

COMMUNITY PLAN
Runnels County
FY2025-FY2028

COMMUNITY PLAN SUBMISSION FORM

Instructions: Complete this form (continued on next page) 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.

- Name of Plan: **Runnels County Community Plan 2025**

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

Runnels County- Ballinger, Miles, Norton, Olfen, Rowena, Wingate, Winters

- 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.

Criminal Justice: Regional Law Enforcement Training Academy

(WCTCOG) Juvenile Justice: Currently, no projects funded by CJD

Victim Service: VOCA provides crisis intervention services to victims of violent crime including all domestic crime in Runnels County.

- 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.

Criminal Justice: Updated equipment and technology; additional staff for increased caseloads; need for specialized training

Juvenile Justice: Provide counseling when necessary and not when set by the Regional Juvenile Probation Services based on referral, substance abuse counselor, sex offender treatment and after care funding, summer work programs for underprivileged youth, basic childcare.

Victim Services: Program funding that is secure and that is secure and ongoing; assistance through process of case; trained assistants; behavior intervention specialist

Mental Health Services: Substance and mental health treatment facilities; behavior intervention specialist

For more information regarding this community plan, please contact

Julia Miller, Runnels County Judge

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Ballinger, TX 76821

(325) 365-2633

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
Truancy Prevention
Criminal Justice Issues
Victims Issues
Mental Health/Substance Abuse 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.

Criminal Justice Issues

Priority 1: Operable and Interoperable Communications among first responder agencies has not been updated to current technological standards. All land mobile radio systems operate on conventional VHF repeater systems or simplex channels. Current subscriber equipment is not capable of radio over LTE, radio over IP, or capable of connecting to a regional or statewide radio system. Communications inside three of the four school buildings in the county are hampered by little or no signal penetration within buildings due to a lack of communication infrastructure. Current conventional VHF radio systems lack the capability of signal penetration inside the buildings utilizing portable, or handheld subscriber units. None of the schools affected have bi-directional amplifiers in place. Local funding for these equipment upgrades is not available. Federal and State grant funding is needed to eliminate these capability gaps.

Priority 2: Technology is an ever-changing factor that cannot be ignored. Upgrading technology is a difficult task with limited resources. Hardware and software must be evaluated, prioritized, and, a replacement schedule maintained and followed. This goal can be met with interagency cooperation and the continued search for local, state and federal funding sources to upgrade the available resources.

Priority 3: Continued change and movement is the best way to describe the types of crimes in our society. Technology based crimes are rapidly becoming a large portion of the total crimes committed. It is becoming necessary to utilize technology in ways we have never needed. The communities' rural nature offers limited resources with which to operate. Funding for additional manpower, training and equipment must be secured with either State or Federal Grants.

JUVENILE JUSTICE ISSUES

Priority #1: Truancy issues are an increasing concern across the county. School representatives are in need of guidance and contact information regarding the filing of truancy violations.

Priority #2: West Texas is at a geographical disadvantage when it comes to being in close proximity to many avenues of treatment for substance abuse, mental health, sexual offenders and meeting the basic needs for our youth. This is the driving force behind our continued alliance with other entities for program development, funding, facilities and work force. Due to the vast geographical area of the county, both travel time and working hours are often underestimated in grant applications and awards.

Priority #3: Parental involvement in the lives of their children is shrinking at a rate that is both frightening and detrimental for the children of our communities. There are very few programs to encourage this fundamental interaction. Our children need an opportunity to have an active relationship with their parents and other significant adults. To accomplish this feat, we must continue to use existing services, work together with different agencies to secure new ideas and avenues and obtain funding on the local, state and federal level.

Priority #4: Requirements of school officials to deal with student-based threats of harm or criminal activity in person or on platforms, such as social media sites, are very specific. These same offenses within the criminal justice system are disconnected from requirements mandated by the Education Code Chapter 37.

Priority #5: Adult mentoring is a valuable tool for the success and well-being of many of our children due to the large number of youth living in single-family homes. According to the most recent data available from the United States Census at [census.gov](https://www.census.gov), in 2022, 20.1% of the households in the county are reported as male householder, no spouse present, family households and 25.7% households in the county are reported as female householder, no spouse present, family households. Providing appropriate adult role models is a goal that can only be met through interagency collaboration and seeking additional local, state and federal funding.

Priority #6: The need for our youth to complete their education is multiplying every day. The young adult who is educated is more likely to serve as a productive citizen and will, in turn, provide the community with an excellent adult role model. The Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA) conducts attrition studies for each county in the state. The data reported for the 2020-2021 school year, 82,215 students have been lost from public school enrollment in the State of Texas. In 2021-2022, the attrition rate for Runnels County increased to 17%, up from 16% from the 2017-2018 data reported. To reach the goal of a zero attrition rate we must continue to seek and secure all possible funding through all avenues available. The most current data available is from the school year 2020-2021. (See Figure 1)

Priority #7: Our economy now dictates households having two wage earners. Running parallel to this way of life are more single parent homes than ever before. The need for low cost effective youth programs is an ever-increasing demand, which must be met. Youth programs after school in all districts would be of great benefit for students both socially and academically. These programs could help foster self-esteem, confidence and help create a more rounded individual for our communities.

Priority #8: Providing essential human services is an on-going challenge for a rural community. We must step forward and reach out of our area to provide these services by

utilizing any resources available. These include interagency cooperation and collaboration to pinpoint the needs of the communities' youth and to also find and secure funding for these programs so that once the needs are recognized, they can be met.

Priority #9: Providing seasonal jobs for underprivileged or economically disadvantaged youth.

VICTIMS ISSUES

Priority #1: As the current sources of funding for many of these programs are more difficult to obtain, it is our goal and objective to have a dedicated individual, such as a community health worker, to coordinate the many highly trained paraprofessionals, volunteers, and peer providers to seek and secure future funding. They will also be used to educate legislators and the public of our current needs.

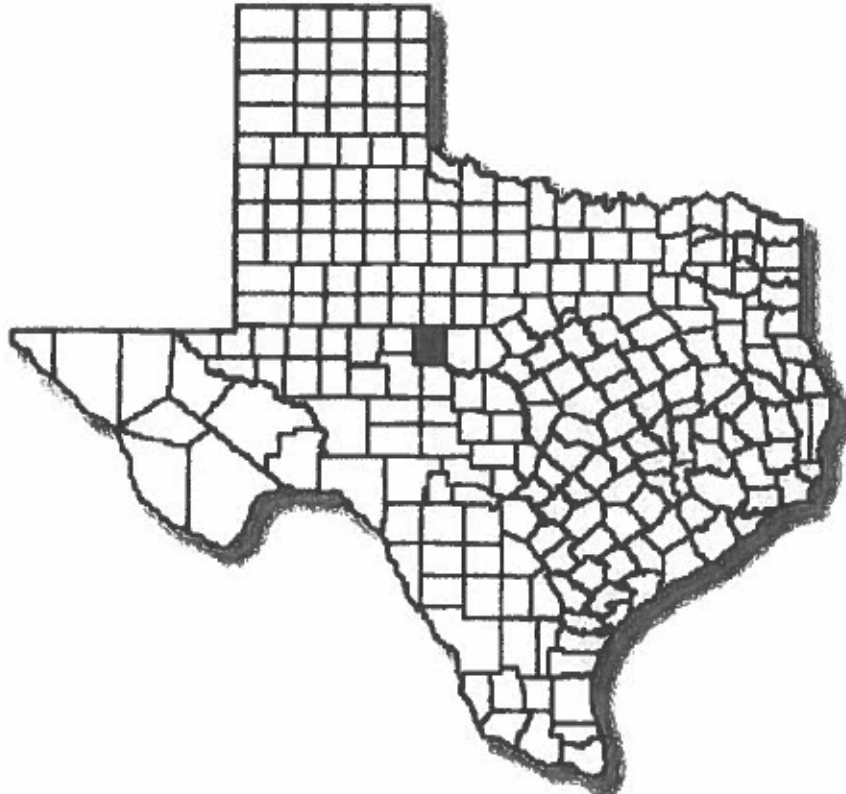
Priority #2: Educating and making our parents, schools and neighborhoods aware of tips for prevention of certain crimes is important. The types of crime and the way they are executed are changing as our population changes. We must educate on child abuse, internet crimes including cyber bullying, texting sexting, and human trafficking, sexual exploitation, labor exploitation, and those involving illegal and prescription drugs and how they involve our adolescents. To accomplish this, collaboration and coordination with the existing resources becomes monumental to our success. The need for a school behavioral intervention specialist best meets this goal. Seeking out and securing funds from all available resources is necessary including local, state, federal and other program dollars.

Priority #3: Gaining and maintaining the trust of violent crime victims is essential throughout the criminal justice process. The victims need to know that their case is being worked and contact is being made with them to confirm it is imperative to provide assistance, coordinate their involvement, and make them aware of the court proceedings and what will be expected of them. It is our goal to provide these measures for our victims. Partnerships are needed with local law enforcement to provide a standardized and updated list of services available to victims of crime.

Priority #4: The current programs which are in place to address the vast problems faced by victims of violent crime are insufficient and are not meeting those needs adequately, including human and sex trafficking. To achieve the aid that these persons require, we must continue to work with local organizations and agencies and put in place a cooperative effort to deal with these issues. Community awareness, interagency collaboration, and legislative awareness are needed to accomplish a trauma informed environment. Whole community training available from such organizations as the Texas Trafficking Task Force or similar resources is needed. Training curriculums need to be developed and train the trainer courses provided for additional law enforcement training related to the requirements of Emergency Protective Orders.

Priority #5: The personnel involved with the victims must be highly trained crisis interventionist with the criminal justice system. It is important to maintain an active liaison with all branches of law enforcement and educational providers. In addition, counseling services for victims and victim's families need to be available and provided regionally to include transportation resources. The continued need for a regional Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) attached to a Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) would maximize the potential that evidence that may be collected from a victim of sexual assault while minimizing the already overly taxed law enforcement resources available in our rural county.

**2025-2030
Community Plan for Runnels County, Texas**



**Including the Ballinger, Miles, Norton, Olfen,
Rowena, Wingate and Winters Communities**

INTRODUCTION

Runnels County has a total population of 9900 and is the 63rd largest county by area in Texas. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population profile by sex reveals 51.3% of the county's population are males and 48.7% are females. Four school districts have a combined annual enrollment of approximately 1,988 students in the 2023-2024 school year, the most recent data available from the Texas Education Agency.

Agriculture is the backbone of Runnels County economy. A strong industrial community adds to the County's economy also. The county is served by five volunteer fire departments and is privileged to have three public libraries in operation.

Runnels County is made up of the following seven communities: Ballinger, Miles, Norton, Olfen, Rowena, Wingate and Winters.

The town of Ballinger was established in 1886 and is located along the Colorado River, at the intersection of U.S. Highways 67 and 83, in West Central Texas. The population is listed as 3567 in 2023, according to the most recent data available at uspopulation.org. According to the 2022-23 Texas Academic Performance Report, Ballinger ISD had 816 students enrolled. There were 1.0% African American, 48.0% Hispanic, 47.7% White, .1% Native American, .5% Asian, 0% Pacific Islander and 2.7% two or more races. Ballinger Memorial Hospital is located in the community. Ballinger Memorial Hospital is a 25-bed facility with a 24-hour emergency medical service. Ballinger also has one physician clinic, an eye doctor and a chiropractor. No dental care is available in Ballinger. It is also home to the Carnegie Public Library.

Miles was established in 1888. It is located on U.S. Highway 67 and Farm Road 2872. Miles is located 17 miles southwest of Ballinger. Miles has a current population of 820. The town was named after Jonathan Miles who donated \$5,000.00 for the extension of the railroad from Ballinger to San Angelo. The 2022-23 Texas Academic Performance Report for Miles ISD had 511 students enrolled. There were 1.2% African American, 35.4% Hispanic, 61.6% White, .2% Native American, 0% Asian, 0% Pacific Islander, and 1.6% two or more races.

Norton is located on Farm Road 383 in West Central Runnels County. It opened the doors to its Post Office in 1894. A short seven years later the first houses and stores were built. Norton survived cyclones and a fire in 1929 and remains a small unincorporated town serving the surrounding rural area. Norton has an approximate population of 50.

The community of Olfen was established in 1893 when Bernard Matthiesen bought land and moved his wife and family from Fayette County. In 1901 members of the community were given permission to build a school/church from Bishop John Anthony Forest. The Olfen School and church are still in operation. Olfen is located approximately 10 miles southwest of Ballinger. The 2018-19 Texas Academic Performance Report for Olfen ISD had 103 students enrolled. There were 2.9% African American, 48.5% Hispanic, 46.6% White, 0% Native American and 1.9% Asian, 0% Pacific Island and 0% two or more races.

Rowena was settled in 1898 primarily by German and Czech Texans from Central Texas. The town served as a trading post for local farmers and ranchers. It is located on U. S. Highway 67 and Farm Roads 2872 and 2133, eight miles from Ballinger. Rowena is also noted as the birthplace of Bonnie Parker, companion to bank robber Clyde Barrow.

Wingate is located on State Highway 153 about 13 miles northwest of Winters in the northwestern portion of Runnels County. The community was first settled in 1890 and is named after Ballinger Attorney W. J. Wingate. Baseball Hall of Fame members Lynn Scoggins and Rogers Hornsby were originally from this small community.

The town of Winters was chartered in 1894 with a general store and a small school house. It is located on U.S. Highway 83, State Highway 153, and Farm Road 1770, and is approximately 15 miles north of Ballinger. Winters houses North Runnels Hospital, which includes 25 beds and a 24-hour emergency medical service. There is one medical clinic and no dental care in this community. Winters currently has a population of approximately 2,800. Winters ISD is also home to the first State Chartered FFA Chapter in Texas. This chapter was created in 1930 and remains active today. The 2022-23 Texas Academic Performance Report for Winters ISD showed 558 students enrolled. There were .9% African American, 58.4% Hispanic, 37.3% White, 0% Native American and .4% Asian, .2% Pacific Islander and 2.9% two or more races.

**Runnels County Criminal Justice Community Plan 2025-2030
Problems/Resources/Identification**

I. JUVENILE CRIME

A. PROBLEMS

Juvenile crime is present in our communities. However, the needs and issues exhibited by juvenile offenders have increased drastically. The reasons for this violence vary. The reasons include child abuse, family disintegration, economic and social deprivation, little to no neighborhood attachment and academic struggles are only a few of the reasons juvenile crime is increasing.

1. Difficulty in getting parents to voluntarily become actively involved in the lives of their children at school, counseling, etc.
2. Poor to non-existent parenting skills.
3. Lack of community response and knowledge to address cyber bullying, sexual oriented crimes and the crimes associated with the internet, social sites, texting and sexting.
4. Limited and affordable community activities for juvenile-age children.
5. Limited services geared to address self-esteem issues through activities (activities, not just counseling) for adolescent females.
6. Limited funding for placement of juvenile offenders.
7. Security updates for aging school facilities are needed for prevention of active shooter and other school violence. Funding for the updates is limited to non-existent.
8. Limited adolescent substance abuse prevention and intervention programs. Vaping by juveniles is an ever-increasing problem.
9. Limited mental health services for adolescents by qualified personnel.
10. Limited appropriate residential mental health programs for qualified juvenile offenders; also awaiting list on average of one to two months for placement and care.
11. No residential independent living programs locally available for adolescents.
12. Dwindling resources for residential and nonresidential substance abuse services in conjunction with limited aftercare.
13. Lengthy waiting lists to place juvenile offenders in substance abuse services. There must be three or more requiring counseling before a counselor will travel to the county.
14. No juvenile job training programs.

15. Limited residential vocational training.
16. Juvenile Probation Officer caseloads are too high; paperwork demands are continually increasing. The attrition rate for juvenile probation staff is high.
17. Lack of community resources to help provide constructive activities (art, physical education, etc.) for youth.
18. Lack of adequate space to provide both long and short-term detention. Several juvenile detention facilities in the last few years. This problem will only grow if the lawful age for an adult offender is changed from 17 to 18 years of age.
19. Limited time available for appropriate guidance and counseling activities.
20. State agencies, (CPS/MHMR), workers have caseloads which are too high. Employee attrition rates are high.
21. Large population of single parent households.
22. Need for School Resource officers in all districts to address juvenile crime issues.

B. RESOURCES

1. COMMUNITY RESOURCES

a. COMMUNITY RESOURCES COORDINATING GROUP (CRCG)

Meetings are the first Wednesday of every other month, September through May, or on an as needed basis, to present difficult cases and develop resources to meet the identified needs of individual students.

b. PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING AND ACTIVITIES

Individual-The Runnels County Juvenile Probation Department provides limited counseling services.

The local mental health authority, West Texas Centers, provides counseling and psychosocial rehabilitation services and medical services.

Region 15 Education Service Center provides counseling services for schools.

c. RUNNELS COUNTY JUVENILE PROBATION

Counseling is provided to juvenile offenders through the Stay Together Program which is offered by High Sky Children's Ranch of San Angelo. Specialized counseling and substance abuse counseling is available through contract providers.

d. New Bridge Family Shelter

New Bridge Family Shelter provides advocacy, support and referrals for Juvenile victims of sexual assault, harassment and dating violence.

e. Food/Clothing Banks

Ballinger Cares

Samaritan's House-Winters
Miles Food Bank

f. West Central Texas Council of Governments Criminal Justice Department
Education and Training

g. 211 Info

Access information on agencies for assistance
Access is also available via www.callforhelp.org

2. RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT

- a. Texas Juvenile Justice Department**--Long-term secure detention for a minimum of 9-month court order; serves approximately 1 child annually for the six county region covered by Regional Juvenile Probation Services.
- b.** Residential placement for children and adolescents sought on an as-needed basis.

3. ADOLESCENT SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

a. Counseling

- 1. Ballinger ISD, Winters ISD, Miles ISD, Olfen ISD**--school counselors, curriculum provided to students.
- 2. Runnels County Schools**, school counselors, curriculum provided for substance abuse, violence and pre-marital sex prevention. Safe and Drug Free Schools Grant provides additional funding with Right Choices for Youth.
- 3. Response to Intervention (RTI)**, student assistance is offered in schools as pre-referral counseling.
- 4. Prevention Resource Center**, facility providing drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse program.
- 5. Abilene Regional Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse**, facility providing drug and alcohol abuse counseling.
- 6. Permian Basin Regional Council on Alcohol & Drug Abuse**, facility providing drug and alcohol abuse counseling. There is a satellite office in San Angelo
- 7. Center for Life Resources and Substance Abuse**, facility providing drug and alcohol abuse counseling.

b. Residential Placement

Runnels County Juvenile Probation currently works with Abilene Regional Council on Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Abilene, the Phoenix House in Austin and San Antonio, and Serving Children and Adults In Need (SCAN) in Laredo for some short-term residential treatment for substance abuse.

4. EDUCATION

a. Ballinger/Miles/Winters/Olfen ISD At-Risk Programs

All independent school districts in Runnels County students, pre-k through 12th grade, who are at risk of dropping out of school, are provided with opportunities aimed to keep them in school, and including Mentoring Programs offered at all campuses. Each district also offers the flexible school programs.

b. Ballinger/Winters/Miles/Olfen ISD Tutoring Programs

Ballinger ISD Tutoring Programs--Tutoring is provided at all campuses. The elementary has tutoring built in during POPS time with afterschool tutoring offering in the Spring. Junior High has a 20-minute tutorial period built into the master schedule. High School has a 30-minute tutorial time built into the middle of the school day.

Miles ISD Tutoring Programs

Tutoring is mandatory with an average of less than 70%.

Winters ISD Tutoring Programs

Tutoring is mandatory with an average of less than 70%. Transportation is provided for after school tutorials.

Olfen ISD Tutoring Programs

Olfen ISD builds tutorials into the school day for tutoring services and education enrichment.

c. School Violence Prevention Program

Prevention, intervention, and recognition of school violence issues for school staff. Each school campus in each district has a threat assessment team.

d. Ballinger and Winters Head Start (Education Service Centers Region 15)

Is a Federally funded program, serving children ages 3 thru 5. Fosters total child development, for public school readiness. It includes health, safety, nutrition, disability services and resources to meet family needs.

e. Character Education Through Texas A&M Agri-Life Extension

Programs that are available;

1. "Character Become You," a character education program for multiple grade levels
2. "Take a Stand" an anti-bullying outreach and education program

5. SUPPORT SERVICE

6. ADOLESCENT JOB TRAINING

a. Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services: Provides youth employment programs for students with recognized medical concerns and other special needs.

b. Job Corp: Residential job training for older adolescents with a waiting period of a minimum of 2 months, usually an average of 3-4 months.

c. Job Fair: Hosted by Ballinger ISD

Winters ISD holds a Career Day and career field trips

Winters, Miles, and Olfen ISD participate in the World of Work (WOW) conference in Abilene

Miles and Winters ISD participated in Rooted program with the Texas Workforce Commission.

Olfen ISD attends the College and Career Day at Howard College

d. Career and Technical Education: Ballinger ISD, Miles ISD, Winters ISD, and Olfen ISD all provide career and technical training through their secondary campuses including work programs, agriculture, family and consumer science, industrial technologies and training for special populations.

7. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- a. Mental Health/IDD Child and Adolescent Services:** Provide counseling services to qualifying children and adolescents.
- b. MH/IDD Crisis Services:** Persons experiencing emotional, behavioral, or psychiatric crisis have access to a 24-hour hotline, crisis walk-in, and crisis support, and mobile crisis intervention.
- c. Shannon River Crest Hospital:** Residential placement with insurance providing short-term care. The only facility that accepts children under 12 years of age.
- d. Oceans in Abilene and Midland:** Residential placement option usually accessed through a state agency.
- e. State Hospitals:** Residential placement option always accessed through a state agency.
- f. Waco Center for Youth:** Residential placement option usually accessed through a state agency. (Must be accessed through local CRCG)

8. AFTER SCHOOL AND SUMMER RECREATION

- a. YMCA Football:** Supervised football competition for youth.
- b. YMCA Basketball:** Supervised basketball competition for youth.
- c. Ballinger Youth Sports Association:** Supervised sporting events
- d. Winters Youth Sports Association:** Supervised sporting events
- e. West Texas Art Guild Camp:** Supervised art instruction for youth.
- f. Youth Baseball:** Supervised baseball competition for youth.
- g. Girls Softball Association:** Supervised softball competition for girls.
- h. Region 15 Education Service Center:** Programs for Migrant, Homeless and At-Risk students.

- i. **Runnels County 4-H Programs:** Programs for youth in 3rd grade, or 8 years old, through 19 years. A wide variety of supervised activities and projects are offered.
- j. **School Sports Camp:** Supervised sport camp for area youth.
- k. **Faith Based Programs:** Faith based programs for youth in grades K-12. Independently sponsored.
- l. **Vacation Bible School:** Faith based program for youth in grades K-12 sponsored independently by local churches.
- m. **Runnels County Scout Clubs:** Including Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts
- n. **G-L Gymnastics:** Supervised gymnastics training.
- o. **City Parks:** Ballinger and Winters each have city parks with swimming pools. Miles has a city park with playground equipment.
- p. **Public Libraries:** Ballinger Carnegie Library, Miles and Winters Public Libraries.

9. MEDICAL/PRE-NATAL CARE

- a. **Women, Infants, Children (WIC):** Must meet income, residency and nutritional need requirements. Services include supplemental food coupons for pregnant, breast-feeding and postpartum women, infants and children under 5 years of age. Nutrition education, counseling and referrals to other health care providers.
- b. **Ballinger/Miles/Winters/Olfen ISD Health Screening:** Conducted by school health personnel. Student screenings consist of vision, hearing, scoliosis, height and weight.
- c. **Ballinger/Miles/Winters/Olfen ISD Lice Screening/Treatment:** The school nurse provides lice screening and treatment for school age children.
- d. **Lions Clubs:** Provides vision and hearing assistance for school age children who qualify. This organization also sponsors school age children who want to attend the disabled and diabetes camps offered in the summer.
- e. **Civic Organizations:** providing community support in the form of scholarships, funding for youth activities, and support for families in need.
- f. **Ballinger/Miles/Winters/Olfen ISD School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)** Provides Health Wellness for students and employees.
- g. **Esperanza Health & Dental Centers:** Non-profit community based health centers. Provides affordable high quality, primary and preventive health & dental care.
- h. **Texas Health & Human Services/CHIP:** Provides assistance in applying for medical insurance, (Medicaid), i.e. school athletics. A representative will also come to the district and provide this information thru health fairs, parent meetings, back to school meetings and handouts. CHIP is a Pre-Natal program from conception to 12 months. At which time the child moves into the Texas

Medicaid Program. Primary program includes Texas Health Steps (TH Steps) and Children of Pregnant Women (CPW).

10. SUPERVISION AND COMMUNITY RESTITUTION

- a. **Runnels County Juvenile Probation Department:** Random and unannounced home visits by certified Juvenile Probation Officers. These officers also supervise community service projects and arrange placement of children in public non-profit programs for completion of community service hours assessed by the juvenile court.
- b. **Community Service and Restitution:** Operated by the respective courts and/or probation and parole offices.
- c. **Law Enforcement Youth Based Training:** The goal to maintain, if not increase, our local law enforcement training is very important to the success of our communities. Finding innovative ways of paying for and securing the required training for our officers is a priority, while maintaining adequate staffing. Supporting their efforts in developing policies and programs in the communities to redirect and offer safer options to our youth is necessary for total collaboration.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

A. PROBLEMS

Substance abuse, the use of illicit drugs, and the abuse of synthetic drugs are constantly increasing. There is also a growing concern with the illegal use of prescription drugs. Their use is continually being flashed before our communities' children and young adults through many genres of media. During the 2018-19 Federal Advisory Committee Meeting, discussions were held that as early as in 4th and 5th grades, the children are using tobacco and alcohol on a limited basis. The level of usage continues to rise through the middle school with a limited use of tobacco and drugs. However, the use of alcohol has gone from moderate to limited use. The secondary school students who include grades 9th-12th have a limited use of drugs, and a moderate use of alcohol and tobacco. This data is the most recent available for inclusion into this plan.

1. Prevention/education/professional training.
2. Distribution of illegal drugs, illegal prescription drugs, alcohol and tobacco.
3. Manufacture of illegal drugs.
4. Usage of illegal and synthetic drugs, alcohol and tobacco.
5. Limited resources and manpower for enforcement of a zero tolerance for underaged tobacco use and drinking.
6. Treatment/counseling.
7. Impact other crimes.
8. Family, Acquaintance Violence. The schools are required to address dating violence.
9. Effect on education process/literacy.
10. Emerging gangs
11. Medical intervention
12. Drug testing/screening
13. Offender treatment

B. RESOURCES

1. Enforcement

- a. Ballinger Police Department
- b. Winters Police Department
- c. Miles Police Department
- d. Runnels County Adult and Juvenile Probation Departments
- e. Runnels County Sheriff's Office
- f. Runnels County Constables' Offices Precinct 1 and Precinct 2
- g. Texas Department of Public Safety
- h. Texas Parks and Wildlife Department-Game Warden
- i. Abilene Regional Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
- j. TABC/Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission
- k. Canine Officers

2. Prevention/Education

- a. Law Enforcement Agencies
- b. Shattered Dreams Project
- c. Building Good Citizens for Texas---Character Education Program for Ballinger ISD students
- d. Response to Intervention (RTI) Student Assistance
- e. West Central Texas Regional Law Enforcement Academy
- f. ESC 15 Shared Service Agreement
- g. Tom Green County Juvenile Probation
- h. VOCA Victims of Crime Act-Abilene
- i. Random student drug testing policy
- j. AIM for Success
- k. Project Graduation
- l. FCS/Family and Consumer Science Classes offered in ISD's
- m. Oceans
- n. Beyond Trafficking

3. Treatment/Counseling

- a. MH/IDD
- b. Alcoholics Anonymous /Narcotics Anonymous
- c. Juvenile and Adult Probation Departments
- d. Private Counselors
- e. Child Protective Services
- f. Ministerial Alliance
- g. Shannon River Crest Hospital
- h. Texas Health & Human Services
- i. Oceans Healthcare, Abilene and Midland
- j. Shannon Behavioral
- k. William's House/Sara's House – Residential Treatment Programs
- l. Hendrick Medical Center SANE Program
- m. Shannon Medical Center SANE Program
- n. Hope House

4. Screening/Assessment

- a. MH/IDD

- b. Juvenile & Adult Probation Departments
- c. Southwest Consortium
- d. CRMP- Interquest-drug dogs
- e. Hendrick Medical Center SANE Program
- f. Shannon Medical Center SANE Program
- g. Abilene Prevention Council

5. Drug Testing

- a. Runnels County Adult Probation Department
- b. Ballinger Memorial Hospital
- c. Runnels Juvenile Probation Department
- d. ESC 15 Shared Service Agreement
- e. Southwest Consortium
- f. North Runnels Hospital
- g. Dr. Shaughn Sims, DC

C. GAPS IN RESOURCES

1. Funding

Runnels County has diminishing financial capabilities to support such an operation.

2. Manpower

a. Law enforcement agencies are very limited on manpower in smaller departments and cannot assign one of their regular officers to work full time on substance abuse investigations without being neglectful of needs in other areas.

3. Training

Training for our law enforcement is a top priority in our communities. However, extensive specialized training is not reasonable for small departments that have to train their officers in the wide spectrum of law enforcement.

4. Accessibility

Rural area with limited resources.

5. Technology

Limited funds to obtain and update equipment and programs.

6. Transportation

Currently there is a lack of suitable transportation. Either size issues, maintenance or manpower to physically transport.

D. PLAN

Explore new options for educational and counseling program through public school systems, law enforcement agencies, medical community, the Community Resources Coordination Group and other available resources while maintaining and supporting existing programs. Expansion of education to support stricter legislation such as key registration, date rape, bullying, online solicitation, and zero tolerance for tobacco and alcohol abuse should also be explored.

I. VICTIMIZATION

A. PROBLEMS

Victimization, in some form or another, has been around as long as civilizations have existed. Family violence is prevalent among all walks of life and social economic classes. According to the United States Advisory Board on Child Abuse “Child Abuse increases the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 53%, as an adult by 38% and arrest for violent crime by 38%”. Many programs, which are in place today were disparaged when they were first offered into our communities. These state compensation programs and grant funding opportunities have increased capabilities in meeting today’s victim needs. However, as with most state funded programs being either eliminated or reduced combined with legislative mandates that are unfunded, these programs rely on local tax supported funding for sustainment.

1. Lack of reporting all areas of abuse/neglect (often due to apathy, fear, embarrassment or lack of knowledge).
2. Reporting and identifying human sex and labor trafficking
3. Limited resources/programs on all areas of abuse available in rural areas (dating, acquaintance, and family). Schools will be required to address dating violence by law.
4. Lack of awareness of resource/programs available to educate general public.
5. Minimal participation of parenting classes for those lacking in parenting skills.
6. Lack of funding.
 - a. Transportation needs
 - b. Few trained, qualified service providers
6. Geographical area covered by each caseworker is too large.
7. Limited counseling available in rural areas.
8. Increasing number of victims of family violence and sexual assault seeking residential and non-residential services.
9. Lack of education on how to get jobs.
10. Lack of participation in programs to educate the general public and children in the public schools.
11. Limited funds available for a sexual assault program.
12. Limited sexual assault services available in rural area.
13. Ballinger, Winters and Miles Police Departments along with the Runnels County Sheriff’s Office report increases of family violence incidents and sexual assault reports.

14. Limited resources available for equipping victims with marketable job skills. This is especially crucial in dealing with victims of family violence who may be sole provider for themselves and their children.

B. RESOURCES

1. **Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (Child Protective Services)**
2. **Community Resources Coordination Group**
3. **District Attorney and Victim Witness Coordinator**
4. **Health and Human Services**
Family Violence Program
5. **Office of the Attorney General**
Sexual Assault Program
6. **United Way**
7. **Homeless Program**
Provided by school districts
8. **Rape Crisis Center of Concho Valley**
9. **Migrant Programs**
Provided by the school district
10. **Response to Intervention (RTI) Student Assistance**
11. **Winters Adult Education Foundation**
12. **New Bridge Family Shelter**
13. **HOPE House**
14. **CASA**
15. **Concho Valley Home for Girls**
16. **Ben Richey Boy's Ranch**
17. **West Texas Boy's Ranch**
18. **Crime Victim Crisis Center**
Locations in Abilene and San Angelo
19. **West Central Texas Council of Governments**

20. Faith Based entities

21. Central Texas Opportunities

22. City and Rural Rides (CARR)

23. Beyond Trafficking

C. GAPS IN RESOURCES

1. Funds

Funds are decreasing to employ staff needed to meet the increase in demand for family violence, sexual assault programs and adult victim education, i.e. Behavioral Intervention Specialist

2. Personnel

Case overload.

3. Training

Training for our law enforcement is a top priority in our communities. However, extensive specialized training is not locally available or affordable for small departments that have to train their officers in the wide spectrum of law enforcement.

4. Accessibility

Rural area with limited resources.

5. Technology

Lack of funding to obtain and maintain technology-based equipment.

6. Transportation

Lack of funding for transportation.

D. PLAN

Support efforts to expand family violence, sexual assault programs, and human trafficking. Support its efforts to develop policies and programs in the community, which promote effective intervention and prevention of family violence and sexual assault crime. As a rural community with limited resources, it is imperative to seek opportunities for local coordination of services to families affected by family violence and sexual assault crime, avoid gaps and duplications in services, and maintain and support educational and counseling programs through public school systems, law enforcement agencies, medical community, CRCG and other available resources.

Figure 1: Texas Public School Attrition Study 2022-2023 from [idra.org](https://www.idra.org)

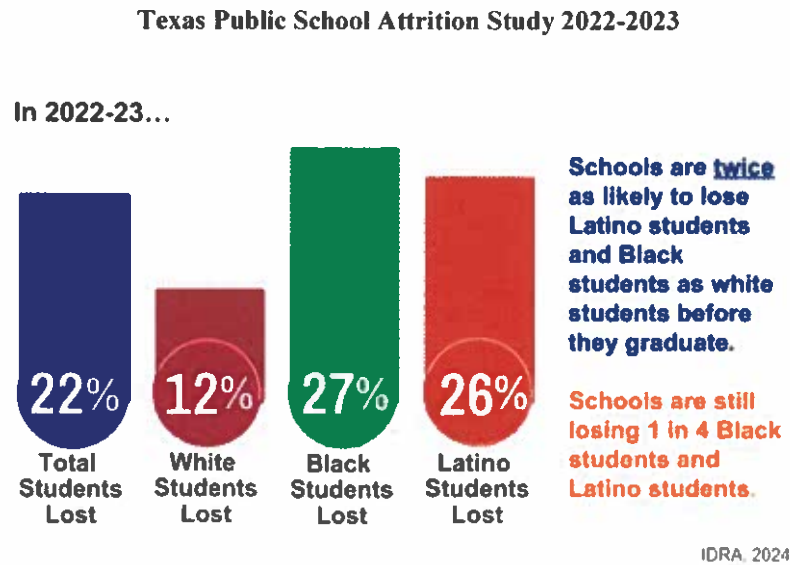


Figure 2:

CURRENT SERVICES FUNDED THROUGH THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE DIVISION

Runnels County

General Victim Assistance-Direct Services Programs Fund- 10/1/2024-9/30/2025

- **Beyond Trafficking CJD Award- \$80,000**
Project Title: *Project Beyond: Uplifting Human Trafficking Survivors and Communities*

Violence Against Women Services Programs Fund- 9/1/2024-8/31/2025

- **Abilene Palm House CJD Award-\$74,790**
Project Title: *Training on Communication and Conflict Resolution for Victims and Victim Assistance Support*
- **West Central Texas Council of Governments CJD Award-\$22,400**
Project Title: *Enhanced Regional Law Enforcement Training Project*

State Criminal Justice Planning (421) Fund-9/1/2023-8/31/2025

- **West Central Texas Council of Governments**
CJD Award- \$188,598
Project Title: *Regional Law Enforcement Academy*

