

Legal Responsibilities for Community Initiatives for Program Development

Statutory References

Federal: Title XX, Social Security Act
 Federal: Title IV-B, Part 2, Social Security Act
 State: Texas Family Code, 264.301
 State: Human Resources Code, 40.0561

The **Community Initiatives for Program Development Division** was established within PRS to develop, implement and manage contracted service programs to prevent child abuse and neglect, juvenile crime, family disruption, and the isolation of agency programs from the communities they serve. Community based programs to prevent child abuse and delinquency include:

- **Community Youth Development Program** - This program assists communities in designing comprehensive approaches to support families and enhance the positive development of youth. Using legislative appropriations, grants are made available for developing juvenile delinquency prevention approaches in communities with high incidences of juvenile crime. Thirteen communities are being served.
- **Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR) Program** - These services are offered to 7 to 17 year old youths who are runaways and/or truants, 7 to 17 year-olds living in family conflict, 7 to 9 year-olds who have been allegedly involved in, or committed delinquent offenses, and 10 to 16 year-olds who have allegedly committed misdemeanor or state felony offenses but have not been adjudicated delinquent by a court. Contracted community agencies offer family crisis intervention, short-term emergency residential care, individual and family counseling, and other support services.
- **Texas Families: Together and Safe** - Grants are allocated for Family Support services to community based prevention programs. The services are designed to alleviate stress and promote parental competencies and behaviors that will increase the ability of families to successfully nurture their children; enable families to use other resources and opportunities available in the community; and create support networks that enhance child-rearing abilities of parents.
- **Texas Runaway Hotline** - Hotline staff and volunteers work closely with social service agencies and juvenile delinquency prevention programs. Their goal is to provide callers with 24-hour crisis intervention and telephone counseling; information and referral for callers in need of food, shelter and/or transportation home; conference calls to parents and shelters; and a confidential message relay service between runaways and parents.
- **Gang Activity Prevention Program** - The program's objectives are to reduce the risk factors that may lead to gang involvement and students dropping out of school. Activities that are provided encourage parental involvement, educational enhancement, cultural and social enrichment activities, drug prevention education, and supportive guidance.

Special projects and initiatives include:

- **Community Partners** - Community Partners is a public/private partnership that develops local boards to support Child Protective Services staff by creating projects such as Adopt-A-Caseworker and Rainbow Rooms. Adopt-A-Caseworker pairs community groups with CPS caseworkers. The adoptive sponsor assists the caseworker in providing goods and services to CPS children and families on the workers caseload. Rainbow Rooms stock emergency items needed by children and families such as diapers, formula, clothes, toys, and cleaning supplies.
- **Young at Heart** - Young at Heart is an intergenerational program that encourages older Texans to volunteer and spend time with young children in child-care settings. A grant for Volunteers in Service to America has enabled the agency to implement the program. The project includes recruitment, training, media materials, and volunteer recognition.
- **Family Outreach** - Family Outreach is an all volunteer organization that works to recruit successful parents to work with at-risk families under the supervision of a PRS case manager. Trained volunteers provide services to at-risk families, parenting classes, "warm lines" for parents in crisis, and other services as determined by the local center.
- **Healthy Families** - This voluntary, comprehensive and intensive home visitation program focuses on families with children who are assessed to be at risk of abuse, neglect or other poor childhood outcomes. Services begin around the time of the baby's birth and can continue until the child is 5 years old. As a primary prevention program, services are designed to prevent infant mortality, premature birth, disease, developmental delays, child maltreatment, school failure, juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy, and other negative outcomes for children, youth, and families.
- **Juvenile Sex Offender Treatment Project** - Three state agencies--PRS, Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, and the Texas Department of Mental Health & Mental Retardation--have pooled resources to develop a model treatment program for juvenile sex offenders. The project provides community-based treatment to Galveston County children and youth who have committed sex offenses. Services are also provided to the offender's families, victims and victims' families. The project is scheduled to end in FY 2001.
- **Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)** - The HIPPY program builds on the basic bond between parents and their children. Three to five year old children learn, with their parents, from trained paraprofessionals who make home visits. As such, parents learn to prepare their children for success in school and beyond. The HIPPY program recognizes the role parents play in a child's transition from preschool to kindergarten.
- **Second Chance Teen Parent Program** - In cooperation with the Texas Department of Human Services, the Governor's Office, and the Texas Workforce Commission, PRS manages this program. Services are provided to teen parents who qualify for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), their children and pregnant teens eligible for Medicaid. Services include counseling, parenting classes, pregnancy prevention training, mentoring case management, child-care, educational assistance, and residential support.