

WISE COUNTY

**CRIMINAL
JUSTICE
COMMUNITY
PLAN**

FY2005

**Chairperson:
Debbie Denney
Sergeant Investigator
200 Rook Ramsey Drive
Decatur, TX 76234**

Introduction

The purpose of the five-year plan is to identify justice-related needs throughout Wise County so gaps in service, existing programs, new initiatives and funding opportunities may be addressed and resources increased. In addition, the planning process will encourage community inclusiveness and address non-justice functions such as transportation, housing, education, health, business, recreation and others having an impact on the justice system.

The organization and process of this comprehensive initiative will be different from past years. One goal of this new planning process is to identify avenues where the citizens, businesses, justice-related entities, not-for-profit agencies, faith-based and governmental entities work together more cohesively, form collaborations to reach more citizens and develop strategies to make more efficient use of all resources, in turn benefiting the entire community.

Numerous focus groups periodically meet throughout the county to discuss the concerns and prevalent issues facing the citizens of Wise County.

This plan has been prepared in response to the requirement that a Community Plan accompany all grant applications submitted to the Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office. The plan has been prepared by the Wise County Sheriff Office in conjunction with the Wise County Community Planning Group, which includes governmental, civic, non-profit service providers, schools, law enforcement, and citizens within our communities.

Wise County covers over a 922 square mile area, serving ten school districts. Wise County includes ten incorporated cities, and eleven communities. Wise County is bordered by Tarrant County to the South, Denton County to the East, Montague County to the North and Jack County to the West.

According to the 2000 Census Population Summary, the estimated population of Wise County is 48,793. The population of Wise County is steadily increasing with the continued development of Alliance Airport and the Texas Motor Speedway both located in Denton County on the southern border of Wise County.

The population of school age children, ranging from elementary school through high school age is a total of 11,391. This figure was obtained through Census 2000 Census.

The Wise County Community Planning Group has created a list of problems to be addressed by the various agencies with responsibility to deliver services to this area. The problems are listed and are grouped accordingly.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Crime Lab

Lack of resources in crime laboratories in Wise County contribute to slow processing of evidence and inability to complete work for presentation to prosecutor offices.

Homeland Security

There is a lack of a statewide, standardized communications system that would allow various governmental units to share information.

Lack of an accessible database of resources available to all entities hinders planning and accessing services in an emergency situation.

Lack of personnel trained to respond in a coordinated fashion in an emergency situation would hinder a quick coordinated response.

Lack of participation by the health care community will delay response time in an emergency situation.

There is a lack of local intelligence capabilities that slows discovery of potential threats.

Lack of security for critical targets presents a potential threat situation.

Lack of technology and equipment prevent analysis of potential threats and quick response.

Mental Health Alternatives

Lack of alternatives to incarceration and a lack of specialized services for the mentally ill requiring either releasing or imprisoning an offender who would be better suited for more intense supervision.

The need for specialized law enforcement/mental health units.

Investigate options for reducing wait times for law enforcement officers in situations where a person must be medically cleared before being evaluated on a warrant less psychiatric apprehension.

Substance Abuse-Prevention

Many individuals commit crimes under the influence of legal and illegal substances. There is a need to provide treatment to at-risk individual before they become involved in the justice system.

The development of increased public awareness of alcohol and substance abuse and the need for intervention through education and prevention.

The lack of resources to monitor and track substance abuse related crimes through out Wise County to aide in clearing multiple related offenses.

Substance Abuse-Prosecution

The addition of special prosecutors for Substance Abuse court cases. Prosecutors who work specifically with manufacturing, possession, and selling cases.

Technology

The lack of coordination in technology, including radio communication between agencies making it difficult to track criminals between various municipalities and surrounding counties.

There is difficulty maintaining pace with advancing technology, including equipment and education, and advancing technology skills by criminals make it difficult to track and prosecute the increase in computer crimes (e.g. Identity theft, economic crimes, and child pornography).

Crisis Response

The lack of resources to assemble a crisis response unit to aide law enforcement agency with natural and man-made disasters. A team of volunteers trained in responding to crisis situations.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Discipline in Schools

Inappropriate behavior in schools is not conducive to a safe and secure learning environment. Students are missing valuable instruction during school days due to suspensions as well as truancy. Students who do not experience success in schools are more likely not to finish school and often become a liability to the community.

Parental involvement to ensure truancy is addressed to minimize the dropout rate.

Additional law enforcement officers trained in juvenile and school related laws.

To continue the education process for accelerated academics for at-risk youth.

Juvenile Justice and Mental Health

Like the adult system, the system's capacity is insufficient to meet the need and there are gaps in service particularly in the areas of early identification and intervention services, crisis services, residential services and substance abuse treatment services.

Juvenile offenders when detained are taken to placement out of the county, as there is no detention facility in Wise County.

Substance Abuse

There are inadequate and fragmented services for youth with mental health and substance abuse problems involving with the juvenile justice system. Often there is overlap between service providers clientele, but many times the service providers are unaware that a client is being served by another agency.

There is no routine standardized screening and assessments done on youth exhibiting “risk factors” before the youth’s problems result in a crisis.

There are inadequate and fragmented services for youth with mental health and substance use/abuse problems. There are few programs specifically targeting the needs of juvenile justice youth and no easily accessible programs for co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders.

Substance Abuse

There are inadequate data to monitor substance use offenses with criminal behavior, (i.e. Burglary and Thefts)

The Texas Crime Summary indicates law enforcement agencies made 87,005 larceny-theft arrest in 2001. When compared with 2000, the number of person arrested for thefts increased .3%. Of the theft arrestees, 25 % were juveniles (16 and under) the age group with the largest number of theft arrestees was the 15 to 19 year-old group.

There are inadequate after school programs available to provide area youth with options other than getting involved with substance and alcohol abuse.

VICTIMS ISSUES

Family Violence

Including all areas of abuse and victimization that occurs between people related by blood, those who are participants in intimate relationships, ex-spouses or partners, or same sex relationships, who have lived in the same household.

- Child abuse/neglect
- Child support/child visitation
- Children in foster care
- Elderly victims
- Economic abuse
- High-risk youth
- Homelessness
- Mental Illness
- Non-English Speakers
- Secondary victims
- Sexual abuse/rape
- Stalking
- Substance abuse
- Undocumented residents
- Violence/abuse between intimate partners

Victim Needs

Victim’s demands on resources have increased as funding for resources/service providers

has decreased. The complex needs of victims puts a strain on service providers. A shortage of resources and a decrease of funding have made it difficult to provide the necessary assistance that allows victims to rise above their circumstances.

Barriers that victims must overcome include, but are not limited to, lack of transportation, lack of financial resources, lack of general life skills, traumatization, physical and mental disabilities and cultural issues. Victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and other violent and nonviolent crimes often lack awareness of available resources.

Violent Crimes

All areas of violent injury or death inflicted on another person. Including:

- * Children in foster care
- * DWI injuries/fatalities
- * Family violence
- * Gang prevention
- * Hate Crimes
- * High-risk youth
- * Homicide
- * Sexual assault/rape
- * Violence/abuse between intimate partners
- * Stalking
- * Injury to the elderly
- * Mental illness
- * Substance abuse
- * Non-English speaker
- * Secondary victims
- * Undocumented residents
- * Child abuse/neglect
- * Increasing need for family court prosecutor

COMMUNITY ISSUES

Transportation

There is inadequate public transportation throughout Wise County. With transportation resources employment issues and community involvement would increase.

Animal Control

With increasing animal population the need for additional manpower and increased shelter space.

Illegal Dumping

With Wise County being a rural county there is a tremendous amount of illegal dumping and needed resources to clean the dumpsites.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Chair: Debbie Denney
Title: Sergeant Investigator
Agency: Wise County Sheriff Office
Web Site: www.sheriff.co.wise.tx.us
E-Mail: denneyd@sheriff.co.wise.tx.us
Phone: (940) 627-5971

Co-Chair: Troy Gregg
Title: Sergeant Crime Prevention
Agency: Wise County Sheriff Office
Web Site: www.sheriff.co.wise.tx.us
E-Mail: greggt@sheriff.co.wise.tx.us
Phone: (940) 627-5971

Criminal Justice Focus Group

Co-Convener: David Walker
Title: Captain
Agency: Wise County Sheriff Office
Web Site: www.sheriff.co.wise.tx.us
E-Mail: walkerd@sheriff.co.wise.tx.us
Phone: (940) 627-5971

Co-Convener: Tom Goode
Title: Public Works Director
Agency: Wise County
Phone: (940) 627-6655

Juvenile Justice Focus Group

Co-Convener: David Vanderkaay
Title: School Resource Officer
Agency: Wise County Sheriff Office
Web Site: www.sheriff.co.wise.tx.us
E-Mail: vanderkaayd@sheriff.co.wise.tx.us
Phone: (940) 627-5971

Co-Convener: Kristi McQuiston
Title: Juvenile Probation Officer
Agency: Wise County Juvenile Probation Office
E-Mail: wjcpd@ntws.net
Phone: (940) 627-7037

Victims Focus Group

Co-Convener: Paula Geiser
Title: Executive Director
Agency: Wise County Domestic Violence Task Force
E-Mail: wcdvtf@ntws.net
Phone: (940) 626-4585

Co-Convener: Sandra Poyner

Title: Executive Director
Agency: Court Appointed Special Advocates
Phone: (940) 627-7535