

Sabine County Strategic Plan

2023-2024

April 10, 2023
Date

Daryl Melton
Daryl Melton, County Judge

Jamie Clark
Jamie Clark, County Clerk



Sabine County Strategic Plan

What Is a Strategic Plan?

This plan is formally known as the Sabine County Criminal Justice Strategic 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 each county in Texas have a Criminal Justice Strategic Plan.

The document that is represented here reflects the efforts of many in Sabine County that are concerned with assuring that any gaps in services that are identified are closed in a way that will both solve the problem and provide as great a benefit to the community as possible. It is with grateful acknowledgement that the names of those involved in the process of developing this plan are listed in the following page(s) under Part II (Strategic Planning Group).

Though the final draft of this plan was completed in month of year, 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, Sabine County is interested in keeping up with these changes, and including such 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 name, Strategic Plan Coordinator for Sabine County, or to the Criminal Justice Program of the Deep East Texas Council of Governments. Contact information is provided within this document.

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

Areas Represented

Incorporated Communities:

City of Hemphill Thad Smith, City Manager

City of Pineland Melissa Jones, City Manager

Unincorporated Communities:

Bronson, TX

Fairmount, TX

Milan, TX

Rosevine, TX

School Districts:

Brookeland ISD Kevin McCugh, Supt.

Hemphill ISD Reese Briggs, Supt.

West Sabine ISD Carmelius Gilder, Supt.

Brief description and history of name County:

According to our 2020 Census information, the population of Sabine County is 9894 with 17.6% living below the poverty level. The racial makeup of the county is 89.9% White, 6.9% Black or African American, 4.9%Hispanic,0.4% Asian 1. % Indian and Alaska Native, and 1.7% multi-racial. The US Census Bureau lists Sabine County median household income at \$34,992.00.

There are three (3) Independent School Districts in the County. Brookeland ISD has a total student population of 394. Of that population, 245 students (59%) are eligible for the subsidized lunch program. Brookeland ISD shows 36.8% to be “at risk by state standards” and a .7% dropout rate. Hemphill ISD is shown to have a total student population of 897. Of that population, 467 (50.9%) are eligible for the subsidized lunch program. Hemphill ISD show 46.3% to be “at risk by state standards” and a 2.7% dropout rate. West Sabine ISD has a total student population of 610. Of that population, 520 students (75%) are eligible for the subsidized lunch program. West Sabine ISD shows 54.8% to be “at risk by state standards” and a 1% dropout rate.

Sabine County is located deepest in the East Texas Region. She is shoulder to shoulder at the west with the State of Louisiana. However, the Toledo Bend Reservoir is positioned between us. Sabine County’s western boundary is engulfed by San Augustine County while Shelby County sits to the north on a small portion. Jasper and Newton Counties split our southern limits.

Sabine County is approximately 100 miles southwest of Shreveport, La; 180 miles northeast of Houston; and 200 miles southeast of Dallas. The City of Hemphill is the county seat.

The county encompasses 546 square miles of the Redlands region with the population density of 22 persons per square mile. The National Forest Service covers 34%.

The major employers are Hemphill ISD, West Sabine ISD, Georgia Pacific, County of Sabine, City of Hemphill and Texas Department of Transportation. The county workforce sits at 3536 with an unemployment rate of 4.2% to 5.6%.

Strategic Planning Team

Strategic Plan Coordinator for Sabine County: Malinda Bryan County Auditor Sabine County

In developing this Strategic 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:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Amanda Drennan	Cotton Seed Patch
Chanelle Svehla	County Extension Office-4H Programs
Jake Squieres	Burke-Early Childhood Intervention
Janelle Treyler	JR Huffman Public Library reading program
Stephen English	Hemphill ISD
Carnelius Gilder	West Sabine ISD
Vera Boxley	Tri County Head Start
Edeska Barnes	First Judicial District Juvenile Probation Officer
Carol Brown	Pineland Early Learning Center
Harvey Zernial	Southeast Texas Food Bank

Victim Services:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
Diedra James	Family Crisis Center of East Texas
Lisa Kanne	Adult Protection Services

Brandi Kolander-Neeb	Child Protection Services
Tressie Simon	Care & Share
Rebecca Carlton	CASA-Court Appointed Special Advocates of Deep East Texas

Law Enforcement:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Agency</i>
George Griffin	Chief Deputy, Sabine County Sheriff's Office
David West	Chief of Police, City of Hemphill
Heath Bragg	Captain, State Game Warden
Paul Robbins	District Attorney, Sabine County
Robert Neal, Jr.	County Attorney, Sabine County
Kenny Isaacks	Chief of Police, City of Pineland

Mental Health:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Name</i>
Anne Bondesen	Burke
John O'Hearn	Sabine County Hospital
Dr. Gregory Backofen, MD	Sabine Health Authority
Tom Maddox	Sabine County Sheriff's Office

Identification of Community Problems

General Public Safety Needs and Issues

In each of the areas below, problems are identified and data is included that supports both the existence and severity of the problems as they are found in Sabine County. Below is 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)

<i>Identified Problem</i>	<i>Data Collection</i>
Lack of Continuing education alternatives	Sabine County has three Independent School Districts. In-County trade school or alternative learning centers preparing students for non-college related careers are not available to students
Lack of Professional Programs and services	Although the vast majority of local students do not attend college, public curriculum is primarily geared towards enrollment. When graduating, seniors leave high school they are ill prepared to find employment or earn a living.
Substance abuse counseling	The gap in local educational services or opportunities has contributed to vulnerable youth experimentation in drugs and other high-risk behavior. Experimentation can include manufacturing of and dealing in drugs and illegal substances.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

<p>Extreme and long-term familial poverty</p>	<p>The prevalence of poverty in Sabine County is of particular concern because of its relationship with other issues. For instance, childhood poverty has been linked to medical conditions and disease, poor health behaviors, mental health issues, and child neglect/abuse. Approximately 25.4% of the county's population is living below the federal poverty line, which is substantially higher than the state average of 10.5% (USCB, 2014c). It is extremely likely that a greater percentage of the population is impacted by poverty. For example, during the 2013 school year 59% of the children at Brookland, 50.9% of Hemphill and 46.3 of West Sabine were eligible for the federal free reduced-price lunch. In order to be eligible for this program, a child's family income must fall below 130% and 185% (reduced lunches).</p>

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

Identified Problem

Data Collection

<p>A Safe House needed in Sabine County</p> <p>Victims of domestic violence and sexual assault must have access to safe housing. This includes emergency shelter and transitional housing.</p>	<p>The 2009 DETCOG regional plan identified victim services as a top priority and emergency shelter for them as a @1 priority. Statewide, Texas provided 12,213 shelter services for women and children fleeing abusive relationships.</p> <p>The limited availability of resources in the county puts victims in a vulnerable situation. Through services outside the county are available to community, victims often need immediate help. An emergency shelter will provide immediate help and counseling.</p>

<i>Identified Problem</i>	<i>Data Collection</i>
Preventative services and counseling are not available to victims of abuse due to lack of in county resources and lack of public transportation.	When faced with a crisis situation victim of abuse are transported by the Sheriff's Office to out of county facilities and resources. (NOTE: The Sheriff's office struggles to keep up with daily calls for service due to criminal activity. An alternative is needed to handle emergency and medical transportation).

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

<i>Identified Problem</i>	<i>Data Collection</i>
Need for additional officers, training, equipment and technology to counteract the crime in Sabine County.	Eight officers must cover 491.4 square miles, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In order to better protect and ensure the safety of our community, officers must be effectively trained to counter and address the strategies and skills of the criminals that they must apprehend. Furthermore, they must have the equipment necessary for the job,

<i>Identified Problem</i>	<i>Data Collection</i>
Sabine County has a need for additional resources for law enforcement officials.	According to the Sabine County Sheriff's Office 2019 and 2020 Annual Activity Report, the case load for the eight full-time officers is untenable. For example, this small department handled 301 misdemeanor investigations, 301 felon investigations and 299 other investigations. The department made 403 misdemeanor arrests, 260 felony arrest, served 1035 misdemeanor warrants, 496 felony warrants and 221 civil papers were served.

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

Identified Problem

Data Collection

The primary concern of residents is the absence of mental health care services.	The Sabine County identifies a need for specific services (1) mental health (2) substance abuse (3) services to the elderly (4) family counseling and crisis intervention. The services need to be in Sabine County, accessible and visible to county residents and available 24/7.
Lack of crisis stabilization services.	The Burke located in Angelina County provides outpatient services to those in need of psychiatric and counseling services.

Identified Problem

Data Collection

Increased demand for mental health services.	The number of Sabine County residents served by Burke Mental Health Services in 2020 341 individuals. Adult Mental Health 191, Child and Adolescent mental health 51, Mental Health Crisis 103, integrated Care Clinic (primary care provided) 12, Detox 4, intellectual and developmental disabilities 88, Crisis Services screened and recommended facility placement 84, screened and recommended outpatient services 52, Admitted to Burk's MHEC 41, admitted to another facility 4. Crisis call received and addressed by Burke initiated by police department 4, initiated by Sheriff's Office 28.
Lack of residential treatment center.	Individuals with mental health issues lack access to available in-patient psychiatric services in the county. The nearest providers of these services are 60+ miles away in Angelina County, Longview and Marshall T x.

Resources Available

Included below are resources identified by the Sabine County Strategic 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>
1 st Judicial District Juvenile Probation	Probation	Serves only youth who are on probation; monitors offenders, checks curfew, school attendance, directs to life skills and drug programs. Served by Jasper TX Probation.
DETCOG	Honors Mentoring Program	The program provides mentoring services to youth, aged 4-18 with an incarcerated parent. Supportive adults are paired with these youths to engage them in positive youth development activities.
Rainbow Room	Emergency resource room	The primary function of the Rainbow Room is to be typically stocked with clothing, diapers, wipes, cleaning supplies, and other items a child or family may need. If a child must be brought into custody the room is available to offer them new possessions that are clean and just for them to bring to their placement.

Law Enforcement:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Sabine County Sheriff's Dept. Hemphill Police Dept.	Law Enforcement	Serves warrants, investigates misdemeanors and felonies, make arrest, serves civil papers, and serves felony warrants.

Victim Services:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Adult Protective Services	Provides services to victims of abuse, neglect and financial exploitation	APS is responsible for investigating abuse, neglect and financial exploitation and providing services to persons who are aged 65 or older or, if age 18-65, with mental, physical, or developmental disabilities that substantially impair the ability to live independently or provide for their own self-care or protection, who reside in the community.
Child Protective Services	Provides services for abusive or neglected children	The Child Protective Services Division investigates reports of abuse and neglect of children. It also Provides services to children and families in their own homes; places children in foster care' provides services to help youth in foster care make the transition to adulthood; and places children in adoptive homes.
Family Crisis of East Texas	Provides services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault	Emergency services to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and their families also includes a safe house and transitional housing.

Health / Medical / Substance Abuse:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
The Burke	Mental Health, intellectual and developmental disability and early childhood intervention	Provides mental health services including Peavy Switch Adolescent Center for Substance abuse as outpatient services. Could expand services to juveniles into Sabine County with an outreach office, counseling programs, assessment, and group sessions.
Sabine County Hospital	Health Care	Alcohol and Drug agency. Provides substance abuse assistance and counseling. Sabine County Hospital is a critical access hospital designated by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid and one of an elite group of hospitals that is Joint Commission of Healthcare Organizations accredited a status recognized nationwide as a symbol of quality healthcare and the commitment to meet high performance standards.

Prevention / Intervention:

<i>Name of Agency</i>	<i>Agency Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
ADAC	Drug & Alcohol	Alcohol and Drug agency, Provides substance abuse assistance and counseling.
DETCOG	Honors Mentoring Program	The Honors Mentoring Program provides mentoring services to youth, aged 4-18 with an incarcerated parent. Supportive adults are paired with these youths to engage them in positive youth development activities.
Local NA/AA Meeting	Alcohol Prevention	Provides local support for those seeking healthy lifestyles without narcotics or alcohol. Groups are led at centralized locations by faith-based organizations.

Interagency Cooperation

In the space below write 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 resource providers can work together to accomplish the goal of closing the identified gaps by coming together to share common challenges and to develop solutions that would be beneficial to the entire community. Setting quarterly meetings to share knowledge and foster good communication and cooperation between all the agencies. This will ensure that all organizations are knowledgeable about the services and needs of all the particular agencies. The Community Resource Collaboration Group comprised of community-based organizations in the region representing women, children, youth, health and nutrition, mental health, elderly services, and more would be the ideal organization to spearhead such an effort to ensure we close the identified gaps. This active group of goal-oriented individuals could harness their collective energy to create seamless service delivery in Sabine County.

Long-Range Plan Development, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Sabine County Strategic 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 Sabine County Strategic 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 Strategic Planning Coordinator.

Drafts and annual updates of the Strategic 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 Strategic Planning Group to improve outcomes for Sabine County families struggling with problems described in the plan's focus areas. Efforts are being made by many Sabine 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 Strategic Planning Team will continue to urge agencies to provide programming that addresses the outlined focus areas.

Contact Information

Malinda Bryan, Strategic Planning Coordinator for Sabine County

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**Mike Claude, County Strategic Planning Liaison from Deep East Texas
Council of Governments**

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This Plan is available on-line at address www.co.sabine.tx.us