

**Merrick, Nance, Polk,
and Hamilton Counties
Juvenile Services
Comprehensive Community Plan
July 1st, 2015 – June 30th, 2018**

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SECTION II

COMMUNITY TEAM

Description of Team

The Merrick, Nance, and Polk Juvenile Services Team was reestablished in late 2014 after a lapse in leadership and understanding from the current community members. A request was sent out to a broad spectrum of community members from counties represented. Our team consists of people from juvenile justice, the faith community, and mentoring programs. The team met monthly, at times bi-monthly due to schedule conflicts. In 2015 this team merged with the Hamilton County Juvenile Services Team (established 2013) to consolidate the community plans. This occurred after Hamilton County struggled to keep their team together. It was a good fit as Hamilton County recently contracted with Merrick County to provide diversion services and manage their grant as they do for Nance and Polk Counties.

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Section III

Community Socio-Economics

Socio-Economics of Merrick, Nance, Polk, and Hamilton Counties

- All three counties are similar in make-up and location. Several major transportation routes run through this area. Highway 30 runs the length of Merrick County, Highway 14 runs through Hamilton, Merrick, and Nance, Highway 92 runs through Merrick and Polk, Highway 39 runs through Merrick, Nance, and Polk. Other transportation routes include Highways 66 and 81 in Polk County and Highway 22 in Nance. Interstate 80 crosses Hamilton County about three miles south of Aurora. High 34 is an east/west highway, going through the towns of Hampton and Aurora. The Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) runs the length of Merrick County and the Nebraska Central Railroad Company's (NCRC) line runs through all four counties. There is a moderate amount of highway and railway traffic going through all counties; especially in Central City where Highways 30 & 14 and the UPRR intersect. There a high amount of traffic through Hamilton County on I80.
- All counties are rural in nature and agriculture is the main industry; especially corn, hogs, and cattle. Major employers in Merrick County include Preferred Popcorn and an ethanol plant. There is a home manufacturing plant also has plans to fully reopen soon. Nance County is home to several cattle feed lots and a sand and gravel company. There are several large companies that also provide employment for the residents of Hamilton County including: IAMS, Aurora Cooperative, Hamilton Telecommunications, and Memorial Health Care.
- As you can see in the chart on the next page, all four counties have a low percentage of minority populations compared to white populations. Polk and Hamilton Counties have slightly higher minority populations than Merrick County and Nance's is slightly lower. Percentages of minority populations are slightly higher among the juvenile population compared to general population. Larger communities and higher minority populations such as Platte County, Hall County, and York County surround the four counties. The county seats: Aurora, Central City, Fullerton, and Osceola all have considerably larger population bases than the other communities throughout the counties.
- There are 14 school systems represented in the four counties. Both Nance and Polk Counties share a school system with Merrick County. Hamilton County has other educational assets including the Plainsman Museum, the Edgerton Explorit Center, L'Eglise Art Center and Prairie Plans Resource Institute. Each of these organizations provide opportunities in varied ways-

history, science, art and natural resources-and most offer programs for youth participation. The Edgerton Explorit Center has instituted “Wacky Wednesdays”, offering educational programming for school aged youth on Wednesday afternoons, as Aurora Public Schools has early dismissal. There are no local colleges in the communities but many of the high schools provide college credit classes via distance learning. Nearby, Grand Island and Columbus both have a Community College available.

- Natural resources of the Platte River and Loup River provide hunting, fishing, and tubing and other popular recreational activities. Merrick and Hamilton County offer parks such as Bader & Tooley Parks for camping and recreation as well as Timberlake Ranch Camp right outside of Central City. Nance County has a four-wheeler track along the river and camping at The Head Gates between Genoa and Fullerton. Polk County offers boating camping at Buckley Park near Stromsburg. All four counties have golf courses to offer as well. Central City and Aurora both have fairly new aquatic centers for swimming in the summer. Central City is the home of the Merrick County Health and Fitness Center which offers a gym, weight room, exercise equipment, and a pool for year-round swimming.
- All four Counties have active community organizations although they each have different levels of involvement. Programs such as Region 3 & 5 Health Systems, county coalitions such as MAPS (Merrick County Meth and Addictions Prevention Services), Hamilton COPE (County Organization for Prevention and Education), PSAC (Polk County Substance Abuse Coalition), MCYC (Merrick County Youth Council), Team Mates, Big Brothers/Big Sisters Programs. The school administrations, county attorneys and county boards are all very supportive of these organizations and have open lines of communication.
- While these counties do have a lot to offer residents for education, recreation, and transportation, they do not have much to offer in the lines of treatment and aid to families because of their rural location. It can sometimes be difficult to find the needed treatment for families that cannot afford to commute to a larger community. The Diversion office works with the Diversion Offices in Hall and Platte Counties to provide classes for clients, but many times, the client cannot make it to Grand Island or Columbus because of economic reasons. On the other hand, all three counties are full of people who are willing to get involved to find solutions to some of these problems.

Merrick, Nance, Polk, and Hamilton Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive Community Plan
2015 – 2018

Gender, Race, and Ethnicity	Total Population of Grant Area of Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties		Total Juvenile Population of Grant Area of Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties	
	Population	Percentage	Population	Percentage
Male	12,875	49.88%	2,751	50.87%
Female	12,937	50.12%	2,657	49.13%
White	25,387	98.35%	5,243	96.95%
Black	169	0.65%	67	1.24%
American Indian and Alaska Native	117	0.45%	34	0.63%
Asian	139	0.54%	64	1.18%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	25,812	100%	5,408	100%
Hispanic or Latino	854	3.31%	333	6.16%
Not Hispanic or Latino	24,958	96.69%	5,075	93.84%
Total	25,812	100%	5,408	100%

*Source of data: http://ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/asp/profile_selection.asp for 2013.

Section V

Identified Priority Areas & Corresponding Strategies

PRIORITY AREAS

Priority #1

Reduce the number of and provide alternatives for youth who find themselves in the justice system.

General Description

Drug and alcohol use, truancy, theft, criminal mischief, and other crimes are on the rise in each county according to the Nebraska Juvenile Court Report. Most members of the collaborative team agreed that they see this as a problem. Law enforcement's main concern was that none of the counties have any place to detain juveniles. There is also a large amount of research that supports the idea that entering the justice system raises a juvenile's risk of recidivism. The rural nature of the communities does not allow for a lot of activities to keep youth out of trouble. As a result, they find things to occupy their time that result in criminal activities.

This priority is similar to the community’s previous plan.

Strategies

1. Juvenile Diversion: Often times, diversion offers the same benefits of probation, including: monitoring for drugs and/or alcohol, referrals to educational classes and educational accountability. By offering a diversion program, these youth will avoid entering the juvenile justice system all together. Diversion will be provided through the Central Nebraska Diversion Program which operates under the Merrick County Attorney. As can be seen on the table provided, nearly 92% of youth from 2011-2013 were discharged from the Central Nebraska Diversion Program with no further legal action. Future outcomes are expected to be similar.

2011-2013: Reasons for Non-Enrollment

Data was collected from the Nebraska Juvenile Diversion Case Management System through the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

Reason	Number	Percent	Statewide
County/City Attorney or School withdrew youth's referral to diversion program	3	15%	4.5%
Diversion program declined admission	2	10%	5.0%
Juvenile had new law violation(s)	6	30%	5.6%
Other (moved away, death, etc.)	1	5%	4.6%
Youth/Parent refused diversion	8	40%	9.6%
Unspecified/Unknown	0	0.0%	2.1%
Total	20	100%	100.0%

2011-2013: Outcomes for Juvenile Diversion

Data was collected from the Nebraska Juvenile Diversion Case Management System through the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

Discharge Reason	Number	Percent	Statewide
Juvenile discharged from diversion, no further legal action	54	91.53%	58.1%
Juvenile failed to comply with program conditions	3	5.1%	10.7%
Juvenile had new law violation(s)	2	3.4%	5.6%
Other (moved away, death, etc.)	0	0.0%	4.6%
Unspecified/Unknown	0	0.0%	2.1%
Total	59	100%	100.0%

Rate of Recidivism from 2011-2012: 7% (no statewide data available)

2. **Constructive Activities:** Another way to combat having youth unnecessarily involved in the justice system would be to provide constructive, pro-social activities for the youth of the community to get involved in. It is expected that having more alternatives to delinquent behavior will increase the number of kids who engage in pro-social activities. There are several organizations that could help provide the youth with different activities.
 - The Merrick County Health and Fitness Center, located in Central City, offers a pool and organized sports for youth.
 - The Merrick County Youth Council offers high school youth opportunities to serve their community.
 - Area youth groups will conduct outreach to attract more youth to their programs.
 - Schools continue to offer a variety of extracurricular activities for youth including sports, music & art programs, and organizations such as FFA & FBLA.
3. **Detention Alternatives:** Youth who are detained are more likely to engage in antisocial activities¹. Often, at the time of intake into the justice system, placement of the youth may be necessary, but not to the point of placing the youth at an actual detention facility. This scenario may occur even when the youth is not necessarily a danger to the community. Tracking Services and GPS electronic monitoring offer an alternative which is not a lock down facility. The expected outcome is reduced detention rates of juveniles in each county, as is deemed appropriate by the Probation Office. This will be accomplished by
 - Contract with Owens Educational Services to provide Tracking and or Electronic Monitoring Services to youth deemed appropriate for the intervention.
 - Law Enforcement will participate in Intake Screening trainings offered by the Probation Office as requested. Law enforcement will receive updated information as to changes in procedure, protocol and legislation. Probation will have the opportunity to build relationships and offer guidance in the area of intake screening. Training opportunities will be ongoing, as requested. Resources needed are time commitment and ample conference space. Expected outcome is a strong relationship between local law enforcement and probation, as well as appropriate use of the intake screening process.

Timeline

Year One: By implementing these strategies, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the first year of the comprehensive community plan that the number of youth who need the justice system, if not decrease, at least will not increase thanks to the proposed strategies. In the first year, the focus will be the continued funding of the juvenile diversion program for the youth needing these services to stay out of the justice system. This will give much needed support to the youth of our counties.

Year Two: By implementing these strategies, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the second year of the comprehensive community plan that the number of youth entering the justice system will decrease by at least three percent. In the second year, the focus will be on providing opportunities for activities for the youth of our counties, such as the ones proposed in strategy two. Having these available for youth will give them opportunities that have the potential to keep them from needing the services provided by the juvenile diversion program.

Year Three: By implementing these strategies, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the third year of the comprehensive community plan that the number of youth entering the justice system will decrease by at least six percent thanks to the proposed strategies. In the third year, the focus will be improving upon what has been put in place the previous two years. The Community Planning Committee feels like these are valuable tools for the youth of our counties.

¹Source: Office of State Courts Administrator, Florida Juvenile Delinquency Court Assessment (2003); LeBlanc, (1991), “*Unlocking Learning*” in *Correctional Facilities*, Washington, D.C.; *Substance use, abuse, and dependence among youths who have been in jail or a detention center: The NSDUH report*, The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University, (2004); America’s Promise report on national rates of high school dropouts: www.msnbc.msn.com/id/23889321/.

Priority #2

Address issues of school absences and truancy that adversely affect the youth of our community.

General Description

Truancy, defined as missing twenty or more days, leads to negative consequences such as lowered test scores, increased risk of dropouts, the greater potential for criminal activity, teen pregnancies and other negative effects. The youth of our community would benefit from a truancy prevention program, to either resolve these issues, deal with them should they arise or prevent them from happening all together.

This priority differs from the community’s previous plan. The members of the Community Planning Committee felt that truancy is an issue faced by the youth of all four counties, as you can see by table provided, and that the Comprehensive Community Plan should address it.

NDE Public School General Absence				
	K-12 # of students	5 days	10 days	15 days
Quarter 1: 7/1 - 10/15/2013				
Central City Public Schools (61-0004)	652	40 *	*	*
Palmer Public Schools (61-0049)	244	14 *	*	*
Fullerton Public Schools (63-0001)	301 *	*	*	*
Twin River Public Schools (63-0030)	448	36 *	*	*
Cross County Community Schools (72-0015)	344 *	*	*	*
Osceola Public Schools (72-0019)	246	15 *	*	*
Shelby-Rising City Public Schools (72-0032)	371	23 *	*	*
High Plains Community Schools (72-0075)	229 *	*	*	*
Quarter 2: 10/16 - 12/31/2013				
Central City Public Schools	652	35 *	*	*
Palmer Public Schools	244	14 *	*	*
Fullerton Public Schools	301 *	*	*	*
Twin River Public Schools	448	32 *	*	*
Cross County Community School	344	14 *	*	*
Osceola Public Schools	246 *	*	*	*
Shelby-Rising City Public Schools	371	18 *	*	*
High Plains Community Schools	229 *	*	*	*
Quarter 3: 1/1 - 3/15/2014				
Central City Public Schools	652	69 *	*	*
Palmer Public Schools	244	15 *	*	*
Fullerton Public Schools	301	23 *	*	*
Twin River Public Schools	448	41 *	*	*
Cross County Community School	344	20 *	*	*
Osceola Public Schools	246	17 *	*	*
Shelby-Rising City Public Schools	371	13 *	*	*
High Plains Community Schools	229	20 *	*	*

Data from NE Dept. of Education website
Gathered July 2014

Strategies

1. To address this priority the Community Planning Committee decided to look into providing some type of truancy prevention program. By having a program in place there will hopefully be two outcomes. First, that there will be better ways to help the youth of our community who struggle with truancy to keep their absenteeism from continuing, as well as help them to have a positive outcome in their education. Second, that incidences of absenteeism will decrease. The Community Planning Committee feels that having resources in place to deal with truancy will greatly benefit the youth of our counties. The Central Nebraska Diversion office, since it already provides services to all four counties, will spearhead this effort.

Timeline

- Year One: A truancy prevention program will be developed and executed in at least one school system. Central City Public School will act as a pilot site for this new program. Laying the groundwork for the improvement of alternative school programs, as well as the possibility of a truancy monitor. By implementing this strategy, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the first year of the comprehensive community plan that the numbers of students who miss school, if not decrease, will at least not increase thanks to the proposed strategies. The Community Planning committee feels this will greatly benefit the youth of our counties.
- Year Two: The truancy prevention program that was developed and executed in year one will be expanded to at least one school system in each of the four counties. By implementing these strategies, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the second year of the comprehensive community plan that the numbers of students who miss school will decrease by at least two percent in each of these schools thanks to the proposed strategies. By continuing the improvement of alternative schools in the second year and making a final decision on the truancy officer, the rates of school chronic absenteeism will continue to improve for the youth of our counties.
- Year Three: The truancy prevention program that was developed and expanded in in the first two years will be expanded to every public school system in each of the four counties. By implementing these strategies, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the third year of the comprehensive community plan that the number of students who miss school will decrease by at least two percent across the county thanks to the proposed strategies. In the third year, the improvements will be in place; the alternative school will help students who have missed too much school, and the truancy monitor will (possibly) keep students from getting to the point of needing alternative school. The Community Planning Committee feels this is the best route to helping the youth of our counties with the issue of truancy faced by the youth.

Priority #3

Address the issues with the youth of the community that pertain to lack of supervision and parenting skills.

General Description

One of the important ways to keep the youth out of trouble is to teach them how to be responsible adults before they become parents. Studies show that children who are raised in both abusive and apathetic environments are prone to suffer from psychological issues, depression and low self-esteem, violence and behavioral problems, poor social adjustment and potential problems with the law². Studies also show that parents who were juvenile law violators themselves tend to have children who are juvenile law violators³. It's a continuous cycle that is hard to be broken. In order to break the cycle and help our youth either exit or stay out of the system entirely, our community has a need to educate parents on effective parenting strategies.

As you can see from the chart on the next page, there has been a 33% increase in Merrick County offenses from under-supervised youth. This accounts for 42% of all diversion referrals in the past four years. There are organizations in place to help accomplish this goal. This priority differs from the community's previous plan.

²Source: European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience, April 2006, Volume 256, Issue 3, pp 174-186, "*The enduring effects of abuse and related adverse experiences in childhood*" R. F. Anda MD, MS, V. J. Felitti MD, FACP
<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00406-005-0624-4>

³Source: Child Delinquency: Early Intervention and Prevention, OJJDP-Produced, Bulletin. Child Delinquency Series. Presents valuable information on the nature of child delinquency and describes early intervention and prevention programs that effectively reduce delinquent behavior. May 2003. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/186162/contents.html>

Stats for Central Nebraska Juvenile Diversion for 2011-2013

Average increase in 40 Developmental Assets for clients: 22%

This reflects benefits to the community because numerous studies have shown that youth with more of these Assets have better coping and life skills and increased positive character traits. They will be more actively involved in improving their own lives and engaging in the community. The numbers show that youth who complete this program gain Assets.

Average decrease in risk assessment score: 30%

This reflects benefits to the community because it shows that youth that complete the program are less likely to engage in criminal activity than when they started.

Successful completion rate: 90%

Recidivism rate: 11%

Other benefits to the community in the last three years:

Restitution collected: \$3,540

Community Service hours performed: 1,021

Money saved in court costs: \$185,000

Charges (for Merrick Co. only):

	2011-2014 (so far)	Increase from 2013
ARSON	2	200%
ASSAULT	4	-100%
CRIMINAL MISCHIEF	8	200%
CURFEW	17	-50%
INDECENT EXPOSURE	1	-100%
MARIJUANA-POSSESSION	1	-100%
MINOR IN POSSESSION	30	150%
SELL TO MINOR	1	100%
SHOPLIFTING	10	-400%
THEFT BY UNLAWFUL TAKING	1	50%
TOBACCO; USE BY UNDERAGE	1	-100%
TRAFFIC OFFENSE	14	-100%
TRESPASSING	1	-100%
WEAPONS OFFENSES	4	11%
Drug & alcohol related charges	33	11%
Under-supervised youth issues	39	33%

- Drug & alcohol related charges account for **35%** of all Diversion referrals by Merrick County in the past four years.
- Under-supervised youth issues (non drug & alcohol related) account for **42%** of all Diversion referrals by Merrick County in the past four years.
- Other counties have similar stats but they are not available at this time.

Strategies

1. Parenting Classes: There is education available to help parents parent better. The biggest obstacle we face with this is getting the parents there. We need to work on getting the parents that need help come to the classes, so they aren't expecting the schools and the courts to deal with there troubled youth instead of helping them themselves. Doing things, such as placing billboards or signs around the community could help spread the word for parenting classes. Offering places for parents to get help (MAPS, churches, diversion, extension, etc.) may also help parents help their children themselves, instead of relying on the juvenile justice system.
2. Education Task Force: Form a "task force" to investigate ways to get youth more involved with existing programs. Teaching today's youth how to be productive, responsible adults and better parents will decrease the amount of troubled youth in the future. There are organizations to help teach the youth of these three counties to be more responsible adults:
 - Mentoring programs such as Teammates and Big Brothers, Big Sisters
 - Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts
 - Church Youth Groups
 - Extension Office/4H
 - Offering options such as job shadowing or internships with local businesses and professionals could provide valuable opportunities for the youth of all counties, as well as being beneficial to the businesses/professionals who would provide this experience.
3. After School Activities: With many households requiring two parents working, there are a lot of "latch key" youth in the community. This results in children in the community being unsupervised for a portion of the day. Giving the youth of our counties a place to go after school could go a long way in keeping them unnecessarily involved in the juvenile system. Some of the programs that could be offered are:
 - Offering things to do at the Fitness Center, the library (such as literacy programs) and the Merrick County Youth Council
 - Some volunteer to help run the programs could possibly be found at the thrift shop
 - After school program available by; the MCYC, several libraries in the counties, and the Aurora youth center.
 - The Aurora Youth Center is a valuable yet under-utilized resource in Hamilton County, and the youth benefit from its programming, and is eager to see how the programming could be expanded to include additional youth, including those who are at-risk.
 - Increasing available outdoor activities such as a skateboard parks and basketball courts
 - 5 Day Clubs, Good News Clubs, churches

With these strategies, the Community Planning Committee feels that the lack of supervision and parenting can be addressed and changed for the betterment of the youth in our

Timeline

Year One: By implementing these strategies, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the first year of the comprehensive community plan that there will be at least a two percent increase in the participation of these programs thanks to the proposed strategies. In the first year, the main focus will be on education. There will be offering of parenting classes, to teach parents how to better guide their children as is outlined previously outlined in this section. This will begin the groundwork for breaking the cycle, so-to-speak.

Year Two: By implementing these strategies, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the second year of the comprehensive community plan that there will be at least a four percent increase in the participation of these programs thanks to the proposed strategies. In the second year, building, creating and continuing the programs as outlined in the beginning of this section. This will give the youth of our counties opportunities to use their time productively, and potentially keeping them from needed in the services offered by the juvenile diversion program.

Year Three: By implementing these strategies, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the third year of the comprehensive community plan that there will be at least a six percent increase in the participation of these programs thanks to the proposed strategies. In the third year, the focus will be continuing and improving the work of the two previous years (parental education and programs/activities). The Community Planning Committee feels this will be the best way to serve the youth of our counties.

Priority #4

Improve the literacy of youth in our counties.

General Description

According to a 2012 paper by Stephen Krashen, Syying Lee, and Jeff McQuillan, “access to books in some cases had a larger impact on reading achievement test scores than poverty... This suggests that providing more access to books can mitigate the effect of poverty on reading achievement, a conclusion consistent with other recent results (Achterman 2008; Evans, Kelley, Kidora and Treian 2010; Schubert and Becker 2010). This result is of enormous practical importance (as) children of poverty typically have little access to books” (Krashen 2004).

The Community Planning Committee recognizes that raising literacy rates is a small step towards solving other issues faced by the youth of our counties (poverty, school drop out rates, etc.). The Community Planning Committee hopes to incorporate strategies to help improve the literacy rates of the youth of the community.

This priority differs from the community’s previous plan.

Strategies

1. Summer Reading Programs: Incorporating summer reading programs will help provide the youth, especially the younger youth of the community, to gain more access to books as well as opportunities. A summer reading program will help boost literacy rates; boosting literacy rates helps youth build better habits, making them more successful in school and ultimately more successful in life. According to United Way, the third grade proficiency rate for Central City Elementary School is sixty-one percent, and sixty-three percent for Palmer Elementary School. This is below the state average, which is seventy-seven percent. Incorporating summer reading programs will help raise these literacy rates.
2. Incentivizing reading programs at the middle school level (Such as reading counts/accelerated reader) is another strategy. By involving parents, perhaps with letters using language when presenting to parents such as “your child has been chosen” or “your child has been targeted” to get more parents to choose to have their children participate in reading programs, it is hoped this as well will help improve literacy rates.

Timeline

Year One: By implementing these strategies, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the first year of the comprehensive community plan that the literacy rates of students will if not increase will at least remain steady thanks to the proposed strategies. In the first year, the existing reading program will be enhanced, offering more rewards to the youth who participate in the reading programs for meeting their reading goals (iPads, gift cards, etc.) to gain more participation, as well as expanding the age range to reach a wider variety of youth in the community. This will be an attempt to improve literacy rates among all the youth of our counties.

Year Two: By implementing these strategies, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the second year of the comprehensive community plan that the literacy rates of students will increase by as much as one percent thanks to the proposed strategies. In the second year, there will be more of an effort to get parents involved, as is outlined in the first paragraph listed under this section (Priority #4 under Strategies). Getting parents more involved will quickly help raise literacy rates among the youth of our community.

Year Three: By implementing these strategies, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the third year of the comprehensive community plan that the literacy rates of students will increase by as much as two percent thanks to the proposed strategies. By keeping the reading programs going as well as increasing parental involvement, the Community Planning Committee feels that the literacy rates of the youth of our counties will continue to improve.

Priority #5

Prevent and address substance abuse in our counties.

General Description

As the data shows, our communities have a long-standing problem with substance abuse. In Merrick County alone, drug and alcohol charges account for 35% of all diversion referrals in the past four years. The Community Planning Committee feels that by raising awareness about substance abuse, for both the youth of the community as well as their parents, will help to combat the issue of substance abuse among the youth of our counties.

This priority is similar to the community's previous plan.

Strategies

1. A strategy to help combat substance abuse is through Drug and Alcohol education for elementary and middle school aged youth to help them make more informed choices. One way to reach out students is through programs such as D.A.R.E. (used in Polk and Hamilton Counties) and the Jr. Deputy Program (in Merrick County which will WhyTry with drug and alcohol education).
2. Reaching out to the older youth in the community can potentially break the cycle. The Merrick County Youth Council sponsors speakers who come to middle school and high schools making the youth aware of the risks and dangers of illegal substances. This will be helpful in deterring the youth from making the decision to partake in these substances.
3. An additional strategy would be to teach all parents about the dangers of drug and alcohol use among youth. The MAPS, COPE, and PSAC coalitions will be providing at least 4 of these types of trainings per year. The resources needed are educational material, marketing money, and personnel to administer the trainings. The results would be that vital information will be given to parents and leaders in our communities and the importance of prevention will be recognized.

Timeline

Year One: By implementing these strategies, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the first year of the comprehensive community plan that the substance abuse rates of youth will if not decrease, remain steady thanks to the proposed strategies. In the first year, the focus will remain on educational programs in order break the cycle of drug use in youth at a young age. It is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that starting education about the dangers of substance abuse at a young age will decrease the amount of substance abuse in our counties in the coming years.

Year Two: By implementing these strategies, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the second year of the comprehensive community plan that the substance abuse rates of youth will decrease by as much as five percent thanks to the proposed strategies. In the second year, the focus will be on parent and older youth education. The Community Planning Committee feels that spreading awareness among the youth of our counties, along with their parents about the dangers of substance abuse, will help decrease the amount of offenders in the coming years.

Year Three: By implementing these strategies, it is the hope of the Community Planning Committee that in the third year of the comprehensive community plan that the substance abuse rates of youth will decrease by as much as ten percent thanks to the proposed strategies. In the third year, by focusing on educating the youth and their parents about the dangers of substance abuse will decrease the amounts of offenders, making the communities of our counties a safer place.

Appendix

- A. Juvenile Justice System Points Analysis
- B. Approval Letter from County Board
- C. MOUs

Appendix A

JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM POINTS ANALYSIS for Merrick, Nance & Polk Counties

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.

Merrick, Nance & Polk Counties

This is the second time Merrick, Nance & Polk Counties have joined together to compile a united juvenile comprehensive plan, which has taken much time and effort in organizing. The stakeholders from each of the counties completed a Juvenile Justice System Analysis Tool. This is a compiled document for all three counties after going through that process.

The following analysis names the decision point and states any noteworthy issue identified or problem acknowledged at the particular stage, particularly since the last application of the Tool for the each of the counties. Not all decision points are commented on.

Data

In 2013, according to OJJDP at http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/asp/profile_selection.asp, it is estimated that Merrick, Nance, and Polk Counties had a total juvenile population (ages 0 – 17 years old) of 3,904, with 3,770 white, 53 black, 24 American Indian, and 57 Asian. In addition, 256 were identified as Hispanic and 3,648 Non-Hispanic.

Juvenile court offense data for Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties for years 2012/13 (Juvenile Justice Inst. UNO)¹ appears below. Arrest numbers for each year represent arrests made of 7-17 year-olds in the county. The data is presented by each county and together.

Justice Data – 2012/13

Youth (ages 7-17)

Racial/ Ethnic Group	Merrick		Nance		Polk		Totals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White	1,108	88.9%	527	93.9%	767	94.1%	2402	91.61%
Black	9	0.7%	7	1.2%	7	0.9%	23	.88%
American Indian	8	0.6%	4	0.7%	0	0.0%	12	.46%
Asian	36	2.1%	1	0.2%	2	0.2%	39	1.49%
Hispanic	85	6.8%	22	3.9%	39	4.8%	146	5.57%
Total	1,246	100.0%	561	100.0%	815	100.0%	2,622	100.0%

Data was collected from the Office of Juvenile Delinquency's *Easy Access to Juvenile Populations* (http://ojidp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop/asp/comparison_display.asp).

Calendar Year 2012 (Age 0-17) Juvenile Arrests

http://www.ncc.ne.gov/statistics/data_search/arrest/arrest_crosstab.phtml

Department name	Number	Percent
Merrick CO. S.O.	0	0%
Nance CO. S.O.	2	22%
Polk CO. S.O.	7	78%
Total	9	100%

**Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive Community Plan
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CY 2013: Youth in Detention: Data was collected from the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice regarding youth booked-into detention.

Facility	Merrick		Nance		Polk		Totals	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Douglas Co. Youth Center	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Lancaster Co. Attention Center	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
NE Nebraska Juvenile Center	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
West Nebraska Juvenile Detention Center	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
All Adult Jails	2	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	100%
Total	2	100%	0	100%	0	100%	2	100%

FY 2013: Youth in Geneva and Kearney

	Merrick	Nance	Polk	Total
YRTC Geneva	0	1	0	1
YRTC Kearney	1	0	0	1
Total	1	1	0	2

**Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive Community Plan
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SYSTEM POINT: ARREST/ CITATION	
PARTY RESPONSIBLE: Police/Law Enforcement	
STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS §§ 43-247 (1), (2), (4)	
<i>Decision: Whether an information report should be filed, or what offense, if any, with which juvenile should be cited or arrested.</i>	
Formal Determining Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sufficient factual basis to believe offense was committed . b. Underlying support for a particular offense. 	Informal Determining Factors <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.
Notes: Not every community has local law enforcement (police department), so the sheriff’s department, for example, might contract with the city or village to provide law enforcement services. There is concern that parents inappropriately call on law enforcement to discipline their kids, rather than enforcing rules themselves. This is also the case with parents whose kids are on Probation – the Probation officer will get a call from the parent when the kid does not come home on time, for example.	

<i>Decision: Whether to cite or arrest juvenile for juvenile or adult offense.</i>	
Formal Determining Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Seriousness of Offense b. Is there a warrant 	Informal Determining Factors <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.

Notes: Age is a determining factor.
 Whether or not the juvenile cooperates with the law enforcement officer might be a determining factor.
 It is up to the county attorney to decide how the case should be filed.

<i>Decision: Whether to take juvenile into custody or to cite and release (NRS § 43-248 (1), (2); § 43-250 (1), (2), (3))</i>	
Formal Determining Factors	Informal Determining Factors <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.

Notes: Law enforcement gets along well with the Health and Human Services workers.

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Madison is the closest secure detention facility, but rarely is a juvenile taken into custody at the time of arrest. Pre-adjudication detention options are limited in the area. It is felt that better communication and coordination among schools, law enforcement, probation, county attorney, and others would better serve the needs of the juveniles while holding them appropriately accountable.

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.	
Formal Determining Factors a. Risk assessment outcome b. Accessibility of placement options: i. Parents/Guardians ii. Emergency Shelter iii. Staff Secure Facility iv. Secure Detention Facility	Informal Determining Factors
Note: There are many detention alternatives available and each county uses these available resources whenever possible.	

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: A juvenile diversion program exists in all three counties, which is utilized. First time MIP, shoplifting, curfew violations, and other minor incidents are routinely referred to the diversion program	

Decision: Whether youth should be prosecuted as juvenile or adult.	
Formal Determining Factors a. Seriousness of offense	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: The seriousness of the offense is the main factor. One of the factors is whether the juvenile has been in trouble before. Also, usually the juvenile is 16 years old before a filing in adult court occurs.	
Decision: Offense for which juvenile should be charged.	
Formal Determining Factors As outlined in statute	Informal Determining Factors

**Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive Community Plan
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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:	3. Staff Secure Facility
1. Parents/Guardians	4. Secure Detention Facility
2. Emergency Shelter	5. Electronic Monitoring
Formal Determining Factors	Informal Determining Factors
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	
Notes: Due to budgetary restraints, secure detention is used as a last resort which leads to more community based placements. At times there are not enough of these placements. If a juvenile is detained, which is rare, he or she is usually released to parents at the detention hearing.	

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: Judge finds probable cause for most cases from the bench.	

SYSTEM POINT: COMPETENCY EVALUATION	
PARTY RESPONSIBLE: Juvenile Court Judge	
STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS § 43-258(1(b))	
<i>Decision: Whether juvenile is competent to participate in the proceedings.</i>	
Formal Determining Factors Outlined in statute	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: No issues reported. Competency evaluations are very rare. It is dealt with as outlined in statute, if it is even brought up.	
<i>Decision: Whether juvenile is “responsible” for his/her acts NRS § 43-258(1(c) and (2))</i>	
Formal Determining Factors	Informal 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))	
Notes: The court would rely on an evaluation – this might include the opinion of a physician, psychiatrist, community mental health program, and/or a psychologist.	

**Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive Community Plan
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SYSTEM POINT: ADJUDICATION	
PARTY RESPONSIBLE: Juvenile Court Judge	
STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS § 43-279 (2) and (3)	
<i>Decision: Whether the juvenile is, beyond a reasonable doubt, “a person described by section 43-247.”</i>	
Formal Determining Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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: Many cases are plea agreements which do not result in adjudications.	
<i>Decision: Whether to order probation to conduct a pre-disposition investigation (statutory authority unclear)</i>	
Formal Determining Factors Outlined in statute	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: PDI’s are not ordered in every case. Many times the judge will proceed to disposition without a PDI, especially in more serious offense cases. *See NRS § 29-2261(2): A court may order a pre-sentence investigation in any case, except in cases in which an offender has been convicted of a Class IIIA misdemeanor, a Class IV misdemeanor, a Class V misdemeanor, a traffic infraction, or any corresponding city or village ordinance.	

<i>Decision: Whether to order OJS evaluation</i> NRS § 43-281	
Formal Determining Factors	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: It depends on the case whether the judge orders an OJS evaluation. *See also: NRS § 29-2204(3): Except when a term of life is required by law, whenever the defendant was under eighteen years of age at the time he or she committed the crime for which he or she was convicted, the court may, in its discretion, instead of imposing the penalty provided for the crime, make such disposition of the defendant as the court deems proper under the Nebraska Juvenile Code. Prior to making a disposition which commits the juvenile to the Office of Juvenile Services, the court shall order the juvenile to be evaluated by the office if the juvenile has not had an evaluation within the past twelve months.	

<i>Decision: Whether to order a PDI or OJS Evaluation</i>	
Formal Determining Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Presumably supplement each other b. Uncertainty about whether probation or commitment to OJS is in the juvenile’s best interest 	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: Usually a PDI is ordered first, with an OJS evaluation being secondary, especially if more information is needed and/or probation recommends an OJS evaluation at disposition or revocation hearing.	

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SYSTEM POINT: DISPOSITION	
PARTY RESPONSIBLE: Juvenile Court Judge	
STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS § 43-286 (1)	
<i>Decision: Whether to place juvenile on probation</i> NRS § 43-286(1)(a)(i)	
Formal Determining Factors	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: Most cases have disposition of Probation as the first intervention in juvenile court.	

<i>Decision: Whether to commit such juvenile to the Office of Juvenile Services</i> NRS § 43-286(1)(b)	
Formal Determining Factors -Whether juvenile is at least twelve years old	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: This area has had many problems with OJS in the past, but hopefully it is getting better. The juvenile might be committed to OJS if he or she fails on Probation.	

<i>Decision: Whether to place juvenile on probation and commit juvenile to HHS or OJS</i>	
Formal Determining Factors a. No apparent authority for delinquent in the legal custody of parents/guardian.	Informal Determining Factors a. Gives probation responsibility of supervision, but opens access to HHS/OJS funds for treatment or rehabilitation
Notes: Dual supervision cases do occur rarely; usually when the judge feels that the kids are being kicked out of the YRTC too soon.	
<p>See Also, State v. David C., 6 Neb. App. 198, 572 N.W.2d 392 (1997): [9] It is clear that the court intended to commit David to the YRTC without actually revoking his probation. We can find no statutory basis for this procedure. Section 43-286 provides for the possible dispositions that a court may make, including continuing [*214] the disposition portion of the hearing and (1) placing the juvenile on probation subject to the supervision of a probation officer; (2) permitting the juvenile to remain in his or her [***31] own home, subject to the supervision of the probation officer; (3) placing the juvenile in a suitable home or institution or with the Department; or (4) committing him or her to OJS. Section 43-286 provides no authority for a court to place a juvenile on probation under the care of OJS. Section 43-286(4)(e) provides that if the court finds that the juvenile violated the terms of his or her probation, the court may modify the terms and conditions of the probation order, extend the period of probation, or enter "any order of disposition that could have been made at the time the original order of probation was entered" The court could not have originally entered an order providing for probation with commitment to YRTC, and it necessarily follows that the court could not enter such an order upon finding that the juvenile had violated the terms of his or her probation. The attempt to continue probation while committing David to a YRTC would also require a reversal of the order of April 30.</p>	

<p>SYSTEM POINT: ADMINISTRATIVE SANCTIONS</p> <p>PARTY RESPONSIBLE: Probation</p> <p>STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS § 29-2266</p>	
<p><i>Decision: Whether to impose administrative sanctions on a probationer</i></p>	
<p>Formal Determining Factors (NRS § 29-2266 (2))</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Probation officers has reasonable cause to believe that probationer has committed or is about to commit a substance abuse violation or a non-criminal violation b. Substance abuse violation refers to a positive test for drug or alcohol use, failure to report for such a test, or failure to comply with substance abuse evaluations or treatment c. Non-criminal violation means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Moving traffic violations; ii. Failure to report to his or her probation officer; iii. Leaving the jurisdiction of the court or leaving the state without the permission of the court or his or her probation officer; iv. Failure to work regularly or attend training school; v. Failure to notify his or her probation officers of change of address or employment; vi. Frequenting places where controlled substances are illegally sold, used, distributed, or administered; vii. Failure to perform community service as directed; viii. Failure to pay fines, courts costs, restitution, or any fees imposed pursuant to section 29-2262.06. 	<p>Informal Determining Factors</p>
<p>Notes: Probation does use administrative sanctions on juvenile cases.</p>	

**Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive Community Plan
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SYSTEM POINT: MOTION TO REVOKE PROBATION	
PARTY RESPONSIBLE: County Attorney	
STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS § 43-286(4)(b)(i)	
Formal Determining Factors	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: A motion to revoke probation is usually requested on new charges that has resulted in a violation of Probation. It depends on the case.	

SYSTEM POINT: MODIFICATION/REVOCAION OF PROBATION	
PARTY RESPONSIBLE: Juvenile Court Judge	
STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS § 43-286(4)(b)(v)	
Formal Determining Factors:	Informal Determining Factors:
Notes: Usually the court modifies order with extensions or additional conditions.	

SYSTEM POINT: SETTING ASIDE ADJUDICATION	
PARTY RESPONSIBLE: Juvenile Court Judge	
STATUTE REFERENCE: NRS § 43-2,104	
<i>Decision: Whether juvenile has satisfactorily completed his or her probation and supervision or the treatment program of his or her commitment</i> NRS § 43-2,102	
Formal Determining Factors (43-2,103) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Juvenile’s post-adjudication behavior and response to treatment and rehabilitation programs b. Whether setting aside adjudication will depreciate seriousness of juvenile’s conduct or promote disrespect for law c. Whether failure to set aside adjudication may result in disabilities disproportionate to the conduct upon which the adjudication was based. 	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: The Judge will order both determinate and age of majority for duration of cases on Probation. The Judge is also willing to do an unsatisfactory discharge of the case.	

<i>Decision: Whether juvenile should be discharged from the custody and supervision of OJS</i>	
Formal Determining Factors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Presumably same as those for probation under NRS § 43-2,103 	Informal Determining Factors
Notes: The Judge might commit a juvenile to OJS but will leave a case open for Probation to supervise after release from OJS placement. See Also, <i>In re Interest Tamartha S.</i> , 267 Neb. 78; 672 N.W.2d 24 (2003): it is clear under the language of § 43-408 that the committing court maintains jurisdiction over a juvenile committed to OJS, conducts review hearings every 6 months, and is to receive written notification of the placement and treatment status of juveniles committed to OJS at least every 6 months. See § 43-408(2) and (3). Thus, although the statute speaks of committed [**28] juveniles' being "discharged from [OJS]," § 43-408(2), the statute does not explicitly say that OJS discharges the juveniles, and, on the contrary, the Legislature has explicitly mandated that the committing court "continues to maintain jurisdiction" over a juvenile [***9] committed to OJS. <i>Id.</i> Therefore, while OJS may make an initial determination with regard to the advisability of the discharge of a juvenile committed to OJS, the committing court, as a result of its statutorily imposed continuing jurisdiction, must approve the discharge of the juvenile.	

**Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive Community Plan
2015 – 2018**

The following issues were touched upon regarding the Juvenile Justice System Points Analysis in Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties:

- 1) Detention alternatives are needed in the area, both pre-and post-adjudication. The expense of detention is daunting, so alternatives are important. Detention alternatives should continually being reviewed for improvements.
- 2) The juvenile diversion program is relied on to offer programming prior to a formal filing in juvenile court. The diversion program in Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties is unique—going above and beyond any usual juvenile diversion program, adopting several curriculums to address very specific needs of the individual juvenile. Best practices are an important part of any juvenile program, and diversion is no different. The program is attempting to help as many youth as possible in Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties, even through some prevention programming for all youth. As the program stretches to take on all of these areas, best practices evaluations are helpful tools to continue doing the most possible for youth.
- 3) According to stakeholders, alcohol related offenses, and some drug related offenses such as marijuana, continue to be an issue for youth in the area. Specific actions could be taken to combat underage drinking such as prevention campaigns, parental and adult involvement, and access to chemical dependency evaluations.
- 4) Truancy was identified as an ongoing issue in schools. Collaboration between the County Attorneys Offices and school administration to outline plans of action would help to track truant behavior. Law enforcement serve as school resource officers in some areas of the 3-county region. As these various entities work together, efforts could be made to maximize resources, manpower, and impact with regard to truancy.
- 5) Stakeholder meetings could take place once per quarter to communicate and collaborate on issues effecting youth in Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties. Limited resources could be shared and creative solutions formed by a more formal and collaborative meeting schedule. Meetings could review and update the Comprehensive Juvenile Services Plan, ensuring that timelines and expected results are met, or adjusted as needed.

**Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive
Community Plan 2015 - 2018**

**Juvenile Justice System Analysis Tool
for Hamilton County**

1. Community Level Data

Gender, Race and Ethnicity	Total Population of Hamilton County		Total Juvenile Population (10-17) of Hamilton County	
	Number	% of Total #	Number	% of #
Male	4565	50%	576	50.8%
Female	4547	49.9%	557	49.1%
TOTAL	9112	100%	1133	100%
White	9000	98.7%	1111	98.0%
Black	52	.5%	10	.8%
American Indian	31	.3%	7	.6%
Asian	29	.2%	5	.4%
TOTAL	9112	100%	1133	100%
Hispanic	258	2.8%	59	5.4%
Not Hispanic or Latino	8854	97.2%	1074	94.6%
TOTAL	9112	100%	1092	100%

(Source: Puzanchera, C., Sladky, A. and Kang, W. (2013). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2012." Online. Available: <http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/ezapop>)

2. System Level Data

- A copy of the Juvenile Justice System Analysis tool is attached in the appendix.
- Hamilton County Juvenile Court filing data was gathered and analyzed. Specific data is also attached in the appendix. It was determined the number of juvenile cases filed in Hamilton County Juvenile Court has remained steady for the past three years. They types of cases filed have also remained consistent.
 - 2010-29 cases filed, including 2 curfew violations, 5 substance related offenses
 - 2011-36 cases filed, including 6 curfew violations, 4 substance related offenses
 - 2012-33 cases filed, including 4 curfew violations, 6 substance related offenses

**Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive
Community Plan 2015 - 2018**

- The data reflects there are several filings each year that could have potentially been referred for diversion, had a program been available. These filings include all cases with the exception of what has been classified as “Major Cases” (Assault, Theft, Criminal Mischief, etc) and cases involving Truancy and Abuse/Neglect.

Year	Number of potential Diversion referrals
2010	9
2011	12
2012	12

- Juvenile’s whose offenses are considered “Major Cases” have a greater possibility of going to a detention facility at the time of their “arrest”. From 2010-2012, there were two (2) juvenile’s detained, at a cost of \$4,020. Additionally, in 2013, there were two (2) youth detained, at a cost of

As a diversion program is not currently available in Hamilton County, each adjudicated case, with the exception of those of an Abuse/Neglect foundation, resulted in the juvenile either being placed on probation or placed with the Office of Juvenile Services with the Department of Health and Human Services.

In 2011 and 2012 there were a higher number of curfew violations than there had been in 2010. It is implied by the nature of the offense, that the juveniles involved in these cases are unsupervised at the time of their citation. There is a need in the community for activities for the juveniles on weekends and throughout the summer. In the past, The Youth Center in Aurora had received funds through the Juvenile Services County Aid funds, however, the funding ended with the previous Juvenile Comprehensive Community Plan in 2012. The Hamilton County Juvenile Services Team believes that The Youth Center is an asset to the juvenile’s of Hamilton County, and would like to see their services expand to offer more programming to more youth.

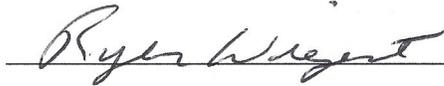
**Merrick, Nance and Polk Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive Community
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The Youth Center was open on 63 occasions and served approximately a total of 306 unduplicated juveniles during the 2012-2013 school years. The total number of juveniles attending The Youth Center during that time period is 3,427, although that figure includes duplicate juvenile attendance. The Youth Center averages approximately 54 students each session.

Appendix B

MERRICK, NANCE, POLK, & HAMILTON COUNTY
JUVENILE SERVICES COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY
PLAN
2015 – 2018

APPROVED BY THE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF
MERRICK, THIS 25th DAY OF August, 2015.



Roger Wiegert, Chairman

Merrick County Board of Supervisors

Lead County

Appendix C

INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT
FOR JUVENILE SERVICES
BY AND BETWEEN
THE COUNTIES OF MERRICK AND NANCE

This agreement is made by and between the County of Merrick, a body politic and corporate and a political subdivision of the State of Nebraska, hereinafter referred to as “Merrick”, and the County of Nance, a body politic and corporate and a political subdivision of the State of Nebraska, hereinafter referred to as “Nance”,

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, Neb. Rev. Stat. 13-804 provides that any power or powers, privileges, or authority exercised or capable of exercise by a public agency of the state may be exercised and enjoyed jointly with any other public agency of this state and jointly with any public agency of any other state or of the United States to the extent that laws of such other state or of the United States permit such joint exercise or enjoyment. Any agency of state government, when acting jointly with any public agency, may exercise and enjoy all the powers, privileges, and authority conferred by the Interlocal Cooperation Act upon a public agency; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this agreement is to make the most efficient use of each county’s taxing authority and other powers by enabling them to cooperate with each other on a basis of mutual advantage and thereby to provide services and facilities in a manner and pursuant to forms of governmental organization that will accord best with geographic, economic, population, and other factors influencing the needs and development of Merrick County and Nance County.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and promises contained herein, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. Purpose. The purpose of this agreement is to establish an agreement between Merrick and Nance in regards to a contract for Juvenile Services.

**Merrick, Nance, Polk, and Hamilton Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive
Community Plan 2015 – 2018**

2. Duration. This contract will begin July 1, 2015 and remain in effect through June 30, 2016, unless the parties hereto agree in writing to modify, extend, or terminate this agreement prior to that time.
3. Organization. There shall be no separate legal or administrative agency created pursuant to this Interlocal Cooperation Agreement.
4. Agency. Merrick, through its Juvenile Services Office, will provide diversion services for residents of Nance who are referred for services by the Nance County Attorney.
5. Consideration. Nance shall let Merrick County act as the “lead county” in the application and administration of the 2015 Community-Based Juvenile Services Aid Grant money for Nance County. Nance shall refer juveniles to participate in the diversion program. Program participants shall be required to pay Nance’s recommended programming fees to Merrick County. The Nance County grant funds plus the programming fees collected by Merrick County will go towards the administration, supplies, travel expenses to schools in Nance County and other overhead expenses. If for any reason, the Nance County grant funds in the amount of \$9,842 plus the additional collected programming fees (amount varies with number of diversion participants and reasons for diversion), do not meet the acquired expenses for Nance County, Nance agrees to compensate Merrick the difference between the actual amount of expenses from the collected grant money and fees. In addition, Merrick County agrees to preserve and maintain fees collected from Nance County Participants that remain after expenses for the use of sustaining the Diversion Program or used on Nance County Youth oriented programs agreed upon by the Juvenile Team.
6. Consideration. Merrick County requests that a percentage of match required by the County State Aid and Community-Based Grants in the amount of \$2,063. This amount is based on the percentage of diversion referrals made to the program by Nance County. This amount is to be paid to Merrick County to no later than May 30, 2016.

**Merrick, Nance, Polk, and Hamilton Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive
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7. Services Provided. Through its Juvenile Services Office, Merrick agrees to screen, enroll, monitor, and supervise Nance County's program participants in Merrick County's Diversion Program, in a similar manner that Merrick County participants are screened, enrolled, monitored, and supervised. At minimum, Merrick will provide the following services to Nance's participants:
 - a. Screen youth referred to see if they are eligible for diversion and to establish the individual needs and risks for each youth.
 - b. Administer appropriate offense specific educational courses;
 - c. Monitor school attendance and behavior;
 - d. Monitor community service work, if required under diversion contract;
 - e. Monitor restitution payment, if required under Diversion contract;
 - f. Monitor counseling or other required rehabilitative treatments;
 - g. Verify that apology letters have been sent to victims;
 - h. Report violations of Diversion contracts to Nance County Attorney; and report successful completions to the Nance County Attorney upon their completion.

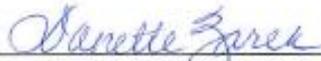
8. Financing. Each party shall be responsible for financing their respective obligations herein, including the levying, collecting and accounting for any tax required and establishing and maintaining required budgets.
9. Property. Any property acquired through this agreement shall be the property of the party acquiring the same.
10. Administration. The Merrick County Juvenile Services Office shall provide information reporting on this program.
11. Entire Agreement. It is agreed that the above represents the entire agreement for juvenile services between the parties for the period of July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016.

Merrick, Nance, Polk, and Hamilton Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive
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THIS INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT FOR JUVENILE SERVICES APPROVED BY THE
COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF NANCE, THIS 9th DAY OF December, 2014.



Nance County Chairman of the Board of Supervisors



Nance County Clerk



Nance County Attorney

INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT
FOR JUVENILE SERVICES
BY AND BETWEEN
THE COUNTIES OF MERRICK AND POLK

This agreement is made by and between the County of Merrick, a body politic and corporate and a political subdivision of the State of Nebraska, hereinafter referred to as “Merrick”, and the County of Polk, a body politic and corporate and a political subdivision of the State of Nebraska, hereinafter referred to as “Polk”,

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, Neb. Rev. Stat. 13-804 provides that any power or powers, privileges, or authority exercised or capable of exercise by a public agency of the state may be exercised and enjoyed jointly with any other public agency of this state and jointly with any public agency of any other state or of the United States to the extent that laws of such other state or of the United States permit such joint exercise or enjoyment. Any agency of state government, when acting jointly with any public agency, may exercise and enjoy all the powers, privileges, and authority conferred by the Inter-local Cooperation Act upon a public agency; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this agreement is to make the most efficient use of each county’s taxing authority and other powers by enabling them to cooperate with each other on a basis of mutual advantage and thereby to provide services and facilities in a manner and pursuant to forms of governmental organization that will accord best with geographic, economic, population, and other factors influencing the needs and development of Merrick County and Polk County.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and promises contained herein, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. Purpose. The purpose of this agreement is to establish an agreement between Merrick and Polk in regards to a contract for Juvenile Services.
2. Duration. This contract will begin July 1, 2015 and remain in effect through June 30, 2016, unless the parties hereto agree in writing to modify, extend, or terminate this agreement prior to that time.

**Merrick, Nance, Polk, and Hamilton Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive
Community Plan 2015 – 2018**

3. Organization. There shall be no separate legal or administrative agency created pursuant to this Inter-local Cooperation Agreement.
4. Agency. Merrick, through its Juvenile Services Office, will provide diversion services for residents of Polk who are referred for services by the Polk County Attorney.
5. Consideration. Polk shall let Merrick County act as the “lead county” in the application and administration of the 2015 Community-Based Juvenile Services Aid Grant money for Polk County. Polk shall refer juveniles to participate in the diversion program. Program participants shall be required to pay Polk’s recommended programming fees to Merrick County. The Polk County grant funds plus the programming fees collected by Merrick County will go towards the administration, supplies, travel expenses to schools in Polk County and other overhead expenses. If for any reason, the Polk County grant funds in the amount of \$13,893 plus the additional collected programming fees (amount varies with number of diversion participants and reasons for diversion), do not meet the acquired expenses for Polk County, Polk agrees to compensate Merrick the difference between the actual amount of expenses from the collected grant money and fees. In addition, Merrick County agrees to preserve and maintain fees collected from Polk County Participants that remain after expenses for the use of sustaining the Diversion Program or used on Polk County Youth oriented programs agreed upon by the Juvenile Team.
6. Consideration. Merrick County requests that a percentage of match required by the County State Aid and Community-Based Grants in the amount of \$2,438. This amount is based on the percentage of diversion referrals made to the program by Polk County. This amount is to be paid to Merrick County to no later than May 30, 2016.
7. Services Provided. Through its Juvenile Services Office, Merrick agrees to screen, enroll, monitor, and supervise Polk’s program participants in Merrick’s Diversion Program, in a similar manner that Merrick County

**Merrick, Nance, Polk, and Hamilton Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive
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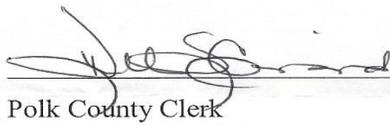
participants are screened, enrolled, monitored, and supervised. At minimum, Merrick will provide the following services to Polk's participants:

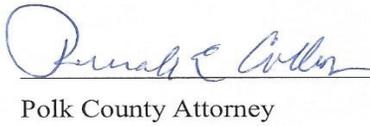
- a. Screen youth referred to see if they are eligible for diversion and to establish the individual needs and risks for each youth.
 - b. Administer appropriate offense specific educational courses;
 - c. Monitor school attendance and behavior;
 - d. Monitor community service work, if required under diversion contract;
 - e. Monitor restitution payment, if required under Diversion contract;
 - f. Monitor counseling or other required rehabilitative treatments;
 - g. Verify that apology letters have been sent to victims;
 - h. Report violations of Diversion contracts to Polk County Attorney; and report successful completions to the Polk County Attorney upon their completion.
-
8. Financing. Each party shall be responsible for financing their respective obligations herein, including the levying, collecting and accounting for any tax required and establishing and maintaining required budgets.
 9. Property. Any property acquired through this agreement shall be the property of the party acquiring the same.
 10. Administration. The Merrick County Juvenile Services Office shall provide information reporting on this program.
 11. Entire Agreement. It is agreed that the above represents the entire agreement for juvenile services between the parties for the period of July 1, 2015, through June 30, 2016.

Merrick, Nance, Polk, and Hamilton Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive
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APPROVED BY THE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF THE COUNTY OF POLK, THIS 16th DAY OF December, 2014.


Polk County Chairman of the Board of ~~Supervisors~~ Commissioners


Polk County Clerk


Polk County Attorney

**Merrick, Nance, Polk, and Hamilton Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive
Community Plan 2015 – 2018**
INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT
FOR JUVENILE DIVERSION
BY AND BETWEEN
THE COUNTIES OF MERRICK AND HAMILTON

This agreement is made by and between the County of Merrick, a body politic and corporate and a political subdivision of the State of Nebraska, hereinafter referred to as “Merrick”, and the County of Hamilton, a body politic and corporate and a political subdivision of the State of Nebraska, hereinafter referred to as “Hamilton”,

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, Neb. Rev. Stat. 13-804 provides that any power or powers, privileges, or authority exercised or capable of exercise by a public agency of the state may be exercised and enjoyed jointly with any other public agency of this state and jointly with any public agency of any other state or of the United States to the extent that laws of such other state or of the United States permit such joint exercise or enjoyment. Any agency of state government, when acting jointly with any public agency, may exercise and enjoy all the powers, privileges, and authority conferred by the Inter-local Cooperation Act upon a public agency; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this agreement is to make the most efficient use of each county’s taxing authority and other powers by enabling them to cooperate with each other on a basis of mutual advantage and thereby to provide services and facilities in a manner and pursuant to forms of governmental organization that will accord best with geographic, economic, population, and other factors influencing the needs and development of Merrick County and Hamilton County.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and promises contained herein, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. Purpose. The purpose of this agreement is to establish an agreement between Merrick and Hamilton in regards to a contract for Juvenile Diversion.
2. Duration. This contract will begin February 1, 2015 and remain in effect through January 30, 2016, unless the parties hereto agree in writing to modify, extend, or terminate this agreement prior to that time.

**Merrick, Nance, Polk, and Hamilton Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive
Community Plan 2015 – 2018**

3. Organization. There shall be no separate legal or administrative agency created pursuant to this Inter-local Cooperation Agreement.
4. Agency. Merrick, through its Juvenile Diversion Office, will provide diversion services for residents of Hamilton who are referred for services by the Hamilton County Attorney.
5. Consideration. Hamilton shall refer juveniles to participate in the diversion program. Program participants shall be required to pay recommended programming fees to Merrick County. These programming fees collected by Merrick County will go towards the administration, supplies, expenses of travel to Hamilton County and other overhead expenses. If for any reason, the contract amount paid by Hamilton County plus the additional collected programming fees (amount varies with number of diversion participants and reasons for diversion), do not meet the acquired expenses for Hamilton County, Hamilton agrees to compensate Merrick the difference between the actual amount of expenses from the collected contract money and fees. In addition, Merrick County agrees to preserve and maintain fees collected from Hamilton County Participants that remain after expenses for the use of sustaining the Diversion Program.
6. Consideration. Merrick County requests that Hamilton County pay a contract amount of \$13,500, payable only upon receipt of Hamilton County's Community Based Aid Grant money. This amount is based on the percentage of expected diversion referrals made to the program by Hamilton County. This amount does not have to be paid unless and until Hamilton County receives their grant money from the Nebraska Crime Commission. If in the event Hamilton County does not receive funds from the Crime Commission, diversion services will not be offered through Merrick County.
7. Services Provided. Through its Juvenile Diversion Office, Merrick agrees to assess, enroll, monitor, and supervise Hamilton's program participants in Merrick's diversion program, the Central Nebraska Juvenile Diversion Program. This will be done in a similar manner that Merrick County

**Merrick, Nance, Polk, and Hamilton Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive
Community Plan 2015 – 2018**

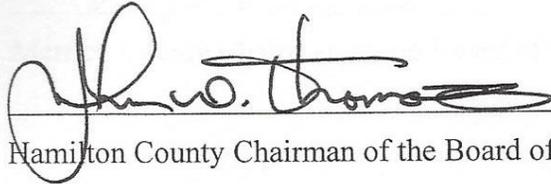
participants are assessed, enrolled, monitored, and supervised. At minimum, Merrick will provide the following services to Hamilton's participants:

- a. Assess youth referred with evidence based assessment tools to see if they are eligible for diversion and to establish the individual needs and risks for each youth.
 - b. Administer appropriate offense specific educational courses;
 - c. Monitor school attendance and behavior;
 - d. Monitor community service work, if required under diversion contract;
 - e. Monitor restitution payment, if required under Diversion contract;
 - f. Monitor counseling or other required rehabilitative treatments;
 - g. Verify that apology letters have been sent to victims;
 - h. Report violations of Diversion contracts to Hamilton County Attorney; and report successful completions to the Hamilton County Attorney upon their completion.
-
8. Financing. Each party shall be responsible for financing their respective obligations herein, including the levying, collecting and accounting for any tax required and establishing and maintaining required budgets.
 9. Property. Any property acquired through this agreement shall be the property of the party acquiring the same.
 10. Administration. The Merrick County Juvenile Diversion Office shall provide information reporting on this program.
 11. Entire Agreement. It is agreed that the above represents the entire agreement for Juvenile Diversion between the parties for the period of February 1, 2015, through January 30, 2016.

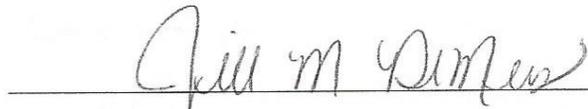
Merrick, Nance, Polk, and Hamilton Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive
Community Plan 2015 – 2018

THIS INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT FOR JUVENILE DIVERSION

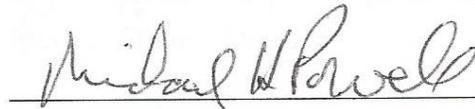
APPROVED BY THE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF THE COUNTY OF HAMILTON, THIS 23rd DAY OF ~~March~~ ^{February}, 2015.



Hamilton County Chairman of the Board of ~~Supervisors~~
~~Commissioners~~



Hamilton County Clerk



Hamilton County Attorney

Merrick, Nance, Polk, and Hamilton Counties Juvenile Services Comprehensive
Community Plan 2015 – 2018

THIS INTERLOCAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT FOR JUVENILE SERVICES

APPROVED BY THE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

OF THE COUNTY OF MERRICK, THIS 23rd DAY OF December, 2014.



Merrick County Chairman of the Board of Supervisors



Merrick County Clerk



Merrick County Attorney