

2014 Needs Assessment for Jefferson

The Hon. Raymond Pearson Chambliss
Family Court of Jefferson County
120 2nd Court North
Birmingham, AL 34204

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Allison Dearing	Beth Johns	Julie Preskitt	Liz Wilson
Robin DeMonia	Vanessa Jones	Lonnie Pressley	Vivian Winters
Valerie Eades	Randy Jones	Cynthia Raulston	Dale Wisely
Nancy Eckberg	Karen Kapp	Tameka Richardson	Mary Woolridge
Brandon Falls	Jennifer Kilburn	Krystal Riggins	Russell Worrell
Ruby Felton	Robin King	Helen Rivas	Joan Wright
Jamie Furman	Marie King	Kiranda Robbins	
Sherri Foster	Tiffany Large	Robbie Roberts	
Ladye Franklin	Lavaite Law	Patrick Rose	
Erica Frey-Delaportas	Robert Matthews	Tammie Sawyer	
Deborah Gaddis	Monica McClung	Beth Scott	

Accomplishments

Held eleven "First Friday" CPC meetings open to the public. Topics included bullying, Jefferson County poverty data, psychological first aid, poison control, resources available through the Crisis Center, introduction to DCA Commissioner Jeana Ross, a panel discussion by parents of children having special needs, spoken word/poetry for at-risk youth, and a report about juvenile issues from Judge Chambliss.

Organized and sponsored a well-attended seminar about maternal depression featuring Dr. Robin Lanzi and Dr. Suzy Davies, research scientists at UAB's School of Public Health. Maternal depression affects all aspects of early childhood development.

Won a grant from the Public Health Advised Fund of the Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham that allowed the CPC to meet with school leaders to raise awareness of Shared Space/Joint Use Agreements as tools to increase community health by providing physical fitness facilities at the school for the community during out-of-school time.

Sponsored a seminar for educators and community leaders to explore successful implementations of Shared Use Agreements.

Collaborated with 3 schools with the result that Shared Use Agreements were signed for 3 different fitness programs at the schools during non-school hours. The schools participating include: Trace Crossings Elementary (Hoover City Schools), Cornerstone School (private, faith-based school) and Avondale Elementary After-School programs (Birmingham City Schools.)

Sponsored The Mentor Institute. For this annual event the Central Alabama Mentor Coalition located the Institute at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and incorporated "50 Years Forward" (the motto of the year to celebrate the progress since the civil rights disturbances of 1963) to address issues mentors will likely face in the coming 50 years as they mentor today, and tomorrow's, young people.

Engaged the public through social media and email. Shared information about children's issues, upcoming events important to families, and child service professionals, and used social media campaigns to increase awareness of CPC activities, meetings and work group activities.

Supported multiple Jefferson County child serving agencies and organizations through letters of support for multiple grant opportunities.

Advocated for legislation that could positively impact children in Alabama.

Work groups met each of ten months, including the Central Alabama Mentor Coalition, Economic Security Work Group, Safety Work Group and the Early Care and Education Work Group.

Joined community-wide multi agency efforts of Bold Goals, through the United Way of Central Alabama; and through priority groups of the Health Action Partnership.

Conducted focus group discussions in three somewhat remote areas of the county to elicit deeper understanding of children's needs in conjunction with the CPC/UAB Needs Assessment.

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First Priority

Need related to children of this county

Bullying

Existing resources available to help meet this need include:	Resources needed but unavailable to meet this need include:
<p>Alabama's anti-bullying law, passed in 2009, (Alabama Student Harassment Prevention Act) allowing criminal sanctions to be pursued for those who engage in bullying; Auburn University's annual Anti-Bullying Conference; the David Mathews Center for Civic Engagement; Central Alabama Mentor Coalition; school-based initiatives to establish "safe places" for students to report/escape from bullying; availability of criminal prosecution to both adults and children for harassment and bullying; police agencies; school counselors; private counselors; numerous web sites dedicated to stopping bullying and offering encouragement to victims (for example, www.StopBullying.gov); agencies and organizations that support LGBTQ youth.</p>	<p>A comprehensive guide is needed, both on-line and in print, of existing Alabama resources, such as those listed above, that provide services dedicated to eliminating bullying.</p> <p>Alabama schools need funding to hire more counselors and to hire social workers.</p> <p>A social awareness campaign is needed to help older adults recognize the serious effects of bullying, especially cyber-bullying, on adults and young people alike. There are many reports of adults in authority positions reacting to bullying with attitudes that are not helpful, such as "just toughen up."</p>

Action steps that will result in progress toward meeting the identified need:

CPC is working with multiple partners to raise awareness of these issues. The Safety Work Group plans a half-day seminar on the topic; the 2013 Mentor Institute focused on the need for mentors to be sensitive to bullying issues their mentees might face; other organizations offer seminars about the negative effects of bullying. The action most needed at this time is a comprehensive list of resources to help victims of bullying.

2014 Needs Assessment for Jefferson

Second Priority

Need related to children of this county

Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Existing resources available to help meet this need include:	Resources needed but unavailable to meet this need include:
Alabama Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy The Reproductive Health Coalition for Greater Birmingham Youth Jefferson County Department of Health The Christ Center (free clinic) Mentoring programs, including Big Brothers Big Sisters, Impact, DreamGirls, other programs whose goals include raising self esteem among young girls. Fatherhood programs, such as that offered through Family Court of Jefferson County	Greater engagement among adults to speak more openly about sexual issues to young people. Increase awareness of medical and social consequences of unprotected sex in school health classes. Resources for counseling for young people who are sexually active. Greater participation among faith-based organizations in raising awareness of health risks for teens engaging in unprotected sex and about health risks of babies born to teen mothers.

Action steps that will result in progress toward meeting the identified need:

Develop forums for discussion of these issues.

Engage in media campaigns to overcome cultural barriers to discussing these issues.

2014 Needs Assessment for Jefferson

Third Priority

Need related to children of this county

Children in Poverty

Existing resources available to help meet this need include:	Resources needed but unavailable to meet this need include:
<p>Lawson State and Jefferson State Community College GED programs.</p> <p>Alabama Public Televisions programming for GED prep.</p> <p>M-Power Ministries, Birmingham Urban League, other GED prep programs</p> <p>Financial literacy programs offered through numerous agencies, including United Way of Central Alabama, M-Power Ministries, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Girl Scouts and others.</p> <p>Alabama State Department of Education's job readiness curriculum.</p> <p>High school academies.</p> <p>For housing options resources include housing authorities of Jefferson County and the City of Birmingham and HUD.</p> <p>Economic Security Work Group of the CPC of Jefferson County.</p> <p>Economic security initiatives of The Women's Fund which focuses on multi-generational financial security development.</p> <p>The Alabama Poverty Project's Blueprints for College Readiness</p> <p>Career-based mentor programs, such as ACE Mentoring.</p> <p>Regarding affordable, dependable transportation, few resources currently exist county-wide.</p>	<p>Affordable, dependable public transportation.</p> <p>Accessible job training for more highly skilled jobs.</p> <p>Home- and community-based financial literacy training.</p>

Action steps that will result in progress toward meeting the identified need:

Ensuring that children are ready for school will increase high school graduation and contribute to a stronger work force. Quality Pre-K education is key to building for future economic security.

Credit recovery programs in schools that allow students to make up for some lost time and still graduate from high school are important to developing a more skilled labor force.

GED testing became measurably more expensive and more difficult in 2014. Increased attention, and increased access to computers and computer training are needed to help recover those who have not graduated from high school.