

WEST REGION

KEY FINDINGS & STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

One of Texas' largest and most geographically dispersed regions with 52 counties and 27 juvenile departments.

Anchored by El Paso County, the region includes a mix of urban hubs, mid-sized communities, and vast rural/frontier counties.

Long travel distances and limited provider capacity shape access to services and system design.

Smaller departments rely on innovation, partnerships, and shared resources to serve youth and families.

WEST 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 West Region CoC Report.



SCAN HERE

to access the full regional report

KEY FINDINGS: STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES



1. STRONG LOCAL INNOVATION & PROBLEM-SOLVING

- Departments adapt services creatively despite limited resources.
- Direct contracts with local providers and university partnerships (e.g., Texas Tech).
- Growing use of telehealth and flexible service models.



2. EMERGING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS

- Existing relationships with universities and providers (Charlie Health, Texas Tech).
- Early examples of shared or rotating clinicians across counties.



3. MOMENTUM FOR REGIONAL COLLABORATION

- Strong interest in pooling resources and working across counties.
- Engagement from probation, schools, LMHAs, and law enforcement.
- Shared appetite for regional solutions and pilots.



4. SCHOOL-BASED DIVERSION FOUNDATIONS

- Existing First Offender and deferred prosecution models.
- Opportunities to scale consistent diversion approaches across ISDs.



5. LIMITATIONS & ACCESS CHALLENGES

- Heavy reliance on justice system entry to access care.
- Gaps in crisis services, outpatient care, and ongoing treatment.
- Geographic & transportation barriers limit access.



6. INCONSISTENT SYSTEM COORDINATION

- Variation in diversion pathways across counties and schools.
- Limited formal coordination between probation, schools, DFPS, and LMHAs.
- Reliance on informal relationships.



WHAT YOUTH & FAMILIES SAID

- “We were asking for help way before probation.”
- Transportation is a major barrier to accessing services.
- Schools often 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

1



Build Regional Behavioral Health Infrastructure

Shared clinicians, telehealth expansion, and university partnerships to grow workforce and capacity.

2



Formalize Regional Collaboration

Create a West Texas Regional Services Compact to coordinate staffing, contracts, and shared priorities.

3



Expand School-Based Diversion

Standardize ISD-probation MOUs and scale First Offender and deferred prosecution models.

4



Strengthen Cross-System Coordination

Formalize partnerships with DFPS and LMHAs and establish regular cross-system case coordination.

5



Launch Regional Assessment & Diversion Center

Create a multi-agency hub for crisis response and screening—an alternative to detention.

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS



0–6 MONTHS

- Share report and align regional priorities
- Launch regional collaboration structure
- Begin planning for shared clinician pilot



6–12 MONTHS

- Pilot shared behavioral health staffing
- Develop school diversion MOUs
- Begin cross-system coordination frameworks



12+ MONTHS

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