

Community Youth Development Program Strengths and Needs Assessment

FY2020



September 1, 2020

City of Austin



Austin Public Health Department
Community Services Unit

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Executive Summary

Overview of Purpose, Scope and Goals

The Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) has provided funding to the City of Austin for the Community Youth Development (CYD) program for over 20 years. The goal of this funding is to provide preventative services to zip codes in the state of Texas that exhibit high referral rates to the juvenile justice system. Dove Springs, 78744, is one of those zip codes that is listed in need.

The Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) is an annual report prepared by the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) members and members of the Community Collaborative Committee (CCC), along with the facilitation of the Program Coordinator to provide a snapshot of what the community has, needs and wants. The data collected from this tool will help the CCC, YAC, DFPS and City of Austin, the fiscal agent, to work together towards determining funding priorities for the next Request for Proposals (RFP).

This report will provide an overview of the community of Dove Springs in addition to the current outlook of the community. The report will also provide demographic information on the current community members in Dove Springs. Lastly, the report will reveal the data collected from surveys and a proposal for funding by the CCC and YAC youth for the upcoming RFP as well as an implementation plan of what the CYD program can do.

Overview of Methodology and Tools

The goal of FY20 was to include the youth and CCC members at full capacity within the year. We began the CSNA planning process in February of 2020 at the second quarter of the CCC meeting. We provided an overview of the FY19 results and talked about how we would implement the FY20 surveys, a focus group and a timeline of delivery. However in the month of



March the CSNA's process was halted due to the Covid19 pandemic. Although original plans such as block walking and tabling were to not commence due to safety regulations and ordinances to keep the community safe, instead in the month in which those events would have taken place, were replaced with a focus group of 12 people including YAC youth and CCC members to be the voice of the Dove Springs community to whom we could not reach.

The discussion provided us a timeline of the process we were to follow to ensure we were able to have the youth and CCC members hold a focus group as well as a workshop to create the FY20 CSNA survey. The timeline is as follows:

FY19 CSNA Timeline		
November 2019	1 st Quarter CCC Meeting	Review of FY19 CSNA Timeline
February 2020	2 nd Quarter CCC Meeting	Focus Group of Dove Springs Community
May 2020	3 rd Quarter CCC Meeting	Workshop: Creating FY20 CSNA Survey
August 2020	4 th Quarter CCC Meeting	FY20 CSNA Planning & Project Meeting

Based on the timeline, the CCC, YAC and City of Austin's CYD program worked together to ensure that all voices were heard and that changes were made to accommodate the different groups, focusing on what the community really needed. By engaging the community directly, we were able to gather little specific and detailed information, giving us a part of a clear picture of the true needs, strengths and challenges that face the community at large.

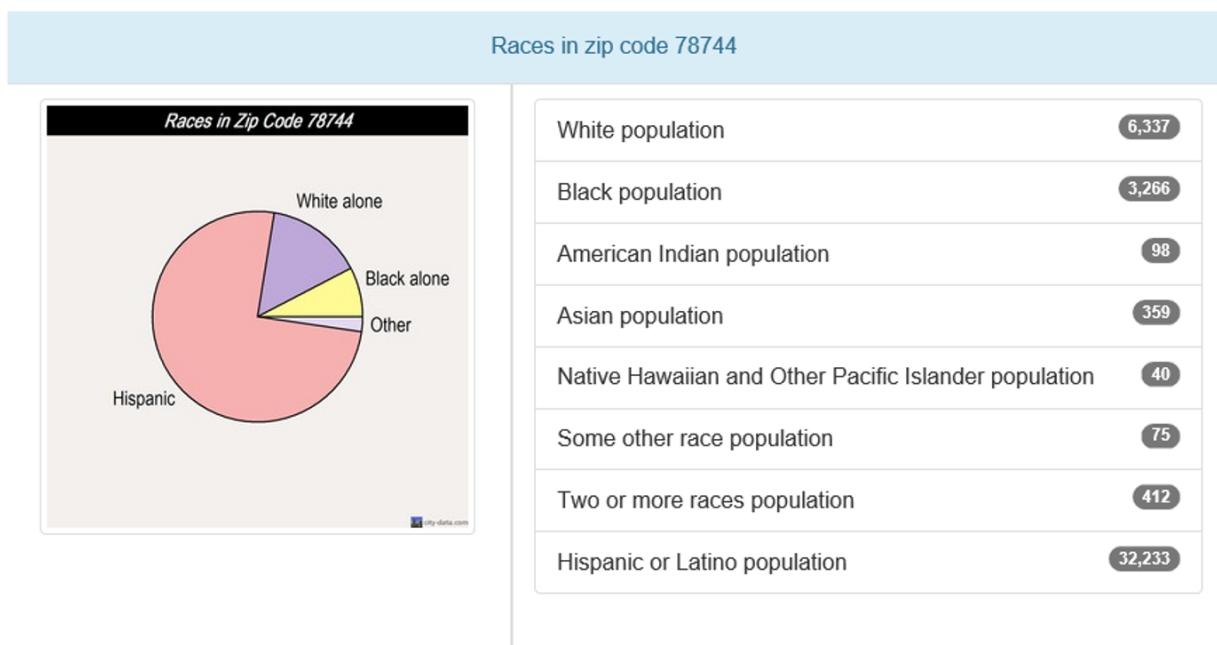
Community Overview

In 2016, the City of Austin's population was 947,897. Specifically, the community of Dove Springs was estimated to have 47,888 residents.

A breakdown of this data by age is provided by www.city-data.com. The data showed that when comparing 78744 to the entire state:

- Hispanic race population percentage above state average.
- Zip code 78744 compared to state average:
- Hispanic race population percentage above state average.
- Percentage of population with a bachelor's degree or higher below state average.

The population breakdown by race is as follows:



Based on the data and additional research, other interesting facts were revealed in the Dove Springs community. Of particular interest was the following:

- 1 in 5 people use SNAP
- There are few food outlets located in this zip code
- 1.5 in 10 middle school students are obese
- 3.3 is the average number of mentally unhealthy days reported in a 30-day span

Another issue we researched and focused on was food availability and accessibility to the residents of this community. Below is a map that identifies where resources are:



Observations based on this are:

- There appears to be very few food outlets located close to where families live.
- There are only a few food establishments in the Dove Springs area that supply meat, fresh fruits and vegetables.
- There appears to be a large amount of green space in this area, but not all of it may be accessible for recreational use and appropriate for children to play.

- A high proportion of students are considered overweight and/or obese with few or poor cardiovascular fitness programs in the Dove Springs area.
- Over the past 3 years, Mendez Middle School, which is the Dove Springs neighborhood, has seen over a 20% decrease in the number of students who failed the cardiovascular test.

The crime rate was also reviewed. In 2017 the City of Austin via, www.austintexas.gov showed that there were 6,592 crimes reported in 78744. The highest crime that was committed was theft coming in at 1,145.

Lastly, we reviewed the teen birth rate in Travis County. Based on a report from the Austin Public Health Department in 2012-2014, 3 out of every 100 babies born was to a mother 15-17 years of age. The breakdown of births by race is as follows:

Table 7.3. Births to Women under the Age of 20 Years Old and 15-17 Years of Age for Travis County and Texas, 2012-2014

Race/Ethnicity	Travis County			Texas	
	2012	2013	2014	2012-2014 Average	2012-2014 Average
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
Percent of Total Births to Women 15-17 Years Old					
White	34 (0.6)	20 (0.3)	16 (0.2)	23 (0.4)	1,836 (4.0)
Black	34 (2.9)	27 (2.3)	38 (2.9)	33 (2.7)	1,400 (9.1)
Hispanic	322 (4.6)	265 (3.8)	266 (3.8)	284 (4.0)	8,292 (13.1)
All Races	395 (2.5)	320 (2.0)	324 (2.0)	346 (2.2)	11,765 (8.8)

Report of Survey Results

Creation of Survey

The data points used to collect information on the community focused on a group discussion at the second quarter meeting between CCC adult members and YAC youth. The discussion focused on what they felt were the current needs in the community and how to best record this information. During the meeting, the youth and adults focused on what they considered were the “hot topics” occurring. Some of the main topics that came out were the “need to know your rights”, the lack of public schools in their community and the lack of out of school time activities, specifically the closure of the recreation center curtailing their structured activities in the community.

We decided utilizing CCC meetings with youth and adult partners would be ideal in order to create the FY20 CSNA. We began the process at the 3rd quarter CCC meeting in February by doing group work. The workshop began by focusing on different things they felt were needs in their communities. Some of those were:

What Are Some Needs in Your Community?					
Mental Illness Awareness	Professional Development for youth entering work during Covid19	Drug and Alcohol abuse	Mental Illness Training and Tools	Spanish Translated documents in schools	Rehabilitation Resources
Rising Costs of Living in Community	Gentrification	Closed recreation center	Police and community relationships	Food Desert	Community Safety



After the list of needs in the community was created, the whole group narrowed their focus on these targeted areas. The targeted areas are listed below:

Survey Focuses Based on Needs		
Community Overview	Covid19 Assistance	Mental Health
Drugs	Alcohol	Community Safety

Based on these targeted areas, the group posted pads around the room and broke into groups to think of different questions that addressed each focused area. Each group got 10 minutes at each pad to think of different questions they would want to ask based on the subject. Once everyone visited each pad, they then voted on the questions they wanted to use to complete the survey that would be used.

Surveying The Community

Once the surveys were created the survey was distributed through Survey Monkey for one month prior to the pandemic cancelling the CSNA. In place of block walking and tabling at public events, the CCC, YAC youth and Austin Public Health's CYD program worked together to create a focus group at the fourth quarter CCC meeting. The results were received through a collaborative focus group comprised of all of the aforementioned.

Survey Results

Summary of Report Findings

Observation and Discussion of Report Findings

After the focus group discussion and the data was compiled, a review was provided to the CCC and YAC to discuss what the results meant for the upcoming year. The findings suggested that in large measure the community was doing well. While the expectations were that there might be more needs the community would have, it was found that overall the community has improved in the past year. Each section of questions not only had something that could be worked on, but something the community had going on that was working well for them.

Among the focus group, the topic that earned the most important during the pandemic was the mental health awareness section. The group felt that the community not only does not talk about mental illness openly, but rather it is especially difficult for youth and is rejected by adults in the community. It was also shown that while it might not be something talked about, the group believed that their community as well as themselves could not identify a mental illness or know what to do if someone does have a mental illness. For the drugs and alcohol focused questions, the community members were somewhat aware of the legal, and physical consequences if found with a substance, however were less aware of the mental consequences of substance abuse. This shows a clear indication that substance abuse and mental illness awareness improvements are necessary.

Are CYD Services Meeting Needs of Community

In review of the data breakdown above, it was clear to see that yes, CYD services in Dove Springs are meeting the needs of the community. This was exciting to see, real results based on real change we have been making in the community.



We saw this by the results of the survey showing that the community knew where to get help for higher education, knew the consequences for doing drugs and alcohol, could identify mental health illnesses, and knew how to respond to officers who are there to protect their community and families. We were able to draw some direct correlations with the services we offered this past year that specifically focused on these issues. Examples include putting police officers in the role of coaches and mentors from our Police Activities League and our partnership with Workers Assistance Program for a drug prevention workshop for youth.

Another CYD lead focus was having the YAC youth be part of the Youth Justice Workgroup that focused on providing youth empowerment opportunities, knowledge on knowing your rights and the importance of civic engagement. We also incorporated more college tours for YAC youth, partnerships with the Southeast Branch, Austin Public Library, partnerships with the State constables, area farmers, subcontractors who worked in schools to provide knowledge on resources, family engagement, family safety and higher educational opportunities such as screen printing, theatre and art. We believe all of these CYD lead opportunities that we made available to the community of Dove Springs were able to not only empower and enrich the lives of those youth directly being served by CYD, but helped empower and enrich the lives of the community that worked with these youth, to include family members, church members, school officials and neighbors.

Limitations and Reflections

The FY20 CSNA process worked to continually improve the process in how we include the community, the CCC and our YAC youth during the pandemic. While we can find great success in the process in completing of the CSNA, we also recognize areas of improvement and limitations we faced.



The main limitation we faced was the inability to physically present the survey at public locations around the city due to public gathering ordinances from the Covid19 Pandemic. This unfortunately lowered the amount of survey results we were able to obtain, however made up for this by holding a focus group of YAC youth and CCC members to be the voice of the Dove Springs Community. While our youth were excited that we were able to get any feedback, we can see the need to increase the amount of community members that take the survey to gain a better picture of what the overall community needs, and this is likely to be attainable in future CSNA data collection opportunities when the Covid19 pandemic has ended.

In reflection of the process and the CSNA, we can certainly take a moment to be proud of the work that was able to be done, despite the many obstacles FY20 has brought. This was a year that showed our community's resilience and our programs, The CCC and YAC's perseverance in the face of adversity. They worked on the timeline, created the questions, and picked projects that we will focus on for FY21. Our youth were able to sit in the driver seat, allowing them to learn what worked, what didn't work, and what we can do next year to make this a better next year. As the Program Coordinator, I reflected on how I can provide better support to not only City of Austin staff, but the CCC. One goal would be to utilize the AmeriCorps VISTA program to have a VISTA work primarily on a sustainability project for the CCC, and provide Youth/Adult Partnership training to CCC members.



Recommendations and Priorities for Strategic Planning

Strengths of the Community

The community of Dove Springs is strong and proud. This is a community that has shown over the years that when they come together, they can overcome any obstacle that comes their way. They are empowering not only themselves, but their youth. We can witness this first hand when reviewing the data from the FY19 CSNA survey. It shows that the community is making positive strides when it comes to the financial climate in their community. Homeownership is increasing, families are making more money and higher education is not only something they know about but encouraging and resources are available to the youth in their communities. The CYD programming has a large part to do with these successes. The community itself, has an

even bigger part in how these successes are not only occurring but being something of the norm for their families and the future leaders in their community.

Needs of the Community

While we can see clear strengths in the community we also see where there are needs that community has. Based on the data, 3 main focuses that came out were the community's need to learn more about resources available to them, information about higher education, financial assistance information sessions and a need to get the community more involved in understanding bills, ordinances and policies that effect their community and have them participate by voting.

A recurring need that the community expressed was wanted, was during our healthy eating project that was put on in August based on the feedback from the FY18 CSNA. Based on the results there was a want to have a family friendly activity in Dove Springs as well as access to healthy and nutritional food. Based on this feedback a Farmer's Market Fiesta was put on in August that not only provided families a fun and free event to take part in together, but also provided fresh produce from local farms that community members were able to take home and learn about healthy eating options in their community. During this event we surveyed the community members asking if they would like to have an event like this again and if it was beneficial. Out of the 25 families that were given food vouchers for fresh produce, all 25 families stated that they wanted this event to happen again and that there was a need.

CYD Implementations and Recommendations

Based on what the needs were of the community, a review of the CYD programming for City of Austin was done to ensure that we are providing resources that are making a real impact in the community. Below is what we currently do in our CYD program and what we have room to

implement in FY20 to help the community where there are needs. A breakdown of the proposed implementation moving forward in FY20 is below:

Current CYD Services	Proposed FY20 CYD Services
Curriculum Based Life skills	Curriculum Based Life skills
Curriculum Based Life skills	Youth Empowerment Program/Activism
Youth Advisory Committee	Youth Advisory Committee
Family Engagement	Family Engagement
Mentoring	Mentoring
Youth Leadership Development	Youth Leadership Development
Recreation	Youth Lead Recreation

These changes to our CYD services would go into effect in the new fiscal year that would allow us to fill a gap of services that the community states there is a need for. Those specific needs would be the need for youth empowerment opportunities and civic engagement.

Based on the data it also shows that there is a need for a project-based solution to some needs. Those needs include: knowing what resources are available to the community, understanding civic engagement and voting, as well as knowing what financially assistance there is for higher education for youth.

To help inform the decision of what project-based solution would be implemented in FY20 the YAC youth were provided the data to review and surveyed on what they would like to spearhead as a service-learning project in fiscal year 20. Based on the survey results the YAC youth decided to create a website that would be used by community members to find out what



events were happening in their community, what resources were available and contacts of community organizations that they could use for assistance.

Another project-based solution to meet a need of the community would be hold a 2nd annual Farmer's Market Fiesta in Dove Springs. This event would allow us to continue to work on a need that was recognized while providing the community with the tools and resources needed so this no longer is something, they find is a need for them.

Final Recommendations

In review of our FY19 CSNA we found what the community is doing great at and how the CYD program can help with certain needs. Our focus in FY20 will be to implement the change in subcontractors' specialties to meet the community needs, utilize the CCC and YAC to build a website where community members can find resources and hold a 2nd annual Farmer's Market Fiesta to ensure that families can continue to get fresh produce.

Our goal as the fiscal agent will be to not only support our community but empower our youth, our adults who partner with our youth and provide resources, guidance and funding to help ensure that all recommendations are able to be met and our youth and adult partners can find success in the good they will do in the upcoming year for Dove Springs.