

Act 555 – Louisiana Children & Youth Services Planning Board Planning Guide Phase I



Prepared for the Louisiana Children's Cabinet by
the LSU School of Social Work, Office of Social
Service Research & Development on behalf of the
Children's Cabinet Research Council

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Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco has established Juvenile Justice Reform as one of her priorities. This effort, along with Health Care Reform, has been a cornerstone of her administration's commitment to improve the lives of our children and families. Clearly, solutions to poverty, improved access to health care, and a stronger education system serve as the primary foundation needed to both divert youth away from the juvenile justice system, and to most effectively serve those youth involved in the system. Many of these efforts find their greatest successes within our local communities.

What is Act 555?

Act 555 builds on the reform efforts currently underway. The Act was born out of recommendations of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act Implementation Commission created by Act 1225 of the 2003 Regular Session and the Children's Cabinet, which is required to submit a plan for reforming the delivery system of services to children and families.

The Cabinet's primary function is to coordinate policy, planning and budgeting affecting programs and services for children and their families; to coordinate delivery of services to children and their families; and to eliminate duplication of services where appropriate. The Cabinet is comprised of the various departments serving children and youth including the Departments of Education, Health and Hospitals, Labor, Social Services, and the Office of Youth Services, as well as representatives of the House and Senate, Juvenile and Family Court Judges Association, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, Children's Cabinet Advisory Board, and Division of Administration.

Children's Cabinet Vision Statement

Louisiana will be a state where all its children and youth can reach their full potential.

Children's Cabinet Mission Statement

Leading the integration of services and effective utilization of resources to produce measurable outcomes in the physical, social, emotional and educational needs of all children in Louisiana.

What has already been done by the Louisiana Juvenile Justice Planning and Coordination Board (LA Board)?

Act 1225 known as the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, established the LA Board composed of stakeholders within the juvenile justice system charged with developing a strategic plan for Louisiana's juvenile justice system and serving in an advisory capacity to the Children's Cabinet and Implementation Commission. This board has met monthly beginning in September of 2003 and has made recommendations on several issues including: technology and information sharing,

regional and local planning, and common assessment tools. (These documents will be available on the Children's Cabinet website and may be forwarded in future communications with the local planning boards or upon request.)

In order to address the many issues and needs of at risk children and youth at the local level, the legislature in Act 555 (see Appendix 1) has mandated that a Children and Youth Services Planning Board be created and established in each state judicial district by the governing authority of each parish in that district. The general purpose of the individual local planning boards in each district is to assist in the assessment, alignment, coordination, prioritization and measurement of all available services and programs that address the needs of children and youth. The local planning boards are intended to encourage collaborative efforts among the stakeholders for assessing the needs of children and youth and for assisting in the development of a comprehensive plan to address those needs.

These services and community resources should target children and youth at risk or identified with social, emotional, or developmental problems including, but not limited to:

- educational failure
- abuse
- neglect
- exposure to violence
- youth or parental mental illness
- youth or parental substance abuse
- poverty
- developmental disabilities
- delinquency

The goal of each local planning board is to promote services which encourage positive development, diversion of children and youth from the criminal justice and foster care systems and intervention, and treatment by creating a multi-disciplinary continuum of care. This continuum should include education, treatment, prevention programs for children, diversion and early intervention in the lives of youths, and alternatives to incarceration. Each plan should have measurable goals and objectives, be data-driven and should be evaluated with recommendations annually.

Technical assistance will be provided to the local planning board's as they begin the community assessment and planning processes. The Children's Cabinet will facilitate the work of the local planning board's by offering guidance and technical assistance to local communities regarding resource identification, needs assessments, monitoring and performance evaluations, strategic planning and other forms of assistance and support.

This guide is the first in a series to help provide a framework for local governing bodies to take the first steps to implement Act 555 in accordance with the intent of the legislation. The Children's Cabinet Research council has undertaken this project to assist local communities.

What does the research tell us about the need for local planning and control over programs that impact at risk children and families?

Research shows that putting resources into prevention programs is the most effective way to impact the lives of children and families, and that prevention begins with good prenatal care. Therefore agencies and programs involved in early childhood and other aspects of the child welfare system will be represented on the local planning boards.

Research has further demonstrated that community-based programs generally are more effective than incarceration or residential programs in reducing recidivism and promoting public safety. Both residential and secure care should be linked to community programs through comprehensive community-based aftercare programs.

Multiple risk factors are generally associated with the development of delinquent behavior. Effective continuums of care should therefore be able to address multiple problems. To identify multiple risk factors, assessment processes must be adopted. Services that address these risks must be integrated across the mental health, substance abuse, school, public health, child welfare agencies and juvenile justice agencies. These agencies must form partnerships to effectively integrate service delivery.

It is often easier to form working partnerships to create ownership of problems and solutions at the local level rather than at the top of state bureaucratic structures.

This guide provides an outline for communities to develop collaborative relationships that can assure the formulation of a truly comprehensive continuum of community-based services ranging from prevention and early intervention, to alternatives to incarceration, intensive probation and aftercare services following incarceration.

The **Current Planning Guide, Phase I**, is limited to outlining the initial intent and preliminary stages of development of the local planning boards, that is, to provide the structure for the local interagency partnerships that will be the foundations for reforming our systems for children and families.

Future Planning Guides in this series will provide instruction and assistance in:

- Phase II - community assessment,
- Phase III - establishing a continuum of care and a system of graduated sanctions and services, creating assessment protocols across agencies and
- Phase IV - establishing monitoring and evaluation processes.

Who should be included in the Children and Youth Services Planning Boards?

Each local planning board should have a minimum of 11 members and a maximum of 25, serve for 2 years and include representation from the following agencies and organizations:

- Behavioral Health
- Health
- Social Services
- Law enforcement
- Prosecutors
- Public Defenders
- Judges and/or court staff
- Education
- Faith Community
- Business Community
- Early Childhood Programs
- Parent Organizations
- Youth Advocates and Youth Serving Organizations
- Lay Citizens
- Youth

Appointments made to the local planning board should be representative of the communities in terms of gender, ethnicity and geography. If the judicial district or parish encompasses rural, urban or suburban communities, each should have representation on the board.

What are the first tasks of the Children and Youth Services Planning Boards?

The parish council of each parish within a judicial district should provide for the enactment of appropriate resolutions to establish the Children and Youth Services Planning Board for that parish. See a sample ordinance (Appendix 3) used by Jefferson Parish to establish the local planning board in that jurisdiction. Act 555 also states that “nothing shall mandate a parish governing authority to fund the operational expenses of the board.”

The parish council should appoint representatives from the agencies and constituencies described above as members of the local planning board. In multi-parish judicial districts, an advisory board may be established in each parish that will report to the judicial district’s local planning board.

Each local planning board should elect officers and establish rules of attendance. The governing authority of the judicial district may designate an agency or organization from among the board to serve as the lead agency. This agency would be responsible for coordinating the activities of the board, communicating with the Children’s Cabinet, taking responsibility for reporting on local planning board activities and be preparing to serve as the fiscal agent of the local planning board as needed.

Many parishes already have collaboratives organized around child and family or juvenile justice issues. For example, Jefferson, Orleans and Calcasieu parishes have juvenile justice taskforces. There are also children's services collaboratives or children's coalitions in several areas. These established collaboratives present a solid foundation on which the local planning boards should build. It is critical that each parish begin their efforts by identifying community efforts already underway. Many of these groups have already begun community needs assessments and have investigated data-sharing or other coordination or integration relationships.

The judicial districts in parishes which have established Truancy Assessment and Service Centers (TASC) have a model to emulate for creating a planning board. Each TASC is required to function as an interagency collaborative composed of individuals in policy-making positions from all children's service agencies and organizations. These collaboratives meet quarterly, at a minimum, to exchange information and plan for services to children and families. Each TASC also has a lead and fiscal agency that assumes responsibility for coordinating board activities, reporting program information and managing finances for TASC.

Every judicial district also has Families in Need of Services (FINS) office which has the statutory mandate to coordinate services for status offenders. These offices are under the authority of the court having jurisdiction over juvenile matters in each judicial district. TASC and FINS staff and their interagency collaboratives may provide valuable assistance to the local governing authority in establishing the local planning board.

After the board is established, the community assessment process will begin.

As the local planning board comes together, it can begin to assess the risks and needs of its community. This will enable communities to:

- identify the factors that contribute to delinquency development
- determine what resources are already in place to serve at risk and troubled families
- identify gaps in services
- identify service which target local needs
- prioritize the needed services

Some potential sources of information and types of information needed are:

- Annie E. Casey Kids Count
- Communities that Care Surveys
- Department of Education
 - Under-performing schools, free and reduced lunches, special education, incidences of school violence, suspensions and expulsions
- TASC data in parishes that have TASC programs
- OYS data
 - Probation, parole and secure care numbers
- Court data
 - Arrests, adjudications, detention, FINS

- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Data
Community Data
Children in poverty, unemployment rate, crime index, food stamps
- Family data
Low birth-weight births, abuse and neglect reports, teen pregnancy rate, children not living with parents, subsidized day care

Future Planning Guides will provide tools to help local planning board organize and report data. Future or continued activities of the local planning boards include:

- review and assess community risks and needs
- determine the services needed to address problem areas
- increase public awareness of causes of delinquency and reduction strategies
- provide training, technical assistance, monitoring, and evaluation of community programs and services
- develop formal comprehensive recommendations and strategies to intervene, respond to and treat the needs of juveniles at risk of delinquency
- report to the Office of Youth Services and the Children's Cabinet by October 1 annually

By January 30, 2005 please provide the following to the Children's Cabinet at the address listed below:

- a statement of commitment by the parish governing authority to support the establishment of the local planning board in their communities
- a resolution, ordinance or other mechanism establishing the local board
- a list of appointees to the board and their organizational *and* representative affiliation (i.e., law enforcement, prosecutor, youth advocate, etc.), to confirm compliance with the intent of Act 555 for balanced and effective board composition
- name and contact information for the person responsible for coordinating the activities of the board.

Children's Cabinet
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804
225-342-7015

For more information please see the Children's Cabinet website at <http://www.gov.state.la.us/ldbc/childrencabinet/childrenshome.htm>.

APPENDIX 1

ACT No. 555

APPENDIX 2

Children's Cabinet Strategic Plan 2005-2010

CHILDREN'S CABINET STRATEGIC PLAN 2005-2010

PURPOSE (as found in RS 46:2602)

“The purpose of the cabinet shall be to facilitate and require coordination of policy, planning and budgeting affecting programs and services for children and their families; to coordinate delivery of services to children and their families; and to eliminate duplication of services where appropriate. The cabinet shall carry out its functions in order to assure the most efficient and effective use of resources, particularly through programs for intervention and prevention and through services that assist and support children to remain in their homes and communities.” (Act No. 245, 2003 Session)

VISION

Louisiana will be a state where all its children and youth can reach their full potential.

MISSION

Leading the integration of services and effective utilization of resources to produce measurable outcomes in the physical, social, emotional and educational needs of all children in Louisiana.

PHILOSOPHY

Improving the lives of children in Louisiana is achieved through collaborative efforts and integrated and comprehensive services. This spirit of collaboration builds upon the shared values of respect for the diversity and uniqueness of individual children; a high priority on early childhood, prevention, and education efforts; the support for family-centered interventions; the assurance of equal access to necessary resources; and the implementation of best practices.

GOALS

- 1) To create a seamless system of care through the integration of services and resources.
- 2) To effectively and efficiently utilize monetary, human, and organizational resources.
- 3) To achieve measurable improvements in the outcomes of all children in Louisiana.

Goal 1

To create a seamless system of care through the integration of services and resources.

Objective 1.1 Implement system improvements for access to services by 2010.

Strategy 1.1 Establish a system of comprehensive integrated services for early childhood that includes mental health, childcare, physical health and family support in collaboration with the Early Childhood Comprehensive Services Initiative.

Strategy 1.2 Implement the “No Wrong Door” concept for services to children and families.

Strategy 1.3 Establish a quality juvenile justice system built on data and best practices that includes graduated sanctions and a comprehensive continuum of services.

Strategy 1.4 Strengthen the Interagency Service Coordination process to more effectively serve children with complex needs.

Strategy 1.5 Collaborate with local communities, through partnerships with Children and Youth Planning Boards.

Goal 2

To effectively and efficiently utilize monetary, human, and organizational resources.

Objective 2.1 Accurately identify and maintain a catalog existing programs and their resources by 2010.

Strategy 2.1 Develop an inventory of all state programs and services related to children that details the program name, program description, population served, areas served, and funding sources.

Strategy 2.2 Identify and maintain a list of available and accessed federal funding and collaborate to ensure full maximization of all monies.

Strategy 2.3 Work with local planning boards to identify programs and resources provided at the community level.

Strategy 2.4 Maintain an accurate Children's Budget that details spending on all state initiatives.

Strategy 2.5 Identify programs and initiatives that can be coordinated to maximize available resources.

Strategy 2.6 Establish a common screening tool for all service providers for coordination of services, data collections and evaluations.

Strategy 2.7 Explore the potential for increased integrated case management.

Strategy 2.8 Utilize technology to support integrated data collection, information sharing, and a statewide information and referral system that is consistent across departments.

Goal 3

To achieve measurable improvements in the outcomes of all children in Louisiana.

Objective 3.1 Implement strategies to elevate the status of children through delivery of services with a particular emphasis on prevention efforts.

Strategy 3.1 Promote the highest quality education at every stage of development.

Strategy 3.2 Increase access to comprehensive health services, monitoring and expecting quality performance.

Strategy 3.3 Assist children to remain in their home and communities, increasing stability and safety.

Strategy 3.4 Identify and utilize culturally sensitive best practices to reduce disparities among children and youth.

Objective 3.2 Evaluate existing programs and direct available resources to initiatives that promote best practices as demonstrated through performance outcomes by 2010.

Strategy 3.1 Identify and utilize performance outcomes/benchmarks to gauge success of programs/initiatives.

Strategy 3.2 Develop criteria for classifying existing and proposed programs to be used for evaluation and priority setting.

CHILD WELL-BEING INDICATORS

13 Data elements for policy and planning

(To be further identified by the Children's Cabinet Research Council and delineated by race to determine disparities.)

- 1) Percent of teens who are high school dropouts (ages 16-19)
- 2) Percent of teens not attending school and not working (ages 16-19)
- 3) Percent of children in poverty
- 4) Percent of children in extreme poverty
- 5) Teen birth rate (birth per 1,000 females in ages 15-17)
- 6) Juvenile violent crime arrest rate (arrests per 100,000 youths ages 10-17)
- 7) Percent low birth-weight babies
- 8) Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)
- 9) Child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1-14)
- 10) Rate of teen deaths by accident, homicide and suicide (deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15-19)
- 11) Percent of children without health insurance
- 12) Percent of 2 year olds who are immunized
- 13) Rate of child abuse

APPENDIX 3

Jefferson Parish Sample Ordinance

On motion of _____, seconded by _____, the following ordinance was offered:

SUMMARY NO. _____ **ORDINANCE NO.** _____

An ordinance amending Chapter 2 of the Code of Ordinances by adding new sections relative to the creation of the Jefferson Parish Children and Youth Planning Board, in accordance with La. R.S. 46:1941.1 et seq., as amended by Act 555 of 2004; establishing the composition of the board, providing for its functions and duties, and to provide for related matters.

WHEREAS, La. R.S. 46:1941.1 et seq., as amended by Act 555 of 2004, mandates that the governing authority of each parish establish a children and youth planning board in each judicial district; and

WHEREAS, La. R.S. 46:1941.1 et seq., as amended by Act 555 of 2004, further provides that the parish's sole responsibility is the establishment and appointment of such board and that nothing in said statute mandates that the parish is responsible for funding the operational expenses of such board; now, therefore,

THE JEFFERSON PARISH COUNCIL HEREBY ORDAINS, acting as the governing authority of the Parish of Jefferson, State of Louisiana, and in accordance with the mandate of La. R.S. 46:1941.1 et seq., as amended by Act 555 of 2004, that:

SECTION 1 Ch. 2 , Article VI of the Code of Ordinances is hereby amended, by adding Division 19.7, entitled Children Youth and Planning Board, and Sec. 2-780.5 through 780.7 to read as follows:

DIVISION 19.7 Children Youth and Planning Board

Sec. 2-780.5 Created.

There is hereby created, in accordance with La. R.S. 46:1941.1 et seq., a board to be known as the Jefferson Parish Youth and Planning Board.

Sec. 2-780.6 Purposes and function of board

The purpose of the Jefferson Parish Youth and Planning Board is to participate in the formulation of and to prepare a comprehensive plan for services and programs for children and youth in Jefferson Parish, as follows: to assist in the development, implementation, and operation of services which encourage positive development, diversion of children and youth from the criminal justice and the foster care system, reduction in the commitments of youth to state institutions, and providing community response to the growing rate of juvenile delinquency. The coordination and implementation of services shall include, but are not limited to prevention, early intervention, diversion, alternatives to home displacement, alternatives to incarceration, and treatment services. the assessment, alignment, coordination, prioritization, and measurement of all available services and programs that address the needs of children and youth including those at risk for, or identified with, social, emotional, or developmental problems, including, but not limited to educational failure, abuse, neglect, exposure to violence, juvenile or parental mental illness, juvenile or parental substance abuse, poverty, developmental disabilities and delinquency. The Board is intended to encourage collaborative efforts among local stakeholders for assessing the physical, social, behavioral, and educational needs of children and

youth in their respective communities and for assisting in the development of comprehensive plans to address such needs. The Board shall perform all services authorized by La. R.S. 46:1941.1 et seq.

Sec. 2-780.7 Composition; terms

The Jefferson Parish Youth and Planning Board shall consist of not less than eleven and not more than twenty-five members and shall include the following:

- 1) CJA Director, who shall be the chairman of the Board;
- 2) Sheriff, or his designee;
- 3) Chief Judge of Juvenile Court, or her designee;
- 4) District Attorney, or his designee;
- 5) Coroner, or his designee;
- 6) Superintendent of the Jefferson Parish Public School System, or her designee;
- 7) Jefferson Parish Human Services Authority Director;
- 8) Department of Juvenile Services Director;
- 9) Chairman of the Jefferson Parish Indigent Defender Board, or his designee;
- 10) Regional Director of the Office of Community Services;
- 11) Regional Director of the Office of Youth Development;
- 12) Truancy Assessment and Services Center Coordinator;
- 13) A representative of a local non-profit organization providing services to children and youth, nominated by the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court and approved by resolution of the Council;
- 14) A representative of the faith-based community, nominated by the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court and approved by resolution of the Council;
- 15) A representative of a local university, nominated by the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court and approved by resolution of the Council; ;
- 16) Such other members as may be broadly representative of the community, nominated by the Jefferson Parish Juvenile Court and approved by resolution of the Council.

The duties of the Board members shall be as provided in La. R.S. 46:1941.8.

This foregoing ordinance having been submitted to a vote, the vote thereon was as follows:

YEAS:	NAYS:	ABSENT:
The ordinance was declared to be adopted on this the ____ day of _____, 2004, and shall become effective as follows; if signed forthwith by the Parish President, ten (10) days after adoption, thereafter upon signature by the Parish President, or, if not signed by the Parish President, upon expiration of the time for ordinances to be considered finally adopted without the signature of the Parish President, as provided in Section 2.07 of the Charter. If vetoed by the Parish President and subsequently approved by the Council, this ordinance shall become effective on the day of such approval.		