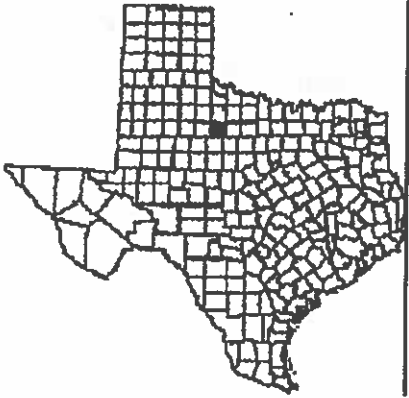


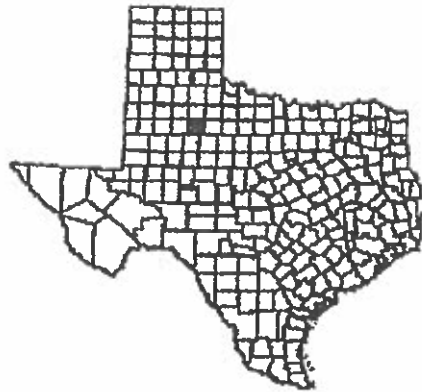
COMMUNITY PLAN

Knox, Stonewall, Haskell, Kent, Throckmorton
Counties

FY2025-FY2028



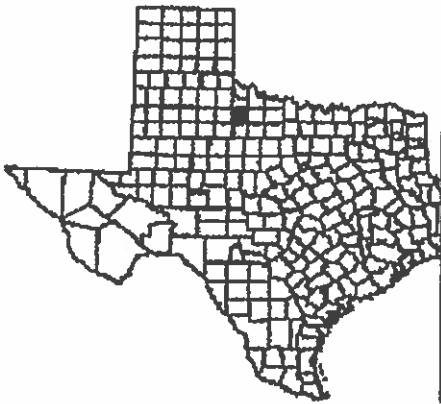
HASKELL COUNTY



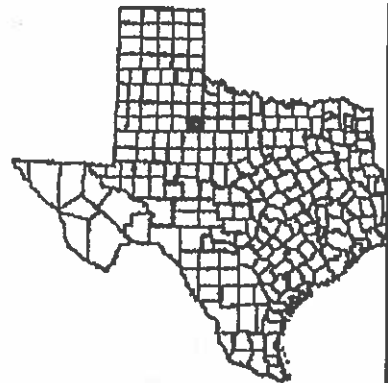
KENT COUNTY

ROLLING PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN

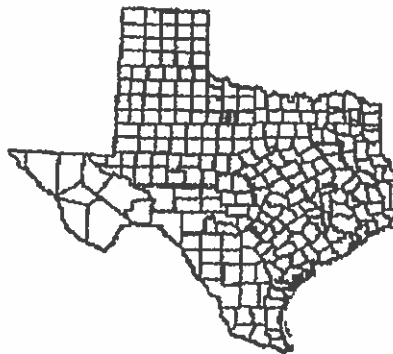
2025 - 2026



KNOX COUNTY



STONEWALL COUNTY



THROCKMORTON COUNTY

<p><i>This Box For COG Use Only</i></p> <p><i>FundSource:</i></p> <p><i>Date Received by COG: _ / _ / _</i></p>

COMMUNITY PLAN SUBMISSION FORM

Instructions: Complete this form and attach it to the community plan when it is submitted to the regional council of governments. The **three-page Community Plan Submission form(s) must accompany all community plans.**

1. Name of Plan: **Rolling Plains Community Plan FY 2026**

2. **Cities, counties,** or parts thereof covered by this plan:

- 1.) **Knox County - Benjamin, Goree, Knox City and Munday**
- 2.) **Haskell County- Haskell, O'Brien, Rochester, Rule, Weinert**
- 3.) **Kent County- Jayton**
- 4.) **Stonewall County - Aspermont**
- 5.) **Throckmorton County- Throckmorton, Woodson**

3. List the types (general focuses) of projects *currently* funded by CJD that the community planning group agrees should continue. **DO NOT** list specific grant applications or agencies.

- Victim Services – Services for Victims of Violent Human Trafficking Crime, General Victims Services & Legal Advocacy, Women’s Shelter, Victim Services Training, and Child Abuse Services.
- Fund the detention of delinquent juvenile in an out of county detention facilities and Juvenile Delinquency Prevention Training / Services / Truancy.
- Regional Law Enforcement Academy; Equipment through Grants, Education?
- Mental Health/ Substance Abuse,

4. List the gaps in services that would enhance the community plan if funding were available. List these gaps as types of services. **DO NOT** list specific grant applications or agencies.

- **Victim Services** - Limited victim services in some of the rural areas, lack of funding, lack of counseling, public transportation, low-cost housing, and funding for rural shelters to carry victim's services past the initial crisis toward restoration or new, violence-free lives. Sexual Assault satellite offices at a central location for rural counties. Lack of Human Trafficking Services due to funding.
- **Juvenile Crime** - Gaps in services for juveniles include lack of parental involvement, Training focus programming including mental health, community-based youth activities and intervention programs; Adult mentoring programs and assistance to rural communities with no/limited services. Human Trafficking Awareness for Juveniles.
- **Criminal Justice** - The changing/increase demands of service; Funding, Manpower and Training; Equipment and Technology.

- **Mental Health / Substance Abuse** - Revenue cuts that affect services, lack of access to mental services; Outpatient Services, and Inpatient Treatment and Services. The lack of mental health providers locally, lack of state beds available regionally and state, and lack of training for mental health workers and officers.

For more information about this community plan, contact:

Name: Chief Richard Candelaria, Knox City Police Department

Address: 902 E. Main Street Knox City Texas 79529

Phone: (940) 658-3414

COMMUNITY PLAN SUBMISSION FORM (CONTINUED)

All community plans must be accompanied by a brief written summary of the plan. The summary must meet the following criteria:

Planning groups must submit a summary of the priorities, goals and objectives from the community plan relating to:

- Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention Issues
- Criminal Justice Issues
- Victims' Issues
- Human Trafficking - lack of HT services due to lack of funding
- Mental Health/Substance Abuse Treatment Issues

This summary must accompany all community plans and must be submitted to the WCTCOG along with the other two Community Plan Submission Forms.

Please type in a brief summary (as outlined above) of your Community Plan in the space provided below. Please attach extra pages if needed.

-
1. Mental Health Issues combined with Substance Abuse Issues (in particular Veterans Issues)
 2. Training, equipment, and communication amount Law Enforcement and others.
 3. Human Trafficking awareness for Juveniles.
 4. Establish and further fund programs, including mandatory programs for offenders, which provide services and positive role models for our juveniles and their parents, including parental skill programs.
 5. Funding and support for the existing victim services of family violence, sexual assault, child abuse and Human Trafficking.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Identified Problem: Need for Mental Health Services (Inpatient I Outpatient)

Helen Farabee Centers receives General Revenue as well as other supplemental funding (waivers, grants, etc.) to provide outpatient services covering a 19-county region that includes Haskell, Knox, Stonewall, and the Throckmorton counties. Mental Health services are provided to individuals aged three and older who meet diagnostic criteria as defined by Texas Health and Human Services Commission. The Center also provides Early Childhood intervention services for children from birth to age three. Services are comprehensive and vary depending on need. Funding from the state for outpatient mental health services through General Revenue has remained flat over the several years despite the steady growth of the Texas population. Thinning resources have required the Center to obtain other funding through transformational incentive payments (1115 Waiver) as well as through distinct state and federal grants. Inpatient hospitalization for the psychiatric conditions has become increasingly sparse as statewide bed capacity is being taken over by forensic commitments. The Center has procured special state funding and grants to expand our inpatient options through private facilities. These inpatient beds supplement our allotted beds at North Texas State Hospital and are in high demand.

Action Plan to Leverage Resources

The Center will continue to maximize the use of General Revenue and will secure available grant funding to maintaining access to inpatient and outpatient services. The Center is now a Certified Behavioral Health Clinic. This designation opens up more funding opportunities such as Alternate Payment Models through Managed Care Organizations and, eventually, possible Prospective Payment Models developed at the state and/ or federal levels.

Goals/ Objectives

The Center will continue to expand access to needed services by securing new funding and by collaborating with primary health care providers to develop a comprehensive mental/ physical healthcare system for all counties served.

Substance Use Disorders

Helen Farabee Centers has dramatically increased access to outpatient substance use treatment centers in our service region. By obtaining transformational funding through the 1115 Waiver, the Center established six outpatient substance abuse treatment centers where none existed before. Additional federal grants were obtained to continue these clinics as waiver funding is depleted. Special state dollars and grant funds were obtained to purchase inpatient substance abuse treatment beds from local psychiatric inpatient facilities. These services had been absent from the areas since 1990s.

Action Plan

The center will continue to secure funding for outpatient and inpatient substance abuse treatment where General Revenue Funds cannot be used.

Goals/ Objectives

Current goals are to ensure timely access to substance use disorder treatment throughout the service area and to see improved outcomes for those dually served with co-occurring psychiatric and substance use disorders.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

About 50% of Human Trafficking survivors deal with addiction as traffickers use drugs to control victims. Beyond Trafficking can help.

Identified Problem

According to the 39th Judicial District Community Supervision and Corrections Department, annual statistical report from September 1, 2017 through August 31, 2018, 52% of all probationers supervised within this jurisdiction were convicted for drug or alcohol offenses. The Department currently utilizes the Helen Farabee Center of Haskell's Outpatient Substance Abuse Counseling services and the Abilene Regional Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse for no-cost screenings and referrals to treatment and recovery support.

According to the 50th Judicial District Community Supervision and Corrections Department who services Knox County. The annual statistical report from September 2017 through August 2018, an average of 43% of all probationers in Knox County direct caseload were convicted of a drug or alcohol offense. It might be worth noting that 57% of the misdemeanor offenses under direct supervisor were drug or alcohol offenses, which often leads to felony crimes that are not always considered drug/alcohol related like, thefts, burglary, and such. ++

Action Plan to Leverage Resources

Inadequate State funds have typically impacted the delivery of services in the two Judicial Districts in the rural areas. However, agencies will continue to form and sustain collaboration between the Counties and District Attorneys allowing for the development and identification of funding resources to provide such services in the local level.

Goals/ Objectives

The five-county area lacks sufficient funding and other limited programs to adequately address the problem of chemical dependency and related issues. Communities in the Rolling Plains will continue to cooperate with State and Federal Governmental entities to document the need for additional resources.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE ISSUES

Identified Problems

Over the past several years there have been major changes in the training requirements for Texas Peace Officer. Some of the changes are mandatory; others are elective, but necessary for the successful completion of assigned duties. The training can be broken down into three categories:

1. Initial Training - mandated to acquire Peace Officer Certification
2. Ongoing Training - mandated to retain Certification
3. Specialized Training- necessary to specific job tasks
4. Beyond Trafficking, Texas Trafficking Task force assists in teaching Law Enforcement – TCOLE and EMS /nursing – CLE.
5. Need funding for more Mental Health Specialized Officers/Deputies; training in recognizing mental health issues combined with substance abuse; need for Mental Health to mental health suspects and/or prisoners.
6. Need for awareness of domestic violence; need for JPs and County Attorneys to communicate with Law Enforcement regarding protective orders, etc.
7. Drug crimes in smaller counties surrounding the Rolling Plains have become

- safe havens for drugs.
8. Rolling Plains is in need of a Crimestoppers program where citizens can call with information without the caller having to give their identity.
 9. Monthly meetings to facilitate the sharing of information about criminal suspects and crime trends.
 10. Lack of resources to provide for in-house training of law enforcement officers sufficient to meet their legal requirements.
 11. Need to establish Task Force Response Team within the Rolling Plains to response to Active Shooting Events & etc. Each agency with the Rolling Plains to provide one officer to train with the team once a month.

In the Rolling Plains Counties there six Sheriff's Departments and three municipalities with law enforcement and they are very limited on manpower. Municipalities have had major cut backs including layoffs and officers going to better paying jobs within law enforcement community. A second problem within the rural law enforcement community is the lack of funding for law enforcement equipment and training such as; Active Shooter training, PTSD training and tactical training and etc.

Law Enforcement in rural areas are very limited on manpower. Rural areas law enforcement agencies cannot be assigned to work full-time on specialized units such as; Narcotics, and Juvenile investigation without neglecting needs in other areas. In addition, this limited manpower can devote to working directly with crime victims.

Another issue also impacts agency's ability to provide training is the lack of manpower. Small agencies in the Rolling Plains have had major cut backs including layoffs.

Law Enforcement agencies provide for the public safety. They are small both in manpower and funding. Maintaining and updating audio and visual equipment for vehicle and personal use is necessary and appropriate for efficiency of local law enforcement agencies. However, the Department of Public Safety has no current funds for this equipment for local public safety. Law Enforcement agencies also in need of information sharing capabilities.

Regarding mental health issues as it relates to criminal justice, there are currently no good options for placement or a mentally ill defendant, either State or Local. In the rural area's officers have to depend on Mental Health to evaluate a person and if that person is going to be committed to a hospital law enforcement has to wait until a bed is found in one of the mental health facilities.

In the five counties that makes up the Rollin Plains officers still have to transport sexual assault victims, to Hendricks Medical Hospital for the examination(s). Transportation to Hendrick Medical Center-north campus, for medical care and examination is limited. Law Enforcement no longer is required to accompany these victims to examinations

There has been progress on this that now small rural law enforcement agencies can go Haskell Memorial Hospital once a week for chronic exams. At the present time Sexual Assault Nurses are being trained hopefully one of these days there will be a Sexual Assault Nurse available 24 hours at Haskell Memorial Hospital.

Transportation to Hendrick Medical Center-north campus, for medical care and examination is limited. Law Enforcement no longer is required to accompany these victims to examinations.

Action Plan to Leverage Resources

Agencies will maximize the use of regularly budgeted funds to both pay for the necessary training and to provide adequate service while officers attend the training.

As always, drug and alcohol abuse are a concern in the Rolling Plain areas. Continuing to investigate the abuse and distribution of illegal drugs is a high priority. Along with the investigations and prosecution of this abuse, we feel it is necessary to address the addiction itself. Early drug, alcohol, and vaping intervention with pre-teens and teens as it relates to criminal justice.

More education in the area of human growth and development needs to be addressed in addition to enforcement alone in order to break the cycle of substance abuse. The abuse of these substances has a direct impact on many other problems in our communities.

More education/training on how to identify victims of Human Trafficking by education, prevention and awareness for officers. The training can be provided by Beyond Trafficking Task Force in their counties and/or jurisdictions.

Goals/Objectives

Continue cooperative efforts with other branches of law enforcement including, Federal Agencies, State Agencies, and local law enforcement agencies in neighboring counties. Local law enforcement believes an impact is being made in recent years; officers' sense that changes are being made and crime rate may be slightly better than a year ago.

Funding for up-to-date equipment, manpower, and ongoing training continue to be hurdles in meeting the needs of Law Enforcement agencies to serve the citizens in the 5 counties. Local city/county budgets are strained in meeting the myriads of necessities, especially in rural areas. Our Law Enforcement agencies will continue to work together to leverage the current resources as we seek ways to fill these gaps in resources by increasing efforts to obtain the limited federal and state funding needed to address these gaps.

VICTIM ISSUES

Summary of notable findings in the current surveys - ranking:

- Tied for Priority #1: Survivors of violent crime needing continued assistance, awareness and involvement throughout the criminal justice process - and - Current funding sources are at risk of significant reductions or eliminations
- Priority #2: Training is imperative for victim assistance and crisis intervention professionals within the criminal justice system;
- Priority #3: Prevention awareness needed for parents, schools and neighborhoods.
- Priority #4: Texas Trafficking Task force provides education and prevention.
- Priority #4: Insufficient programs to adequately address the growing problems faced by victims of violent crime

17 Representatives from 26 entities completed the survey: 13 law enforcement+ (CAC); 3 non-profit victim services; 5 prosecutors; 2 state agencies; 1 medical facility; 1 legal aid agency.

Representative comments from surveys:

Narrative: Violent crimes affect thousands of adults and children every year, and the need for victims' services has increased dramatically, as we increase our efforts to enhance awareness of

services available and encourage public reporting of criminal activity. We still have a long way to go to reach every victim of every violent crime. While it is difficult to capture the factors responsible for decreases in some crimes and increases in others, various strategies to combat violence in our community may be having an impact; these include prevention education, reduced recidivism rates due to longer incarcerations of violent offenders and perhaps enhanced outreach to previously under-served populations. Enhanced training is needed for the professionals who regularly encounter victims, to provide those professionals with information and tools to assist victims in crisis and to refer victims to the appropriate community agencies and aid in reducing revictimization.

VICTIM ISSUE #1

Survivors of violent crime need continued assistance, awareness and involvement throughout the criminal justice process (tied with Current funding sources are at risk of significant reductions or eliminations)

Supporting Statistics:

Noah Project assists primary and secondary victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in Abilene and the nine contiguous counties (Taylor, Eastland, Stephens, Callahan, Jones, Shackelford, Haskell, Knox, Stonewall, and Throckmorton). For Noah Project clients, services are provided free of charge, without regard to income.

Noah Project provides services to victims of family violence, dating violence intimate partner sexual assault and stranger rape. Services are available to adult women and men, children accompanied by a parent, as well as unaccompanied youth. Services include a 24-hour crisis line/hotline, residential shelter/safe-house, domestic violence/sexual assault intervention, crisis counseling, emergency protective order advocacy, legal accompaniment, medical accompaniment, transportation, educational support, survivor support groups, children's programs, employment and vocational training assistance, justice support, sexual assault services, on site professional counseling, legal representation by an Attorney and assistance with crime victim's compensation. Noah Project makes considerable and effective use of volunteers and student interns. In addition, Noah Project also operates a 24/7 outreach office in Haskell, Texas; offering the same services/advocacy, including emergency protective shelter through local resources or by transporting to the Abilene protective shelter. The Noah Project office in Haskell, provides life-saving services and advocacy to the five northern-most counties in Noah Project, Inc.'s ten-county service area including Haskell, Jones, Throckmorton, Stonewall, and Knox counties.

During fiscal year 2017-2018 (Sept. 1, 2017 to Aug. 31, 2018) Noah Project's unduplicated internal statistics include the following: Noah Project provided protective shelter to 124 women, children and men who identified as family violence victims. Additionally, 997 child and adult victims received outreach face-to-face unduplicated services for some total of 2238 unduplicated clients. We had 2453 hotline calls from victims during the year in review. In addition to the direct client services provided, Noah Project staff conducts Primary Prevention professional and community presentations. These presentations are targeted at preventing violence before it starts, and to giving participants the tools necessary to stop the cycle of violence. During fiscal year 2017-2018 our Primary Presentation program provided 1105 prevention presentations to 30955 individual students. In addition, 54 essential training and awareness programs were provided to 3654 adults.

Summary: 2,238 (unduplicated) victims served
2,453 hotline calls from victims

3,654 individuals received Primary Prevention training

Continued funding is vital to maintain present services throughout the Big Country. Additional funding would enhance the ability of the project to provide comprehensive services.

Regional Crime Victim Crisis Center dba Regional Victim Crisis Center (RVCC) victim services include a 24/7 telephone crisis line and 43 certified volunteer victim advocates who stand by as emergency responders to crime scenes or the trauma center at the request of law enforcement or medical personnel to assist crime victims. Professional staff provide trauma-informed mental health care and counseling, advocacy and criminal justice support throughout the crisis. Specialized, age-appropriate, evidence-based counseling, individualized case management and comprehensive victim services are confidential and provided free of charge. RVCC provides services to Taylor, Jones, Shackelford, Callahan, Coleman, Haskell, Knox, Throckmorton, and Stonewall Counties, as well as other nearby counties when requested. During the fiscal year 2017- 2018 (October 1, 2017 through September 31, 2018) RVCC provided services to a total of 1466 victims of violent crimes through VOCA funding. RVCC's VOCA funds were used to provide service to victims in the following categories:

129 child physical abuse	0 DUI/DWI Survivors
484 child sexual abuse	237 domestic violence
210 adult sexual assault	9 robbery
235 adults molested as children	134 assaults
28 survivors of homicide victims	0 elder abuse

1628 total number of primary victims and secondary victims served by RVCC.

In collaboration with law enforcement, justice, and other service providers in our region, RVCC provided the following services to victims through VOCA funding during the year in review:

- 1231 crisis counseling
- 78 follow-ups
- 1511 information/ referral (in person)
- 119 justice support/advocacy
- 22 assistance filing compensation claims
- 223 personal advocacies
- 1280 telephone contact info/referral

Forensic Exams provided through the Hendrick Forensic Nursing Staff:

The age group ranged from 2 years old to 75 years old.

Totals:

2018 Jan – Jan 2019 Sexual Assaults – 212, Non-fatal Strangulation – 2 Total 214
2019 Jan – November 1, 2019 Sexual Assaults – 228, Non-fatal Strangulation 71, Total 299

RVCC operates with 8 licensed counselors with continuing education and training in trauma informed therapy models. Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) is an evidence-based treatment model designed to help children overcome traumatic stress due to child sexual abuse, exposure to domestic violence or other serious trauma(s). Certification requires successful completion of a year-long learning collaborative (supported by TXCAC and ATCAC) several RVCC counselors working with children have completed or are in a TF-CBT learning collaborative. In addition, training in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR), an evidenced based method to treat victims of trauma is underway. RVCC will also collaborate with Mental Health Association of Abilene and other mental health professionals, along with the Abilene/Taylor County Child Advocacy Center, to encourage more Trauma Informed Care certification among local mental health care providers.

Continued and additional funding will sustain the standards of care and enhancement of services and number of clients that can be served.

Forensic Nurse Examiner Program-Hendrick Medical Center North Campus:

Hendrick Medical Center in Abilene, Texas is a designated Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) coverage 24/7. The forensic nurse program provides medical forensic exams, non-fatal strangulation exams and assists with human trafficking victims and child and elderly maltreatment. Victims of these crimes receive medical treatment that assists with treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. Medical care is provided to each patient that is trauma driven, evidenced-based and time sensitive. The forensic program at HMC provides educational opportunities to law enforcement, advocacy centers and other victim services that relevant and based on best practices for crime victims.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is not included in this Plan because MADD does not serve this region of Texas. Victims of injury or families of victims killed by drunk drivers can be referred to Regional Victim Crisis Center for victim assistance services.

The **Abilene/Taylor County Child Advocacy Center (CAC)** works with law enforcement, including **Child Protective Services**, and victim service agencies to provide services to child victims of violence and their non-offending family members. During the 2019 fiscal year, (9/1/17-8/31/19) the Abilene/ Taylor County Child Advocacy Center provided services to:

- 382 children
- 255 females
- 127 males

Cases involved:

- 292 sexual abuses
- 73 physical abuses

- 2 both sexual and physical abuse
- 3 at-risk of harm due to physical or sexual abuse, neglect or drug exposure.
- 12 witnesses to violent crime
- 2 Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Alleged Perpetrators:

- 41 females
- 229 Males
- 66 Juveniles
- 204 adults
- 1 stranger
- 269 known to child

In addition, the Abilene/Taylor County Child Advocacy Center provided services to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, and law enforcement agencies from a variety of local and county jurisdictions throughout Texas, the Texas Rangers, the US Air Force OSI, and various local, county and state law enforcement and child welfare agencies from around the country.

Further, the Abilene / Taylor County Child Advocacy Center provides referral to therapeutic and crisis counselling services to victims and their families as necessary. The CAC presently provides

services off-site through collaboration with Regional Victim Crisis Center (RVCC) and Noah Project. Children, and their siblings and non-offending caregivers, receive counseling and family violence service referrals at the time of their visit. The CAC also facilitates and provides funding for training that allows therapists to become certified in Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

In addition, during the 2019 fiscal year, RVCC's counselors and Noah Project advocates have participated in the multidisciplinary team case reviews. This has served to dramatically strengthen the quality, continuity and overall integrity of services the Center provides to victims and their families.

Child Protective Services responsibilities include:

- Investigating reports of abuse and neglect of children
- Providing services to children and families in their own homes
- Placing children in foster care
- Providing services to help youth in foster care make the transition to adulthood
- Placing children in adoptive homes

Child Protective Services is a program of the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services.

Adult Protective Services investigates allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of the elderly or adults with disabilities. When reports are confirmed and protective services are appropriate, APS caseworkers provide or arrange for services to alleviate or prevent further maltreatment. Services may be provided directly by caseworkers, through arrangements with other community resources, or purchased by APS on a short-term, emergency basis.

Types of services provided include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Financial assistance for rent and utility restoration
- Social services
- Health services
- Referrals to the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) for guardianship services
- Referrals to other state or community services

Adult Protective Services is a program of the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services.

D.A.'s Victim/Witness Coordinators in Taylor, Callahan and Coleman Counties handle all felony and misdemeanor cases that flow through the District Attorney's Office for criminal prosecutions. They handle victim notifications of hearings, communications between victims, witnesses, and the D.A.'s Office prosecutorial staff. They provide court accompaniment and deal with protective orders. Similar services are also provided by the counties' Juvenile Probation Departments to victims in juvenile cases.

Action Plan to Leverage Resources:

Communication, with appropriate authorizations to release/exchange information from crime victims and witnesses, survivors of homicide victims, will enhance cooperation with law enforcement and the D.A.'s Offices for prosecution of violent crimes. This ensures that the priorities of victims' rights, Crime Victims' Compensation, and the Victim Impact Statement are as seamless as possible to reduce additional trauma to survivors. Enhancing communications and protocols in victim service referral processes among collaborating agencies will reduce victim

frustration in getting appropriate professional victim services and encourage victim's utilizing victim services and resources.

Funding Priorities:

This issue is prioritized as #1 out of 5.

Goals and Objectives Based on Problems & Activities

- Ensure that victims and witnesses are well informed regarding victim rights, services and resources in a timely manner.
- Ensure that victims know who the detective is that is assigned to their case.
- Maintain the relationship with victims and witnesses once the case is transferred from law enforcement to the prosecutorial staff.
- Introduce and/or accompany crime victims to pre-trial hearings and the pre-trial conference with the assigned D.A. or Assistant D.A. and Victim-Witness Coordinators.
- Accompany victims and witnesses to trial on an as-needed basis.
- During criminal prosecutions, victims need assistance at every stage of the proceedings. Victims need adequate notice of all hearings and time to prepare for those hearings. Victims need support in attending hearings and in preparing to testify. Plea agreements, criminal penalties, early release procedures, crime victims' compensation benefits and the right to a victim impact statement should be thoroughly explained. Collaborative efforts are in place with Noah Project Victim Advocates, Regional Crime Victim Crisis Center dba Regional Victim Crisis Center (RVCC) advocates, and D.A.'s Victim/Witness Coordinators with appropriate authorizations to exchange information, to work toward realization of this goal.

VICTIM ISSUE #2

Current funding sources are at risk of continued reduction or elimination.

Supporting Statistics:

All funding sources (federal, state, county, city) are facing heavy demands for funding. This in turn makes a dramatic impact on virtually every victim assistance agency throughout the region. Noah Project and Regional Crime Victim Crisis Center dba Regional Victim Crisis Center (RVCC) continue to increase their services while facing funding reductions. With ever increasing pressures due to various funding streams with a variety of prioritizations at the state and national levels, funds may be further restricted while the numbers of crime victims needing supportive services continues to grow.

Given that VOCA funds are restricted for use to only direct crime victim assistance services, these reductions have, in turn, a direct impact on the level of services available to meet the growing numbers of victims requiring those services. Local foundation grant limitations and the decline in the oil and gas industry has affected the supplemental funding that are critical to supporting victim assistance, awareness and prevention programs and resources.

Action Plan to Leverage Resources:

With shrinking financial resources, agencies must work harder and for fewer financial resources, which becomes increasingly difficult in view of the policies of the current federal administration. The Action Plan includes: victim service providers continuing to collaborate to prevent duplication of services, to increase collaborative service to victims, to formulate strategies to diversify funding sources and enhance governmental awareness that termination of funding sources and decreased financial incentive for charitable donations results often in a lack of services for victims of violent crimes.

Funding Priorities:

This issue is prioritized as #2 of 5.

Goals and Objectives Based on Problems & Activities

Continue to recruit and utilize highly trained and effective paraprofessional volunteers and interns.

- Establish a centralized basic training program for victim service providers, in order to maximize resources and avoid duplication of efforts.
- Continue to collaborate with other service providers and agencies.
- Evaluating current funding sources for available revenue.
- Direct resources to fund development and more diversification of funding sources.
- Educate legislators of the imperative need for funding for victim services and incentives for charitable donors.

VICTIM ISSUE #2

Training for victim assistance and crisis intervention volunteers is imperative, as well as training for professionals with whom victims of violent crimes come into contact.

Supporting Statistics:

Noah Project, Inc., the regional domestic/family violence crisis center and protective shelter, seeks every opportunity to provide Primary Prevention training and education to victim advocates, criminal justice personnel, health care providers, faith communities, businesses, advocacy organizations, service providers and allied professionals in communities throughout this area of West Central Texas and the state. Noah Project schedules trainings that are designed to help organizations and communities work to end violence against women, men and children. Workshop topics cover a variety of issues including, but not limited to: advocacy, battering intervention and prevention, legal issues, working with communities of faith and assisting law enforcement. Trainers focus on issues related to preventing the onslaught of violence, the immediate response to a family violence situation, as well as barriers facing victims and the necessary continuum of advocacy through restoration. During October, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Noah Project strives to offer several opportunities to raise awareness regarding the issue of family violence and solutions to create safe homes and safe.

Finally, Noah Project provides ongoing recruitment and training of volunteers. This specialized training prepares those willing to give of their time and skills to the service of victims of family/domestic and dating violence and training for specific professional groups in our service area. Training opportunities in the past have included; Criminal Justice Response Training for all area law enforcement personnel, training with APD Academy students, and Patty Hanks Shelton Nursing students. Topics are focused on family and domestic violence issues.

Regional Crime Victim Crisis Center dba Regional Victim Crisis Center (RVCC) offers assistance with in-service training for the Abilene Police Department and Taylor County Sheriff's Office, as well as offering it to other law enforcement agencies in our region. RVCC also offers sexual assault investigations training and victim sensitivity training for the WCTCOG Regional Police Academies and Hendrick Trauma Center. RVCC conducts intensive training for volunteer victim advocates in collaboration with law enforcement and criminal justice. In addition to RVCC volunteer advocates and staff, other victim service agencies send volunteers and staff to attend the RVCC training. RVCC certified advocates attend continuing training to remain current on minimum standards for direct victim services and emphasis on trauma informed approach for service providers and victims, including self-care, compassion fatigue, and psychoeducation regarding post traumatic and acute stress response system.

Action Plan to Leverage Resources:

Training will be continued for law enforcement, mental health, medical, educators and victim service providers throughout the region at any given opportunity.

Funding Priorities:

This is funding priority #3 out of 5.

Goals and Objectives Based on Problems & Activities

- Establish a centralized, standardized training academy for basic training in victim assistance and crisis intervention for professionals and volunteers.
- Continue to actively pursue liaison relationships with law enforcement educational providers to provide training in crisis intervention and victim assistance.
- Continue to update training materials and other informational resources concerning domestic violence batterers, victims, and sex offender dynamics as well as victimology, child abuse and trauma-informed care and systems.
- Continue to pursue opportunities for cross training among disciplines and agencies to enhance trauma informed systems and community response and collaborations for victim services.
- Continue to include training on utilizing statutory penalty enhancements in charging and punishing re-offenders, and to properly distinguish between misdemeanor and felony assaults. Pursuant to Texas Law, training may also include identifying primary aggressors in family violence crime and avoiding double arrests for "mutual combat."

VICTIM ISSUE #4

Prevention awareness needed for parents, schools and neighborhoods.

Supporting Statistics:

Noah Project, Inc. promotes awareness of family violence issues through many avenues. Primary Prevention (as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Health and Human Services) training has become a significant focus for Noah Project. Primary Prevention presentations and training are provided to schools, church and civic groups, law enforcement, judiciary, health care, employee groups, and professionals. Specialty programs, mandated by the Texas Legislature through HB 121, provided by Noah Project include the Bullying Prevention Program, Teen Dating Violence Program and the Healthy Relationships. These training opportunities are age-appropriate presentations on prevention of violence, existing family violence, bullying, and relationship/dating issues to students from kindergarten through college.

Regional Crime Victim Crisis Center dba Regional Victim Crisis Center (RVCC)

Back in 1987, RVCC began presenting anti-violence programs in schools reaching 7,976 students. Twenty years later we were among the first agencies in Texas, and the only one in Abilene, to receive the SAPCS-F (Sexual Assault Prevention and Crisis Services – Federal funds) grant for the Primary Prevention Education project. Although the grant only funds a portion of our cost each year, additional support in 2016-17 allowed our programs to reach 16,000 K-12th graders in local classrooms and provide training to another 7,000 young adults, community members and professionals in how to recognize and react to sexual violence and other violence.

Today our RVCC Primary Prevention Education program for 2018-19 is one of only two dozen programs in Texas and the only one in Abilene funded through the Office of the Attorney General of Texas, specifically tasked with researching the causes of sexual violence and determining how to stop it. Our additional Violence Prevention programs for individual grade levels use evidence-based curricula designed to stop the cycle of sexual violence, bullying and

other forms of violence.

RVCC Prevention staff and volunteers provided hundreds of programs (The WHO Program - We Help Ourselves) during the 2018-2019 school year. The curriculum is designed to assist children and adolescents throughout the region with identification of potentially dangerous situations, and equipping them with the skillfulness to say no, get away and talk to an adult about any disturbing experiences. Additionally, the WHO Program attempts to identify children who are being victimized, encourages them to disclose and offers help for those children. The WHO Program addresses touches, bullying, secrets, and confusion for the younger audiences. WHO also deals with bullying, premarital violence, dating violence, drugs, alcohol, peer pressure, teen pregnancy, eating disorders, depression and suicidal ideation with mature decision-making strategies for adolescents. In addition, RVCC is facilitating Primary Prevention programs (as defined by Centers for Disease Control), mandated for school districts by the state legislature, at local high schools, and providing violence prevention programs to thousands more children and young people in community organizations this year. This program is in collaboration with the Regional XIV Education Service Center, school districts and community agencies. More than 16,000 students and young adults will have completed RVCC violence prevention programs during calendar year 2018; at least 4,000 professionals will also receive violence prevention training through RVCC in 2018-2019.

Action Plan to Leverage Resources:

Agencies will continue collaborative efforts to educate students concerning the prevention of child abuse and facilitating communication between children, teens and authority figures such as school personnel, clergy, parents, and other trusted adults to reduce the incidence of child abuse in our communities. Parent education and appropriate responses to outcries of abuse are also emphasized.

Children who enter into care and protection at Noah Project have been clearly affected emotionally and often physically by the consequences of family/domestic violence. The agency will continue to provide services through the onsite children's advocacy program but will increase efforts to collaborate with agencies that have services available to children of family/domestic violence. These intervention efforts work toward ending the cycle that accompanies family/domestic or dating violence.

Given that Regional Victim Crisis Center continues to assist adults molested as children who are coming for counseling support, it is incumbent upon us to also provide the community education and support children and teens need for early disclosure and early intervention as opposed to adult life-styles of substance abuse and family dysfunction that may be cyclical when childhood abuse remains undisclosed into adulthood. Prevention of social norms that perpetuate sexual violence, child abuse and victim blaming/shaming are also targeted by awareness and primary prevention programs.

Funding Priorities:

This priority is #4 out of 5.

Goals and Objectives Based on Problems & Activities

- Continue to enhance educational efforts and prevention programs throughout our community concerning child physical/sexual abuse and violence prevention.
- Continue in education of appropriate reporting mandates and responses to child and elderly abuse.
- Maintain updated educational materials and disseminate to parents, schools, and community professionals.

Insufficient programs to adequately address the growing problems faced by victims of violent crime, including a need to expand mental health services, particularly, for victims who are mentally ill.

Supporting Statistics:

In our urban areas an adequate number of programs, as detailed previously, are available among the various agencies that serve victims of violent crime. What is needed is further enhancement and expansion of the current programs, particularly in our rural areas, as well as continued support and funding for collaboration among the various victim services entities and communications among the communities regarding available resources and victim services.

Action Plan to Leverage Resources:

Continued collaboration among the various agencies and organizations to provide training for professionals and volunteers, and to provide awareness of services available to victims of violent crime will help ensure that victims receive the assistance they need to recover from the trauma resulting from violent crimes.

Funding Priorities

This issue is prioritized as #5 of 5.

Goals and Objectives Based on Problems & Activities

We will continue to meet regularly in an interdisciplinary setting to ensure victim services are provided at a comprehensive level and that no victim or survivor "falls through the cracks." In order to maximize services, resources, and avoid duplicity of services, we will continue pursuit of the following:

- Enhancing legislative and community awareness of services and support required in fulfilling service needs.
- Continuing community agency collaboration through timely meetings and services coordination.
- Attempting to reduce the incidences of violent crime in our communities.

Abilene Palm House Community Plan Contribution

The goal of the Abilene Palm House VAWA Grant Project is to help women who have been victims of violent crimes move past their trauma and decrease the rate of repeat victimization. We use proven mediation techniques and communication tools to address the challenges women face post-trauma. Supplemental training focused on communication and conflict resolution is also offered to organizations that support victims.

We do not duplicate the tremendous efforts of the existing organizations but address the subject from a unique perspective. As attorneys, therapists, psychologists, and mediators, we interviewed many victims and found the universal need not being met was that the women felt like they did not have a voice post-trauma. They felt like they were not believed, heard, or listened to and their trauma has caused them to question trust. As a result of our weekly empowerment group, we are building a strong community helping victims move forward by giving them a safe environment to realize that the Big Country community does care. We teach specific conflict resolution skills to help them feel empowered again and learn to trust the system. We train professionals and volunteers from the perspective of the victim by using communication and conflict resolution techniques when helping victims at the time of crisis or later during the recovery process. We offer one-on-one communication coaching for trauma victims. Also, a weekly Peer Support Group is offered at the Palm House to reduce secondary trauma for first responders, professionals, and volunteers who work with victims.

The challenges that we face are the other community organizations becoming aware of the Palm House and the services offered to women and children. Because victims tend to have trust issues due to the nature of their trauma, they are at times unwilling to take advantage of the services offered at other local organizations. We have seen that because we are not associated with law enforcement/CPS, they seem to be willing to come to Palm House because we are "outside the typical victim services system." We find some victims are more willing to come and build community and trust at Palm House, which is one of the best ways to start to be able to meet the needs they have and provide the services that they require. We seek to fill a gap because some victims want a place that may be less stigmatized, or they are unwilling to accept the help offered at organizations that focus primarily on victims. Our services seek to complement services victims receive at other organizations or professional agencies. Another challenge that we faced was convincing the first responders to participate in our seminars. The number of people we have served every month has gone up as the word is getting out about our programs.

With the help of Resolution Solutions, a consulting firm, these challenges are being addressed through the VAWA grant providing the best training, resources, and support to victims and service providers. The Palm House gives victims one-on-one and group support, has created peer support groups for professionals and volunteers who work with victims and offers professionals and volunteers training and professional development to be able to serve victims effectively. The Palm House facilitates a weekly Communication Group for women who have been victims of violent crimes. Two professional Communication Coaches lead the group, and a Licensed Family Counselor attends to help facilitate intermittently. Recently a four-week Anger Management Course has been offered for victims. Palm House also holds a weekly Peer Support Group for individuals who work with victims. The group is meant to reduce secondary trauma and provide valuable resources for professionals and volunteers to use. Palm House gives training to organizations that support victims with trauma on how to better care for those victims by engaging in role plays, seminars, individual exercises, brain exercises, and exercises on how to help victims deal with the outside world. Professionals and volunteers also learn conflict resolution skills and communication skills to use with victims and their families so that revictimization rates are

reduced and to prevent further trauma to victims. Continuing education credits have been provided to service agencies and organizations throughout workshops for the busy first responders.

Victims of violent crime report having trouble with effective communication in personal relationships and employment relationships but also with the justice system. We work with them individually teaching communication skills, assisting them in recognizing their triggers and other issues post-trauma. Also, we work with victim advocates on trauma-informed care so they will be better equipped to work with the victims in building trust and not causing revictimization. Monitoring the intended and unintended consequences of the training or interventions is part of the communication training approach. Formal evaluation of intervention effectiveness, especially using qualitative techniques, is a problematic component when working with post-trauma women; however, our surveys and interviews, although confidential, allow us to determine the effectiveness of the training. One victim statement regarding how our services have impacted her was, "Thank you so much. You have given me so much hope. I was so afraid of doing this on my own."

Our training sessions include interactive role plays involving all participants. These are tailor-made for each population we are serving. This assists the participants in making changes in reactions to circumstances and situations, improved decision making in the moment, and increased communication skills. These methods are proven to empower the client to employ problem-solving strategies, increase the client's ability to communicate more effectively in the future, and leads to a more effective personal and working environment, which will help reduce revictimization.

During this current grant cycle 2019-2020, we plan on training 350 criminal justice professionals, training 400 noncriminal justice professionals, providing 25 training events, and serving 800 victims or survivors.

Last year our agency made immense progress towards meeting our goals and objectives laid out in the grant.

Our volunteers have provided more than 440 hours of service, which was our target level.

We have provided over 432 hours of training and professional development, which was our target level by teaching 631 individuals.

We have mentored over 298 women victims at the Abilene Palm House through our Communication Group and

personal coaching. We have almost hit our target of 800 (789 is what we accomplished) individuals receiving advocacy through our groups at Palm House and other organizations we provide services to.

We came close to our target for peer support groups by reaching around 206 individuals.

We have joined the 211 networks for victims to contact us, and we have applied for the Texas Victim Resource Directory.

The following are some organizations we have worked with through the grant. We have provided either workshops, groups, or services for them. We have worked with victims they serve, or their staff, First Responders, or volunteers. Services for victims involve Communication Groups, Anger Management Courses, one-on-one personal Communication Coaching.

Abilene Regional Drug and Alcohol Council

Council of Governments

180 House

Stop the Violence Abilene

Oxford House

New Beginnings

Regional Victim Crisis Center

Noah Project

ARK Domestic Violence Shelter

Hope Haven

Abilene PD

Abilene Law Enforcement

Eastland Law Enforcement

Dyess Air Force Base

Mental Health America

Heavenly Rest Abilene

Sweetwater Law Enforcement

Aspermont Stonewall Law Enforcement

Snyder Law Enforcement

Sweetwater Law Enforcement

Santa Anna Law Enforcement

Breckenridge Law Enforcement

Hardin Simmons University

Cogdell Memorial

Brownwood Law Enforcement

Baird Law Enforcement

Hendrick Medical Center

Our services are open to all women in the community who have been victims of violent or sexual crimes. All volunteers or service providers in the community can attend our weekly peer support group for free. We involve community first responders by providing training to them several times a year. We allow people in the community to volunteer to help in the services we provide. We promote our training and services throughout the community in hopes that people in the community can point others to our organization.

- **Thursday Communication Group for Women/ Domestic Violence Shelters and Transition Houses for Women Groups/ 1 on 1 Victim Communication Coaching Sessions:** the team has implemented several programs in order to ensure victims have available service outside of the criminal justice system and traditional therapy. Every Thursday at the Abilene Palm House, we facilitate a Communication Coaching group for women who have been victims of crimes. In the group, we do various communication exercises and activities to help women learn to communicate through their trauma more effectively. This equips them with the ability to express what they have gone through and potentially decrease communication conflicts in their lives. The hope is that their ability to express what has happened and express what they want/do not want moving forward would enable them to have tools to prevent revictimization in the future.
- Have set up similar periodic programs at local organizations that work with victims. The programs are communication-based, and we use communication tools to help victims learn to express themselves in an effective way to decrease trauma and conflict in their lives.
- We have also set up One on One Communication Coaching Sessions with women who desire or need more individualized support. Through communication activities and tools, women can express emotions or situations, and we help equip them with long term tools for specific instances in their lives.
- Programs have been more effective in addressing and fulfilling what we outlined in our problem statement. Our programs offer different services than what victims may typically receive through traditional counseling or therapy. We have seen how having proper communication tools can decrease the effects of trauma and equip victims to lessen the potential of becoming a victim again.
- **Friday Peer Support Group for Professionals and Volunteers:** Peer Support Group is a place for people who work with victims to come and confidentially share their feelings and difficulties with others who are in their line of work. We provide communication training as well as self-care practices to equip the workers with tools to successfully serve victims and handle unique, challenging situations with them, as well as provide them a place where they are heard and supported. We have seen that the group has lessened secondary trauma for those working with victims and given individuals who attend stamina to continue in their work, so it lessens turn over as well. This group has fulfilled what we outlined in our problem statement.
- **First Responders Training:** Training focuses on the Neurology of Trauma and How it Affects Victims and First Responders in the Real World. We speak about how trauma affects various areas of the brain and how it may trigger the fight, flight, and freeze response. This enables trainees to better understand the effects of trauma and why victims sometimes act or respond the way they do. We then work through our specific tools of communication to equip First Responders for how to respond to women who have been victims. We also talk through some self-care tips to lesson secondary trauma. We have received great feedback from attendees.
- We have had great success in adding an element of self-care to our training seminar for First Responders and people who work with victims. We have found that this can lead to less turnover,

higher job satisfaction and reducing secondary trauma.

- We found that giving professionals insight into what happens to victims neurologically because of their trauma, and how that affects their behaviors, has provided professionals a better understand and empathy for how to respond to them.

Name *

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Company*

Abilene Palm House/ Resolution Solutions

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Victim Issue Survey requests were emailed to the following:

Abilene Police Department	Jones County Sheriff's Office
Albany Police Department	Legal Aid of Northwest Texas
Baird City Marshall	Noah Project
Clyde Police Department	Regional Victim Crisis Center
District Attorney for Callahan County	Santa Anna Police Department
District Attorney for Jones/Shackleford County	Shackleford County Attorney
District Attorney for Taylor County	Shackleford County Sheriff's Office
Hamlin Police Department	Stamford Police Department
Hawley Police Department	Taylor County Child Advocacy Center
Hendrick Medical Center	Taylor County Sheriff's Office
Jones County Attorney	The Ark in Brownwood
Jones County Sheriff's Office	Tye Police Department
Legal Aid of Northwest Texas	
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services - CPS and APS	

JUVENILE JUSTICE ISSUES

Identified Problems:

1. Depression is increasing among youth and there are extremely limited resources to help combat depression in our area. (i.e. counselors, treatment centers) Limited appropriate residential mental health programs for qualified youth offenders Limited mental health services from state agencies for adolescents by qualified personnel.
2. Drug use and the drug related crimes, Burglary, Theft, Assault, and Truancy. There are also limited resources for treatment, both residential and non-residential. Limited adolescent substance abuse prevention and intervention programs
3. Drop-out prevention- help prevent students from withdrawing from school in order to participate in home schooling, to avoid sanctions.
4. Communication of information regarding children/youth in foster care; specifically, probation status. School districts received delayed notice and probation is seldom transferred to the county of the youth's residence.
5. Bullying, including cyber-bulling (social networking), dating violence, sex trafficking, and sexting.
6. Limited and affordable secure placement for youth offenders (long-term detention). Lack of affordable residential services for sex offenders outside of TYC commitment. Lack of adequate space to provide both long and short-term detention.

Action Plan to Leverage Resources

Inadequate State and Local funds remain an issue where gaps in services and implementation of a successful plan of action occur. There is a large gap in drug prevention services throughout the county. The local agencies/entities working with juveniles are under-staffed and/ or have had to

cut programs or services due to lack of funds to address the many varied needs of juvenile offenders. Many of the resources available to address juvenile crime and corrections are located a great distance away, causing us to lose direct input to the opportunity for success of these students. In addition; there are costs incurred of equipment, time and personnel involved with accessing many of these resources.

Goals/Objectives:

Maintain enforcement and support of juvenile laws. Explore the possibility of creating a Teen Court within the rural areas for appropriate cases.

Revise, if needed the current procedures with the assistance of the District Judge and the County Judges to comply with new state law for appointment of lawyers for indigent juvenile offenders.

Improve community awareness of existing programs to aid in the promotion of youth activities which are positive and develop character.

Provide training for parents who are home-schooling their children. Provide resources and information to help manage these kids.

Education for parents and grandparents about bullying, including cyber-bulling, sex trafficking, and sexting, and the various forms in which these offenses could occur - texting, social media, cell phones, internet, etc.