



### Introduction

The Children's Policy Council Needs Assessment is an opportunity for local communities to inform state policy-makers of the unmet needs of children throughout the state. The growing demand for evidence-based practice requires using metrics. As policy-makers rely more and more on data to drive decisions, we ask CPCs to provide objective data to support their identified needs.

We appreciate your willingness to dig deeply into what is happening at the local level to inform state leaders and ultimately guide policy and funding decisions.

### About Your CPC

Please provide the requested information regarding your County's Children's Policy Council.

#### County \*

Jackson

#### Honorable Judge \*

Please provide the name of the Judge who leads the county's Children's Policy Council.

Honorable Don Word

#### Name of CPC Coordinator \*

Please provide the name of the contact person who coordinates the CPC activities.

Honorable Don Word

#### CPC Coordinator Email \*

Enter the email of the contact person who coordinates the CPC activities.

don.word@alacourt.gov

#### Address \*

Enter the address for mailing information to the CPC.

##### Street Address

102 Laurel Street

##### Address Line 2

##### City

Scottsboro

##### State / Province / Region

AL

##### Postal / Zip Code

35768

##### Country

USA - Jackson County

#### School System/LEA Representation \*

Are the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) all represented on the CPC?

- Yes, all are represented and active
- Yes, all are represented but not all are active
- Some are represented, but not all
- Only 1 school system is represented

#### Number of School Systems \*

Indicate the number of school systems or Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in your county.

2

**Does your county currently conduct a youth survey? \***

- Yes  
 No

## CPC Members

Use the fields below to list the names of all CPC Members, with each name in a separate field. Use the "Add" link to create more fields as needed.

CPC Member	CPC Member	CPC Member
Don Word	Liletta Jenkins	Lauren Gattis
Ashley McLemore	Erica Kirkland-Weeks	Jason Davidson
Chris Davis	Jonathan Colvin	Dustin Roden
Amy Childress	Carrie Bradford	Kennington Smith
Kim Wilhelm	Rachel Cook	Beverly Benson
Rocky Harnen	Eric Woodall	Cheryl Long
Shannon Heikkinen	Deb Dunsmore	Chandler Formby
Cia Dempsey	Josh Weldon	Krystina Jackson
Jason Pierce	Mateesa Collins	Matt Mitchell
Erica Player	Margaret George	Erik Dohring
Wendy Dulaney	Brianna Wells	Cathy Mitchell
Dana Garner	Deborah Cleaver	Deccie Turk
Elizabeth Wheatley	James Allen	Kayla Magbie
Kelly Klein	Laurel Moffat	Linda Rogers
Mark Williams	Miranda Davis	Myra Holt
Richard Lockard	Stacie Rolfe	Shalyn Benson
Shauna Schafer	Stephanie Lusk	

**Does your CPC currently have 501(c)3 status? \***

- Yes  
 No

### Needs Identification

The questions below relate to the needs of children ages birth to 19 and their families in your county. The sections represent umbrella categories of needs which have been identified over the past several years through local CPC Needs Assessments. The data requested in each section aims to help identify root causes, risk factors and/or specifics within each category.

Please rank your county's top three needs and provide the requested data regarding those needs.

Links to several data sources and local organizations are listed below as a resource to assist CPCs in completing the needs assessment and locating the requested information.

Kids Count Data:

<https://alavoices.org/2021-alabama-kids-count/>

<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#AL/2/0/char/0>

CPC Website for AOC County Data: [www.alcpc.org](http://www.alcpc.org)

Local Mental Health Center that serves county

**Three Most Urgent Needs \***

Select the three needs below that are the most urgent. These are the ones you will provide more information about.

- Substance Abuse
- Parental Involvement and Family Engagement
- School Success
- Early Care and Education
- Mental Health
- Juvenile Crime and Safety
- Poverty
- Health and Well Being
- Neighborhoods and Housing
- Transportation

**Substance Abuse**

Substance abuse affects youth, families and all parts of society and is manifested through underage drinking, prescription drug abuse, as well as illegal substance manufacturing, access, and use.

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**Substance Abuse Rank \***

Rank this need in order of its importance with 1 being the most important, 2 as second most important, and 3 as the least important of your top three urgent needs.

- 1
- 2
- 3

**Number of juvenile delinquency cases filed for drug and substance violations. \***

22

**Have substance abuse violations and delinquency cases increased or decreased over the past year? \***

- Increased significantly
- Increased somewhat
- About the same
- Decreased slightly
- Decreased significantly

**How many children have been removed from their home due to parent drug use in your county? \***

36

**Characterize the trend of children removed from homes due to parent drug use year over year. \***

- Each year, significantly more children are being removed from their homes due to parent drug use.
- We are seeing a leveling off of this trend.
- We have seen a significant decline in children being removed from their homes due to parent drug use.

**Is there a Juvenile Drug Court in your county? \***

- Yes
- No

## Substance Abuse Characteristics

Please select all that describe characteristics of substance abuse in your county.

- Youth Substance Abuse
- Underage Alcohol Sales
- Family Prescription Abuse
- Family Illegal Substance Abuse
- Drugs in Schools
- Lack of space to refer individuals with addiction issues

## Recidivism Rate \*

Provide the recidivism rate and any additional relevant information such as length of time drug court has been in existence and contributing factors to recidivism.

We don't have a drug court program in our juvenile court system and don't have any specific data on recidivism rates.

## Additional information About Substance Abuse \*

Provide additional information and data regarding why you believe substance abuse is a significant problem in your county.

We have not had a significant number of substance abuse charges in juvenile court in the last couple of years, but after several meetings with schools and community members, it has become evident that the newest trend that is rapidly growing in our area with both adults and youth is THC vape pens, otherwise known as "dab pens." Due to current legislation about the % of THC that is "legal" in AL, our DA's office has determined that these "dab pens" are not able to be used to charge someone with possession of marijuana, despite them testing positive for THC in LEO field tests. These devices are becoming almost as common as regular vape pens amongst juveniles, and we are finding them with kids at younger and younger ages every year. The legislators need to look into what it would take to pass a law that would allow these juveniles to be charged with something so that we can help the school systems combat this problem.

## Parental Involvement and Family Engagement

Family risk and protective factors impact the involvement, or lack thereof, of parents in their children's social-emotional development and their academic education.

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## Parental Involvement Rank \*

Rank this need in order of its importance with 1 being the most important, 2 as second most important, and 3 as the least important of your top three urgent needs.

- 1
- 2
- 3

## Trends of Child Abuse \*

Mark the answer that best characterizes reports of child abuse in your county.

- Over the past few years, we have seen an increase in the number of reports of child abuse.
- We are seeing a leveling off of child abuse reports.
- Our county has seen a decline in the reports of child abuse.

## Domestic Violence \*

Select the item that best characterizes the domestic violence trends in your county.

- Increasing
- Remaining about the same
- Declining

## Community Factors Impacting Trends \*

Describe community factors which may impact the trends in domestic violence and child abuse, including but not limited to, access to family counseling and mental health support.

There are several factors that potentially contribute to incidents of domestic violence and child abuse such as a lack of access to mental health services, the socioeconomic status of many Jackson County residents, limited resources for anger management and family counseling, the rising issues of substance abuse, and the rural landscape of the county.

### Number of Children in Foster Care \*

88

Are there enough available placements for foster children in your county? \*

- Yes
- No

Which components of parental involvement and family engagement apply to your county? \*

- Single parent families
- Support for teaching children at home
- Increased foster care placements
- Increased child abuse and domestic violence rates
- Increased adoption needs

### Mental Health

Mental Health is important at every stage of life from childhood, through adolescence, to adulthood. Mental Health is an essential component of overall health and well-being for children and their families. Children need to have any mental health conditions identified early so they can receive proper treatment through outpatient or inpatient services that meet their needs.

### Mental Health Rank \*

Rank this need in order of its importance with 1 being the most important, 2 as second most important, and 3 as the least important of your top three urgent needs.

- 1
- 2
- 3

### Needs Related to Mental Health \*

Select all statements that apply to your county.

- We have a dire need for inpatient mental health facilities.
- We have a dire need for outpatient mental health facilities and care.
- Our need and the demand for mental health services match pretty well.
- We do not have enough counselors to fill the needs in our county.
- Children with mental health issues is a growing problem in our county.
- We do not have a need for mental health services and care in our county.
- Services are only available for those with ability to pay.

How many facilities in your community maintain inpatient beds for mental health issues? \*

0

How many inpatient beds are available in your county for children? \*

0

Does this number meet the demand? \*

- Yes, demand is almost always met.
- Demand is mostly met. Occasionally, there are not enough beds.
- Demand almost always exceeds the supply of available beds.

How many inpatient beds are available in your county for adults? \*

0

Does this number meet the demand? \*

- Yes, demand is almost always met.
- Demand is mostly met. Occasionally, there are not enough beds.
- Demand almost always exceeds the supply of available beds.

**If the demand for services is unmet, what are some actions taken? \***

Describe how the unmet needs are currently addressed.

For juveniles, we have a Juvenile Court Liaison through Mountain Lakes Behavioral Healthcare that can assist with filing with the juvenile court if a child is in need of residential care. She is also able to help the parents and guardians get the child to a hospital that can help with assessing an acute issue. We also have the county Multi-Needs Team that meets monthly to discuss children in the county that may require residential care for mental illness related issues. That MNT can request funding from the state MNT to cover the cost of that residential care. There are no residential placements for juveniles in our county, and there are very limited beds in the state, so many times children are held for a short period and released back into their parents or guardians care and referred to a local counselor for follow up care.

For adults in the area, many are referred to Mtn Lakes Behavioral Healthcare for counseling and referrals for inpatient and medication services. We also have Highlands Medical, our local hospital, that can see all patients for acute assessments. Our probate judge also has the power to intervene in adult commitments, although beds and resources across the state are still extremely limited.

**Describe the greatest mental health needs in your county. \***

We need services for juveniles that are experiencing acute or long-term mental health crises such as suicidal and homicidal ideations, and severe behavioral issues. We are seeing more and more reports of severe behavioral issues at young ages, especially from the schools, and at this time, our main resource to provide them services is our county MNT. Our county mental health department, Mountain Lakes Behavioral Healthcare, is understaffed compared to the need, and they have a history of high staff turnover which makes it difficult to provide consistent care to patients that need it. Many people are only seen once every 4-6 weeks, which is often not enough. We need more staff to be able to provide mental health services and potential residential or intensive programs.

**Which population has the greatest mental health need in your county? \***

9 to 17 years old

**Top 3 Mental Health Resources \***

List the top 3 mental health resources in your county.

Mountain Lakes Behavioral Healthcare  
Health Connect America  
Limestone Behavioral Health Services

**Accomplishments**

With regard to your programs in existence from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, consider accomplishments in those areas. Provide information about who benefited from the accomplishment and the source and amount of funds used for the accomplishment. Describe at least three of your county CPC's accomplishments for the past year. You may include up to 10.

**Accomplishment 1 \***

Describe this accomplishment.

Our Youth Advocacy Program (YAP) is our most helpful tool and resource, especially when it comes to our juvenile justice kids and those families with DHR involvement. They provide one on one mentoring services at least 10 hours a week and work in the homes, directly with the families. This program has been such a tremendous asset in the past couple of years, that we coordinated with them to apply to expand and fund the program to be able to service 10 juveniles per year, in contrast to the 6 per year that they have been able to serve.

They are also in the process of opening a YAP house that will serve as a location for family visitations, parenting and skills development, cooking classes for parents, homework stations to assist families and children with reading and homework, a safe place for our youth to do homework at and hang out at after school and during the summer. This house is currently going through the preparation stage and hopefully should be open for the public within 4-5 weeks.

**Who benefitted from Accomplishment 1? \***

Our juvenile justice children and children that have cases with our Department of Human Resources. We have had 4 juveniles complete the program during this evaluation period and none of them have had any new criminal charges since their successful completion.

**Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 1 \***

+/- \$75,000

**Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 1 \***

DYS Diversion Grant is the primary source of funds, and other various grants to help supplement

**Accomplishment 2 \***

Describe this accomplishment.

Strengthening Families parenting classes are held once a week for 14 weeks. Trained facilitators lead the classes, which consist of separate child and parent classes, as well as an instructional period each week that includes the entire family. Parenting strategies and skills are taught in the adult classes while the children's classes are taught a lesson tailored to them about the same topic the parents are learning that week. In the last hour, the parents and children come together to work on putting the newly learned skills to real use. A family meal is also provided at the beginning of each session.

**Who benefitted from Accomplishment 2? \***

SF served 27 parents and 41 children during the reporting period. Anyone living in the home where the children are living or where they were removed from are required to participate in SF as part of their voluntary commitment to Jackson County's Family Wellness Court.

**Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 2 \***

+/- \$300,000

**Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 2 \***

SAMSHA and Alabama Administrative Office of Courts

**Accomplishment 3 \***

Describe this accomplishment.

Our Jackson County Juvenile Probation Office provides an Early Warning Truancy Prevention Program to help our local school systems combat the truancy issues from Kindergarten through 12th grade. This program helps to educate and hold the parents and children accountable for their absences and responsibilities when it comes to following both the school's rules and the Alabama laws about attendance in public schools. This allows the families to meet with court personnel, the Juvenile Court Judge, a representative from the District Attorneys office, and the school representative that tracks attendance, and handle their case without having to come to court and face further court action.

**Who benefitted from Accomplishment 3? \***

We were able to serve 248 families this year and assist them in understanding the compulsory attendance laws, avoid court action, and many times get clarification from the school representatives.

**Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 3 \***

0

**Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 3 \***

The Juvenile Probation Office operates this program at no cost to the schools.

**Accomplishment 4**

Describe this accomplishment.

Jackson County's Family Wellness Court implemented an OJJDP Prevention Services program titled Substance Abuse Education Series that also addressed mental health and self-care. This program was taught to Scottsboro High School students, who then went into the Scottsboro elementary schools to teach the elementary age kids the skills and information they had learned.

**Who benefitted from Accomplishment 4?**

In the reporting year, 126 high school students completed the SA Education Series, and many more elementary aged students also received the benefit of the program. As of the time of this report, two middle schools in the Jackson County School District have inquired about implementing the SA Education Series in their schools.

**Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 4**

+/- \$4,000

**Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 4**

OJJDP grant

**Accomplishment 5**

Describe this accomplishment.

Scottsboro City Schools began teaching the Parent Project this spring of 2023 and has since collaborated with Jackson County Schools to offer the program to a larger of parents starting in the fall of 2023. The parents that have participated in the program have been referred from juvenile court. This program is a 10-week program that teaches parenting techniques, life skills, and healthy family interactions.

**Who benefitted from Accomplishment 5?**

This program began in the spring of 2023 and the first class had 5 sets of parents complete the program. They are looking to serve many more families this fall when they collaborate with Jackson County Schools to offer multiple time slots for the classes.

**Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 5**

+/- \$2,500

**Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 5**

This program is funded by the local school districts and any outside grants that they can apply for.

**Accomplishment 6**

Describe this accomplishment.

Scottsboro City Schools hosted a family movie and resource night this spring of 2023. They provided a family friendly environment to entertain families, provide refreshments, and introduce families to multiple agencies and resources that provide services in our area. There were 13 community agencies that attended and set up informational booths that parents could obtain information from. The families were provided with punch cards that they could get stamped at each booth. They were able to turn in that punchcard once they had gotten every booth's stamp to be entered for a prize. This encouraged the families to fully engage with each agency and find out about previously unknown resources.

**Who benefitted from Accomplishment 6?**

Approximately 350 families attended the program and visited the informational booths to learn about local resources.

**Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 6**

+/- \$500

**Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 6**

This was funded by Scottsboro City Schools.

**Accomplishment 7**

Describe this accomplishment.

**Who benefitted from Accomplishment 7?****Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 7****Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 7****Accomplishment 8**

Describe this accomplishment.



**Who benefitted from Accomplishment 8?**

**Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 8**

**Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 8**

**Accomplishment 9**

Describe this accomplishment.

**Who benefitted from Accomplishment 9?**

**Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 9**

**Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 9**

**Accomplishment 10**

Describe this accomplishment.

**Who benefitted from Accomplishment 10?**

**Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 10**

**Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 10**

### **CPC Self-Assessment**

Self-assessment is an integral part of the County CPC development. Please provide the information below and indicate your CPC's level of development.

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#### **Level I CPC**

Select all that apply.

- Mandated Members (at least 8 of 15) attended at least two meetings last year
- At Large Members (at least 5 of 7) attended at least two meetings last year
- Minutes and sign in sheets were kept for all meetings
- CPC met at least quarterly
- Membership list was kept current
- Needs assessment was turned in on time and in correct format
- Annual Report submitted with needs assessment

## Level II CPC

Select all that apply.

- At least 10 of the 15 mandated members attended 2 or more meetings last year
- At least 6 of the 7 At Large members attended 2 or more meetings last year
- At least 3 members attended the CPC conference last year
- New Member Orientation Manual was developed
- Committees met at least quarterly in addition to regularly scheduled CPC meetings
- Committees presented reports at CPC meetings
- Committees took action toward identified issues
- CPC has a mission statement
- CPC has an elected Vice-Chair
- CPC has an elected Secretary

## Level II - Committees

Select all committees which have been established.

- Early Care and Education
- Economic Security
- Education
- Health
- Parent Involvement and Skills
- Safety

## Level III CPC

Select all that apply.

- Council has developed strong leadership
- Fiscal agent has been identified or a 501(c)3 has been established
- Bylaws have been written and approved
- Members have attended CPC Leadership Training
- Council is active in child advocacy efforts
- Council sponsors community efforts for children's issues
- Committees are active and performing specific actions
- 5 or more members attended the CPC Conference last year
- Communication line has been developed with legislators
- Communication with the media occurs
- CPC has a strategic plan in place

## Self-Rating\*

Based on the answers above, how would you characterize your current level?

- Striving for Level I
- Level I moving toward Level II
- Level II moving toward Level III
- Level III

## Annual Report Documentation

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### CPC Members List

Use the upload button below to provide a CPC membership list with contact information.

CPC Jackson County Membership.pdf 30.6KB

### CPC Meeting Minutes\*

Upload minutes from CPC meetings from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. Please ensure all minutes are scanned together as one document.

Jackson County CPC Minutes 5-24-2023.docx 15.48KB

### **CPC Sign-In Sheets \***

Upload all CPC Meeting sign-in sheets from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. Please ensure all sign-in sheets are scanned together as one document.

CPC Attendance 5-24-2023.pdf

53.58KB

### **Conclusion \***

What have we not asked you about that you feel is important?

Jackson County is a rural county with a greatly varying population, with needs that are often overlooked or not adequately addressed. There are a number of people in this area that are passionate about providing services and help to the families that make up this community, but there is still much more that can be done and needs to be done to address the lack of parental involvement, mental health issues, and substance abuse crisis that is affecting our youngest.