CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS REGIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE PLAN 2016

A Strategic Plan for Meeting the Criminal Justice Needs of Region 23



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Executive Summary

Located centrally between Dallas, Houston and San Antonio, the Killeen, Temple, Fort Hood urbanized and seven counties that encompass and surround it face enormous challenges to ensuring the safety and well-being of citizens in a time of rapid economic growth spurred by wartime activity over the last decade and a half. Covering approximately 6,600 square miles, the counties of Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Milam, Mills and San Saba comprise the region referred to as 'Central Texas'. The region contains 30 cities, the largest of which is Killeen, several unincorporated communities and Fort Hood, the largest active duty armored post in the United States Armed Services. The Texas State Data Center projects the population in the region to grow by just under 50% by 2030, adding almost 545,000 people. This is equivalent to adding another city the size of Killeen in less than 15 years.

Established in 1968 by state enabling legislation, the Central Texas Council of Governments (CTCOG) is a voluntary association of, by and for local governments located in the counties of Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Milam, Mills and San Saba to assist those local governments in planning for common needs, cooperation for mutual benefit and coordination for sound regional development. Initially created as a sub-region, it gained full region status in 1974. The Central Texas Criminal Justice Regional Community Plan has been prepared by a team of staff and community volunteers of the CTCOG, referred to as the Regional Strategic Planning Team (planning team).

The team identified the following issues in the region involving Juvenile Justice Delinquency:

- Lack of diversion programs in schools.
- Lack of juvenile job/education training programs.
- Lack of juvenile substance abuse services.
- Lack of delinquency prevention based programs.
- Lack of training for law enforcement involving juvenile justice procedures.

The team identified the following issues under victim services:

- Lack of services provided to child abuse victims.
- Lack of services provided to domestic violence victims.
- Lack of services provided to sexual assault victims.
- Lack of services provided to victims of other violent crimes.
- Lack of training opportunities for first responders and the general public.

The team identified the following issues concerning law enforcement agencies in the region:

- Lack of proper training facilities and resources for law enforcement officers to train.
- Lack of proper equipment to keep officers safe.
- Lack of proper equipment to conduct investigations and evidence collection.
- Human trafficking and drug trafficking issues.

The team identified the following issues involving mental health and substance abuse issues:

- Lack of knowledge and understanding for individuals suffering from mental health issues/substance abuse issues.
- Lack of infrastructure to support substance abuse services and mental health services.
- Lack of funding to provide training to emergency response personnel on how to handle people with mental health issues.
- Lack of funding for implementation of prevention programs and strategies that decrease alcohol use, marijuana and prescription drug abuse.

Regional Profile

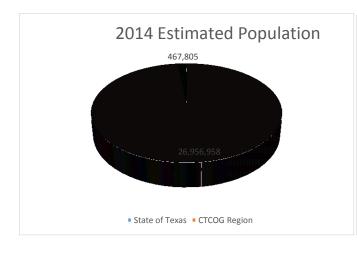
he Central Texas Council of Governments was established as a sub-region in 1968 and gained full regional status in 1974. The seven counties encompassed by the CTCOG region include Bell, Coryell, Hamilton, Lampasas, Milam,

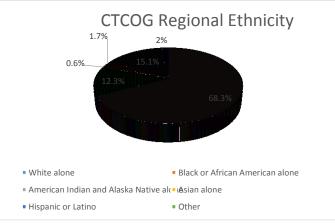


Mills and San Saba. These counties cover a total area of 6,559 square miles and contain 30 cities and several unincorporated communities.

Historically, the Central Texas population experienced steady growth on average. The regional population grew more than 200 percent in 60 years from almost 149,000 in 1950 to nearly 468,000 in 2014. During the same period, the State's population saw an increase by 314 percent.

The Texas State Data Center projects the population in the region to grow by almost 50% in the next 30 years. The suggested growth pattern would generate approximately 650,000 persons in the region by 2030.





Planning Team

PLAN COORDINATOR: Jerry Muhamet / Criminal Justice Division

In developing this Regional 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.

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Belton Police Department
Mills County Sheriff's Office
Mills County Sheriff's Office
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WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES IN OUR REGION?

In each of the areas on the following pages, problems are identified and data is included that supports both the existence and severity of gaps as they are found in region 23. Below the description and data are 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 Justice Priorities

Most of the services in the CTCOG region are focused on psychological treatment and programs designed to lower juvenile criminal activity. One of the gaps that exists in the region is the lack of services to help these juveniles find employment. These services include providing programs that offer juveniles training that will prepare them for the job market. Without a service to provide them the skills they need for continued success, these juveniles will be at a higher risk of recidivism.

Also, juveniles in the region lack extracurricular activities that provide a place for them to go and learn. Many families in the region are either single parents or both parents that are working. Many of these juveniles have to be left by themselves, with a family member or a daycare. Many families cannot afford the cost of daycare, so after school programs are a big support. These programs will provide a safe place for juveniles to go and they will help keep juveniles out of the juvenile justice system.

With an ever increasing overall population to include rapid growth of the juvenile populace, the CTCOG Region faces the same challenges as before in terms of recidivism. The steady increase in domestic criminal gang growth that targets, primarily, juveniles, puts the task of preventing youth from choosing a bad life path on community shoulders. Cooperatively, we can make a difference, as indicated by the charts below:

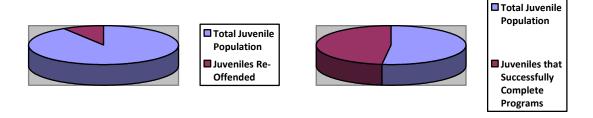
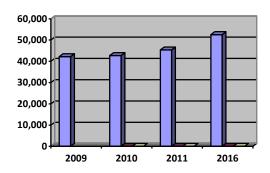


Figure 1Source: Crime In Texas Report 2013 Figure 2Source: Crime In Texas Report 2013

CTCOG Juvenile Population by Year



Priority #1	
Problem Identified	Data
Lack of juvenile diversion	Disciplinary placements (2012)
programs and school based	State average – 1.7%
diversion programs and	Temple ISD Bell Co – 3%
after school programs and	Killeen ISD Bell Co – 2.4%
activities.	Rogers ISD Bell Co – 2.2%
	Bartlett ISD Bell Co – 2.5%
Rate of Disciplinary	Gatesville ISD Coryell Co – 1/9%
Placements in Regional	Hamilton ISD Hamilton Co – 2.9%
ISD's is higher than or	Lampasas ISD Lampasas Co – 1.9%
equal to the state average.	Cameron ISD Milam Co – 1.7%
	Thorndale ISD Milam Co – 1.8%
	Milano ISD Milam Co – 2.1%
	(Source: Texas Education Agency TARP Report)

Secure funding and develop early intervention and prevention programs for at-risk youth. Programs should focus on stress conflict resolution, development of character, self-worth, confidence, abstinence and drug awareness. Coordinate programs to prevent duplication of services.

	Priority #2
Problem Identified	Data
Lack of juvenile job / education training programs.	The number of juveniles entering into the system continues to grow yearly. Currently, the region funds programs to address those issues psychologically but it falls short on education and job programs. If juveniles complete the mental health programs but do not possess skills to work, then they will be at a higher risk of recidivism.
Potential Response to Problem	
S	ional programs that address the juvenile unemployment rate and help reduce the poverty cycle. Coordinate programs to ervices.

Priority #3		
Problem Identified	Data	
Lack of funding for juvenile substance abuse services, to include treatment.	Currently, most of the funds used under region substance abuse programs goes toward substance abuse protection. Many communities are not funded enough to provide treatment and detection.	
Detential Post once to Duellon		

Secure more funding in order to allow for both detection of substance abuse, as well as treatment. Coordinate programs to prevent duplication f services.

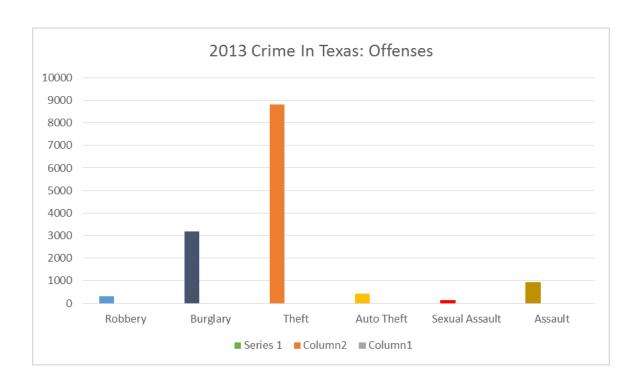
Priority #4	
Problem Identified	Data
Lack of services that address school based delinquency.	Currently, there are only a couple organizations that provide services to students on school campuses. These organizations are located in Bell County. The other counties currently do not have additional counseling, tutoring and social development services for their students.
Potential Response to Problem	
Additional funding and coordination with non-profit agencies to bring these services to other school districts throughout the region.	

Priority #5	
Problem Identified	Data
Lack of training for law enforcement on juvenile justice issues.	The juvenile population in the CTCOG Region continues to grow yearly. Law enforcement officers' interactions with juveniles will continue to rise. Dealing with juveniles requires different approaches and law enforcement officers will need to train constantly to stay up with changes in the law.
Potential Response to Problem	
Additional funding and training would ensure that officers are keeping updated on	

Additional funding and training would ensure that officers are keeping updated on changes in the law.

Victim Services Priorities

Most of the issues that are occurring with victim services is lack of resources and services for victims. Most of the agencies in the CTCOG Region have already taken cuts in funding which caused them to cut staff and resources. Crimes continue to rise which causes the amount of victims needing services to grow. If more funding is not made available, then victims will continue to suffer hardships and their recovery time will take even longer. From data reported through the 2013 Crime In Texas report, the State of Texas has experienced a, roughly, 1.5% decrease in family violence incidents, whereas child abuse and sexual assault incidents remain about the same. Often, the three categories are linked, further propagating the cycle of violence. As criminal activity increases, the number of victims increases exponentially. It is for this reason that the emphasis on supporting viable, sustainable victim service programs and training for law enforcement personnel will remain a priority for the CTCOG Region. Below is a regional view of the issues identified in this plan:



Priority #1	
Problem Identified	Data
Lack of services provided to child abuse victims.	Child abuse services in the region continues to rise yearly. Recently, the number of cases in child abuse have exhausted local resources funds. Many of the agencies in the region already work together and with law enforcement. Also, many rural communities also lack services nearby causing many victims hardships in receiving services.

Increase state and federal funding to programs that focus on child abuse services. Identify local funding to help offset federal and state funds. Also, raise public awareness about child abuse to encourage people to volunteer.

	Priority #2	
Problem Identified	Data	
Lack of services provided to domestic violence victims.	Domestic violence has exhibited a slight decrease in the region, however, victim services needs still remain high. Many victims are located far away from services. Also, the constant number of victims have exhausted local resources.	

Potential Response to Problem

Increase funding to agencies providing this service. Also, help agencies identify volunteers and increase staff.

Priority #3	
Problem Identified	Data
Lack of services provided to sexual assault victims.	There are limited services in this category throughout the region. Certain rural communities do not have facilities located nearby and this causes victims to travel far distances to receive services.
Potential Response to Problem	
Identify agencies already working in the region to extend services. Increase state and federal funding to programs that focus on victims of sexual assault.	

Identify local funding to help offset federal and state funds.

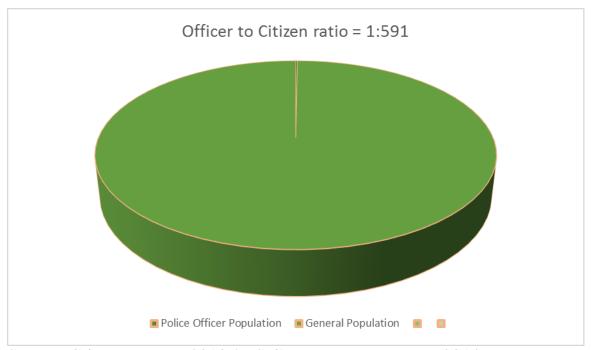
Priority #4		
Problem Identified	Data	
Lack of funds for victims of other violent crimes not covered by the above.	Currently, there are not enough funds in the region to support agencies that provide these services. Most of the funds are used to help child abuse victims, domestic abuse victims and victims of sexual assault.	

More funds are needed to provide this service. Also, encourage more participation from local communities in order to generate more funds.

Priority #5	
Problem Identified	Data
Lack of training opportunities for law enforcement, judges, advocates and counselors involving victims of crime.	The CTCOG Region is mostly comprised of small rural agencies. Many of these agencies do not have large training budgets. This hinders the region's ability to bring in training that address issues involving victims of crime.
Potential Response to Problem	
Encourage agencies to comb	bine funds to bring in training. Also, collaborate with ng throughout the region.

Law Enforcement Priorities

A majority of law enforcement issues in the CTCOG Region revolve around officer safety issues, equipment and training shortfalls. Many agencies in the CTCOG Region cannot generate enough revenue to sustain equipment purchases and personnel at the same time. Many criminals know this and take advantage of this by exploiting the region's weaknesses. Providing funding for officers to purchase equipment will help bridge the gap that criminals keep trying to exploit. Not only do these officers need the equipment to help bridge the gap, they also need the equipment to keep them safe. Additionally, the State requires certain mandated continuing education classes which many smaller agencies lack the budget for, or have to sequester funds from other areas to accommodate. Law enforcement faces evermore scrutiny from the public due to numerous, controversial deadly force incidents. New technology, along with training is not only necessary, but absolutely critical to law enforcement success in the region. Below is some statistical crime data for the seven county CTCOG Region:



Source: Crime In Texas 2013 / US Census Bureau Report 2014







Priority #1	
Problem Identified	Data
CTCOG Region lacks proper training facilities and resources for law enforcement officers to train causing an officer safety issue.	Currently, CTCOG Region has approximately 791 peace officers in service and the region's population continues to grow. Currently, agencies in the seven county region have to train using the Killeen Police range or Temple Police range. Some departments even have to travel out of region due to lack of resources or inability to secure time at the facilities due to high demand. As the amount of officers increases in response to population increase, it's becoming difficult for agencies to secure training, all of which is mandated by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement. (Source: The Texas Crime Report for 2014)

Develop an additional training range that is available to all agencies around the region. Also, purchase training equipment and resources that can be used by all agencies throughout the region.

Priority #2		
Problem Identified	Data	
The CTCOG Region lacks personnel serving as Mental Health Officers.	Currently, there are approximately 30 officers in our region that serve as mental Health Officers. The number of mental health calls is on the rise. Many departments are reporting an increase in Emergency Detention custody orders. There are not enough MHO officers to cover all shifts throughout the region.	
	(Source: Survey of local law enforcement agencies)	
Potential Response to Problem		
Coordinating training programmer law enforcement officers as	ams that will focus on educating and certifying additional Mental Health Officers.	

Priority #3		
Problem Identified	Data	
Law enforcement agencies throughout the CTCOG Region lack proper equipment to keep officers safe	There are numerous cities throughout the CTCOG Region that cannot afford to purchase equipment for their officers. Officers in these agencies are wearing 10 year old vests and up. They also do not have cameras, mobile data terminals or microphones in their vehicles nor on their persons. Most agencies are fortunate enough to be able to field barely enough vehicles for officers to use.	

Agencies need to purchase equipment (vests, radios, Mobile Data Terminals, lights, etc.) in order to improve officer safety.

	Priority #4
Problem Identified	Data
Law enforcement agencies in the region lack the proper equipment to conduct investigations, collect and process evidence.	Over the past several years, crimes requiring evidence collection, both for investigation and prosecution, have increased immensely. Many officers and investigators lack the essential equipment required to properly collect, store and catalogue evidence. Items include on-scene lighting, camera and video equipment and storage facilities. Lighting issues affect officer safety in the field and inhibit timely, thorough evidence collections at night. Proper collection and storage affects the ability of the officer or investigator to preserve and produce evidence for use in court.
Potential Response to Problem	
1 1	will aid in the recovery of evidence and investigations. enforcement officers covering investigations and evidence

Priority #5		
Problem Identified	Data	
Human Trafficking and Drug Trafficking.	There are numerous major highways and an interstate that run through the CTCOG Region. Many cities throughout the CTCOG Region serve as drop off points where drugs change hands. Human trafficking is also an issue in this region as this activity usually follows the same routes the drugs do. Many officers on the road lack the proper equipment they need to enhance their ability to hinder traffickers.	
Potential Response to Problem		
Purchase of drug interdiction equipment and law enforcement education programs.		

Mental Health & Substance Abuse Priorities

Priority #1		
Problem Identified	Data	
Lack of knowledge and understanding for individuals suffering from mental health issues / substance abuse issues.	Minimal education and training on mental health issues in the region.	
Potential Response to Problem		

Work to identify and develop programs that train individuals to help people with mental health and substance abuse issues. Work to educate and promote community awareness on these issues because the community and family are the first line of defense on these issues.

Priority #2		
Problem Identified	Data	
Lack of infrastructure to support substance abuse services and mental health services.	The CTCOG Region is mostly made up of rural communities. Many of these communities do not have facilities designated to handling these issues. Many of the people in these communities have to drive far distances in order to receive treatment.	
Potential Response to Problem		
Work with state agencies, he services to the region.	ospital and private sector organizations to bring remote	

8 · I	ining covering mental health issues and first responders'
8 · I	ining covering mental health issues and first responders'
response personnel on how to handle people with mental health issues.	conse to those situations are a relatively new topic. Most conders treat these individuals the same way they would one else. Unfortunately, some mental health cases require fferent method to help them. Many first responders lack training and find themselves in a bad situation when ng to help them.

More funding would allow agencies to bring in training that covers these topics. Currently, there are a few classes that widely cover the topic. However, there are agencies that provide specialized training on how to handle people that are suffering from mental health issues. CTCOG will continue to source appropriate training for law enforcement while seeking additional resources outside the law enforcement realm.

Priority #4			
Problem Identified	Data		
Lack of funding for implementation of prevention programs and strategies that decrease alcohol use, marijuana and prescription drug abuse.	There are limited resources and facilities dedicated to substance abuse in the rural areas of the region.		
Potential Response to Problem			

WHO IS DOING WHAT?

ncluded below are resources identified by the CTCOG Regional Planning Team that are available to provide services that could potentially help in closing criminal justice gaps.

JUVENILE JUSTICE:

Name of Agency

Central Texas COG
Bell County JPO
Coryell County JPO
Hamilton County JPO
Lampasas County JPO
Milam County JPO
Mills County JPO
San Saba County JPO
Lometa ISD
Communities In Schools

Agency Type

Non-profit agency
Juvenile Probation
School District
Non-profit agency

Description

Grant application & management
Provide services to juveniles
Provide after school activities
Provide on campus resources
For kids

LAW ENFORCEMENT:

Name of Agency

Bell County S.O.
Belton P.D.

Harker Heights P.D.

Killeen P.D.

Nolanville P.D.

Temple P.D.

Morgans Point Resort P.D. Police Department Troy P.D.

Police Department

Agency Type

Sheriff's Office
Police Department

Description

Located in Bell County

Salado P.D. Police Department Located in Bell County Coryell Co. S.O. Sheriff's Office Located in Coryell County Copperas Cove P.D. Police Department Located in Coryell County Police Department Gatesville P.D. Located in Coryell County Hamilton Co. S.O. Sheriff's Office Located in Hamilton County Lampasas Co. S.O. Located in Lampasas County Sheriff's Office Located in Lampasas County Lampasas P.D. Police Department Lometa P.D. Police Department Located in Lampasas County Milam Co. S.O. Sheriff's Office Located in Milam County Cameron P.D. Police Department Located in Milam County Milano P.D. Police Department Located in Milam County Police Department Located in Milam County Rockdale P.D. Police Department Located in Milam County Thorndale P.D. Sheriff's Office Mills Co. S.O. Located in Mills County Sheriff's Office San Saba Co. S.O. Located in San Saba County San Saba P.D. Police Department Located in San Saba County

VICTIM SERVICES:

Name of Agency	Agency Type	Description
Dove Project	Non-profit	Provides services to abused women
Aware Central Texas	Non-profit	Provides services to abused children
Families in Crisis	Non-profit	Provides services to abuse victims
Lone Star Legal Aid	Non-profit	Provides free legal services to victim
W.A.V. Project	Non-profit	Provides services to abused women
Hill Country CAC	Non-profit	Provides services to abused children
Central Texas CAC	Non-profit	Provides services to abused children

WHO CAN WORK WITH WHOM?

Typically, most agencies listed in this plan currently work with each other throughout the region. The W.A.V. Project in Goldthwaite and the Dove Project in San Saba provide space for each other if their shelters are full. Also, both of these agencies work with local law enforcement conducting investigations on family violence. The Hill Country and Central Texas Child Advocacy Centers work closely with local law enforcement when it comes to obtaining statements from children. They also provide valuable services to help children cope with traumas they have experienced. Communities in Schools and the Lometa ISD provide valuable services to school aged children. Also, Regional Juvenile Probation Officers work with CTCOG to identify gaps in the juvenile population and how funding should be used to address it. All agencies and organizations work to do two things: help victims of crime and help at-risk populations.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

the CTCOG Regional Planning Team works in conjunction with other planning groups in the region 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 CTCOG Regional 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 Planning Coordinator.

Drafts and annual updates of the Regional 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 Regional Planning Group to improve outcomes for region 23 families struggling with problems described in the Plan's focus areas. Efforts are being made by many Region 23 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 Regional Planning Team will continue to encourage agencies to provide programming that addresses the outlined focus areas.



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