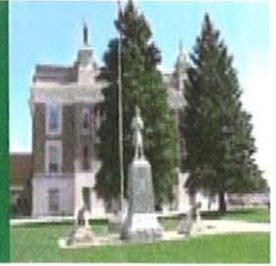


DAWSON COUNTY
nebraska



Comprehensive Juvenile Services Plan June 30, 2010 - July 1, 2013

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NEBRASKA CRIME COMMISSION

Dawson County Comprehensive Juvenile Services Plan

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I. INTRODUCTION

This three-year plan is intended to serve as a guide for Dawson County in the implementation of effective strategies to address identified priority areas. The Dawson County Juvenile Services Team will continue to study issues identified in this plan and work cooperatively toward effective solutions that will promote the safety and well-being of the community (Dawson County) and its youth.

Members of the Dawson County Juvenile Services Team and other youth-serving agencies and organizations including churches, medical groups and the Tri-County Hospital are dedicated to giving the youth in the county the help they need to grow into productive and well-adjusted adults. The community understands the difficulties faced by children of immigrants and asylees who often come into the county with little or no knowledge of the language and customs of the area, and they are addressing the needs of those children and their families as best they can. With few resources, little money to address the needs of the immigrants, and a serious language disconnect (at least 20 different languages/dialects spoken in the county), the county is challenged to find new ways of delivering services and new ways to connect with its residents.

The Juvenile Services Plan is designed to guide the youth programs in the county as they work together for the good of the youth in Dawson County. The Plan provides a foundation that agencies and organizations can use to direct the activities and provide for the needs of youth in the county.

The Juvenile Services Team, with input from the community and the organizations the Team members represent, has chosen seven priorities for the 2010-2013 Plan. These priorities (listed here) are discussed in detail in this document:

Priority 1. Identify, support and collaborate with all juvenile services programs in the County and with Juvenile Court.

Priority 2. Provide a Juvenile Diversion Program.

Priority 3. Create and implement a Juvenile Drug Court.

Priority 4. Address Disproportionate Minority Contact.

Priority 5. Address problems related to gang activity in the county.

Priority 6. Address school related issues including truancy, mental and behavioral health issues, gang recruitment, and dropout rates.

Priority 7. Maintain a formal juvenile justice team to address issues specific to the juvenile population while addressing the priorities of this plan and establish a Disproportionate Minority Contact Team.

II. DAWSON COUNTY JUVENILE SERVICES TEAM

The Dawson County Juvenile Services Team was formed in March 2007. Key stakeholders involved in Juvenile Justice and juvenile assistance programs were invited to the informational meeting held March 26, 2007 at the Dawson County Courthouse. At that time, Jennifer Myers from the University of Nebraska, Omaha Juvenile Justice Institute led the group through a discussion of system decision points. This discussion became the basis for the Community Planning Decision Point Analysis included in Appendix A of this document.

On May 30, 2007, the group was brought back for a second meeting at the Courthouse. At this meeting, the group decided on their structure as a board and membership and chose a chairman. The Board includes all members of the Team and has only one officer, the Chairman. Decisions are made on a majority vote and meetings are scheduled as needed at 4:00 in the afternoon.

At the May 30, 2007 meeting, Ms. Myers led a discussion on the Community Planning Decision Point Analysis and the group began work on choosing priorities and designing strategies they would like to utilize immediately as well as long-term strategies they will implement in the next three years.

In 2008, the plan was revised to include gang prevention and intervention as a priority and in September and October of 2010 the Team met to create the 2010-2013 Juvenile Services Plan. The team worked together with Julie Rogers from UNO to review the Community Planning Tool, study the changes in the needs of the County and law enforcement and identify the top priorities for inclusion in the Juvenile Services Plan. The Team explored different strategies and suggestions which address prioritized concerns and selected the most promising strategies for implementation in Dawson County.

The Team has studied the key decision points in the juvenile justice case flow process and identified points that require policy changes, practice changes, training and/or new programs that will be implemented to improve outcomes for young people in the juvenile justice system.

The Dawson County Juvenile Services Planning Team includes key stakeholders in the local criminal justice system along with representatives of the community, prevention services, and Health and Human Services. The Planning Team meets to identify and prioritize juvenile justice issues facing the county and determine viable strategies for dealing with these issues.

Stephen Garcia, Midwest Nebraska Drug Court Coordinator, serves as the Chair of the Planning Team.

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III. COMMUNITY PLANNING TOOL

The Juvenile Justice System Analysis Tool is included in its entirety beginning on page 19. The Community Stabilizing Efforts Review is included in its entirety beginning on page 33.

IV. COMMUNITY SOCIO-ECONOMICS

Dawson County is located in south central Nebraska with both the Platte River and Interstate 80 dissecting the county from east to west. Main transportation routes include Interstate 80 and State Highways 30, 40, 21 and 47. The Union Pacific Railroad runs through the county and the city of Lexington. The main economies in the county include farming and ag-related businesses and industry. Tyson has a plant located in Lexington, and Orthman manufacturing is located just outside Lexington. Johnson Lake is a 2,500 acre lake located south of Lexington that provides recreation such as swimming, boating, fishing and camping.

The county has a total population of 24,756 residents with a little over 4,000 juveniles. The proportion of county residents who were under age 18 in 2004 was 29.2%, which is higher than the Nebraska average of 25.5%. The proportion of seventh- to twelfth-grade students who dropped out of school during the 2003-04 school year was 2.6% compared to 1.9% statewide.

Overall, 26.4% of county residents aged 25 years or older have less than a high school education compared to 13.4% statewide.

In an average month in 2004, 131 children were in out-of-home care and the agencies serving domestic violence victims in the county handled 1,170 crisis calls and served 548 new contacts in 2000.

According to the 2003 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Nebraska high school students are more likely than their counterparts nationwide to drink and drive and ride in a motor vehicle with a drinking driver. The motor vehicle death rate for Dawson County (32.3%) was almost double the Nebraska rate of 16.6%.

The proportion of single-parent families is increasing. In 2000, 12.3% of the county households were single-parent families compared to an average of 12.4% in Nebraska. 15% of first births occurred to unmarried women under the age of 20 with less than a high school education. This rate of “new families at risk” is almost double the Nebraska average of 9% of first births. The proportion of new families at risk in the county was higher among Hispanic Americans at 18.9%. 11.4% of county residents live in households with incomes below the poverty level; this is slightly higher than the state average (10%). This proportion increases for minority groups with Native Americans at 39% and Hispanic Americans at 17.1%. No numbers are available for the new ethnic groups that have moved into the county since 2004.

Racial and ethnic minority residents made up 31.4% of the population of the county compared to 14.3% statewide in 2004. Although there is no new Census data to substantiate this, Team members agreed that the percentage of minorities in Dawson County is much higher, probably around 67% now and Nebraska is one of the top five states in the nation for fastest growing populations of immigrant children (JDAI Inter-site Conference, Dallas, TX, 9-26-2007). In the Lexington Public Schools, the minority rate is 84% of all students; last year it was 75%. Dawson County has the fastest growing population of Somali immigrants in the state of Nebraska and also has new immigrants from Liberia and Sudan. Estimates of the Somali population range from 2,500 to 3,000 individuals; this is approximately 12% of the population of the city of Lexington where most of the Somalis live. Immigration puts a strain on the entire county as there are so many languages and dialects in the county (13 different languages and/or unrelated dialects are spoken at the Lexington School) and so few interpreters competent in those languages.

Lexington public schools have 2,936 students enrolled for 2010-2011. There are 28 Asian/Pacific Islanders, 139 Black (not Hispanic-- these would be refugees from Somalia, Liberia and the Sudan, not African Americans), 2,284 Hispanic, 14 American Indian/Alaskan Native and 471 White (not Hispanic). Approximately 77% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch, approximately 39% of the students are English Language Learners, approximately 12% of the students are from migrant families and approximately 213 of the students are homeless.

The arrest rate for all crime in the county in 2009 (80.2 arrests per 1,000 population) was almost twice the overall rate for Nebraska (49.5) (NE Crime Commission). In 2004, the arrest rate for

juveniles under age 18 (32.8) was near the statewide rate of 33.3 (2009 statistics are not available) (HHS County Profiles).

Additional information is included in the Community Planning Tool in Appendix A.

V. PRIORITIES

Based on its review and analysis of juvenile justice related issues facing the community, the Dawson County Juvenile Services Team established the following priorities:

Priority 1. Identify, support and collaborate with all juvenile services programs in the County and with Juvenile Court.

Priority 2. Provide a Juvenile Diversion Program.

Priority 3. Create and implement a Juvenile Drug Court.

Priority 4. Address Disproportionate Minority Contact.

Priority 5. Address problems related to gang activity in the county.

Priority 6. Address school related issues including truancy, mental and behavioral health issues, gang recruitment, and dropout rates.

Priority 7. Maintain a formal juvenile justice team which will discuss issues specific to the juvenile population while addressing the priorities of this plan and establish a Disproportionate Minority Contact Team.

VI. STRATEGIES

Priority 1. Identify, support and collaborate with all juvenile services programs in the County and Juvenile Court, and look for reciprocal collaborations with organizations and agencies within the State.

There are many service providers in Dawson County who work with juveniles and with each other in an informal collaboration. The concern of the Team is that each organization as an individual and the juvenile services provided to the County as a whole could be strengthened and intensified through a more intentional collaboration. CASA, Club 180, TeamMates, YMCA and the schools are working with the Juvenile Services Team to create more and stronger collaborations and the Team hopes to expand to include other service providers. The Team believes that working together will make the Diversion and Drug Court programs stronger and

will reduce truancy and behavior problems in school and have a positive effect on the gang intervention and prevention program.

Strategy 1.1: Include all organizations that work with juveniles in the County on the Juvenile Services Community Team.

Expected Results:

- Stronger collaborations will result in stronger programs.

Timeline: 2010-2013 Add agencies/organizations to the Team and consult with agencies/organizations and service providers to update the services offered and the Juvenile Services Plan. The Team has representatives from many organizations and expanded in 2011 to include CASA and the Lexington Public School.

Responsible Parties: Juvenile Services Team

Strategy 1.2: Use the County Juvenile Facilitator and the County Gang Specialist as community liaisons who facilitate collaboration among the organizations and refer juveniles to services provided throughout the County.

Expected Results:

- Organizations will become more aware of each other and better able to make referrals so that juveniles will get the help they need through a wider range of services.
- There will be more communication and less overlap of services.
- Organizations can cooperate to alleviate duplication of services.

Timeline: 2010-2013 Ongoing and continuous

Responsible Parties: Juvenile Services Team, County Juvenile Facilitator and County Gang Specialist

Strategy 1.3: Update courtroom technology as needed; especially in the form of a video-conferencing or web conferencing ability such as Skype.

Expected Results:

- Adding a videoconferencing and/or web conferencing component to the courtroom will alleviate the need for transporting juveniles great distances to appear in court.
- Utilizing video conferencing will streamline the current daily practice in juvenile court of having Police Officers, Detectives, Expert Witnesses, interpreters, etc... subpoenaed to appear in court.
- It will also allow juveniles who are in treatment facilities out of state or at a long distance in the state, to appear in court for hearings and reviews without hours of tedious and sometimes troublesome traveling.

- With reviews conducted every three months and nearly 500 juvenile cases heard in court each year, the time and money saved by updating technology available in juvenile court will clearly make the video conferencing system worth the cost to purchase and install it.

Timeline: Have videoconferencing services available by Dec. 2013.

Responsible Parties: Juvenile Services Team, Court

Strategy 1.4: The Team is open to collaborations outside the County. This could be important in forming a new Juvenile Drug Court.

Expected Results:

- Collaborations outside the County could add to capacity and funding for the juvenile services in Dawson County.

Timeline: The Adult Drug Court is working with North Platte and forming collaborations there. The Adult Drug Court is planning to establish a Drug Court in North Platte in 2012 and then will work on a Juvenile Drug Court to begin operations in Dawson County in 2013. The Administrative Office of the Courts/ Problem Solving Courts has given Dawson County tentative permission (contingent on meeting all requirements from the Supreme Court) to begin the process of creating a Juvenile Drug Court.

Responsible Parties: Midwest Nebraska (Adult) Drug Court and Juvenile Services Team

Priority 2. Provide a Juvenile Diversion Program

Dawson County was using the services of an agency that contracts for a juvenile diversion program in 2006-07. When that agency quit providing those services, Dawson County was left with no diversion program and without the resources to conduct a program within the County. Working with Club 180 and the NE Crime Commission, Dawson County started a new Diversion Program in October 2010 that ended in the first part of 2011. The Team is planning to develop a new diversion program in collaboration with the new Juvenile Drug Court. Developing diversion services was high on every team member's list of priorities due to its potential impact on the court system regarding first time offenders in Dawson County.

Strategy 2.1: Increase the capacity of and referrals to the Dawson County juvenile diversion program. Juveniles will be under the authority of the County Attorney who has the discretion to either divert a juvenile offender to alternative programming or prosecute the youth's misconduct. Juveniles who satisfactorily complete diversion requirements avoid prosecution but when a juvenile fails to satisfy diversion requirements, the County Attorney will determine whether to prosecute the original charge.

There is a discussion about having a diversion (pre-adjudication) program that begins in 2012.

Expected Results:

- There will a County diversion program in place.
- An effective diversion program will teach juveniles positive social skills, how to make good decisions and respect for the laws and norms of the community.
- The diversion program will help juveniles become effective members of the community.
- Diversion will give juveniles strong direction.
- A strong diversion program will decrease the case load for the courts, probation and jail system.

Timeline: Have increased capacity in the diversion program by December 2012. Utilize the Juvenile Drug Court for diversion programming by December 2013.

Responsible parties: County Commissioners, Dawson County Juvenile Services Team, Juvenile Drug Court, County Attorney.

Priority 3. Create and implement a Juvenile Drug Court

The increase of methamphetamine use and delivery in Dawson County, along with underlying issues of alcohol, marijuana, synthetic drugs and other substance abuse, is a concern that all Team members agreed to address. The implementation of a juvenile Drug Treatment Court could provide assistance combined with punishment for juvenile offenders with this specific issue.

According to county statistics, alcohol related offenses account for the majority of juvenile arrests. Team members agree that the availability and use of alcohol by juveniles is a significant threat to their health and contributes to youth involvement in other risk behaviors (violence, motor vehicle and other accidents, teen pregnancy, etc). Alcohol use is also widely acknowledged as a gateway to other drug use and is often a factor in gang activity. Team members feel that alcohol abuse is the underlying cause for many of the juvenile crimes committed in Dawson County. Early use of alcohol is a strong factor in alcoholism and it is also considered to be a 'gateway' drug for even more serious drug abuse and increasing levels of criminal behavior. Juveniles who are dependent need more than punishment, they need treatment.

To combat this problem, the Juvenile Drug Court will identify alcohol and drug abuse related violations and provide services/programs relating directly to abuse of alcohol and controlled substances by juveniles. Team members agree that implementing sanctions through the Juvenile Drug Court system will be a strong deterrent to alcohol and drug abuse and will aid juveniles as they strive to break free of abusive behavior. Sanctions will be implemented which are specific to each juvenile brought before the court on charges related to alcohol and drug abuse. The sanctions will include impounding the juvenile's driver's license, chemical dependency

evaluations, treatment for alcohol abuse, alcohol detection devices (i.e. SCRAM) and/or participation in victim impact panels.

Dawson County created and administers the Midwest Nebraska Drug Court for adults. The success of that program convinced team members to begin work on a juvenile drug court.

Strategy 3.1: A Juvenile Drug Court Steering Committee will form with the intention of implementing a Juvenile Drug Court. The Steering Committee will determine policies, procedures and sanctions to be used by Juvenile Court and create a protocol that outlines the use of sanctions including who will be responsible for monitoring the sanctions and under what circumstances they will be removed or increased.

Expected Results:

- Officials in the Justice System of Dawson County will have a drug court dedicated to juveniles which allows them to apply sanctions in a proportionate, immediate, relevant and effective manner and will allow for increases in sanctions as needed to prevent recidivism.
- Sanctions which are immediate and consistent will prove a deterrent to alcohol and drug abuse and the crimes that go with abuse.
- Juveniles in the system will be less likely to move on to other drug use. Recidivism will be reduced.
- The program is expected to decrease the juvenile court case load and the probation case load.
- Offering the program to juvenile offenders allows them the opportunity to have their court case dismissed upon completion of the Drug Court program.
- Court officials will be able to identify rehabilitation/intervention strategies that are most appropriate for the juvenile.
- Juveniles will receive treatment if necessary, rather than a sentence that does not address the underlying problem of substance abuse.

Timeline: Steering Committee forms in first quarter of 2012. Diversion program included in Juvenile Drug Court program by December 2013.

Responsible Parties: County Commissioners, Dawson County Juvenile Services Team, Juvenile Court, County Attorney.

Strategy 3.2: One of the most troubling aspects of working with juveniles is their ability to manipulate family members and elude detection of their illegal use of alcohol and drugs. There are not enough court officials to personally monitor every youth who needs supervision. One solution to this problem is the use of the SCRAM devices that provide a system for monitoring youth directly and not relying on family members or adding to the workload of court or probation officials. Electronic monitoring was included in the previous County Plan and will be a continuing priority addressed within the parameters of the Juvenile Drug Court.

Expected Results:

- The use of electronic monitoring devices allows juveniles to stay in their own homes rather than be incarcerated.
- Children of single-parent families and families where both parents work or parents work the evening or night shifts will be able to stay at home even though there is no direct supervision by parents.
- The electronic monitoring device will give reliable feedback to officials when there is no strong family structure or the family does not enforce good behavior.
- The SCRAM device will track alcohol consumption of a youth whose parents do not speak English or do not understand the requirements of the court.
- Use of the electronic monitoring device will give court officials a low-cost method of monitoring juveniles without incarceration.
- Use of the electronic monitoring device will help the juvenile probation officer supervise juveniles in his/her case load.

Timeline: Present and ongoing. The Steering Committee started working on the Juvenile Drug Court in 2007 and will continue until the drug court is well established. The Administrative Office of the Courts/ Problem Solving Courts has given Dawson County tentative permission (contingent on meeting all requirements from the Supreme Court) to begin the process of creating a Juvenile Drug Court.

Responsible Parties: Midwest Nebraska Drug Court Coordinator, courts, Public Defender, County Attorney, probation, Judges and Law Enforcement.

Priority 4. Address problems of Disproportionate Minority Contact.

The information below is taken from the 2000 Census and local data. The entire Team agrees that the 2000 Census demographics are outdated and do not reflect the incredible changes in population demographics the county has seen in the last few years.

Three Top DMC System Points as Identified by the Juvenile Services Team:

1) Population at risk: The Team feels that the youth population aged 10 to 17, in Dawson County and especially around Lexington, the county seat of Dawson County, is at risk. According to the 2000 Census, the population includes 64% listed as White, 36% listed as Hispanic/Latino and 3% as Black, Native American and Asian. The school drop-out rate among Latino children in Dawson and Gosper counties in 2002 was 20% as compared to only 3% for white teens (Inspire Mentoring Initiative, 2004). The Office of Juvenile Programs records 61% of 18-24 year-olds in Dawson County do not have a high school degree and Health and Human Services reports Dawson County as having one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in Nebraska.

2) Juvenile Arrests: According to the NE Crime Commission report, there were 445 juvenile arrests under the age of 18 for violent crimes, DUI and drug law violations in 2006. This is a 53% increase over a two year period from 235 arrests in 2004 to 445 in 2006. In the past three years (07-09), drug abuse arrests have risen by 171%, Liquor law violations increased from 79 to

90, an increase of 14%, disorderly conduct arrests increased by 150% and overall juvenile arrests went from 346 to 370, a 7% increase.

3) Cases Diverted: One of the issues the Juvenile Services Community Team is concerned about is the lack of a diversion program.

The Team has decided to prioritize the need for a program that will address system point number one, Dawson County's at-risk population. By working with the local agencies and organizations dedicated to serving juveniles and offering after-school programs, the Team believes some of the problems faced by the County can be eliminated over time. One priority in this area is the Diversion Program which needs to be increased.

According to local law enforcement, 95% of crimes committed by juveniles occur immediately after school hours. Recent United Way data reveals that Nebraska youth are at home alone 4 hours a day, 5 days a week. Parents in the area are facing a language barrier (47% of the population speaks a language other than English at home), 43% of the adult population did not complete High School and less than 15% of parents are actively involved in their child's education (2000 Census). These statistics show that youth in the area are not supervised after school and parents and students do not place a high priority on education. These are two areas Club 180 will directly target.

Lexington public schools have 2,936 students enrolled for 2010-2011. There are 28 Asian/Pacific Islanders, 139 Black (not Hispanic-- these would be refugees from Somalia, Liberia and the Sudan, not African Americans), 2,284 Hispanic, 14 American Indian/Alaskan Native and 471 White (not Hispanic). Approximately 77% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch, approximately 39% of the students are English Language Learners, approximately 12% of the students are from migrant families and approximately 213 of the students are homeless (Lexington Public Schools).

Dawson County has an estimated population of 24,756 with over 23 countries represented in the county's diverse population ("Ethnic Diversity in Dawson County" by Russ Czaplewski). The 2000 Census shows a minority population of 36% but most members of the Team believe numbers have changed dramatically since then and the minority population is closer to 50% of the population in 2008. Five of the 13 Nebraska gangs are known to have members in Lexington (Boys and Girls Club Community Assessment). Over 20% of children in the Lexington area are involved in child protective services as compared to the state average of 5% (Boys and Girls Club Community Assessment).

Although we do not have hard data at this time, the Team believes there are a number of risk factors that should prompt us to implement a DMC program. Among the risk factors are the following:

- Disregard for school attendance and/or graduation (2000 Census)
- The need to support the family with a job rather than school attendance (Juvenile Services Community Team informal assessment)
- Disorganized family and immediate community (Juvenile Services Community Team)

- informal assessment)
- Parents are too busy at work to become involved in the child's life; less than 15% of parents are involved in child's school (Lexington Public Schools)
- The multi-county agency serving domestic violence victims in Dawson County handled 1,170 crisis calls and served 548 new contacts in 2000 (http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/profiles/two_rivers_HD.htm)
- The overall arrest rate for all crime in Dawson County was 84.8 arrests per 1,000 population in 1999. This is 43% higher than the overall rate for Nebraska which is 59.2%. The arrest rate for juveniles was under age 18 was 58.8% which is 26% higher than the statewide rate of 46.5% (http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/profiles/two_rivers_HD.htm)
- Gangs are seeing a resurgence in the area (Boys and Girls Club Community Assessment)
- Teen pregnancy is rampant- in 2000 one of every seven first births occurred to unmarried women under age 20 with less than a high school education (2000 Census)
- Lack of adult supervision after school or during summer vacation
- 14% of Dawson County youth live in poverty (2000 Census)

Strategy 4.1: The County will work with the schools, TeamMates, Diversion, Club 180 and other organizations to involve youth in after school programming, truancy reduction and behavior altering classes/programming.

Expected Results: Getting a juvenile involved in the justice system after a crime has been committed is a necessity, but creating a climate of change and growth where youth can learn to avoid a life of crime is a much better idea. The Team wants to embrace the minority youth in the county and give them the tools they need to become productive citizens with the hope of a better life.

- The classes offered will teach juveniles positive social skills, how to make good decisions and respect for the laws and norms of the school and community.
- The program will help juveniles become effective members of the community. and will give juveniles strong, positive direction.
- Truancy was identified as a problem in the schools that seems to be more prevalent in minority families. The new school policy will address this issue.
- After school programs will engage youth during the hours that they are most likely to get into trouble with the law and will place them in an environment where they have direct contact with caring adults who can mentor them.
- Use of the County Juvenile Facilitator and County Gang Specialist as liaisons between the organizations that serve juveniles, the County and the community will strengthen all aspects of the juvenile services in the County.

Timeline: Ongoing--The County has contracted with a County Juvenile Facilitator who works with youth in the probation system to provide classes from evidence-based programming that will help youth recognize and reduce unacceptable behavior. The Schools have implemented new policies on truancy, TeamMates is providing mentoring services and Club 180 has a strong after-school program. The County has hired a County

Gang Specialist who will work on gang prevention and intervention. The County Juvenile Facilitator and County Gang Specialist were hired in 2010 and will continue as funding allows.

Responsible parties: DMC Committee, County Attorney, Club 180 of Lexington, TeamMates, Superintendent of Lexington Schools and the Juvenile Services Team.

Strategy 4.2: Strengthen the DMC Committee. Revisit the appointed members to determine interest, meet with Doug Christenson to learn about DMC issues and numbers/rates for Dawson County.

Expected Results: Getting a juvenile involved in the justice system after a crime has been committed is a necessity, but creating a climate of change and growth where youth can learn to avoid a life of crime is a much better idea. The Team wants to embrace the minority youth in the county and give them the tools they need to become productive citizens with the hope of a better life.

- The classes offered will teach juveniles positive social skills, how to make good decisions and respect for the laws and norms of the school and community.
- The program will help juveniles become effective members of the community and will give juveniles strong, positive direction.
- Truancy was identified as a problem in the schools that seems to be more prevalent in minority families. The new school policy will address this issue.
- After school programs will engage youth during the hours that they are most likely to get into trouble with the law and will place them in an environment where they have direct contact with caring adults who can mentor them.

Timeline: Team members met with Doug Christensen in 2010. The DMC Team is being revived and reorganized in 2011.

Responsible Parties: DMC Coordinator, DMC Team, Juvenile Services Team

Strategy 4.3: Increase use of the juvenile diversion program. Juveniles will be under the authority of the County Attorney who has the discretion to either divert a juvenile offender to alternative programming or prosecute the youth's misconduct. Juveniles who satisfactorily complete diversion requirements avoid prosecution but when a juvenile fails to satisfy diversion requirements, the County Attorney will determine whether to prosecute the original charge. Juvenile diversion is in use in 2010, so protocols for use of diversion services are already in place

Timeline: Increase use of Diversion Program by December 2012.

Responsible parties: County Attorney, Dawson County Juvenile Services Team.

Expected Results:

- The courts offer a diversion program.
- An effective diversion program will teach juveniles positive social skills, how to make good decisions and respect for the laws and norms of the community.
- The diversion program will help juveniles become effective members of the community.
- Diversion will give juveniles strong direction.
- A strong diversion program will decrease the case load for the courts, probation and jail system.

Priority 5. Address problems related to gang activity in the county.

The resurgence of the gang culture among youth in the Lexington community was also identified as an emerging concern that needs to be addressed. Team members agreed that after a lull in gang activity, the influence of gangs is beginning to reappear in the community and is stronger and more violent with 13 of the known Nebraska gangs represented in Lexington. One of the problems is the generation spanning capacity of the gangs. Often a young man joins the gang that his father and uncles belong to making this a deeply ingrained and family-accepted cycle that is hard to break. Young women are not as likely to join a gang as to 'belong to' or be owned by a gang. These girls endure unspeakable abuse.

Strategy 5.1: Sustain the new County Gang Specialist position. The County Gang Specialist works at prevention and intervention. This person will also track gang activity and gang-related crimes to verify the problem and work as a liaison for organizations in the County who are dealing with gang problems but have limited expertise. Due to funding restrictions, the Lexington schools and the Juvenile Services Team are planning to collaborate to provide this position. This person will serve as the County Gang Specialist for the County and the Migrant Coordinator for Lexington Schools. The blending of these two positions and the duties of the position are being discussed at the time of the writing of this plan.

Expected Results:

- Combining the resources of the schools and the Juvenile Service Team/County will provide an ongoing position not totally reliant on grant funds.

Timeline: The position will begin functioning in August 2011

Responsible Parties: Lexington Schools Superintendent (Todd Chessmore) and Juvenile Service Team Chair (Steve Garcia)

Strategy 5.2: Provide cognitive/behavioral gang prevention and intervention training to juveniles in the Drug Court and probation systems and those referred by the schools.

Expected Results:

- Juveniles will learn positive social skills, how to make good decisions and respect for the laws and norms of the community.

- The gang prevention program will help juveniles become effective members of the community and give them positive direction.
- A strong gang prevention program will decrease the case load for the courts, probation and jail system and decrease the amount of gang activity in the county.
- The schools and other organizations in the County will receive help and direction when dealing with gang-related problems and recruitment efforts by gang members.
- The program will contain a strong component focused on victim awareness and the restorative justice model.

Timeline: Beginning in October 2010 and ongoing

Responsible Parties: County Attorney, Court, and District #11 Probation.

Strategy 5.3: Work with the elementary, middle and high schools to provide gang intervention and prevention programming.

Expected Results:

- Juveniles will learn positive social skills, how to make good decisions and respect for the laws and norms of the community.
- The gang prevention program will help juveniles become effective members of the community and give them positive direction.
- A strong gang prevention program will decrease the case load for the courts, probation and jail system and decrease the amount of gang activity in the county.
- The schools and other organizations in the County will receive help and direction when dealing with gang-related problems and recruitment efforts by gang members.

Timeline: Beginning with middle school and high school on October 15, 2010.

Beginning with elementary schools in 2012.

Responsible parties: Juvenile Services Team and Dawson County Schools.

Priority 6. Address school related issues including truancy, mental and behavioral health issues, gang recruitment, and dropout rates.

Strategy 6.1: Increase collaboration between the schools and other organizations and agencies in the County to address all issues in Priority 6.

Expected Results:

- A position will be created in collaboration with the Lexington schools to provide a focus on all items listed in this priority.
- Juveniles will learn positive social skills, how to make good decisions and respect for the laws and norms of the community.

- The gang prevention program will help juveniles become effective members of the community and give them positive direction.
- A strong gang prevention program will decrease the case load for the courts, probation and jail system and decrease the amount of gang activity in the county.
- The schools and other organizations in the County will receive help and direction when dealing with gang-related problems and recruitment efforts by gang members.

Timeline: Position for County Gang Specialist/School Migrant Coordinator Provider will begin in August 2011.

Responsible Parties: Juvenile Services Team and Dawson County Schools.

Strategy 6.2: The County Juvenile Facilitator and new County Gang Specialist/School Migrant Coordinator will work with the schools, law enforcement and probation to address all issues in Priority 6.

Expected Results:

- The schools, Juvenile Services Team and other organizations/agencies in the County will work together to deal with truancy, mental and behavioral health, gang-related problems and recruitment efforts by gang members and dropout rates.
- Juveniles will learn positive social skills, how to make good decisions and respect for the laws and norms of the community.
- The gang prevention program will help juveniles become effective members of the community and give them positive direction.
- A strong gang prevention program will decrease the case load for the courts, probation and jail system and decrease the amount of gang activity in the county.
- The schools and other organizations in the County will receive help and direction when dealing with gang-related problems and recruitment efforts by gang members.

Timeline: Beginning in October 2010 with adjustments to program made in August 2011.

Responsible Parties: County Juvenile Facilitator and new County Gang Specialist/School Migrant Coordinator, Lexington Schools, Law Enforcement and Probation.

Strategy 6.3: The Team realizes the importance and expense of mental health issues and will search for ways to introduce mental health care into the schools and County agencies at minimal cost to families and agencies.

Expected Results:

- Mental health issues will come to prominence as a problem that needs to be addressed when working with juveniles who are involved negatively with social agencies, law enforcement and school officials.

Timeline: In discussion, possible solutions presented in 2012.

Responsible Parties: School, County Juvenile Facilitator, County Gang Specialist, Juvenile Services Team, Law Enforcement, Service Providers.

Priority 7. Establish a formal juvenile justice team which will discuss issues specific to the juvenile population while addressing the priorities of this plan and establish a Disproportionate Minority Contact Team.

Strategy 7.1: Dawson County has established a formal juvenile justice committee that will discuss issues specific to this population while addressing the priorities of this plan. The team currently consists of members listed on page three of this document but new members can be added at will.

Expected Results:

- The County will have a guiding organization for juvenile services.
- Juvenile services will be coordinated through the Juvenile Services Team and the County Plan.
- Duplication of services will be reduced.
- Gaps in juvenile services will be identified and addressed.
- The County Plan will be revised as needed to address the needs of the juveniles in Dawson County.

Timeline: The Team will actively function 2010-2013. Quarterly meetings will be established for 2011-2013.

Responsible Parties: Juvenile Services Team, established in March 2007

Strategy 7.2: Dawson County formed a DMC Committee on July 31, 2008. The members of the committee are as follows:

Victor Diaz (308-325-6057)	Terry Unterseher	Suzanne Reynolds
Susan Jacinto	Sandy Doss	Robin Lange
Paul Pack	Linda Nielsen	Linda Miller
Leticia Bonifas	June Shubert	Jerry Bergstrom
Frances Peterson	Elizabeth Montes	Dan Boetel

The County has also appointed Victor Diaz, a member of the Juvenile Services Team and the DMC Committee, to serve on the State DMC Board.

Expected Results:

- DMC issues will be identified.
- Gaps in juvenile services that affect DMC issues will be identified.
- The DMC Team and the Juvenile Services Team will collaborate to address DMC issues.

Timeline: The team was established in March 2007. Quarterly meetings will be held 2011-2013.

Responsible Parties: Victor Diaz, the DMC Team (listed above) and the Juvenile Services Team.

Notation:

In the implementation of all seven priorities, the county will use electronic monitoring whenever possible to allow youth to remain in their own homes and will hire interpreters as necessary to communicate effectively with youth and parents.

The Team agreed that disproportionate minority contact in the county is a concern since the rapid increase of ethnic/minority groups may lead to disproportionate minority contact. The increase in residents of Hispanic, Latin, Sudanese and Somali ethnicity is growing faster in Dawson County than in any other location in the state of Nebraska. This explains the steady increase in minority contacts; as minorities increase in the community, minority contacts increase in proportion. These contacts are often complicated by language barriers that are difficult to overcome. Although Dawson County hires many interpreters, there are some languages and/or dialects that are not represented in the interpreter pool for the area. These are all areas of concern that will require constant monitoring by the DMC Team and the Juvenile Services Team.

APPENDIX A

JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM POINTS ANALYSIS

The Juvenile Justice System Analysis Tool (Tool) was developed by the Juvenile Justice Institute at the University of Nebraska at Omaha in conjunction with the Nebraska Crime Commission to assist in County Juvenile Services Comprehensive Planning.

The Tool consists of twelve areas of decision points that make up the formal juvenile justice system in Nebraska. Various factors are present at each decision point—oftentimes changing from year to year based on state or county dynamics within the system such as changes in policies, programs, and/or personnel.

There are formal factors dictating certain decision points in the system, such as statutory authority. In addition, each county or community has unique factors surrounding certain decision points within the local county juvenile justice system. Identifying such informal factors helps to understand and assess juvenile justice needs and issues in individual locales.

Available data might also inform the factors surrounding a data point. Anecdotal data might be compared with statistical data, for example, to assess the true state of the system. County data is assessed when applying the Tool where applicable.

Dawson County

Because it was reported that nothing changed in the decision points factors over the past three years, Dawson County stakeholders did not go through the entire Juvenile Justice System Analysis Tool by decision point. A meeting was held with some stakeholders (probation, county court judge, grants coordinator, Lexington Public Schools superintendent, and clerk's office), and points were clarified on the prior Dawson County Juvenile Justice System Points Analysis report. Those areas have been noted in this report. It is highly recommended that Dawson County undergo a more thorough review the Points Analysis to determine the status of systems and to identify areas needing attention to make a seamless continuum of services for juveniles, and to make sure resources are being utilized in the most effective and efficient way possible in Dawson County. In addition, by thoroughly reviewing and then planning, the community will be best poised to address any issues found needing attention.

NEBRASKA JUVENILE COURT REPORT - DAWSON COUNTY
(Nebraska Crime Commission)

	2006	2007	2008	2009
ARRESTS	322	346	412	370
OFFENSES				
1st/2nd Degree Assault	0	1	2	
3rd Degree Assault	39	23	27	
Sexual Assault - 1st	0	2	0	
Sexual Assault - 2nd	0	0	0	
Burglary	22	7	13	
Drug - Felony	1	1	2	
Drug - Misdemeanor	0	0	4	
Theft > \$1500	2	3	6	
Theft < \$1500	0	0	3	
Theft < \$500	8	2	3	
Theft < \$200	14	25	32	
Crim Mischief - Felony	4	3	1	
Crim Mischief - Misd	18	25	34	
Major Trespass	5	6	15	
Forgery - Felony	1	0	0	
Forgery - Misd - Major	1	0	0	
Weapon - Misd	0	1	1	
Disturbing Peace	13	6	6	
Other Felony	1	5	4	
Other Misdemeanor	139	103	107	
Running Away	0	0	0	
Truancy	3	0	3	
Curfew	3	0	0	
Ungovernable Behavior	43	29	27	
Possession of Alcohol	60	87	98	
Other Status	0	0	0	
Neglect	26	19	23	
Dependent	8	2	2	
Other/Unknown	34	34	20	
TOTAL	445	384	433	

Dawson County Data

Juvenile court offense data for Dawson County for years 2006, 2007, and 2008 (Juvenile Court Reporting—Nebraska Crime Commission)¹. Arrest numbers for each year represent arrests made of 0 – 17 year-olds in the county.

In 2007, according to OJJDP at http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/asp/profile_selection.asp, Dawson County had a juvenile population (ages 0 – 17 years old) of 7,259, with 6,864 white, 206 black, 118 American Indian, and 71 Asian. In addition, 3,279 were identified as Hispanic and 3,980 Non-Hispanic.

Dawson County's county seat is Lexington. Other towns within the county include Cozad, Eddyville, Farnam, Gothenburg, Overton, and Sumner.

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Juvenile Court Reporting (JCR)

The Nebraska Crime Commission's Statistical Analysis Center (SAC) collects information from the courts on juveniles processed through the juvenile justice system. Approximately 8,000 juvenile cases a year receive final disposition or judgment which are reported to the Crime Commission by paper forms and by the computerized court system JUSTICE. Various statistics are compiled from these data by the SAC for use in juvenile justice planning. Data are provided back to local and state agencies, policy makers, the courts, [National Center for Juvenile Justice](#) and federal [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#).

Nebraska Juvenile Court Data Set

Juvenile court information has been submitted to the Crime Commission on an ongoing basis for over 20 years. When a case reaches a disposition, meaning finality with concern to the court proceedings, a data collection form is completed and forwarded to the Crime Commission. The reported information is collected within the county court or by the probation office. There data typically include cases which have been handled with a formal petition having been filed. The statistics reported here by the Crime Commission only contain information on cases handled through a formal petition. The terms, cases, petitions and referrals may all be used describe the same group of juveniles processed. This does not necessarily represent all cases filed in juvenile court during those times; rather only those that received final a disposition or judgment. Information on pending cases is not included.

SYSTEM POINT: ARREST / CITATION

PARTY RESPONSIBLE: Police/Law Enforcement

STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS §§ 43-247 (1), (2), (4)

Decision: Whether an information report should be filed, or what offense, if any, with which juvenile should be cited or arrested.

<p>Formal Determining Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sufficient factual basis to believe offense was committed . b. Underlying support for a particular offense. 	<p>Informal Determining Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Officer's Inclination/ patience b. Degree to which parent or service provider pushes the issue c. Youth's prior incidences with law enforcement. d. Youth and/or youth's families perceived status in the community.
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Notes:

Decision: Whether to cite or arrest juvenile for juvenile or adult offense.

<p>Formal Determining Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Seriousness of Offense b. Is there a warrant? 	<p>Informal Determining Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Degree to which juvenile cooperates with officer. b. Victim's desire. c. Youth is already in the HHS or juvenile system.
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Notes:

Age is a determining factor

Decision: Whether to take juvenile into custody or to cite and release (NRS § 43-248 (1), (2); § 43-250 (1), (2), (3))

<p>Formal Determining Factors</p>	<p>Informal Determining Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Immediate risk to juvenile b. Immediate/short term risk to public c. Seriousness of perceived offense d. Extent to which parent or other responsible adult available to take responsibility for juvenile. e. Availability of pre-adjudication detention options.
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Notes:

SYSTEM POINT: INITIAL DETENTION
 PARTY RESPONSIBLE: State of Nebraska Probation
 STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS § 43-250(3), § 43-260, § 43-260.01

Decision: Whether juvenile should be detained or released.

<p>Formal Determining Factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Risk assessment outcome b. Accessibility of placement options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Parents/Guardians ii. Emergency Shelter iii. Staff Secure Facility iv. Secure Detention Facility 	<p>Informal Determining Factors</p>
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Notes:

Probation does not handle any status cases.
 Screening instrument is accurately determining placement of juvenile.
 Does not have any secure facilities in the immediate location—have a contract with Lancaster County for secure placements otherwise juveniles are sent to the Lincoln County holdover.

SYSTEM POINT: CHARGE JUVENILE	
PARTY RESPONSIBLE: County Attorney	
STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS § 43-274(1), § 43-275, § 43-276	
Decision: Whether to prosecute juvenile.	
Formal Determining Factors a. Likelihood of successful prosecution b. Factors under NRS § 43-276	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: Methamphetamine is still thought to be a large problem in Dawson County, resulting in increases in cases from this drug issue. Cocaine is identified as a close second. The court is beginning to see more and more prescription drug cases as well. Gang related activity is a problem, especially amongst the Hispanic gangs which has lead to various criminal activity.	

Decision: Whether youth should be prosecuted as juvenile or adult.	
Formal Determining Factors a. Seriousness of offense	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: The County Attorney is more likely to file adult on subsequent drug and alcohol related cases, especially in MIP cases.	

Decision: Offense for which juvenile should be charged.	
Formal Determining Factors As outlined in statute	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: If a juvenile has patterned cases then a 3 (b) charge will also be filed in addition to any other current offenses.	

SYSTEM POINT: PRE-ADJUDICATION DETENTION	
PARTY RESPONSIBLE: Juvenile Court Judge	
STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS § 43-253(2)	
<i>Decision: Whether juvenile detained at the time of citation/arrest should continue in detention or out-of-home placement pending adjudication.</i>	
Options: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Parents/Guardians 2. Emergency Shelter 3. Staff Secure Facility 4. Secure Detention Facility 5. Electronic Monitoring 	
Formal Determining Factors <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Whether there is an “immediate and urgent necessity for the protection of such juvenile” b. Whether there is an “immediate and urgent necessity for the protection of...the person or property of another” c. Whether juvenile is likely to flee the jurisdiction of the court 	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: <p>The judge will not proceed without a parent/guardian.</p> <p>No other pre-adjudication alternatives besides sending the juvenile home or keeping them in a staff secure/secure facility.</p> <p>Public defender services are available based on need of juvenile.</p>	

SYSTEM POINT: PROBABLE CAUSE HEARING	
PARTY RESPONSIBLE: Juvenile Court Judge	
STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS § 43-256	
<i>Decision: Whether state can show that probable cause exists that juvenile is within the jurisdiction of the court.</i>	
Formal Determining Factors Outlined in statute	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: <p>Judge finds probable cause for most cases from the bench.</p>	

SYSTEM POINT: COMPETENCY EVALUATION	
PARTY RESPONSIBLE: Juvenile Court Judge	
STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS § 43-258(1(b))	
Decision: <i>Whether juvenile is competent to participate in the proceedings.</i>	
Formal Determining Factors Outlined in statute	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: Competency evaluations are rarely ordered.	

Decision: <i>Whether juvenile is “responsible” for his/her acts</i> NRS § 43-258(1(c) and (2))	
Formal Determining Factors a. Physician, Surgeon, Psychiatrist, Community Health Program, Psychologist b. “Complete evaluation of the juvenile including any authorized area of inquiry requested by court.” (NRS § 43-258(2))	Informal Determining Factors
Notes:	

SYSTEM POINT: ADJUDICATION	
PARTY RESPONSIBLE: Juvenile Court Judge	
STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS § 43-279 (2) and (3)	
Decision: <i>Whether the juvenile is, beyond a reasonable doubt, “a person described by section 43-247.”</i>	
Formal Determining Factors a. Legal sufficiency of evidence presented during adjudication hearing b. Whether juvenile admits the allegations of the petition (or, “pleads to the charges”) c. Residency d. Age	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: The court conducts adjudication hearings approximately 20-30% of the time.	