

McLennan County Youth Roadmap

Community stakeholders can consider the following next steps to reduce justice involvement for youth with mental illness (MI), substance use disorders (SUD), or intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). For more information, and resources review the McLennan County Youth SIM Report.

Invest in Strategic Priorities | Support Local Planning, Partnership, and Education | Build Upon Existing Efforts

1. **Increase information sharing and collaboration across youth stakeholder groups.**
2. **Expand mentorship and peer services for youth across the SIM.**
3. **Increase early intervention and prevention services for students in school and community-based settings.**
4. **Increase transitional supports at re-entry (housing and family support).**

- ### 1. Coordinate
- Strengthen behavioral health and juvenile justice partnerships through regular convening of all key juvenile stakeholders.
 - Establish subcommittees dedicated to implementing the action plans developed during the Youth SIM Workshop.
- ### 2. Partner
- Identify opportunities to strengthen relationships with new stakeholders (e.g., school resource officers, local school districts, juvenile SUD providers).
 - Learn from other similar-sized counties implementing best practice models.
- ### 3. Train
- Train stakeholder groups on identifying, responding, and effectively treating children with MI, SUD, and IDD.

- Expand HOTBHN school-based services to additional McLennan County School districts.
- Increase utilization of crisis hotline and MCOT services through community and provider education.
- Increase community collaboration through the Our Community Our Future (OCOF) subcommittees.
- Establish triage and referral protocol for the new Diversion Center specific to law enforcement diversion of youth with behavioral health needs.

See the Strategic Action Plans on pg. 16 of the report for additional details.

McLennan County Gaps, Opportunities, and Best Practices

Intercepts 0 & 1

School-Based and Community-Based Services & Law Enforcement

Selected Gaps:

- Lack of consistent coding of youth mental health calls for service
- Universal mental health and IDD screenings across school districts
- Parent education and engagement
- Pre-arrest diversion options for law enforcement responding to youth in crisis
- Wrap-around supports for families with unmet behavioral health and social service needs
- Early intervention and prevention resources across primary schools

Opportunities:

- Streamline coding of mental health related calls for service across dispatch systems
- Increase use of screening and assessments in primary schools for mental health and special education needs
- Increase use of family partners to facilitate parental engagement
- Plan for utilization of the diversion center to triage youth in crisis
- Implement evidence-based prevention curricula in primary schools

Intercepts 2 & 3

Initial Referral to Juvenile Justice & Judicial Processing

Selected Gaps:

- Limited education for law enforcement on use of formal versus informal probation referrals
- Limited interventions for gang-affiliated youth and gang-controlled neighborhoods
- No specialty treatment court or docket
- Limited mentorship and peer capacity to serve justice-involved youth
- Limited treatment and placement options for youth with acute mental health needs

Opportunities:

- Establish law enforcement process flow to guide diversion and probation referral decision making
- Increase use of screening tools for early identification for gang-affiliated youth
- Explore implementing of specialty juvenile treatment court or dockets
- Create detention liaison position
- Coordinate with placement options to explore broadening eligibility criteria for youth with juvenile justice involvement

Intercepts 4 & 5

Reentry & Community Corrections

Selected Gaps:

- Continuity of care for youth transitioning from placement
- Parent engagement in both court-ordered and voluntary family services
- Gap in services between youth's release from placement and intake into community-based services
- Lack of housing supports for justice-involved youth and their families

Opportunities:

- Explore telehealth intakes with HOTBHN for youth prior to community reentry
- Consider teletherapy options and after hours appointments to increase parents' participation in family services
- Expand housing options for youth and young adults who are justice-involved, including group homes, transitional housing, and landlord incentive

Best Practices at Each Intercept

Intercepts 0 & 1

Early identification and prevention	School-based behavioral health supports
Police diversion programs	Law enforcement and mental health collaboration

Intercepts 2 & 3

Validated risk and needs assessment tools	Specialized court interventions
Juvenile justice stakeholder collaboration	Detention-based SUD and MH services

Intercept 4

Coordinated after-care services (school re-enrollment, wrap-around behavioral health supports, and family partners)	
Specialized juvenile probation caseloads	Formalized family support and engagement