



### 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 \*

Lauderdale

#### Honorable Judge \*

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

Judge Benjamin Graves

#### Name of CPC Coordinator \*

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

Heather Haynes

#### CPC Coordinator Email \*

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

heather@lauderdalecountycpc.org

#### Address \*

Enter the address for mailing information to the CPC.

Street Address

205 West College Street

Address Line 2

City

Florence

State / Province / Region

AL

Postal / Zip Code

35630

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.

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**

Laura Akers

Heather Begley

Jennifer Bolton

Rachel Chobot

Mary Lauren Davis

Judge Ben Graves

Angie Hamilton

Amber Jones

Sharlene Key

Kathryne Lambert

Joseph McDonald

Darlene Minnifield

Danielle Napier

Jeremy Patton

Rhonda Richardson

Tiffany McFall-Rook

Courtney Smith

Treca Springer

Sarita Thompson

Pam Turner

Shelia Weaver

Lelia Wissert

**CPC Member**

Jackie Baker

Jennifer Berry

Anthony Brooks

Sonja Croone

Lori Gooch

Karen Grisham

Heather Haynes

Keith Jones

Jawana Kindred

Rob Martin

Katie McWilliams

Breanna Minyard

Stephanie Newland

Vicky Perry

Teresa Robertson

Jimmy Shaw

Pat Smith

Debra Staggs

Deanna Tidwell

Leslie Wallace

Catlean Williams

**CPC Member**

Donna Beck

Kim Bevis

Amanda Chadwell

Amanda Davis

Camonica Graham

Jerry Groce

Liz James

Connie Karthaus

Sibylle Kipp

Gina Mashburn

Nina Miles

April Moore

Africa Patterson

Casey Reed

Stacie Rolfe

Ann Sikes

Renee Smith

Danielle Stokes

Heidi Tilenius

Laurie Washington

Marquita Wilson

**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. \*

38

### 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? \*

30

### 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

## How many juveniles went through the court last year? \*

9

### 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.

Lauderdale County Drug Court was established in 2009 and is designed to last approximately 36 weeks.

### Additional information About Substance Abuse \*

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

By looking at the numbers, it appears as though substance abuse has declined in our county, however that is inaccurate. The number of youth testing positive on drug screens has increased. Many of the children identified as having a substance abuse problem become involved with the juvenile court initially for non drug related charges, therefore leading to a discrepancy between the number of cases filed for substance abuse violations versus the actual number of youth using substances. The number of children removed from their homes by DHR due to parent drug use appears to have declined, however this is only the number of children placed in foster care due to parent drug use. Many of the children are placed in out of home safety plans, per the parent's agreement, so the parent does not lose custody of the child. The numbers do not reflect the children who are placed in safety plans instead of foster care, signifying that the number of children removed due to parent substance abuse is actually higher than what is represented.

### 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.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, there are many risk factors that contribute to victimization. Among those factors, two listed are substance abuse and mental health. Both of those factors are priorities that we have identified from our county as the top two needs in our Needs Assessment. We have many caregivers struggling with substance abuse which impacts their ability to provide appropriate care to the children in their home, as well as many youth who are also struggling with substance abuse. We also have limited resources for mental health services for both adults and youth. Lauderdale County has 0 inpatient beds available for any age group. Due to the lack of resources and the demand for these resources, domestic violence and child abuse will likely continue to stay the same or increase.

### Number of Children in Foster Care \*

114

### 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.

Children and adolescents are referred to inpatient units throughout the state. There is an inpatient facility for adults in an adjoining county, so many of the adults travel to that county or are referred to other units throughout the state.

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

We are in need of inpatient beds for children and adolescents locally, as well as available psychiatrists.

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

18 to 54 years old

**Top 3 Mental Health Resources \***

List the top 3 mental health resources in your county.

Riverbend Center for Mental Health, Shoals Hospital, and Health Connect

**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.

The Juvenile Drug Court Program received a grant to continue to successfully serve adolescents in Lauderdale County. Juvenile Drug Courts are designed to provide a specialized and collaborative treatment and services to youth with substance use disorders who come in contact with the juvenile justice system.

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

Adolescents ages 13-18

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

\$30,000.00

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

Administrative Office of Courts

**Accomplishment 2 \***

Describe this accomplishment.

The CoParenting Solutions Program received a grant to continue to successfully serve families in Lauderdale County. CoParenting Solutions is a mediation program that works with custodial and noncustodial parents to form a consistent visitation schedule for their children. The family unit is strengthened as children can maintain a relationship with both parents.

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

Children and Families in Lauderdale County

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

\$20,000.00

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

Alabama Center for Dispute Resolution

**Accomplishment 3 \***

*Describe this accomplishment.*

The Safety and Health Committee of the Lauderdale County Children's Policy Council successfully hosted a community event on October 11, 2022, bringing Lieutenant Mike Reese with Operation Save Teens to provide information on the trends and dangers of substance abuse. The event was open to the public, with the target audience being youth and their parents. All youth involved with the local Juvenile Probation Office were encouraged to attend.

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

A total of 132 people attended the event.

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

N/A

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

N/A

**Accomplishment 4**

*Describe this accomplishment.*

Local Children's Trust Fund grantees partnered to host a Christmas Stocking Giveaway to local indigent families. Christmas stockings were provided to 414 children and their families. Pertinent information was provided to the parents, including local resources, parenting education handouts, individual agency information, etc.

**Who benefitted from Accomplishment 4?**

A total of 414 children and 141 adults were served from our community.

**Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 4**

N/A

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

Donations

**Accomplishment 5**

*Describe this accomplishment.*

Local Children's Trust Fund grantees partnered to host an Easter Basket Giveaway to local indigent families. Easter baskets were provided to 452 children and their families. Pertinent information was provided to the parents, including local resources, parenting education handouts, individual agency information, etc.

**Who benefitted from Accomplishment 5?**

A total of 452 children and 200 adults were served from our community.

**Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 5**

N/A

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

Donations

## **Accomplishment 6**

### **Describe this accomplishment.**

The Parent Involvement and Early Care Committees of the Lauderdale and Colbert County Children's Policy Councils successfully hosted the 6th Annual Family Fun Fair on May 4, 2023, at the Florence-Lauderdale Coliseum. The event was in honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month and was a free event to all community members. The goal for this event was to inform families about community, health, and safety resources, as well as provide and encourage positive interaction between parents and their children.

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

A total of 259 people attended the Family Fun Fair.

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

\$500.00

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

Long Lewis Foundation Grant and donations.

## **Accomplishment 7**

### **Describe this accomplishment.**

The Community Action Agency of Northwest Alabama's Mothers Program provided parenting education classes to 100 families from July 1, 2022 to date and the Daughters Program provided education to 4 youth. They also provided the Shaken Baby Presentation on a monthly basis through Lauderdale County Child Support Court.

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

Local Families

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

Unknown

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

Children's Trust Fund and Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

## **Accomplishment 8**

### **Describe this accomplishment.**

The First Teacher Home Visiting was established this year and served 8 families in Lauderdale County. They completed visits and group connections with these families during which they discussed Child Development, Family Well-Being, and provided an activity between the parent and the child. They also provided education on Child Transportation Safety to families through Florence-Lauderdale Public Library and Kids and Kin Program.

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

Local Families

### **Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 8**

Unknown

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

Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education by the Department of Human Resources Grant

## **Accomplishment 9**

### **Describe this accomplishment.**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Shoals started a new school based mentoring program with Florence City Schools at Harlan Elementary. 60 students were referred for mentoring services, and they were able to match 8 of those students with adult mentors. They have plans to expand the program and utilize Florence High School Students as mentors to the younger students.

### **Who benefitted from Accomplishment 9?**

Elementary Students through Florence City Schools

### **Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 9**

Unknown



## Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 9

Unknown

## Accomplishment 10

Describe this accomplishment.

Troopers with Alabama Law Enforcement Agency visit children in local hospitals during the holidays and provide them a Trooper Bear stuffed animal, from the Alabama State Troopers Association, as well as other small gifts that are donated or purchased by the visiting trooper.

## Who benefitted from Accomplishment 10?

Children who are patients in the local hospitals

## Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 10

N/A

## Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 10

The Alabama State Troopers Association and Donations

## 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.

LCCPC Membership List July 2023.docx 36.51KB

#### 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.

Minutes from July 2022-June 2023.pdf 368.62KB

#### 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.

Sign in Sheets July 2022-June 2023.pdf 1.8MB

#### Conclusion \*

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

N/A