Bosque County Community Plan 2026

What Is a Community Plan?

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

This document reflects the efforts of Bosque County citizens' efforts to ensure that any gaps in services addressed benefit the county. The names of those involved in the process are listed following pages under "Community Planning Team."

Though the final draft of this plan was completed in March 2025, this is a work in progress. As new criminal justice goals are identified, the constituency of the planning team and priorities in the plan are subject to change. Such updates may be reported to the Bosque County Community Planning Coordinator throughout the year, and the program may be amended accordingly.

If you read this plan and have not been involved in its development, you are invited to join this ongoing effort. Your questions should be addressed to the Criminal Justice Program of the Heart of Texas Council of Governments. Contact information is provided on page 28.

The Bosque County commissioners support the concept of community planning by providing staff support and resources for developing and implementing the Bosque County Community Plan. Additionally, the Regional Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) and the Heart of Texas Council of Government governing Board (Executive Committee) invite grant applications from county departments and community organizations that provide the services identified in the Community Plan.

Areas Represented

Incorporated Communities:

Walnut Springs	Morgan	Iredell	Meridian
Cranfills Gap	Clifton	Valley Mills	

Unincorporated Communities

Laguna Park	Lakeside Village	Kopperl
Womack	Mosheim	Eulogy

School Districts:

Walnut Springs ISD	Valley Mills ISD
Clifton ISD	Morgan ISD
Meridian ISD	Iredell ISD
Kopperl ISD	Cranfills Gap ISD

School Police Agencies

Walnut Springs ISD PD	Kopperl ISD PD
Valley Mills ISD PD	

School Guardian Programs

Morgan ISD	Iredell ISD
Cranfills GAP ISD	

Brief Description and History of Bosque County:

Nestled in oak-studded limestone hills and pecan-covered river bottoms, Bosque County is one of Texas's most beautiful, awe-inspiring counties. People from all over the state flock to the Top-of-the-Hill Country scenery every weekend. Whether staying at a lake or river lodge, or river house on the weekend, your family in Bosque County will surely be

Much of the beauty and heritage of Bosque County is closely entwined with its abundant waterways Brazos River and two lakes, Meridian and Whitney. The county's distinctive pathways reflect its history; the Cleng Peerson Memorial Highway, the Old Chisholm Trail, the Sante Fe Railroad, and the Texas Lakes Trail.

Early Spanish explorers bestowed Bosque (pronounced boss-kee), meaning "wooded." The first survey for land grants in the Bosque Valley came about in 1839. In 1849, a few years after Texas attained statehood, the first permanent settlers arrived in a territory still roamed by Native Americans. By 1854, the number of immigrants living in Bosque Territory had increased, and Bosque County was created. Meridian was named the County seat.

Lured by fertile, inexpensive land, more settlers came, mostly Anglo-Americans moving west with the frontier and Norwegian and German immigrants. The pioneer farmers and ranchers were industrious and creative. They built homes, churches, schools, mills for wheat, gins for cotton, and produced a thriving livestock business. Bustling communities sprang up, and small towns flourished through the turn of the century. As America changed, so did Bosque County.

http://www.bosquecounty.us/

Community Planning Team

Community Plan Coordinator for Bosque County: Lana Gudgel, the Criminal Justice Planner for the Heart of Texas Council of Governments.

In developing this Community Plan, team members collaborated to provide updates and changes to the previous plan. Many members serve in multiple capacities and categories.

Name	***Agency***
Cindy Vanlandingham	Bosque County Judge
Alicia Wilson	Bosque County EMC
Trace Hendricks	Bosque Co SO
Marie Garland	Court Clerk City of Morgan
Aleigh Ascherl	Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children

Identification of Community Problems

General Public Safety Needs and Issues

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

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

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

PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

Building assets in youth and the community is essential to a community plan. Therefore, prevention issues must take priority over those based on incarceration and deterrence if the long-term impact of crime control spending is to be maximized. Nonetheless, controlling known delinquents who threaten public safety must also remain an important strategy.

In each of the areas below, problems are identified, and data is included that supports the problems' existence and severity issues found in Bosque County. Below is a discussion of the problems and issues being addressed and how responses to these community problems could be improved. In some problem areas identified, there is no current data to support areas, due to the funding and program cuts taking effect within the last few years. The data collection will be added to the plan as the problem area statistics become available throughout the year.

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

1. **Support Services**

Data Collection:

- Sexual assault, no SANE specifically provided in Bosque County
- Family violence/Domestic violence
- Child Abuse
- Post-suicide services for family members affected by suicide
- Anger Management
- Need for multidiscipline investigation and response to domestic violence; Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children
- Need for a suicide prevention program
- Need for local volunteers
- Need for training
- Need for outreach
- Need for counselors
- Stable victim resource revenues to enable organizations to maintain core services
- Awareness of available resources in the community
- Comprehensive case management, and job search services
- Seamless continuum of care
- Improved collaborative relationships among service providers, law enforcement, and other local agencies
- No VINE Service Participation

Recommendations:

- Continue to support programs that address support services for victims of violence and crime
- Encourage collaboration of agencies in services provided
- Raise awareness of rural advocacy resources available in the county, like Family Abuse Center's rural program

Resources:

- The Heart of Texas Sexual Assault Response Team
- Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children
  - provides training for volunteers to escort victims to hospitals
  - has a bilingual counselor, case manager, and forensic interviewer
- Family Abuse Center
- Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network, formerly HOTRMHMR/ Hope Shelter Child Sex Trafficking Emergency Shelter

Statistical Information:

- Family Abuse Center
  - According to the 2022 Crime in Texas Report, 46 domestic violence reports were made to law enforcement.

- On average, shelter clients stay 22 days at the Family Abuse Center
- In 2022, FAC received 25 hotline calls from Bosque County and worked with two clients from Bosque County.

- Advocacy Center collaborates with Bosque County LE agencies, CPS, Bosque County DA, and County in investigating all crimes Bosque County residents suffered.
  - Advocacy Center conducted 642 forensic interviews with children alleging sexual or physical abuse during the fiscal year 2023. Children that live in Bosque County have access to these services, as well as medical exams, counseling, and case management. Services are available virtually.
  - Each prosecuted client case has case management contact or accompaniment to court.
  - All clients are offered to counsel for primary victims and family members who may be secondary to the victimization in office space available in Bosque County.

2. On-scene Victims Services

Data Collection:

- Limited law enforcement and public awareness of services offered by agencies
- Limited bi-lingual services
- Develop a volunteer program to assist in on-scene services

Recommendations:

- Increase law enforcement awareness of services and persons willing to respond to on-scene incidents
  - Provide localized training for law enforcement
  - Include Family Violence training for both law enforcement and volunteers
- Establishment of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children and law enforcement agencies to provide forensic interviews

Resources:

- Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children
  - Sexual Assault Forensic Nurses (SAFE) perform sexual assault exams in both Waco hospitals
- Family Abuse Center: provides free training for law enforcement, judges, and other criminal justice professionals; emergency shelter, rural outreach services

Stats

- Advocacy Center provides both English-speaking and bi-lingual (Spanish) forensic interviews for Bosque County partners that request them for child abuse case investigations.
- Family Abuse Center hosts an annual conference that targets law enforcement, attorneys, judges, counselors, and social workers. Presenters are from diverse organizations and bring expertise in various family violence concerns. This conference offers TCOLE and continuing education credits.

3. Aftercare/Follow-up Care for Victims

Data Collection:

- Lack of long-term & short-term care
- Transportation needs for victims can reduce the length of care.
- Delays in crime victims getting approved for CVC benefits.
- Area churches and groups have expressed interest in monthly support groups for those dealing with past or current abuse.

Recommendations:

- Support services that will allow for funding to continue assistance to victims that require a longer recovery time.
- Coordination among services
- Develop systems and procedures for coordinating CVC presumptive eligibility efforts between law enforcement and advocacy agencies.
- Coordinate to provide monthly support groups in local communities for victims of abuse.
- Contact Mental Health Grace Alliance about setting up a PTSD/Trauma/Mental Health support group.

Resources:

- The Heart of Texas Sexual Assault Response Team – provides support and training to Law Enforcement, Prosecutors, and Judges.
- Victims Services
- Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children case management and counseling. Services are available virtually.
- Faith-based organizations
- Family Abuse Center.

4. Primary Prevention for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

Data Collection:

- Current domestic violence and sexual assault resources are overloaded. The solution is either to increase funding for these resources or prevent such violence from occurring in the first place.
- Children who grow up in homes with domestic violence are more likely to become abusers or victims of domestic violence themselves when they grow up.

Recommendations:

- Develop task forces to address domestic violence and sexual assault.
- Motivate DA's office, judges, lawyers, and law enforcement to work together and raise awareness about domestic violence in their communities.
- Coordinate with local media to raise awareness and promote cultural change.
- Education/support groups for victims of domestic violence and violent crimes
- Partner with schools to provide early education on healthy relationships and crime/violence prevention.
- Change the community perception of domestic violence and sexual assault through a community-wide domestic violence prevention campaign. Special particular emphasis on non-criminal justice sectors (such as businesses, churches, libraries, youth sports, etc.)

Resources:

- Family Abuse Center
- Advocacy Center collaborates with Bosque County LE agencies, CPS, APS, Bosque County DA, and County Judge in the investigation of all crimes suffered by Bosque County residents.
    - The Advocacy Center offers primary prevention programming with the goal of preventing acts of sexual violence before they occur. Through programming in schools, community organizations, and communities they address relevant topics such as healthy relationships, conflict resolution, and consent.
- The Heart of Texas Sexual Assault Response Team

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

1. Youth Substance Abuse

Data Collection:

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

Recommendations:

- Support funding sources to allow for prevention, treatment, and follow-up care for juveniles struggling with addictions and peer pressure
- Develop a tracking system to follow a child through juvenile justice, mental health, and substance abuse treatment programs
- Develop programs that address Anger Management for children and adolescents
- Develop programs that address goal-setting for children and adolescents
- Develop early identification and intervention programs that can divert children and adolescents into treatment
- Survey schools to discover specific needs
- Collect statistics relating to substance abuse, where to send resources

Resources/Successes:

- Baylor Scott & White Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center Teen Safe Program
- Baylor Scott & White Hillcrest Reality Education for Drivers (RD) program
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- VOICE, Inc.
- Bluebonnet Trails Community Services
- Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network, formerly HOTRMHMR

2. Delinquent behavior, schools at risk

Truancy is one of the minor juvenile crimes and is often the least enforced in most communities within Bosque County. There is substantial evidence that youth who become truant will eventually drop out of school and put themselves at high risk of becoming disadvantaged unproductive citizens. The linkages between truancy, tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use can lead to other chronic delinquent behaviors and possibly other violent behaviors. Truancy is the first sign of trouble. Coupled with academic failure, these two indicators may be the initial signs that a young person is giving up and dropping out. For example, according to the Department of Education/National Center for Education Statistics, over the past decade, between 347,000 and 544,00, 10th through 12th-grade students left school each year without a high school diploma. Status dropout rates for 16 to 24-year-olds were reported at 11% nationally. (The Condition of Education 2001, National Center for Education Statistics.)

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

Data Collection:

- Vandalism
- Truancy
- Theft
- Sexual aggression
- Date violence
- Aggression/Anger management

- Substance Abuse
- Possession of weapons

Schools need to be more staff with a better student-teacher and student-counselor ratio and find it difficult to address individual needs. Sometimes, students can develop a pattern of non-attendance and are no longer eligible for credit before anyone identifies the problem and takes action.

The school, family, and community must continue to work together to tighten communication regarding the importance of school attendance, academic success, and graduation.

There needs to be more focus on the importance of education and its life-long impact at the lower grade levels, such as middle and junior high school.

First-generation citizens need help navigating the complex systems of barriers to attending school. Communities need to provide a full range of services to youth. To meet the needs of the youth in the juvenile justice system, targeted mental health and substance services must be available at all levels of need. Services that target this population. The youth population needs early intervention and prevention programs, diversion programs, services assistance, and aftercare treatment to be developed and implemented.

Risk factors in children should be identified as early as possible with services including evaluations in all domains.

Limited availability of intervention services for youth not involved with the juvenile justice system.

No easily accessible and coordinated programs for youth experiencing co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders.

Limited access to programs and services for youth attending alternative schools.

There need to be more interim services for youth on waiting lists.

There needs to be more communication and coordination between the involved systems. The absence of good communication means restricted access to services and programs, duplication of services, missed identification of youth, philosophical barriers, and ineffective intervention/treatment strategies.

Services are often provided in a piecemeal fashion, or they address only a fragment of the problem. Strategies should include intensive service plan coordination as well as a ”wraparound’ approach that targets all domains (psychological, academic, physical, family, social, economic, mental health/substance abuse)

Problem - Delinquency, violence, and persistent misbehavior in children and youth continue to increase.

Recommendations:

- Support a project/program that would allow for a Teen Court for first-time offenders of non-violent issues and traffic violations.
- Advertise available resources to schools, churches, youth organizations, and other gathering points.
- Begin a youth mentoring program.
- Coordination among services/agencies
- Explore the feasibility of a resource officer(s) for the school districts.
- Provide training for youths about the state laws concerning delinquent behavior.

- Court Ordered Parenting Classes
- Support funding sources for prevention, treatment, and follow-up care for juveniles experiencing peer pressure and struggling with addictions.
- Support a program/project for a Drug Court for first-time offenders.
- Educate youth and parents on the value of completing high school by exposing them to career opportunities related to school completion.
- Expand stay-in-school, after-school, and school appreciation activities.
- Expose youth to the value of pursuing higher education through college visit programs.
- Provide information to youth and parents regarding financial assistance for pursuing advanced training opportunities or education.
- Continue programs that reduce risk factors associated with delinquency and strengthen protective factors that prevent such behavior; prevention programs addressing youth issues including a range of behaviors such as impulsivity, bullying, and racial name-calling and threats, as these are precursors to more violent and aggressive behaviors; prevention program addressing coping skills, social competency skills, and enhancement of personal responsibility and respect for others.
- Enhance the availability of inpatient and outpatient services for children and adolescents with a co-occurring substance abuse disorder.
- Develop mechanisms for improving communication and collaboration among providers who serve juvenile offenders.
- Raise awareness among policymakers of funding needs to develop new services or enhance existing services.
- Educate the general public about the behavioral health needs of children and adolescents.
- Develop a tracking system to follow a child through juvenile justice, mental health, and substance abuse treatment programs.
- Programs addressing Anger Management for children and adolescents.
- Programs addressing goal setting for children and adolescents.
- Outpatient counseling programs for children and adolescents
- Enforce curfew for juveniles (16 and under). Sunday through Thursday-10 p.m. Friday through Saturday- midnight.
- Need for surveillance cameras for juvenile crime.
- Develop a Community Resource Coordination Group (CRCG)
- Encourage higher education in high schools.
- Encourage involvement in school-related activities.

Resources/Successes:

- Family Abuse Center
- Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children Prevention and Education programming is available to school districts, civic organizations, churches, and other groups interested in addressing Bosque County community concerns regarding changing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that tend to lead toward sexual violence.
- Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network, formerly HOTRMHMR, School Based Program
- Baylor Scott & White Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center Teen Safe Program
- Clifton PD surveillance involved in schools.
    - County or DPS involvement is needed.
- Bosque County Higher Education Coalition
    - Sponsors Career Day
- Bosque County Juvenile Probation Office
    - Juvenile Probation Officer tracks juveniles through programs; however, it is limited to her office alone.
    - GPS ankle monitors are now in use for juveniles on probation.

- Meridian AEP Program

3. Dating Violence & Sexual Aggression

Data Collection:

- 1 in 3 teens report experiencing dating violence and abuse in their dating relationships.

Recommendations:

- Initiate prevention services, such as educational presentations for students and faculty.
- Raise awareness in school and youth programs about domestic violence resources available in Bosque County

Resources:

- Family Abuse Center
- Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children Prevention and Education programming is available to school districts, civic organizations, churches, and other groups interested in addressing Bosque County community concerns regarding changing attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that tend to lead toward sexual violence.

4. First Offenders Program

- Drug Court

Resources/Successes:

- Hillcrest Hospital Reality Education for Drivers (RED) program

5. Aftercare/Follow-up Programs

Data Collection:

- Limited aftercare services for victims and family members of domestic violence, suicide, homicide, sexual assault, child abuse, etc.
- Limited counseling services have to travel out of the area to receive counseling.
- Referrals to HOTBN
- Limited resources, if the juvenile doesn't qualify for HOTBN services.

Recommendations:

- Support programs allowing aftercare services that provide extended support, treatment, and prevention.
- Counseling services are limited due to juveniles and family members having to travel out of the area to receive counseling or support for a local resource that is available on more than just an on-call basis.
- Explore funding streams that will allow for treatment for those that do not qualify for MHMR
- Coordination among services

Resources:

- Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children
- Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network
- Family Abuse Center
- Faith-based organization that offers counseling services.
- DSHS does free pregnancy, STD testing, and treatment.
- DSHS can collect DNA samples.
- HOTCOG Rural Transit District provides transportation to/from Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, & Limestone Counties.

- Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children offers two groups specifically for survivors of homicide and suicide to help cope with the emotions associated with this experience.

6. Lack of role models/mentors and motivating factors for youth

Data Collection:

- Limited parental involvement – the majority of single-parent families
- Generational issues – grandparents raising grandchildren.
- Limited recreational/athletic facilities.
- No after-school programs.
- Limited career/education exploration for the general population

Recommendations:

- Continued support for funding agencies offering services.
- Begin motivation and mentoring program.
- Encourage involvement in school activities.
- Start after-school programs.
- Motivational training for teachers and coaches
- Life skills training "Adulthood."
- Get area churches involved in mentoring programs.

Resources/Successes:

- Meridian Lions' Park and Skate Park
- First Baptist Valley Mills Park
- Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network, formerly HOTRMHMR – Klaras Center
- Local Independent Schools Districts offer programs.
    - Gear-Up Program available in Bosque County school districts – includes career and education exploration for all youth.

7. Need for Vocational Training Program (VocaT)

Data Collection:

None available.

Recommendations:

- Take Juniors and Seniors to vocational school campuses for tours.
- Investigate programs in other cities (like the YES Prep program)

Resources:

- Texas State Technical College (TSTC)
- McLennan Community College (MCC)
- Hill County College
- Heart of Texas Workforce Center
- Bosque County Higher Education Coalition
- Bosque County Extension Agent
- Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network, TAY Program
- Meridian ISD
    - Will provide campus site.
    - Junior High students shadow employees at hospitals, banks, and law offices.

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

1. **Training and counseling services for law enforcement, fire, and EMS to include all first responders and first response teams.**

   Data Collection:

   - Training opportunities are hindered due to not having backfill or funds to travel to training.
   - State mandates for training – funding needed to bring training in locally and to accommodate shift personnel.
     - Crisis Management
     - Mental Health Issues
     - Victims Assistance
     - Critical Incident & Stress Management
     - Emergency Pursuit Driving
     - Firearms Training
   - Need for Certified Trainers
   - Need for available funding for Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and training for the use

   Recommendations:

   - Search for additional funding in the next grant period to allow for sufficient training of staff.
   - Ideally, it would be beneficial to have trainers within the departments. The need is to reimburse jurisdictions to send officer(s) to Train-the-Trainer courses.
   - Debriefing capabilities

   Resources:

   - Heart of Texas Council of Governments Law Enforcement Training Program
   - Family Abuse Center provides law enforcement training (including TCOLE credits) and can travel to train at local departments.
   - Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children offers courses for TCOLE credits.
   - Heart of Texas Regional Advisory Council (HOTRAC) offers courses in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) for first responders and other partners.
   - Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network, Klaras Center for Families for children and adolescents and Adult BH Division

   Stats:

   - Family Abuse Center hosts an annual conference that targets law enforcement, attorneys, judges, counselors, and social workers. Presenters are from diverse organizations and bring expertise in various family violence concerns. This conference offers TCOLE and continuing education credits.

2. **Specialized equipment for law enforcement and fire departments**

   Significant pressures are being placed on the Justice Information Systems used by Federal, State, and local governments. These pressures have resulted from the post-September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, which caused a major emphasis on sharing justice information and ongoing, significant technological changes.

   Compounding the problem is that these pressures are being placed on old systems, which have limited functionality, and need more flexibility to address new functional or technical requirements. A major movement is underway in Texas counties to improve their Justice

Information Systems (JIS). The new generation of systems is frequently referred to as Integrated Justice Information Systems (IJIS).

This integration works at two levels:

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

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

Problem Statement

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

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

Data Collection:

- Out-dated equipment
- Insufficient funds to purchase essential law enforcement for smaller jurisdictions (,i.e.: vests, weapons, vehicles, PPE, body-worn cameras, etc.)
- Limited thermal imaging equipment is a non-evasive way of finding or locating missing persons or fugitives.

Recommendations:

- In some smaller areas existing equipment must be updated or replaced
- Surveillance cameras needed- only one officer on patrol per night (Clifton PD)
- Support and seek funding to enable jurisdictions to purchase/replace essential equipment.
    - Seek funding to provide a compact package for each patrol vehicle, including biological protective clothing, hazardous materials information, etc.
- Seek funding for encrypted P25 compatible emergency police radios (mobile and handheld((BCSO)
- Annual replacement of Sheriff's Office Vehicles (BCSO)
- Seek funding for body-worn cameras and equipment for storage.

Resources/Successes:

- Four Thermal Imaging Units are available to share among the agencies.
- Five satellite repeaters are within the county for public safety and emergency management.
- There is 70% radio operability coverage within the county.

3. Insufficient funding for law enforcement and court personnel

Data Collection:

- Not enough funded positions to meet the optimal needs of the community.
- Not able to pay competitive wages for more qualified personnel.
- No funds to create and operate specialized programs.
- Drug task forces are needed.
- Investigation follow-up
    - Clifton PD will be certified to deal with the methamphetamines lab in the county.
    - Transport of mental health individuals takes law enforcement out of pocket for hours; there are not enough personnel to transport.
- Critical Incident and Stress Management debriefing for all first responders (law enforcement, fire departments, EMS, etc.)
    - DSHS in Temple set up teams.

Recommendations:

Funding for qualified personnel and competitive pay for existing employees to reduce turnover rates inside departments/agencies.

- recommended that the county hire person(s) for community grant writing to obtain grant funds. As well as exploring the possibilities of internship grant writers from the surrounding colleges and universities.
- Current financial burden as law enforcement continues to experience long processing times of individuals with mental health issues. This processing and travel time takes some jurisdictions out of service for several hours.
- More personnel and vehicles.
- Counseling services and debriefing following a critical incident.
- There is a need for immediate and individual follow-up with a licensed professional

Resources/Successes:

- MOU with HOTMHMR for contract transportation services
- Mental Health Grace Alliance (counseling services for post-crisis trauma)

4. Substance Abuse – Adult and Juvenile

In recent years the overall crime rate has decreased; however, studies show that drugs drive a record number of crimes being committed today. Drug-driven is an offense committed for the sole purpose of obtaining money to purchase illegal substances or sell such substances.

Data collection:

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

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

DUI/DWI

- High incident rates
- Insufficient law enforcement workforce to process within local jurisdictions, and smaller departments have to use DPS services, which may not be available.
- Lack of urban and rural community awareness of increased use, manufacturing techniques, warning signs, and environmental concerns.

- Methamphetamines
- Lack of partnership among the retail community enforcement and prevention efforts
- Lack of oversight in remediation (environmental response)
- Anhydrous ammonia theft

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Texas had 10,1042 total alcohol-related fatalities in 2019. Alcohol-related fatalities made up 28% of all traffic accident fatalities in 2019.

According to the Texas Department of Public Safety Web site, the total number of drug-related arrests in Texas in 2020 was 88,651. The total of all drug abuse violations decreased by 30.9% in comparison with data collected in 2019.

Recommendations:

- Pursue funding streams and resources that offer local support groups, prevention, and treatment

Resources/Successes:

- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Ministerial Alliance
- Texas Association of Counties
    - Bosque County is starting a DWI court program that will be used as a model for TAC – these court programs have been shown to drop recidivism rates
- Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center Trauma Services Teen Safe Program
- Brazos Recovery Center
- Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network, formerly HOTRMHMR

5. Increase in Domestic Violence Calls

Data Collection:

Domestic violence is the number one cause of injury to women in the U.S., more than muggings, rapes, and auto accidents combined (Surgeon General's Workshop on Violence and Public Health). The escalation of violence in families has become a justice, public health, and economic problem for families and society. Domestic violence and violence between intimate partners is a problem for Bosque County. The country lacks county comprehensive for reducing the number of incidents and the resources to mediate the damage done to the victims of violence crosses all racial, ethnic, economic, social, and religious barriers; violence between intimate partners is a cycle leading victim into feeling hopelessness and despair.

Gaps in the Community

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

- Programs needed for outreach, local resources not easily accessible
- Lack of stable victim resource revenue threatens the ability of organizations to maintain core services
- Lack of resources and accessibility to resources for victims with physical handicaps
- Lack of support groups for male victims
- Lack of standardized requirements for obtaining a protective order
- Lack of training for judges granting protective orders
- Lack of specialized services and awareness for elderly victims of domestic violence
- Lack of awareness among minority groups, cultural groups, and immigrants
- Lack of awareness of available resources in the community
- Lack of transportation
- Lack of affordable and accessible childcare

- Lack of awareness of cultural differences and needs
- Lack of comprehensive case management, job training, transportation, and job search services
- Lack of seamless continuum of care
- Need for improved collaborative relationships among service providers, law enforcement, and other local agencies.
- No VINE participation

Recommendations:

- Develop a program to establish mandatory counseling sessions for family members involved in a domestic violence dispute.
- Begin a safe house in Bosque County
- Establish a program to provide transportation for victims of domestic violence.
- Need for Batterer Intervention Program (BIP)
- Life Skills Class- include unacceptable behavior
    - Develop a prevention campaign advertised in the school.
- Establish the VINE Program with Bosque County for Crime Victim notifications of offender release (BCSO)

Resources:

- Family Abuse Center
- Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children will provide education and counseling to minority groups and immigrants
- Family Abuse Council – community-based group
- Alternative for judges to refer individuals to the BIP Program
- Faith-based organizations that offer to counsel.
- Advocacy Center provides counseling to victims of crime that access our services by referral from partners or through our 24/7 crisis hotline.
    - Each client can receive free counseling and may be referred to other available services to meet additional emotional and psychological needs.
- Advocacy Center offers case management and counseling for primary victims and family members who may be secondary to the victimization in office space available in Bosque County.
- Advocacy Center offers free counseling to all providers suffering from secondary trauma, including but not limited to first responders, medical/mental health personnel, CPS, APS, educators, and attorneys. Counseling is available virtually.

Statistical Information:

- Family Abuse Center
    - According to the 2020 Crime in Texas Report, the total number of Texas family violence incidents in 2020 was 213,875. This represented an
    - 8.6% increase when compared to 2019. These incidents involved 231,029 victims (an increase of 9.2% from 2019) and 224,792 offenders (an increase of 9.0% from 2019).

    - On average, shelter clients stay 22 days at the Family Abuse Center
    - In 2022, FAC received 17 hotline calls from Bosque County and worked with 2 clients from Bosque County.

6. Sexual Abuse/Assault

Each year males and females fall prey to sexual abuse. This form of victimization often shames the victim and leads to emotional and psychological trauma.

Data Collection:

- Sexual assault referrals by juvenile offenders continue to be a significant problem.

- There are no services for juveniles that are sexual offenders available in Bosque County; offenders are expected to go to Waco or Cleburne for services.

Many victims don't report forcible rape because of the stigma and fear of embarrassment. It has been reported that more than two-thirds of rape and sexual assaults were not reported.

Sexual assault is a highly personal and potentially devastating form of victimization. It may take the victims of this type of crime many years to recover from the physical and emotional effects caused by the sexual assault. Many victims of rape experience the symptoms of post-traumatic disorder and may exist in a psychological cycle of depression, fear, anger, shame, and secrecy.

The crime of rape may also significantly impact an entire community in various ways. It can shatter the sense of safety and trust among citizens. A district may also experience both a psychological and financial toll as well.

Recommendations:

- Search and obtain grants that will provide local services for offenders and treatment placement
- In response to these issues, there is a need for the following:
    - Educate the public about acquaintance and marital rape, and sexual assault
    - Educate the public about resources available for rape and sexual assault victims
    - Expand counseling and advocacy services for rape and sexual assault victims
    - Expand services available to male victims of sexual assault
    - Expand efforts to increase the reporting of rape and sexual assault incidents
    - Expand services available to disabled victims of rape and sexual assault
    - Expand services available to non-English speaking victims of rape and sexual assault
    - Develop a danger, violence, or sexual assault prevention team

Resources:

- Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children provides education on sexual assault prevention and rights for victims—also, training for law enforcement. Bilingual services are available.
    - All clients are offered counsel for primary victims and family members who may be secondary to the victimization. Counseling is available virtually.
    - Advocacy Center offers parenting classes to families referred by partners and has resources for parents of children who offend siblings.
    - Advocacy Center offers free counseling to all providers suffering from secondary trauma, including but not limited to first responders, medical/mental health personnel, CPS, APS, educators, and attorneys.
- Prevention education programming is available to school districts, civic organizations, churches, and other groups interested in addressing Bosque County community concerns regarding child abuse.

* Family Abuse Center

- The Heart of Texas Sexual Assault Response Team

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

1. Early Warning System

Data Collection:

- Need for Reverse 9-1-1 system HAVE CIVIC PLUS? NOT SURE IF THAT COUNTS
- Need for a weather radio system.
- No local TV or radio channels are available.

Recommendations:

- Need for local radio broadcast system
- Need for additional local outdoor warning systems

Resources/Successes:

- HOTCOG's Emergency Preparedness Advisory Committee (EPAC) allocated funds for the Reverse 9-1-1 system
- All schools, hospitals, and the Emergency Operation Center in Bosque County will be receiving weather radios
- Channel 10 has a live weather feed through the internet

2. Community Emergency Management Training

Data Collection:

Educate citizens to aid understaffed law enforcement and emergency medical services.

Recommendations:

- Promote and support local community volunteer programs such as:
  - Neighborhood Watch (NW)
  - Citizens on Patrol (COP)
  - Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT)
  - Fire Corps
  - Police Reserves
- Continue training volunteers to keep them active in the community.
- Combine all volunteer agencies and cross-training to those who are interested.

Resources/Successes:

- BEST in Meridian.

Resources Available

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

Juvenile Justice:

Name of Agency	Agency Type	Description
MCYC	School Social Work	Work with students in schools who are at risk of dropping out. Also, work with students who are in juvenile detention.
ESC Region 12	Education	College preparedness for students, student leadership forum
Bluebonnet Trails Community Services	Substance Abuse Treatment	Outreach, Screening, Assessment, and Referral (OSAR) provides alcohol and drug screenings, assessments, referrals, crisis intervention, education, support, and case management. All services are free. Jamie Schmitt 254.297.7771 or 800-841-1255 jamie.schmitt@bbtrails.org
Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network	Mental Health	Provide a full array of mental health services to children involved in the criminal justice system. Provide truancy court support, assessment, and treatment services to children in detention facilities, cross-referencing all children booked into detention with the State data system and specialized intensive casework services to children on Probation in McLennan County.
Family Abuse Center	Non-Profit Domestic Violence Shelter & Resource Center	24-hour. Hotline 800.283.8401 Office254.772.8999 www.familyabusecenter.org
Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center Trauma Services Teen Safe 254.202.6533 866.332.0005 FB: TeenSafe Waco	Hospital	The Teen Safe Youth Traffic Safety Educational program, focuses on teen traffic safety, driving responsibility, underage drinking, substance abuse, and driving under the influence. The program also educates parents on the laws relating to teen traffic safety. This prevention program combines videos, simulations, written materials, and computer-based simulations. This program is FREE.
Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children	501c3 Non-Profit	Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children provides 24/7 crisis hotline services, sexual assault nurse examination, counseling and case management, court accompaniment, and assistance

		filing Crime Victim's compensation and VINE registration through its Victim's Center program. Services may be provided via Telehealth. Forensic interviews are available to children from each county upon request of CPS, APS, or law enforcement. Educational presentations on victim""""" issues and prevention are general. Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) and Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)are available. Office: 254.752.9330 Hotline: 254.752.7233 or 888.867.7233 www.advocacycntr.org
Center for Learning and Development	Non-profit Educational Support	Conducts research-based projects and provides workshops, seminars, learning tools, and group processes to prevent and intervene with behavioral and educational difficulties.
Counseling Network	Counseling services	Multiple counselors are available for individuals, children, adolescents, families, and lie, s and they specialize in play therapy, EMDR, substance abuse (outpatient) treatment, and domestic abuse issues. Bio-psycho-social assessment for drug and alcohol abuse (hair follicle and UA tests available). 211 E. Elm St. Hillsboro, TX 76645 (by appointment only). 214-724-0702 or www.cnimetro.com

Law Enforcement:

Name of Agency	Agency Type	Description
Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network, formerly HOTRMHMR	Mental Health	the Central Texas area TDC
Family Abuse Center	Non-Profit Domestic Violence Shelter & Resource Center	24- Hotline 800.283.8401 Office254.772.8999 www.familyabusecenter.org
HOTCOG LE Training Program		Provides 30 + LE training classes each year. Input on TCOLE classes offered comes from regional law enforcement agencies and the Law Enforcement Training Advisory Committee (LETAC).
Counseling Network	Counseling and Training	We offer counseling services for first responders (PTSD, marriage and family, individual and group sessions). Training and consultation for law enforcement agencies. 214-724-0702 or karin@cnimetro.com

Victim Services:

Name of Agency	Agency Type	Description
Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children	501c3 non-profit organization	Advocacy Center for Crime Victims and Children provides 24/7 crisis hotline services, sexual assault nurse examination, counseling and case management, court accompaniment, and assistance filing Crime Victim's compensation and VINE registration through its Victim's Center program. Services may be provided via Telehealth. Forensic interviews are available to children from each county upon request of CPS, APS, or law enforcement. Educational presentations on victims' issues and prevention are available. Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) and Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) are available. Office: 254.752.9330 Hotline: 254.752.7233 or 888.867.7233 www.advocacycntr.org
Area Agency on Aging HOT Benefits Counseling/Legal Awareness	HHSC	Educational events regarding prevention. Education regarding Texas Law and Elder Law Assistance with filing complaints and making reports of abuse. Links to Texas Legal Services Center and victims compensation.
Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network	Mental Health	A full array of mental health services to people victimized fall into our targeted population identified by State Health Services, INC., including individuals diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective Disorder, or Major Depression.
Family Abuse Center	Non-Profit Domestic Violence Shelter & Resource Center	24-hour Hotline 800.283.8401 Office254.772.8999 www.familyabusecenter.org
Counseling Network, Inc.	Counseling Services	Bi-lingual counselors are available for individual counseling with survivors of domestic abuse. Supervised Visitation for CPS-related cases. Play therapy, EMDR, and various evidence-based modalities to address PTSD and anxiety-related matters. 214-724-0702 or www.cnimetro.com

Health / Medical / Substance Abuse:

Name of Agency	Agency Type	Description

Area Agency on Aging HOT Benefits Counseling/Legal Awareness	Health and Human Services	Educational events regarding health and wellness, public benefits, health insurance, prevention, and resources in the HOT region. Legal documents to protect rights of health care choices
Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network,	Mental Health	Provide specialized substance abuse services to people with co-occurring psychiatric disorders.
Heart of Texas Regional Advisory Council	Non-profit, 501c3 State and Federal grant funded	Prevention and education for cardiac, stroke, and trauma.
Waco-McLennan County Public Health District	Public Health	HIV/AIDS STD Clinic
211		Help to find information and referrals to the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) community organizations and volunteer opportunities. www.211texas.org/211 or 2-1-1 option 1 or 1-877-541-7905
Texas Health Steps		Education on Medicaid medical, dental, vision, mental health, and case management benefits for children birth-age 20 yrs old on Medicaid. Call 1.877.847.8377.

Prevention / Intervention:

Name of Agency	Agency Type	Description
Area Agency on Aging HOT Benefits Counseling/Legal Awareness	HHSC	Educational events regarding preventing ID theft, scams, and Financial Abuse. Education regarding Texas Law and Elder Law Assistance with filing consumer complaints and making reports of abuse.
Klara's Children's Center ECI	Early Childhood Intervention	Early intervention services to children ages birth to 3yrs who have developmental delays. Services are community-based and family-focused.
Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network	Mental Health	Mental Retardation Services (254-757-3933) MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (254-752-3451) Eligibility: Adults (18+) Serving persons w/ severe and persistent mental illnesses: • Schizophrenia • Schizoaffective • Bipolar • Major Depressive Disorder • Obsessive Compulsive Disorder • Anxiety Disorder

		• Attention Deficit Disorder • Delusional Disorder • Bulimia nervosa, anorexia nervosa or other eating disorders Fee: Based on monthly maximum fee schedule; accepting insurance, Medicaid, and Medicare Services: • Information/referral • Screening/assessment • Crisis services (day/night) • Crisis respite • Psychiatric/pharmacological • Jail-based assessment/ diversion services • Probation/Parole assessment and treatment • Case Management • Service Coordination • Supported Employment • Homelessness support for youth and adults
MCYC-CIS, PACES	School Social Work	Work with students in schools who are at risk of dropping out. Also, work with students who are in juvenile detention.
Family Abuse Center	Non-Profit Domestic Violence Shelter & Resource Center	24-hour Hotline 800.283.8401 Office254.772.8999 www.familyabusecenter.org
Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center Mature Driver Program 254.202.6539 866.332.0005	Hospital, Non-profit 501c3, grant-funded	The Mature Driver Program is a traffic safety injury prevention program for drivers ages 55 and up. The program offers educational opportunities for families, caregivers, and healthcare providers. Educational opportunities cover various topics; how the aging process affects driving skills, the effects of medication on driving, and vehicle features that can positively affect driving abilities. Presentations for caregivers on unsafe driving and how to "talk" are available.
Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center Trauma Services Teen Safe 254.202.6533 866.332.0005 FB: TeenSafe Waco	Hospital	The Teen Safe Youth Traffic Safety Educational program, focuses on teen traffic safety, driving responsibility, underage drinking, substance abuse, and driving under the influence. The program also educates parents on the laws relating to teen traffic safety. This prevention program combines videos, simulations, written materials, and computer-based simulations. This program is FREE.
Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center Trauma Services Kid Safe 254.202.6538 888.675.0260	Hospital	The Kid Safe program is an injury prevention program sponsored by the Trauma Center at Hillcrest Hospital, cooperating with the Texas Department of Transportation. Kid Safe offers free educational classes and presentations to parents, caregivers, children, teenagers, and the community in id Safe also

		provides a child safety seat and booster seat distribution program. Currently, Kid Safe provides services to McLennan, Bosque, Hill, Falls, Limestone, Coryell, and Bell counties.
Department of State Health Services	Public Health	Health Service Region 7 is one of eleven health service regions of the Department of State Health Services, the state government agency responsible for bringing comprehensible public health services to the citizens of Texas. Health Service Region 7 serves a 3030-county area in Central Texas. **Health Service Region 7 Mission Statement** Our mission is to commit, through personal and organizational excellence, to be an agent of change dedicated to achieving a healthier Texas. **Programs and Services** **Public Health Improvement Program:** The mission of the DSHS Division for Regional and Local Health Services is to serve the needs of Local Public Health Agencies, DSHS Health Service Regions, and local communities in building and maintaining the capacity to provide essential public health services responsive to local needs. Department of State Health Services Public Health Region 7 254-316.0216 (answered 24/7) Local Bosque County Office: Department of State Health Services 409 South Hill Street Meridian Tx76665 254.435.6331 barbara.blake@dshs.texas.gov
ESC Region 12, Heart of Texas Regional Advisory Council (HOTRAC), Waco PD Hostage Negotiators, DSHS Region 7		Each of the listed agencies will provide crisis intervention training for first responders.

Transportation:

HOTCOG Rural Transit District	254.292.1873	Schedule trips at a minimal cost; call 48 hours ahead for trips to/from Bosque County.

Interagency Cooperation

The Bosque County Community Planning group was very involved in the planning process. All agencies were proactive in their approach to identifying the needs of the communities. By putting their particular interests aside, they succeeded in developing a strategic plan to aid in prioritizing and closing the identified gaps in the community.

The Planning Committee shared the different services they offered and services provided by agencies/individuals who could not attend the planning meetings. The team met once to update and correct the previous year's plan. The cooperative working relationship is in place and functions well.

Law enforcement, juvenile justice, victims services, and social services groups agreed to continue working together to make the Bosque County communities safer and increase awareness through intervention, prevention, and education.

Long-Range Plan Development, Monitoring, and Evaluation

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

The Bosque County Community Planning Team strives to meet periodically to review the plan and make necessary additions and deletions. The planning team will meet each biennium, but agency and community representatives may submit suggestions and changes via e-mail to the Community Planning Coordinator throughout the year.

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

The Community Planning Team intends to improve outcomes for Bosque County families struggling with problems described in the plan's focus areas. Many Bosque County agencies and organizations are trying to address issues with local funds and grant funds from multiple state and federal sources. To the extent that these funds are available, the Community Planning Team will continue to urge agencies to provide programming that addresses the outlined focus areas.

Contact Information

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