

# **ELLIS COUNTY**

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY PLAN**

**Victim Services & Juvenile  
Justice – Updated 2010**

**Law Enforcement – Updated  
2005**

# **ELLIS COUNTY**

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY PLAN**

### **Victim Services & Juvenile Justice**

#### **FY2010**

**Chairperson:**

**Janis Burdett, Program Director  
Ellis County Juvenile Services  
111 W. Franklin  
Waxahachie, TX 75165**

# Ellis County Community Planning Team Participants

## Community Planning Chairman:

Janis Burdett                      Ellis County Juvenile Services

## Focus Group Chairpersons:

Juvenile Justice	Lisa Hill and Sandra Poarch
Victim Services	John Wyckoff
Law Enforcement	Dennis Brearley
Mental/Physical Health	Mackie Owens

## Community Planning Participants:

Chris Aldama	Ellis County Juvenile Services
Jennifer Jimenez	Adapt of Texas
Mackie Owens	HOPE Clinic
Kevin Howard	Glenn Heights Police Department
Nathan Bickerstaff	Red Oak Police Department
Sandra Poarch	Boys & Girls Club of Ennis
JoAnn Livingston	Waxahachie Daily Light
Cheryle Chafin	Lakes Regional MHMR
Cynthia Winters	Presbyterian Children's Home
Roger Smotts	Midlothian Police Department
Lori Guarnero	Red Oak ISD Police Department
Lisa Hill	Heritage Baptist Church
Dawn Tunnell	Texas Baptist Home for Children
John Wyckoff	Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center
Suzanne Pylant	Mothers Against Drunk Driving
Ginny Lindsey	Victims Coordinator – ECJS
Donna Knight	Red Oak ISD
Rhodie Rawls	CASA of Ellis County
Kelly Echard	HOPE Clinic
Diana Buckley	Ellis County Human Resources
Christie Noonkester	Waxahachie High School
Chatrinia Johnson	Ellis County Juvenile Services
Kris Rencher	Waxahachie ISD
Anita Roseborough	Precinct 2 Justice of the Peace Court
Dennis Brearley	Ellis County Sheriff's Department
Gabriel Hensley	Southwestern Assemblies of God University
Alfred Mims	Ellis County Community Corrections
Bernyce Crownover	Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center
Sue Brown	Red Oak ISD

# **NORTH CENTRAL TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY PLAN FOR ELLIS COUNTY, TEXAS**

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

Ellis County is a county located in the U.S. state of Texas. In 2000, its population was 111,360. The more recent 2006 American Community Survey estimates the population of Ellis County at 139,300. Ellis County forms part of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. It is named for Richard Ellis, president of the Texas Constitutional Convention of 1836. The county seat is Waxahachie.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 952 square miles (2,465 km<sup>2</sup>), of which, 940 square miles (2,434 km<sup>2</sup>) of it is land and 12 square miles (30 km<sup>2</sup>) of it (1.23%) is water.

According to the census of 2000, there were 111,360 people, 37,020 households, and 29,653 families residing in the county. The population density was 118 people per square mile (46/km<sup>2</sup>). There were 39,071 housing units at an average density of 42 per square mile (16/km<sup>2</sup>). The racial makeup of the county was 80.63% White, 8.64% Black or African American, 0.59% Native American, 0.35% Asian, 0.02% Pacific Islander, 7.90% from other races, and 1.86% from two or more races. 18.42% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

There were 37,020 households out of which 42.10% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 64.80% were married couples living together, 11.00% had a female householder with no husband present, and 19.90% were non-families. 16.60% of all households were made up of individuals and 6.50% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.96 and the average family size was 3.31.

In the county, the population was spread out with 30.20% under the age of 18, 9.30% from 18 to 24, 29.80% from 25 to 44, 21.50% from 45 to 64, and 9.20% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 33 years. For every 100 females there were 98.30 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 95.40 males.

The median income for a household in the county was \$50,350, and the median income for a family was \$55,358. Males had a median income of \$37,613 versus \$26,612 for females. The per capita income for the county was \$20,212. About 6.80% of families and 8.60% of the population were below the poverty line, including 11.10% of those under age 18 and 10.40% of those ages 65 or over.

Cities in Ellis County include: Cedar Hill (small southern portion), Ennis, Ferris (Most of Ferris, southern portion), Grand Prairie (Far south areas) Glenn Heights (Southern portion), Italy, Mansfield (South areas), Midlothian, Oak Leaf, Ovilla, Pecan Hill, Red Oak and Waxahachie. Towns in Ellis County include: Alma, Bardwell, Garrett, Maypearl, Milford, Palmer and Venus. Unincorporated areas of Ellis County include: Avalon, Forreston and Telico.

Ellis County has ten (10) independent school districts and nine (9) private and charter schools. Ellis County is a part of the Navarro College community college system with campuses located in Waxahachie and Midlothian.

Major highways running through Ellis County include: Interstate 35E, Interstate 45, U.S. Highway 67, U.S. Highway 77, U.S. Highway 287 and State Highway 34 (Texas).

Public transportation is not available within the county to transport residents to court, social service programs, etc. For programs/services not available in Ellis County, most citizens would need to travel at least 20-30 miles to access such services in neighboring counties.

# JUVENILE JUSTICE FOCUS GROUP SECTION

## Juvenile Justice System Introduction Narrative:

Similar to most juvenile justice systems across Texas, the juvenile justice system in Ellis County is comprised of a central County Juvenile Probation Department and various state, county and local agencies that deal with youth. These organizations often operate as a loose network of agencies at the state, county, and municipal level. These agencies include (but are not limited to):

:

- Ellis County Juvenile Services
- Law enforcement agencies including the Ellis County Sheriff's Department, municipal police departments, and the Texas Department of Public Safety.
- County Court at Law #2 sitting as the Juvenile Court, municipal courts and Justice of the Peace Courts
- Judges, County/District Attorneys and private defense attorneys
- Contract parole services with the Texas Youth Commission
- State agencies (i.e. The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, Lakes Regional MHMR, Texas Department of State Health Services and others).
- Contract STAR services with Central Texas Youth Services
- Private social service and youth organizations (i.e. Presbyterian Children's Home and Services, Texas Baptist Home, Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club)
- Behavioral Health services through the North Texas Behavioral Health Authority (NTBHA). (i.e. ADAPT of Texas, private therapists, Counseling Center of Ellis County)
- Local school districts
- Local churches and faith based organizations

Each entity has different responsibilities within the juvenile justice system and come into contact with juveniles at different stages in the justice process. Because juvenile justice in Texas is administered at the state and county level, the process may differ across the many juvenile justice systems in Texas.

## ELLIS COUNTY JUVENILE DATA

### Ellis County Juvenile Population by Total Juvenile Population & Ethnicity (TJPC website – most recent data available)

	Juvenile Age Population 10-16	Anglo	%	Black	%	Hispanic	%	Other	%
<b>2004</b>	15,430	10,030	65	1,464	9	3,781	25	153	1
<b>2005</b>	15,697	10,026	64	1,471	9	4,056	26	145	1
<b>2006</b>	15,996	10,047	63	1,516	9	4,290	27	143	1

### Ellis County Juvenile Probation referrals by Age

	Age 10	Age 11	Age 12	Age 13	Age 14	Age 15	Age 16+	Total
<b>2006</b>	3	6	9	29	48	55	95	245
<b>2007</b>	1	7	20	20	51	86	102	287
<b>2008</b>	3	8	16	37	52	72	118	306

### Ellis County Juvenile Probation referrals by Ethnicity/Gender

	Anglo Male	Anglo Female	Black Male	Black Female	Hispanic Male	Hispanic Female	Other Male	Other Female
<b>2006</b>	122	30	38	3	39	13	0	0
<b>2007</b>	124	26	53	10	51	23	0	0
<b>2008</b>	133	44	33	12	64	20	0	0

**Number of Violent Felonies Charged to Juveniles in Ellis County**

<b>Offense</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Homicide	0	0	0
Attempted Homicide	0	0	0
Sexual Assault	17	9	12
<b>Offense</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Robbery	0	1	2
Aggravated Assault	11	12	24

**Ellis County Juvenile Probation Referrals and rate per 1,000 & Number of Children Referred**

Calendar Year	# Referrals/#Juvenile Population	Juvenile Referrals/Rate per 1,000
<b>2006</b>	245 referrals/ 14,423 10-16 yr olds.	22 / 1000
<b>2007</b>	287 referrals/	/
<b>2008</b>	305 referrals/	/

**Cases under Supervision as of December 31 of each year**

Calendar Year	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
<b>Ellis County</b>	140	149	170

**# of Ellis County Youth Adjudicated to Probation/TYC/Residential Placements**

Calendar Year	Residential Placements	Adjudicated Probation	TYC Commitments
<b>2006</b>	23	55	2
<b>2007</b>	24	56	4
<b>2008</b>	15	67	8

**Discussion of data:** Although the juvenile population in Ellis County showed a slight increase from 2004 to 2006, data was not available for the years 2006 – 2008. However, based on increases in the overall population rates in Ellis County, the juvenile population has likely also increased. As the population has increased, so have referrals to Juvenile Probation. Most significant in the data is the increase in referrals for 10-13 year olds and the number of referrals for female offenders.

Another significant increase was in the number of aggravated assault cases and commitments to the Texas Youth Commission. We believe that some of the increase in aggravated assault charges is a direct result of changes to the Texas Family Code that no longer allows county probation departments to commit misdemeanor offenders to the Texas Youth Commission. Prosecutors are more reluctant to reduce assault charges.

Ellis County has had an ongoing concern for the number of youth removed from the community for residential placement which has consistently remained between 20-30 delinquent youth per year. The probation department created a Program Director position in 2006 to oversee programs and treatment needs of youth referred to the department in an attempt to keep youth in the community. The Program Director also serves on a number of community committees and boards to increase collaborative efforts within the system.

Three of the larger school districts within the county have developed ISD police departments and school security systems to assist with criminal behavior on school campuses.

As the numbers indicate, the juveniles adjudicated to probation in Ellis County remained about the same with a slight increase. Municipal and Justice of the Peace Courts have expanded their community service/counseling and other diversionary efforts. Only violators of court orders are referred on to Juvenile Court.

### **Juvenile Justice Focus Group participants:**

Lisa Hill, Heritage Baptist Church/LifeSkilled  
Chris Aldama, Ellis County Juvenile Services  
Janis Burdett, Ellis County Juvenile Services  
Sandra Poarch, Boys and Girls Club of Ennis  
Donna Knight, Red Oak ISD  
Anita Roseborough, Justice of the Peace, Pct#2  
Gabriel Hensley, Southwestern Assembly of God University

### **CONTRIBUTORS TO JUVENILE CRIME AND DELIQUENCY:**

## Contributor One: Family Instability

Family instability continues to be a factor in the overall contributors to juvenile crime and delinquency. The functioning of the family is effected dramatically by the emotional turmoil both within and outside of the family unit. Divorce and/or employment can be traumatic for children in the family, causing them to become withdrawn or act out their stress and anxiety. Likewise, family violence and child abuse in the home can result in increased risk for juvenile delinquency. While it is obvious how instability affects the family, it also impacts the larger, surrounding community. The behaviors that may result from family instability include drug abuse, family violence, increased mental health issues, lower academic functioning, truancy, runaways, on-set and repeated delinquent behavior and gang involvement.

The tables below represent contributors to family instability:

### Ellis County

<b>Contributors to family instability</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
# Of Family Violence Reports	654	536	593
# Of Protective Orders Filed	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
# Of Child Abuse Confirmed	285	530	430
# Of Children in Foster Care	n/a	140	154
# Unemployed - Percentage	5.3%	5.1%	4.4%

### Ellis County

	2000**	2006
# Of Single Parent Households	5,679	
Female Householder with own children under 18 YOA		
Male Householder, with own children under 18 YOA		
Divorce Rate for Males	8.6%	
Divorce Rats for Females	9.5%	

\*\* Only stats available are the 2000 Census information and for 2006 the American Community Survey results which only report for Counties over 65,000 in population

2000 stats only reported Female Householder, while stats for 2006 reported both Male Householder and Female Householder

**Ellis County is currently addressing family instability in the following ways:**

- Ellis County is a part of the North Texas Behavioral Health Association and offers psychiatric, counseling and case management services for citizens that qualify financially.
- Ellis County has a number of non-profit counseling agencies that offer individual and family counseling.
- Ellis County receives STAR services for at-risk youth through Central Texas Youth Services. CTYS offers individual and family counseling.
- The Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center provides forensic assessments and counseling services to children suspected to have been abused.
- Ellis County has one Workforce Center located in the county seat, which provides job searches, resume development, job seeking education and training, and information on child care.
- Local churches will often provide marriage and other types of counseling to their congregations.
- The District Attorney's office has a dedicated staff person to process protective orders.

**The Focus Group identified the following needs for Ellis County:**

- There is limited marriage education and parenting education programs available in the county for families to access that could potentially decrease the likelihood for family violence in the home.
- There are limited services available for children abused by their families, which contributes to the acting out behavior of adolescents. Increased family stability will improve the adolescent functioning in the family and the community.
- There are a limited number of agencies providing after-school programs and many times they are cost prohibitive for the neediest children.

- There are no outpatient programs that might prevent the escalation of abusive behavior in the home.
- The county does not have a Family Preservation Program to provide intensive counseling to high risk families.
- Specialized training to law enforcement in dealing with juvenile offenders, and training in responding to family violence calls/reports is not available on the local level. Officers must travel to larger counties for training which can be neither cost effective nor convenient.

## **Contributor Two: Substance abuse**

Substance use and abuse continues to be a factor in the overall contributors to juvenile crime and delinquency. The functioning of the child in the home and community including school is dramatically effected by the introduction and continued use of drugs. The behaviors that result from drug use can also include drug abuse, addiction, lower academic functioning, runaways, on-set and repeated delinquent behavior and gang involvement. Underage drinking is on the rise in Ellis County. Not only is it illegal to use, purchase or possess alcohol for those under the age of 21, it also effects physical, intellectual, emotional and social development. Currently there are few underage-drinking programs being provided in schools and churches. Innovative programs already in place need funding to continue. Underage-drinking programs assist in reducing traffic incidences and DWI's, and reduce the potential chances of alcohol abuse and dependency into adulthood. With recent changes in local ordinances that allow the sell of beer and wine in several of the larger cities in Ellis County, alcohol will be more readily available to youth.

**The following data identifies issues relating to substance abuse:**

### **Referrals to Juvenile Probation for Drug Offenses**

<b>Calendar Year</b>	<b>Felony Drug</b>	<b>Misdemeanor Drug</b>
<b>2006</b>	14	34
<b>2007</b>	6	35
<b>2008</b>	8	28

**Average Age of First Use (in Years) of Substances Among Texas Secondary School Students, by Grade: 2006**

[http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/sa/research/survey/2006/2006TSS\\_G712\\_Final%20Report.pdf](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/sa/research/survey/2006/2006TSS_G712_Final%20Report.pdf)

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
Tobacco	10.7	11.3	12.1	12.8	13.5	14.3
Cigarettes	10.8	11.3	12.1	12.8	13.5	14.3
Smokeless Tobacco	11.2	11.6	12.7	13.6	14.2	15.0
Alcohol	10.5	11.0	11.8	12.5	13.1	13.8
Beer	10.5	11.1	11.9	12.7	13.4	14.1
Wine Coolers	10.9	11.5	12.2	12.9	13.5	14.2
Wine	10.9	11.5	12.2	12.9	13.5	14.3
Liquor	11.2	11.9	12.7	13.5	14.2	14.9
Inhalants	10.8	11.4	12.0	12.6	13.1	13.8
Marijuana	11.5	12.2	12.8	13.6	14.2	14.8
Cocaine	11.9	12.7	13.6	14.4	15.1	15.9
Crack	11.6	12.4	13.5	14.1	14.8	15.7
Hallucinogens	11.6	12.5	13.5	14.3	15.0	15.8
Uppers	11.4	12.6	13.3	14.1	14.7	15.5
Downers	11.5	12.5	13.3	14.0	14.7	15.3
Rohypnol	11.3	12.5	13.2	13.9	14.4	15.1
Steroids	11.2	11.9	12.8	13.4	14.2	15.2
Ecstasy	11.9	12.9	13.7	14.6	15.4	16.0
Heroin	11.7	12.4	13.2	14.1	14.8	15.4

**Ellis County is addressing the substance abuse issue in the following ways:**

- Ellis County has one licensed substance abuse counselor that works with youth in Ellis County
- Ellis County has one agency, REACH Council on Drugs and Alcohol that provides education and referral services for families on the northwest portion of the county.
- Ellis County is a part of the North Texas Behavioral Health Association. Youth who qualify for Northstar can receive substance abuse services from any Northstar provider
- Ellis County has attempted to establish contacts with substance abuse services from Dallas area programs (i.e. Phoenix House, Hickory Trails Hospital), although transportation remains a barrier to services.

- Drug Prevention Resources (DPRI) is in the process of organizing a community coalition to focus on underage drinking and substance abuse among youth in Waxahachie.
- Ellis County organized a community Mental Health/Substance Abuse task force to address needs. Members include law enforcement, public officials, social service agencies, school districts, faith based organizations, NAMI members and private practitioners.

**The Focus Group identified the following needs for Ellis County:**

- Ellis County has limited resources available for children and families experiencing substance abuse problems.
- Ellis County has no residential substance abuse programs for youth.
- Ellis County has no intensive-outpatient or day treatment substance abuse programs for youth.
- Ellis County only has ONE licensed substance abuse counselor willing to work with adolescents.
- Ellis County has no state approved MIP/tobacco classes available. Most youth have to travel to surrounding counties.
- Ellis County has no AA/NA groups for teens.
- Ellis County has no public transportation system to access services in nearby counties

**Contributor Three: Education (problems in school – violence, truancy, etc.)**

Education is a primary factor in the overall success or failure of a child into adulthood. The functioning of the child in the home and the community many times whether positive or negative is influenced by their school performance and attendance. The behaviors that result from poor academic performance typically are acting out behaviors that cause additional disciplinary or delinquent referrals.

**The tables below represent contributors to Education Issues:**

**School Districts in Ellis County and Enrollment**

<http://mansfield.tea.state.tx.us/TEA.AskTED.Web/Forms/QuickSearch.aspx>

<b>School No.</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>06-07</b>
070-901	Avalon	265
070-903	Ennis	5737
070-905	Ferris	2373
070-907	Italy	609
070-915	Maypearl	1001
070-908	Midlothian	6830
070-909	Milford	228
070-910	Palmer	1134
070-911	Red Oak	5179
070-912	Waxahachie	6118
<b>Totals</b>		<b>27,474</b>

**Dropout Rates\Graduation Rates**

[http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/acctres/drop\\_annual/0607/district.html](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/acctres/drop_annual/0607/district.html)

<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/acctres/completion/2007/campus.html>

<b>School District</b>	<b>06 - 07</b>	
	<b>Dropout rate Grades 7-12</b>	<b>Graduation Rate</b>
Avalon	0 / 0%	100%
Ennis	24 / 1%	96.8%
Ferris	0 / .2%	97.5%
Italy	5 / 1.6%	93.6%
Maypearl	0 / 0%	100%
Midlothian	33 / 1%	95%
Milford	0 / 0%	100%
Palmer	11 / 1.9%	94.4%
Red Oak	55 / 2%	94.7%
Waxahachie	49 / 1.5%	96.8%

**# of students for in-school suspension (full and partial days)**

[http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/adhocrpt/Disciplinary\\_Data\\_Products/Download\\_District\\_Student\\_Incident\\_Counts\\_NUMBER.html](http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/adhocrpt/Disciplinary_Data_Products/Download_District_Student_Incident_Counts_NUMBER.html)

<b>School District</b>	<b>05-06</b>	<b>06-07</b>	<b>07-08</b>
Avalon	10	18	8
Ennis	1238	1341	1171
Ferris	633	1010	1023
Italy	149	219	151
Maypearl	144	138	161
Midlothian	974	956	641
Milford	39	40	36
Palmer	323	341	353
Red Oak	718	866	833
Waxahachie	1559	1941	1633
Totals	5787	6865	6010

**# of students for out of school suspension**

<b>School District</b>	<b>05-06</b>	<b>06-07</b>	<b>07-08</b>
Avalon	13	12	12
Ennis	785	672	491
Ferris	98	124	60
Italy	31	0	0
Maypearl	32	7	12
Midlothian	281	318	328
Milford	6	8	0
Palmer	47	341	41
Red Oak	367	364	248
Waxahachie	623	511	639
Totals	2283	2357	1831

**# of students placed on/off campus - DAEP**

<b>School District</b>	<b>05-06</b>	<b>06-07</b>	<b>07-08</b>
Avalon	6	1	1
Ennis	224	263	265
Ferris	85	107	62
Italy	6	11	0
Maypearl	0	0	12
Midlothian	37	162	95
Milford	10	0	0
Palmer	32	42	40
Red Oak	186	193	144
Waxahachie	262	238	187
Totals	848	1017	806

**# of students expelled with NO educational placement**

<b>School District</b>	<b>05-06</b>	<b>06-07</b>	<b>07-08</b>
Avalon	0	0	0
Ennis	0	8	26
Ferris	0	0	0
Italy	0	0	0
Maypearl	0	0	0
Midlothian	0	0	0
Milford	0	0	0
Palmer	0	0	0
Red Oak	5	0	0
Waxahachie	17	34	7
Totals	22	42	33

**# of students with truancy/charges filed (na represents > 5)**

<b>School District</b>	<b>05-06</b>		<b>06-07</b>		<b>07-08</b>	
	<b>w/fine</b>	<b>w/o fine</b>	<b>w/fine</b>	<b>w/o fine</b>	<b>w/fine</b>	<b>w/o fine</b>
Avalon	na	na	na	na	0	0
Ennis	na	na	na	na	43	14
Ferris	na	na	na	na	na	na
Italy	5	0	na	na	na	na
Maypearl	na	na	na	na	Na	na
Midlothian	13	88	61	0	97	0
Milford	na	na	na	na	na	na
Palmer	0	8	5	21	na	na
Red Oak	9	0	7	0	na	na
Waxahachie	Unk	Unk	29	15	25	89

## Economic Disadvantaged – Eligible for free meals

School District	05-06		06-07		07-08	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Avalon	142	59.92%	120	49.18%	135	50.94%
Ennis	2737	18.08%	2776	49.18%	2896	50.48%
Ferris	1180	52.84%	1277	55.21%	1278	53.86%
Italy	257	39.06%	243	38.76%	277	45.48%
Maypearl	294	30.06%	293	28.84%	184	18.38%
Midlothian	709	11.62%	734	11.19%	823	12.05%
Milford	121	55%	124	57.41%	136	59.65%
Palmer	312	28.24%	333	30.16%	343	30.25%
Red Oak	1090	21.50%	1265	24.64%	1275	24.62%
Waxahachie	2181	35.09%	2341	37.05%	2394	36.48%

Enrollment continues to increase throughout Ellis County. Disciplinary referrals and referrals for truancy have drastically increased as well. Students placed in AEP has fluctuated some, but maintained fairly consistent. The numbers of economically disadvantaged remain at staggering levels for each school district.

### Ellis County is addressing educational issues in the following way:

- Some of the larger districts offer GED programs for students as well as credit recovery programs.
- Some of the Municipal Courts and Justice of the Peace Courts have taken a proactive role in enforcing attendance.
- Counselors with the STAR Program attend truancy court hearings and offer diversionary counseling/groups.
- Boys and Girls Clubs in two communities offer after school programs/tutoring.
- Presbyterian Children's Home and Services has expanded their residential programs to include a transitional/family therapeutic program and a joint residential treatment program with the Methodist Boy's Ranch that focuses on children with Special Education needs.
- The Skillsnet Foundation provides job readiness training, GED instruction and tutoring for 16-17 year olds under Juvenile Probation Department supervision.

**The Focus Group identified the following community needs:**

- Expansion of the programs offered at the larger school districts to the smaller school districts would allow for easy access to services for all students.
- Adding a Charter School that would offer an alternative to more traditional education setting for students who need credit recovery and who may work better in a more self-paced environment.
- The addition of Juvenile Case Managers to all the Justice of the Peace Courts and Municipal Courts would greatly increase a juvenile’s accountability to this system particularly truancy cases.
- Educational alternatives for juvenile justice students who have been expelled from the public school system. Ellis County does not have a Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP)
- Vocational/skills training programs for juvenile justice students with academic and attendance deficits that disqualify them for school based programs.
- Independent living/skills programs to assist students aging out of the juvenile justice system.

**Contributor Four: Disproportionate minority contact in juvenile justice system**

All children and youth, regardless of race or ethnicity, have more in common than they have differences, but culture does influence how they behave and how the juvenile justice system perceives them. Disproportionate minority contact continues to be concerning for all juvenile justice programs.

**The tables below represent information related to disproportionate Minority contact:**

**Texas**

Calendar Year	Juvenile Age Population 10-16	Anglo	%	Black	%	Hispanic	%	Other	%
2006	15,996	10,047	63%	1516	9%	4290	27%	143	1%
2007	unavailable								
2008	unavailable								

## Referrals by Ethnicity

### Ellis County

Calendar Year	Total Referrals	Anglo		Black		Hispanic		Other	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2006	245	152	62%	41	17%	52	21%	0	0
2007	287	150	52%	63	22%	74	26%	0	0
2008	306	177	58%	45	15%	84	27%	0	0

**Discussion of the data:** Referrals to Juvenile Probation in Ellis County tend to be reflective of the ethnic makeup of the state with a slight elevated percentage of black youth referred. Over the past three years, there has been a steady increase in the number of Hispanic youth referred.

**Ellis County is addressing the issue of disproportionate minority contact in the Juvenile Justice system in the following ways:**

- Ellis County actively recruits minority and bilingual staff to work with juvenile offenders
- Ellis County contracts with therapists and treatment providers with culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Ellis County employs a culturally diverse juvenile probation staff.
- The Ellis County STAR provider employees a culturally diverse outreach counseling staff

**The Focus Group identified the following needs relating to disproportionate minority contact:**

- There is a shortage of bilingual staff and providers available for non-English speaking families to access current programs and treatment.
- There is a need for culturally diverse mentors to work with At-risk children in the community

## **Contributor Five: Gangs**

There is no current/verifiable gang information available from the local juvenile probation department or the local police departments. There is currently no gang task force or organized efforts to address gang activity in Ellis County.

## **Contributor Six: Barriers to services**

Encarta dictionary defines a “barrier” as “a structure blocking access: or a structure such as a fence that is intended to prevent access or keep one place separate from another”. In the context of the Juvenile Justice System, barriers to services are anything that keeps a child and/or family from getting the help they need.

**SIGNIFICANCE:** The focus group determined that all the programs in the world are useless if the targeted recipients/population is unable to take advantage of them.

**DATA/DISCUSSION:** The focus group identified two factors in Ellis County that create barriers to accessing services:

1. Ellis County is a rural county located south of the Dallas-Ft. Worth Metroplex. While there are numerous social service agencies within the Metroplex, Ellis County does not have a public transportation system. With current economic conditions, families with the greatest needs for services lack dependable/affordable transportation to access services. This is true for travelling to adjoining counties and also accessing services within the county.
2. Ellis County has a growing Hispanic population with an increase the number of people that do not speak English.

**COMMUNITY RESPONSE/NEEDS:** Unfortunately Ellis County has made little progress in developing a public transportation system. Many of the social service agencies have expanded their case management services to allow practitioners to travel to the homes and schools to assist clients.

Social service agencies continually advertise for bilingual staff when filling job vacancies. Several agencies have bilingual staff, but they become quickly overloaded.

## **Contributor Seven: Juvenile justice system vulnerabilities (insufficient staff, courts, judges, caseload, etc.)**

Juvenile Justice's ability to provide appropriate rehabilitation to juvenile offenders is directly related to the ratio of staff to referrals, the need for specialized programs and the availability of these programs, costs of quality programs, the size of the case loads each officer supervises and the participation of the family in the process.

**Each factor listed below affects this ability in one way or another.**

- The # of Juvenile Probation Officers in the Ellis County- **TWELVE (12)**
- The # and Description of Specialized Juvenile Courts (youth drug court, teen court, etc) – **NONE (0)**
- The # of Juvenile Court Judges in County- **ONE (1)**
- The # of open court cases in county - ??
- The # and description of specialized case loads handled by the JPO – **FOUR (4)**
  - Sex Offender/Intensive Supervision Officer
  - Court/Intake Officers (2)
  - Special Needs/Mental Health Officer
- Ellis County does NOT have its own county operated juvenile detention facility. Ellis County primarily contracts with Hunt County Juvenile Detention for detention beds. The facility is located in Greenville, Texas approximately 80 miles from the county seat (160 miles roundtrip) Law Enforcement officers are responsible for transporting the youth to and from the facility for Court hearings and Court related appointments.

With regard to the above information, Ellis County Juvenile Services appears to have adequate staff for referrals and adequate specialized staff. The lack of specialized courts is of concern due to increasing referrals for drug cases and lack of resources available in the community. A drug court would be another level to ensure accountability of juvenile drug offenders.

The number of Juvenile Court Judges could be increased to allow for more immediate action in court cases and a reduction in the pending cases. When juvenile offenders wait for final action in their cases their concern with the seriousness of the case diminishes.

Detention facilities have been and continue to be an issue. While the distance of 80 miles is not prohibitive, the distance does provide some hesitation on the part of law enforcement agencies to detain juvenile offenders.

**Ellis County is currently addressing these issues by:**

- Ellis County has a juvenile probation department that is staffed appropriately.
- The county Juvenile Board and Commissioner's Court are sensitive to the juvenile probation department's needs; however many times the needs outweigh the available funding.
- The juvenile probation department operates a Short Term Detention Center that helps alleviate some of the transportation issues between the county and contracted detention facilities.
- The juvenile probation department is a part of the statewide Special Needs Diversionary Program initiative that partners a juvenile probation officer with a therapist from the local mental health authority (ADAPT).
- Ellis County has an active Community Resource Coordination Group to staff cases of children with multiple agency involvement
- Ellis County contracts with specialized counselors to work with juvenile probationers/families including a substance abuse counselor and bilingual therapist.
- Ellis County has a STAR program provided by Central Texas Youth Services that provides services for at-risk youth 0-18 years old.
- Ellis County school districts actively enforce attendance laws by filing cases in the appropriate municipal or justice court.
- Ellis County has two Boys and Girls Clubs in two of the larger cities

**The Focus Group identified the following needs in the community:**

- Lack of coordination of efforts between agencies and organizations to serve at-risk youth especially services that allow continuity of care
- Lack of substance abuse treatment providers/programs in Ellis County

- Lack of programs for at-risk youth
  - Lack of faith based programs
  - Lack of quality training specific to juvenile law for law enforcement officials.
  - Specialized interventions targeting specific juvenile crimes. (i.e. shoplifting, drug charges, destruction of property, graffiti)
  - Staffing and implementation of first offender programs and other prevention programs
  - The juvenile department along with school officials and law enforcement should share information and work together in presenting information to children and their families
- ;
- In school and after school and/or summer mentor program;
  - An early intervention program in schools or in the community for youth and their families that begin demonstrating at-risk behaviors;
  - Summer activity or camp programs, or at least funds to send youth to already established camps;
  - Diversion programs for youth that do not appear to respond to early intervention programs to serve as a warning of what the juvenile system is like;
  - Establishment of a drug court;
  - Establishment and ongoing operations of a Teen Court Program
  - Peer mediation training, counseling, tutoring, leadership development, mentoring and community service opportunities for youth;
  - Purchase of bed space for pre and post adjudication placements;
  - Funds to establish a juvenile detention facility for Ellis County
  - Youth presenting behaviors such as truancy, runaway and substance abuse could be made to participate in a program, along with a parent, and receive instruction regarding developmental issues, discipline, responsibility, choices and consequences;

- Parenting education could also be available through the school systems, the juvenile justice system, child protective services and social service agencies, including faith-based agencies
- Mentoring through the faith-based communities;
- Provide the necessary case-management personnel that oversee and guide the youth in accountability and compliance with the lower courts (i.e. case managers for truancy courts)

# **VICTIMS OF CRIME FOCUS GROUP SECTION**

## **Victims of Crime Introduction Narrative:**

Ellis County has one full-time Victims Assistance coordinator who handles protective orders and assists crime victims of adult offenders and one part-time Victims Assistance coordinator who handles all crime victims of juvenile offenders. Although every law enforcement agency is required to have a designated staff person responsible for victim notifications, referrals and assistance, most Ellis County Law Enforcement agencies refer crime victims to the County Crime Victim Assistance staff for services.

Ellis County has a county Child Advocacy Center to assist with child crime victims. All child abuse (sexual and severe physical abuse) cases in Ellis County are investigated by the appropriate agency; Law Enforcement or the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The lead Investigator contacts the Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center so a forensic interview can be scheduled as soon as possible. The child victim is interviewed by the center's trained Forensic Interviewer. The Multi-Disciplinary Team Members (Law Enforcement, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Ellis County District Attorney's Office, and the Ellis County Juvenile Probation Services) are always present throughout the interview and observe the interview of the child victim in the Multi-Disciplinary Team room. Prior to or after the completion of the forensic interview; the child victim may be scheduled for the following services; a sexual assault examination, referred for professional counseling services, additional investigative gathering meetings with the non-offending family members, court preparation, and more.

## **Victims of Crime Focus Group participants:**

John Wyckoff, Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center  
Suzette Pylant, MADD  
Chris Aldama, Ellis County Juvenile Services  
Bernyce Crownover, Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center  
Ginny Lindsey, Ellis County Juvenile Services and the Ellis County  
Children's Advocacy Center

## **CONTRIBUTORS TO THE VICTIMS OF CRIME PROBLEMS:**

### **Contributor One: Child Abuse**

Child abuse is one of the most profound issues facing our community today. An overwhelming number of children in Ellis County are victims of abuse and neglect leading to death and injury, as well as significant psychological damage that can last a lifetime. The effects of this crime are far reaching and transgress many

other identified problems and focus areas. According to new statistics from Prevent Child Abuse America, the annual national cost of child abuse reached \$104 billion. That breaks down to a flat average of over \$2 billion per state. For Texas that breaks down to a flat average of over \$8 million per county. Ellis County abuse statistics remain higher than the regional or national statistics. There is a dramatically higher occurrence of sexual abuse cases confirmed in Ellis County. There is a direct relationship of substance abuse in 80% of all sexual abuse cases with meth-amphetamine and alcohol being present in the majority of these cases. Victims of sexual abuse are 2.5 times more likely to abuse alcohol and 3.8 times more likely to become addicted to drugs. Abused children as a whole are 25% more likely to become pregnant in their teens, they are 59% more likely to be arrested as a juvenile, 28% more likely to be arrested as an adult, and 30% more likely to commit a violent crime. Nearly 2/3 of all people in drug treatment were abused as children. One-third of those abused as children will abuse their own children. This is a cycle that is incredibly hard to break and causes significant concern for the well-being of communities. Even more disturbing were those findings of the National Clearing House on Child Abuse and Neglect. Their statistics state that 80% of young adults who had been abused met the diagnostic criteria for at least 1 psychiatric disorder by the age of 21 (including depression, anxiety, eating disorders & post-traumatic stress disorder).

The following tables relate to child abuse in Ellis County:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Child Population</b>	<b># of Children in Child Advocacy Center Services (CPS + Law Enforcement cases)</b>	<b>Confirmed Victims of Abuse &amp; Neglect (CPS Only)</b>	<b>Minors in Foster Care System</b>
2004	37,231		No data	No data
2005	37,879		285	140
2006	39,177		530	199
2007	No data		430	154

The following information relates to risk factors for children in Ellis County:

- In 2000, there were 5,670 Ellis County children living in single parent homes
- In 2004, there were 5,473 Ellis County children living in poverty. In 2005, there were 5,284
- In 2004, there were 306 Ellis County children born to teenage moms. In 2005, there were 315.

- In 2004, there were 9 deaths of Ellis County children. In 2005, there were 3. In 2006, there were 6.
- In 2005, there were 36 Ellis County children staying in Family Violence shelter. In 2006, there were 5. In 2007, there were 19.

## COMMUNITY RESPONSE/NEEDS:

- **Professional Counseling** - The Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center provides a child-friendly environment that facilitates a coordinated intervention process reducing further trauma to the child. The center's goal is to optimize the investigative and prosecution process, provide quality legal, psychological, social and medical services to abused children and to heighten community awareness. However, additional funding continues to be researched for a full time Psychotherapist position at the center. The center is only able to provide therapy referrals at this time to the child abuse victims and their non-offending family members.
- **Medical Services** - All sexual assault examinations are currently conducted at the Cook's Children's Medical Center in Ft. Worth, Texas (45 miles). Funding is needed to purchase a Colposcope (system designed for viewing, documenting and managing sexual assault patients) and also provide SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) training to local nursing personnel so sexual assault examinations of the child abuse victims can be conducted locally in Ellis County. There are two hospitals in Ellis County who have been approached about providing the necessary space in their facility for a sexual assault examination room and coordinating the SANE training with the Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center.
- **Advocacy** - Today, approximately 500,000 children in the US are caught up in the court and child welfare maze because they are unable to live safely at home. Imagine what it would be like to lose your parents, not because of something you did, but because they can't—or won't—take care of you. Now, into these children's lives come dozens of strangers: police, foster parents, therapists, social workers, judges, lawyers, and more. Hopefully, one of these strangers is a CASA volunteer. Ellis County implemented a CASA volunteer program in September 2004.
- **Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy** - Teen and unplanned pregnancy continues to be a growing problem in Ellis County. Many teens are not receiving education and services advising them on the health and social risks of sexual activity outside of marriage. More agencies need to be funded in Ellis County to provide accurate and current sexual health education to the people in the community by trained professionals. In May 2003 there were 43 pregnant high school students in Ellis County and 72 teen parents in high schools.

## Contributor Two: Domestic Violence

The Texas Family Code defines Family Violence as an act by a member of a family or household against another member that is intended to result in physical harm, bodily injury, assault, or a threat that reasonably places the member in fear of imminent physical harm. Domestic or family violence is an ongoing societal problem which has devastating consequences for victims, both primary and secondary. This brutal crime often leaves the victim both physically and emotionally devastated, and death is all too often the final outcome. According to the Surgeon General's Workshop on Violence and Public Health, domestic violence is the number one cause of injury to women in the U.S., more than muggings, rapes and auto accidents combined.

Domestic violence has become a justice, public health and economic problem for the families involved as well as society as a whole as these families in turn impact all aspects of the community including hospitals, schools, work-places, and the criminal justice system.

This crime knows no racial, ethnic, economic, social, or religious barriers. Non-English or limited English speaking victims face multiple challenges as well. This communication barrier prohibits victims from seeking help for themselves and their children.

Violence between partners continues to be a perpetual cycle which leads victims into feelings of hopelessness and despair. These deep emotional wounds can last a lifetime and create a multi-generational cycle of violence.

The following table relates to domestic violence in Ellis County:

YEAR	Reported Incidents of Domestic Violence	Number of Women Killed by Intimate Partner***	Number of Shelter Days- Adults and Children	Hotline Calls Answered	Number of Protective Orders Granted****
2005 County	**654	***0	*	*	****
2005 State	** 187,811	***143	*****29,101	*****190,269	N/A
2006 County	**536	***0	*	*	****
2006 State	** 186,983	***120	*****29,733	*****179,394	N/A
2007 County	**593	***not available	*	*	****
2007 State	**189,401	***not available	*****	*****	N/A

\* Local ITS Data

\*\* Uniform Crime Report

\*\*\* Texas Council on Family Violence

\*\*\*\* Local County Attorney's Office

\*\*\*\*\* Texas Department of Health and Human Services

## COMMUNITY RESPONSE/NEEDS

- **Emergency Shelter** - The non-availability of emergency shelter for these victims creates a dangerous situation. In 2002 an Ellis County Community Partnership study identified the need for an emergency shelter for domestic violence victims in Ellis County as a top priority. Due to the lack of alternative shelter, many victims must return to the home where violence is sure to continue. If available in Ellis County, an emergency shelter would provide a haven that would provide continued safety as well as counseling resources. The Ellis County Community Partnership conducted a needs assessment by surveying organizations in the county. One of the top priorities was shelter for women and children. The Texas Baptist Home provides residential services to pregnant and parenting young mothers. The average age served was 20-24. According to the 2001 Crime in Texas Report by the TXDPRS, this is the age bracket with the highest number of victims of family violence. In 2001, 65 young women (73 children) applied to the Texas Baptist Home's program. Of those who applied, 65% were victims of domestic violence and 32% were victims of sexual assault.
- **Law Enforcement** - Victims of family violence report a need for comprehensive training of law enforcement officers. There is a continuing demand for police sensitivity towards victims and understanding of family violence dynamics. A 2001 change in the law has made predominant aggressor training mandatory for law enforcement officers, and smaller police departments may not be able to afford specialized training. Continuing comprehensive law enforcement training covering family violence dynamics, predominant aggressor, and effective law enforcement response to the scene is required.
- **Domestic Violence Resources** - The limited resources for the victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse cause families not to seek help. Limited resources for young parents or young single mothers, along with the absence of credentialed family violence counselors, perpetuate the cycle of child abuse and neglect. Without in-county resources, and without transportation to access out-of-county resources, victims may remain in unsafe environments. In Ellis County 70 women were referred to a local temporary shelter. Of those 70, 65% were victims of domestic violence.

### Contributor Three: Sexual Assault

The Attorney General's Office for the State of Texas states that "Sexual assault is defined in several ways. Generally, sexual assault is any unwanted, non-consensual sexual contact against any individual by another." According to the National Center for Victims of Crime and Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, approximately

683,000 women and 92,700 men are forcibly raped each year. Based on the work of Robin Warshaw (1994), 42 percent of rape victims reported that they had told no one about the assault and only five percent reported to the police. This is attributed to the guilt, shame and fear associated with this violent and personal crime.

The experience of sexual assault has different meanings for each person. According to the Texas Association of Sexual Assault, no one knows precisely how an individual will react; however, crisis counselors have found that most people experience sexual assault as a severe emotional and physical violation, usually referred to as Rape Trauma Syndrome. Rape Trauma Syndrome is considered a form of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). For sexual assault victims, the emotional and spiritual trauma can be the most difficult to overcome.

Trauma can produce pronounced feelings of helplessness and powerlessness, as well as physical symptoms. Many times victims experience depression. Eventually, victims may become despondent, demoralized, and preoccupied with pain or disability. If victims are not validated, as is often the case with rape victims, this may feed into his/her sense of worthlessness and shame. According to a 1992 survey conducted by the National Victim Center, 30% of rape victims contemplate suicide with 13% of those making an actual attempt.

The crime of rape can shatter the sense of safety and trust among the citizens. Communities also experience a financial toll as well. The cost of sexual assault to Americans is an estimated \$127 billion per year (U.S. Department of Justice, 1996). This crime is one with no boundaries.

The following table relates to sexual assault in Ellis County:

YEAR	Number of Reported Rapes*	Number of Sexual Assault Hotline Calls**	Intakes into Sexual Assault Programs**
2005-County	654	No Local Hotline	No Programs
2005-State	8505	n/a	n/a
2006-County	536	No Local Hotline	No Programs
2006 -State	8406	n/a	n/a
2007-County	593	No Local Hotline	No Programs
2007-State	8430	n/a	n/a

\*Uniform Crime Report

\*\* ITS local data

**COMMUNITY RESPONSE/NEEDS:**

- **Rape Crisis Center** - There is no Rape Crisis Center in Ellis County. Presently all rape victims in Ellis County receive services in Tarrant County. According to the Ellis County District Attorney’s Office, Sexual Assault cases have increased each year with 31 reported cases in 2000

and a projection of approximately 45 in 2003. Victims need to be examined, counseled and provided other appropriate services by trained personnel in Ellis County. The Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center has discussed this situation with local Physicians who have support that planning for these services should be in the immediate future.

- **Education of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence** - There continues to be a lack of education and information on sexual assault and domestic violence available to the public. Progress has been made to implement new programs in the county that will provide education and improve awareness and knowledge of sexual assault. The Ellis County Children's Advocacy Center (also known as The Gingerbread House) will begin offering in-services to the local ISD counselors and administrators in 2009. These in-services will be presented by their Multi-Disciplinary Team members who consist of Law Enforcement, CPS, Ellis County Juvenile Probation Services, and the Ellis County District Attorney's Office.

**Contributor Four: Underserved Victims of Crime** (may include but not be limited to: survivors of homicide victims, victims of assault, robbery, gang violence, hate and bias crimes, victims of intoxicated drivers, bank robbery, economic exploitation and fraud, non-English speaking victims, and elder abuse)

**IMPACT:** A victim of crime is defined by Chapter 56 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, as (1) someone who is the victim of sexual assault, kidnapping, or aggravated robbery or who has suffered bodily injury or death because of the criminal conduct of another, (2) the close relative (spouse, parent, adult brother or sister, or child) of a deceased victim or (3) the guardian of a victim. The law also applies to victims of juvenile crime, including victims who suffer property loss

The Crime Victim Bill Of Rights found in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure (TCCP), lists 14 rights that a victim has. The State of Texas intends that victims of crime receive a number of safeguards, assurances and considerations. It is important that the information be given in a way that the victim can understand and that there is adequate staff available to respond to victim needs.

**COMMUNITY RESPONSE/NEEDS** – As previously noted, Ellis County has one full-time Victims Assistance coordinator who handles protective orders and assists crime victims of adult offenders and one part-time Victims Assistance coordinator who handles all crime victims of juvenile offenders. Neither coordinator is bilingual.

- **Culturally Competent Programs / Bilingual Caseworkers** - Census data indicate a growing diversity of the population of Ellis County. Although each race within Ellis County increased in population from 1990 to 2000, the percentage of change is significantly higher within the Hispanic population (82.4%). In 2000, persons of Hispanic of Latino origin

represented 18.4% of total population of Ellis County. Spanish is the language spoken at home in 15.3% of all homes. There is a lack of bilingual service providers with Ellis County. With the increased number of Spanish speaking victims the need for bilingual services is necessary. The lack of culturally competent services impedes access to services for ethnic and racial minority groups.

- **Victims Advocates** - Without assistance from the victim advocates in the adult and juvenile court systems, victims would not be notified of their rights in a timely manner. Without victim advocates there would also be delays in receiving crime victim information that is available to them from the Office of the Attorney General. An advocate is a victim's direct link to the court system. An advocate will many times assist the victim in providing valuable information to the court system. Victim advocates help to ensure that victims not only receive their required notifications but also receive information for additional counseling, shelter, legal advice/system, court accompaniments and other available resources. No data was collected for this issue but it is the consensus of the Ellis County Community Planning Team that this issue be addressed.

# HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH FOCUS GROUP

## Health/Mental Health narrative introduction:

Often entry into the juvenile system is the direct result of mental illness or substance abuse that is untreated or undertreated through conventional means such as counseling and medication management. Depression, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and Bipolar Disorder are a few such mental illnesses that affect a number of adolescents in the juvenile system, along with substance abuse.

For instance, a symptom of depression in children and adolescents is an increase in irritability or “out of character” behaviors. Juveniles may use drugs as a way of coping with depression, then, due to the irritability that accompanies adolescent depression, may lash out and assault others. The impulsivity that can be a part of Bipolar Disorder or ADHD may lead a child/teen to steal or destroy the property of others.

Ellis County has insufficient day hospital programs for substance abuse and mental health consumers. Currently, consumers must travel to Dallas or Fort Worth for this type of programming. Day hospital treatments are usually recommended for those youth requiring more treatment than can be provided on an outpatient basis but less intense treatment than is provided in an inpatient setting.

Lack of access to primary health care is a factor contributing to STD’s and teen pregnancy rates, which also have significant correlation to entry into the juvenile justice system. Funding for health care and access to health care are not necessarily synonymous.

Ongoing health and mental health problems contribute to recidivism in the juvenile justice system. While probation officers and social workers are often able to assist families in accessing solutions, those connections often fail after the juveniles are released from the justice system.

## Health/Mental Health Focus Group participants:

Mackie Owens, HOPE Clinic  
Kelly Echard, HOPE Clinic  
Diana Buckley, Ellis County Human Services  
Janis Burdett, Ellis County Juvenile Services  
Chatrinia Johnson, Ellis County Juvenile Services  
Rich Cameron, Hickory Trails Hospital  
Cynthia Winters, Presbyterian Children’s Services  
Dawn Tunnell, Texas Baptist Home

Cheryl Chafin, Lakes Regional MHMR  
 Rhodie Rawls, CASA of Ellis County  
 Kris Rencher, WISD  
 Christie Noonkester, WISD  
 Sue Brown, ROISD

**CONTRIBUTORS TO THE HEALTH/MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS:**

The following table shows the health insurance needs of Ellis County children:

<b>Insurance needs</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b># children in Medicaid</b>	7,219	7,617 or 20%	7,464
<b># children in CHIPS</b>	1,700	1,557 or 4%	1,339
<b># uninsured children</b>		7,553 or 20%	
<b># of child population</b>	37,231	37,879	39,177

**Contributor One: Economic issues**

Families who do not have insurance often simply cannot afford to get the health care or mental health care that is needed for their children. Some uninsured juveniles will qualify for Medicaid, some for the State Children’s Insurance Program (SCHIP), some for services at Hope Clinic, and others will not qualify for any of these programs. Many juveniles will qualify for mental health services under NorthSTAR, but there are many more that will not.

**Contributor Two: Lack of Providers**

Funding for health care and access to health care are not necessarily synonymous. It is very difficult to locate health care providers in Ellis County who are willing and/or able to accept new patients whose payer source is CHIPS or Medicaid, because of low payment rates. Social service agencies are reluctant to encourage families to apply for CHIPS because of the lack of providers available within Ellis County. Many of the providers who previously accepted Medicaid have limited the number of clients they serve and/or are not accepting new clients. Additionally, NorthSTAR has continual difficulty locating qualified psychiatrists to service the county, also due to low reimbursement rates.

**Contributor Three: Transportation**

Ellis County is still considered a rural county. Public transportation is limited and difficult to access. It is not available daily from many areas of the county, and for services available only beyond the borders of the county, it is cost prohibitive. Rising gasoline prices have severely impacted even those families with vehicles. Juveniles may qualify for programs that will provide health and mental health

treatment, yet still be unable to access these solutions because they are unable to access adequate transportation.

### **Contributor Four: Specialized training for law enforcement**

Law enforcement agencies in the area have access to free training for dealing with mental health issues, but few officers have actually had the training. We do have a mobile crisis team that will respond, but it is still essential for law enforcement officers to be trained to independently identify and respond to situations where mental health is a contributing factor. The first step must be to empower top law enforcement officials with full knowledge of the benefits of obtaining this type of training for their employees.

### **Contributor Five: Education**

It is difficult for many students to qualify for special education services due to state regulations that require a certain threshold of discrepancy between IQ and performance. Students who do not qualify to be placed in a special education program fall through the cracks. Many of these students find themselves in the juvenile justice system. If not properly diagnosed before the age of 18, they may not finish high school and they may not be eligible for other programs that teach life skills and prepare individuals for independent living. Additionally, schools are in need of social workers to assist with students who are parents as well as students who have been estranged from their families and are forced to live on their own.

# ELLIS COUNTY

# CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY PLAN

**LAW ENFORCEMENT SECTION  
ONLY**

**FY2005**

**Chairperson:**

Chris Aldama, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer

Ellis County Juvenile Services

111 W. Franklin

Waxahachie, TX 75165

**ELLIS COUNTY**  
**FY2005 CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY PLAN INITIATIVE**

**INTRODUCTION**

The Community Planning Team has completed the first stage of the project. Many issues that affect Ellis County have been addressed on an individual basis within the plan. It has been very important to our planning team that we include key issues that are affecting our community as a whole. With Ellis County growing at such a rapid rate, it is important that resources and services continue to be developed so that the growing population does not go underserved. Many of the service gaps the currently exist will only broaden with increased numbers of families with children.

As recommended by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG), the Ellis County Planning Team implemented the subcommittee approach so that more agencies and citizens could participate and provide input into the planning process. This method was successful for our county. We were able to focus on four groups to address the needs of the county. The following subcommittees were formed: Juvenile Justice Group, Victim Services Group, Law Enforcement Group and the Mental Health Group.

The planning group is composed of diverse representation, which included: law enforcement, mental health, juvenile justice, prevention and intervention programs, non-profits and well as concerned citizens. The diversity that was present was very beneficial to the team and the plan.

The citizens of Ellis County are thankful for the group of individuals who devoted their time and efforts to the development of the initial stage of the Ellis County Community Plan. Completion of this first stage would not have been possible without the input from each member. With the team's assistance, a document has been created that gives accurate representation of the problems and needs of Ellis County.

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT FOCUS GROUP** **INITIAL PROBLEM STATEMENTS**

### **Communications**

Radio communications within the Ellis County Law Enforcement agencies need to be upgraded due to the growth in our County over the past several years. One city within Ellis County has grown over 12% each of the preceding years, with an estimated 14% for 2003 and 2004. This upgrade can be accomplished by adding new repeaters within the County. Some of the repeaters being used for dispatching fire and police are outdated and 15 years old. The ability for law enforcement agencies to effectively communicate within the county during a major event (natural disaster, terrorism, or other emergency) is greatly compromised at this time. Increased radio operability between the cities/county agencies will provide for a more timely, coordinated and safer response to emergency situations within Ellis County. This updated equipment will save time, money and most importantly, lives.

### **DNA Statute Compliance /Specialized Training**

As of April 15, 2001, the Texas Legislature requires all law enforcement agencies to preserve all evidence in its possession which contains biological material that, if scientifically tested, would establish the identity of the guilty person or exclude others as the guilty person. This evidence must be tracked from the scene, to storage, to testing, to the prosecuting office, then into evidence at trial, and held until the sentence is completed even if the defendant pleads guilty. The use of bar coding is a well-known and reasonable solution to tracking massive numbers of different items.

There is a need to create inexpensive or no-cost innovative specialized training to increase the knowledge base for law enforcement personnel. Innovative specialized training will increase the number of crimes solved and expedite the prosecution process. Overall knowledge of law enforcement personnel will be increased attributing to better prevention of crime, detection of crime, and prosecution of crime. Specific training for such personnel should include the proper collection and preservation of DNA evidence as required by law. Currently there are no courses offered specifically for law enforcement personnel dealing with the collection and preservation of DNA evidence in Ellis County. Such training would provide law enforcement personnel the proper tools and skills needed to solve crimes and assist in the prosecution process.

### **Fingerprint Processing**

Law enforcement personnel are required by Statute to fill out a CR-43/44 or CR-43J/44J form when they arrest an individual on a Class B misdemeanor or higher charge. At this time, each form or supplement form has to be handwritten by law enforcement personnel, taking away valuable patrol time of each officer. By utilizing technology available, this process could be expedited by purchasing equipment that scans the arrested person's finger/palm prints into the Identix system, and then downloads it directly to the Department of Public Safety mainframe. The equipment would then transfer the arrested individual's personal information into that agency's arrest program, thus saving time on the duplication of information entered by

officers. The benefits from purchasing this equipment would be increased community policing activities by redeploying officers to the streets through timesaving.

By state recognition of the value of funding for this technology, each agency, regardless of size or budget, has the capability to improve its efforts in reducing offenses and enhancing the prevention of crime and quality of life for residents of that community.

### **Computer Forensics**

Each year Ellis County Law Enforcement Agencies are experiencing an increase in the amount of computer crimes reported to their agencies. Computer crimes involve criminal offenses such as identity theft, fraud, forgery, child pornography and other related crimes. Crimes in which a computer is the instrument of the crime, victim of the crime, or contains evidence of a crime are increasing in Ellis County. However, there is a distinct lack of qualified resources to examine this evidence. Criminals commonly use computers to commit crimes, communicate, store information and perform financial and other transactions. Digital evidence is volatile and can be easily destroyed or altered, rendering it useless for prosecution in court. It is vital for law enforcement agencies and crime labs to have access to new and advanced technologies. However, it is also imperative to have the necessary training for the agency's staff to identify, investigate and prosecute computer-related crimes and similar resources to analyze digital evidence. By providing law enforcement agencies with the needed technology, training and in some cases, personnel, Ellis County law enforcement agencies would solve more computer crimes and process digital evidence in a more legally defensible manner.

Within Ellis County there exists a need to improve the operational effectiveness of law enforcement through the use of crime analysis techniques, street sales enforcement, schoolyard violator programs, and gang prevention and enforcement and low-income housing drug control programs. There is a specific need to create, implement, fund and staff programs of which the primary goal is to strengthen urban enforcement and prosecution efforts targeted at street drug sales. Methods of operational effectiveness for law enforcement include but are not limited to single jurisdiction drug task force efforts, drug-free school zone enforcement, canine acquisition and training of a K-9 unit, street sales and street level narcotics enforcement and crack houses-nuisance abatement.

### **Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program**

A major concern for our county is what to do with students who are expelled from our local school district. Most schools in the county have their own Alternative Education Programs for persistent misbehavior and for mandatory placements of certain criminal offenses such as drugs and weapons.

Many will continue to commit crimes against the citizens of our county and our state. State law mandates a county Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP) for counties over 125,000 in population. While Ellis County does not currently qualify for mandatory our numbers are very close, and our issues are no different than those of larger counties.

## **FY05 Ellis County Community Planning Team Participants**

**Community Planning Chairman:** Chris Aldama, Ellis County  
Juvenile Services

**Focus Group Chairpersons:**  
Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention - Chris Aldama  
Victim Services – Ginny Lindsey  
Law Enforcement – Don Cole  
Mental Health - Keith Frazier

### **Community Planning Participants:**

Denise Butler	North Ellis County Outreach
Debi Mattocks	Adapt of Texas
Dianne Bailey	County Ext Agent – 4-H and Youth Development
Trigg Even	Family Connections
Isabelle Dorlan	District Attorney’s Office
Shauna Greaham	City Of Red Oak
Janice Carey	REACH Council on Alcohol and Drugs
Sandra Poarch	Boys & Girls Club of Ennis
JoAnn Livingston	Waxahachie Daily Light
Keith Frazier	Adapt of Texas
Michael Hall	JEN MHMR Services
Cindy Wiser	Waxahachie Police Department
Michael Sanders	Daniel’s Den
Michael McGraw	District Attorney’s Office
Don Cole	Midlothian Police Department
Scott Lindsey	Red Oak ISD Police Department
Dianne Argo-Brillhart	Registered Nurse
Gretchen Kitzman	North Ellis County Outreach
Donna Young	Hannah’s Ministry
Gay Johnson	Texas Baptist Home for Children
Carletta James	Child Protection Services
John Wyckoff	Gingerbread House
Diane Abel	Mothers Against Drunk Driving
Ginny Lindsey	Victims Coordinator – Ellis County Juvenile Services
Jo Wesley	Helping Hands of Ennis
John Hain	Red Oak ISD
Denise Hale	Women’s Resource Center