educational and recreational programs.

10. Provide mentoring, counseling, guidance, character education, and intensive training to truant/delinquent behavior.
11. Offer alternative to dropping out to include flexible scheduling, adult education classes, and Even Start programs.
12. Enforce the truancy law.
13. Training for all professionals addressing truancy.

### **Gaps in Services**

1. Lack of parent involvement.
2. Grades 7-12 - Dropout – 2,007 students out of 83,179 - 2009 TEA 2.4%.

According to the Texas TEA assessment, the annual dropout rate in Hidalgo County school districts there is a 2.4% Hispanic, 3.7% African-American, 1.3% White, and 1.9% economically disadvantaged, 2.9 % At Risk that resulted in a high dropout rate this year.

- a) Cumulative dropout rate for grades 7–12
- b) Completion rates for grades 9-12; 74%
3. No uniformity throughout the region's schools on how to address truancy.
4. Lack of training in all professionals that address truancy issues as well as tracking methods.
5. Lack of collaboration amongst schools, social, and public service agencies.

### **Program Measures**

#### **A. Output Measures**

1. Apply for and operate programs and community facilities that address truancy, drop-outs, family violence, teen dating violence, drug abuse, and gang activity.
2. Apply for and operate programs that provide anger management training and parenting skills for teens.
3. Apply for and operate programs to hire truancy officers and prevention/intervention programs.

#### **B. Outcome Measures**

1. Reduce truancy rate in targeted population group.
2. Reduce incidence of bullying and aggression by peers and professionals in schools.
3. Reduce the number of teen pregnancies.
4. Increase high school graduation rate.
5. Reduce the incidence of teen dating violence in schools.

## SECTION 6

### JUVENILE CRIME

#### I. Identification of Needs

Due to the increase in Juvenile Crime there is a need for more programs, personnel, and funds to properly address juvenile crime issues and prevention in Hidalgo County. In 2009, the Hidalgo County Juvenile Department received **2,916** formal referrals.

The need for funding for the following types of programs was identified under this category:

1. Hire juvenile law enforcement officers, juvenile probation officers, juvenile corrections officers, juvenile warrant officers, and juvenile prosecutors.
2. Support for prosecutorial staff to address juvenile violent crime cases.
3. Develop and provide access to emergency shelters and residential service centers for youth.
4. Increase awareness among adolescents concerning teen issues such as drugs/alcohol, bullying, cyber bullying, teen pregnancy, drop-outs, truancy, gangs etc.
5. Provide psychotropic medications for youth with mental health needs.
6. Facilitate group and individual counseling for youth and families with special needs, such as cognitive, behavioral and learning disabilities with co-occurring disorders.
7. Build access to behavioral and mental health evaluations and treatment for youth.
8. Train and educate professionals working with youth and families about behavioral disorders and juvenile issues.
9. Collaborate with and enhance after school educational and recreational programs.
10. Collaborate with and enhance alternative centers and schools.
11. Provide teen parenting skills for families and youth.
12. Establish a community/local teen advisory board to consult and advise community leaders on issues affecting them and their peers.
13. Establish law enforcement collaborations to address gang activity and other juvenile crime.
14. Supply prevention and intervention services related to gang involvement.
15. Training for local law enforcement to collect and document graffiti and gang markings for use as evidence.
16. Supply cities and municipalities with materials necessary to cover and conceal graffiti and gang markings in a short amount of time in order to discourage copycat and repeat offenders.
17. Programs for tracking sex based crimes.
18. Support for establish/enhance K-9 Units.
19. Creating vocational training for youth.
20. Increase employment opportunities for youth through after school and summer activities.
21. Training for Juvenile Probation Officers/Juvenile Detention Officers in the areas of safety awareness and cultural diversity.
22. Training for Juvenile Probation Officers/Juvenile Detention Officers in the areas of teen date rape, bullying and cyber bullying.

## **II. Identification of Resources:**

- ◆ Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council Regional Police Academy
- ◆ All law enforcement agencies in Hidalgo County, local, state and federal
- ◆ Hidalgo County District Attorney
- ◆ All Crime Stoppers organizations in Hidalgo County
- ◆ Hidalgo County Juvenile Probation
- ◆ Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc.
- ◆ Palmer Drug Abuse Program
- ◆ South Texas Behavioral Health Center
- ◆ All school districts in Hidalgo County
- ◆ Mujeres Unidas-Women Together Foundation, Inc.
- ◆ Childrens Advocacy Center of Hidalgo County-Estrellas House
- ◆ Court Appointed Special Advocates-CASA
- ◆ Boys and Girls Club - Date Smart and Street Smarts Program
- ◆ Boys and Girls Club in Hidalgo County
- ◆ Hidalgo County Juvenile Court System
- ◆ Texas Juvenile Probation Commission
- ◆ 211
- ◆ Texas Youth Commission
- ◆ Pharr Leadership Program (non-profit)
- ◆ Communities in Schools
- ◆ Region One Educational Service Center
- ◆ South Texas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- ◆ Baptist Children and Family Services (BCFS)
- ◆ Serving Children Adolescents in Need (SCAN)
- ◆ Safe Schools/Healthy Students

## **III. Coordination of Resources**

Many of these agencies work together as matter of course, with sharing information and making referrals being the most common forms of coordination. The following are some examples of existing coordination:

1. The local municipalities collaborate with local chapters of the Boys and Girls Clubs to provide services to our youth.
2. The Hidalgo County Juvenile Justice Department works closely with the District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department, local school districts and police departments. It also operates a community restitution program with cooperation from non-profit and faith based organizations.
3. Communities in Schools provides counseling for prevention and intervention of substance abuse, gang participation, and truancy. It coordinates its services with Child Protective Services (CPS), Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc., Mujeres Unidas, Inc., the Tropical Texas Behavioral Health, and Tip of Texas Family Outreach.

4. The Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc. provides substance abuse treatment for adults and adolescents as well as substance abuse prevention and early intervention services. It coordinates its services with the Hidalgo County Adult Probation Department and Juvenile Probation Office, Valley Aids Council, SCAN, Child Protective Services (CPS), and Tropical Texas Behavioral Health. Also, the Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc. provides presentations, trainings, and implements evidenced based curricula in schools throughout the county.
5. The Local Independent School District's State Compensatory/At Risk/UJL Department works closely with the Hidalgo County Juvenile Probation Department, local law enforcement departments, and various other local government agencies.
6. Mujeres Unidas provides prevention and intervention education is provided to grades K-12 to address issues on family violence, sexual assault, stalking, teen dating violence, bullying, cyber bullying, child abuse, and safety planning. Counseling, information ,referrals, and personal advocacy are provided to vicitms of sexual abuse and family violence.
7. The Juvenile Court Conference Committee works with at-risk youths and 1<sup>st</sup> time offenders with volunteers from the community to provide intervention.prevention programs to deter youths from being deliquent. The program provides information and referrals and after school activites.
8. PDAP works closely with the Hidalgo County Adult and Juvenile Justice Departments as well as with other law enforcement agencies such as Police Departments, Hidalgo County Sheriff's Department, and the Hidalgo County District Attorney's Office. PDAP also coordinates drug prevention and education efforts with community social service agencies such as Mujeres Unidas, HCCAC - Estrella's House, the Tropical Texas Behavioral Health, all local school districts, and local health care providers.
9. LRGVDC Regional Police Academy works closely with Juvenile Justice departments to deliver safety training and drug/gang awareness for staff.
10. BCFS coordinates with Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, CASA, local school districts, Juvenile Probation and faith based organization to provide intense case management and emergency assistance in the areas of education, housing and transportation, financial management, employment, health and safety and juvenile delinquency.

#### **IV. Goals and Strategies**

The goals for dealing with juvenile crime are as follows:

1. Reduce the incidence of juvenile related crime, drug use, and delinquency.
2. Reduce gang participation by juveniles.
3. Provide increased services to juveniles, e.g., alternative schools, counseling, and after school mentoring.
4. Reduce the truancy and drop-out rate in area schools.
5. Schedule the juvenile violent crime caseload more effectively and efficiently.
6. Furnish emergency shelter and residential services for juveniles.
7. Increase employment opportunities for youths.
8. Foster entrepreneurial skills in youths.
9. Promote and maintain safety of school students by purchasing a bomb K-9 Unit for use in bomb threat situations on school campuses.
10. To reduce the amount of drugs on school campuses by making available a drug detector dog to schools.
11. Train and educate school personnel and families about behavioral disorders and juvenile issues.
12. Provide assistance for youths and families with special needs such as mental impairment and learning disabilities.

13. Minimize juvenile caseloads.
14. Track sex based crimes.
15. Provide vocational training for youths.
16. Prepare youths for adult independence, including parenthood.
17. Prevent the incidence of family violence.
18. Prevent graffiti and gang markings.
19. Set-up community/local teen advisory boards.
20. Provide for locally relevant, ongoing evaluation of programs to improve program implementation.
21. Inform youths about teen health issues.
22. Supply psychotropic drugs to youths with mental health needs.
23. Prepare accurate and efficient data collection, data compilation, and data sharing.
24. Provide services for self motivated parents.

The strategies for dealing with juvenile crime are as follows:

1. Establish gang prevention/intervention programs in the community.
2. Hire additional juvenile probation officers, juvenile law enforcement officers, juvenile correction officers, juvenile warrant officers, and juvenile prosecutors.
3. Establish one or more juvenile residential service centers in Hidalgo County.
4. Initiate parental involvement programs in area schools and youth organization/programs.
5. Initiate "Just Say No", "DARE", "Stay in School", "Expect Respect", and other prevention programs in area schools and communities.
6. Set-up law enforcement networks to deal with gang activity and other juvenile crime.
7. Set-up "One Stop" Youth Entrepreneurship Programs.
8. Maximize use of existing community centers, schools, and other facilities in the community.
9. Set-up K-9 Units on school campuses.
10. Develop school-based and community-based mentoring, educational, and recreational programs with case management.
11. Create counseling centers and support groups for youths and families to deal with behavioral disorders, mental impairment, and other juvenile issues.
12. Develop an integrated system of service delivery to bring needed mental health services to youths in a family-driven, culturally competent, and strength-based approach to service planning.
13. Build programs for tracking sex based offenses through social network sites.
14. Establish vocational training programs for youths based on aptitude.
15. Prepare programs that provide life and parenting skills for youths and their families.
16. Develop programs that educate youths about family violence.
17. Set-up a coalition to address juvenile issues or concerns.
18. Train local authority to collect and identify graffiti and gang markings.
19. Provide cities with materials to cover and conceal graffiti and gang markings.
20. Schedule community and county-wide teen advisory boards.

21. Provide anger management training for youths.
22. Inform youths about teen health issues.
23. Supply psychotropic drugs to youths with mental health needs.
24. Establish a comprehensive centralized clearinghouse for data collection and program evaluation.
25. Document and identify youth involvement with organizations that promote border violence.

### **III. Gaps in Services**

The existing gaps in services include:

1. Purchase juvenile services, e.g., counseling, residential services, etc.
2. Locate funding for gang and juvenile violent offender prevention programs.
3. Support for community outreach programs that target local youths.
4. Sponsorship of local agencies to hire more juvenile law enforcement officers, juvenile probation officers, juvenile correction officers, juvenile warrant officers, and juvenile prosecutors to handle juvenile cases.
5. Applications for parental involvement programs.
6. Support for "Just Say No", "DARE", "Stay in School", "Expect Respect", GREAT Program, Boys & Girls Clubs "SMART MOVES", and other similar programs.
7. Request Funds for setting up law enforcement networks to deal with gang activity and other juvenile crime.
8. Construct juvenile residential service centers in Hidalgo County.
9. After school mentors to address truancy and drug abuse.
10. Set-up K-9 Units for use on school campuses.
11. Establish after school educational and recreational programs.
12. Programs to train and educate school personnel and families about behavioral disorders and juvenile issues.
13. Funding for programs that provide employment opportunities for youths.
14. Funding to track sex based offenses through social network sites.
15. Funds to teach youths vocational skills.
16. Support to teach life skills and parenting skills to youths and their families.
17. Funding to address, curtail, and remove graffiti and gang markings.
18. Set-up community and county-wide teen advisory boards.
19. Assign Mentors for youths.
20. Provide anger management training for youths.
21. Inform youths about teen health issues.
22. Programs to provide psychotropic drugs to youths with mental health needs.
23. Set-up a centralized clearinghouse for data collection and program evaluation.
24. Integrate juvenile services with parenting services.
25. Increase violence prevention programs to include: bullying, cyber bullying, dating violence, etc.
26. Awareness training regarding human trafficking/smuggling victims (teen prostitution, drugs, etc.).

## **VI. Program Measures**

### **A. Output Measures**

1. Apply for and operate programs and community facilities to address truancy, dropouts, drug abuse, gang activity, bullying, cyber bullying, and violence.
2. Apply for and operate programs to hire juvenile officers, juvenile probation officers, juvenile correction officers, juvenile warrant officers, juvenile prosecutors, case management, mentors, social workers, substance abuse counselors, license, mental health providers, and school resource officers.

### **B. Outcome Measures**

1. Reduce truancy rate in targeted group.
2. Reduce juvenile sexual assault cases.
3. Reduce graffiti.
4. Reduce repeat offenders associated with violent crimes.
5. Reduce incidence of bullying and aggression in local schools.
6. Increase high school graduation rate.

## SECTION 7

### CRIME AND DRUG PREVENTION

#### I. Identification of Needs

Hidalgo County's illegal drug use and other substance abuse can be attributed to the county's proximity to the Mexican border, high unemployment rates, and high poverty level.

- ◆ High incidence of burglaries, robberies, theft, alcohol and substance abuse in the community.
  - ◆ Lack of community knowledge of existing resources to address criminal justice and substance abuse needs.
  - ◆ High incidence of domestic violence, sexual assault, underage drinking and youth related substance abuse.
  - ◆ Drug and contraband trafficking at private mailing services and other means of transporting.
  - ◆ Selling and distribution of drugs at educational facilities.
  - ◆ Lack of law enforcement personnel and presence in Hidalgo County's communities and *colonias*.
  - ◆ Lack of collaboration between schools and existing community resources.
  - ◆ Insufficient drug prevention and crime fighting initiatives.
  - ◆ Insufficient bilingual crime/drug prevention literature.
1. Resources to establish/enhance neighborhood watch and crime stoppers programs.
  2. Programs to provide drug/alcohol prevention and education.
  3. Programs to implement and provide community awareness of existing resources to address criminal/drug issues.
  4. Programs to provide training for crisis management in public schools.
  5. Programs to provide community education on domestic violence and sexual assault prevention.
  6. Programs for structured education on domestic violence and sexual assault.
  7. After school programs to address underage drinking, youth related substance abuse, and youth related crime.
  8. Programs to provide on-going training on co-occurring disorders (clients with multiple diagnosis) for schools, agencies, professionals, and law enforcement.

#### **Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc. Hidalgo County Statistics from 9/01/2008 – 8/31/2009**

<b>Service Rendered</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Youth</b>	<b>Total Served</b>
Prevention Education and Training	2,160	7,580	9,740
Evidence Based Program Services		811	811
Screening, Assessment, and Referral Services	552	148	700
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,665</b>	<b>8,282</b>	<b>13,947</b>
<b>Colonia Residents</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>6,454</b>	<b>7,117</b>

***Individuals served were primarily Hispanic.***

## **II. Identification of Resources:**

- ◆ Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council Regional Police Academy and Training Center
- ◆ All law enforcement agencies in Hidalgo County, local, state and federal
- ◆ Hidalgo County District Attorney's Office
- ◆ HITDA Task Force
- ◆ Hidalgo County Adult and Juvenile Probation
- ◆ Palmer Drug Abuse Program
- ◆ Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc.
- ◆ SouthTexas Behavioral Health Center
- ◆ All school districts in Hidalgo County
- ◆ Boys & Girls Clubs of America, all locations in Hidalgo County
- ◆ Local municipalities Parks and Recreation programs in Hidalgo County
- ◆ Boys and Girls Scouts in Hidalgo County
- ◆ Region One Education Service Center
- ◆ Mujeres Unidas-Women Together Foundation, Inc.
- ◆ 211
- ◆ Workforce Solutions
- ◆ Texas Department of Health and Human Services
- ◆ Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid
- ◆ HOPE Clinic
- ◆ Serving Children and Adolescents in Need (SCAN)
- ◆ South Texas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- ◆ Buckner Children and Family Service
- ◆ AVANCE
- ◆ New Beginnings
- ◆ Association for Advancement of Mexican Americans (AAMA)
- ◆ RGV Empowerment Zone
- ◆ Faith Based Organizations
- ◆ Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)
- ◆ Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD)
- ◆ Communities In Schools of Hidalgo County

## **III. Coordination of Resources**

Many of these agencies work together as matter of course, with sharing information and making referrals being the most common forms of coordination. Collaborative efforts exist among agencies listed below.

The following are some examples of existing coordination:

1. Mujeres Unidas work with all agencies to provide prevention and treatment services for victims of domestic and sexual abuse and stalking. It also works with the local courts, parole and probation departments, CPS, and district courts by providing Anger Management groups and BIPP (Batterers Intervention Prevention Program) to participants that have been charged with family violence or a violent crime.
2. Communities in School provides counseling for prevention of substance abuse, gang prevention, and dropping out of school. It coordinates its services with Child Protective Services (CPS), Mujeres Unidas, Inc., Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc., the Tropical Texas Behavioral Health, and Tip of Texas Family Outreach.
3. PDAP works closely with Hidalgo County Adult and Juvenile Probation by providing 12-step drugcounseling programs, free of charge, to adults and youths. In addition, PDAP works with numerous community organizations, including Mujeres Unidas, Inc., Child Protective Services (CPS), and other agencies. It assesses individuals referred to the program and makes the appropriate referrals for individual or group counseling, in-patient treatment for those who require such services or other services that the individual may need.
4. The Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc. collaborates with Hidalgo County Adult and Juvenile Probation Offices providing education and treatment services to offenders. Also, the Rio Grande Valley Council is working with agencies throughout the county to educate youth and adults about substance abuse in an effort to deter and reduce individuals from drug abuse. Other services offered include coalition efforts to prevent underage drinking and binge drinking; implementing evidence based curricula with elementary, middle, and high school students, and serving as a clearinghouse for substance abuse educational materials.

#### **IV. Goals and Strategies**

The goals for dealing with crime and drug prevention are as follows:

1. Reduce the incidence of burglaries, robberies, and theft in the community.
2. Reduce the incidence of alcohol and substance abuse in the community.
3. Reduce the incidence of domestic violence and sexual assault.
4. Reduce the incidence of underage drinking and youth related substance abuse.

The strategies for dealing with crime and drug prevention are as follows:

1. Initiate more Neighborhood Crime Watch, and community policing programs.
2. Initiate education programs on alcohol and substance abuse that include information about early warning identifiers.
3. Initiate bilingual public information to inform the public of existing resources to address criminal justice needs, to include publishing resource guides for distribution to the public.
4. Establish more Crime Stoppers programs.
5. Set-up crisis management training for school personnel.
6. Establish programs to educate the community about domestic violence and sexual assault prevention, including structural education on domestic violence and sexual assault.
7. Establish after school programs to inform students of the dangers of underage drinking and substance abuse.
8. Coordinate awareness months for alcohol/drug abuse, domestic violence, and sexual abuse prevention.
9. Seek greater involvement from the media and medical community for public information and education endeavors.

10. Establish a centralized clearinghouse for data collection and program evaluation.
11. Inform the public of existing resources to address criminal justice needs.
12. Help law enforcement agencies to solve crime cases by receiving assistance from the public.
13. Provide school personnel with the skills to address crisis situations.
14. Provide for locally relevant, on-going evaluation of programs to improve program evaluation.
15. Furnish accurate and efficient data collection, data compilation, and data sharing.
16. Produce and disseminate bilingual crime/drug prevention literature.

## **V. Gaps in Services**

The existing gaps in services include:

1. Operate crime watch and crime stoppers programs in the county.
2. Funding for anti-drug use information and education programs in the community.
3. Locate programs to promote community awareness or existing resources to address criminal justice issues.
4. Provide crisis management training for school personnel.
5. Support for programs that educate the community about domestic violence and sexual assault.
6. Awareness programs for students about the dangers of underage drinking and substance abuse.
7. Funds to set-up a county wide data clearinghouse for data collection and program evaluation.

## **VI. Program Measures**

### **A. Output Measures**

1. Apply for and operate crime, drug, domestic violence, and sexual assault prevention programs.
2. Distribute brochures and resource guides to the public through media methods.
3. Establish Crime Watch neighborhoods throughout the county.

### **B. Outcome Measures**

1. Increased referrals for alcohol/substance abuse services.
2. Increased referrals for domestic violence/sexual assault services.
3. Awareness months for alcohol/substance abuse and domestic violence/sexual assault initiated.
4. Initiate 3-5 events per year to distribute brochures and resource guides through media events.
5. Establish 5-10 additional Crime Watch neighborhoods throughout the county.

## **SECTION 8**

### **TECHNOLOGY / PUBLIC SAFETY / EQUIPMENT**

#### **1. Identification of Needs**

There is a compelling need for technological equipment for the County's law enforcement agencies. Computer hardware and software for law enforcement offices, radio communications equipment, and mobile data terminals for patrol units.

The need for funding for the following types of programs were identified under this category:

1. Equipment for courtrooms.
2. Equip law enforcement agencies with computer hardware & software.
3. Automated systems for criminal justice records.
4. Automated systems mug shot, criminal imaging, and fingerprint scanning.
5. Install and/or enhance Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems and Records Management (RMS) systems in all law enforcement departments.
6. Purchases of basic and specialized law enforcement equipment, to include detection and surveillance equipment.
7. Establish a centralized clearinghouse for data collection and program evaluations-Homeland Security.
8. Security and surveillance systems in government and municipal facilities, school campuses and educational facilities, in mass transit stations (to include airport and bus terminals).
9. Law Enforcement training in sexual assaults, domestic violence and child abuse.
10. Law enforcement vehicles.
11. Technology in law enforcement facilities, such as automated fingerprinting identification systems (AFIS) for adult offenders and live scan systems for juvenile offenders.

Communities want and must need to feel safe in their respective environments. Therefore, public safety should include increasing the number of police officers on patrol with better response times, providing alternatives for expelled students and gang activities, providing advanced technology and upgrades to law enforcement equipment, and decreasing drug distribution and contraband trafficking.

#### **II. Identification of Resources**

- ◆ All local, state and federal law enforcement agencies
- ◆ District Attorney's Office

#### **III. Coordination of Resources**

Many of these agencies work together as a matter of course, with sharing information and making referrals being the most common form of coordination. The following are some examples of existing coordination:

1. Local law enforcement agencies enter data that is shared throughout the LRGV region's criminal justice system.
2. Biometric system for facial recognition, fingerprint, and mug shot used for identification and prosecution.
3. Local prosecutors collaborate with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies.

#### **IV. Goals and Strategies**

The goals for addressing technological needs are as follows:

1. Automation of criminal justice record systems.
2. Install heart defibrillators in as many law enforcement vehicles and criminal justice facilities as possible.
3. Link separate local law enforcement computer systems.
4. Purchase courtroom programs and equipment for prosecution.
5. Automation of mug shot, criminal imaging, and fingerprints scanning systems.
6. Install Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Systems and Records Management Systems (RMS) in law enforcement departments.
7. Provide law enforcement agencies with basic and specialized law enforcement equipment, to include detection and surveillance equipment.
8. Improve radio communications in Hidalgo County to a level 6 interoperability, in accordance with the State Plan.
9. Provide accurate and efficient data collection, data compilation, and data sharing.

The strategies for addressing technological needs are as follows:

1. Set up a database to link local law enforcement agencies together and eventually, with other agencies nationwide.
2. Install automating systems in Hidalgo County jails to include mug shots, criminal imaging, and fingerprint scanning.
3. Install heart defibrillators in law enforcement vehicles and criminal justice.
4. Establish infrastructure to promote information sharing among agencies to facilitate planning.
5. Install CAD and RMS Systems in all law enforcement departments.
6. Increase equipment budgets for law enforcement departments.
7. Link separate local law enforcement computer systems.
8. Install hardware and software for review and presentation of evidence.
9. Funding for basic and specialized law enforcement equipment, to include detection/surveillance equipment.
10. Raising the tactical radio interoperability level from 4 to 6.
11. Establish a centralized clearinghouse for data collection and program implementation.

#### **V. Gaps in Services**

The existing gaps in services include:

1. Program to purchase hardware, software to automate criminal justice records and to link separate local law enforcement computer systems.
2. Funding for personnel trained to operate criminal justice information systems.
3. System to implement automated mug shot, criminal imaging, and fingerprint scanning systems in Hidalgo County jails.
4. Purchase of heart defibrillators.

5. Purchase and install CAD and RMS systems in all law enforcement departments.
6. Available hardware, software for courtroom presentation of evidence.
7. Detection and surveillance equipment for basic and specialized law enforcement utilization.
8. Purchase high level radio equipment.
9. Establish a centralized clearinghouse for data collection and program evaluation.

**VI. Program Measures**

**A. Output Measures**

1. Available programs to provide current technology and equipment
2. Training for criminal justice agencies and social service providers with follow-up availability for 24 months

**B. Outcome Measures**

1. Law enforcement and social service agencies better prepared to utilize equipment and technology to its maximum capability
2. The county and surrounding jurisdictions will be prepared and equipped to mitigate and respond to emergency calls for service

## **SECTION 9**

### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND TREATMENT**

#### **I. Identification of Needs**

The use of illegal and prescription drugs is rising in the LRGV Region due to the proximity of the border and easy access. As a result our region has been identified as a High Intensity Drug Trafficking area. Due to these factors the availability of drugs is prevalent for our youth and in our school system.

1. Substance abuse prevention programs
2. Local substance abuse treatment centers
3. Mental health treatment centers
4. Intravenous transmitted diseases
5. Coalition development and sustainability
6. Inpatient and outpatient treatment services
7. Public awareness of existing resources through community outreach services
8. Provide school personnel with training on how to identify and address suspected substance abuse and or possession of controlled substances

Hidalgo County is home for two educational institutions of higher learning, the University of Texas-Pan American and South Texas College. Education awareness programs geared towards this age group are also fundamental in the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse. The Hidalgo County Community has determined a need to identify funding sources in order to provide substance abuse services in prevention, intervention, treatment, training, and education programs that address a gap in services.

Implementation of programs are needed to provide support for juvenile services that deal with and discourage substance abuse, delinquent behavior, and truancy. In addition, programs are needed that will provide family services. Parental involvement programs are needed to provide training which addresses the information necessary to provide effective parenting, social norm development, and provide parents with alcohol, tobacco, and other drug knowledge and awareness.

#### **II. Identification of Resources**

- ◆ Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc
- ◆ Valley Aids Council
- ◆ Palmer Drug Abuse Program (PDAP)
- ◆ Hidalgo County Adult and Juvenile Probation
- ◆ Faith Based organizations
- ◆ School districts
- ◆ Boys and Girls Clubs in Hidalgo County
- ◆ Local law enforcement
- ◆ Municipal and Justice of the Peace courts
- ◆ University and Colleges
- ◆ First Responders and Local Hospitals
- ◆ Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission
- ◆ District Attorney's Office
- ◆ South Texas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- ◆ SCAN
- ◆ New Beginnings

- ◆ Mothers Against Drunk Drivers
- ◆ Students Against Drunk Drivers
- ◆ Baptist Children and Family Services
- ◆ AAMA

### **III. Coordination of Resources**

Many of these agencies work together as a matter of course, with sharing information and making referrals being the most common forms of coordination. The following are some examples of existing coordination:

1. Hidalgo County Adult Probation and Juvenile Probation coordinate with the Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc. for the provision of screening, assessment, outpatient treatment, and referral for inpatient treatment services.
2. The Rio Grande Valley Council, Inc. coordinates with school districts, Boys and Girls Clubs, church organizations, law enforcement, community, substance abuse providers, and university/colleges to provide substance abuse prevention/intervention services.
3. PDAP works closely with Hidalgo County Adult and Juvenile Probation by providing 12 step drug-counseling programs, free of charge, to adults and youth.
4. Boys & Girls Clubs of Hidalgo County provide prevention programs with participating school districts through in school and after school programs.
5. Law enforcement coordinates with local school districts and community organizations to provide awareness/prevention.

### **IV. Goals and Strategies**

The goals for dealing with substance abuse are as follows:

1. Reduce illegal incidences of alcohol, tobacco, and substance abuse in the community.
2. Secure funding for drug treatment, prevention/intervention, and co-occurring programs.
3. Provide accessible treatment, intervention, and prevention programs for the community.
4. Provide mentoring, guidance, counseling, and character development training for youth.
5. Foster healthy attitudes towards drug-free lifestyles.
6. Provide ongoing training to law enforcement, educators, health care professionals, and youth development professionals.

The strategies for dealing with substance abuse issues are as follows:

1. Collaborate effectively with community resources to provide a continuum of care.
2. Promote public awareness and provide educational programs through outreach and presentations to the community on substance abuse and prevention.
3. Provide professionals with training to identify, refer and address suspected substance abuse.
4. Develop coalitions that addresses the substance abuse issues in the community and effectively implement environmental strategies.
5. Provide parenting programs that foster asset building/resiliency in families and youth.
6. Provide accurate and efficient data collection, compilation, and sharing.
7. Develop a local hotline for substance abuse crisis.

**V. Gaps in Services**

1. Limited outpatient treatment services.
2. Lack of inpatient treatment services.
3. Limited after care services with transportation.
4. Limited positive alternatives for youth and adults.
5. Limited continuing education opportunities for professionals specific to substance abuse.
6. Limited number of schools receiving prevention and intervention services.

**VI. Program Measures**

**A. Output Measures**

1. Increase the number of substance abuse prevention and intervention programs.
2. Increase opportunities for outreach efforts, for substance abuse prevention, intervention and treatment services.

**B. Outcome Measures**

1. Increased number of agencies that provide substance abuse prevention/intervention services.
2. Increased substance abuse outreach efforts.

## **SECTION 10**

### **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

#### **I. Identification of Needs**

Last year more than 7,379 new child abuse cases were reported to the Children's Advocacy Center of Hidalgo County. The serious nature of this problem is a major concern because children in our communities are being victimized and robbed of their childhood.

The lack of parental involvement has been cited by school personnel as one of the biggest problems they face. The districts have a difficult time motivating students to stay in school. Many Rio Grande Valley youth come from dysfunctional families where physical and emotional abuse is common and or single parent homes. According to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services 2009 Data Book, Hidalgo County had 252,901 children and was 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state of Texas for child fatalities due to child abuse and neglect. Confirmed victims of child abuse is 1,522 and 28% of violent crimes against children go unreported. Also, according to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, in 2009 Hidalgo County had 7,379 investigations and 1,522 confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect with ten fatalities.

Hidalgo County is in desperate need of facilities for children with developed programs in the area of child abuse, child information, early case resolution, crisis intervention, child development, child and family assessment, supervised visitations and many other areas that will aid children in crisis. Hidalgo County is in need of a facility where families and children can have easy access to assessment, crisis prevention, crisis intervention, as well as shelter.

1. Extremely limited Child Abuse Awareness
2. Low child abuse reporting
3. Child removal rate by Child Protective Services is very low compared to other counties in the State
4. Lack of Children emergency shelters
5. Children's Treatment Center
6. Training for all personnel that address issues of child abuse and neglect

Studies show that abused children who get early professional assistance are more likely to succeed in dealing and coping with abuse. The high number of reported cases in the Rio Grande Valley proves that steps need to be taken to protect the children who are suffering. With early intervention, we can help break the cycle of abuse and, more importantly, significantly increase a child's chances of becoming a healthy adult and good parent. Breaking the cycle of abuse involves understanding the causes and effects of child abuse as well as what measures can be taken to prevent it. Strong community involvement is essential to this delicate process. It is our sincere belief that a community united together to combat child abuse can make possible a higher quality of life and a safer place for all children to live.

Hidalgo County is in desperate need of facilities for children working to develop programs in the area of child abuse, neglect, child information, early case resolution, crisis intervention, child development, child and family assessment, supervised visitations and many other areas that will aid children in crisis. Hidalgo County is in need of a facility where families and children can have easy access to assessment, crisis prevention, crisis intervention services, as well as shelter.

#### **II. Identification of Resources**

- ◆ Children Advocacy Center of Hidalgo County
- ◆ Texas Council on Family Violence
- ◆ Mujeres Unidas

- ◆ Texas Department of Family and Protective Services CPS
- ◆ Local Law Enforcement
- ◆ Driscoll Children's Hospital
- ◆ Renaissance Behavioral Center
- ◆ Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office

### **III. Coordination of Resources**

Many of these agencies work together as a matter of course, with sharing information and making referrals being the most common forms of coordination. The following are some examples of existing coordination:

1. Mujeres Unidas is a non-profit agency founded in 1978 to provide shelter and support services to battered women and their children. The agency has incorporated crisis intervention and support services for victims of domestic violence and/or sexual violence. It is the vision of Women Together to end violence so that individuals may live without fear, abuse, or oppression. In 2006 Women Together staff provided services to 1,548 walk-in adult clients,
2. Shelter clients and 765 children. Agency staff also provided telephone hotline crisis intervention to a total of 2,182 callers. (In 2009, 3,146 individuals received counseling and crisis intervention services)
3. Estrella's House was established in the year 2000 in tribute to Estrella Rojas, a victim of child abuse whose life ended tragically in Edinburg, Texas. Our mission is to reduce the emotional trauma to child abuse victims by facilitating a multidisciplinary team approach, which supports the prevention of child abuse through community education and promotes the effective prosecution of those who perpetrate crimes against children.
4. Local law enforcement agencies coordinate with Estrella's House for the provision of forensics. Mujeres Unidas and CPS coordination to provide emergency shelter for families victimized by domestic/sexual violence.
5. RIO GRANDE VALLEY COUNCIL, INC. is a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Organization whose mission is to provide services that reduce substance abuse and encourage healthier lifestyles. Founded in 1991 as a nonprofit agency and governed by a local board, the Rio Grande Valley Council is located throughout the Rio Grande Valley with a diversity of programs that include: assessment, screening and referral, prevention and intervention services, as well as coalition building. Programs address alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse providing treatment services in an outpatient capacity.

### **IV. Goals and Strategies**

The goals for dealing with Child abuse and neglect are as follows:

1. Developing a comprehensive, multidisciplinary response to child abuse.
2. Establishing separate, child-friendly facilities for interviewing and providing services to child victims and their families.
3. Preventing or reducing trauma to children caused by multiple contacts with professionals and involvement with the courts.
4. Increasing community understanding of child abuse.
5. Identifying and developing funding and marketing strategies.
6. Maintaining open communication and case coordination among community professionals and agencies involved in child protection efforts.
7. Enhancing the skills of professionals and volunteers who support child abuse intervention such as the local Children's Advocacy Center.

8. Developing and negotiating interagency agreements and protocols.

The strategies for dealing with child abuse and neglect issues are as follows:

1. Child abuse and neglect has increased and there is a need for more Children's Shelters and Crisis Centers.
2. Increase child abuse services, prevention and education.
3. Increase successful child abuse investigations and prosecution.
4. Schedule development and interagency discussions to negotiate agreements and protocol.
5. Create awareness materials and meetings to market information.
6. Provide educational opportunities for professions and volunteers.
7. Promote awareness to community.
8. Increase prevention facilities and alternate housing for victims.
9. Advocate methods of communication with court and legal agencies.

#### **V. Gaps in Services**

1. No emergency shelter for minors that are not accompanied by their parents/guardian
2. Lack of prevention education on child abuse being done in the community
3. Lack of community education on reporting child abuse
4. Lack of Children's Treatment Center

#### **VI. Program Measures**

##### **A. Output Measures**

1. Increase prevention education
2. Apply for more facilities
3. Create awareness campaign

##### **B. Outcome Measures**

1. Increase awareness
2. Provide 2 alternate shelters for area
3. Increase services

## **SECTION 11**

### **MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL DISABILITY**

#### **I. Identification of Needs**

People with mental illness need to be provided quality behavioral healthcare with respect, dignity, and cultural sensitivity through the efficient and effective delivery of services.

1. Increase programs providing mental health and mental disability services for indigent and low income populations.
2. Increase emergency residential facilities for adults/children with mental health issues.
3. Establish group homes for persons with mental health issues.
4. Establish long term residential facilities for persons with mental health issues.
5. Purchase transportation means to safely transport persons with mental health issues.
6. Hire trained law enforcement officers to safely transport persons with mental health issues.
7. Increase awareness in the community on mental illness and substance induced psychosis.
8. Establish more support groups for families and persons with mental health issues.
9. Train law enforcement personnel and Justice of the Peace Officers in dealing with persons with mental health issues.
10. Establish mental health clinics on post secondary campuses to train counselors, social workers, and medical professionals with hands on training.
11. Increase funding to hire additional personnel to work with persons with mental health issues.
12. Establish prevention programs on mental health issues to include school prevention.
13. Purchase equipment, technology, and assesment tools to work with mental health issues.

#### **II. Identification of Resources:**

- ◆ South Texas Behavioral Health
- ◆ Hidalgo County Rehabilitation Center
- ◆ Tropical Texas
- ◆ AAMA Association for the Advancement of Mexican American
- ◆ Renaissance Behavioral Center
- ◆ Mujeres Unidas Shelter/ Outreach Offices
- ◆ Palmer Drug Abuse Program
- ◆ NAMI National Assosiation on Mental Illness
- ◆ Nuestra Clinica Del Valle
- ◆ El Milagro Clinic
- ◆ HOPE Clinic
- ◆ Local Faith Based Church
- ◆ Health and Human Services
- ◆ VAIL Valley Association for Independent Living

- ◆ DARS Department of Assistive Rehabilitative Services
- ◆ McAllen ISD Safe School /Healthy Students Initiative
- ◆ Donna ISD Safe School/Healthy Students Initiative
- ◆ Mission ISD Safe School/Healthy Students Initiative
- ◆ Migrant Health Promotions
- ◆ Veterans Administration

### **III. Coordination of Resources**

Many of these agencies work together as a matter of course, with sharing information and making referrals being the most common forms of coordination. The following are some examples of existing coordination:

1. Identify housing for long-term care offering numerous options for service with agencies communicating vacancies and coordinating services.
2. Law enforcement communicate with health care facilities, hospitals, and residential settings to monitor patient movement and activities.
3. Increase court liaisons for mental patients.
4. Promote and provide more information concerning mental health illnesses, medications, side effects, usage.
5. Increase counseling services both group and individual at affordable prices for patients and families.
6. Request support for free medications through medical companies.

### **IV. Goals and Strategies**

The goals for dealing with mental health issues are as follows:

1. Increase the number of programs providing mental health services.
2. Increase the number of referrals for mental health services.
3. Increase access to mental health services in rural areas.
4. Increase community education and prevention education regarding mental health issues.
5. Increase emergency residential facilities for adults/children.
6. Establish group homes.
7. Establish long term residential facilities.
8. Increase support groups.
9. Increase personnel to work with persons with mental health issues.
10. Secure funding to provide continued education to law enforcement and Justice of the Peace Officers in working with person with mental health issues.
11. Secure funding to purchase equipment, technology, and assessment tools.
12. Secure funding to purchase adequate transportation to safely transport person with mental health issues.

The strategies for dealing with mental health services are as follows:

1. Increase programs providing mental health and mental disability services for indigent and low income populations.
2. Increase emergency residential facilities for adults/children with mental health issues.
3. Establish group homes for persons with mental health issues.
4. Establish long term residential facilities for persons with mental health issues.
5. Purchase transportation means to safely transport persons with mental health issues.
6. Hire trained law enforcement officers to safely transport persons with mental health issues.
7. Increase awareness in the community on mental illness and substance induced psychosis.
8. Establish more support groups for families and persons with mental health issues.
9. Train law enforcement personnel and Justice of the Peace Officers on dealing with persons with mental health issues.
10. Establish mental health clinics on post secondary campuses to train counselors, social workers, and medical professionals with hands on training.
11. Increase funding to hire additional personnel to work with persons with mental health issues.
12. Establish prevention programs on mental health issues to include school prevention.
13. Purchase equipment, technology, assessment tools to work with mental health issues.
14. Increase the number of programs providing mental health services.
15. Increase the number of referrals for mental health services.
16. Provide alternatives for residential services.
17. Offer scholarships to encourage more mental health care workers.
18. Secure transportation to doctors and counseling services.
19. Apply for funds to provide group and halfway houses with adequate staff to manage patients.
20. Advertise for more professional doctors for mental illness.
21. Schedule counseling services at flexible times to meet daily schedules for patients.
22. Provide delivery of medication.
23. Increase number of beds available for residential treatment.

#### **IV. Gaps in Services**

1. Limited services related to mental health and mental disabilities available.
2. Limited transportation to treatment facilities for rural areas.
3. Limited community awareness and prevention education provided in mental health.
4. Limited services for children with mental health issues.
5. Limited equipment and technology to address mental health issues.
6. Limited training for education professionals in dealing with mental health issues.
7. Limited qualified personnel to work with person with mental health issues.
8. Limited wellness programs and networking groups for mental health professions.
9. Limited services related to mental health and mental disabilities available.

**V. Program Measures**

**A. Output Measures**

1. Apply for funding to increase treatment services for mental health and mental disability.
2. Apply for funding to increase outreach efforts in rural areas for the provision of mental health and mental disability services.

**B. Outcome Measures**

1. Increased programs providing mental health and mental disability services.
2. Increased mental health outreach efforts in rural areas.
3. Apply for funding to increase treatment services for mental health and mental disability.
4. Apply for funding to increase outreach efforts in rural areas for the provision of mental health and mental disability services.
5. Increased programs providing mental health and mental disability services.

## **SECTION 12**

### **SPECIALIZED COURTS AND COURT SAFETY**

#### **I. Identification of Needs**

Court management and coordination of all services to deal with drugs and special cases need to have alternate court rooms, and personnel. A stereotypical description of the Court System in Hidalgo County notes its clogged dockets and lengthy delays before final disposition.

There is no longer any doubt that the passage of many months, or even years, between the date charges are filed and the date of disposition by plea or trial, significantly reduce the deterrent, punitive, and rehabilitative effects of the sentences and increase the amount of crime and level of public frustration and sense of insecurity. Identification of victim/witnesses of misdemeanor cases who have personal injury and/or property damage is inadequate, given the present lack of personnel and resources. Consequently, many victims/witnesses are not properly identified, notified, or given information of court hearings and judgments. Victims may never get restitution after the criminal case is disposed because of this perpetual problem. In addition, half of all misdemeanor defendants fail to appear at the arraignment hearing. DWI, theft, drugs, assault, homicides and other violations increase the backlog every month. In addition, drug trafficking across the Texas-Mexico border is extensive. Researchers estimate that 80% of all drugs smuggled in the U.S. come from across the border and the average first time alcohol user in Hidalgo County is 12 years old. 30% of the Hidalgo County population is 15 or younger as compared to the state total of 21.4%. There is a clear need for rehabilitative services in Hidalgo County.

1. Clogged dockets need quicker dispositions
2. Post arrest procedures for victims, juveniles, and adults
3. Specialized courts for specific issues
4. Lack of security

#### **II. Identification of Resources**

- ◆ County Courts of Law
- ◆ Juvenile Court
- ◆ District Courts
- ◆ Justice of the Peace
- ◆ Municipal Courts
- ◆ Federal Court
- ◆ Drug Court
- ◆ Child Welfare Court

#### **III. Coordination of Resources**

1. Provide improved security in each County Court and Administrative facilities.
2. Specialized Courts for handling specific cases such as child abuse, domestic violence, crimes committed by juveniles, and drug courts.
3. Develop post arrest procedures for enforcement officers to handle juvenile and adult offenders as well as their victims.

#### **IV. Goals and strategies**

The goals for dealing with special courts and court safety issues are as follows:

1. Security will be analyzed and all systems will be updated or installed.
2. Training for court personnel and court house security personnel.
3. Court clerks will coordinate and manage cases for expedited service to patrons.
4. Schedules will be distributed to all courts on a weekly basis.
5. Court cases will be assigned according to Judge expertise and past experience.
6. Procedures will be put in place for moving and containing prisoners.
7. Scheduling cases dealing with children during unbusy times to cause less trauma to victims.
8. Training, awareness, promotion, to community with information on procedures for special cases.
9. Training, awareness, promotion, to law enforcement and advocates on safety procedures for special cases.

The strategies for dealing with special courts and court safety issues are as follows:

1. Security company will conduct inservice on equipment and technology every 6 months.
2. Court clerks will meet once a week to coordinate and cooperate in meeting timing disposition of cases.
3. Court schedules will be distributed, posted, and mailed to all involved parties.
4. Apply for funding to update and acquire additional security system for court house and court rooms.
5. Request funds for set up of special rooms for children involved in court cases "Safe Room."
6. Counselors and or designated social workers will manage Safe Room.
7. Awareness campaign to communities.

#### **V. Gaps in services**

1. No accomodations for children involved in court cases
2. Little or no formal security technology in place
3. No training in place for procedures

#### **VI Program measures**

##### **A. Output Measures**

1. Court outbursts, disruptions, disturbances will be reduced
2. Personnel will receive trainings 2 times per year
3. Maintainence will be managed by court personnel with technical back up from vendor
4. Court backlogs will be reduced
5. Children will display delight and happiness when using the "Safe Room"

##### **B. Outcome Measure**

1. Attendance at Public Awareness informational meetings and workshops will increase by
2. Security will add a more orderly conduct in court rooms and court house
3. Counselors and social workers will receive specialized training on handling court cases

## SECTION 13

### IDENTIFIED RESOURCES AND STATISTICS

1. Additional Police Officers in the Community—The Crime Bill request of additional funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program has allowed Cities to place additional police officers into specific neighborhoods. The intent is to provide residents with public safety and community oriented policing services.
2. The County Alternative School—Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) created by the county focuses on juvenile felony offenders.  
Goals:  
Improve school attendance  
Foster individual responsibility  
Have students promote respect for themselves and others
3. The Hidalgo County Sheriff's Department provides a sense of security for the people by protecting life and property, reducing the opportunity for crime and disorder, enforcing the law, and providing other police – related services as required by the community in a manner consistent with the values of a free society. Forming partnerships with other law enforcement and government agencies to address crime and disorder issues, the department upholds their commitment to community service.
4. Non-Profit (Public Organizations)

The consolidation and coordination of social service programs for youth is imperative. Young people that are currently involved with drugs and illegal activities must be provided with basic services such as counseling, financial assistance and housing. These services must be viewed as an investment in their as well as our future. These programs are mentioned because they work with courts and utilize community volunteers.

**AVANCE** provides comprehensive and innovative services to community organizations, as well as parents and their children through the administration of several family programs. These programs also strive to break the cycle of violence that seems to perpetuate itself from parents to children. Funding will help operate a program to assist children in foster care throughout Hidalgo and Starr Counties.

**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS** Boys & Girls Clubs build Character through everyday leadership and guidance in behavior and attitude. Young people from Hidalgo and Starr County join together in wholesome recreation and companionship. Trained professional staff provides positive adult mentors and role models. Nationally recognized programs help young people succeed in school, stay healthy, learn important life skills, pursue interests in the arts and sports, and explore vocational choices. Most importantly, the Boys & Girls Clubs show youngsters that someone cares and wants them to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens.

At the forefront of youth development Boys and Girls Clubs continue working with young people from disadvantaged economic, social, and family circumstances. The Boys & Girls Club actively seeks to enrich the lives of girls and boys whom other youth agencies have had difficulty reaching. They are dedicated to ensuring that our community's disadvantaged youngsters have greater access to quality after school programs and services that will enhance their lives and shape their future. The Boys & Girls Club focuses on the overall performance improvement of at-risk children by implementing various Boys & Girls Club of America programs.



**TOGETHER TIME**  
**Co-Parenting Education &**  
**Neutral Exchange Visitation Site**

The Boys & Girls Club of McAllen has been working on a program to facilitate both a Co-Parenting Curriculum and a Safe Exchange Program for the residents of Hidalgo County.

On behalf of Boys & Girls Club, a presentation was made at the Board of Judges Meeting on May 22, 2008, to explain that the Boys & Girls Club is volunteering its facilities for two purposes:

(1) The first is to implement a program of Co-Parenting Classes, which will help diminish the discord between many separated parents when it comes to the best interest of their children. The new curriculum's facilitator is organizing units of study that include live presentations, speakers, and the utilization of existing electronic media. The Boys & Girls Club Co-Parenting Class instructions, will be provided with an award from a grant from the Attorney General's Office.

(2) The most important thing to the Family Law Practitioner is that there will be a weekend protected exchange program, with the intent of providing a place where the person having possession of the children can leave them for a short period of time in a cheerful, protected supervised environment where the person receiving the children can pick them up without any interaction or confrontation. The plan provides for the children to be supervised for a period of no longer than 20 minutes, considered a sufficient window to avoid conflict between parents. In addition, the Boys and Girls Club will help facilitate supervised visitation where the non-custodial parent is not allowed to take the children out alone. This program is still in the planning stages with full implementation beginning in January 2010.

The Safe Exchange Program, will charge \$25.00 per month per family, payable in advance. It is anticipated that the Court will order this payment when the Order of the Court is handed down with the Boys & Girls Club of McAllen serving as the responsible appointed court liaison. The Roney Center, located at 34<sup>th</sup> Street and Buddy Owens in Northwest McAllen will provide the actual exchange location for families using this service.

Supervised Visitation programming is in the beginning planning stages with details on scheduling, levels of supervision, validation of credentials to be examined, and charted for utilization. As implementation nears further information will be provided to the Family Law Section, and the local Bar Association as a whole. The area Board of Judges has unanimously endorsed this program, funded by the Attorney General and the organizers will be providing new Co-Parenting Curriculum, a safe exchange program, and supervised visitation soon to residents needing these services.

- 1) **Family violence prevention and child neglect prevention** will utilize **Together Time** programming, facilities, staff and materials, which will prove to enhance child welfare by providing neutral exchange sites, safe havens for child custody battles, co-parenting education, and supervised visitation in safe, child friendly environments.
- 2) **Teenage pregnancy prevention** with the dual purpose of eliminating Juvenile delinquency will be introduced by up-to-date-technological programming called Smart Girls. Energetic, enthusiastic, electrifyingly realistic this insightful program will surely prove helpful and rewarding. See [www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org) for a full description of Smart Girls. Another delinquency prevention program will attack **dating violence** and it is called Smart Dating.
- 3) **Juvenile crime prevention** strategies need special focus to truly reflect the serious nature of the problem, which is emphasized by the increase in drive-by shootings, kidnappings, the massive influx of illegal drugs, and the increase of assassin-styled murders as well as the most recent influence of recruiting teens by Zeta involving Youth located in the 78501 zipcode (designated as a high juvenile crime area). Youth not involved in gangs are being beaten up and bullied by local youth gangs. These serious incidents are not classified as gang related activity by school officials or local law enforcement because of the gang's clever maneuvering of the legal system. Interviews with the School Police Chief verify the facts, however because these criminal incidents are not properly documented the numbers are low.

Reports from the county jail also point out the high numbers involved in gangs by the separated living quarters designated for differing gangs. These units are more heavily staffed and inmates are more carefully monitored. Other specifics reinforcing the comprehensive complex problem is the fact that the U.S. Department of Justice and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency does not yet recognize us as a priority need area in terms of youth gang activity. Therefore, to date we have been unsuccessful getting federal grant dollars. This evidence shows a clear picture of the obvious gang problems and it would be extremely helpful if the COG recognized the gang potential particularly in light of our proximity to the border and the recent increase of criminal activity, and the Mexican military involvement at the International bridge.

- 4) Statistical evidence is another way to reaffirm the problems with juvenile crime and the current figures for all youth crime for the City of McAllen Report 2008 can be reviewed online at [www.mcallen.net](http://www.mcallen.net). Youth crime rose last year when compared to the previous year and it was not simply because of population growth. Youth crime activity jumped up 17%.

### **SUCCESSFUL SOLUTIONS - BGCA PREVENTION SERVICES**

- a.) An alumni survey conducted by an outside evaluator, Harris Poll, is in final analysis to determine the success of programming.
- b.) See the extent of our reach with our 2009 fact sheet (also attached).
- c.) The change point for many youth in terms of prevention is a relationship with a caring adult or mentor. Please see our websites for descriptions of our youth mentoring services, [www.begreatmcallen.org](http://www.begreatmcallen.org) and [www.bgcmcallen.org](http://www.bgcmcallen.org)

***BGCM Mission is : To inspire and enable all young people especially those who need us most, to realize their potential as productive, responsible, caring citizens.***

1. The Boys & Girls Club of McAllen served **12,786** youth and teen members in 2008, with **16,086** total touched in outreach services in **14 sites** around the city.
2. **Three new sites** opened in September 2008 in local schools touching youth that do not normally access services in clubhouses. These sites join 8 additional school sites which formed the BGC McAllen Youth First Alliance in 2006. Alliance partners McAllen ISD, IDEA Public Schools, Quest Academy and Sylvan Learning Center serve more than **2200 at risk youth in schools** to date.
3. BGCM is more than a youth hang out or sports program. We offer comprehensive after-school and weekend programs in youth development and leadership skills building such as:
  - ***Education & Career Development***
  - ***Health & Life Skills***
  - ***The Arts***
  - ***Character & Leadership Development***
  - ***Sports, Fitness & Recreation***
  - ***Specialized Programs for Gang Prevention: Targeted Outreach and One to One Mentoring for At Risk Youth***
4. The Department of Justice states that juvenile crime occurs during the after-school hours, between 4pm. – 8pm. These are BGCM peak hours of operation.
5. ***Between 60% and 90% of our youth (depending on which center) come from single parent homes,*** making our availability to latch key kids essential!
6. While our membership fee is \$10.00 annually so that all children may have club access regardless of social economic status, there is a charge for special programs, such as camps and sports. It costs

**\$144** per youth annually to operate BGCM, while the BGCA national average cost per youth annually is \$260. Youth incarceration exceeds \$40,000 annually. ***BGCM is a tremendous value!***

***BGCM Alumni share that the Boys & Girls Club of McAllen changed or saved their lives through mentoring and at risk prevention programs.***

### **Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg RGV Community Plan Data**

For 39 years, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg Rio Grande Valley has been in the forefront of youth development with the mission of inspiring and enabling all youth especially those from disadvantage circumstance to realize their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg Rio Grande Valley has actively sought to enrich the lives of girls and boys whom other youth agencies have had difficulty in reaching. We are dedicated to ensuring that our community's disadvantaged youngsters have greater access to quality programs and services that will enhance their lives and shape their futures.

In a world that has never seemed more threatening and devoid of promise for a disproportionate number of America's children, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg RGV provides youth, ages 6 to 18, with a tangible measure of hope. The Club offers them what they need and want most:

- adults who respect and listen to them;
- a safe environment where they can have fun and be themselves;
- and interesting, constructive activities that channel youthful energy into challenging pursuits.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg RGV is facility-based, has 37 paid professional staff supplemented by 16 part-time volunteers, and offers daily access to a broad range of programs that promote the health, social, educational, vocational, character and leadership development of girls and boys served.

The Club's programs are carefully designed to support achievement and foster a sense of belonging, competence, usefulness and influence that builds self-confidence and self-esteem. The Youth Development Outcomes our Movement has articulated for young people to succeed is central to our program methodology: Positive Self-Identity, Educational, Employment, Emotional and Cultural Competencies, Community and Civic Involvement, Health and Well-Being and A Moral Compass.

It offers daily access to a broad range of programs in five core program areas: Character and Leadership Development, Education and Career Development, Health and Life Skills, The Arts, Sports, Fitness and Recreation. However, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg RGV has identified three program area focuses.

**Increase Academic Success-** 3,625 service hours are provided in Education & Career Development. In 2007 we documented a 96% graduation rate of club members who graduate for high school as compared to 79% of ECISD and 79.1% for the state of Texas. For over 10 years the Club has given out over \$100,000 in scholarship each year. In the coming program year, it is our intent to track the number of members who progress to the next grade level on time and the percentage of Club member going to college.

**Increase Healthy Life Skills** – 6,654 service hours are provided in Health, Life skills and fitness with a focus on drug prevention, conflict resolution, healthy habits and nutrition. Based on a sample size of 250 youth we have documented a 58% increase in awareness of gang resistance skills, an 88% increase in conflict resolution skills, and a 70% increase in positive peer helper skills.

**Improve Character and Civic Engagement** 936 service hours are provided in Character & Leadership Development with a focus on service learning, moral compass, civic engagement, diversity and leadership. A total of 33,917 community service hours were provided by teen club members project included park clean up, tutoring, and homework helpers to name a few.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg RGV is the only club in the Valley to administer a Teen Court Program. The Edinburg Teen Court has been established through the collaborations of community leaders, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg RGV and the City of Edinburg. The program is specifically designed to address the needs of the first time class C misdemeanor offender and his/her family. The purpose of the Edinburg Teen Court is to interrupt the development pattern of criminal behavior in juvenile by promoting and motivating self esteem for self improvement and forming a healthy attitude towards authority. The offenders assume responsibility for their behavior and accept the consequences of their actions through community service work, serving on the Teen Court Jury and any punishment sanctioned by a Teen Court jury of their peers. The Teen Court provides an educational experience for the offenders and teen volunteers. The teens are given hand-on experience with the legal process, become familiar with the court system and learn about variety careers opportunities the court system has to offer. The offenders also learn about variety careers opportunities through the community service they perform. Teen Court provides young people a unique challenge and opportunity to demonstrate to adults and themselves their capability for self government and responsible citizenship. To date more than 3,000 teen respondents participated in the program with 60% being males. It has been documented that males age 16 are referred the most for fighting.

Today, over 16,000 underserved boys and girls at risk and in need are taking advantage of the programs, activities, and services provided at the thirteen (13) the Boys & Girls Clubs of Edinburg Rio Grande Valley Units. Of those sites 9 are located in the schools – 1 at Edinburg High School, 1 in public housing and 3 in traditional neighborhoods. 80% of club members are from low income families, an average of 45% are from single family households and 55% are from colonias. Each day these club members benefit from trained, caring, professional staff and volunteers who help young people take control of their lives, envision productive futures, and reach their goals.

**COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADOVOCATES**, their purpose is to provide courts with factual information about the children in foster care. They also make recommendations regarding what is in the children's best interests. They help ensure that children have a safe, permanent and stable environment. CASA promotes and strives to reduce a child's time in Foster Care. CASA assists with academic needs of children. There is no other program where volunteers are court-appointed to represent the children. CASA also advocates for all children by doing community awareness to area schools and organizations. CASA has indicated that between 65% - 70% of the mothers with children who are served have a substance abuse problem.

**CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER OF HIDALGO COUNTY- ESTRELLA'S HOUSE** is a child- focused community-based non-profit 501 C 3 organization established in June 2000 and was identified as the regional vehicle by which to unite, coordinate and bring needed resources and victim services to abused children in Hidalgo County.

In the short time of its existence, the Children's Advocacy Center of Hidalgo County (CACHC) has a proven seven year track record providing a coordinated team investigation, child forensic interviews (i.e., one child-one videotape interview), on-site sexual assault examinations, immediate intervention counseling, case reviews, case tracking and follow-up services using a multidisciplinary team (MDT) "one-stop shopping" approach. Currently, through an executed working protocol MDT members refer all sexually abused children to be interviewed (videotape) by our two specially trained child interviewers. All interviews are recorded using state-of-the-art one-touch digital video recording and management system designed specifically for interview rooms.

We also have two child interviewing rooms equipped with one **Pan, Tilt, Zoom (PTZ)** camera and one covert camera creating a ("picture in picture" format) capability, recording 2 interview simultanelously with mounted sensitive ceiling microphones. We also have two monitoring rooms for MDT members (district attorney, child protective services, law enforcement, CACHC staff, etc.) to observe the interview through 17" LCD widescreen monitors for the MDT members. The center also provides earpieces available for the interviewer, so that the MDT members in the viewing room can feed questions and information to the interviewer.

The Child Oriented-Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) has been established for ten (10) years and serves as a local response team to allegations of child abuse. The MDT includes representation from the following disciplines: law enforcement, child protective services, district attorney's office, mental health and medical providers, and victim advocates. The MDT meets on a weekly basis (Thursday) with other representatives of the above-mentioned

agencies that share a common interest: to discuss cases and share information to enhance the investigation, prosecution, and continuum of services. Cases are followed through to closure.

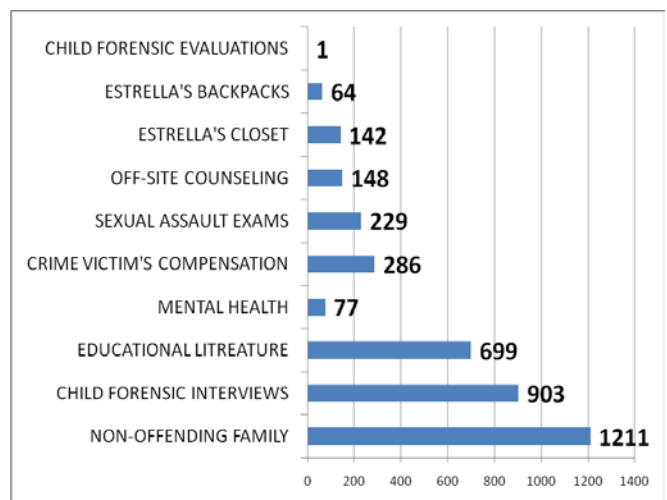
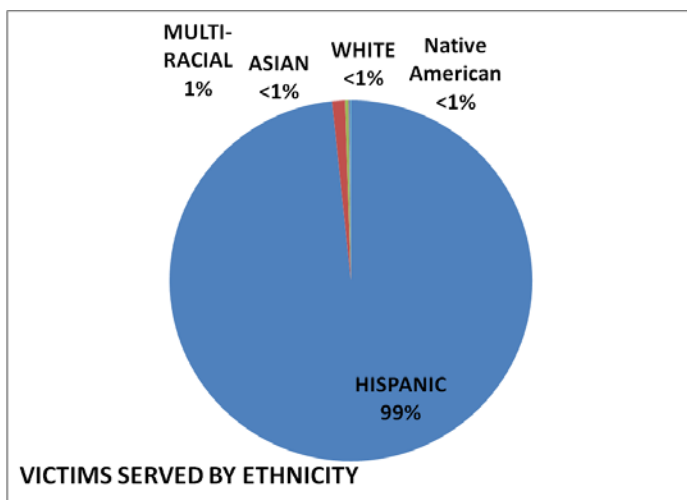
The purpose of the MDT is to ensure and document the commitment enacted by the Texas Legislation (Family Code Section 264) to work collaboratively in an effort to: 1) minimize the re-victimization of child abuse cases during the investigative and prosecutorial processes, 2) facilitate the prosecution of perpetrators, 3) ensure victim's safety, and 4) improve victim's access to treatment resources and services. In fact, we have videotaped interviews of 9,500 sexually abused children in Hidalgo County. Moreover, we have been averaging 1,100 child forensic interviews per year since 2004. This group included both female and male victims of all races located in Hidalgo County and ranging from two to seventeen years of age.

It is clearly in the best interest of all children and the present-day criminal justice system to handle child abuse victims and witnesses in the most effective and sensitive manner possible. A number of studies have found that reducing the number of interviews of children minimizes psychological harm to child victims (Tedesco & Schnell, 1987) and increases the child's participation, thereby leading to an increased chance of a successful outcome in the investigation and prosecution stages. It is these two specific areas of concern that this proposed project directly addresses.

**Goal Statement:**

Our goal is to continue reducing trauma to child sexual abuse victims by improving (videotape) interviews, and thereby enhancing the quality of video, which in turn will preserve the evidence, protect the rights of persons accused, and ease the system-imposed trauma to the child and parents. Other services provided at Estrella's House: on-site sexual assault examinations (Rape Kits), on-site crisis intervention/therpay, multi-disciplinary case staffing/case review, Texas Crime Victim's Compensation services, social service referrals, criminal justice support/advocacy, (accompaniment to hospital and/or court when necessary) and prevention education and community outreach activities. In addition, Estrella's House has an after hour 7-days, 24 hour Sexual Assault Response Team of 4 dedicated nurses and is the only child-friendly center in Hidalgo County that utilizes a one-kind and only SDFI<sup>®</sup>-Telemedicine designed to serve as a new complete colposcope offering digital pictures that are 1281% better than the very best video colposcope.

**Note:** All cases are referred by Child Protective Services, law enforcement and/or the District Attorney's Office of Hidalgo County for a child forensic interview, sexual assault exam and crisis intervention counseling.



**ESTRELLAS HOUSE- CONT'**

<b>AGE</b>	
0 TO 5 YEARS OLD	207
6 TO 12 YEARS OLD	483
13 TO 17 YEARS OLD	240
18+ YEARS OLD	35
TOTAL	<b>965</b>
<b>GENDER</b>	
FEMALE	676
MALE	289
TOTAL	<b>965</b>
<b>ALLEGATIONS</b>	
SXAB	723
PHAB	111
SXAB/PHAB	17
CHILD WITNESS	52
RISK	60
NSUP	2
TOTAL	<b>965</b>
<b>ETHNICITY</b>	
HISPANIC	949
MULTI-RACIAL	11
WHITE	3
ASIAN	1
NATIVE AMERICAN	1
TOTAL	<b>965</b>
<b>SERVICES</b>	
NON-OFFENDING FAMILY	1211
CHILD FORENSIC INTERVIEWS	903
EDUCATIONAL LITREATURE	699
MENTAL HEALTH	77
CRIME VICTIM'S COMPENSATION	286
SEXUAL ASSAULT EXAMS	229
OFF-SITE COUNSELING	148
ESTRELLA'S CLOSET	142
ESTRELLA'S BACKPACKS	64
CHILD FORENSIC EVALUATIONS	1

**TEEN COURT's** purpose is to interrupt the developing pattern of criminal behavior in juveniles by promoting motivation and self esteem for self-improvement and forming a healthy attitude toward authority. The offenders assume responsibility for their behavior and accept the consequences of their actions through community service work, serving on the Teen Court Jury and any punishment sanctioned by a Teen Court Jury of their peers. Teen Court provides an educational experience for the offender and teen volunteers. The teens are given 'hands-on' experience with the legal process, become familiar with the court system and learn about various career opportunities the court systems has to offer.

**WOMEN TOGETHER (MUJERES UNIDAS)** is a non-profit agency founded in 1978 to provide shelter and support services to battered women and their children. The agency has incorporated crisis intervention and support services for victims of domestic violence and/or sexual violence. It is the vision of Women Together to end violence so that individuals may live without fear, abuse, or oppression.

In 2009, Women Together staff provided services to a total of 1,889 non resident clients and provided shelter for a total of 340 women and 624 children. Agency staff also provided telephone hotline crisis intervention to a total of 1,348 callers. Women Together currently provides the following services to victims of family violence and or/sexual assault: Emergency Shelter, Rape Crisis Center, Nueva Vida Transitional Supportive Housing Program (a 16 unit apartment complex whose goal is to assist women and their children to continue to transition of violence- free life through intensive case management while ensuring residential stability), Legal Advocacy Program, Battered Intervention and Prevention Program, Family Justice Center. Through donations received from the community, Women Together is able to assist women and children who are victims of family violence and or/sexual assault by providing them with clothing, furniture, kitchen ware, appliances and home décor.

## **AFTER SCHOOL RECREATION**

After-school recreation programs conducted by the school system are extremely important. These programs are seen as a means of extending school hours so that students would be home at the same time as the parents. They would also be used as an alternative for spending time with gangs or involvement in destructive activities. School buses are used to transport students to the Boys & Girls Clubs, which also serves to accomplish the same goal. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Community Development Block Grant funds can be used to assist in providing after-school recreational programs and creating other after-school activities. Although the Community Development Block Grant is available annually to the City or County, a maximum of only 15% is designated for social service activities including agencies such as Boys & Girls Clubs and local Youth Centers.

Some statistics for consideration include:

- ◆ Hidalgo County has flipped back and forth between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> over the years for the county in the Nation with the most Drunk Driving Fatalities.
- ◆ TABC issued 272 citations for possession of alcohol for minors under the age of 21 in Hidalgo County. This does not include any other policing agency statistics.

**HIDALGO YOUTH CENTER** coordinates services with the Hidalgo Police Department, Hidalgo Independent School District, and Valley View Independent School District to provide area youth at risk with educational and recreational programs and activities. Youth are mentored by trained staff to enhance the opportunity for success in decision making, social and education achievement. The Hidalgo Youth Center strives to instill the importance of moral and family values in our youth in order for them to become productive and caring members of their community.

**PLANNED PARENTHOOD ASSOCIATION of HIDALGO COUNTY, Inc.** (PPAHC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization which provides reproductive health care and education about healthy sexuality to residents of Hidalgo and Starr Counties. Due to cuts in funding many of the PPAHC centers have closed. This will impact this region dramatically. Teenage pregnancy is at an all time high. Hidalgo County has historically had the highest teen pregnancy rates within the state. Girls as young as twelve years of age are pregnant and giving birth within the county.

Community education is integral to PPAHC's mission of promoting healthy sexuality. In 2009, over 21,300 people were reached through community education and outreach. PPAHC's nationally recognized Community Health Worker (promotora) project provides reproductive health education in rural colonias, low-income housing and community centers, focusing on the prevention of unintended pregnancy, STD prevention, cancer screening and family communication.

Adults and juveniles in correctional facilities represent a large, highly at-risk population for HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). This population could benefit greatly from health interventions, as could the general public. Inmates are admitted and released frequently, making them active participants in the community.

**TEXAS RIO GRANDE LEGAL AID (TRLA)** provides legal assistance to low-income residents of Hidalgo County. From January 1, 2010 to November 30, 2010, a total of 2,701 clients from Hidalgo County were served by TRLA.

Of these clients, approximately 1,341 were family law cases and 694 were victims of violence. TRLA assisted these victims in obtaining protective orders, divorces, child custody, and permanent residency under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). In addition to administering free high-quality legal assistance to victims of violence, TRLA also helps people in Hidalgo County apply for Crime Victims' Compensation. There is one social worker in place for the Rio Grande Valley Region, which includes Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy County. This social worker not only helps victims file for Crime Victims' Compensation, but also provides crisis intervention, advocacy, safety planning, and referrals to the appropriate partner organizations. There is a definite need for additional social workers to provide these services to clients.

**RIO GRANDE VALLEY COUNCIL, INC.** is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization whose mission is to provide services focused on providing youth and adults with knowledge, guidance, and resources related to preventing, intervening, and treating substance abuse/dependence. The Rio Grande Valley Council was founded in 1991 and is governed by a local board. Services available include: assessment, screening and referral, outpatient treatment, drug testing, prevention and intervention services, and coalition building.

**Hidalgo County Statistics from 9/01/2009 – 8/31/2010**

<b>Service Rendered</b>	<b>Adults</b>	<b>Youth</b>	<b>Total Served</b>
Prevention Education and Training	2,160	7,580	9,740
Evidence Based Program Services		811	811
Screening, Assessment, and Referral Services	552	148	700
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,665</b>	<b>8,282</b>	<b>13,947</b>
<b>Colonia Residents</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>6,454</b>	<b>7,117</b>

***Individuals served were primarily Hispanic.***

In 2009, 34% of all clients screened in Hidalgo County identified alcohol and marijuana as their primary drugs of choice. Twenty-percent (20%) identified cocaine as their primary drug of choice with an additional 7% identifying crack. The remaining clients sought services as a result of using/abusing heroine, rohypnol, non Rx-methadone, other opiates, amphetamines, other sedatives, tranquilizers, inhalants, hallucinogens, and ecstasy.

The Rio Grande Valley Council is dedicated to increasing awareness, services, and resources for individuals and families impacted by alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use/abuse.

## January-December 2010 – Calendar Offenses Reported

Hidalgo County			2010 Calendar Year Offenses Reported for Criminal Justice Grant Funding Plan Year 2012											
City	Last Name	First Name	Murder	Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Burglary	Larceny/Theft	Auto Theft	Family Violence	Hate Crime	Total	Months Reported	Date Received
1 Alamo	Espinosa	Arturo	0	16	17	125	234	857	154	84	0	1487	11	12.15.2010
2 Alton	Sotelo	Enrique	0	8	7	15	113	300	39	124	0	606	11	12.14.2010
3 Donna	De Leon	Ruben												
4 Donna ISD	Crist	Donald	0	0	1	3	6	118	2	0	0	130	12	11.10.2010
5 Edcouch	Cardenas	Eloy	0	9	15	19	75	30	15	16	0	179	11	12.15.2010
6 Edinburg - Interim	De La Garza	Peter	2	21	42	154	914	3023	277	469	0	4902	11	12.15.2010
7 Edinburg CISD	Gonzalez	Juan	0	1	1	187	31	264	0	0	0	484	11	12.13.2010
8 Elsa - Interim	Diaz	Jesse												
9 Hidalgo	Rosser	Vernon	0	2	6	6	45	64	30	20	0	173	11	12.14.10
10 La Joya	Del Angel	Jose												
11 La Joya ISD	Gonzalez	Raul												
12 La Villa	Cardenas	Eloy	0	1	10	11	25	15	10	9	0	81	11	12.15.2010
13 McAllen	Rodriguez	Victor												
14 McAllen ISD	Esquivel	Cris	0	2	1	2	44	420	4	1	0	474	11	12.14.2010
15 Mercedes	Maldonado	Olga	0	5	7	8	181	520	47	81	0	849	11	12.15.2010
16 Mission	Longoria	Leo												
17 Palmhurst	Vela	Michael	0	0	2	6	32	242	7	5	0	294	11	12.13.2010
18 Palmview	Barrera	Robert	0	0	3	0	22	286	18	0	0	329	11	12.10.2010
19 Peñitas - Interim	Martinez	Andres												
20 Pharr	Villescas	Ruben												
21 Progreso	Rodriguez	Alberto												
22 San Juan	Gonzalez	Juan	1	33	29	130	306	781	120	250	0	1650	11	12.13.2010
23 Sullivan City - Interim	Lucio	Carlos	0	0	0	4	13	16	8	6	0	47	11	12.13.2010
24 Weslaco - Interim	De La Cerda	Robert	0	21	39	131	477	1862	215	279	0	3024	11	12.15.2010
25 Hidalgo County SO	Treviño	Lupe												
26 UTPA PD (Edinburg)	Stearns	Roger												
			3	119	180	801	2518	8798	946	1344	0	14709		

Hidalgo County		2010 Calendar Year Victim Services Offenses Reported for Criminal Justice Grant Funding Plan Year 2012												
Agency	Sexual Assault (Adult)	Sexual Assault/Abuse (Child)	Sexual Assault/Abuse (Elder)	Family Violence	Physical Abuse/Neglect (Child)	Physical Abuse/Neglect (Elder)	Assault	Survivors of Homicide Victims	Hate/Bias Crimes	Other Victims of Violent Crime	Unknown Type of Victimization	Total	Months Reported	Date Received
1 CACHC - Estrellas' House	0	740	0	0	113	0	0	0	0	52	60	965	11	1.4.2011
2 Women Together	300	123	5	2129	328	0	0	0	0	0	0	2885	12	12.14.2010
	300	863	5	2129	441	0	0	0	0	52	60	3850		

## **DETERMINE HOW THESE RESOURCES CAN WORK TOGETHER**

1. The creation of a community resource document listing projects that have been funded within the community is fundamental to the county's goals. Coordination of services and provisions of the technical assistance necessary to implementing proposed plans prevents the duplication of programs and ensures their longevity and success.
2. The gathering of information from agencies working in the community is vital to the creation of a regional perspective of the problem. Domestic violence, drugs in schools, and gang activities are all symptoms of a community in trouble. The information necessary to address these problems must come from the community and must be addressed with resident participation. In this particular case, federal assistance for Hidalgo County is needed due to the impact of the proximity of the Texas-Mexico Border.

## **DEVELOP A PLAN**

The plan is based on the mobilization of the community to become more aware of the impact of drugs in the area and the creation of programs to address specific problem areas. The broad approach is as follows:

1. The primary step is to reduce or alleviate the infiltration of drugs from international sources through the use of the Narcotics Trafficking Task Force. This effort would eliminate the large amounts of money available to those individuals within the community that participate in illegal activities. It would also ensure that local law enforcement agencies are working together.
2. Additional police officers in the community are seen as important because they indicate that the community is responding to community and residential needs.
  - a) The creation of a number of projects to ensure that young people receive a basic education, even if they are not willing participants, will be important in this plan. Programs implemented with the cooperation of the school systems that extend students' time in school will also be given priority. The object is to identify churches, non-profit agencies, and other organizations that can assist community youth and sponsor activities. The only detriment to advancement is for these individuals to remain on public assistance, and ultimately become a hindrance to public growth.
  - b) Utilize confiscated properties and funds for the development and sustainability of a youth, parenting, prevention and intervention classes.
  - c) Have elected officials advocate for funding that been lost in this region and reinstate the programs for youth and families that were lost due to these funding cuts.

The above items are intended to address the immediate needs of the community. Subsequently, items intended to address long-term problems are as follows:

- a. After-school recreation programs that can provide mentoring
- b. Multiple Boys and Girls Clubs
- c. Church activities
- d. Public service jobs and training
- e. Social service support groups (counseling, medical, financial)
- f. Facilities for children of abuse. We have an animal shelter, but no Children's Shelter in Hidalgo County.

Although there are a variety of programs that are designed to provide assistance, the funding for programs is not available, stable, and our region has historically not been appropriately funded to provide for our community. In order to make a significant impact on a major community, programs will have to push for a consolidated

community effort and consistent funding. That means that the amount of funding available to supplement community projects must be known for at least three years into the future.

As of this date, these trends and issues are still existent in the area. The efforts to resolving the area problems will be on-going and will require the leaders of the community to come to the forefront and participate in a proactive manner.

Hidalgo County will maintain its focus on the priorities that have been set forth for this year. In efforts to bring our community the resources and social services that are needed, we will remain focused and dedicated. We must give our residents a hope of a better tomorrow to Valley residents.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Community Planning Group deserves much thanks and praise for their hard work on behalf of their respective agencies and the community. They provided the substance of this plan and it is a result of their input that we feel this plan accurately sets forth the status of criminal justice needs in Hidalgo County.