



### 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 \*

Covington

#### Honorable Judge \*

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

Judge Frank "Trippy" McGuire

#### Name of CPC Coordinator \*

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

Susan J. Short

#### CPC Coordinator Email \*

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

susanjshort@gmail.com

#### Address \*

Enter the address for mailing information to the CPC.

##### Street Address

P. O. Box 1418

##### Address Line 2

1000 Dannelly Blvd.

##### City

Andalusia

##### State / Province / Region

Alabama

##### Postal / Zip Code

36420

##### Country

USA

#### 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.

3

**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**

Tanasha Womack, Medicaid

Beth Jones, Smart Start AL

Brandy Hamilton, Help Me Grow

Sandy Kent, Beacan H. H.

Rachel Pridgen, MH Counselor

Brent Cosby, MH Counselor

Judge Trippy McGuire, Chairman

Freda Barton, Book Keeper

Leroy Cole, Bap. Association

Michael Smithart, Superintendent

Charlotte Spurlin, DFC Director

Todd Grimes, Chief Deputy

Tammy Speigner, UHSINC

**CPC Member**

Julie Moody, District Judge

David Pearce, Chief JPO

Eddie Powell, JPO

Donna Cauley, YES Program

Lesa Rathel, DHR Director

Staci Wilson, SCAMHC

Kiana Ferrell, SCAMHC

Josh Carnely, Senator

Halle B. Wilson, Project Coor.

Daniel Shakespeare, Superintend.

Jan White, Civitan Club

Walt Merrell, DA

Jessica Adair, Help Me Grow

**CPC Member**

Heather davis, SCAMHC

Lakenya Anderson, SCAMHC

Derrick Bolling, Youth Services

Hayden Kelley, Social Worker

Blake Turman, Sheriff

Julia Knight, ABC

Misty Mooney, Social Worker

Matt Hammett, House of Rep.

Susan J. Short, Director

Shannon Driver, Superintendent

Greg White, Chair, CCC

David Kirkland, Family Guidance

**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

Local County Department of Human Resources (DHR)

### 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.

### 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. \*

16

### 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? \*

5

### 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.

The 22nd Judicial Circuit Drug Court has been in existence since 2009. In 2011, when the current administration took office, there had been no Drug Court graduates. Since that time, 357 have graduated from the Drug Court Program, and only 24 have been rearrested within 3 years of their graduation. The recidivism rate of Drug Court graduates is 6.72%, which is extremely low. This low recidivism rate can be attributed to the successful recovery methods utilized in the Program. Clients are taught life skills, coping skills, redirection skills, and even budgeting skills.

The 22nd Judicial Circuit Drug Court has been in existence since 2009. In 2011, when the current administration took office, there had been no Drug Court graduates. Since that time, 357 have graduated from the Drug Court Program, and only 24 have been rearrested within 3 years of their graduation. The recidivism rate of Drug Court graduates is 6.72%, which is extremely low. This low recidivism rate can be attributed to the successful recovery methods utilized in the Program. Clients are taught life skills, coping skills, redirection skills, and even budgeting skills.

Factors that may contribute to recidivism include the lack of a familial support system, clients going back to the same cultural group and falling back into those same user habits, as well as a lack of appropriate problem solving mechanisms aside from using illicit drugs or alcohol.

### Additional information About Substance Abuse \*

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

Pride Survey Data, an anonymous survey collected among 6-12 grade students every two years, usage rates are high particularly for vaping nicotine and marijuana. Although underage drinking will always be a factor, the use of marijuana among youth is on the rise. Anecdotal data collected from law enforcement also indicates that even when youth are arrested for underage drinking, when asked if they would test positive for marijuana if a blood test was taken, 10 out of 12 would reply "yes." SAMHSA Data shows that parental drug use increases the likelihood that their children will repeat these patterns in their own lives and it becomes an intergenerational problem. Parents will be allowed to have MM Cards with 70 doses of MJ at any one time. Data from other states that have passed legal medical marijuana laws show that the recent passing of medical marijuana laws in AL will increase youth (ages 12-19) usage rates will increase by about 30%.

### 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.

### 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.

1. Substance abuse increases the risk for Domestic Abuse. Substance abuse and mental illness are an inter-related issue. With more drugs pouring into Alabama, we will continue to see an increase in usage rates among youth, as well as more mental health issues. Also, increased drug use by adults/parents brings on more child abuse. Out of youth ages 12-25 that are regular marijuana users, about 30% will develop a psychosis (most often-schizophrenia).
2. Counseling service providers generally have waiting lists.

### Number of Children in Foster Care \*

53

### 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

### Early Care and Education

The early childhood education experiences a child has before the age of five in First Class Pre-K, Head Start, Child Care Facilities, and Home Visiting programs builds social, emotional, cognitive and physical development that prepares them for school success.

### Early Care and Education 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

### First Class Pre-K \*

Enter the number of children in your county who participated in First Class Pre-K in 2022-2023.

267

### Licensed Childcare Facilities \*

Enter the number of licensed childcare facilities located in your county.

15

### Exempt Childcare Centers \*

Enter the number of center-based license-exempt childcare centers located in your county.

2

### Access and Affordability \*

Provide information about access to, and affordability of, childcare for working families in your county.

The average cost of daycare is about \$100. per week no matter the number of days attending. Paying for a hired worker at a home is about \$70./day (\$10. hour) which is not an option for many. Others choose to have a relative (grandparents, aunts) to keep their children which is low costs/no cost.

### Other Childcare Options \*

In instances where there is not sufficient access to childcare or it is not affordable, how does this impact your workforce? Where do children go for care?

The majority of families in our county with children, both parents work outside the home. There are options for child care but many choose to have grandparents or relatives to keep their children while at work due to costs as well as other reasons such as safety and or less illnesses for families to encounter throughout the year.

### Is the local CPC an active advisory council for First Class Pre-K in your county? \*

- Yes  
 No

### Describe your CPC's involvement with local First Class Pre-K providers. \*

We provide letters of support for all 3 school systems for their Pre-K applications. We have no other contact with these programs after they receive their classrooms although we would welcome the partnership.

### Under-Represented Populations \*

Describe those populations which are under-represented in early care and education. These are populations which may specifically be hard to reach and may come to kindergarten less prepared than other students.

Covington County is AL's 8th largest county by landmass. We have many school and church communities scattered around our county. Some children live in remote areas in our county and come to kindergarten without any preschool training. Since we all know that advertising works, perhaps utilizing social media to promote programs for pre-school children would be ideal. Local libraries in our county offer special reading times whereby the librarian reads a story to groups of children and/or provides a puppet show for pre-school children on a weekly basis.

### Collaboration and Coordination \*

Describe both the opportunities and the barriers to collaboration and coordination within the early care and learning community.

An opportunity that is provided in Covington County is the Parents As Teachers program, but a barrier is that few seem to be aware of this free opportunity. Again, children living in remote areas are at a disadvantage unless their parents are proactive in pursuing ways to get their children ready for kindergarten.

### Home Visiting Programs Availability \*

Does your county have sufficient access to home visiting programs such as HIPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters), PAT (Parents as Teachers), Nurse Family Partnership (NFP), or other Home Visiting programs?

- Yes  
 No

### Home Visiting Programs \*

Mark all that are available in your county.

- Parents as Teachers (PAT)  
 HIPY  
 Nurse Family Partnership  
 Early Head Start  
 Family Check Up  
 Healthy Families America  
 Early Intervention Program for Adolescent Mothers  
 Child FIRST  
 Locally developed model  
 Other

## Are children ready for school? \*

Describe the readiness of children for school success upon kindergarten entry. How do you know if they are or are not ready?

Whereas there is no single factor that determines whether a child is ready to start school, but there are someways to tell if your child is mature enough physically, socially, and cognitively. Parents most likely know their children the best; Can their child listen to instructions and then follow them, are they able to put on their coat and go to the bathroom by themselves, do they have a rudimentary familiarity with the ABCs and numbers, can they hold a pencil or cut with scissors, do they show an interest in books or can they try to "read" a book by telling a story based on the pictures, are they curious and receptive to learning new things, can they share and know how to take turns, can they work together with others as part of a group? If the answer is yes or sometimes to most of these questions then they are ready for Kindergarten, if not, preschool may be the better option.

## 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.

Andalusia City School's Drug Free Communities Grant (Year 4) got off to the great start with multiple activities & drug prevention activities for their school system and community. Here are just a few of them: Students Against Opioids Social Media Campaign, Everfi.com Alcohol EDU Vaping & Prescription Pills Modules for students, Dr. Craig Boykin spoke to District Faculty & Staff, Prevention presentation for varsity football team with character development, Toilet Talks-Aired Prevention PSA's on Jumbotron at JV games, Peer Helpers researched vaping info & created fliers to post on bathroom stalls doors, Prescription Pill Take Back, Conducted New Student Breakfast, "Parents Who Host Lose The Most" Info at AHS "Open House."

### Who benefitted from Accomplishment 1? \*

Children grades 6-12, their parents, guardians and the City of Andalusia as well as Covington County.

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

\$125,000

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

ONDCP (Office of National Drug Control Policies-The White House), the CDC (Centers for Disease Control), SAMHSA (Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration) and CADCA (Community Drug Coalitions of America).

### Accomplishment 2 \*

Describe this accomplishment.

The Covington County Children's Policy Council events: Hosted "Alabama-Help Me Grow" Books, Balls & Blocks event at the Andalusia Public Library with over 25 children attending. About 6 CPC members volunteered their time to help with this worthwhile event.

### Who benefitted from Accomplishment 2? \*

Children and families living in Covington County

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

\$0.

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

Alabama-Help Me Grow sponsored by the Alabama Partnership for Children and the Andalusia Public Library donated printed fliers to be placed around town. The Andalusia Star News also donated their time in posting this upcoming Children's Policy Council event on their social media pages.

### **Accomplishment 3 \***

#### **Describe this accomplishment.**

In Covington county, informational pamphlets were placed in obstetrician's offices reminder letters about the Count The Kicks free app and materials. Brochure holders and brochures for the Count the Kicks app were hand mailed to the Covington County Health Department. There has been at least 1 stillbirth prevented in Alabama by the Count the Kicks app. Crystalee Walters, LBSW, MCH Coordinator for the Southeastern District & Coffee County Health Department also makes a presentation to our CPC members to keep us apprised on maternal well-being data and needs in our area.

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

Women of child-bearing ages living in Southeastern District.

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

\$200

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

Alabama Department of Public Health

### **Accomplishment 4**

#### **Describe this accomplishment.**

The Covington County Youth Enrichment Services (YES) Program served 37 participants this year. Of the 37 served, 21 obtained their high school diploma or GED and 11 will continue to work toward earning their high school diploma or GED in the next program year. 25 participants were either employed when they entered the program or became employed while in the program and 1 is in the Army. YES participants remain eligible for all services through the Follow-up program. During Follow-up, participants remain in contact with the job pilot at least once a month for a year. The job pilot will help them in areas such as applying for financial aid, applying to college, updating resumes, filling out job applications, etc. Although Follow-up services are for one year, job pilots continue to help former participants for as long as they request the help.

#### **Who benefitted from Accomplishment 4?**

Communities and youth residing in Covington, Coffee, Dale, and Geneva counties.

#### **Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 4**

\$500,000.

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

The YES Program is funded through the WIOA grant for at-risk youth. The WIOA grant for \$500,000 is funded to support the participants in the YES Programs in Covington, Coffee, Dale, and Geneva counties.

### **Accomplishment 5**

#### **Describe this accomplishment.**

The maintenance of the Covington County Imagination Library where by children living in Covington County county that are registered receive free books on a monthly basis. Currently, about 700 children (birth-age 5) receive a book each month. Our Imagination Library started in 2012 and so far, about 6000 free books have been mailed out on our behalf so far.

#### **Who benefitted from Accomplishment 5?**

Children ages birth through age 5.

#### **Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 5**

\$14,500.

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

Donations are made each year from area civic groups including the Andalusia Rotary Club and the Andalusia Coterie Club.



## **Accomplishment 6**

### **Describe this accomplishment.**

On October 20, 2022 the Covington County Children's Policy Council hosted a Religious Leader's Symposium at the Covington County Courthouse. All ministers in the area were invited to attend. The topic was the brain and marijuana and the effects on the unborn and born. Growing research shows that cannabis use damages DNA and induces epigenetic changes to both the sperm and egg, increasing rates of lasting neurological defects, such as autism.

Medical physicians donated their time to speak on the subject: Dr. Ken Finn, MD, Pain Management-(Presentation via Zoom), Christine Carr, CRNA Anesthetists-(Presentation via Zoom), Dr. Michael Wells, OBGYN (Retired), Dr. Marsha Raulerson, MD, FAAP, and Dr. James Raulerson, MD, Internal Medicine, Nephrologist, & Escambia County Coroner.

### **Who benefitted from Accomplishment 6?**

Families and communities in Covington County.

### **Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 6**

\$0.

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

N/A

## **Accomplishment 7**

### **Describe this accomplishment.**

The Covington County Children's Policy Council applied and received it's 3rd Anti-Tobacco Grant from ADPH. Processing through the Covington County School System this year, our Project Coordinator, conducts 20 presentations in person or via zoom to civic groups or parents; teaches students in grades 5-12 about the dangers of Vaping utilizing the Stanford Medical School Anti-Tobacco Program for Students; review local and school tobacco policies are up to date; and participate in monthly coalition meetings across Alabama via zoom or in person and post all of our events on the social media platform, "We Get It Alabama." We also encourage high school students that show leadership skills to make a presentation to their school board about current drug trends and particularly vaping. A billboard with a prevention message is also utilized to educate our community.

### **Who benefitted from Accomplishment 7?**

Students in grades 5-12

### **Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 7**

\$70,000.

### **Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 7**

Alabama Department of Public Health

## **Accomplishment 8**

### **Describe this accomplishment.**

The Family Guidance Center in Montgomery provides the Kids & Kin program in Covington County as well as others. Christy Ainsworth, one of their Child Care Partners, enjoys hosting monthly meetings throughout south Alabama. Christy has always worked with children and now is able to teach DHR state certified trainings to all the Grandmas, Aunts, Uncles, and siblings who take care of their "kin." Christy feels as if it is an honor to continue learning about children and in turn to help those who could benefit from updated information. The Kids and Kin Program has been specifically designed to meet the needs of relative child care providers and to raise their level of awareness about the importance of their roles. Educational workshops, resources, support activities, and a quarterly provider newsletter are offered to relative care providers which impact the quality of child care available in our communities. Kids and Kin includes a Voluntary Certification Program through which providers earn health and safety items, books, and learning materials for attending free training sessions related to quality child care enhancement. Participation in the Kids and Kin Program is free. trainings in all state categories; Health & Safety, Child Development, Professionalism, Also, the Civitan Club donated \$350. for extra supplies to be giLanguage Development, Quality Child Care & Licensing, Positive Discipline, Guidance & Administration.

### **Who benefitted from Accomplishment 8?**

Children, Grandparents, Aunts, Uncle, and siblings living in Covington County.

**Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 8**

\$700.00

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

The Family Guidance Center of Montgomery as well as DHR.

**Accomplishment 9**

Describe this accomplishment.

Just Say Know About High Potency THC Public Education Campaign:

Did you happen to see one of our billboards on the highway? Utilizing professionally created images these billboard photos provided by Johnny's Ambassadors about the harms of youth marijuana use. All interested in posting billboards in your community can apply and Johnny's Ambassadors will offer a \$500 grant toward your billboard and will send you the artwork with your logo added at no charge. This strategy is being promoted to help us save our youth from the harms of today's high-potency THC products!

**Who benefitted from Accomplishment 9?**

People that viewed the billboard along the Florida Corridor, estimated number, 20,000 cars per day.

**Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 9**

\$500.

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

Johnny's Ambassadors's Laura Stack and Mr. Don Cotton of Andalusia for the discounted price and use of his LED billboard for 1 month.

**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.

---

**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

---

### CPC Members List

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

CPC Membership Template Fall 2023.xlsx 17.32KB

### 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.

CPC Minutes 2022-2023.pdf 672.48KB

**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 Sign-In Sheets 2022-2023.pdf

2.16MB

**Conclusion \***

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

Early Care & Education, Home Visiting Programs, needs to include the "Kids & Kin" program funded by The Family Guidance Center in Montgomery.