

OVERVIEW

"We have to find ways to address the challenges facing our children, youth and families at risk, and to support all children, youth and families. We know the value of a child who is encouraged and supported and helped to become a successful citizen. Our challenge is to develop actions and strategies that will make children feel safe and cared for and hopeful about the future."

Rosalynn Carter

We ask what can be done to reclaim the one child in four who is in jeopardy of school failure. And we are asking how other, often highly interrelated, problems that place youth at risk – poverty, premature parenthood, substance abuse, unemployment, and homelessness – can be addressed so that children can learn. What is required to create communities where learning can happen?

The hope for answers to these and many more compelling questions lies within the intent of Senate Bill 555. The 1999 Oregon Legislature adopted Senate Bill 555, which declared *"Communities provide the context for healthy children and families and strong families and healthy communities are interdependent."* This legislation was a call to action for local communities to work in partnership with state agencies to plan together to provide programs that address needs, strengths and assets. Through a local coordinated, comprehensive planning process, communities will engage in examining their capability to support and nurture children, youth, and families. This framework is the first step in implementing the collaborative planning effort envisioned in SB 555.

The legislature charged communities and the state through 2005 with developing one truly coordinated, comprehensive plan that will be the unifying vehicle to the "Gateway to Systems Change," through processes and systems that will:

- Create one local, coordinated comprehensive plan with the authority for policy setting, and coordination of service delivery systems.
- Focus on family centered and family driven needs rather than institutional preferences.
- Focus on outcomes that are performance based, time driven and measurable.
- Create community based services where the focus of services as well as management and decision making responsibility are residing at the community level.
- Create a system that addresses service gaps through partnerships, collaboration and service integration.
- Create a system that has culturally competent services, agencies and programs that are responsive to the cultural, racial, ethnic and gender differences of the population they serve.
- Create a system that supports families through the full continuum, with a focus on strengths, assets, and needs at the consumer, community and provider levels.

Senate Bill 555 specifies that the local commissions on children and families are responsible for coordinating and facilitating the planning process. This Phase 1 document is the foundation from which we will continue to build our local actions and strategies that will make children, youth and families safe and cared for and hopeful about the future. Therefore this Phase 1 planning process focuses only on the mapping of resources and identification of gaps and barriers. This initial process has also given us the opportunity to identify and use data and information from some existing planning efforts.

This Phase 1 document is the first stage in a five-year process that will continue to build on previous planning efforts, adding depth and breadth to those efforts. Previous plans and state-provided data have been the starting point for this framework. As agreement is reached at the state level on merging together other plans, this document will serve as the foundation for a coordinated, comprehensive plan and will include collaborative efforts around identification of strategies, priorities, proven practices and outcomes.

This phase of the planning process involves the following:

- ✓ Identification of indicators within the OCCF's four goals and ten core areas,
- ✓ Collection of historical data for those indicators at state and local levels,
- ✓ Analysis of historical trends for those indicators, and
- ✓ Identification of resources, gaps and barriers

This SB555 Comprehensive Planning Document – *Phase 1: Identification of Resources, Gaps, and Barriers* – will be available countywide. We will have the *Phase 1* document, the *Early Childhood Plan*, and the *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious Chronic, and Violent Youth Offenders (Comprehensive Strategy)* available on the internet (<http://www.co.lane.or.us/ccf>) as well as copies available at local libraries and city halls. The *Phase 1 Summary* will be the document disseminated countywide as the source for community input and dialogue. A successful outcome of the *Phase 1* documents will be the volume and intensity of questions and comments. For this to be truly a Lane County Community Plan we need to build upon this foundation. Now the community can begin to sketch out the rest of the structure and begin filling in the missing pieces. As you review the Appendix D Planning Activity Identification Matrix please note that there are many more plans and planning efforts to be referenced than was possible in the short time frame for this Phase 1.

When efforts to improve the quality of life for children, youth and families are re-focused at the local level, their emphasis shifts from upgrading traditional services to crafting a comprehensive web of services and support systems linking the various sectors of the community in new ways. The legislature is doing just that by enacting SB555.

Lane County has taken the first steps with the completion of the SB555 Phase 1 document toward the vision of a community where everyone is committed to the well being of children; where families are nurtured and supported; where diversity is honored; where all children and families are healthy and safe; where people live and work together and support one another.