[Region Name] Criminal Justice Strategic Plan

Strategic Planning Period (Interlocal Agreement allows for 5-year plan): [e.g., 2025–2030]

Foreword

Texas is vast and diverse, with each region facing unique challenges and opportunities in public safety and criminal justice. From urban centers to rural communities, we share a collective responsibility to ensure our justice systems are fair, effective, and responsive to local needs. This Criminal Justice Strategic Plan represents a coordinated effort across our region to strengthen public safety, support victims, reduce recidivism, and address the root causes of crime.

Guided by community input, regional data, and the expertise of our criminal justice partners, this plan identifies priority areas for investment and collaboration. It reflects our commitment to a balanced approach—one that values prevention and intervention alongside enforcement and accountability. We have engaged law enforcement agencies, courts, corrections, juvenile justice professionals, victim advocates, behavioral health providers, and community stakeholders to build a strategy that is both inclusive and actionable.

As our region continues to grow and evolve, so must our strategies. This plan is not a static document, but a roadmap for progress—anchored in data, informed by those on the front lines, and adaptable to emerging needs. Whether responding to mental health crises, supporting at-risk youth, or enhancing reentry efforts, our goal remains the same: to build safer, stronger communities across Texas.

We thank everyone who contributed their time, insight, and dedication to this important work. Together, we are advancing a vision of justice that is equitable, collaborative, and locally driven.

X _____

[Typed Name]
Executive Director,
[Regional Council of Governments Name]
Date

Executive Summary (Maximum Two Pages)

Purpose:

The Executive Summary should provide a clear overview of the plan so that someone without prior knowledge of the process can understand the planning effort by reading only this section. Assume many readers will not read beyond the summary.

Content Requirements:

This summary should include:

- **Overview of the Plan:**
  A concise explanation of the Criminal Justice Strategic Plan, highlighting that it addresses priorities in criminal justice, juvenile justice, victim services, and mental health/substance use within the **[Region Name]** region.
- **Planning Process:**
  A high-level description of how the plan was developed, including:
  - Engagement of diverse community stakeholders
  - Use of regional data and analysis
  - Assessment of service gaps
  - Process for identifying priorities
- **Top Five Critical Needs:**
  Clearly list the five most pressing needs identified across all criminal justice areas:
    1. [Critical Need 1]
    2. [Critical Need 2]
    3. [Critical Need 3]
    4. [Critical Need 4]
    5. [Critical Need 5]
- **Connection to Implementation:**
  State that the plan will guide the **Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC)** in funding prioritization and will support evidence-based improvements across the justice continuum.

Reminder:

At the end of the summary, briefly **summarize the planning process** (which is explained in more detail later in the plan).

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1. Community Engagement in the Planning Process

This section should provide a comprehensive explanation of how the COG engaged local communities during the development of the plan, with emphasis on both methods of outreach and the contributions those communities made to shaping priorities. Describe not only what was done, but also what input was received and how that input was incorporated.

When writing this section, include:

- Public Input Opportunities
  - Describe how residents were invited to participate (e.g., public hearings, town hall meetings, online surveys, or stakeholder focus groups).
  - Explain the level of participation (attendance numbers, survey response rates) and summarize the themes of feedback received.
  - Note any changes or priorities in the plan that were directly shaped by this community input.
- Stakeholder Representation
  - Document engagement with local law enforcement, prosecutors, defense attorneys, probation officers, victim service providers, mental health and substance use providers, school officials, and other relevant professionals.
  - Provide examples of what each group contributed (e.g., law enforcement highlighted trends in violent crime, schools provided insight on youth at risk, victim services identified unmet needs for shelter or advocacy).
- Underserved and Vulnerable Populations
  - Explain how efforts were made to reach communities that are often left out of planning, such as rural residents, limited-English speakers, communities of color, or individuals with lived experience in the criminal justice system.
  - Describe targeted outreach strategies (e.g., bilingual surveys, partnerships with faith-based or community organizations).
  - Summarize what those groups contributed (e.g., rural residents raised concerns about limited access to services, survivors emphasized the need for trauma-informed care).
- Ongoing Communication and Collaboration
  - Describe how engagement was structured not just as one-time input, but as part of a continuing dialogue with community stakeholders.
  - Note if there are mechanisms for feedback throughout implementation (e.g., standing advisory committees, annual updates).
- Impact on Priorities
  - Clearly state how community feedback informed the identification of gaps and the prioritization of needs.
  - Provide at least one or two concrete examples showing how input changed the plan (e.g., after input from victim advocates, a priority need for expanded crisis counseling was added).

2. Data Sources Used to Support the Plan

This section should provide a comprehensive overview of the data sources used in developing the Criminal Justice Strategic Plan. The goal is to demonstrate that the plan is grounded in reliable, relevant, and current data.

Include a list of all primary data sources, such as (but not limited to):
- Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)
- Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) data
- Mental health and substance use prevalence data (state and regional sources)
- Local law enforcement and court statistics
- Victim services provider reports and needs assessments
- Community needs assessments, surveys, or focus group results
- Jail population, probation, and parole statistics
- Demographic and socioeconomic data from sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau or Texas Demographic Center

Instructions for presenting data in this section:
- Provide enough narrative detail to show how each data source informed the planning process.
- If charts, graphs, or tables are used to display the data, include them directly in this section unless they are placed in an appendix.
- If visual materials are located in an appendix, provide a reference (e.g., *"See Appendix B: Crime Statistics by County"*).
- Ensure all data presented is clearly labeled (source, year, and geographic area covered).
- If possible, highlight trends, comparisons, or key findings that directly support the identified needs and priorities in the plan.
- When multiple years of data are available, include historical context to show changes over time.

3. Stakeholder Participation

This section should provide a detailed record of the individuals and organizations that actively participated in the development of the Criminal Justice Strategic Plan. The goal is to demonstrate that the plan reflects broad input from across the criminal justice system and related service networks.

Instructions for completing this section:
- **Identify Stakeholder Groups:** Begin by listing all stakeholder groups that were engaged in the planning process (e.g., law enforcement, victim service providers, juvenile justice professionals, behavioral health providers, CJAC members, community-based organizations).
- **Provide Names/Organizations:** For each group, include the specific agencies, organizations, or individuals who contributed. For example, list "Smith County Sheriff's Office" under Law Enforcement or "Safe Haven Women's Shelter" under Victim Services.
- **Describe Roles in Planning:** For each participant, describe how they contributed. Examples may include:
    - Attended stakeholder meetings or focus groups

- o Provided data or statistical reports
  - o Completed community surveys
  - o Offered feedback on draft priorities
  - o Participated in prioritization workshops with the CJAC
- **Use the Table:** Complete the table below to clearly document stakeholder engagement. Each row should identify the stakeholder group, name or organization, and their role in the planning process. [Add rows as needed]

Stakeholder Group/Individual	Name/Organization	Role in Planning
Insert stakeholder group (e.g., Law Enforcement)	Insert specific agency/organization or individual name	Describe their role in the planning process
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4. Gaps in Criminal Justice Resources and Regional Priorities

This section outlines the most significant gaps in criminal justice resources within the [Region Name] region and identifies the corresponding priorities and strategies to address them. By linking each gap to a proposed priority action, the region ensures that planning efforts are both evidence-based and solution-oriented. [Add rows as needed]

Adult Criminal Justice

Category	Description of Gap	Impact	Priority Need	Proposed Strategy/Action
Insert category here	Describe the identified gap	Explain the impact of the gap	Identify the priority need	Proposed strategy or action to address the gap
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Juvenile Justice

Category	Description of Gap	Impact	Priority Need	Proposed Strategy/Action
Insert category here	Describe the identified gap	Explain the impact of the gap	Identify the priority need	Proposed strategy or action to address the gap
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Insert category here	Describe the identified gap	Explain the impact of the gap	Identify the priority need	Proposed strategy or action to address the gap

Victim Services

Category	Description of Gap	Impact	Priority Need	Proposed Strategy/Action
Insert category here	Describe the identified gap	Explain the impact of the gap	Identify the priority need	Proposed strategy or action to address the gap
Insert category here	Describe the identified gap	Explain the impact of the gap	Identify the priority need	Proposed strategy or action to address the gap
Insert category here	Describe the identified gap	Explain the impact of the gap	Identify the priority need	Proposed strategy or action to address the gap

Mental Health and Substance Use

Category	Description of Gap	Impact	Priority Need	Proposed Strategy/Action
Insert category here	Describe the identified gap	Explain the impact of the gap	Identify the priority need	Proposed strategy or action to address the gap
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Insert category here	Describe the identified gap	Explain the impact of the gap	Identify the priority need	Proposed strategy or action to address the gap

5. Use of the Strategic Plan by the CJAC

This section should describe in detail how the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) will use the strategic plan in its decision-making process. Including bullets is acceptable, but each item should also have a narrative explanation describing its role in the prioritization process, implementation, and long-term use.
The plan should demonstrate how the CJAC will:

- Prioritize grant funding – Explain how the CJAC will apply the plan to ensure funding decisions directly address the region's most critical gaps and needs.
- Align project selection with strategic needs – Describe how project proposals will be evaluated against the plan's identified priorities to promote fairness and consistency.
- Promote transparency and data-informed decisions – Show how the plan provides a transparent framework that allows stakeholders to understand why certain projects are funded.
- Guide future evaluations and updates to the plan – Discuss how the plan will be revisited and updated (e.g., annually or every biennium) to reflect new data, emerging needs, and stakeholder input.

Implementation and Future Use:

- Detail how the CJAC will incorporate the plan during meetings, scoring, and deliberation processes.
- Explain how the plan will guide not just current funding decisions but also long-term strategies for system improvement.
- Identify when and how the plan will be updated (e.g., after major data releases, changes in state priorities, or every 2 years).
- Note how the plan will remain a "living document" to ensure ongoing relevance and usefulness.

6. Appendices (Optional)

The appendices should contain supporting documentation that validates and strengthens the strategic plan. These materials provide evidence of stakeholder participation, community engagement, and data-driven decision-making.
Instructions for Using this Section:

- Appendices should only include supplemental materials referenced in the body of the plan.
- If charts, graphs, tables, or documents are essential to understanding the plan but not directly included in the main sections, place them here.
- Each appendix item should be labeled (Appendix A, B, C, etc.) and referenced by number in the main document where relevant (e.g., "See Appendix B: Survey Results").
- Ensure all appendix documents are clearly dated, sourced, and formatted consistently.
- Avoid placing critical content only in the appendices—summarize in the main body and provide full detail here.

Recommended Appendix Categories (expand as needed):
- Appendix A – Community Engagement Documentation
  - Meeting agendas, sign-in sheets, or focus group notes.
- Appendix B – Public Input Results
  - Survey results, summaries of public comments, or outreach findings.
- Appendix C – Data Tables and Charts
  - Crime statistics, demographic trends, juvenile justice data, or other supporting visuals.
- Appendix D – Stakeholder Rosters and CJAC Information
  - CJAC membership list, bylaws, and role descriptions.
- Appendix E – Supporting Documents (Optional)
  - Needs assessments, agency reports, or other documents that substantiate identified gaps and priorities.
- Appendix F – Plan Update Log (Optional)
  - Record of revisions, updates, and CJAC approvals to show the plan is a living document.