



Report on Youth Crisis Outreach Teams

**As Required by
2026-2027 General Appropriations Act
Senate Bill (S.B) 1, 89th Legislature
Regular Session, 2025 (Article II,
Health and Human Services
Commission, Rider 54)**

**Texas Health and Human Services
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Executive Summary

The Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) submits the *Report on Youth Crisis Outreach Teams* in compliance with the 2026-27 General Appropriations Act (GAA), Senate Bill (S.B.) 1, 89th Legislature, Regular Session, 2025 (Article II, HHSC, Rider 54).

As required by Rider 54, the *Report on Youth Crisis Outreach Teams* is due to the Legislative Budget Board, Office of the Governor, Senate Finance Committee, and House Appropriations Committee by September 1 of each fiscal year. The rider requires HHSC to report on:

- The number of Youth Crisis Outreach Teams (YCOTs) in the state;
- the number of individuals served by the YCOTs; and,
- any other information requested by the Legislative Budget Board.

The 2024-25 GAA, House Bill 1, 88th Legislature, Regular Session, 2023 (Article II, HHSC, Rider 52) appropriated \$7,000,000 in each fiscal year to establish YCOTS to reduce the risk of hospitalization from acute mental health illness and transition youth into care, including three to prioritize children served by the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). The 2026-27 GAA, Senate Bill 1, 89th Legislature, Regular Session, 2025 (Article II, HHSC, Rider 54) appropriated \$27,000,000 in each fiscal year to establish additional YCOTs. This report contains data related to FY2024-25 appropriations. Future reports will contain data related to FY2026-27 appropriations.

The YCOT program is a mental health crisis stabilizing resource designed to meet the unique needs of youth and families with developmentally appropriate interventions administered by qualified professionals. YCOTs support youth experiencing a mental health crisis by de-escalating the situation and remaining available to provide services with the youth's family or caregiver(s) for up to 90 days after the crisis.

Through YCOT support, youth and families receive intervention services to reduce the need for emergency room visits or law enforcement involvement. YCOTs provide an opportunity for individuals observing a crisis to contact them before a mental health crisis escalates, allowing youth and their families to receive developmentally appropriate and timely support when and where they need it.

From June 2024 through June 2025, the eight established YCOTs served 1,427 youth. Of these 1,427 youth, 319 youth had some form of current or previous involvement with DFPS at the time of the crisis, including open child protective services investigations, participating in family-based services, or in conservatorship with or without placement.

Introduction and Background

YCOT Services

The YCOT program uses trauma-informed interventions and strategies to de-escalate the situation when a youth experiences a mental health crisis and aid in relapse prevention and safety planning. YCOTs are available to the youth's family for up to 90 days after the mental health crisis. YCOT+ provide mental health crisis services to youth who are involved or at risk of involvement with DFPS. However, since all YCOT providers can serve youth with current or previous DFPS involvement, HHSC will no longer designate a program as YCOT+ beginning in fiscal year 2026.

As of August 31, 2025, local mental health authorities (LMHAs) and local behavioral health authorities (LBHAs) operate a total of eight YCOTs in Texas. These include Bluebonnet Trails Community Services, Border Region Behavioral Health Center, Burke Center, Emergence Health Network, Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network, My Health My Resources of Tarrant County, North Texas Behavioral Health Authority, and Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare. Each program offers the following services:

1. Crisis intervention needs for youth and families;
2. De-escalation and assessment;
3. Crisis stabilization in the least restrictive environment with intensive short-term follow up care; and
4. Connection to, community resources, including non-LMHA and -LBHA resources.

YCOT Eligibility

YCOTs serve youth ages three to 17 years old, who need mental health crisis services and intervention to prevent escalation to more acute settings, such as a hospital, when resolution in a home, school, or community setting is more appropriate. A youth served may be:

1. At risk of parental relinquishment or removal;
2. Experiencing multiple placement disruptions;
3. Experiencing DFPS involvement;
4. Experiencing challenges with school participation, truancy, family issues, exposure to violence and trauma, or suspected mental health concerns;
5. On the inquiry list for the Youth Empowerment Services Waiver;
6. Experiencing multiple or extended stay inpatient psychiatric hospitalizations;
7. Engaged with the juvenile justice system; or
8. Receiving multiple referrals for behavioral or mental health services within the school district.

Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025 YCOT Providers and Numbers Served

YCOT Providers

HHSC released a Multi-Program Needs Capacity Assessment on July 14, 2023. Through this assessment, HHSC accepted applications from LMHAs and LBHAs to implement a subset of programs including YCOT, funded through Rider 52 (2024-25 GAA).

Selection criteria included organizational capacity to implement services and having at least one psychiatrist available to dedicate a minimum of 25 percent of their time to YCOT activities, with priority given to regions with a high population of youth under DFPS conservatorship or juvenile justice and law enforcement involvement.

HHSC selected the following providers based on selection criteria listed in the Needs Capacity Assessment for crisis mental health services for youth:

- Border Region Behavioral Health Center,
- Burke Center,
- Emergence Health Network,
- Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network, and
- My Health My Resources of Tarrant County.

YCOT+ Providers

HHSC, in collaboration with DFPS, selected three providers to operate a YCOT+ program in areas with the highest concentration of youth in foster care lacking DFPS placement:

- Bluebonnet Trails Community Services,
- North Texas Behavioral Health Authority, and
- Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare.

Figure 1. YCOT Providers and Counties

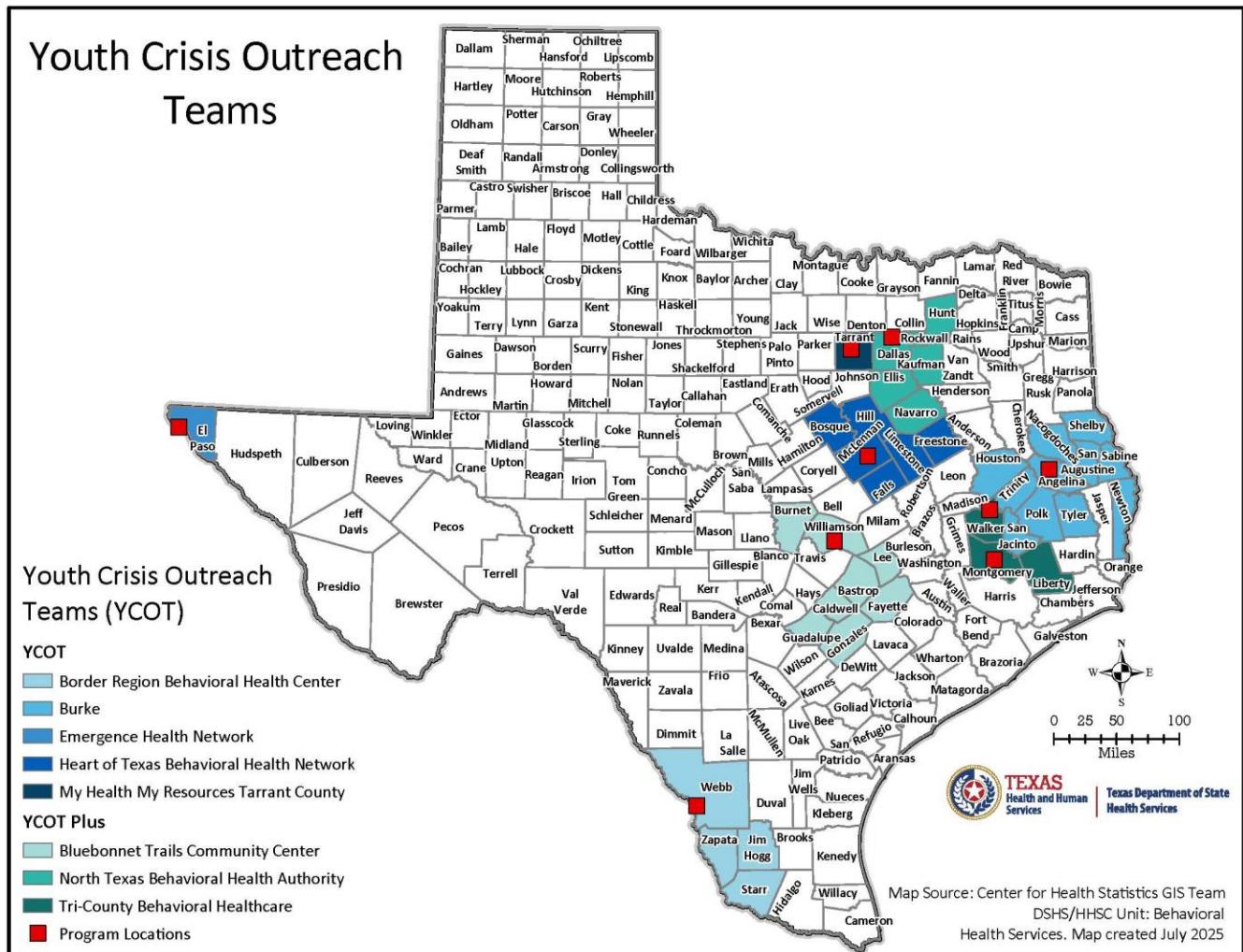


Table 1 shows the number served by LMHA or LBHA from each program's start date through May 31, 2025.

Table 1. YCOT Numbers Served

| LMHA or LBHA | Start Date | YCOT | YCOT+ | Youth Served |
|--|-------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Bluebonnet Trails Community Services | August 2024 | No | Yes | 48 |
| Border Region Behavioral Health Center | August 2024 | Yes | No | 446 |
| Burke Center | July 2024 | Yes | No | 54 |
| Emergence Health Network | June 2024 | Yes | No | 477 |
| Heart of Texas Behavioral Health Network | July 2024 | Yes | No | 151 |
| My Health My Resources of Tarrant County | September 2024 | Yes | No | 76 |
| North Texas Behavioral Health Authority | September 2024 | No | Yes | 51 |

| LMHA or LBHA | Start Date | YCOT | YCOT+ | Youth Served |
|--|-------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Tri-County Behavioral Healthcare | August 2024 | No | Yes | 124 |
| Total Youth Served | | | | 1,427 |

YCOT Expansion

Expansion

The 2026-27 GAA, S.B. 1, 89th Legislature, Regular Session, 2025 (Article II, HHSC, Rider 54) provided HHSC \$27,000,000 in additional general revenue for each fiscal year of the biennium to expand YCOT services. The funding is intended to establish at least eight new YCOTs, prioritizing establishment of new YCOTs in urban areas of the state. The funding allocated is available as of September 1, 2025.

HHSC will utilize a data driven methodology to determine YCOT expansion sites. The investment will allow HHSC to increase the number of YCOTs in the state to a total of 16 or more teams. This increase allows HHSC to continue and expand this needed service to provide youth and their families access to mental health crisis services.

Conclusion

From June 2024 through June 2025, the eight established YCOTs served 1,427 youth. In fiscal year 2026 and 2027, HHSC will expand the YCOT program using a data driven methodology. This strategic expansion will prioritize areas with high mental health crisis utilization among Texas youth populations in urban communities.

By focusing on earlier, in-person responses that engage the entire family system, the YCOT program will continue to stabilize and support Texas families in mental health crisis and expand Texas' mental health crisis continuum.

List of Acronyms

| Acronym | Full Name |
|----------------|--|
| DFPS | Department of Family Protective Services |
| GAA | General Appropriations Act |
| HHSC | Health and Human Services Commission |
| LBHA | Local behavioral health authority |
| LMHA | Local mental health authority |
| YCOT | Youth Crisis Outreach Team |
| YCOT+ | Youth Crisis Outreach Team Plus |