



Matagorda County Community Plan

2010-2011

December, 2010 Final Revision

Matagorda County Community Plan

What Is a Community Plan?

This plan is formally known as the Matagorda County Criminal Justice Community Plan, the purpose of which is to identify gaps in services regarding criminal justice issues. The Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office (CJD) requires that each county in Texas have a Criminal Justice Community Plan.

The document that is represented here reflects the efforts of many in Matagorda County that are concerned with assuring that any gaps in services that are identified are closed in a way that will both solve the problem and provide as great a benefit to the community as possible. It is with grateful acknowledgement that the names of those involved in the process of developing this plan are listed in the following pages under Part II (Community Planning Group).

Though the final draft of this plan was completed in December of 2010, this is a work in progress. New criminal justice goals are identified, the Planning Group changes as a result of individual and agency circumstances, and requirements concerning the makeup of the Plan are subject to change from year to year. Thus, Matagorda County is interested in keeping up with these changes, and including such in updates that will be posted from time to time.

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

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

Areas Represented

Incorporated Communities:

Bay City
Palacios

Unincorporated Communities:

Van Vleck	Blessing	Wadsworth	Cedar Lane	Ashwood
Matagorda	Midfield	Collegeport	Pledger	Cedar Lake
El Maton	Markham	Sargent	Sugar Valley	

School Districts:

Bay City Independent School District	Matagorda Independent School District
Palacios Independent School District	Van Vleck Independent School District
Tidehaven Independent School District	

Brief description and history of Matagorda County:

History: Matagorda County was an early home of the Karankawa Indians and landing place of La Salle in 1685. It began its existence as a Spanish province, and was settled in 1822-1836 by colonists of Stephen F. Austin. It is one of the original 23 counties and is part of Stephen F. Austin's original grant. It contained Texas' third largest town at the time of the Battle of the Alamo, and was one of the few Civil War battle sites in Texas.

Matagorda was county seat from 1837-1894, but the county seat was moved to Bay City in 1894. In the early days Matagorda County was on a key route between settlements. The Colorado River was a major obstacle for early travelers, and many-used Cayce's Ferry. During Texas' republic days, a garrison of 30-40 men were stationed in Matagorda County near the ferry.

Matagorda County has contributed to the development of Texas culture – the pioneer woman teacher, Mary S. Wightman Helms, and early newspaper, "The Matagorda Bulletin," as well as the first Episcopal Church.

Description: Matagorda County is centered in the Texas Coastal Bend at the crossroads of the Colorado River and the Gulf of Mexico, and is less than two hours away from Houston and Corpus Christi. With an agricultural background, our natural resources, and modern technology; we provide a unique blend that has proved attractive to high-tech nuclear and petrochemical industries. We have many miles of unspoiled beaches, exceptional fishing and boating, hunting, golf, and unrivaled birding opportunities.

Demographics: Matagorda County is a rural area with a population of 37,957 according to the 2000 Census*. Males make up (18,845) 49.6% of the population and females (19,112) 50.4% of the population. There are 13,901 households with 40.9% under the age of 18 and 24.4% over the age of 65*. Average family size is 3.25. There are 11,174 children. Median household income is \$32,573, with the state average being \$39,927. Individuals below poverty level are at 18.5%, the state average is 15.4%*. Children living in poverty are at 23.7%*. According to the Texas Workforce Commission, unemployment rate for Matagorda County in November 2009 is 11.2%, and the state average is 8.3 %.

Ethnic Make-up: Caucasian 67.8%
Hispanic 31.3%
African American 12.7%
Asian 2.4%

Community Planning Team

Community Plan Coordinator for Matagorda County: Harriet Townsend / Executive Secretary to County Judge / Matagorda County

In developing this Community Plan, members of the team were divided into several focus groups for the purpose of narrowing the scope of research and data that are incorporated into the Plan. Some members may serve in multiple capacities/categories.

Juvenile Services:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Judge Jeanette Bell	Bay City Municipal Court and Justice of the Peace, #1
Judge Suzan Thompson	Bay City Municipal Court and Justice of the Peace, #2
Pat Curry	Rio Colorado American Red Cross
Tammy Exum	Rio Colorado American Red Cross
Vicki Adams	Palacios Independent School District
Theresa Hawkins	Matagorda County Teen Court
John O'Brien	Van Vleck Independent School District
Christie Dement	Van Vleck Independent School District
Laura Shay	Matagorda Independent School District
Janet Peden	Boys and Girls Club, Bay City
David LaVassaur	Boys and Girls Club, Bay City
Don Stoffel	Boys and Girls Club, Palacios
Eugene Davis	Matagorda County Women's Crisis Center
Tami Savage	Boys and Girls Club, Bay City

Victim Services:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Monica Tucker	Matagorda County Women's Crisis Center
Letisia C. Ramos	Bay City Police Department
Teresa Hawkins	Teen Court
Julia Gonzales	Matagorda County United Way
Celeste Harrison	MEHOP
Kathy King	Coastal Clipper Newsletter

Susan Maxwell	Matagorda County District Attorney's Office
Charles King	Coastal Clipper Newsletter
Mitch Thames	Bay City Chamber of Commerce

Law Enforcement:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Judge Craig Estlinbaum	District Judge, 130 th Judicial District
Lieutenant Robert Lister	City of Bay City Police Department
Chief David Miles	City of Palacios Police Department
Andrew Lewis	City of Bay City Police Department
Steven Reis	Matagorda County District Attorney's Office
Carla Post	Matagorda County District Attorney's Office
Susan Maxwell	Matagorda County District Attorney's Office
Mayor Richard Knapik	City of Bay City
Mayor Joe Morton	City of Palacios
Steven Baker	Matagorda County Sheriff's Office
Bruce Page	Matagorda County Sheriff's Office
Julia Gonzales	Matagorda County United Way
Karma Chambless	Matagorda County CSCD
Jill Cornelius	Matagorda County Attorney
Chief L C Cunningham, Jr.	Bay City ISD Police Department

Mental Health:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name</i>
Steven Baker	Mental Health Officer, Matagorda County Sheriff's Office
Willie Welch	Texana Center Clinic

Identification of Community Problems

General Public Safety Needs and Issues

Matagorda County is a diverse rural community that is experiencing issues that are usually confined to larger cities. Increased reporting of child sexual assaults, sexual assault, drug activity, juvenile crime, property crime, gang violence and domestic violence has kept law enforcement and victim services busy.. Poverty and unemployment are high in Matagorda County, which can be attributed to an increase in crime. When crime increases demands for victims services increase. The community faces a higher unemployment and poverty rate than the statewide averages according to the 2007 Census Information and 2009 Texas Workforce Commission information: 30.3% of Matagorda County’s population under 18, live in poverty according to Census Bureau. Child abuse is at 15% compared to the statewide average of 7.9%. Local law enforcement reports an increase in domestic violence and sexual assault calls. Child Protective Services report an increase in child sexual assault. Additional resources are needed to address these issues. Reduced funding has affected victims’ services and nearly all-social providers are facing and have faced budget shortfalls. The community must address the needs for professional counseling, affordable legal services, affordable housing, utility and rental assistance, affordable medical care, transportation, crime prevention programs, community awareness programs, bi-lingual services, child and teen programs, child day care, community education, professional education, crisis intervention services, mental health services, substance abuse and expansion of job training and skill building programs.

In each of the areas below, problems are identified and data is included that supports both the existence and severity of the problems as they are found in Matagorda County. Below is a discussion of the problems, the manner in which the problems are being addressed, and strategically how responses to these community problems could be improved.

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

<i>Identified Problem</i>	<i>Data Collection</i>
Lack of after-school programs and services for youth.	Estimated County data shows nearly 70% of students in Matagorda County are latchkey kids with no adult at home when they arrive from school.
Matagorda County has begun to address these issues with more youth groups being started in the local churches, increased opportunities in schools, and the opening of youth organizations such as the Boys & Girls Club of Bay City and Matagorda County, and Palacios Boys and Girls Club	

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Juvenile Delinquency	<p>Between December 1, 2008 and November 30, 2010 there were a total of 385 referrals to the Matagorda County Juvenile Probation Department. The ages of these juveniles were primarily between 13 and 16 years old. The referrals came from law enforcement agencies, schools, and private citizens. 82 of these referrals were at the Felony level including Sexual Assaults, Aggravated Assaults, Burglary, Theft, Motor Vehicle Theft, Drug Offenses, and Weapon Offenses.</p> <p>There were 211 misdemeanor referrals including Weapons Violations, Assault, Theft, Drug Offenses, and Violations of Probation.</p>
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There are several different patterns and levels of juvenile delinquency. Juvenile Offenders may be Violent, Non-Violent, First-time offenders or Habitual. Some of the problems will be related and could lead to a progression to more serious acts of delinquency.

There are several different agencies that focus on juvenile delinquency. The Matagorda County Juvenile Probation Department, The Matagorda County Criminal District Attorney's Office, the Municipal and Justice Courts, Boys & Girls Club of Bay City and Matagorda County, and Children's Protective Services handle the majority of juvenile delinquency issues.

Law Enforcement, School Police Departments and School Attendance Offices also play a vital role in coping with juvenile delinquency and it's issues. The schools also offer various services that address health, mental health, education and social needs.

There has been a significant decrease in the number of referrals to the Juvenile Department over the last year. There is no one explanation for this decrease and it seems to be a state wide occurrence. County departments and agencies, the programs in place and community support play a fundamental role in the decrease of juvenile referrals. With the number of county residents expected to rise in the next few years, we can expect the number of referrals to also rise.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Children in Need of Supervision	There were 102 children in Need of Supervision (CHINS) referrals including Truancy, Runaway, Theft, Disorderly Conduct, Liquor Law violations and School Expulsions.
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There are several issues concerning Children in Need of Supervision, the most prevalent being lack of resources and programs and the lack of transportation. For the most part, unless it is a habitual problem, these children are often referred to the Juvenile Probation office for a one time counseling session with a Juvenile Probation Officer. The

Probation Officer will sometimes make referrals to the S.T.A.R. Program. Matagorda County currently has two specific justices of the peace that handle all failure to attend school cases and parent contributing to nonattendance with an aggressive approach in counseling both parents and children. Both courts have had great success with their programs and approach to children not attending school from the elementary to the high school level. When a child is expelled from school, they will be referred to the Matagorda County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program.

Identified Problem *Data Collection*

Substance Abuse by Juveniles	There were a total of 32 reported drug related referrals to the Juvenile Probation Department during this reporting period.
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The use of drugs and alcohol and juvenile delinquency can be directly related. Law Enforcement, School Officials, and the Juvenile Probation Department all identify substance abuse as a significant issue.

Although there were only 32 referrals for Drug Offenses throughout the year, it is the feeling of the community-planning group that the use of drugs and alcohol is far more prevalent than reported. Many of the juveniles that have been referred for various other offenses have reported that they use drugs or alcohol on a regular basis. Many of the violations of probation for juvenile offenders are for drug use. In many instances, drugs and alcohol can be attributed to many different problem areas including juvenile violence, truancy and curfew violations, thefts, and sexual activity.

Many times drugs or alcohol are being used by parents or other family members in the home. This negative environment can only increase the chance that the juveniles are going to experiment or continue to use, and further increase the chance of juvenile delinquency.

Identified Problem *Data Collection*

Teen Pregnancy	Matagorda County schools report an average of 3.1% for teen pregnancies in the age groups of 7-12 grades.
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The community of Bay City is developing plans to bring more youth activities to the city and county. Currently there is no bowling alley, no movie theatre, and very little teen activities. The more activities we have for our young people the less likely they are to participate in negative behaviors.

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

<i>Identified Problem</i>	<i>Data Collection</i>
Domestic Violence	Department of Public Safety Statistics show that over the last three years the number of domestic violence cases reported has seen an increase and drop, from 508 in 2007 to 542 in 2008 to 474 in 2009. Over the same years, the number of Crisis Center clients has stayed about the same. The Crisis Center is the only provider of emergency shelter and crisis intervention services for domestic violence victims in Matagorda County.
<p>The Matagorda County Women’s Crisis Center (The Crisis Center) has been providing services to domestic violence victims in Matagorda County since 1984 and in Wharton County since 1992. Two full time advocates deliver crisis intervention services to victims of domestic violence, along with shelter advocates. The Crisis Center works closely with local law enforcement agencies, the district attorney’s office, local medical providers, and other social service providers to provide immediate crisis intervention services to victims of domestic violence. Communication from community sources state that the need continues to grow, with many victims reluctant to come forward. Through the Crisis Center, victims have access to immediate safety, emotional and personal advocacy. Services include the 24 hour hotline, emergency shelter, peer support, licensed professional counseling, safety planning, peer legal advocacy for protective orders, case management, crime victim compensation benefits, and many more.</p>	

<i>Identified Problem</i>	<i>Data Collection</i>
Sexual Assault	Department of Public Safety statistics show that in 2007 Matagorda County had 14 rapes reported, in 2008, 14 rapes reported, and in 2009, 12 rapes reported. The Matagorda County Women’s Crisis Center provided services for some 50-60 victims from Matagorda County each of these years.
<p>The Matagorda County Women’s Crisis Center provides immediate crisis intervention with medical accompaniment for all sexual assault victims. In addition services include the 24 hour hotline, emergency shelter, peer support, licensed professional counseling, legal advocacy and accompaniment to all legal proceedings and medical exams, case management, and many more services. From the response, most victims do not report, but may seek services.</p>	

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Insufficient Bilingual Services	The Hispanic community makes up some 37% of the population in Matagorda County. Many do not speak English fluently, making it difficult to provide service.
The Crisis Center has bilingual advocates in Matagorda County; however, several of the advocates do not speak Spanish. Many Hispanics are reluctant to come forward for services because of cultural issues, or a lack of awareness that there are services available.	

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Day Care Assistance	90% of Crisis Center shelter clients lack funds to obtain quality day care for their children. Average cost for day care is \$400.00 per child monthly.
Victims of domestic violence have minimum paying jobs with very little funds to find quality daycare for their children. Funding is needed to assist with child care.	

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Equipment and furniture need for the Child Assessment Center	The Crisis Center has been providing victim services since 1984. Since that time the center has become technologically based. The center needs to replace outdated, broken, and worn out equipment much of which has been donated over the years. Equipment needs include security cameras, computers, laptops, copiers, computer chairs, shredders, fax machines, filing cabinets, a new telephone system, training aids, conference table and chairs. The shelter has a need for new beds, cribs, shelter appliances, such as modern commercial stove, dishwasher, freezers, refrigerators, computer, and dining room tables.
In order to provide the best possible victim services and to effectively communicate with staff along with local, state and federal agencies, funding is needed to update and replace old equipment, telephone systems and furniture.	

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Lack of Counseling and medical services for adult and child victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Child Protective Service cases for Matagorda County have risen steadily over the last three years: 269 in 2008, 271 in 2009, 270 in 2010. At present children who are victims of crime are taken out of county for medical examination and interviews. There is not a Child Advocacy Center in Matagorda County. At present there is not a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner in Matagorda County. All sexual assault victims, adults and children, must be taken out of county. The poverty rate was last estimated at 18% in 2008, and unemployment was 11.1% in October of 2010. Better than 90% of the clients served are low income, lacking insurance to access needed mental health and medical services.

The Crisis Center provides accompaniment services for victims of sexual assault. These accompaniments are either to Victoria, Ft Bend, Brazoria, or Harris Counties. Traveling this far adds to the trauma for the victim. At present, there are no specific services for victims who are children in the area of advocacy, or examiner. The Crisis Center professional counselor provides free counseling for clients of the center. Kids In Distress provides therapy for sexually, physically, and mentally abused children. However, there are gaps in reaching the victim population. Victimization reaches not only the primary victim, but the secondary victims who make up the household. Many times secondary victims are the children. At present, services are not available to adequately treat the trauma received by secondary victims. Studies have shown that children raised in households of violence, domestic in this case, are far more likely to learn and act out this pattern of behavior as older children, teens, and adults.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Emergency Services

The poverty rate of Matagorda County was estimated at 18% in 2008, unemployment at 11.1% in October 2010, and over 90% of the clients of the Crisis Center being low income, the issue of emergency services is a pressing need for victims. In rural areas, such as Matagorda County, services such as public transportation and specialized forms of assistance are nonexistent.

The Crisis Center seeks to provide case management services, seeking to provide needed help to victims for recovery and success, while directing clients to other service providers who can assist with needed help. However, funding for basics, such as rent and utility assistance, job readiness training, reliable transportation, work clothing, food, personal hygiene products, necessary legal documents, child care, mental health, medical, and other services are in short supply, with not enough funds and services available for clients. The Crisis Center will provide limited transportation assistance, primary to shelter residents, however, this is narrow in scope to within a few miles radius of the shelter in Bay City.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Need for community collaboration	Matagorda County is a rural area who has dedicated and committed individuals who work tirelessly to serve those whose lives have been affected by domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Collaboration and a community coordinated response to these crimes is essential in reducing these problems in our community. Communication among criminal justice based programs and shelter program is essential to accommodate the victim's needs.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Lack of Affordable Legal Services	Clients of the Crisis Center depend upon the County Attorney for protective orders. Other services are provided by Legal Aid, which comes to the county sporadically. Low income clients cannot access needed legal services within the county such as divorce and child issue cases.
<p>There is a need for pro bono assistance and resources to help with legal issues. No cost or affordable legal assistance is a critical need in our local area. Eighty-five percent of our family violence victims and their children are in need of legal assistance. When a victim flees an abusive situation, she is often without financial resources, while her abuser may have ample resources to obtain legal representation. When the victim cannot obtain legal services, she is threatened with losing her children and will usually return to her abuser to keep her children. Once she has returned, she and the children feel powerless to escape the abuse and the consequences are often devastating. In addition, family violence victims require divorce decrees, orders for support and supervised visitation, and modifying previous custody orders. Victims must have access to legal resources for special needs such as emergency housing, immigration, tenant issues and in some cases the need arises for representation in matters of guardianship, custody and adoption.</p>	

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Specialized Training for Law Enforcement and Service Providers	
<p>The turnover in law enforcement and in the social service sector is regular and constant. Frequent specialized training in dealing with domestic, sexual assault, and child victims of crime is needed on an annual/biannual basis. Clients are frequently reporting frustration by law enforcement personnel that results in inappropriate handling of cases. Also, there is presently no Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program within the county.</p>	

Training, with stipends for observation/interning, along with monies for needed medical equipment and supplies are an obstacle to starting the SANE program.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Batterer Intervention Program	Presently there is not a Batterer Intervention Program in Matagorda County
The Crisis Center works with a private company that offers the Batterer Intervention Program in Wharton. Seeking help for the batterer is paramount if there is ever going to be lasting change.	

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Special Population Groups	A rising need is in the area of youth: bullying and teen dating violence.
The Crisis Center has an outstanding individual that deals with bullying in the younger grades. His duties are spread over two counties. Having more resources would help to provide adequate coverage and impact. In the area of teen dating violence, The Crisis Center has not had the resources to address this important issue. At present, volunteers are being actively pursued; however, volunteers are not always available.	

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Long Term Housing	There are two housing authorities in Matagorda County: Bay City and Palacios Housing Authority. The Bay City Housing Authority has 247 Section 8 vouchers and 92 housing units. The Palacios Housing Authority has 57 Section 8 vouchers and 44 housing units. HUD regulations specify that homeless individuals have a priority with public housing.
The Matagorda Women's Crisis Center works with those in the shelter for an extended period of time. By working closing with the Housing Authority, the Center has discovered that by the time a family is ready to leave the shelter, most of the time, an apartment is available. Problems arise when the Center client is nonresidential; many times the only recourse is encouraging victims to enter the shelter before housing becomes available.	

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Emergency Housing	At present there is little available for the general population of homeless individuals and families. One or two groups provide shelter for specific population groups such as drug and post release for those who have been incarcerated, and the Crisis Center for domestic violence and sexual assault victims. A couple of local service agencies do provide overnight vouchers for the general homeless population at the local motels.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Lack of transportation	Public transportation is limited in Matagorda County. R-Transit provides transportation primarily to Medicare recipients and the elderly. Appointments must be made 24-72 hours in advance. In a community wide need assessment 2002 survey done by United Way, 36% of respondents reported lack of transportation a major problem.
Crime victims that lack transportation have had their access to service providers, social services, medical care, courts, the workplace, daycare and schools restricted due to lack of public transportation. Victims of domestic violence are often forced to leave their homes and possessions behind when they leave their abusive relationships. Without public transportation, victims have difficulty finding transportation to appear in court proceedings or take care of everyday tasks. These shortages result in staff from agencies such as the Crisis Center providing transportation to victims.	

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

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Sexual Assault	In 2009, from January 1st to December 31 st , the Bay City Police Department received approximately 68 reports of Violent Crime: 1 Homicide, 10 sexual assaults, 29 Aggravated Assaults, and 28 Robberies; however, sexual assault remains the most <u>underreported</u> felony crime.
For survivors of sexual assault, counseling, advocacy, and accompaniment are essential for healing from the trauma. Studies show that the sooner a victim receives counseling and other support services the faster they recover and return to productive lives as compared to those who did not. We do have the Matagorda County Women's Crisis	

Center to assist in this area, but we need to ensure services are adequate to meet the needs of those affected by sexual assault including counseling, advocacy, crisis intervention, accompaniment, and other support services.

<i>Identified Problem</i>	<i>Data Collection</i>
Lack of Deputies/Officers to respond to mental health crisis situations.	Since January of 2009, the Bay City Police Department has responded to over 500 calls for assistance regarding mental health situations. Many of those have either been evaluated by a mental health officer, or transported to out of county mental health facilities. A conservative estimate of cost for each crisis case of this type is \$150 in deputy/officer time, vehicle, and fuel costs for transport. Even more critical is the loss of the availability of the deputy/officer for essential law enforcement duties.
The implementation of additional dedicated mental health deputies/officers and transportation means to support out-of-county crisis hospitalizations and evaluations.	

<i>Identified Problem</i>	<i>Data Collection</i>
Lack of Immediate & Consistent Advocacy for Victims of Violent and Non-Violent Crimes	From January 1 st to December 31 st , 2009, the Bay City Police Department had 68 reported violent crimes, which included 1 homicide, 10 sexual assaults, 29 aggravated assaults, and 28 robberies. There were 914 non-violent crimes reported; 219 burglaries, 690 thefts, and 5 motor vehicle thefts.
Crime statistics tell only part of the story. They do not show the actual number of victims affected by a single crime, nor do they reflect the scope of the financial and emotional impact personally experienced by the victims of both violent and non-violent crimes. Crime victimization affects all aspects of a person's life. The impact is immediate, and the effects can last for weeks, months and even years. Advocacy is vital to the stabilization, healing and rebuilding of victims' lives, and may be needed long after a case may or may not have completed its route through the criminal justice system. Advocacy for crime victims includes, but is not limited to, those services that are legally mandated to be provided by criminal justice based agencies. State law requires criminal justice agencies to provide victims with certain information related to the criminal justice process; crime victim's rights; the Texas Crime Victims' Compensation Fund; certain notifications if requested by the victim; contact information for law enforcement, and prosecutors' legal mandates. For justice to be served, crime victims must have access to community based advocacy services which aids them in healing and rebuilding their lives. Community based nonprofit organizations provide immediate and long term advocacy services to crime victims such as crisis intervention; shelter; psychological counseling; medical services; legal services; transportation; emergency financial assistance; information; referrals; justice advocacy; peer grief support; assistance with crime victim compensation; criminal justice and victims' rights information; among	

other valuable assistance.

Through collaboration, system and community based agencies can build capacity to better serve victims of crime. We need to ensure adequate advocacy services are available to victims of all types of crime. This can be done by increasing collaborative efforts among system and community based agencies. Priority should be placed on shoring up existing gaps to strengthen short and long-term victim service delivery. Such efforts will help to insure that more victims of crime receive the immediate and consistent advocacy they need and deserve.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Substance Abuse

Matagorda County CSCD – Substance Abuse’s effect on Matagorda County has been well documented through an examination of Substance Abuse in Probation Population. From September 9, 2009 thru September 28, 2010 the following information represented the impact on the area: Of the offenders receiving direct supervision by the Matagorda County CSCD, 21% are DWI/DUI offenders. This represents 11% of the felons under direct supervision and 41% of those under supervision for misdemeanors.

20% of the offenders are on probation for drug related offenses. This represents 28% of the felons under direct supervision and 6% of those under supervision for misdemeanor offenses.

42% of the offenders under direct supervision are being supervised for a substance abuse related offense (including DWI, DUI, drug charges). This number does NOT represent those offenders who are under supervision for other offenses but have exhibited a substance abuse problem.

17% of offenders whose supervision was revoked were on probation for controlled substance offenses. 13% of offenders whose supervision was revoked were on probation for DWI/DUI. 28% of the offenders whose supervision was revoked indicated that they had problems related to substance abuse.

These statistics are particularly alarming because there are no existing Chemical Dependency Treatment facilities in Matagorda County. The outlying region does not have public transport and the nearest outpatient facilities providing a structured program are at least 50 miles away. County officials rely upon the very limited private practitioners to assist with substance abuse issues. While this is one avenue, private therapists are not equipped to accommodate the volume of offenders in need of intensive/structured counseling programs. The county received no funds for substance abuse treatment.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Lack of a Juvenile Detention Facility in close proximity	From January 1 st through November 20, 2007, there were 111 juvenile transports made to and from Victoria Regional Juvenile Detention Center, in Victoria by Matagorda County Sheriff's Department, Bay City Police Department, and Palacios Police Department. Currently Victoria Regional Detention Center is the closest juvenile detention center located near Matagorda County. There were also several juvenile transports made by the agencies to different TYC facilities. With 111 transports made @ 126 miles per round trip to Victoria, totaled to 15,624 miles placed on department vehicles. It takes approximately 2 hours per round trip to Victoria, and totals 222 manpower hours. These transports are made primarily by patrol officers, taking an officer off of the streets to transport the juvenile between two and three hours.
Matagorda County needs a juvenile detention facility either closer to Matagorda County or in Matagorda County, thereby decreasing the time needed to transport our juveniles. But as an alternative, we need a countywide juvenile transport officer, and patrol unit. This position could primarily transport juveniles to and from the detention center for court, detention hearings, etc. When there are no transports to be made, this officer could assist juvenile related cases throughout the county.	

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

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Lack of short term psychiatric placement facility	Matagorda County admitted 30 patients to Austin State Hospital in 2009, and 40 in 2010, with some being returned just days later.
Some people have a traumatic incident in their lives that cause depression and do not need to go to Austin State Hospital. We need a facility closer to home that could be used for short term patients that are not classified disturbed enough for Austin State Hospital.	

Resources Available

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

Juvenile Justice:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Bay City Independent School District		School
Matagorda Independent School District		School
Palacios Independent School District		School
Tidehaven Independent School District		School
Van Vleck Independent School District		School
Matagorda County D.A.'s Office	Prosecution	Prosecutes Juvenile Cases
Juvenile Probation Department		Supervises the probation of juvenile offenders. Operates the Matagorda County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program and the Motivation Day/ALERT Program.
Children's Protective Services	Investigation	Investigates reports of abuse and neglect of children, provides services to help youth in foster care, places children in foster care.
Matagorda County CASA	Non-Profit	Provides Court Appointed Special Advocates for abused and neglected children involved in the courts. Provides referral information, awareness programs, and crime victims' compensation help and information.
Kids in Distress (KID)	Non-Profit	
Matagorda County Teen Court Program	Non-Profit	Receives referrals from Courts, Schools, Law Enforcement and other agencies for Youth 12-17 with violations of the law. Conduct sentencing hearing and supervise community service for youth. Provide youth counseling and education.

Law Enforcement:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Matagorda County Sheriff's Department	Law Enforcement	Provides information to victims regarding the investigation of their case and assistance with Crime Victim Compensation.
Bay City Police Department	Law Enforcement	Provides information to victims regarding the investigation of their case and assistance with Crime Victim Compensation.
Palacios Police Department	Law Enforcement	Provides information to victims regarding the investigation of their case and assistance with Crime Victim Compensation.
Matagorda County Crime Stoppers	Law Enforcement/Citizen Program	Provides case incentives to witnesses to come forward and report crimes
Matagorda County District Attorney's Office	Prosecution	Provides victims with information, referrals, assistance with Crime Victim Compensation and court notification.

Victim Services:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Matagorda County Women's Crisis Center	Non-Profit agency for domestic violence and sexual assault victims	Provides crisis intervention services to victim's of domestic violence and sexual assault which includes 24-hour hotline, shelter, professional counseling, transportation, accompaniment to hospitals, courts and law enforcement, assistance with protective orders.
United Way of Matagorda County	Non-Profit	Provides community resources and referrals to other agencies that assist citizens in need.
Community Resource Coordination Group for Families (CRCGS)	Non-Profit	Coordinates community resources to assist citizens in need.
Child Protective Services	Investigation	Investigates reports of abuse and neglect of children, and contracts with others to provide clients with specialized services.

Matagorda County District Attorney's Office	Prosecution	Provides victims with information, referrals, assistance with Crime Victim Compensation and court notification.
Matagorda County Crime Stoppers	Crime Victim Group	Support Group for crime victims to share thoughts and feelings on individual experiences and ideas for purpose of assisting other victims.
Matagorda County CASA	Non-Profit	Provides trained child advocates who act as Guardians ad Litem for abused and neglected children. Provides community awareness and educational programs as well as referral information.
Matagorda County Teen Court	Non-Profit	Provides victim services for Teen victims of crime and their families.

Health / Medical / Substance Abuse:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Bay Area Council on Drugs and Alcohol	Non-Profit	Provides assessments and referrals to those with substance abuse issues.
Matagorda Episcopal Health Outreach Program (MEHOP)	Non-Profit	Mission is "to improve the health status of clients by providing quality primary healthcare services and spiritual care to people in the communities it serves regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, or the ability to pay". MEHOP began in 1998 through a vision of three Episcopal churches in Matagorda County who identified a medical need for the underserved rural population. In June 1999, MEHOP began delivering acute and primary medical services using a mobile van, as a way to provide access to health care for the underserved. In June 2005, MEHOP broadened its scope and opened a permanent fixed site facility in Bay City.

Prevention / Intervention:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Matagorda County Women's Crisis Center	Non-Profit	Provides shelter and crisis intervention services to domestic violence and sexual assault victims. The center also provides community awareness programs and educational programs to the community.
Matagorda County CASA	Non-Profit	Provides trained community volunteers who speak for the best interest of abused and neglected children in court. Provides educational and awareness programs, and referral/information on area resources.
Matagorda County Teen Court Program	Non-Profit	Provides crisis intervention and intervention projects and services for teen offenders, youth 12-17 years of age and teen victims and their families. Provides youth community service projects throughout the County on a weekly basis. Provides Street Law legal related workshops and educational programs for youth to help them learn how to know the law and live within its limits.
Texana Mental Health		Provides assessment, treatment, and supportive assistance to serious and persistent mentally ill adults and seriously emotionally disturbed children and adolescents with a goal of promoting stabilization and empowering individuals to increase their success in leading functional and productive lives within their community, in the workplace, and in their homes. A crisis hotline is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist individuals in crisis.

Interagency Cooperation

In the space below write a description of how the various resources listed in the previous pages could cooperatively work together to accomplish the goal of closing identified gaps in services:

The Matagorda County Women's Crisis Center has cooperative working agreements with all area law enforcement agencies, district attorney's office, Child Protective Services and local hospitals as well with other social service providers to insure that victims will receive the best possible crisis services available. The Crisis Center is continuing its efforts to coordinate a Sexual Assault Response Team (SA RT) in an effort to provide effective services to sexual assault victims; this is being done in a two-county wide area. Additionally, the center coordinates all community resources for domestic violence and sexual assault victims through its hotline, offices and outreach office as well as providing shelter. The Matagorda County Women's Crisis Center is working hard to reduce the incidents of sexual assault and domestic violence in our community through crisis intervention services, advocacy, community awareness, professional trainings and community involvement.

The Matagorda County Teen Court Program has cooperative working agreements with Juvenile Probation, Bay City Police Department, The Matagorda County Sheriff Department, Van Vleck ISD, Bay City ISD Police Department, The United Way, The Matagorda County Women's Crises Center, the Literacy Volunteers of America, the Boy Scouts of America, the Bay City Municipal Court and Justices of the Peace in Matagorda County. In addition, the program has working arrangements with local churches and non-profit agencies where youth perform community service on a weekly basis year around. Teen Court conducts Law related education projects in connections with Schools throughout the County. The Teen Court program recently opened an office in Palacios and works with governmental and non-profits agencies in the Palacios area. The program also has working arrangements with St. John Baptist Church, Bethlehem Christian Church and St. Mark Baptist Church to help youth and families in the Van Vleck, Cedar Lane, Cedar Lake and Sargent Areas.

Matagorda County CASA has cooperative working agreements with law enforcement, County Attorney, District Judge, and Children's Protective Services to ensure that child victims receive appropriate services, proper legal representation, ultimately leading to placement in safe, nurturing, permanent homes. CASA acts as a liaison among these agencies advocating for the best interest of abused and neglected children, ensuring that child victims' cases progress in a timely manner reduction the amount of time a child must stay in

the State's custody. In addition, CASA provides information and referrals, community awareness programs, educational materials, and free advocacy training to community volunteers. Law enforcement, the County and District Attorneys, CASA, and Children's Protective Services could further enhance services to child victims by formulating and agreeing to a plan that would allow child abuse cases and criminal cases to progress smoothly without further victimizing the children.

Fort Bend Regional Council on Substance Abuse is a potential partner to provide Substance Abuse Treatment services.

Long-Range Plan Development, Monitoring and Evaluation

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

The Matagorda County Community Planning Team strives to meet periodically to review the plan and make necessary additions and deletions. At least one formal meeting of the entire group is held each fall, but agency and community representatives typically submit suggestions and changes via telephone and e-mail throughout the year to the Community Planning Coordinator.

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

It is the intent of the Community Planning Group to improve outcomes for Matagorda County families struggling with problems described in the plan's focus areas. Efforts are being made by many Matagorda County agencies and organizations to address problems with local funds as well as grant funds from multiple state and federal sources. To the extent that these funds are available, the Community Planning Team will continue to urge agencies to provide programming that addresses the outlined focus areas.

Contact Information

Matagorda County Community Planning Coordinator

Harriet Townsend, Executive Secretary to County Judge
Matagorda County Courthouse
1700 7th Street, Room 301
Bay City, Texas 77414

Matagorda County Community Planning Liaison from Houston-Galveston Area Council

Jim Mahood, Public Justice Planner, Houston-Galveston Area Council
P. O. Box 22777
Houston, Texas 77227-2777

This Plan is available on-line at www.co.matagorda.tx.us