

NORTHEAST REGION

REGIONAL FINDINGS & STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

The Northeast Region includes 23 counties with a blend of mid-sized commercial hubs and rural communities.

Counties are deeply rooted in their communities and collaboration is a strength.

Many counties rely on the core institutions—hospitals, colleges, courts, and service agencies—to support youth and families.

Long travel distances and limited provider capacity create barriers to accessing services. Suburbanization near the Dallas–Fort Worth Metroplex is increasing service demand.

NORTHEAST REGION COUNTIES



ABOUT THE CONTINUUM OF CARE (COC) PROJECT

The Continuum of Care (CoC) Project, led by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department in partnership with Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, engaged youth, families, system leaders, and community partners across Texas to assess strengths, identify gaps, and build a shared vision for a coordinated, community-based system of care.

The goal is to ensure youth have access to the right support, in the right place, at the right time—reducing unnecessary justice system involvement and improving outcomes.



WANT TO READ MORE?

Dive deeper into data, resources, and recommendations in the full Northeast Region CoC Report.



SCAN HERE

to access the full regional report

KEY FINDINGS: STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES



1. STRONG COMMUNITY ROOTS & COLLABORATION

- Strong relationships among probation, courts, schools, and community partners.
- Counties are committed to serving youth and supporting families.



2. CORE INSTITUTIONS DRIVE SUPPORT

- Hospitals, colleges, courts, and service agencies are key anchors.
- Vital sources of stability and support across the region.



3. LIMITED SERVICE ACCESS

- Few local behavioral health providers and long wait times.
- Youth often enter probation to access needed services.



4. GEOGRAPHIC & DEMOGRAPHIC PRESSURES

- Long travel distances create barriers.
- Rapid suburban growth near DFW is increasing demand for services.



WHAT YOUTH & FAMILIES SAID

- “We were asking for help way before probation.”
- Transportation is a major barrier to getting services.
- Schools escalate behavior instead of diverting.
- Lack of safe spaces and structured activities increases risk.
- Frustration with systems asking for input, but not acting on it.



TOP CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR ACTION



EXPAND COMMUNITY-BASED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ACCESS

Increase local mental health & substance use services, reduce wait times, and expand telehealth and mobile response capacity.



STRENGTHEN SCHOOL-BASED PREVENTION & DIVERSION

Implement tiered interventions, expand diversion partnerships, and reduce referrals driven by discipline.



BUILD EARLY DIVERSION INFRASTRUCTURE

Develop pre-referral diversion options, expand law enforcement diversion, and pilot assessment hubs.



STRENGTHEN REGIONAL CAPACITY & COLLABORATION

Share resources across counties, expand cross-county contracts and partnerships, and provide TA & training.



IMPROVE CROSS-SYSTEM COORDINATION

Formalize communication between probation, schools, DPFS, LMHAs, and community partners to better serve youth.

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS



0–6 MONTHS

- Share this report and align on regional priorities
- Identify pilot opportunities
- Begin planning for shared clinician models



6–12 MONTHS

- Launch school diversion MOUs
- Pilot regional partnerships
- Expand telehealth & mobile capacity



12+ MONTHS

- Launch assessment/diversion center pilot
- Scale regional service-sharing models
- Sustain long-term infrastructure



THE OPPORTUNITY

Northeast Texas has strong partnerships and a deep commitment to youth. By investing in early access, consistent diversion, and regional collaboration, we can ensure youth get the right help—earlier and closer to home.

