

Gillespie County Criminal Justice Community Plan 2014



**Date approved by Gillespie County Commissioner's Court:
10 February 2014**

Gillespie County Criminal Justice Community Plan

What Is a Community Plan?

This plan is formally known as the Gillespie County Criminal Justice Community Plan, the purpose of which is to identify gaps in services regarding criminal justice issues. The Criminal Justice Division of the Governor's Office (CJD) requires that Criminal Justice Community Plans be developed and maintained by counties and regions throughout Texas.

The document that is represented here reflects the efforts of many in Gillespie County that are concerned with assuring that any gaps in services are closed, thus making our communities safer places in which to live and work. It is with grateful acknowledgement that the names of those involved in the process of developing this Plan are listed in the section entitled Community Planning Team.

Though the final draft of this Plan was completed in February of 2014, this is a work in progress. New criminal justice goals are identified, the Planning Group changes as a result of individual and agency circumstances, and requirements concerning the makeup of the Plan are subject to change from year to year. Thus, Gillespie County is interested in keeping up with these changes, and including them in updates that will be posted from time to time.

If you are reading this Plan and have not been involved in its development, you are invited to join in this ongoing effort. Any questions you may have can be addressed to either John Culpepper, Community Plan Coordinator for Gillespie County, or to a Criminal Justice Program staff member of the Alamo Area Council of Governments. Contact information is provided at the end of this document.

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

Areas Represented

Incorporated Communities:

City of Fredericksburg

Unincorporated Communities:

Doss

Harper

Stonewall

Tierra Linda

Willow City

School Districts:

Doss Consolidated School District

Fredericksburg ISD

Harper ISD

Brief description and history of Gillespie County:

Gillespie County is located in the south central region of Texas. The only incorporated city is Fredericksburg. The geographical area of the county measures 1,060 square miles.

There are fifteen schools, including a number of private schools, in Gillespie County, educating the youth from pre-school to some college courses. Fredericksburg Independent School District (FISD) and Harper Independent School District (HISD) are the two biggest school districts.

Gillespie County has one hospital, Hill Country Memorial. This hospital serves an eight-county area and is a total health care system in that it provides an extensive range of area health care including home care, hospice care, clinics, Women, Infants, & Children programs, the Community Health Center and Hill Country Memorial Wellness Center.

The county's employment base is a mixture of service industry, agriculture, tourism, construction, real estate, retail and a very small amount of manufacturing.

A complete description of Gillespie County and its rich history can be found on the following website: www.gillespiecounty.org

Community Planning Team

Community Plan Coordinator for Gillespie County: John Culpepper, Director, Department of Emergency Services.

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

Juvenile Services:

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*Fredericksburg Independent School District
Gillespie County Juvenile Probation Office
Gillespie County Attorney
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Victim Services:

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*Gillespie County Needs Council
Gillespie County Health Division
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Hill Country Cares
Hill Country Cares*

Law Enforcement:

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Chief Steve Wetz
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City of Fredericksburg Police Department
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Mental Health

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Hill Country Memorial*

Transportation

*David Wisniewski

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City of Fredericksburg Department of Emergency Services*

Identification of Community Problems

General Public Safety Needs and Issues

Alternate Vehicle Route

Increased traffic through the City of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County is presenting an increasing threat to our citizens. Truck traffic through the City lowers the quality of life for our citizens, threatens our tourism industry and presents law enforcement officials and emergency planners with significant public safety problems. An alternate vehicle route may help reduce the threat to our citizens and our tourist industry.

Hazardous Materials

Hazardous Materials are being transported through Gillespie County and the City of Fredericksburg in every increasing quantities. A study conducted by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute of the I-10 corridor indicated that significant amounts of hazardous materials are being transported through our community en-route to Interstate 10. More data is needed to quantify the amount and type of Hazmat coming through our Community.

Evacuation Transportation

Numerous exercises conducted by Gillespie County officials required the evacuation of a significant number of people. In many cases, significant evacuation resources were not readily available if large numbers of people had to be evacuated. Alternate means of evacuation should be developed and utilized in the event of an actual emergency.

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 Gillespie County. 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 Issues (listed in order of priority, greatest need first)

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Start a mentoring program that can assist children and their parents in need before they enter the juvenile justice system and to give the meaningful options once in the juvenile justice systems.	Gillespie County juvenile Officer notes that almost 50% of his cases have parents that say they “do not know what to do” or “cannot handle” their child.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community education keep offering Parenting class and perhaps have local judicial services to encourage those parents in need to attend. 2. Get Gillespie County Juvenile Officer trained to teach these type of classes. 	

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Expand and develop drug and alcohol prevention measures, especially in schools.	In 2012 there were 48 Juvenile cases in Gillespie county. In 2013, there were 43 Juvenile cases in Gillespie county. In 2012, there were 10 Juvenile Alcohol Convictions and 14 Juvenile Drug Related convictions. In 2013, there were 9 Juvenile Alcohol Related Convictions and 15 Juvenile Drug Related Convictions
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
Create videos for schools to explain and expand crime stoppers “TEXT” program.	

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Gillespie County needs to establish awareness, education and prevention programs about teen and pre-teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, teen sex and prenatal care.	One of the more difficult areas we have dealt with is a rise in teen pregnancies in our county. While the rate nationally and statewide has dropped in recent years, the rates in our county have continued to rise. The State of Texas repeatedly ranks among the top four states in the country in the rate of teen pregnancies. The cost of teen pregnancy with its attendant health, societal, economic, and educational impacts prove staggering for all levels of government and society. In 2012, the Teen Birth Rate was 47 births per 1000 female population. Per the 2010 Census, there are 447 female head of households with children in Gillespie County.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the self-esteem of these young people through education and mentoring programs in order to reduce teen and pre-teen pregnancies. • These education or mentoring programs should also include tools for young parents to have a higher success rate for graduating from high school and being productive citizens. • Educational programs need to promote healthy, appropriate relationships and behavioral choices 	

Priority #4	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Gillespie County needs to develop and expand transitional services (life skills, college prep, job skills, etc.) to youth to help them be successful in Gillespie County.	Current data suggests that there are over 300 unfilled jobs in Gillespie County. Many of these jobs are trades that require skills or training that is not available in Gillespie County.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer classes in high school that will help all Gillespie County graduates gain meaningful employment. • Promote opportunities and training to enhance skills and knowledge necessary to gain meaningful employment. 	

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Gillespie County has hired a person whose job description includes Victims services. This person works in the County Attorney’s office. However, the current work load in the County Attorney’s office is such that this person is not able to devote the time needed to Victim Services.</p>	<p>The case load in the Gillespie County Attorney’s Office is very high and increasing. Employees of the office are tasked with multiple jobs. This results in a situation where, although the job gets done, the employees of the office are not able to devote adequate time to some of the necessary functions.</p>
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hire an additional person to be designated Victims Assistance Coordinator for Gillespie County. 2. Pursue Grant opportunities for Victim’s services programs. 3. Suggest that Gillespie County continue to match funds for grants for the 216th Judicial District VAC to continue to provide victims assistance in felony and some misdemeanor cases in Gillespie County. 4. Encourage support for Victims Services in Gillespie County Government as well as in non-governmental entities. 5. Take steps to ensure that victims of crimes know what assets and services are currently available to them and ensure that they know how to access those services. 	

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Victims of crimes in Gillespie County often do not report the crimes because they do not know what help is available or where to get the help.</p>	<p>The Gillespie County Attorney’s Office states that in many of the cases that pass through his office, the victims simply state that they do not know where to go or how to get help. This lack of information often leads to a sense of helplessness and cause crimes to go unreported. Increasing people’s awareness of the type and location of services will make it easier for people who would not otherwise report a crime to step forward and report it.</p>
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Educate the public in regards to what services are available and who provides them. 2. Improve or expand services for victims of all crimes, including crisis intervention and emergency shelters for all victims. 3. Expand services to include help in the legal, medical, psychological and financial fields. 	

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>There is a general lack of programs available in Gillespie County that can help prevent the conditions that lead to abuse and neglect.</p>	<p>Gillespie county is home to an increasing population. As our population increases the causes of neglect and abuse will grow as well.</p>
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide programs to teach parents how to deal with everyday stress in order to help prevent conditions that may lead to children being harmed. 2. Implement and/or expand prevention programs and activities for all school children (preK-12) that will empower them to protect themselves from becoming victims of physical, sexual and psychological abuse. 3. Provide training opportunities for those people who work with children, including parents, to recognize child abuse and create environments where abuse will not happen. 4. The Gillespie County Attorney's Office and the District Attorney's office will work with other agencies to secure a battered women's shelter in Fredericksburg or Gillespie County. 	

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Establish interoperability in communications systems throughout Gillespie County	Although the law enforcement entities within Gillespie County have the ability to communicate on a common radio frequency, the radios themselves are becoming obsolete. The current radios that are in use, Ericson LPE200, will not be compatible with our current operating system by the end of this year. The radio towers within the county, which also support the surrounding counties, do not all have the ability to support the 700 MHZ. Second, the Fire Departments, EMS Agencies, and Public Works within the city and county do not have a compatible radio system which allows any of them or Law Enforcement to communicate with each other.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
Establish communication interoperability between all emergency services and public works departments within Gillespie County, as well as other counties in the region, by completing radio tower upgrades and the purchase of new radios.	

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of an audible and visual early warning system throughout Gillespie County	The geographical area does not support everyone with the availability to receive data information through cell phones, or radio notifications through the NOAA system, in times of emergencies.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
Implement and audible warning system throughout the county to notify citizens that an emergency information is being broadcasted and available, and provide signage to direct people where to search for that information.	

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Lack of portable signage to direct/manage traffic in emergency or non-routine situations	Due to the many events and larger numbers of traffic affecting our area, there are many times that traffic must be diverted to maintain safety and allow for a continual flow of traffic. Second the geographical surrounding counties conditions of the area are more susceptible to severe winter weather than in the area, making driving conditions dangerous.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
Purchase programmable mobile sign trailers that can be positioned in different areas when needed, and in a timely manner, to notify drivers of severe road conditions and or information as to alternate routes of travel.	

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Gillespie County needs a practicing private psychiatrist who sees patients affordably within the county.</p>	<p>The resources for psychiatric care for Gillespie County residents of any income level are limited, and none of them keep regular office hours in the county itself. This is the same for both adults and children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a private psychiatrist that visits Pedernales Medical Group no more than four times per month. All payments must be in advance (which can be hundreds of dollars) with the patient reporting it to their insurance company themselves. • MHDD provides services to individuals with Bi-Polar, Schizophrenia, and Major Depression. Individuals are not denied services due to inability to pay, but a Maximum Ability to Pay scale is used to determine payment. • MHDD also has consumers with insurance being served. • MHDD services include psychiatric services, crisis screening and services, case management, veteran’s services, substance abuse services, and trauma therapy services. Individuals who do not meet the target population of Bi-Polar, Schizophrenia, or Major Depression are not eligible for services and must receive services elsewhere, unless they had Medicaid. • Likewise, unless receiving MHDD services, veterans must go to either Kerrville or San Antonio for psychiatric or psychological services, which often makes transportation an issue. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If a veteran has VA benefits they can seek help at the VA hospital in Kerrville (the waiting list for this is around three months). ○ If a veteran does NOT have VA benefits, but their psychiatric/psychological problem is combat-related then they can seek help at a veteran center in San Antonio.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit a private psychiatrist to practice and see patients in Gillespie County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make part of the psychiatrist’s practice to see low-income patients on an affordable sliding scale. • Find an additional affordable psychiatric provider for veterans for Gillespie County and/or affordable transportation for veterans to get to either Kerrville or San Antonio. 	

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Psychiatric patients need access to affordable medications to manage their disease.</p>	<p>One common problem for psychiatric patients is that their maintenance medications are often unaffordable, potentially costing hundreds of dollars each month. MHDD has a program to help its established indigent patients and new patients entering services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established indigent patients have to keep up with paperwork to keep meds available. • Newly diagnosed indigent patients entering MHDD services have to fill out paperwork and MHDD covers meds until med assistance meds come in. • MHDD Patients with insurance get scripts when seeing the dr. the first time. • Patients who are changing providers and/or are new to the area will be delayed in getting their medications. They will try to go to the emergency room at Hill Country Memorial to get a doctor to write a script, but the hospital's policy is to not write prescriptions that will last more than a few days and very few family practice doctors are willing to write prescriptions for psychiatric medications.
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Patients must be able to find a faster path to getting their medications and attaining them affordably. The biggest problem are the delays mentioned in the first priority, but after the delays are met and reduced then there needs to be additional ways to patients to affordably attain their maintenance medications.</p>	

Priority #3	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
Affordable Substance Abuse Services	<p>Gillespie County currently has one substance abuse treatment center for adults, Serenity House (located at 312 Balcones Dr. in Fredericksburg). There are no residential substance abuse treatment facilities for juveniles closer than San Antonio. Serenity House is not an affordable option for low-income, uninsured individuals. MHDD has out-patient substance abuse services available for patients and also persons not in MHDD services.</p>
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish an affordable, sliding-scale residential treatment center in Gillespie County. 2. Establish some sort of a respite and/or halfway house in Gillespie County 3. Increase community knowledge of available substance abuse services. 	

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

Priority #1	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Hazardous Materials are transported via truck through our community daily. The volume of truck traffic is increasing. The City of Fredericksburg LEPC has been awarded a Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning grant to determine the amount and type of Hazardous Materials that are being transported through Gillespie County and the City of Fredericksburg.</p>	<p>Preliminary data collected by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute as part of an I-10 Corridor study in 2012 indicated that a significant amount of Hazardous Materials was passing through Gillespie County en-route to I-10. This study was the basis of our application for and receipt of a Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning Grant to document the amount of hazardous materials traveling through Gillespie County.</p>
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<p>Complete the Hazardous Materials Commodity Flow as provided for in the TDEM Grant awarded on 6 November, 2013. Study will be completed by 30 September, 2014.</p>	

Priority #2	
<i>Problem Identified</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Gillespie County and the City of Fredericksburg are home to a growing population and a growing tourist industry. Traffic through the city and county, especially truck traffic, is posing an ever greater problem for law enforcement and our tourism industry. An Alternate Vehicle route would relieve truck traffic in and around the City of Fredericksburg</p>	<p>Data collection to determine the need for an alternate vehicle route is currently in work.</p>
<i>Potential Response to Problem</i>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect data concerning the number and type of trucks, their cargo and routes. 2. If alternate route is deemed necessary, then develop community support for an alternate truck route. 3. Find funding sources for alternate vehicle route. 4. Develop the plan for an alternate vehicle route. 5. Build and utilize an alternate vehicle route 	

Priority #3	
<i>Evacuation Transportation</i>	<i>Data</i>
<p>Emergency Management exercises have shown that in the event of a major emergency, Fredericksburg ISD busses are going to be counted on to evacuate victims in an emergency. In a large emergency that affects numerous organizations and agencies, more resources would be needed.</p>	<p>In the event of an evacuation, many citizens will lack transportation and need some form of public evacuation asset. A large scale evacuation will require assets beyond our current capability to provide. Additional assets need to be identified for use in an emergency situation.</p>
<p><i>Potential Response to Problem:</i></p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contact private schools, nursing homes, senior centers, tourist centers and other organizations that provide transportation for patrons, residents or patients to determine the availability of their transportation resources in the event of an emergency. 2. Compile a comprehensive list of transportation assets willing to participate in an evacuation scenario to include capability, contact numbers, location, handicapped capabilities, etc. 3. Ensure that Annex S (Transportation) is complete and up to date. 	

Resources Available

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

Juvenile Justice:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
County Attorney's Office	Governmental	The county attorney shall attend the terms of court in his county below the grade of district court, and shall represent the State in all criminal cases under examination or prosecution in said county; and in the absence of the district attorney he shall represent the State alone and, when requested, shall aid the district attorney in the prosecution of any case in behalf of the State in the district court. He shall represent the State in cases he has prosecuted which are appealed.
Gillespie County Juvenile Probation Office	Governmental	The Gillespie County Juvenile Probation Department is a fundamental part of the Juvenile Justice System. In Gillespie County. The 33rd and 424th Judicial District and Gillespie County Juvenile Probation Department serves the needs of Gillespie County.
Fredericksburg ISD	School District	Fredericksburg Independent School District is a public school district based in Fredericksburg, Texas. In addition to Fredericksburg, the district serves the unincorporated communities of Stonewall, Luckenbach, Willow City, and Albert.
Harper ISD	School District	The Harper Independent School District serves pre-kindergarten through twelfth-grade students in a diverse and growing district located about 76 miles northwest of San Antonio and 90 miles west of Austin.
Advocacy Place	Non-Profit	Child Abuse Advocacy Agency in Kerrville, Texas

Law Enforcement:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Gillespie County Adult Probation Department	Governmental	Employees of the department serve the Courts and the citizens of Gillespie County and the State of Texas.
Gillespie County Sheriff's Office	Governmental	The members of the Gillespie County Sheriff's Office are committed to excellence in law enforcement and are dedicated to the people, traditions and diversity of Gillespie County. In order to protect life and property, prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime, we will provide service with understanding, response with compassion, performance with integrity and law enforcement with vision.
Texas Department of Public Safety	Governmental	The mission of the Texas Department of Public Safety is to protect and serve the citizens of the State of Texas.
Texas Parks and Wildlife	Governmental	The Law Enforcement Division provides a comprehensive statewide law enforcement program to protect Texas' wildlife, other natural resources, and the environment. Texas Game Wardens are responsible for enforcement of the Parks and Wildlife Code, all TPWD regulations, the Texas Penal Code and selected statutes and regulations applicable to clean air and water, hazardous materials and human health. Wardens fulfill these responsibilities through educating the public about various laws and regulations, preventing violations by conducting high visibility patrols, and apprehending and arresting violators.

Victim Services:

Name of Agency

Agency Type

Description

Good Samaritan Center of Fredericksburg

Non-Profit/Charitable

The Good Samaritan Center is a charitable medical and dental clinic that helps low-income individuals and families that have no health insurance.

The Salvation Army

Non-Profit/Volunteer

The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.

The American Red Cross

Non-Profit/Volunteer

The American Red Cross is part of the world's largest humanitarian network with 13 million volunteers in 187 countries.

Hill Country Cares

Non-Profit

Hill Country CARES' mission is to promote healthy individuals, healthy families and healthy communities by providing prevention, intervention and recovery services for domestic violence, sexual assault, abuse and neglect, chronic illnesses, and self-destructive behaviors.

Hill Country Community Needs Council

Non-Profit

The Needs Council identifies, establishes and administers services that address the basic unmet needs of people in Gillespie County. This mission is accomplished through the mobilization of a core of community volunteers, the utilization of community resources and services, and the establishment of programs.

Peterson Regional Medical Center

Medical Hospital

Peterson Regional Medical Center is a private, not-for-profit community-based healthcare facility located in the heart of the Texas Hill Country in Kerrville.

Gillespie County Indigent Health

Governmental

This program is a county program that provides medically necessary health care benefits to individuals who meet the criteria; and who are categorically ineligible for Texas Medicaid Program.

The Golden Hub

Non-Profit

A community gathering place for seniors of every age that provides food, fun, and fellowship in a safe, friendly, and welcoming environment.

Mental Health

Name of Agency

Agency Type

Description

Gillespie County Ministerial Alliance

Faith Based

The Gillespie County Ministerial Alliance is the joint effort of local Christian ministers making a difference for those living in our local area.

Hill Country Memorial

Medical Facility

Hill Country Memorial is an 88-bed medical center serving eight counties. Patient services are provided without regard to race, color, creed, age, gender, disability, place of national origin or ability to pay.

Gillespie County Veterans Service Office

Governmental

The Gillespie County Veterans Service Officer is responsible for assisting Armed Forces Veterans and their dependents who reside in Gillespie County of the legal benefits available to them under U. S. Federal and State laws.

Transportation

Name of Agency

Agency Type

Description

Texas Department of Public Safety Government

The mission of the Texas Department of Public Safety is to protect and serve the citizens of the State of Texas.

Gillespie County Sheriff's Office Government

The members of the Gillespie County Sheriff's Office are committed to excellence in law enforcement and are dedicated to the people, traditions and diversity of Gillespie County. In order to protect life and property, prevent crime and reduce the fear of crime, we will provide service with understanding, response with compassion, performance with integrity and law enforcement with vision.

Fredericksburg Police Department Government

It is the mission of the Fredericksburg Police Department and its employees to create a safe and hospitable working environment wherein employees can pursue the goals of reducing crime and the fear thereof, as well as improving the quality of life within the community, through solution and community oriented policing techniques. These techniques will comply with state and United States constitutional and statutory requirements.

Interagency Cooperation

The following is a description of how the various resources listed in the previous pages could cooperatively work together to accomplish the goal of closing identified gaps in services:

The committee that drafted our Community Plan was made up of representatives of the governments of the City of Fredericksburg and Gillespie County, citizens at large, representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, Hill County Memorial, Hill County Needs Council, the Fredericksburg Ministerial Alliance, Hill Country Cares, the Fredericksburg Independent School District, the Victims Assistance Coordinator, and the Fredericksburg Good Samaritan Center. Several meetings were held in order to develop the plan. During the discussions, there was an open exchange of ideas and information.

The members of the committee were genuinely interested in the problems that we discussed. The members of the committee interact with the public in their area of expertise. Everyone on the committee learned new things about assets and services that are available in our area. For example, the Hill County Needs Council has a brochure that is available to everyone that may be useful to churches, law enforcement, mental health professionals and volunteers. The committee discussed making this information available on City and County websites and allowing law enforcement officials to distribute the brochure when needed. This will help get the information out to people who need it when they might otherwise not have known where to get help in victim services and mental health.

All of the people on the committee volunteered to take part in the process. All of the participants expanded their personal and professional network of contacts and information. All of the participants have a better knowledge of the services that are available to us, and the shortcomings of those services. The improved network between governmental officials, volunteer agencies and private individuals will help us share resources, identify new resources and work together to make our community better.

Long-Range Plan Development, Monitoring and Evaluation

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

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

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

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

Contact Information

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This Plan is available on-line at the following URL address:

[Gillespie County Web Site \(www.gillespiecounty.org\)](http://www.gillespiecounty.org)