

Thurston County

Comprehensive Juvenile Services

Community Plan

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2025

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Introduction

The Thurston County Juvenile Team was formed by persons who express interest in our Diversion Program and show their continued support by willingly volunteering to help with our Diversion Activities. Our team is currently in transition with the formalization to happen in the next few months. During this time, we as a group have met informally to discuss ongoing plans and programs that can be made available for the Youth and Communities of Thurston County. Formal meetings will be scheduled once every quarter. Informal meetings will be held when necessary. Tammy Maul-Bodlak, Thurston County Attorney is the Thurston County Diversion Coordinator and the Chair Person for the Community Team, Robin Christiansen is the Financial Officer for the Team with Tammy Maul-Bodlak being the person that gives final approval for how the funds are spent.

Thurston County Community Team

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Data Summary

Thurston County is comprised of seven communities with two reservations and has an estimated population of 7,171 with approximately 2,862 of them being juveniles. In assessment of the data, it has shown there is not an overabundance of arrest and long-term detentions; however, there is a definite need for the Diversion Program and mental health services programs to continue on in this County as well as other activities developing to help our juveniles of this County.

One of the primary issues identified for the county needs assessment for 2020-2021 is chronic absenteeism. Historical data reflects an increase in youth chronic absenteeism in recent years. In 2018/2019 more than 1000 students were chronically absent. This data reflects a need to address truancy within Thurston County.

Another troubling issue identified by the Thurston County needs assessment reflected youth who reported mental health symptoms and substance use. More than 20% of high school seniors in Thurston County have considered or attempted suicide which is indicative of a serious mental health crisis in our county. More than 50% of Thurston County 10th graders reported being depressed (20 percentage points more than the Nebraska average). The Pender Public School is working to address the mental health needs of youth in our community. Pender Public Schools has made a room available for mental health practitioners to come into the school and meet with clients there. Heartland Counseling comes to the school 3 days a week and meets with 11 students. Faith Regional also comes to Pender 2 days a week and meets with 6 students. Kathy Baker also comes to the school once a week to meet with a student. These services are in addition to the counseling provided by the school counselor. The school reports that appointments with providers fill quickly and that if additional appointments were available, they would be utilized by students. Pender Public Schools had a student who committed suicide last school year and other students within the county have been hospitalized for suicide attempts.

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Drug and alcohol use is another problem in Thurston County. 33.3% of Thurston County 10th graders report current marijuana use (as compared to 7.3% of Nebraska 10th graders). Similarly, 26.8% of 12th graders report current marijuana use (as compared to 13.9% of Nebraska 12th graders). Nearly a third of high school seniors report current alcohol use.

Comprehensive List of Services

SYSTEM POINT: PREVENTION		
(includes programs that aim to intervene before and after problematic behaviors are identified)		
Program/ Agency Name	Eligible age	Risk or need
<i>Delinquency Prevention</i>	<i>11-18</i>	
<i>Mental Health Programming</i>	<i>6-18</i>	<i>Mental health disorders, antisocial behavior, lack of empathy</i>

SYSTEM POINT: DIVERSION SERVICES		
(diversion and services available to youth on diversion)		
Program/ Agency Name	Eligible age	Risk or need
<i>Drug. Alcohol Education</i>	<i>11-18</i>	<i>Drug/alcohol use</i>
<i>Community Service</i>	<i>11-18</i>	<i>Inappropriate use of time; lack of concern for others</i>

Community Analysis and Response (CAR) Final Worksheet

COMMUNITY ANALYSIS & RESPONSE WORKSHEET			
Identified Need	Existing Program, Agency or Resource	Eligible age	Does this program accomplish the desired change? If no, what is missing?
EXAMPLE:			
Youth who commit minor crimes	Juvenile Diversion Program	11-17 years	This program cannot serve 17+, and we have a large number of college MIPs.
EXAMPLE:			
Elementary school youth with high percent of absenteeism	CPS calls /welfare check	0-99 years	CPS / formal handling often does not get at the root cause of the absenteeism.

Gaps to be Filled Worksheet

GAPS IN THE CONTINUUM			
Brief Data Snapshot	Existing Program, Agency or Resource	Eligible age	Does this program accomplish the desired change? If no, what is missing?
EXAMPLE:			
124 youth under 17 committed minor law violations (shoplifting, 3 rd degree assault, MIP).	Only an adult diversion program	18-99 years	Need to develop a juvenile diversion program, allow youth to accept responsibility and stop offending,
EXAMPLE:			
25% of elementary school youth in our county, are absent 15 or more days per semester.	CPS calls /welfare check	0-99 years	Need to develop a truancy program to get at the root cause of the absenteeism, and begin attending school.

List of Team Members

Thurston County Community Team is formed of members of the current LB1184 members plus a few staff members from the Pender Public School, they meet quarterly for 1 to 1.5 hours, at the Thurston County courthouse.

List of team members:

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Closing Comments

Appendices

Appendix A: Completed Community Needs Assessment (CNA)

Appendix B: Approval Letter/minutes from Governing Board

Appendix C: Multi-County or Tribe Group MOUs

Appendix D: Other Appendix as identified by the community team