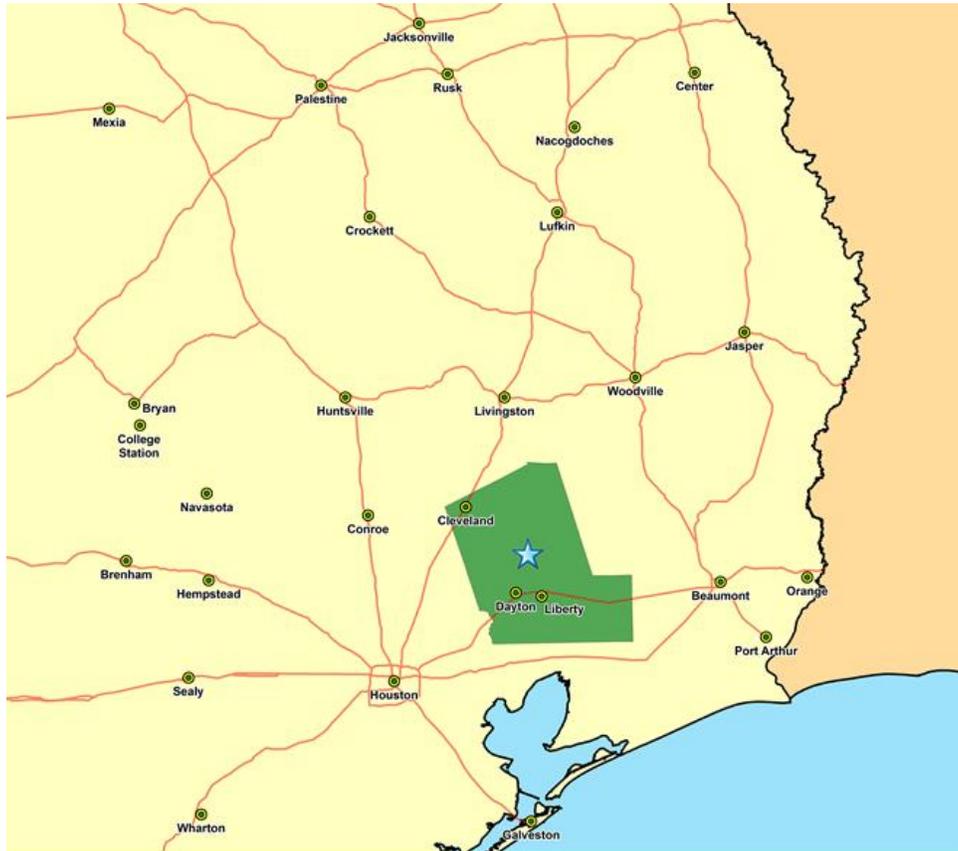


# Liberty County Community Plan 2017-2018



*Revised December 2017*

## **Liberty County Community Plan**

### **What Is a Community Plan?**

The purpose of the Liberty County Community Plan, previously referred to as the Liberty County Criminal Justice Community Plan, is to identify issues that impact the safety and well-being of the community as a whole. The Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office (CJD) requires that each county in Texas have a Community Plan.

The Liberty County Community Plan reflects the efforts of many agencies and local citizens in Liberty County who are concerned with identifying issues of importance to the community and assuring that these issues are discussed and that any gaps in service are closed in a way that will both solve the problem and benefit the community.

Though the final draft of this plan was completed in December 2017, this is a work in progress. New goals are identified, the Planning Committee changes as a result of individual and agency circumstances, and requirements concerning the make-up of the plan are subject to change from year to year. That being said, Liberty County is interested in keeping up with these changes, and including updates that will be posted from time to time.

If you are reading this plan and have not been involved in its development, you are invited to join in this ongoing effort. Any questions you may have can be addressed to either the Community Plan Coordinator for Liberty County, or to a Criminal Justice Program staff member of the Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC). Contact information is provided within this document.

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

## **Areas Represented**

**All incorporated and unincorporated areas of Liberty County including the communities of:**

Ames	Cleveland	Daisetta
Dayton	Devers	Dolen
Dayton Lakes	Hardin	Hull
Kenefick	Liberty	Moss Bluff
North Cleveland	Plum Grove	Raywood
Romayor	Rye	Tarkington Prairie

**School Districts located in Liberty County:**

Cleveland ISD	Dayton ISD	Devers ISD
Hardin ISD	Hull-Daisetta ISD	Liberty ISD
Tarkington ISD		

**Brief description and history of Liberty County:**

### **POPULATION:**

According to the latest official data from the United States Census Bureau (2010), the population for Liberty County was 75,643, which is an increase of approximately 8 % from the previous census in 2000. The largest percentage increase was in the Hispanic Community, with an increase of 77.57 % over the past 10 years (2000-2010).

### **DEMOGRAPHICS:**

- Liberty County is approximately 1,160 square miles in size with an average of 65.3 persons per square mile.
- Liberty County has approximately 29,000 households.
- Liberty County has a current unemployment rate of 6.9 ( September 2017).
- The racial makeup of Liberty County, as reported in the 2010 United States Census, is approximately 67% White, 18.0% Hispanic, 11.0% Black, 0.5% American Indian, and 0.5% Asian
- The Trinity River flows from north to south through Liberty County and Liberty County is home to portions of the Big Thicket National Preserve and the Trinity River Wildlife Refuge. The City of Liberty serves as the county seat.
- There are two U.S. Highways (59, 90) and four State Highways (61,105,146, 321) running through Liberty County. Liberty County highways serve as major evacuation routes during emergency situations such as hurricanes. The Texas Department of Transportation State Highway 146 expansion project and the Cleveland Bypass Project have been completed, and Liberty County officials expect the construction of the Grand Parkway, which will run through a portion of southwest Liberty County, to begin within the next few years.
- The proximity of Liberty County to Houston, a lower cost of living, great schools, and the hospitality of communities like Cleveland, Liberty, Dayton and others, make Liberty County a wonderful place to raise a family or locate a business.

## Community Planning Committee

\* includes members from FY2009 thru FY 2017

In developing the Community Plan, the individuals identified below met for the purpose of gathering the data contained in this plan. Some members may serve in multiple capacities/categories. Issues identified in previous plans by prior planning committee members were reviewed and remain in the plan if the problem is still of concern to the community and has not been resolved.

Tom Branch	Community Plan Coordinator
Jay Knight	Liberty County Judge
Mike McCarty	Liberty County Commissioner Pct.1
Greg Arthur	Liberty County Commissioner Pct. 2
Eddie Lowery	Liberty County Commissioner Pct. 3
Leon Wilson	Liberty County Commissioner Pct. 4
Wesley Hinch	Liberty County Attorney (past)
Logan Pickett	Liberty County District Attorney
Donna Brown	Liberty County District Clerk
Kimberly Judge	City of Dayton
Hector Herrera	Dayton ISD
Dr. Jessica Johnson	Superintendent Dayton ISD
Debra McGinnis	Liberty County Housing Authority
Christine Shippey	Covenant with Christ
Margie Morris	Covenant with Christ
Joy Burwell	Street Community Outreach
Ann Rogers	Street Community Outreach
Sgt. Rob Willoughby	Texas Department of Public Safety
Brian Nichols	Texas Department of Public Safety
Rick Larkin	Deputy Constable Dayton ISD
Kevin Wilson	Deputy Constable Dayton ISD
Chief Darrel Broussard	Cleveland Police Department
Captain Scott Felts	Cleveland Police Department
Melissa Manderano	Cleveland Police Department
Chief Pete Douzat	Dayton Police Department (retired)
Officer Steve Rogers	Dayton Police Department
Tamara Alexander	Dayton Police Department
Curtis Trousdale	Dayton Police Department
Chief John Headrick	Dayton Police Department
Asst.Chief David Roger	Dayton Fire Department
Chief Tom Claunch	Liberty Police Department
Captain Gary Martin	Liberty Police Department
Jeanne Marie Ewing	Bridgehaven Children Advocacy Center
Francis Wood	Liberty Police Department
Tim Allison (past)	Liberty County Pct. 1 Constable
Sheri Phelps	Liberty County Adult Probation

Donna Burt	Liberty County Indigent Health Care
James Carson	Liberty County Office of Emergency Management
Captain Don Neyland	Liberty County Sheriff Department
Alexis Cordova	Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service
Ray Ansley	Liberty County Resident
Crista Beasley	Liberty County Office of Emergency Management
Terri Bivins	Office of State Representative Dist. 18 John Otto
Hortencia Alvarado	Department of State Health Services
Keely Sullivan	Department of State Health Services
Chief Brian Hurst	Liberty Fire Department
Gracie Garza	ADAPT Programs
Joe Gardinza	ADAPT Programs
Steve Swan	Liberty County Adult Probation
Rachel Ansley	Bridgehaven Children's Advocacy Center
Lisa Spivey	SETRAC
Jeremy Way	SETRAC
Glenda Hardin	Liberty County Long Term Recovery
Brenda Fairchild	Liberty County Bond Department
LeeAnn Penton Walker	City of Plum Grove
Lanny Brown	Dept. of State Health Services
Tom Clanton	City of Kenefick
Dr. Darrell Myers	Cleveland ISD
Dawn Graham	Family Time
Judy Cox	Family Time
Logan Pickett	Criminal District Attorney
Barbara Lange	Liberty County Long Term Recovery
Barbara McIntyre	Liberty County Long Term Recovery
Fay Williams	Resident
David Hunter	Liberty County Constable Pct 5
Laci Lognion	Liberty County Deputy Constable Pct 5
Joan Caruthers	Daisetta City Secretary

**Identification of Community Problem**  
**General Public Safety Needs and Issues**

Liberty County remains a community of contrasts, with pockets of rural and urban poverty, and areas of beautiful country estates. Given the rapid growth, geographic size, and recent economic disparity, certain problems have been exacerbated over the past few years.

Substance abuse, driving while intoxicated, child sexual abuse, and traffic congestion, continue to be chronic issues within the county.

Treatment facilities and shelters are needed for substance abuse clients, mentally ill persons, battered women, and foster children.

Gaps in Interoperable Communications between emergency response agencies exist within the county and needs to be addressed in order to enhance public safety.

Liberty County, much like neighboring counties, has seen a rise in crime, which will most likely continue as the population increases.

Liberty County is situated between two large metropolitan areas, Beaumont to the east and Houston to the west. The expansion of transportation routes to these cities makes it easier for criminals to travel to and from Liberty County.

This Community Plan identifies important community issues and includes data that supports both the existence and severity of the problem. A proposed "Potential Response" to the "Identified Problem" is also included in the overall evaluation of each issue.

It must be noted that the "Identified Problems" listed below are each assigned a "priority" number. The assignment of priority numbers is a required protocol when creating a community plan; however, members of the planning committee want it to be known that each item in the community plan is considered to be equally important to improving the well-being of Liberty County.

## **Law Enforcement / Public Safety Issues As Identified By The Planning Committee**

### **❖ Law Enforcement ❖ Priority 1**

#### **Problem Identified:**

#### **Outdated Equipment and Facilities**

#### **Data:**

With the massive growth in both residential and commercial construction, the population has increased in the community at an alarming rate. Every law enforcement agency in Liberty County has also experienced a similar growth within their area of responsibility. There is a growing need for not only new types of equipment, but also a need to replace outdated and worn-out equipment and facilities. Commonly identified equipment needs include but are not limited to; body armor, body cameras, laptop/mobile computers and docking stations, radar units, portable breath test equipment, audio/video cameras, electronic control devices (Tasers), night vision equipment, inter-operable radio equipment, forensic equipment, surveillance equipment, training aids, photography equipment, standard patrol equipment, vehicles and facilities. While the design and management of the police estate alone will not transform confidence in the police, well-designed, public minded police facilities can enhance the image of the police among victims and the public.

#### **Potential Response to Problem:**

Modern law enforcement equipment is technology based and expensive. Law enforcement agencies require substantial funding to maintain and expand the most current technology, equipment and facilities. Officials should review current funding methods and make long term plans for upgrading equipment and facilities.

**❖ Law Enforcement**  
**❖ Priority 2**

**Problem Identified:**

**Communications Interoperability during Routine and Crisis Operations**

**Data:**

With the increasing growth rate in Liberty County, agencies will have to rely more and more on mutual aid for what are typically routine events. Having interoperability for voice communications is now being mandated at both the Federal and State level.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Review the current status of interoperable communications in Liberty County and determine the cost of reaching and maintaining interoperable communications throughout the county.

Explore external funding sources if necessary in order to procure interoperable radio equipment and mobile data equipment for emergency services agencies in Liberty County.

Study ways to improve interoperability between agencies during routine and critical incidents utilizing the voice and data systems.

**❖ Law Enforcement**  
**❖ Priority 3**

**Problem Identified:**

Additional Mental Health Treatment Facilities Needed

**Data:**

There is a need for the establishment of mental health treatment facilities within Liberty County. Currently law enforcement officers are out of service for several hours due to the fact they must transport mental health individuals to out of county facilities.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Obtain resources; additional deputies; vehicles; and transportation funding, in order to provide patient transportation to distant in-patient psychiatric facilities for stabilization prior to outpatient treatment.

Research funding options regarding the use of contract hospital facilities for short-term stabilization.

❖ **Law Enforcement**  
❖ **Priority 4**

**Problem Identified:**

Illicit Drug Manufacturing, Distribution and Sale with Related Crimes

**Data:**

**Methamphetamine-** Methamphetamine abuse is on the rise and is affecting every section of Liberty County. The primary distributors are Aryan gangs and associates with ties to the prison system. These gangs are mainly being supplied by the Mexican drug cartels via Mexican prison gangs. With this increase of abuse comes an increase in violence. Historically methamphetamine traffickers and abusers are some of the most violent offenders encountered by law enforcement. Methamphetamine abuse and the related crimes are on the increase in the entire country as well as our community, as witnessed by the drug courts and by other judicial officers.

**Prescription Pills-** prescription medication abuse is becoming a significant problem in Liberty County and other areas of east Texas. The proliferation of pain clinics in Houston caused a dramatic increase in the availability of prescription pain medication that makes it to the street of our communities. There is little or no control over how these clinics operate or who manages them.

**Marijuana, Cocaine and Crack Cocaine-** These drugs remain a constant level of concern in Liberty County, but there has not been a noticeable increase in these types of seizure or investigations.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Increase resources to combat Illicit Drug Manufacturing, Distribution, and Sales.

❖ **Law Enforcement**  
❖ **Priority 5**

**Problem Identified:**

DWI / DUI Offenses/Traffic Offenses

**Data:**

The social and financial impacts on Liberty County and its citizens resulting from DWI/DUI are enormous. It is estimated that Texas motor vehicle crashes caused by alcohol impaired drivers total over \$390 million in legal/court costs, insurance administration, and vehicle damage annually. The estimated cost per injury survivor of an alcohol-related crash averaged \$48,000 - \$96,000 in monetary costs and \$48,000 in quality of life losses.

Police have traditionally engaged in reactive enforcement by responding to impaired driving as patrol and traffic officers have detected it. Detecting, stopping, and arresting impaired drivers removes them from the streets, and the sanctions those offenders receive should act as a deterrent to similar occurrences in the future. Reactive enforcement strategies can be augmented by “looking beyond the ticket” for other criminal violations, reducing the amount of time a patrol officer spends processing a DWI/DUI arrest, and detecting a larger proportion of impaired drivers. Many jurisdictions have implemented programs to further those objectives.

NHTSA (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration) estimates that alcohol is a factor in 25% of the costs associated with motor vehicle crashes in Texas. Annually, alcohol-related crashes in Texas are believed to cost the public an estimated \$10.3 billion, including \$4.5 billion in monetary costs and almost \$5.8 billion in quality of life losses.

The annual number of DWI/DUI arrests in Liberty County continues to increase. Traffic violations such as speeding and traffic accidents occur regularly in Liberty County on both rural roadways and on state highways located within the county.

Traffic accidents and traffic violations not related to DWI drivers are also a problem within Liberty County. Accidents that are the result of improper driving habits (speeding, texting, eating, etc..) occur daily on both rural roadways and state highways located within Liberty County.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Enhanced DWI/DUI enforcement and prosecution that also allows for more expedient processing of DWI/DUI prisoners and evidence.

Implement educational promotions with the media and other outlets to publicize pro-active enforcement efforts and education to increase driver's perception of risk and punishment. Above all, pro-active enforcement is important.

High-visibility Law Enforcement with supporting communication campaigns (STEP, No Refusal Program, Etc..)

Enhanced prosecution and adjudication; medical screening and brief intervention for alcohol/substance abuse problems.

Special emphasis is placed on reaching high-risk populations; including those under 21, those ages 21 to 34, repeat offenders, and high-BAC (blood alcohol concentration) offenders. Increase enforcement measures; speed, DWI, DUI and seatbelts.

Educate our youth about driving responsibilities, especially the consequences of distracted driving.

❖ **Law Enforcement**  
❖ **Priority 6**

**Problem Identified:**

Centralized 911 Public Safety

Answering Point ( PSAP)

**Data :**

Thousands of 911 emergency calls are answered each year within Liberty County by four different Public Safety Answering Points ( PSAP's), namely the Liberty County Sheriff's Department, City of Cleveland Police Department, City of Dayton Police Department and the City of Liberty Police Department. These four offices are responsible for dispatching law enforcement, fire and EMS services within Liberty County.

With the emergence of new technology and the addition of interoperable communication devices, it is much easier for PSAP dispatchers to communicate with responders.

Creating a centralized PSAP would bring dispatchers and call takers together in a single facility, allowing for improved communications coordination, and given current budget restraints, it may be more efficient to operate and maintain a single facility.

A centralized PSAP facility would increase safety of responders and citizens as it would allow call takers and dispatchers to quickly assist each other during high profile or overwhelming events.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Bring together all those involved in the dispatching of emergency responders and discuss the possibility of creating a single 911 Public Safety Answering Point in Liberty County. Include in those discussions: funding sources, operational theory, budgeting and staffing issues, benefits of having such a facility, and the location of the facility.

❖ **Law Enforcement**  
❖ **Priority 7**

**Problem Identified:**

Lack of a Standard Integrated Criminal Justice Information System

**Data:**

Continued population growth has strained the criminal justice system in Liberty County. Law Enforcement agencies, the District Attorney's office, the County Attorney's office, Adult and Juvenile Probation Departments all have their own versions of records management systems. Three immediate problems arise from this:

- 1) Information known to one agency that could generate leads in criminal cases in not easily shared.
- 2) True extent of an offenders conduct is not readily available.
- 3) There is duplication of offender information, which is inefficient and prone to inaccuracies caused by human error.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

An information system needs to be established that can be utilized and accessed by all criminal justice agencies in Liberty County.

❖ **Law Enforcement**  
❖ **Priority 8**

**Problem Identified:**

Gang Awareness/Prevention

Data: Preventative medicine is used to decrease future medical and fiscal costs. Prevention helps the overall quality of life not only for the particular person but society as well. This quality of life improvement should be the ultimate goal of any community member or government.

As Liberty County continues to grow at a rate of over 1% each year, so does the presence of criminal street gangs. Liberty County has observed a small presence of common street gangs such as Aryan Brotherhood, Crips, Bloods, and the offshoots of each for years. However, they were not highly visible but new and more visible gangs have begun to form. Unfortunately, membership in these criminal enterprises starts at a very young age, as early as middle school in some instances. Gangs represent a decrease in the quality of life because they are not only a symbol of the type of activity that we do not want but are also actively committing the crimes that we are trying to curtail. In an effort to prevent future gang activity and thwart the current “grass roots” movement of new gangs, assistance such as financial assistance through grant sources is needed. Our chance of success is much greater while these gangs remain in a mostly unorganized infantile stage. Once they become entrenched in our communities their eradication will be almost impossible.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

The solution has two goals, education to the young people to prevent their initial involvement and aggressive investigation and prosecution of active members. To achieve these goals Liberty County officials will seek grant funding for personnel to teach an anti-gang program at our local schools and for law enforcement officers to be assigned to a task force with the primary duty of investigating gang activity. If the best medicine is preventative then that is what we need.

Liberty County District Attorney Logan Pickett has discussed this issue with a representative of Texas Pardons and Parole for Liberty County, Texas Rangers, DPS intelligence, Liberty County Sheriff’s Department, Dayton Police Department, Liberty Police Department, Cleveland Police Department, Liberty County Alternative School, Liberty County Probation Department, Liberty County Juvenile Probation Department, TUFF kids, a local school superintendent and citizens.

## **Measures Implemented:**

An Adult Gang Investigator funded by Grant #2786201 from the Office of the Governor has enabled Liberty County to implement the following measures:

### **1. Identified Gangs Inside Liberty County (17 total with members living in Liberty County)**

Aryan Brotherhood of Texas (Entire County)

Aryan Circle (Entire County)

“SWS” Solid Wood Soldiers (Entire County)

White Knights (Cleveland Area)

52 Hoover Gangster Crips (Out of Houston in Dayton and Liberty)

59 Hoover Gangster Crips (Out of Beaumont in Liberty and Daisetta area)

Rolling 60’s Crips (Out of Houston in Dayton and Liberty area)

5th Ward Circle (Out of Houston in Dayton and Liberty area)

Piru Bloods (Out of Houston in Dayton area)

Tango Blast/Houston (Entire County)

Texas Syndicate (Dayton, Liberty, and Cleveland)

Mexican Mafia (Dayton and Cleveland area)

WinnWood (Plum Grove area)

Montebello Subdivision (Plum Grove area)

MS 13 (Cleveland area)

“KDT” Crips (Kick Doors Texas in Dayton and Kenefick area)

Bandido 1% MC Clubs (in Dayton and Cleveland area)

### **2. Active Gang Members document in Liberty County**

Over the last 9 months the Liberty County DA’s Office has been able to document over 70 active gang members living in or having direct ties to Liberty County.

**3. Agencies that DA's Office has partnered with to combat gang related crimes inside Liberty County (Each of these agencies have actively assisted in Liberty County investigations)**

ATF	Cleveland Police Department
Daisetta Police Department	Dayton Police Department
DEA	FBI Gang Task Force
Federal Pardon & Parole Division	Harris County DA's Office
Harris County Sheriff's Office Gang Unit	HIS
Houston Police Department Gang Unit	Houston Texas Anti-Gang Center "TAG"
Jefferson County DA's Office	Liberty County Constables Offices
Liberty County Probation Department	Liberty County Sheriff's Department
Liberty Police Department	Montgomery County DA's Office
Montgomery County Gang Unit	Polk County DA's Office
San Jacinto County DA's Office	Texas DPS/Narcotics Unit

**Texas Pardon & Parole Division**

**4. Accomplishments achieved during joint investigations in Liberty County involving gang members**

- a.** We have built a solid foundation that we can build on as the county continues to grow in population.
- b.** Seized multiple firearms from documented gang members.
- c.** Seized explosive devices from documented gang members.
- d.** Seized multiple pounds of Heroin/Methamphetamines.
- e.** Targeted 17 active gangs in Liberty County.
- f.** Charged active gang members with felony and misdemeanor offenses.
- g.** Three multi-jurisdictional investigations currently in progress.

**Continuation Plan:**

Continuation of the Adult Gang Investigator Position will provide the ability to monitor current gang activity and to identify future growth of gang within Liberty County.

## **JUVENILE ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMITTEE**

### **❖ Juvenile**

### **❖ Priority 1**

#### **Problem Identified:**

Substance Abuse by Juveniles

Law enforcement, school, and juvenile probation officials identify juvenile substance abuse as a significant problem in Liberty County. Agencies including the Liberty County District Attorney's Office "DARE" program, Liberty County Juvenile Probation Department, local law-enforcement agencies and schools, provide prevention programs to Liberty County youth. However, many juvenile drug users reside in homes where parents/guardians are the principal supplier of intoxicants or fail to adequately supervise their children. Often drug use is a motivation for other crimes including theft, and crimes of violence.

#### **Data:**

Information regarding this identified problem can be found within various agency records (Law enforcement, schools, juvenile court officials, etc..) and "fresh" statistics will be provided for review in support of any future grant applications.

#### **Potential Response to Problem:**

Strategies for addressing juvenile substance abuse include establishing intervention programs for youth struggling with substance abuse, providing low/no-cost family counseling to address underlying issues.

❖ **Juvenile**  
❖ **Priority 2**

**Problem Identified:**

Lack of Mental Health Care for Juveniles

Liberty County does not have an inpatient psychiatric hospital for juveniles and has limited resources for addressing the psychological needs of youth who diagnosed with MHMR issues. Many at-risk youth lack financial resources and parental support necessary to secure mental health services. Logistical concerns preclude participation in out-of-county services. Many families lack sufficient understanding, resources, or stability to develop and maintain a treatment plan.

**Data:**

Zero (0) psychiatric inpatient hospital beds in Liberty County.

Limited practicing private psychiatrists in the Liberty County area.

Tri-County Services is the only non-profit provider of mental health services in Liberty County.

No sliding scale mental health providers in Liberty County.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Establish partnerships with regional psychology/psychiatry programs for low/no-cost individual, family and group counseling for at-risk youth in order to divert juvenile offenders from incarceration and towards treatment of underlying issues. Foster cooperative efforts between the juvenile justice system and the mental health system to develop programs and services within juvenile systems for these children

❖ **Juvenile**  
❖ **Priority 3**

**Problem Identified:**

Child Abuse Services for Victims and Non-Offending Caregivers

**Data:**

Bridgehaven Children's Advocacy Center provides trauma focused counseling to victims and non-offending caregivers, along with child friendly forensic interviews to children ages 2-17.

Once an interview is conducted, Bridgehaven's qualified staff offers assistance to child abuse victims and non-offending caregivers or family members.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Currently child abuse victims and non-offending caregivers are receiving services at Bridgehaven Children's Advocacy Center; however, it is imperative that future funding sources are identified in order to maintain staff and training requirements necessary for providing this much needed service to the community.

❖ **Juvenile**  
❖ **Priority 4**

**Problem Identified:**

Community Programs for Child Abuse Awareness and Education

**Data:**

The need for additional child abuse awareness programs exist in Liberty County. Currently Bridgehaven offers free child abuse awareness programs to community based organizations, schools and churches. It is important to continue and possibly expand these services, which will result in a greater awareness in the community of the issues associated with child abuse.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Additional community awareness presentations focused on child abuse prevention and education.

Additional funding for purchasing printed materials to be used during child abuse awareness programs.

❖ **Juvenile**  
❖ **Priority 5**

**Problem Identified:**

Implement a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP)

**Data:**

The need to reduce delinquency, increase offender accountability and rehabilitate offenders through a comprehensive, coordinated community-based juvenile probation system. The JJAEPs assist students in performing at grade level as a result of academic interventions provided by the JJAEP in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and self-discipline. Students are assigned to a JJAEP program as a result of violating Texas Education Code Chapter 37 listed offenses which include: 1) mandatory expulsion from their home school for serious infractions of the Student Code of Conduct, 2) discretionary expulsions for serious infractions that occur off-campus as well as other infractions of the Student Code of Conduct, or 3) are court ordered due to title V offenses or probation conditions.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Currently due to the fact that Liberty County does not have a JJAEP, students with serious behavioral problems are suspended or expelled. School districts are required to have a Discipline Alternative Education Program (DAEP). Sec. 203.0065.

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION SERVICES. (a) In this section, "prevention and intervention services" means programs and services intended to prevent or intervene in at-risk behaviors that lead to delinquency, truancy, dropping out of school, or referral to the juvenile justice system. School districts would like the opportunity to work in partnership with the County to organize, plan, and implement a Liberty County JJAEP.

## **OTHER ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

### **❖ Other Issues**

#### **❖ Priority 1**

#### **Problem Identified:**

Criminal Justice System Support Personnel Needed

#### **Data:**

There is the need for additional criminal justice support personnel and the creation of a position identified as a Criminal Justice Analyst would greatly increase the efficiency by which criminal cases move through the criminal justice system in Liberty County. Information would be gathered that would collaterally help crime prevention, crime solving, and post crime victim assistance. The function of the position would be to track all arrested/indicted/filed criminal cases (misdemeanors and felonies, juvenile and adult) thru disposition.

The Criminal Justice Analyst would be able to track cases to see where we may improve whether it be thru law enforcement, prosecutors, or courts. By identifying the problem areas, we could focus more attention there to make the end product faster. If it's faster, that would leave more time for law enforcement to prevent crime and solve crimes. It would also make prosecutors and courts run more efficiently which makes victims happier because their time in the criminal justice system is shorter. It would also be easier on victims who would not have to languish for years awaiting resolution. This would keep them more likely to continue to assist in the resolution instead of losing hope or faith and changing their position with respect to proceeding with just charges.

#### **Potential Response to Problem:**

Hire a Criminal Justice Analyst for the purpose of increasing the efficiency of case management within the criminal justice system.

❖ Other Issues  
❖ Priority 2

**Problem Identified:**

Lack of Medical Facilities

**Data:**

Liberty County is served by Liberty Dayton Regional Medical Center, a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital. This is the only hospital serving the medical needs of the surrounding areas (approximate population of 76,907).

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Establish a county wide incentive program to aide in attracting a medical group to Liberty County.

❖ **Other Issues**  
❖ **Priority 3**

**Problem Identified:**

Improve Mobility and Reduce Traffic Congestion

**Data :**

A traffic study of westbound traffic ( traveling towards Houston ) on Hwy 90 west of the intersection of Hwy 146 in Dayton, Texas was conducted by the Texas Department of Transportation resulting in a preliminary daily traffic count of 14,763 vehicles.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Implement a Park and Ride Service and transfer center in Dayton with commuter service to the Houston Central Business District (with a stop in eastern Harris County in the future).

❖ **Other Issues**  
❖ **Priority 4**

**Problem Identified:**

Homeless Community

**Data:**

As Liberty County continues to grow, so does the presence of homeless persons within our community. Liberty County law enforcement officials and others have observed individuals and families struggling to find work, shelter, and food. Many of our homeless are seeking shelter under bridges, on park benches, and in front of local businesses. This is not safe for the homeless and often deters patrons from frequenting these locations. Many of the homeless have mental health issues, and suffer from drug addiction and alcoholism; therefore, they encounter the police on a regular basis. Police agencies have limited resources for the homeless and jail is not always the best option.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Locate resources that can be used to help the homeless obtain food, shelter, and basic work skills.

❖ **Other Issues**  
❖ **Priority 5**

**Problem Identified:**

Limited Resources for Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

**Data:**

Liberty County's distance from urban resources such as shelters and private or charity-based counseling often leaves victims of violence with few options but to remain in the abusive environment. Limited prosecutorial and law enforcement resources frequently delay or preclude the execution of protective orders and a thorough investigation of alleged offenses. Financial hardships, limited opportunities, limited educational backgrounds, the unavailability of long-term assistance and the prospect of having to return to an abusive environment often dissuade victims from reporting abuse or testifying against their abusers.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

The County Attorney's office needs a prosecutor and support staff to target domestic violence issues in order to improve the quality of case management, preparation, and presentation to assist in obtaining a successful disposition.

Dedicated prosecutorial resources such as the addition of a part-time attorney to manage the protective order docket would expedite the processing of applications for protective orders.

Partnerships with existing non-profit shelters/victim service coordinators could afford victims resources necessary to ensure prosecution of violent crimes.

❖ **Other Issues**  
❖ **Priority 6**

**Problem Identified:**

Need for A Senior Welfare Protection Program

**Data :**

Currently there are gaps throughout the county related to specific services for the senior population. There is a need to ensure that senior citizens have adequate living conditions, are receiving necessary nutrition, access to health and medical care, access to public transportation, and are free from abuse and neglect.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Currently there are active senior feeding and fellowship programs in Dayton, Cleveland and Hardin, and many churches throughout the county stay in contact with senior church members. Expanding these programs throughout the county would benefit senior citizens in the community.

Agencies such as churches, concerned citizens, emergency response service providers, Texas Department of Protective Services /Adult Protection Services, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service , county officials, and law enforcement agencies should work together to create programs for conducting welfare checks on senior citizens in order to minimize the risk of abuse or neglect.

Local officials should work to identify programs that will benefit our ever growing senior population, as well as funding sources to support these programs.

❖ Other Issues  
❖ Priority 7

**Problem Identified:**

Lack of Body Armor For Adult Probation Officers

**Data:**

The Liberty County Adult Probation Department is staffed by 8 field agents that have the responsibility of overseeing approximately 3500 offenders that are currently on probation. These field agents often travel to the residences of offenders.

These agents do not have body armor and could find themselves at risk of death or injury during a site visit.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Grant funds to be used for the purchase of body armor would be in order as current state and local budget restraints do not allow for funding of such items.

❖ **Other Issues**  
❖ **Priority 8**

**Problem Identified:**

Investigatory Resources Needed for County Attorney

The Liberty County Attorney's office is charged with the prosecution of all misdemeanor offenses and all juvenile offenses.

The office maintains a staff of 3 attorneys and receives an average of 70 new criminal cases per-week, plus all juvenile referrals, J.P. dockets, and civil matters.

The protection of victims' interests often mandates that substantial post-incident and pre-trial investigation be completed even after receipt of an incident report.

**Data:**

Avg. 70 new criminal cases a week filed for review;

Minimum 3 criminal dockets a week in Liberty County Court at Law

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Investigate the cost and benefit of expanding the County Attorney's staff to include an investigator to pursue leads on outstanding warrants, conduct post-incident and pre-trial witness interviews, and ensure service of trial subpoenas.

❖ **Other Issues**  
❖ **Priority 9**

**Problem Identified:**

Lack Of Sidewalks

**Data:**

Although Liberty County is largely a rural county, there are areas near schools that may benefit from the construction of sidewalks. Sidewalks would be most beneficial to students walking to and from school, making for a safer community.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Conduct a feasibility study to determine the benefit to the community from the construction of sidewalks near schools.

Identify funding sources for construction of sidewalks if the study verifies that a need exist.

❖ **Other Issues**  
❖ **Priority 10**

**Problem Identified:**

Need for Community Collaboration

**Data:**

Liberty County is rich with dedicated, committed individuals who work tirelessly to serve those whose lives have been affected by crime. Collaboration and a community coordinated response to violence and crime is essential in ending these problems within our community; however, demand for services by clients and families in crisis compete for the time needed to organize such collaboration and response.

As Liberty County continues to grow, so does the need for victims and victim advocates to have the most up-to-date resource information. All public-based agencies, community advocacy programs, school district personnel and the medical community need to know where to go for referrals and assistance.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Establish a local association of service providers to discuss violence and crime in Liberty County. Conduct special events, provide training opportunities, and update the community on emerging issues such as school shootings and natural disasters.

Update the current service provider directory and distribute to local agencies, schools, hospitals, physician's offices and non-profit organizations.

# **VICTIM SERVICES AS IDENTIFIED BY THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

## **❖ Victim Services**

### **❖ Priority 1**

#### **Problem Identified:**

Child Abuse, Child Sexual Assault, Child Neglect

#### **Data:**

Nationally, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reports that 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 5 boys will be victimized by sexual abuse and/or assault by their 18th birthday.

Liberty County law enforcement agencies continue to investigate a large number of cases of child abuse, and/or sexual assault. Community cost and consequences of sexual abuse of children is significant. A Texas Report concluded that without intervention:

50% of children are more likely to run away;

72% are more likely to become substance abusers;

54% are more likely to become pregnant as teens;

64% are more likely to become child abusers as adults; and

90% of convicted murderers were physically abused as children;

#### **Statistical Data acquired from Bridgehaven Child Advocacy Center and Familytime Crisis and Counseling show the following:**

##### **Age of Victims**

❖ 0-5 51%

❖ 6-12 26%

❖ 13-17 23%

##### **Victimization**

❖ Sexual Abuse 49%

❖ Child at Risk 34%

❖ Physical Abuse 11%

❖ Child Witness 6%

**Clients accessing case management:**

- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2015---85
- ❖ Jan. – Oct. 2016---100

**Clients accessing legal advocacy:**

- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2015---43
- ❖ Jan. – Oct. 2016---45

**Victim & Non-Victim counseling sessions:**

- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2015---741
- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2016---619

Bridgehaven, as the only specialized children’s advocacy center in Liberty County provides forensic interviews for child sexual and/or severe physical abuse cases, drug endangered children and children who have witnessed homicides. For Bridgehaven, the average numbers of unduplicated cases of child sexual and/or severe physical abuse have continued to increase as the population of Liberty County grows.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Ensure adequate services are available to meet the increasing need for crisis intervention, advocacy, counseling, and support services to victims of child physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, drug endangerment and those who have witnessed homicides.

Ensure availability of trained forensic interviewers to accommodate increased need.

Additional resources should be garnered for prevention programming and education across all segments of the community.

❖ **Victim Services**  
❖ **Priority 2**

**Problem Identified:**

Limited Resources for Victims of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

**Data:**

Liberty County's distance from urban resources such as shelters and private or charity-based counseling often leaves victims of violence with few options but to remain in the abusive environment. Limited prosecutorial and law enforcement resources frequently delay or preclude the execution of protective orders and a thorough investigation of alleged offenses. Financial hardships, limited opportunities, limited educational backgrounds, the unavailability of long-term assistance and the prospect of having to return to an abusive environment often dissuade victims from reporting abuse or testifying against their abusers.

**Potential Response to Problem:**

The County Attorney's office needs a prosecutor and support staff to target domestic violence issues in order to improve the quality of case management, preparation, and presentation to assist in obtaining a successful disposition.

Dedicated prosecutorial resources such as the addition of a part-time attorney to manage the protective order docket would expedite the processing of applications for protective orders.

Partnerships with existing non-profit shelters/victim service coordinators could afford victims resources necessary to ensure prosecution of violent crimes.

**❖ Victims Services**  
**❖ Priority 3**

**Problem Identified:**

Gap in Adult Victim Services

**Data:**

Adult Criminal Homicide, Adult Rape, Adult Robbery, Adult Family Violence, Adult Assault Victims, DWI Statistical Data acquired from Dayton Police Department and Family Time Crisis & Counseling are as follows:

**Clients accessing case management:**

- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2015 --- 85
- ❖ Jan. – Oct. 2016 --- 100

**Clients accessing legal advocacy:**

- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2015 --- 43
- ❖ Jan. – Oct. 2016 --- 45

**Victim counseling sessions:**

- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2015 --- 393
- ❖ Jan. – Oct. 2016 --- 166

**Non-Victim counseling sessions:**

- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2015 --- 237
- ❖ Jan. – Oct. 2016 --- 360

**Criminal Homicide:**

- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2015 --- 1
- ❖ Jan. – Oct. 2016 --- 1

**Rape:**

- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2015 --- 3
- ❖ Jan. – Oct. 2016 --- 6

**Robbery:**

- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2015 --- 4
- ❖ Jan. – Oct. 2016 --- 3

**Assault Non-Family:**

- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2015 --- 99
- ❖ Jan. – Oct. 2016 --- 108

**Assault Family Violence:**

- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2015 --- 80
- ❖ Jan. – Oct. 2016 --- 82

**Sexual Assaults:**

- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2015 --- 5
- ❖ Jan. – Oct. 2016 --- 9

**Driving While Intoxicated:**

- ❖ Jan. – Dec. 2015 --- 28
- ❖ Jan. – Oct. 2016 --- 21

**Potential Response to Problem:**

Ensure adequate services are available to meet the increasing need for adult victims of Criminal Homicide, Rape, Robbery, Family Violence, Assault Victims, DWI and those who have witnessed homicides.

Ensure availability of trained forensic interviewers to accommodate increased need.

Additional resources should be granted for prevention, programming, and education across all segments of the community.

## **RESOURCES AVAILABLE**

**The below listed agencies are available to provide services that could potentially help in closing service gaps:**

Law Enforcement/Judicial:

Cleveland Police Department

Dayton Police Department

Liberty Police Department

Liberty County Constables Pct. 1-6

Daisetta Police Department

Liberty County Sheriff's Department

Liberty County Adult Probation

Liberty County Bond Department

### **Victim Services:**

Bridgehaven Children's Advocacy Center

State Representative District 18 Ernest Bailes

Liberty County District Attorney and Staff

Liberty County Attorney and Staff

Health / Medical / Substance Abuse:

Tri-County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services

Liberty County Indigent Health Care

Department of State Health Services

ADAPT Programs

SETRAC (Southeast Texas Regional Advisory Council)

## **Interagency Cooperation**

Liberty County agencies have a long history of working together and these efforts continue today. Many of the agencies involved in victim services regularly meet to develop multi-agency case plans.

These endeavors will continue in the coming year and will address the identified gaps in services noted in this Community Plan. Agencies involved with the current plan will document any new issues that need to be presented in coming planning years, as well as identify new community partners that emerge over the coming year.

## **Long-Range Plan Development, Monitoring and Evaluation**

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

The Liberty County Community Planning Committee strives to meet periodically to review the plan and make necessary additions and deletions. At least one formal meeting of the entire group is held each fall, but agency and community representatives are encouraged to forward suggestions and changes via telephone or e-mail to the Community Plan Coordinator at any time throughout the year.

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

It is the intent of the Community Planning Committee to improve outcomes for Liberty County families struggling with problems described in this plan. Efforts are being made by many Liberty County agencies and organizations to address problems with local funds as well as grant funds from multiple state and federal sources. To the extent that funds are available, the Community Planning Committee will continue to encourage agencies to strive to develop programs that will benefit the residents of Liberty County.

## **Contact Information**

### **Liberty County Community Planning Coordinator**

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### **Liberty County Community Planning Liaison from Houston-Galveston Area Council**

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*This Plan is available on-line at the Liberty County Website: [www.co.liberty.tx.us](http://www.co.liberty.tx.us)*

## **Appendix A: Miscellaneous Crime Statistics Provided by Agencies**

### **Dayton Police Department**

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Narcotics arrest:	81	92
Sexual Assaults:	6	18
Motor Vehicle Accidents:	291	273
DWI's:	28	52

### **Office of Liberty County District Attorney Logan Pickett**

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Narcotics cases	279	319
Sexual Assault	17	30
Indecency with a Child	15	14
Intoxication Assault	4	5
Intoxication Manslaughter	3	2
Felony Driving While Intoxicated	39	29