



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 *

Tuscaloosa

Honorable Judge *

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

Elizabeth C. Hamner

Name of CPC Coordinator *

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

Elizabeth C. Hamner

CPC Coordinator Email *

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

Elizabeth.Hamner@alacourt.gov

Address *

Enter the address for mailing information to the CPC.

Street Address

714 Greensbosos Ave

Address Line 2

City

Tuscaloosa

State / Province / Region

Alabama

Postal / Zip Code

35401

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

Hon. Elizabeth C. Hamner

Shelly Standridge

Kevin Besnoy

James Brook

Leslie Guy

Carleigh Irby

Chris Jordan

Shelbi Lake

Lisa Maddox

Susan Miles

Faye Royal

Jennifer Thomas

Stephanie Waters

Jackie Wuska

CPC Member

Hon. Dennis Steverson, Sr.

Marilou Baker

Jessilyn Blair

Marquetta Burton

Jackie Hudgins

Whitney Jamison

April Kendrick

Tangi Landers

Ginger McGaughy

Mary Norwood

Trendle Samuel

Marketta Walton

Shakina Wheeler-Cox

CPC Member

Hon. Rob Robertson

Kara Bernal

Brent Blankney

Mary Florian

Melanie Ingle

Joyce Jelks

Corlina Koranda

Shannon Lynch

Danielle McInerney

Sherri Presley-Dumas

Nicole Shine

Kimeldria Washington

Alexis 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

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

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.

There are numerous factors that impact trends in domestic violence and child abuse. Substance and alcohol abuse, mental health, including the lack of low cost readily available mental health services, are significant factors for both. Financial insecurity and lack of education also play a role.

Number of Children in Foster Care *

112

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? *

7

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

2

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? *

568

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.

The creation of Hope Pointe Behavioral Health Crisis Center, serving Tuscaloosa County and 10 additional counties. The center will improve access to behavioral healthcare services for individuals who are experiencing a mental health or substance abuse crisis, and it will aid jails and hospitals throughout the communities served by alleviating the burden to house and care for individuals in need of services.

Describe the greatest mental health needs in your county.*

The greatest mental health need in Tuscaloosa is access to appropriate care (medications, therapy, etc.) for children and adults experiencing mental health or substance use issues.

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.

Indian Rivers Behavioral Health
Tuscaloosa's One Place
Private practice as a collective

Juvenile Crime and Safety

The future growth and success of a county depends on the productivity and well-being of youth. Juvenile violent crime and a population of teens not working or going to school can defer dreams and can place limits on access to opportunities.

Juvenile Crime and Safety 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

Mark the answer that best fits juvenile property crime that includes burglary, theft, or arson.*

- Has risen significantly over the past year
- Seems to have stabilized and remains virtually the same
- Has seen a decline over the past year

Mark the answer that best fits related to juvenile violent crime that includes murder, non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, or aggravated assault.*

- Has risen significantly over the past year
- Seems to have stabilized and remains virtually unchanged
- Has seen a decline

Reasons for Juvenile Crime Trends*

Describe factors that have influenced trends in juvenile crime.

Trends in juvenile crime have been influenced by a number of factors, including: an increase in overall crime in the community, substance and alcohol abuse, mental health, lack of parental involvement and supervision, peer and social media pressures, and gang activity.

Causes of Teen Accidents or Deaths*

Mark the top 2.

- Distracted driving
- Inexperienced drivers
- Violent crime
- Poor health/obesity
- Suicide
- Accidental discharge of firearm
- Drowning
- Overdose of drugs or alcohol
- Other

Teen Safety Challenges *

What are the biggest challenges to teen safety?

The biggest challenges to teen safety are distracted driving, drugs and alcohol abuse, and untreated mental health issues.

Gang Activity *

Are gangs a significant and/or growing threat in your county?

- Yes
 No

Describe how any gang problem is being addressed. *

Local law enforcement is working to address the issue through policing and education. The juvenile court is attempting to address by placing juveniles with suspected gang affiliation in separate areas of detention, placing juveniles on house arrest and addressing association with others in the juvenile court release orders and/or probation orders.

Describe the role of Juvenile Probation Officers in schools. *

Describe successes, challenges, initiatives, and other relevant information related to the partnership between JPO's and the school system(s) in your county.

The relationship between the Juvenile Probation Officers and the school systems in our county are growing. However, there is a lot of information that cannot be shared due to confidentiality, which at times makes it harder to communicate.

What is your county's Juvenile Violent Crime petition rate? *

4.3%

Provide the rate of teens not attending school or not working in your county. *

3.4%

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.

Doing What Matters Conference

The Doing What Matters for Children Conference was held on February 1, 2023. The conference is an annual event focused on the well-being of our children. In 2023, the conference highlighted topics including mental health concerns, internet safety, resiliency, and working in partnership to support and strengthen families. We use the Five Promises of America's Promise and the Annie E. Casey Kids Count data to direct the conference's content and track our progress in meeting the needs of Alabama's children. These promises ensure that children have access to caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, an effective education, and opportunities to help others.

Who benefitted from Accomplishment 1? *

People who benefited from the conference include social services agency staff, social workers, University of Alabama faculty, staff and students, parents, law enforcement, nurses, teachers, counselors, attorneys, court staff, and medical professionals.

Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 1 *

\$10,000

Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 1 *

Funding was provided by the University of Alabama College of Continuing Studies, United Way of West Alabama, the Children's Trust Fund, individual and business sponsors, and through attendance fees.

Accomplishment 2*

Describe this accomplishment.

Parenting Assistance Line (PAL)

Alabama's Parenting Assistance Line (PAL) is a statewide free confidential service available to anyone who wants information and support in becoming a more confident parent or caregiver. PAL provides free information, support and tools to parents across the state whose children are ages birth through adolescence.

Who benefitted from Accomplishment 2?*

Parents and caregivers statewide. 608 calls/chats were received; there were 94 website contacts with parenting questions; 20,628 PAL brochures and 10,393 parent tip sheets were distributed in English and Spanish; and 14,913 people were reached through PAL presentations and/or PAL Exhibits across the state. With our new PAL By Text program, 21,642 text messages were sent out across the state informing parents of community resources available in their area which were in addition to child development and parenting information texts.

Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 2*

\$225,000

Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 2*

The Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention & The Alabama Department of Human Resources.

Accomplishment 3*

Describe this accomplishment.

Mobile Food Pantry

Tuscaloosa's One Place, A Family Resource Center (TOP), annually hosts several Mobile Food Pantries across West Alabama in partnership with the local food bank. Approximately 150 families receive a week's worth of groceries at each pantry. Groceries include an assortment of fresh produce, meats, dairy products, canned goods, and non-perishable items.

Who benefitted from Accomplishment 3?*

From July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, approximately 1,300 families experiencing food insecurity benefitted from mobile food pantries through TOP.

Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 3*

\$2,450

Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 3*

Mobile Food Pantries are funded through general donations from TOP supporters.

Accomplishment 4

Describe this accomplishment.

Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. Head Start Programs (tie for 4th)

Community Service Programs of West Alabama, Inc. Head Start & Early Head Start provides comprehensive services to children, ages birth - 5, and their families. Services are currently offered in Bibb, Fayette, Greene, Hale, Lamar, and Tuscaloosa County. The program focuses on school readiness including development in the areas of social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, science & technology, social studies, and arts.

Who benefitted from Accomplishment 4?

Children and families enrolled in the program directly benefit from services provided. The local community also indirectly benefits from program services.

Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 4

See below

Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 4

The amount of the program's base funding grant is \$7.3M plus additional one-time funding listed below.

Additional one-time funding:

QRIS: \$ 60,375

Cash Contributions: \$25,887

Note: The amounts listed above funds all counties served.

Accomplishment 5

[Describe this accomplishment.](#)

Safe Sleep Program (tie for 4th)

The Cribs for Kids, Safe Sleep Initiative is a program offered to promote safe sleeping environments. Interested parents attend a 1hour- safe sleep presentation with group discussion & Pack-N-Play demonstration to ensure proper assembly. Upon completion, a FREE Pack-and-Play is received.

Who benefitted from Accomplishment 5?

The Cribs for Kids, Safe Sleep Initiative is available to any parent or guardian with a child 0-2 years old who needs a safe sleeping environment.

Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 5

See below

Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 5

The Cribs for Kids, Safe Sleep Initiative, in partnership with the Impact Family Counseling Center in Birmingham, Al. provides the cribs for distribution within the communities in which Tuscaloosa's One Place serves. The program is grant funded by CTF, and our agency, as a partner, provides a letter of support to the FCC upon request to continue funding for the program. The Cribs for Kids, Safe Sleep Initiative is funded by CTF.

Accomplishment 6

[Describe this accomplishment.](#)

Fathers in the Park (tie for 4th)

Fathers in the Park honors and celebrates the role that dads and father figures play in the development of children and in strong families. The event is coordinated through TOP's CHAMPS program, which stands for Changing Habits and Making Parents Stronger. Fathers in the Park welcomes all families and strives to strengthen parent engagement with their children.

Who benefitted from Accomplishment 6?

Families in Tuscaloosa County and neighboring counties benefited from this event.

Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 6

\$5,500

Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 6

Whataburger, Tuscaloosa Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and Children's Trust Fund.

Accomplishment 7

[Describe this accomplishment.](#)

BabyTALK (tie for 5th)

Baby TALK is a parental involvement program that encourages parents in establishing a nurturing relationship with their children and reinforces positive parenting practices. Baby TALK teaches infant and child development to parents.

Who benefitted from Accomplishment 7?

Families with children birth to 3 years of age. 7,701 adults and 8,010 children were reached through direct contact.

Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 7

\$112,000

Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 7

The Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention.

Accomplishment 8

Describe this accomplishment.

Big Brother Big Sisters Mentoring Programs (tie for 5th)

This is one-to-one mentoring for youth where adult mentors help develop potential in each child during weekly scheduled meetings together (filled with a variety of experiences) and providing parental education by supplying each family with easy-to-read literature. They also receive professional staff support to create safe, strong, and enduring relationships to help ensure everyone's success. There is educational success as children do better in school, they develop higher aspirations, gain confidence to overcome challenges, and avoids risky behaviors (drugs, delinquency and juvenile justice system).

Who benefitted from Accomplishment 8?

Child being mentored, families and the community.

Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 8

\$304,223

Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 8

Local, city and state funding

Accomplishment 9

Describe this accomplishment.

Tuscaloosa Backpack Connections (tie for 5th)

Backpack Connections is a collaborative effort to enhance students/families lives by providing backpacks and first day school supplies to those with the most need in our Tuscaloosa City & County schools. Parents have benefited from the knowledge and experience that we have consistently been there to help, since 2003.

Who benefitted from Accomplishment 9?

Students and teachers in all Tuscaloosa City & County Schools. Counselors & Social Workers identify families with the most need. Parents respond and register students via online registration and paper forms sent home with students. Area churches & NPOs also refer families. Families are sent cards inviting them to their various respective distribution sites for backpacks and school supplies.

Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 9

\$30,000 (monetary and in-kind donations)

Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 9

Community donations, Apples for Education fundraisers, and in-kind donations

Accomplishment 10

Describe this accomplishment.

Shelton State Honor Dorm at the Tuscaloosa County Juvenile Court Detention Center (tie for 5th)

The Juvenile Court Shelton State Honor Dorm is a collaboration between the Tuscaloosa County Juvenile Detention Center, the Tuscaloosa County Juvenile District Attorney's Office, and Shelton State Community College Adult Education to assist youth with an alternate pathway to success. Students are selected for the Shelton State Honor Dorm based on behavior, determination, and eligibility. All students must apply themselves daily to meet the requirements of their college classes and hold each other accountable. The Honor Dorm is a privilege and not a guarantee. Education is both celebrated and taken seriously in the Honor Dorm. Class is taught by a Shelton State instructor twice a week, and students study online virtually through laptops on individualized study plans designed based on their career paths determined at their intake meeting. Upon exit from the JU Detention facility, the student has a schedule to enter Shelton State Community College and transition to their college and/or work-based learning plan. All students attend SSCC 8:00-4:00 Monday-Thursday for a minimum of 3 months, immediately transitioning from the Honor Dorm to establish resources needed for success into adulthood.

Who benefitted from Accomplishment 10?

20 students have been served through the Juvenile Shelton State Honor Dorm

3 students earned their GED credential

5 students obtained their GED and participated in the graduation ceremony at Shelton State.

5 co-enrolled in college classes

2 earned National Career Readiness Certificates

Tuscaloosa County residents, as a whole, by helping these juveniles establish resources needed for success into adulthood.

Amount of Funds Dedicated to Accomplishment 10

N/A

Source(s) of Funds for Accomplishment 10

The funding to support this collaboration's instructor, computers, and education curriculum is funded through the Shelton State Community College Adult Education Grant. Shelton State Community College supports co-enrollment students of the Honor Dorm by covering tuition and training costs through the Alabama Committee on Credentialing and Career Pathway Funding until Federal Pell Grant status is established. This year we received a \$25,000 grant from Alabama.

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.

MembersNeedsAssess23.xlsx 17.21KB

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.

Minutes2023.pdf 498.42KB

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.

SignIn2023.pdf 1.43MB

Conclusion *

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

In the section regarding Mental Health several items allowed only a number entry for the answer. Our CPC thought more details were needed to adequately represent the Mental Health needs in Tuscaloosa County.

How many inpatient beds in our county for children? Answer 2

There are no inpatient acute stabilization beds for children in Tuscaloosa. However, Brewer Porch Children's Center and the Working On Womanhood Program offer a total of 62 residential beds for specific children who meet strict admission criteria.

How many inpatient beds in our county for adults? Answer 568

In total, there are 568 beds for adults in Tuscaloosa. However, several of these facilities serve very specific populations or have limited scope of service.

North Harbor – 54; Bryce Hospital – 268; Crisis Stabilization Unit (CSU) – 10; Taylor Hardin Secure Medical Facility – 140; Mary Starke Harper Geriatric Psychiatry Center – 96 = 568

Which population has the greatest mental health need in our county? Answer 9-17

Resources are needed for this age group to educate on mental health issues, reduce stigma associated with treatment, and foster resilience.