



A Report for  
Youth Opportunities United

# **NUECES COUNTY JUVENILE DELINQUENCY RISK FACTOR DATA AND TREND ANALYSIS**

**7th Edition**

**Kristina M. Zambrano, B.S., M.P.A.  
Philip W. Rhoades, Ph.D.  
Social Science Research Center  
Data Collection & Analysis Workgroup**

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**Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi**  
The Island University

# **NUECES COUNTY JUVENILE DELIQUENCY RISK FACTOR DATA AND TREND ANALYSIS, 7<sup>th</sup> ED.**

## **Data Collection and Analysis Workgroup Report**

### **Authors**

Kristina M. Zambrano, B.S, M.P.A.  
Philip W. Rhoades, Ph.D.

### **Research Assistants**

Sarah L. Huser, B.A.  
Joe Guerrero

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# NUECES COUNTY JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

## RISK FACTOR DATA AND TREND ANALYSIS

### 7<sup>th</sup> EDITION

#### INTRODUCTION

This report continues the effort of the Data Collection and Analysis Workgroup to provide the Youth Opportunities United (YOU) Comprehensive Planning process with an accurate problem description based on real, local data in a comparative context. The Workgroup's mission remains as stated in Section II, A. of the June 26, 1999 *Comprehensive Plan*, to provide YOU committees and the community with a research and data based image of the risk factors producing juvenile delinquency in Nueces County.

The Workgroup has been supported by the Social Science Research Center (SSRC) at Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi through YOU sustaining grants. While continuing to use the risk factors and data indicators outlined in *The Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders*, the SSRC has expanded from the original 52 data indicators to the current 135 indicators. This report and its allied documents expand the data set to earlier years and provide updates to the most current year. This report integrates data from the YOU Middle School/Junior High Student Survey - 2000, the Crime Control and Prevention District's Survey completed in 2000, and the Safe Communities Survey - 2002. Data are reported in detailed, tabular form in the July 2004 – Delinquency Risk Factors with Supporting Data Indicators. The tables in that document support the findings reported here. The Data Tables and additional charts not provided in this document are available on the "YOU Comprehensive Strategy Planning Tools CD, 5<sup>th</sup> edition."

This report begins with an overview of the Priority Risk Factors following comments about the County population. Then, as in the previous editions, the report provides a discussion of 18 risk factors in sections for the Priority Risk Factors followed by other risk factors that have a clear impact and contribute to delinquency in the community, and risk factors for which a clear, strong conclusion cannot be made.

#### THE POPULATION CONTEXT

The population context for Nueces County remains important. Population figures indicate that Nueces County continues to have larger families with fewer working age adults available to provide for the young and elderly. The 2000 census data indicate that Nueces County grew at a much slower rate than the State as a whole. Nueces County

grew only 7.7% from 1990 to 2000 while the State grew 22.8%. While the County's population was younger than the State's in 1990, it has aged. In 2000, 11.2% of the County's population was 65 year old and over while only 9.9% of the State was 65 or over. In 2000, Nueces County had only 60.4% of its population in the 18 to 64 age ranges as workers and taxpayers compared to 61.9% for Texas. The County has a median household size of 2.79 that is slightly higher than the State's 2.74. Also, 41.8% of Nueces County households have persons under 18, while only 40.9% of households Statewide have persons under 18. With lower household median income (2002) than the State (\$42,409), Nueces County (\$36,023) has more families, adults, and children in poverty. Nueces County families must try to support more people with less income. Fewer family and community resources are available to deal with risk factors in this community compared to the State as a whole.

## **AN OVERVIEW: PRIORITY RISK FACTORS**

In April of 2002 the Data Collection and Analysis Workgroup reviewed and discussed the risk factors and their associated data indicators. At the conclusion of this analysis, the Workgroup recommended and the YOU Steering Committee adopted a revised set of Priority Risk Factors as reported in the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of this report. These include:

- 1. Family Management Problems and Family Conflict**
- 2. Extreme Economic Deprivation**
- 3. Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behaviors**
- 4. Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior**

The data in this 7<sup>th</sup> Edition indicate that the seriousness of three of the five problem behaviors: violence, teen pregnancy and dropout have declined. This decline coincides with the start of the YOU initiative in 1998 - 1999. Evidence of these changes may be seen in the discussion of the individual risk factors that follows.

Of significance for continued planning efforts are the data indicators related to the problem behaviors of delinquency and substance abuse. These indicators demonstrate that for both adults and juveniles substance use and abuse have remained stable or increased. While rates of delinquency for all juveniles have remained stable, the proportion of arrest attributed to the 10-14 year old age group for alcohol, drug, and property offenses has increased. Further, a significant three year increase in curfew, disorderly conduct, and vandalism arrests for all juveniles has occurred.

The four Priority Risk Factor sets appear to continue to fuel the five problem behaviors. The stability of the alcohol and drug abuse indicators and the increase in delinquency among 10 to 14 year olds are traced to patterns within the priority risk factors.

Of greatest concern is an apparent downturn in the County's economic conditions that have consistently been worse than the State as a whole. The improvements seen in

**Extreme Economic Deprivation** in the last several years and reported in earlier editions of this report appear to have been reversed starting in 2001. While the per capita income has been steadily increasing in Nueces County the gap between the County, State, and Nation continues to grow rather than shrink. In 2003, the unemployment rate in Nueces County increased to 6.6%. The proportion of families and children in poverty remains higher in Nueces County than the State or Nation. Indeed, the proportion of families with children in poverty reached its highest level in 5 years in 2002. The proportion of children qualifying for free or reduced lunch at school increased over the past four years in all five of the County's largest school districts. In 2003, the number of individuals qualifying for food stamps and Medicaid reached their highest levels in six years. **Extreme Economic Deprivation** is not just an important risk factor for this community. It may be the driving force behind the disturbing changes in Family Management Problems and Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behaviors.

The worsening economic conditions have contributed to an increase in **Family Management Problems and Family Conflict**. In 2003, both the number of confirmed cases of child abuse and the rate of abused children per 1,000 children reached their highest levels in the County in a decade. Also, in 2003, the rate of domestic violence incidents reported by law enforcement in Nueces County reached its highest level in more than a decade.

Stress from both economic conditions and family conflict appear to have contributed to higher adult arrest rates for property and violent crimes in 2002 and 2003 than in earlier years. Changes in these indicators of **Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior** are paralleled by an increase in adults arrested of alcohol related crimes and a stability in the adult drug arrest rate. The sale of alcohol has been gradually increasing, but the number of adults in alcoholism treatment has decreased.

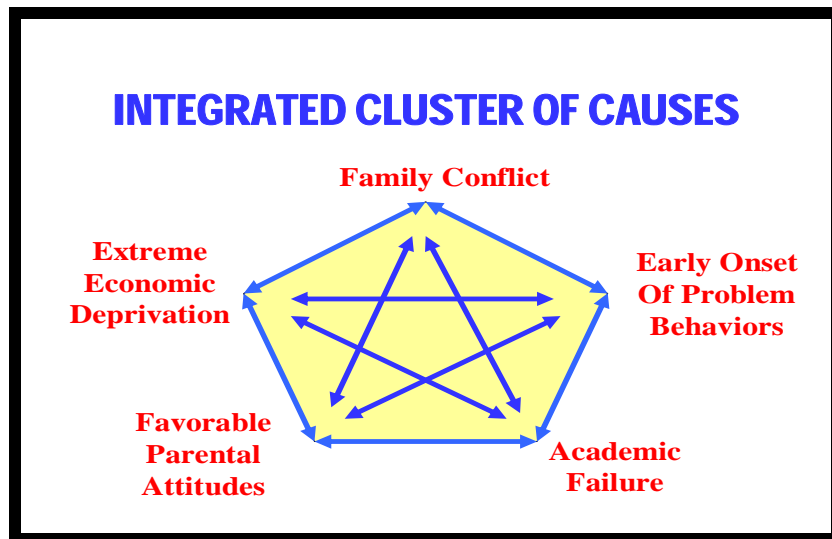
The integrated nature of the priority risk factors can also be seen in changes with the **Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior**. Property arrests, alcohol-related arrests, and drug arrests for the 10-14 age group have steadily increased over the past three years in the County. These increases show an amazingly similar pattern to the increase in child abuse, increase in child poverty, and increased in adult offenses over the same time period. The covariance of the indicators for these risk factors indicate the sensitivity of adult and youth behavior to economic change and the patterning of youth behavior after that of adults.

Analysis of the Priority Risk factors in 2002 indicated that **Early Academic Failure and Lack of Commitment to School** had improved. The Data Collection and Analysis Workgroup recommended to the YOU Steering Committee that the Priority Risk Factors, Academic Failure and Lack of Commitment to School be removed to the set of Risk Factors with **Clear Impact in the Community**. This change should not imply that the community's effort directed toward these risk factors should be changed. Reducing effort to keep children in school and to encourage their better performance might cause a return to the worse conditions of the past. Rather, the current initiatives

need to be continued and strengthened so that the negative effects of the priority risk factors can be countered within the educational arena.

The priority risk factors are those which are clearly indicative of problems for Corpus Christi and Nueces County. They form an integrated cluster, related by cause and effect with each risk factor also serving to compound the effects of the others. This relationship is demonstrated on the following chart. While this edition of this series of reports emphasizes the risk factor Economic Deprivation, the chart reminds us that worsening conditions or improvements in any of the priority factors will have effect on all of the other factors. The former priority factor set, Academic Failure and Lack of Commitment to School remains on the chart because of the significance of the Priority Factors to it and it to them. If the current increase of risk in other domains can be prevented within the educational domain, some long-term improvements in economic conditions and parental capacity to manage families and life's stresses may occur.

The integrated nature of the priority risk factors is a reminder that YOU's work must remain collaborative and comprehensive. Programmatic advances in the County need to be integrated with and contribute to the range of protective responses already in place. The work of YOU needs to remain focused on the Priority Risk Factors and Factors with Clear Impact as detailed in the following.



#### **PRIORITY RISK FACTORS: THE DETAILS**

- 1. Family Management Problems and Family Conflict**
- 2. Extreme Economic Deprivation**
- 3. Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior**
- 4. Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior**

All of the priority risk factors are related to the five problem behaviors: delinquency, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, violence, and dropout. Their integration assists in designing strategies for their amelioration and strategies chosen to affect one will likely affect the others. At least one of the four priority risk factor sets is found in each of the four domains: community, family, school, and individual/peer. Thus, appropriate response strategies may be found in any of the four domains.

The Priority Risk Factor Sets are reported in their order of seriousness for the community.

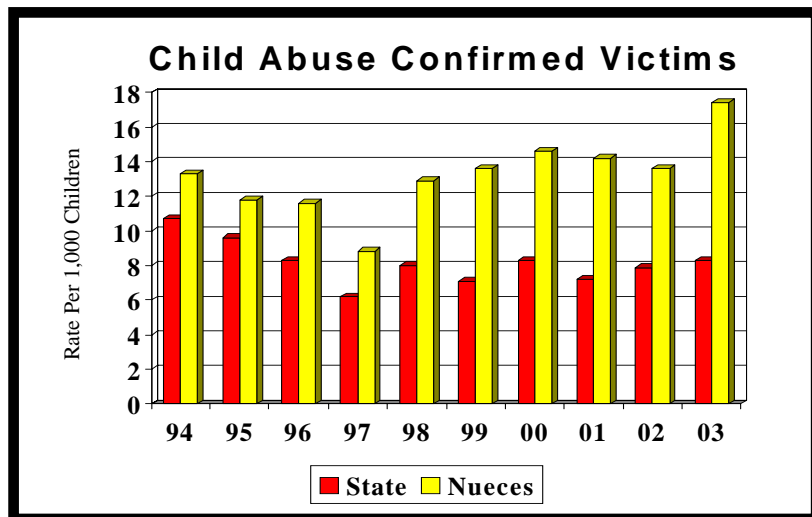
**1. Family Management Problems and Family Conflict.**

These risk factors have been grouped together because they are inherently related. Domestic violence includes child abuse. Families that are experiencing management problems are families in conflict. Failure of a marriage due to conflict is a failure in management of the family as a social unit.

The research literature well supports the conclusions that child abuse, domestic violence, family conflict, and failure of parenting contribute to juvenile delinquency and adult criminality. These problems contribute to the cycle of violence wherein children growing up in negative environments grow up to be ineffective and potentially abusive parents themselves. Nueces County is an example of the reality of these research findings.

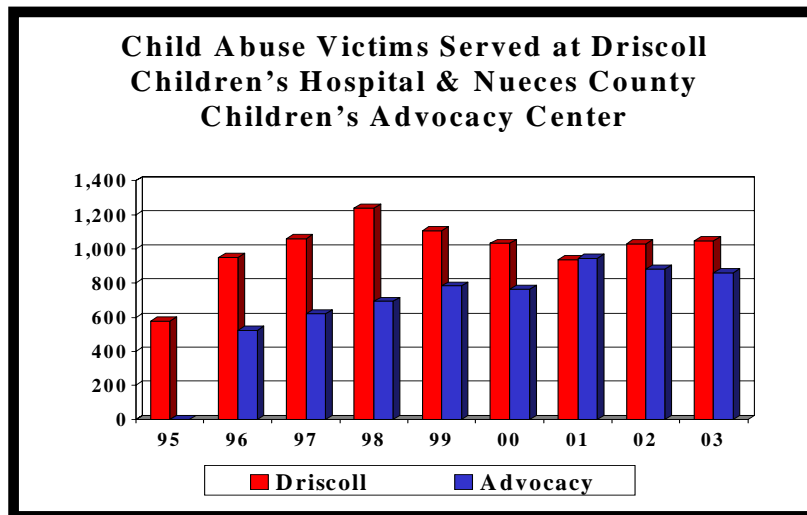
**Family Management Problems:** From 1995 to 2003, the total investigations for child abuse and neglect increased 21.6% for the State. From 1995 to 2003, total investigations increased 18.9% for Nueces County. However, from 2000 to 2003 cases of reported abuse and neglect slightly decreased 1.4% for the County.

These data conceal the more disturbing fact that the rate of confirmed victims of child abuse in Nueces County has increased dramatically. The 2000 rate for Texas was the same as that for 2003, while that for Nueces County increased by 19.2%.



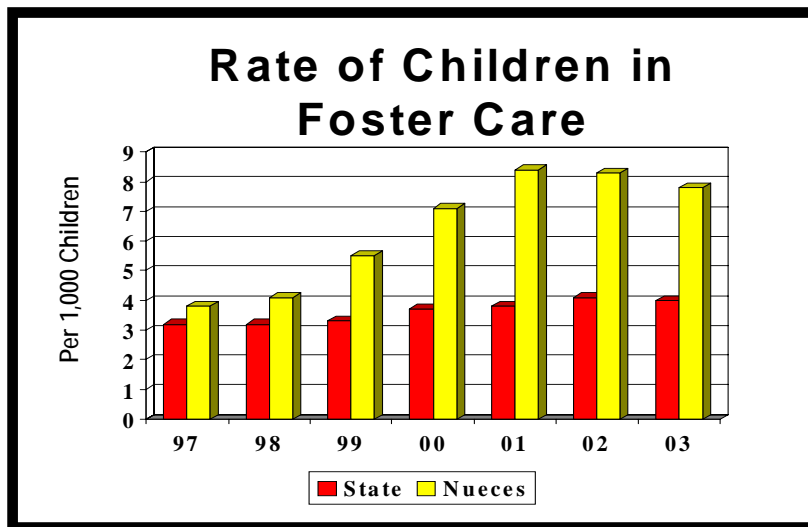
The rate per 1,000 children of confirmed victims of child abuse in Nueces County has also been greater than that for the State across the 1995 to 2003 period. For example, the 2003 rate of confirmed victims for Texas was 8.3 while the rate for Nueces County was 17.4. These data demonstrate that a greater number of children are at risk of abuse in the County.

Confirmed child abuse victims can be further evidenced through the number of clients served by local response agencies. Driscoll Foundation Children’s Hospital reports a 130.4% increase in child abuse victims treated from 1994 to 2003. While the number of victims declined from 1998 to 2001, a return to a higher level of abuse has occurred in 2003. The Nueces County Children’s Advocacy Center reports an 81.0% increase in victims served from 1996 to 2001 but it dropped 8.9% from 2001 to 2003. The number of children served by the Court Appointed Special Advocates of Coastal Bend (CASA) has steadily been decreasing in the last four years. It is possible that these data indicate a more active response system in Nueces County than in other communities.



Note also that the data for these agencies reflect regional service areas, not just Nueces County.

The number of children living in foster parent homes in the State has increased from 1994 to 2003 by 55.2% and the increase was 93.7% for Nueces County. In 2002, the rate of children in foster care was almost double that in Nueces County as compared to the State but slightly decreased in 2003.

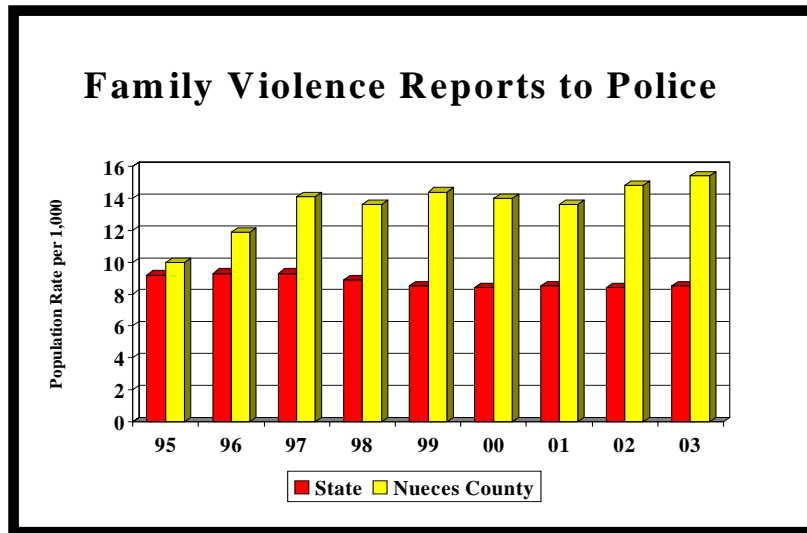


Two alternate statewide sources of data for runaways indicate a relatively stable problem. Texas Uniform Crime Reports for police arrests of runaways and Texas Juvenile Probation Referrals both indicate a steady decline from 1994 to 2002. County referrals to the Nueces County Juvenile Probation Department for runaways demonstrate a reduction from 1994 to 2003. Increases occurred in 1997 and 1998. The 2002 figure for Nueces County reflects a decrease of 68.2% in runaway referrals since 1994.

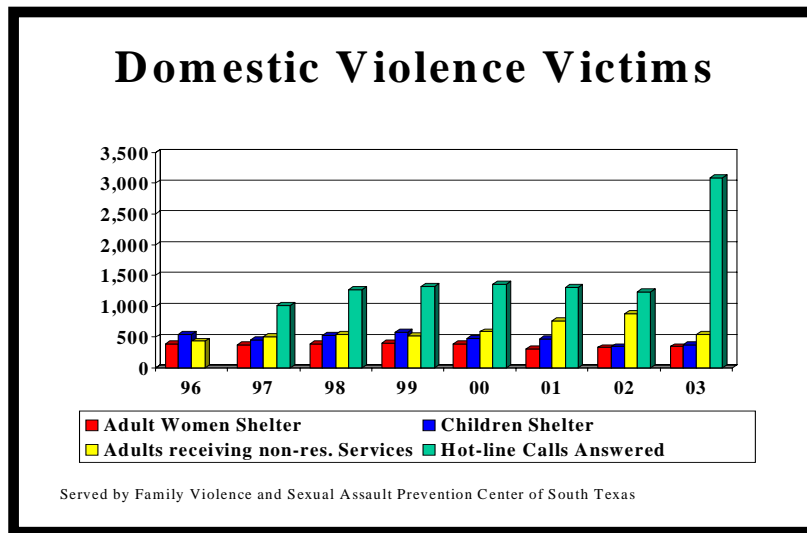
The data indicators reported above demonstrate that family management problems remain significant in the community. However, higher levels of confirmed cases, children in foster care, and children served by the Advocacy Center indicate community improvements in producing protective factors for this risk factor.

**Family Conflict:** Over the long term, the **number** of family violence reports has been increasing in the State, County, and city. From 1994 to 2002, family violence reports increased 12.4% in Texas. From 1994 to 2003, family violence reports increased 76.9% in the City of Corpus Christi. Then from 1997 to 2001 the number of domestic violence reports decreased. Most recently Corpus Christi experienced and 19.2% increase from 2001 to 2003. Thus, the 2003 number remains 76.9% higher than that for 1994.

Connected to this is a dramatic increase in the **rate** of family violence reports in Nueces County as compared to the State. According to the *Crime in Texas Report*, in 1996, the rate of family violence reports for the State by 1,000 population was 9.3, but for Nueces County it was 11.9. From 1996 to 2003, the State rate of family violence decreased. However, in Nueces County the rate increased. By 2003, the State rate of family violence reports had dropped to 8.5. In the County, the rate increased to 15.4 in 2003.

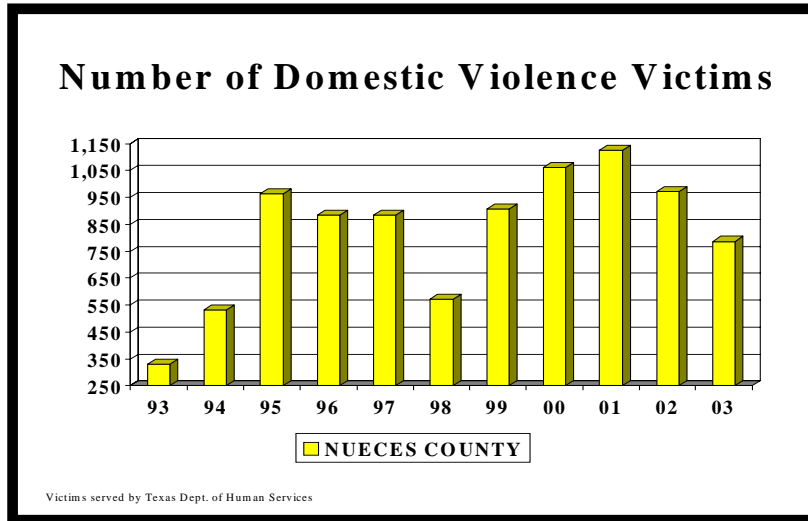


Domestic violence remains a serious problem due to the fact that County rates are still much higher than the State. With Nueces County’s population increasing at a slower rate, but family violence increasing at a higher rate than the State, the data show that a greater proportion of the County’s families are in conflict than those of the State as a whole.

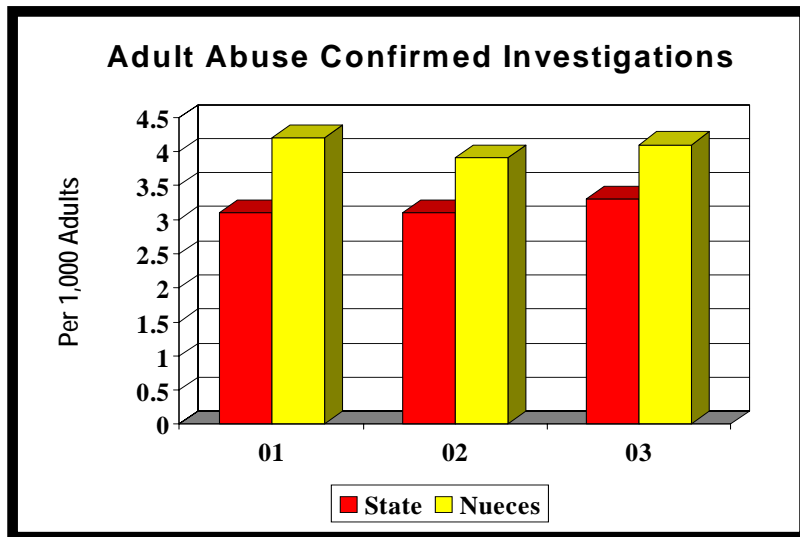


Another clear indicator that domestic violence has increased in Nueces County at a greater rate than the State are the figures for the number of domestic violence victims served by the Texas Department of Human Services. From 1994 to 2002, the number of victims served for the State of Texas increased by only 106.9%. While the number of victims served in Nueces County increased by 111.5% from 1994 to 2001, it decreased 30.0% from 2001 to 2003. From these two indicators, it may be concluded that family conflict remains a problem in the community. It is important to see these data also as an

indicator that more families are receiving services. More protective response has been provided in recent years.



When examining the data from Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services on confirmed adult abuse victims, the rate of adult abuse per 1,000 for the State was 3.3 in 2003. For Nueces County in 2003 it was 4.1. The higher rate of adult abuse in the County mirrors that of the child abuse present in the County.



The number of divorces in the State and the County has declined from 1994 to 2002. The rate of divorces per 1,000 population for the State has dropped from 5.3 in 1994 to 3.9 in 2002. The rate of divorces per 1,000 population for the County is higher than the State. In 1994, it was 6.3 and in 2002, it was 4.3. The County rate dropped to the same as the State in 1996, but again increased to 5.3 in 1997, which was higher than

the State's 4.8 rate. The County rate has remained higher than the State from that year on. The higher divorce rate for Nueces County compared to the State is another indicator that family conflict occurs at a higher level in the County than the State.

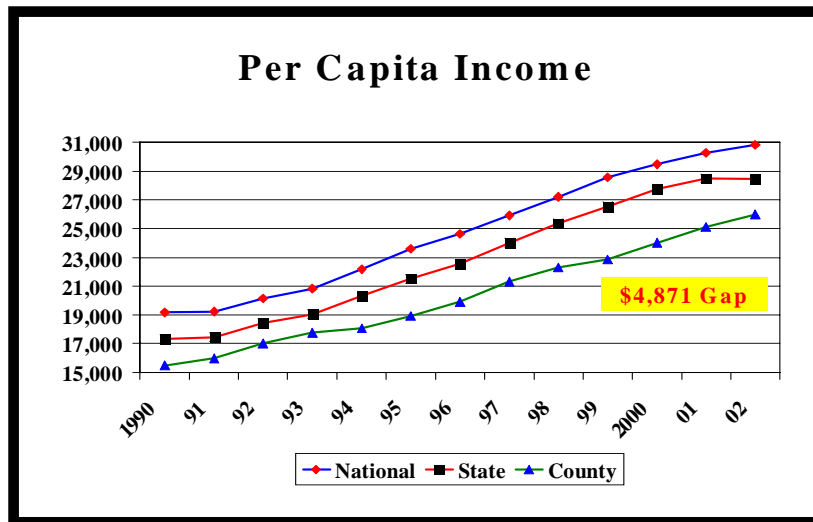
Local data were found about the percent of married persons with a spouse absent. This data was obtained from the 2000 census year. In Texas, 12.7% of female householders have no husband present. The Nueces County data 15.3% is slightly higher than the State.

This set of risk factors is clearly present in the community. Data indicators for child abuse, domestic violence, runaways and divorce all indicate greater effects in the community when compared to the State.

## 2. Extreme Economic Deprivation.

Family management problems and conflict occur often in situations of family stress. A significant stress on families is poverty. While the following data show some gains for Nueces County, these have not mirrored the improvements elsewhere in the State. Extreme Economic Deprivation remains an important risk factor for this community.

Nueces County clearly demonstrates worse economic conditions than the Nation or the State. One way of looking at economic deprivation is through the use of per capita income figures. In 1992, per capita income for the Nation was \$20,146. For Texas, it was only \$18,408 and for Nueces County it was only \$17,013. Per capita income in Nueces County was only 87.9% of the State figure and 79.5% of the National one.

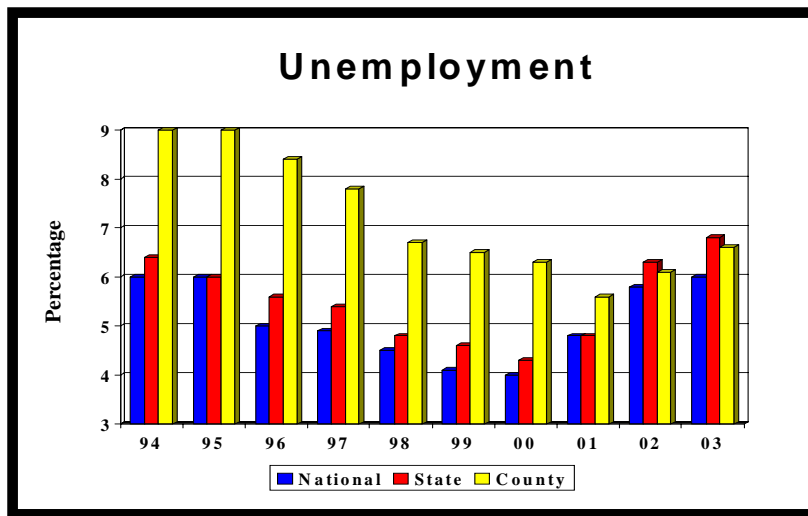


By 2002, per capita income for the Nation was \$30,832 and Texas it was \$28,401. It was \$25,961 for Nueces County. Therefore, in 2002 the per capita income in Nueces County was only 91.4% of the State figure and 84.2% of the National figure. The change in ten years has only been slight. It is important to recall the population information

provided earlier. The County's families have less income for more people. This can be seen in the following indicators.

The median household income for the Nation, State, and County levels has been steadily increasing since 1990. The State, however, ranks behind the National level with the 2002 median income being \$42,409 compared to the National median of \$43,760 a difference of \$1,351. The County median ranks even lower than the State's. In 2002, the County's median household income was \$36,023. The County's median is \$6,386 less than the State and \$7,737 less than the National median.

The income information means that the smaller numbers of wage earners in the community definitely make less than those in other parts of the State. It becomes obvious that with more dependents and fewer dollars, families in the community are likely to be under greater economic stress.



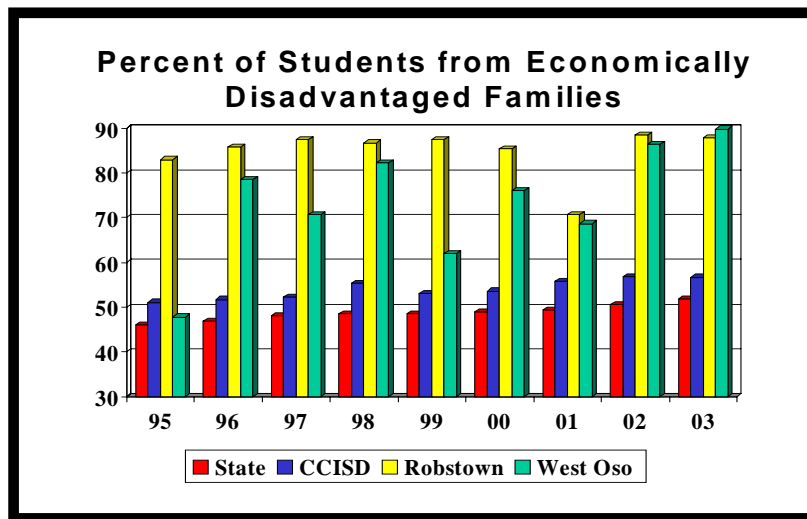
Unemployment in the County has historically been higher than State levels. It is possible to demonstrate this with data extending back more than forty years. More recently, from 1994 to 2001, State unemployment dropped 1.6 percentage points for an improvement of 25.0%. For the County, unemployment dropped 3.3 percentage points for a 36.0% improvement. Since 1994 the County unemployment rate remained about 2 percentage points higher than that for the State. However, in 2002 the County reported an unemployment rate of 6.1%, which was 0.2 percentage points lower than the State. For the first time in decades, County unemployment was lower than the State even though it has increased from 2001 to 2003.

The proportion of families living below the poverty level has been gradually decreasing for the Nation and the State. In Nueces County, the proportion of families living below the poverty level has increased by 1.5% or a difference of 7.2% between 1989 and 1999 figures. The proportion of families in poverty for Nueces County in 1999 was 35% higher than that for the State. From 1999 to 2002 the proportion of families

living in poverty decreased 21.8% for the State and 19.3% for Nueces County. Yet, the County rate remains 39.5% higher than the State.

Economic deprivation can also be seen by the school district data on children from economically disadvantaged families. A greater proportion of Nueces County children in its largest school district are from economically disadvantaged families than the State. Pockets of even greater poverty are reflected by the Robstown ISD and West Oso ISD data.

These proportions in 2003 ranged as low as 32.8% for Calallen ISD to as high as 89.8% for West Oso ISD. The largest school district, CCISD, reported over 50.0% of its students in the last nine years on economic assistance. The proportions of students from economically disadvantaged families in most Nueces County school districts have remained stable over the past three years. Summed across all of the reporting districts in the County, it appears that a majority of local school children come from economically disadvantaged families.



The number of families and children in poverty has increased in Nueces County since 1989, while it has decreased nationally and statewide. Economic growth has not extended to Nueces County families in poverty. This lack of growth is reflected in the fact that unemployment has returned to higher level. And that income for Nueces County residents remains well below that for the State and is even lower when compared to national data.

The percent of children living in poverty has decreased for the State level from 28.6% in 1993 to 20.5% in 1999. The percent of children living in poverty has also declined in Nueces County from 32.2% in 1993 to 24.5% in 1999, but returned to a higher proportion, 31.0% by 2002.

An increase has occurred in the number of infants and children receiving assistance through the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program at both the State and County levels. A 13.2% increase occurred from 1996 to 2001 at the State level while a 19.2% increase occurred for Nueces County during the same time period. In 2001, 10,408 children received WIC in Nueces County.

The percent of persons uninsured for ages 18 and under are significantly higher in Nueces County than at the National and State level. In 1999, the percent of all uninsured persons under 18, at the National level was 11.8%, the State was at 25.0% and the County it was at 27.6%.

From 1993 to 2002, the State and County experienced an increase in Children in Head Start Programs. When examining the number of children in the program at the State level an increase of 88.9% occurred during this time period and for the County it was 39.2%. However, the proportion of children in Head Start in 2001 for the State was only 9.3% while in the County it was 11.8%.

The number of children on State subsidized childcare has increased significantly from 1992 to 2002 at both the State and County levels. At the State level, an increase of 359.7% occurred from 1992 to 2002. At the County level, there was a 274.8% increase from 1992 to 1999. However, Nueces County experienced 24% decrease from 1999 to 2002. In 1999, a dramatic increase occurred at both State and County levels. This appears to be due to a policy or legal change.

Children in families receiving Food Stamps have drastically decreased from 1993 to 2001 at both the State and County levels. A decrease of 57.4% occurred during this time period for the State and a 44.2% decrease in the County. However, from 2001 to 2003 both the State and County experienced an increase of children in families receiving Food Stamps. For the State, it was 31.5% and in Nueces County it was 29.5%.

The number of children enrolled in Medicaid has decreased at both the State and County levels. From 1994 to 2001, at the State level a 16.8% decrease occurred and at the County a decrease of 8.1% occurred. For the first time since 1994 an increase has occurred at both the State and County levels. From 2001 to 2002, an increase 40.0% occurred at the State level and for Nueces County it was 16.7%.

The number of children in families receiving Texas Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) decreased significantly from 1992 to 2002 at both the State and County levels. During this time period a decrease of 49.2% occurred at the State level and a 47.0% decrease occurred at the County level. When examining the percent of children in families receiving TANF in 2001, the County had a higher percent enrolled as compared to the State.

Recipients of Food Stamps, Medicaid, and TANF declined in Nueces County. However, from 2000 to 2003 an increase of 38.7% occurred for food stamps recipients and 25.2% for Medicaid.

These data show that while most indicators of poverty have remained stable or increased, the number of individuals receiving State aid has decreased. Simply put, in Nueces County, poverty has not decreased, State assistance has. The data for 2000 to 2003 appear to indicate that the level of poverty for larger numbers of families has increased, thus returning them to eligibility for assistance.

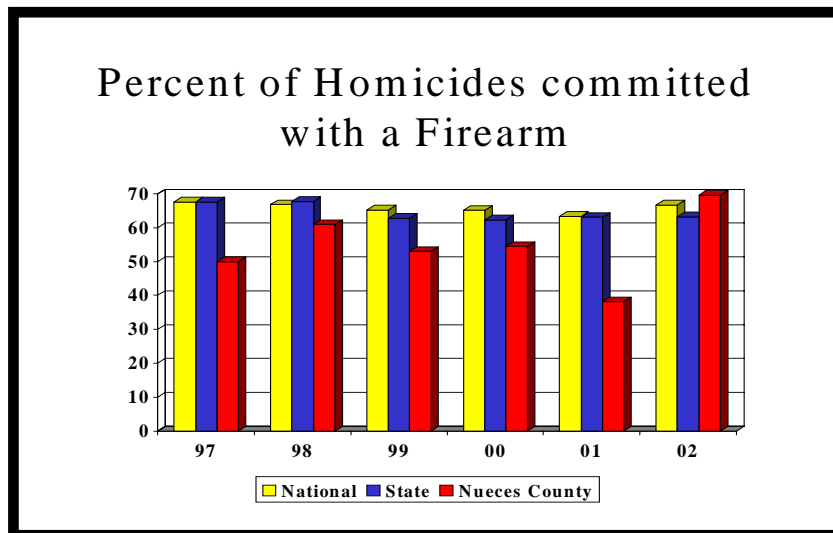
These data indicators demonstrate that extreme economic deprivation is a significant risk factor for the community.

### 3. Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior.

Children whose parents or guardians engage in problem behaviors are likely to engage in the same behaviors. A clear pattern appears between the data indicators for this risk factor and Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior by juveniles. For both, declines are observed in violent and property crimes. Conversely, indicators of drug and alcohol abuse are increasing or remaining stable for both adults and juveniles.

Adult violent crime arrests appear to have declined in the State. From 1994 to 2000, violent crime arrests declined 19.2% in Texas but slightly increased 5.1% from 2000 to 2002. In Nueces County, violent crime arrests from 1994 to 1995 increased 8.9%; however, between 1995 and 2000 violent crime decreased 33.4% but slightly increased to 7.6% from 2000 to 2001 and slightly decreased in 2002.

Homicides committed with firearms appear to have increased in the State. From 1996 to 1998 it increased 2.1%, but from 1998 to 2000 it decreased 8.1% and slightly increased in 2001. In Nueces County, homicides committed with firearms increased by 22% from 1997 to 1998, but from 1998 to 2001 it decreased 37.5%. A significant increase occurred from 2001 to 2002 of 70.2% for Nueces County; whereas the State had a very slight increase.

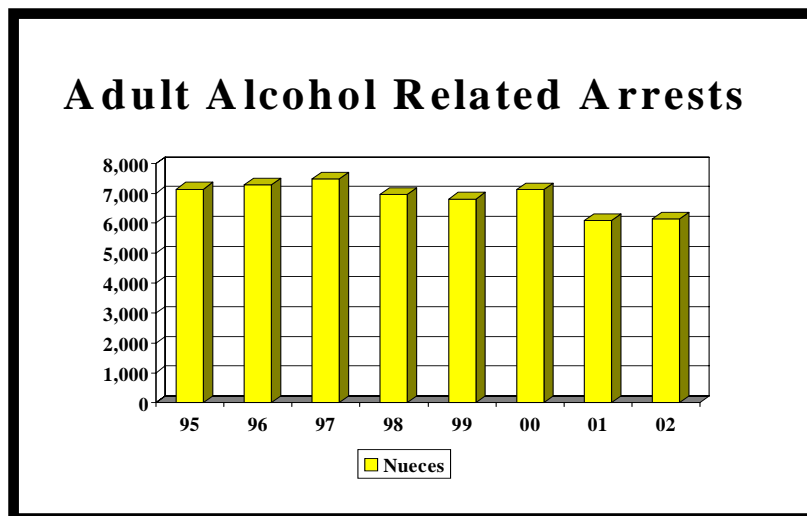


Robberies committed with firearms appear to have decreased in the State from 1995 to 1998 but showed an 8.3% increase from 1998 to 2002. In Nueces County, robberies committed with firearms from 1997 to 1998 decreased 25.9%, however, from 1998 to 2000 it increased 28.8% and dropped 11.0% in 2001 with another slight increase in 2002.

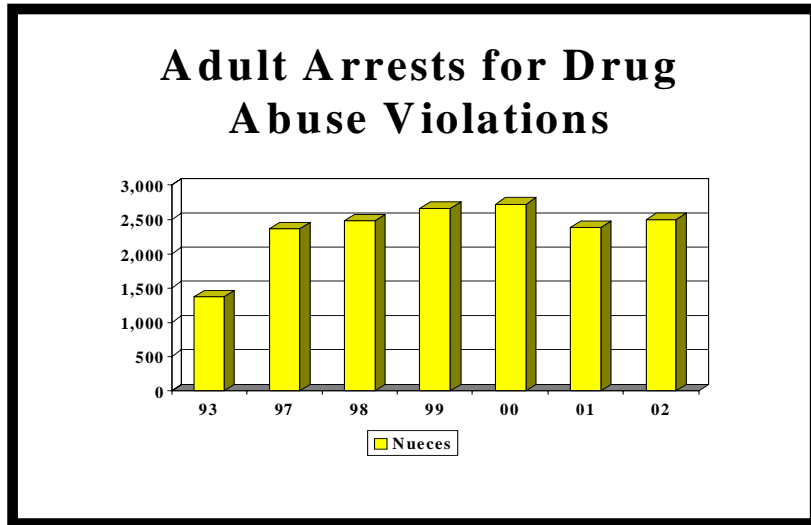
Aggravated assaults committed with firearms appear to have declined in the State. From 1995 to 2000, a decrease of 26% occurred but slightly increased in 2002. The pattern is similar for Nueces County, from 1997 to 2002 a decrease of 21.0% in aggravated assaults committed with firearms was recorded.

Adult property crimes arrests appear to have declined in the State. From 1997 to 2000, property crime arrests declined 13.9% but increased 14.1% from 2000 to 2002. In Nueces County, property crime arrests decreased 20.5% from 1997 to 2001, but slightly increased in 2002.

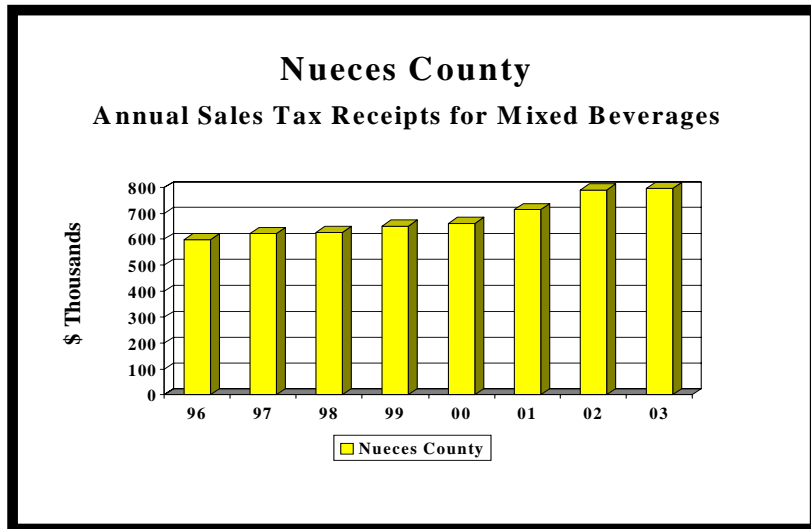
Adult alcohol related arrests appear to have also declined in the State. From 1995 to 2002, alcohol related arrests declined 15.2% in Texas. In Nueces County, from 1995 to 1999 alcohol related arrests declined by only 4.6%. However, reviewing that trend from 1999 to 2000 an increase of 4.7% occurred but declined 14.5% from 2000 to 2001 and slightly increased again in 2002.



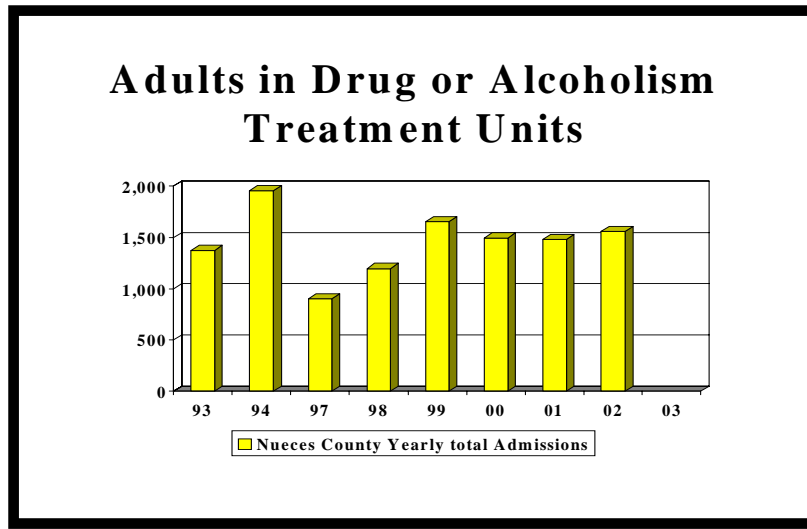
Adult arrests for drug abuse violations appear to have increased 9.4% in the State from 1997 to 2000 but decreased 3.3% from 2000 to 2002. However, in Nueces County, a steady increase has been demonstrated. From 1997 to 2000, drug abuse violations increased 15.3% but decreased 12.6% from 2000 to 2001 and then increased again in 2002.



Nueces County sales of alcoholic beverages have remained relatively stable. Gross total liquor store sales for Corpus Christi MSA increased 47.8% from 1993 to 2003. Nueces County annual sales tax receipts for mixed beverages increased 39.8% from 1993 to 2003.



The number of adults in alcohol or drug treatment units has fluctuated in the State from 1994 to 2002. Overall, a decline can be seen in the number of adults in treatment. The number of adults in drug or alcoholism treatments facilities decreased 53.9% from 1994 to 1997 for Nueces County. From 1997 to 2002, there was an increase of 72.9%. Clearly, alcohol and drug use are problems among the adult population in Nueces County.



The long-term effects of alcohol abuse can be seen by the startling figures on the number of deaths due to liver disease and cirrhosis. The figures indicate that Nueces County has a much higher death rate due to liver disease and cirrhosis than the State. Since 1997 the rate for the State has been decreasing, but the rate for the Nueces County has been increasing at an alarming rate (See slide under heading **Family History of High Risk Behavior**).

The Safe Communities project reported from a 2002 survey of 503 Nueces County residents that 19.4% state that they have driven after consuming alcohol and 7.1% have driven after consuming a mind-altering drug in the past month.

Statewide data reported in 1990 indicated that 40% of mothers used alcohol or drugs within the year of pregnancy and 28% used alcohol or drugs during pregnancy. No additional or local data were found concerning this indicator. The data that is available at this time is from a 1996 report by The Institute of Medicine's Committee to Study Fetal Alcohol Syndrome which found that various studies report FAS affects from 0.5 to 3 per 1,000 births in most communities.

At this time no National monitoring of the extent of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) exists. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has sponsored monitoring in five states to create such a system. Current CDC estimates range from .3 to 1.5 per 1,000 live births. Higher rates were found among poor populations. Rates for alcohol-related neurodevelopment disorder and alcohol-related birth defects are thought to be three times greater than FAS rates. Given the high incidence of poverty and indicators of alcohol use in Nueces County, the community should be concerned with these alcohol related birth defects.

The indicators for **Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior** of drug and alcohol abuse are strikingly clear. It is likely that these adult behaviors are sending a powerful message to the children of Nueces County. Evidence for this conclusion is found among the data indicators that follow.

#### **4. Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior.**

Generally, it has been demonstrated that the earlier children begin their involvement in problem behaviors, the more serious and longer that involvement becomes. Children from families in conflict, experiencing economic stress, and provided with inappropriate role models are at high risk of engaging in the five problem behaviors at an early age. The data indicators reported below confirm that this is happening in the community.

Theft in middle schools and junior highs seems to be a problem in Nueces County. When participants of the 2000 YOU survey were asked if they had experienced any type of theft at their school, 16.7% report they had. This compares to the national average that shows only 14 % of 13 and 14 year olds have experienced theft at their schools.

The YOU survey data also indicated that Nueces County middle school students were carrying guns and knives to school. When the students were if they carried a gun to school one or more days, 3.6% indicated they had. Compared to the national data, the percentage is essentially the same among 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders. Also, 8.5% of Nueces County middle school students reported carrying a knife to school one or more days.

Violence arrests for the 10 to 14 age groups have declined in the State and County. Arrests declined from 1995 to 2002 by 34.8% in the State. According to the Nueces County Juvenile Probation Department, violent offenses declined 35.7% for Nueces County from 1995 to 2003 with a slight increase from 2001 to 2002. When examining the data from the Texas Uniform Crime Report, arrests for violence decreased 53.7% from 1997 to 2002 for Nueces County but had increased 32.1 % from 2000 to 2001.

However, when all arrests are considered, Nueces County has a higher rate of arrests of 10 to 14 year olds than the State or Nation. A National Institute of Justice report indicates that 10 to 14 year olds made up 32% of all juveniles arrested in 1996. For Texas, the proportion was 38%, and for Nueces County it was 41%. When limited to 10 to 12 year olds, the National proportion was 9%. For Texas, it was 8.6% and for Nueces County it was 9.6%. This is clear evidence that problem behaviors begin earlier in the community when compared to the State.

Arrests of juveniles in the 10 to 14 age group for property crimes have declined in the State and County. For the State, arrests declined from 1997 to 2003 by 38.4%. Arrests declined 75.8% for Nueces County from 1997 to 2001 but increased 50.4% from 2001 to 2003.

The abuse of alcohol and drugs among the adult population in Nueces County appears to spill over to the problem behaviors of the juveniles. The juvenile data suggest that the behavior of the juveniles in regard to alcohol and drug use mirrors that of the adults in Nueces County.

Referrals of juveniles to the Juvenile Probation Department in the 10 to 14 age group for drug abuse violations have increased in the State and County. From 1995 to 1999, referrals for these offenses increased 31% in the State and fluctuated from 1999 to 2002. According to the Nueces County Juvenile Probation Department from 1995 to 1999, arrests for these offenses increased 60% in Nueces County. However, from 1999 to 2003, referrals for Nueces County decreased 35.2%.



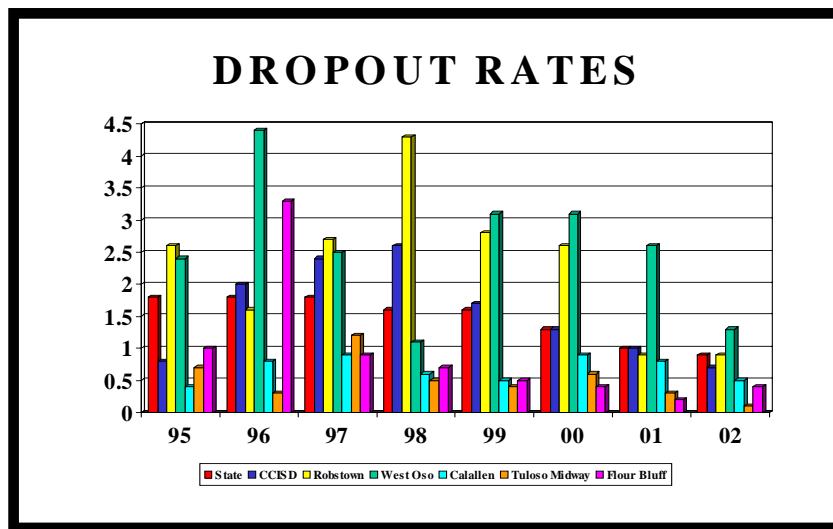
The YOU survey data indicated that Nueces County students begin their participation in the problem behaviors of drug and alcohol use at an early age. The YOU survey indicated that 16% of the students began their use of drugs or alcohol at age 10 and an additional 29.6% began by age 13. Of those students responding to the survey, 17.8% report attending school under the influence of alcohol or drugs at least one or more days in the school year. The students' drug and alcohol use also leads to trouble with teachers, police, and friends. In regards to teachers and police, this trouble occurs more frequently among Nueces County students than is reported by students statewide.

Significantly, juveniles entering TCADA funded treatment for drug abuse in the County have tended to report their first use of alcohol or marijuana at an earlier age than the rest of the State. For example, the average age of first use for juveniles entering treatment in Nueces County was 8 for alcohol and 11 for marijuana in 1996. For both of these substances, the State figure was 12 years of age. The average age in 2000 in Nueces County was 12 for both of the substances, but it was 13 for State. However, 2001 was the first year in the past five years that juveniles in the County reported starting their

first use of alcohol at a later age as compared to the State and in 2002 the age was the same for both the State and County for alcohol (13 years) and marijuana (12 years).

In a 1996 study, the longitudinal dropout rate for Texas was 9.1%, while for CCISD it was 13.4%, and for Robstown ISD it was 15.3%. In a 2000 study, the longitudinal rate for Texas dropped to 7.2% and for CCISD it dropped to 7.7%. However, for Robstown ISD, it increased from 15.3% in 1996 to 18.9% in 2000. Calallen ISD, Flour Bluff ISD, Tulo-so-Midway ISD, and West Oso ISD all demonstrated a drop from the 1996 longitudinal study to the 2000 longitudinal study.

In the 2001 school year, the annual dropout rate for most of the school districts in Nueces County was either at or below the State. The only exception was West Oso ISD.



In review, rates of arrests for drug and alcohol offenses in Nueces County remain above the State average. Nueces County children appear to start their use of alcohol and marijuana at a younger age than the State average.

Also, as noted above, available data indicate that dropout at an early age occurs more frequently in Nueces County than in the State. In general, dropout remains a problem for school districts covering a majority of students in the County.

It is useful to consider teen pregnancy as an alternate data indicator for this risk factor. It was noted earlier that this problem is greater here than in the State as a whole. See the risk factor **Friends who Engage in the Problem Behavior**.

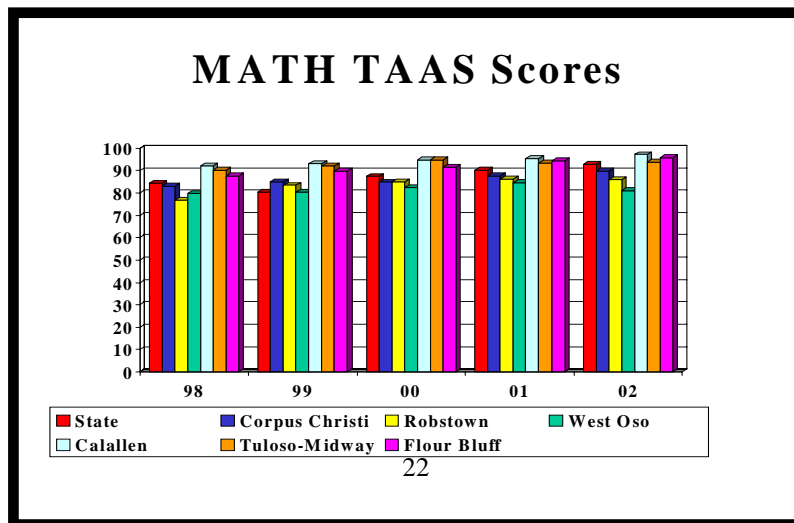
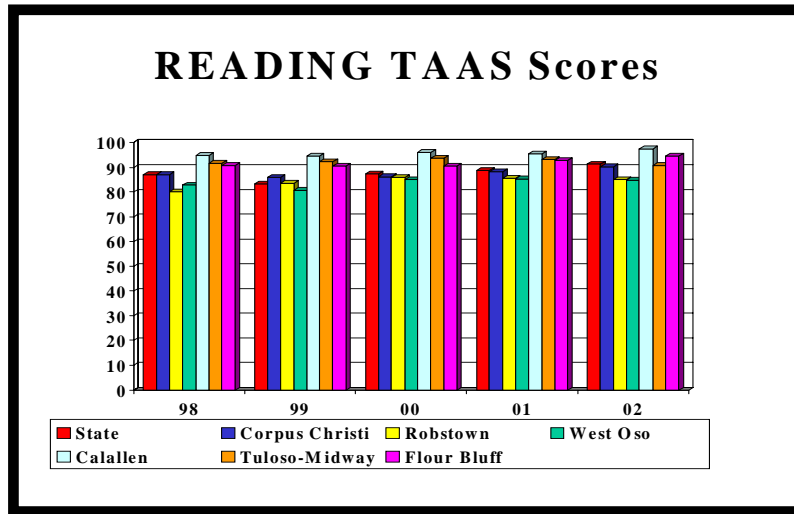
From these data indicators, it may be concluded that **early initiation of the problem behavior is present in the community**.

**RISK FACTORS WITH CLEAR IMPACT IN THE COMMUNITY**

The following eight risk factors are supported by data indicators for which adequate data are available. The data permit the conclusion that these risk factors are present and are contributing to the presence of delinquency in the community.

**Early Academic Failure:** The data indicator for this risk factor is the proportion of eligible students scoring at or above the Texas Education Agency accountability criteria on the SAT or ACT. For the 1993 to 1996 school years, this was reported as the proportion of all students eligible to take the exams but changed to the proportion of students taking the exam in the 1996-1997 school year. On this indicator, Robstown, West Oso, Tuloso-Midway, and Corpus Christi ISD's have had lower proportions than the State for the last three years. Flour Bluff ISD's proportion has consistently remained higher than the State, whereas, the other five school districts have fluctuated from year to year.

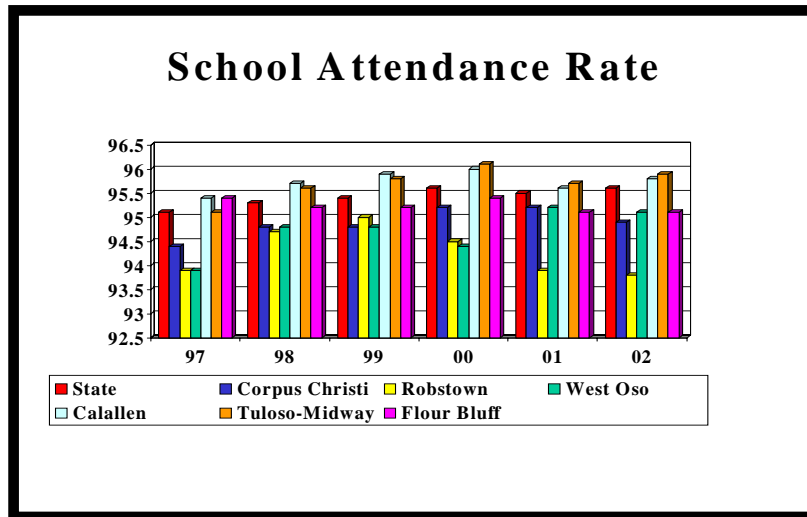
Reading and Math proficiency is improving in the State and within the County's school districts. As measured by the TAAS test, both reading and math test scores have improved over the past five academic years for the State and for the six largest school districts in Nueces County. However, for three of these school districts, CCISD, Robstown ISD, and West Oso ISD representing a majority of the students in the County, test scores have been below the State average for both reading and math.



In the 2002 – 2003 academic year, Texas implemented the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), system of exams to replace the TAAS. For that year, the proportion passing the Reading test was lower than the State in only the Tuloso-Midway and West Oso ISD's. For the Math test, the proportion passing was lower than the State in the Corpus Christi and West Oso ISD's.

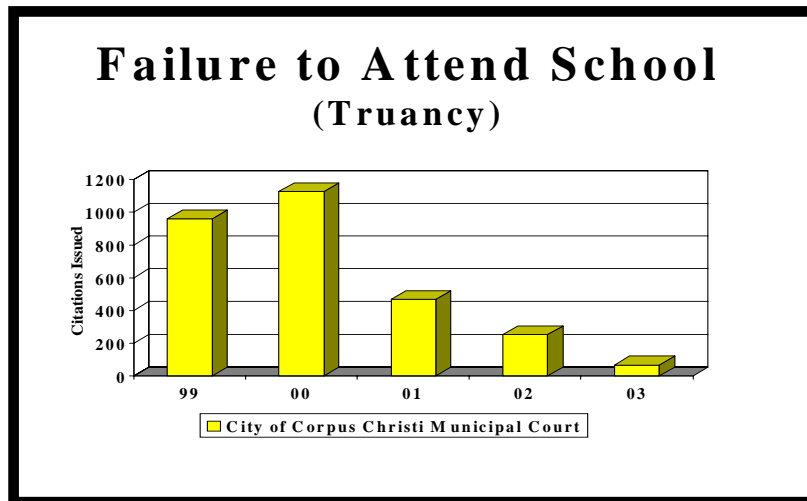
These indicators support the conclusion that early academic failure is present in the community.

**Lack of Commitment to School:** Two of the five largest school districts in this County (Callallen and Tuloso-Midway) have had higher attendance rates than the State since 1994. However, a decline has been experienced from 2000 to 2002. Flour Bluff ISD's attendance rate was higher than the State from 1994 until the 1997 – 1998 when it dropped below to State average through 2002. The attendance rate for Corpus Christi, Robstown, and West Oso school districts have been lower than the State's since 1995 – 1996.



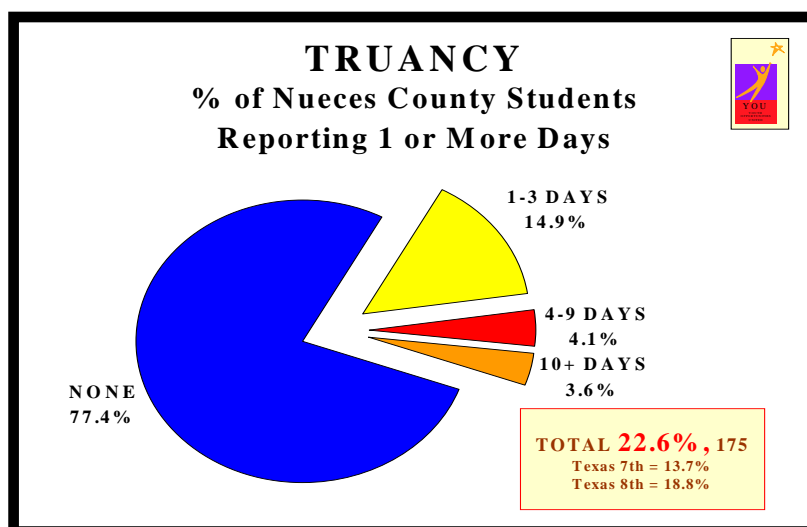
Truancy appears to be declining in the State and Nueces County. From 1995 to 2002, the number of truancy reports declined 47.9% in the State. According to the data from the Nueces County Juvenile Probation Department truancy reports declined 90.5% from 1995 to 2003. Data on official arrest and referral to the Juvenile Department indicate that truancy has been dropping for the past several years in Nueces County.

Data from the Corpus Christi Municipal Court showed a decrease in failure to attend school (truancy) violations from 1999 to 2001. In 2000, there were 1,127 violations. That number has decreased to 67 as of 2003.



When examining the data gathered from the Precincts in Nueces County on failure to attend school (truancy) from 1998 to 2003 the numbers overall show an increase in truancy violations for most of the Precincts.

The data from the YOU Middle School/Junior High Student Survey – 2000, indicated that truancy was a sizeable problem. Students were asked about how many days (if any) had they missed a whole day of school because they “skipped” or “cut.” Of those responding, 22.6% reported missing one or more days of school. In comparison, only 13.7% of 7<sup>th</sup> graders and 18.8% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders statewide indicated that they were truant during the previous school year.



Given the data indicators here and considering the dropout, literacy, and high school completion indicators, it may be concluded that early academic failure and lack of commitment to school are risk factors with influence in the community.

A connection to the Priority Risk Factors can be seen here. Economic growth is heavily dependent upon a workforce that can perform well in today's market. Our community cannot offer as high a proportion of high school educated, literate, prospective employees as other communities can. Thus, we are unable to compete for new businesses and industries as well. As a result, salaries remain low and unemployment remains high. Economic stress on families is perpetuated. Perhaps adults use drugs or alcohol to escape the stress, and thus, provide negative role models for youth.

**Rebelliousness:** Nueces County reported 52 suicides in 1994, 33 in 1996, 37 in 1997, 21 in 1998, 30 in 1999 and 34 in 2000. Juvenile suicides in the County were reported as 5 in 1994, 1 in 1995, 2 in 1996, 4 in 1997, and 0 in 1998. Data was unavailable for juvenile suicides in 1999 and 2000. These numbers are too small for use in making valid conclusions.

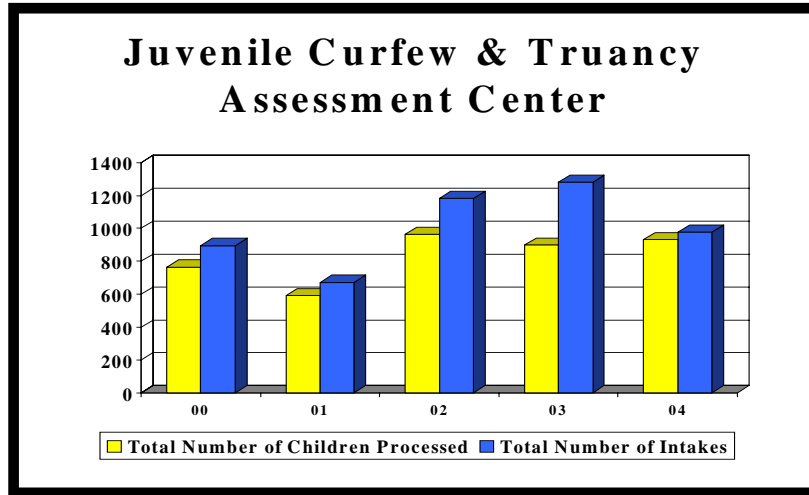
Reported gang involvement measured by the number of known juvenile gang members. The Juvenile Enforcement Team of the Corpus Christi Police Department reported 124 members in 1993 and only 65 known juvenile gang members in 2003.

Of those students responding to the YOU Middle School/Junior High School Survey - 2000, 44.8% indicated gangs existed in their school. This compares to the national data that shows 12.1% of 12 year olds, 14.5% of 13 year olds, and 17.9% of 14 year olds reported street gangs present at their schools.

Vandalism arrests in the State have decreased 33.4% from 1994 to 2001 and slightly increased in 2003. Incidents of vandalism reported to the Corpus Christi Police Department decreased 16.7% from 1995 to 2000 but increased 21.2% from 2000 to 2002 and again slightly decreased in 2003.

In September 1999, the Juvenile Assessment Center opened its doors. The JAC is designed to decrease juvenile crime in Corpus Christi by providing assessment and case management services to juveniles at risk of delinquency. For their first year in operation, the JAC had 897 intakes and processed 766 children. This represents a significantly larger number of juveniles engaged in truancy and curfew violations than previously recorded. The number children processed and intakes increased in 2002 and 2003 but slightly decreased in 2004.

With the present data indicators, it is believed that this risk factor is presently contributing to delinquency in Nueces County.



**Favorable Attitudes Toward the Problem Behavior:** Texas school children perceive alcohol and marijuana use as dangerous. For alcohol, the proportion of 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> graders that perceived alcohol use as dangerous has remained steady from 1996 to 2002 at 91.9%. However, some disturbing details are present in these data in regard to 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. The proportion of students perceiving alcohol use as very dangerous was much less than their younger counterparts. In 2002 only 77.5% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders viewed alcohol as dangerous as compared to 78.7% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 83.8% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

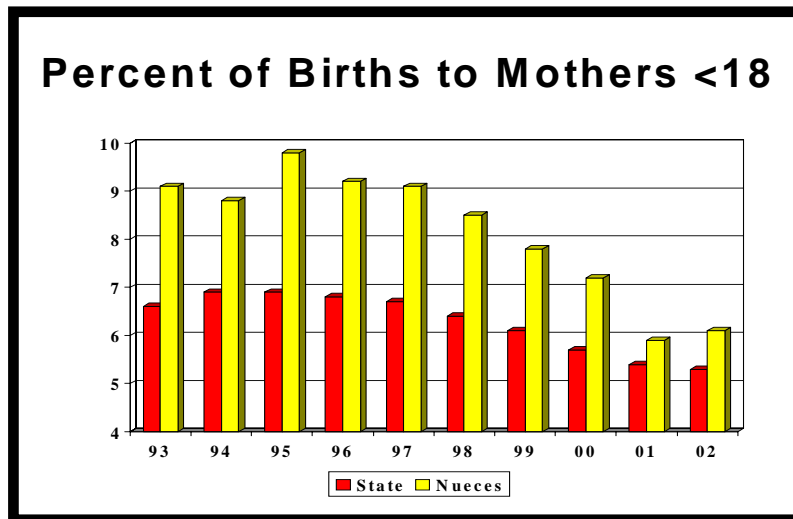
For marijuana, the proportion of 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> graders perceiving it as very dangerous declined from 89.3% in 1996 to 86.3% in 2002. In the 2002 data, the proportion of students perceiving marijuana use as very dangerous declined from 82.6% of 8th graders to only 70.3% of 12th graders.

When the students that participated in the YOU Middle School/Junior High Student Survey-2000 were asked about the seriousness of drugs, drinking, and smoking/chewing tobacco, most did not see any of these areas as serious problems in their school. Only 17.8% viewed drugs as a serious or very serious problem, even less viewed drinking as a problem, 14.7%, and only 10.9% thought that smoking/chewing tobacco was a serious problem.

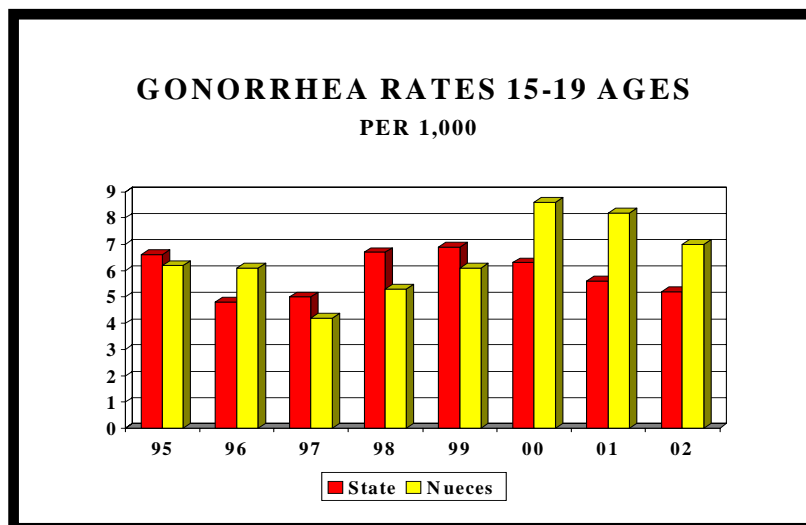
The data in regard to juvenile drug and alcohol arrests and arrests of juveniles in the 10 to 14 age groups reported earlier demonstrates drugs and alcohol use is a serious problem in Nueces County. The significant increase in drug arrests may be related to the changes in attitudes demonstrated in the State and local data. It is believed that this risk factor is present in the community.

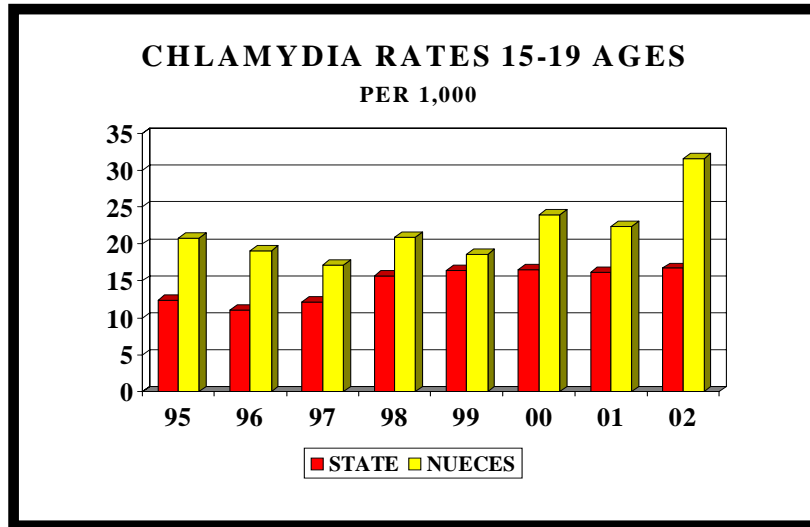
**Friends Who Engage in the Problem Behavior:** Adolescent pregnancies appear to be a significant problem for Nueces County when compared to the State. The

proportion of live births that were to mothers under 18 years of age in the State has remained about 6.9% over the 1994 -1996 time period. The figures for Nueces County have varied from a low of 7.8% in 1994 to a high of 9.7% in 1995. The 1995 high placed the County as first in the State for births to teen mothers. The 9.3% figure for 1996 indicated that Nueces County had the highest proportion of births to this age group among the 9 most populated counties in the State. Even though the rate of adolescent pregnancies in Nueces County has decreased between 1995 and 2001, the rates are still higher than the State.



Reported cases of adolescents diagnosed with sexually transmitted diseases were also examined. From 2000 to 2002, the rate of adolescents per 1,000 diagnosed with gonorrhea has been consistently higher for the State than for Nueces County. When examining chlamydia, the rate for Nueces County during the same time period was much higher than that of the State. For example, in 2002 the rate of adolescents diagnosed with chlamydia in Nueces County was 89.2% higher than the State rate.





Adolescents carrying weapons to school was another indicator examined. According to the YOU survey data, 15.6% reported that their friends have carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club to school in the last four weeks.

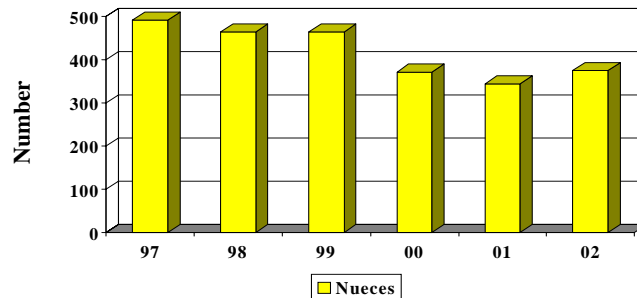
Juvenile arrests for property crime in the State dropped 31.6% from 1997 to 2002. In Nueces County, juvenile property crime arrests dropped 69.8% from 1997 to 2002, more than double that of the State.

The best data available concerning reported marijuana and alcohol use by friends of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders comes from statewide surveys conducted every other year from 1994 to 2002. Additionally, 4th to 6th graders were surveyed in 1994 and 2002. From 1994 to 2002 an increased proportion of students at all grades reported that some or all of their friends used marijuana.

The use of alcohol by friends of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders also comes from statewide surveys conducted every other year from 1994 to 2002. Additionally, 4th to 6th graders were surveyed in 1994 and 2002. From 1994 to 2002 a decreased proportion of students at all grades reported that some or all of their friends used alcohol.

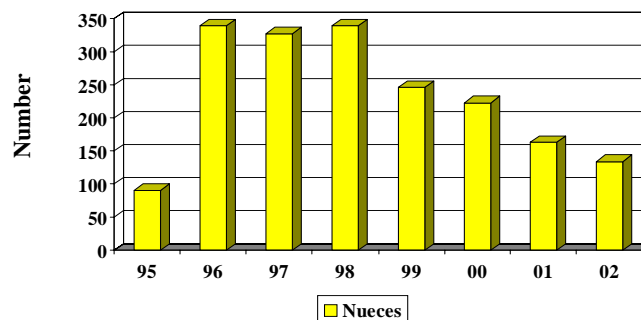
Juvenile alcohol related arrests also seem to be a significant problem. Juvenile arrests for alcohol related violations from 1996 to 1998 increased by 14.9% in the State but decreased by 15.5% from 1998 to 2002. The County juvenile alcohol related arrests demonstrated a 4.8% increase from 1996 to 1998 but showed a decrease of 26.0% from 1998 to 2001 and increased slightly in 2002.

## Juvenile Alcohol Related Arrests



For Texas, the number of juveniles in drug treatment facilities funded by the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA) increased 75% from 1995 to 1999 but dropped 17.8% from 1999 to 2002. Nueces County recorded a significant increase of 272.5% from 1995 to 1998 but from 1998 to 2002 dropped 81.5%. The significant drop in 2002 may reflect a reduction in funding to the County rather than a difference in juveniles needing treatment. No data has been obtained concerning other drug treatment programs operating in the County beyond those funded by TCADA. Data from other treatment programs needs to be obtained.

## Adolescents in Treatment for Alcohol or Drug Use



It is clear from the drug treatment, births to teen mothers, adolescents diagnosed with STDs, and weapons in schools data indicators that this risk factor is present in the community.

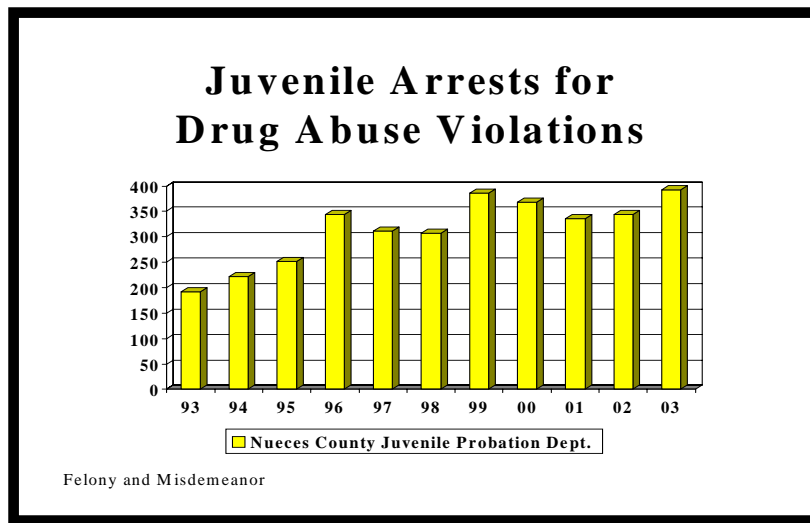
**Availability of Drugs:** A statewide survey performed every two years from 1992 to 1998 with students in various grades indicates that Texas school children in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades find marijuana and alcohol about as available as national samples. Clearly, significant more Texas school children found alcohol and marijuana easily available in 1998 than did in 1992. Children in elementary and middle schools also reported the availability of these drugs. Some 10% of 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> graders report that they had been offered marijuana, and one third reported that they had been offered alcohol within the past year.

According to the YOU Middle School/Junior High Student Survey-2000, alcoholic beverages are readily available to middle school children in Nueces County. Many of them or 26.5%, report that they often get their alcoholic beverages from parties, 18.3% from friends, 6.5% at home, 3.5% from a store, and 13.5% from other sources.

In Nueces County, the sales of alcoholic beverages have remained relatively stable from 1993 to 2003. Gross total liquor store sales for Corpus Christi MSA have remained relatively stable. Annual sales tax receipts for mixed beverages in Nueces County have increased 39.8% from 1993 to 2003.

Additional data indicators should be sought for this risk factor focused on drugs other than alcohol. Still, it may be concluded that alcohol and marijuana are increasingly available in the community.

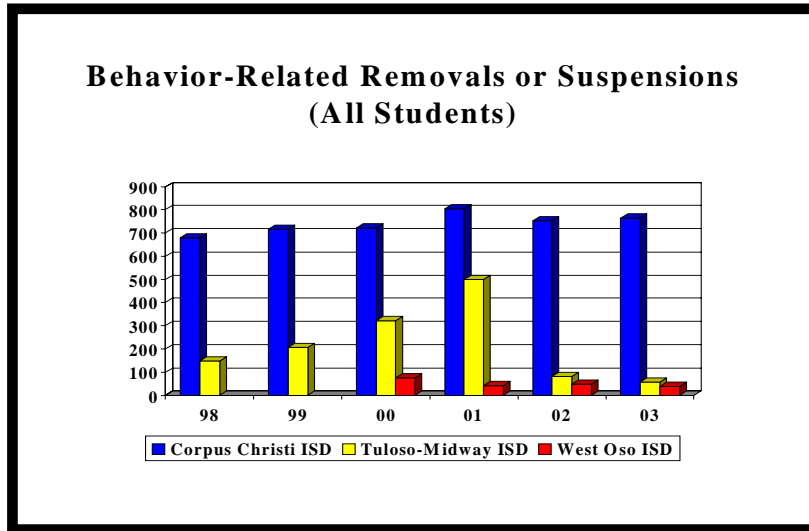
**Community Laws and Norms Favorable toward the Problem Behaviors:** Juvenile arrests for drug abuse violations from 1994 to 1997 increased 41.2% in the State but from 1997 to 2002 the number of arrests fluctuated. However, a 9.5% decrease occurred from 1997 to 2002 for the State. According to the Nueces County Juvenile Probation Department, between 1993 and 1999 juvenile drug offenses have increased 101% for Nueces County. A decrease of 12.9% occurred from 1999 to 2002 and a slight increase occurred in 2003. However, County juvenile drug offenses have demonstrated a dramatic 522.2% increase from 1990 to 2003. These data are a clear indication that the community has a serious juvenile drug use problem.



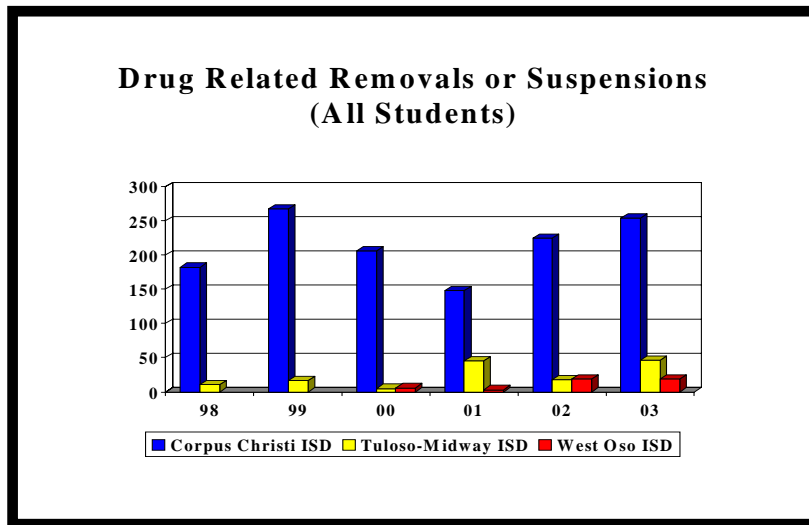
Based on the YOU survey data, drug and alcohol use is a serious problem among 8<sup>th</sup> graders in Nueces County. In comparison to State and National survey data, greater proportions of Nueces County students reported use of most forms of alcohol and drugs. Fewer Nueces County students reported use of inhalants. For beer and uppers Nueces County students reported very similar use compared to students statewide. For all other drugs, Nueces County students reported disturbingly higher levels of use.

Juvenile arrests for violent crime in the State dropped 30.2% from 1997 to 2002. In Nueces County, juvenile violent crime arrests have dropped 56.6% from 1997 to 2001. According to the Nueces County Probation Department, juvenile violent crime offenses had decreased 56.8% from 1995 to 2001 before increasing in 2002 and slightly decreasing again in 2003.

Significant for this risk factor is the issue of school discipline. Data are available for disciplinary removals and suspensions and also for expulsions. Only charts for removals and suspensions are provided. CCISD reports an increase of 18.3% from 1998 to 2001 in behavior-related removals or suspensions. In 2002 a decrease occurred in CCISD, but an increase occurred in 2003. Tuloso-Midway reports an increase of 237.2% from 1998 to 2001 for behavior-related removals or suspension and then a significant decrease of 88.9% from 2001 to 2003. In regard to behavior-related expulsions, CCISD experienced a decrease of 70.4% from 1998 to 2003. During this same time period, Tuloso-Midway only reported 31 behavior-related expulsions and West Oso reported only 11.



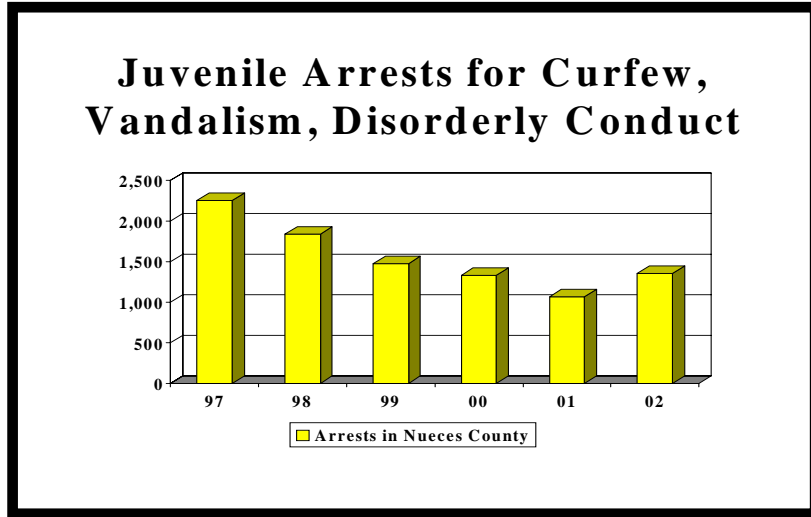
CCISD reports a decrease of 55.3% from 1997 to 2001 for drug-related removals or suspensions. However, CCISD incidents increased 71.6% from 2001 to 2003. Tuloso-Midway also showed a significant increase of 309.1% from 1997 to 2001 for drug-related removals or suspensions and a slight decrease in 2002 and again another increase in 2003.



CCISD experienced a 1,433.3% increase from 1997 to 2002 for drug-related expulsion with a slight decrease in 2003. Tuloso-Midway ISD experienced 22 incidents in 2002. West Oso ISD only experienced 3 drug-related expulsions from 2001 to 2003.

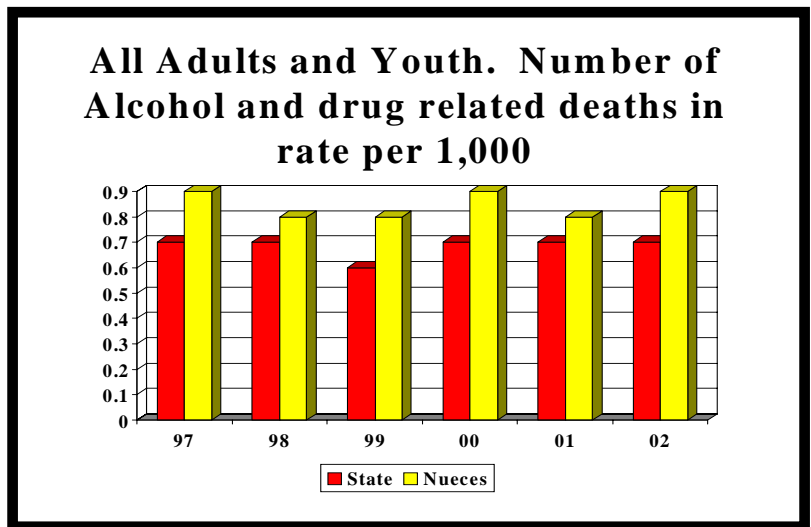
Numerous attempts have been made to obtain discipline data from the other school districts in the County but have been unsuccessful. Further attempts will be made to collect the data.

The YOU survey data indicates that bullying is a problem among middle school and junior high students. Of those participating in the survey, 16.7% have experienced incidents of bullying during the school year. This compares to the national data that shows only 11% of 7<sup>th</sup> graders and only 9% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders experienced incidents of bullying.



Juvenile arrests for curfew, vandalism, and disorderly conduct have increased in the State 42.7% from 1994 to 1998 but then decreased 30.5% from 1998 to 2001 and increased again in 2003. Arrests for these offenses in Nueces County declined by 52.5% from 1997 – 2001 but increased 26.4% from 2001 to 2002. It cannot be determined if this was a change in juvenile behavior or of police enforcement practice. The data need to be extended over a greater number of years to determine if a trend is occurring.

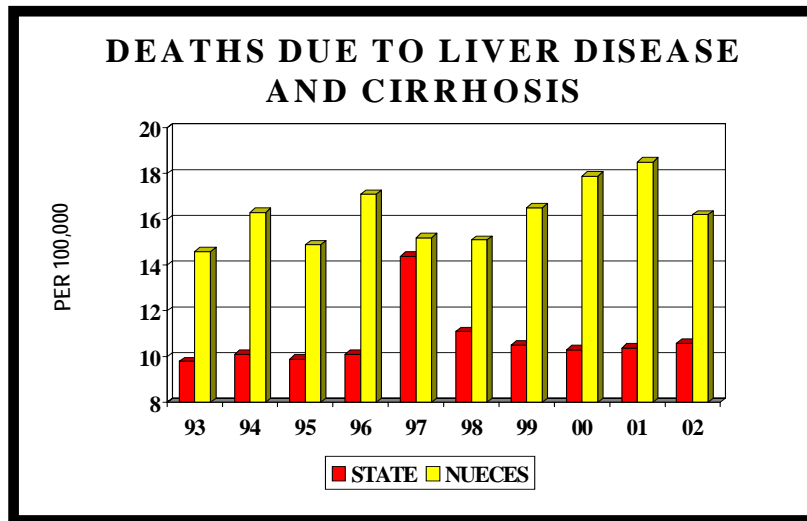
When examining the number of alcohol and drug related deaths in the State and County, the County experiences slightly higher incidents. However, when looking at substance related motor vehicle crashes, the State reports slightly higher incidents.



These data indicators support the conclusion that this risk factor is present in the community.

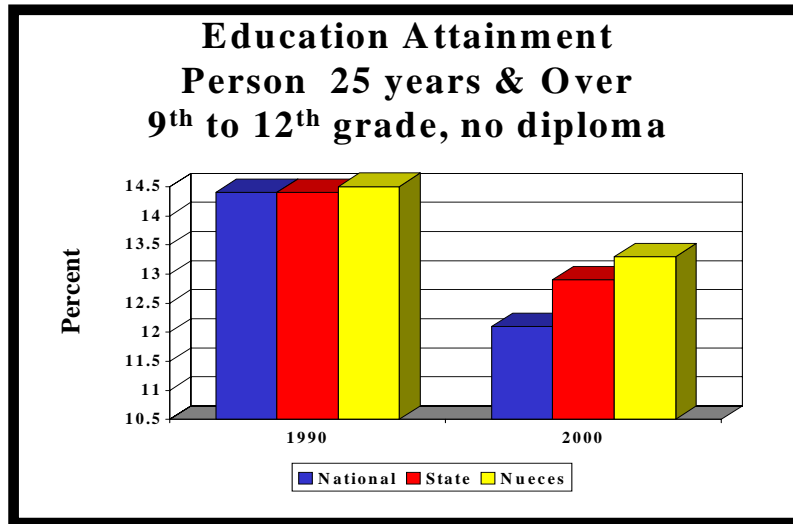
**Family History of High Risk Behavior:** The number of adults in drug treatment programs for the State and the County has been fluctuating from 1997 to 2002. However, these figures reflect programs reporting to the Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. It is not known if a change in funding levels and persons seeking alternate treatment account for some portion of this decline.

An alternate data indicator is the number of deaths due to liver disease and cirrhosis. These figures indicate that Nueces County has a much higher death rate due to liver disease and cirrhosis than the State. The County death rate has increased 13.5% from 1994 to 2001; however, a decrease of 12.4% occurred from 2001 to 2002. The 2002 death rate for Nueces County is 52.8% higher than that for the State. This is a clear indicator that drug and alcohol use is a significant problem in the community.



Nueces County has a higher level of adult illiteracy than the State as a whole. A 1994 national survey indicated that 23% of the State's adult population tested in Level 1 (0-5th grade), and an additional 28% tested in Level 2 (less than high school completion) on the literacy scale. Figures reported for Nueces County were 24% for Level 1 and 32% for Level 2. Thus, a greater proportion of County residents function at lower literacy levels than the State.

When examining educational attainment, persons over the age of 25 years in Nueces County have a lower educational attainment as compared to the State and National averages.

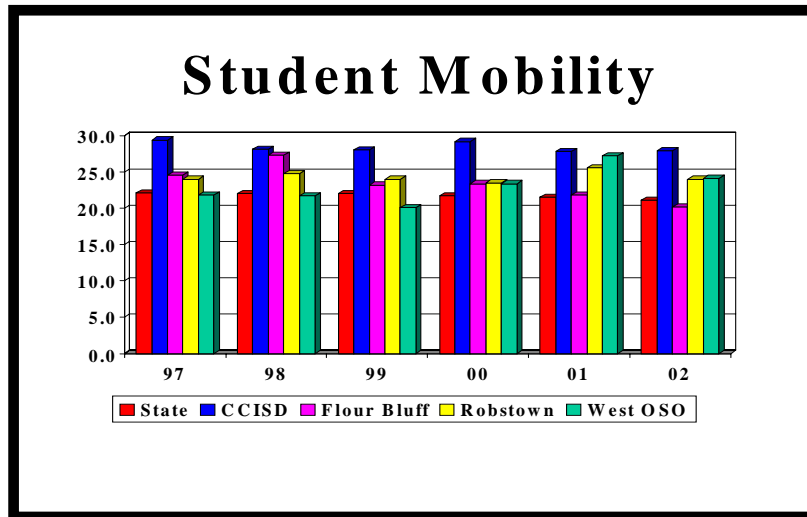


Again, for this risk factor, the data indicate that it is present in the community.

### **RISK FACTORS WITH POSSIBLE IMPACT ON NUECES COUNTY**

The following six risk factors may be present in the community. However, inadequate data or data indicators that point in opposite directions have been found.

**Transitions and Mobility:** Student mobility is measured by examining those students that have been in membership at the school less than 83% of the school year. Of the six largest school districts in the County, CCISD has the highest percentage of student mobility followed by West Oso ISD and Robstown ISD. In the 2001 - 2002 school year student mobility for CCISD was 27.9%, West Oso 24.1%, and Robstown ISD at 24.0%.

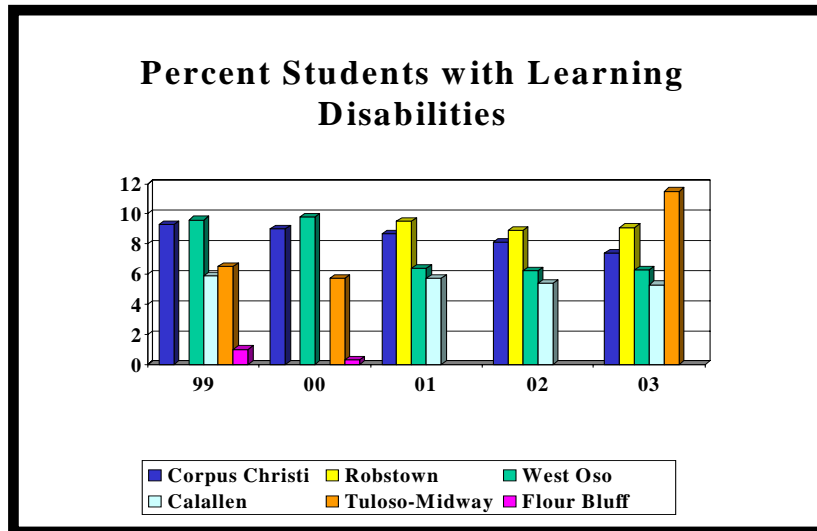


Data for the number of new homes constructed and the proportion of residents in rental housing were not found. Several requests for this data met with no response. It is believed that the data exist. An effort should be made to obtain data for these two indicators. However, data was found for existing home sales in Nueces County. Existing home sales increased 59.8% from 1994 to 2001 but slightly decreased 11.1% from 2001 to 2002 and increased only 9.9% from 2002 to 2003.

With the present lack of local data, no conclusion can be made concerning this risk factor.

**Early and Persistent Anti-Social Behavior:** The Corpus Christi Independent School District (CCISD) reported 31.2 discipline incidents per 1,000 elementary students in 1997. This rate is similar to the 31.9 per 1,000 reported for all students in the same year. This indicates that discipline problems arise at the same rate in the early and later grades. However, when examining the discipline problem at CCISD during the 1999 – 2000 school year, the rate has slightly decreased to 27.4. When examining Tuloso-Midway, the rate for the 1997 –1998 school year was 52.0 but dramatically increased to 177.9 in the 2000 – 2001 school year. Numerous attempts have been made to gather this data from the other school districts.

Data were found concerning students with learning disabilities for five school districts in Nueces County for the last five school years. The data may be missing in some years due to the availability of the data.



No adequate data were found in published reports or through our survey for the number of elementary special education students diagnosed with behavioral disorders or attention deficit disorder. It is also believed that the data exist and further attempts will be made to obtain them.

At this point, it may be concluded that this risk factor is likely to be present, but confirmation through a third data indicator is needed.

**Media Portrayals of Violence:** A national study conducted for the National Cable Television Association recently reported that violent content was in 61% of the television programs surveyed. This was an increase from 1984 when only 50% of the programs were found to have violent content. Pay cable networks programming included violent content in 92% of the programs surveyed.

The 1998 Texas Crime Poll conducted by Sam Houston State University indicates that 48% of Texans believe that media depiction of crime and violence have caused a large increase in the crime rate. This figure was an increase over the 28% reporting this opinion in 1978. A similar finding was reported in regard to movies.

Local data concerning this risk factor comes from the YOU Middle School/Junior High Student Survey-2000. Students were asked if they thought each of these media outlets promote violence among teens: TV shows, movies, Internet, video games, news coverage and music. Of those responding, 52.7% believe movies promote violence among teens followed by TV shows (40.0%), Internet (38.5%) and video games (33.6%). The results clearly demonstrate that teens believe there is a connection between the media and teen violence.

Because television programming is available within Nueces County in all formats, it may be assumed that the increase in violent content nationally has occurred locally. Therefore, it is likely that this risk factor is present in the community.

**Availability of Firearms:** Again, no data could be found directly bearing on firearm sales in the community. However, some local data was found on firearm ownership in the community. According to the YOU survey data, 32.8% of the respondents report that they have a gun (s) in their home. Of those reporting a firearm in the home, 52.4% report a rifle in the home, 36.9% a pistol, 30.8% a shotgun, and 52.0% report other. Also, the 2000 Safe Communities Survey found 42.8% of respondents indicated that they had firearms in the home. Of those responding, 81.6% had handguns, 54.8% rifles, and 56.8% shotguns. Only 38.2% have trigger locks on their firearms, and 58.8% report storing them under lock and key. Another survey completed in 2000 was of Corpus Christi Residents for the Crime Control and Prevention District. That survey found that 47.5% had a firearm in the home. Of these Corpus Christi residents, 24.3% stated that they carry a knife, gun, club or stun-gun when out of their home.

A national opinion poll has been taken on firearm ownership by homeowners each year for several decades. This data indicates a steady level of 40 to 42% of American homes report the presence of a firearm. The region in which Texas is placed tends to report greater ownership of firearms than the nation as a whole. Approximately 48% of homes within the region report the presence of a firearm. The local survey data appears to support these data.

Brady Bill Applications for firearms have been decreasing both nationally and in Corpus Christi. However, it cannot be determined how many of these applications resulted in a firearm purchase. Further, these data would not account for firearms sold between citizens and not from a commercial outlet. Local data for Brady Bill Applications processed by the Corpus Christi Police Department is no longer available. The data will have to be gathered from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

It is likely from the survey data that Texas as part of its region has more firearms in homes than the rest of the U.S. This would also be true for the community. While it is likely that this risk factor is present in the community, additional local data indicators need to be found to confirm it.

**Low Neighborhood Attachment and Community Disorganization:** Voter turnout appears to be dropping in Nueces County. At the National and State levels, voter turnout as a percent of the voting age population appears to have dropped somewhat in non-presidential election years. The percent of registered voters who voted in the same elections has dropped significantly.

The number of churches and synagogues with listings in the Corpus Christi area telephone book yellow pages decreased 5.1% between 1994 and 2000 but demonstrated a significant increase of 54.8% from 2000 to 2002 but declined slightly in 2003.

Also, the number of homicides in the State and in Nueces County has been dropping. Reported State homicides dropped 43.3% from 1993 to 1999. However, an increase of 7.1% occurred from 1999 to 2002. Reported homicides also dropped 55.3% from 1993 to 1999 in Nueces County, but an increase of 35.3% occurred from 1999 to 2002. Historically, local homicide totals have fluctuated dramatically. For example, the 1993 figure is followed by a 60.5% one-year decrease to 1994 and then by a one year 133% increase to 1995.

The data available do not provide a basis from which to judge if this risk factor is operative in the community.

## **SUMMARY AND RESTATEMENT OF PRIORITY RISK FACTORS**

The data reviewed above provide evidence that the Corpus Christi-Nueces County community suffers from juvenile delinquency fueled by four Priority Risk Factor Sets and additional risk factors. Family management problems and family conflict provide unstable environments, reduce the probability of social bonding, and prevent the development of healthy beliefs and clear standards for behavior. They damage children's potential development early and reduce the possibility that families can be supportive of successful growth, educational completion, and gainful employment.

Extreme economic deprivation contributes significantly to the stresses that lead to family management problems and conflict, reduces parents' resources to be supportive of children, and creates family and neighborhood environments conducive to the development of behavioral problems.

As a result, children from these environments demonstrate early academic failure and lack of commitment to school. At the same time, these risk factors contribute to the failure of children to grow-up with the education and skills needed to be competitive in the economy, prepared for advanced education or technical training, and ready for professional jobs. They leave youth without the coping, problem solving, communication, and other skills necessary to be good parents and manage families well.

Thus, they may grow up to be adults that seek temporary stress relief through the use of alcohol and drugs. The favorable attitudes and behavioral involvement of parents demonstrate toward substance use and abuse provide negative role models for the next generation of children. Children model their parents' and other adults' behaviors. They begin their substance abuse at an early age.

Early initiation of the problem behavior tends to remove children from environments where successful development is likely. These children are less likely to bond with their families, social institutions, or society itself. They are less likely to develop socially acceptable standards of behavior and healthy beliefs. They are more likely to fail in school, fail to develop an adequate work ethic or advanced job skills, and fail to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to be good parents. Thus, they are

likely to grow into adulthood to establish families in environments of economic deprivation that they fail to manage well.

In the manner described, the four Priority Risk Factor Sets and other risk factors perpetuate themselves and the production of delinquency, violence, drug use, teen pregnancy, and dropout in the community. The data have provided the Youth Opportunities United strategic planning process a clear, valid problem image on which to focus its recommendations for community intervention.

The preceding analysis of eighteen risk factors using data for Nueces County and the City of Corpus Christi has included 135 data indicators. The analysis of the data indicators in relation to risk factors demonstrates that risk factors may be present in the community. These include:

- **Transitions and Mobility**
- **Early and Persistent Anti-Social Behavior**
- **Media Portrayals of Violence**
- **Availability of Firearms, and**
- **Low Neighborhood Attachment and Community Disorganization.**

For eight risk factors, the evidence is stronger and the data indicators provide a clearer image of them. The following eight risk factors have impact on delinquency in the community:

- **Academic Failure**
- **Lack of Commitment to School**
- **Rebelliousness**
- **Favorable Attitudes Toward the Problem Behavior**
- **Friends Who Engage in the Problem Behavior**
- **Availability of Drugs**
- **Community Laws and Norms Favorable Toward Drug Use and Crime**
- **Family History of High Risk Behavior.**

The strongest evidence from data indicators is found with four sets of Priority Risk Factors. For these Priority Risk Factors, the data provide unmistakable, long-term trends that are confirmed through the use of multiple data indicators. The Priority Risk Factors for the community are:

- 1. Family Management Problems and Family Conflict**
- 2. Extreme Economic Deprivation**
- 3. Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior**
- 4. Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior.**

The Priority Risk Factors exist within each of the four domains: community, family, school, and individual. They each contribute to all five problem behaviors: delinquency, teen pregnancy, drug use, violence, and dropout. They are interconnected

by both cause and effect. Thus, the set of Priority Risk Factors is most appropriate for the continued development of a **comprehensive strategy** to prevent juvenile delinquency.

This report provides solid evidence that the YOU and other community initiatives have had an effect on juvenile delinquency in Nueces County. Delinquency, juvenile violence, dropout, and teen pregnancy have all declined since the beginning of the YOU initiative in 1998. This may be considered as evidence that the comprehensive strategy process as applied in Nueces County—Corpus Christi is working. Since 1998, changes have been made in response systems and linkages in regards to early stage juvenile delinquency such as truancy. New afterschool, early headstart, and healthy families initiatives have been funded and implemented. Resources have been added to or shifted to the community's response to family conflict. Mentoring efforts have been coordinated and expanded. Considerable attention has been given to improving collaborative efforts in regard to the problems of delinquency, family conflict, dropout, teen pregnancy, and substance abuse. The evidence presented here leads to the conclusion that these activities have reduced risk factors and strengthened protective factors.

Programmatic evidence of the YOU Initiative's effect is found in the extensive evaluation that has occurred with the target project, the TAMU-CC Family Life Center (FLC). The FLC provide after school enrichment and mentoring for 50 youth at HAAS Middle School. Participating youth demonstrate better academic achievement in grades and standardized tests in comparison to a control group. The participants are significantly more involved in school activities than the control group. The participants demonstrate significantly fewer unexcused absences and disciplinary referrals to the office and suspensions than the control group. The FLC demonstrate that intervention based on best practices can be successful in reducing delinquency and improving protective factors. A full evaluation report for the FLC's 2002 – 2003 school year is included in the YOU Comprehensive Strategy Planning Tools CD.

The changes reflected in the data indicators reported in the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of this report resulted in modification of the Priority Risk Factors. In this report, economic indicators have pointed to increased economic stress over the 2001 to 2003 period after a time of improvement or stability. Coinciding with this economic downturn appears to be increases in child abuse, family violence, and adult and juvenile crime. Some indication of increased adult and juvenile alcohol and drug use are also present. These data point to the power of economic conditions in the risk factor analyses. They may mean that YOU should consider extreme economic deprivation as its most serious problem within its next round of planning. These changes are reminders that comprehensive processes and strategic planning require ongoing data gathering and analysis. The *YOU Comprehensive Plan* must be considered a living document that requires the modifications of goals, priorities, targets, and action plans for it to remain viable over the long term. Comprehensive, strategic planning for a 20-year time frame is a continual process of assessment, adjustment, re-planning, and extension.