

Alabama's Children's Policy Councils

CATCHING MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

Many times, at the state and local levels, children's agencies and nonprofit organizations often are unaware of the activities of other agencies..

Duplication and missed opportunities are the likely outcomes of such isolation, and lack of collaboration ensures that there are holes in the network of services for children.

The solution is to get all people involved with children's services to meet regularly and to plan active collaboration.

In 1999, the state legislature revamped a 1975 law that mandated local juvenile judges to form local county children's policy councils. Council members include local heads of state agencies, schools, nonprofit organizations and citizens concerned with children.

To make them more active, the law invested in the councils fiscal and programmatic responsibilities.

The law also created a state children's policy council that correlates to county councils. Members of the state council, like local county councils, includes the head of every state agency that deals with children as well as the state's leading children's advocates and political figures.

HISTORY OF LOWNDES COUNTY CHILDREN'S POLICY COUNCIL

The Lowndes County Children's Policy Council has been active since 1976 when it was formed as a Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council. Over the years, progress and changes were made.

On May 14, 2002, under the guiding hand of the Alabama Department of Children's Affairs, the Lowndes County Children's Policy Council incorporated as the Lowndes County Partnership, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Each year, the state requires local policy councils to complete a comprehensive assessment of the needs of the county's children.

The structure of this report develops three broad "outcomes" for children using promotional language.

Each "outcome" has four parts—outcome, needs and resources and actions steps to address the need. The first part states an identified outcome for children. The outcome can be general or specific.

Benchmarks are listed to create a means of measurement for progress and to illustrate the need that that the outcome addresses.

Strategies to achieve the outcome such as programs, services or activities the council will promote to achieve the outcome are also listed.

The second part discusses needs.

Reasons for the level of need in the county are outlined along with an identification of hard-to-reach populations and the barriers they face.

The third part of the assessment involves identifying and mapping local resources.

For each outcome the council identifies, it must list the local resources that can be used to achieve the goal.

The fourth part lists action steps for the council and recommendations for the state Children's Policy Council.

Compiling and writing the needs assessment helps counties and the people that provide children services plan for their children's future.

By setting goals, council members create a local blueprint for action to address needs together in a planned collaborative effort.

By going through the assessment process, many who are concerned for children work together and learn about different agencies, programs and perspectives.

SUMMARY OF LOWNDES COUNTY'S
2005 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- **Health Issues**—Teen pregnancy and STDs; substance abuse, and healthy lifestyles.
- **Safety Issues**—School safety, proper parental supervision, detention of violent offenders
- **Education Issues**—Funding, graduation rates and dropout rates, truancy.
- **Economic Security Issues**—Reading proficiency, financial literacy
- **Early care and education**—School readiness, child care, and child development

DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. Promote economic security among families in Lowndes County by teaching financial literacy
2. Secure funding for existing programs that are making a positive change in the lives of Lowndes County children and their families.
3. Community awareness of existing programs.

News for 2005-2006

2005 Grant Awards:

Alabama Civil Justice Foundation

Alabama Power Foundation

BancorpSouth Bank

Beasley, Allen, Crow, Methvin, Portis & Miles, P.C.

Cornerstone Community Foundation

First Lowndes Bank

Senator Hank Sanders

Hayneville Communications

General Electric Plastics

Lowndes County Board of Education

The Council hopes to have an exciting and productive year working toward the desired outcomes set forth for the 2005-2006 year.

*District Judge Terri Bozeman Lovell –
Chairman*

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**Contributions are tax-deductible and can be
mailed to the address above.**

LOWNDES COUNTY CHILDREN'S POLICY COUNCIL



2005-2006

Mission Statement

***To identify needs, resources
and the availability of services
to effectively address
problems and establish
programs to enrich the lives
of children and families
through collaboration of
agencies and individuals
serving Lowndes County.***



*The Lowndes County Partnership for
Children, Inc. a 501(c)(3) nonprofit
organization*