

**TCJIUG-IJIS Steering Committee
Texas Criminal Justice Information Users' Group
Program Charter
Approved December 3, 2002**

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Program Charter

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Table of Contents

Section 1 - Introduction2

Forward2

Integrated Justice Information System Program Background.....2

Challenges2

Opportunities.....2

Section 2 – Executive Summary2

Vision2

Mission.....2

Goals2

Section 6 – Steering Committee Approval.....2

Document Control.....2

Section 1 - Introduction

Forward

There are several Integrated Justice Initiatives already in progress throughout the State of Texas. The purpose of this document is to outline the strategy and approach in defining the role of the Texas Criminal Justice Information Users' Group (TCJIUG) initiative. This document is intended to:

Establish the vision, mission, and goals of the TCJIUG initiative.
Provide an overall management approach.
Identify significant deliverables and proposed schedule.

Background

In May 2002, the State of Texas released the Texas Justice Information Integration Initiative (TJI³) Plan¹. As a result of the issues identified in this plan, sharing justice information at the local, state and national levels has become a priority as the Integrated Justice Community struggles to contend with escalating crime, more sophisticated criminals and the rising costs associated with the administration of justice. The plan was created with the input of the following entities:

- County Information Resources Agency (CIRA)
- Criminal Justice Policy Council (CJPC)
- Department of Information Resources
- Harris County
- Judicial Committee on Information Technology (JCIT)
- Office of Court Administration (OCA)
- Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Division (CJD)
- Texas Association of Counties (TAC)
- Texas Commission on Jail Standards (TCJS)
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ)
- Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS)
- Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC)
- Texas Youth Commission (TYC)

Texas Justice Information Integration Initiative (TJI³) Plan

The strategic plan describes the current efforts to integrate justice information systems in Texas at the state and county levels, and similar efforts in other states and the federal government. The plan provides the vision and mission of TJI3

¹ Texas Department of Information Resources, [Texas Justice Integration Initiative Plan \(TJI³\)](#), May 2002.

and recommendations on how to proceed with efficiently exchanging justice information.

The following is an excerpt from the TJI³ strategic plan that describes the challenges and opportunities facing the Texas Justice Community:

The Texas justice community is served by a wide variety of information systems that have been designed for very specific purposes. For example, in the late sixties and early seventies, the state and the federal government created statewide and national law enforcement systems that have provided unified repositories of critical information such as theft reports, warrants, missing persons reports, and criminal histories. These repositories and the statewide and nationwide law enforcement telecommunications systems that support them have provided invaluable services to law enforcement and criminal justice agencies across the state and across the country. At the same time, however, other systems have been developed to meet the explicit operational requirements of justice agencies at the local, state, and federal levels. Many justice agencies, local law enforcement, correctional authorities, and the courts developed their plans for information technology without consulting one another. **Many of these systems cannot communicate with systems used by other justice agencies that need the same information.** Crucial information is not shared widely enough within and between agencies on the same level, and local governments spend an enormous amount of time sending the same information to various state and federal entities. Precious resources are wasted on redundant data entry, manual research, and correction of errors. As a result, justice officials are unable to get timely, accurate, and complete information.

Public safety and government efficiency are sacrificed when public servants are unable to rely on information systems to support critical decision-making needs. Policymakers lack access to reliable data and statistics on which to measure effectiveness of laws, policies, and programs. Justice officials need timely and accurate information at every stage in the justice process.²

The officer on the street who makes a traffic stop already has near immediate access to critical information about the driver and the vehicle. He knows within seconds whether the driver's license is current, whether the driver is wanted, or the vehicle stolen. But, as times have changed, he or she needs more information. Is the

² Florida Criminal and Juvenile Justice Information Systems Council, *Improving Criminal and Juvenile Justice Information for the 21st Century*, Strategic Plan 2000-2005. Retrieved 5-Jun-2002 from www.myflorida.com/myflorida/sciencetechnology/tech_pte/pubsPublicationsReports.html.

driver a threat to peace officers, or is the driver a terrorist? In the future, will the police officer use biometrics to identify the driver positively?

Judges hearing first appearances for arrested persons need to have a correct identification of the offender and complete and accurate data on the subject's criminal history to make decisions concerning bail or other pre-trial release conditions. Is the subject wanted in another jurisdiction? Has he or she failed to appear in court on previous matters?³ Is there a domestic violence warrant outstanding? Are there prior Class C misdemeanor convictions that would affect the current charge?

Prosecutors need complete and accurate information about not only the current case details but also the defendant's previous criminal history in order to make good decisions about charging the subject. Is this a hate crime? Was a weapon used? Does the offender qualify for enhanced penalties under a habitual offender statute?⁴

New needs for information are identified constantly. Judges hearing petitions for domestic or repeat violence injunctions should have the respondent's criminal history available to help determine the degree of threat they pose. Law enforcement agencies need to be able to search pawned property data statewide in order to try to locate items stolen in their jurisdiction.⁵

Each justice agency has historically been focused on capturing and using the information needed for its own processes. However, all justice agencies need essentially the same information, which is entered into each agency's automated systems, albeit often with slightly varying definitions. What has been lacking has been a comprehensive plan for sharing information from one justice agency to another. Effective sharing of the information developed by the various criminal and juvenile justice agencies is critical to public safety.⁶

Texas state agencies have attempted to address the goal of justice data sharing. The Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) was initially designed to provide law enforcement and corrections agencies timely and accurate information regarding the criminal

³ See note 2.

⁴ See note 2.

⁵ See note 2.

⁶ See note 2.

history and corrections status of the persons in the justice system. While the initial expectations for the system were sound, evolving technology, a more mobile society, and increasing need for the data from a wider variety of justice agencies have combined to form new requirements. Justice agencies and the public now expect justice systems to perform at unanticipated levels of timeliness, accessibility, and completeness.⁷

There are, within the state, examples of well-planned and engineered integrated data systems that can serve as models. Appendix A lists information sharing initiatives in Texas that have been completed and are now in place due in part to the strong leadership provided by the legislature, the justice-related agencies, the courts, the Criminal Justice Policy Council, and the Criminal Justice Division in the Governor's Office. Appendix D lists initiatives that are planned to improve those systems. The following groups have also been working to achieve data integration:

Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (TLETS) Advisory Board: TLETS is a telecommunications network that provides seven-days-a-week, 24-hours-a-day telecommunications service to local and state criminal justice agencies to enter data and inquire into state and federal databases. The TLETS Advisory Board, which is composed of representatives of the state, federal, and local agencies that participate in TLETS, advises the executive director of the Department of Public Safety regarding needs and strategies to enhance the automated systems and practices used in exchanging of information among Texas law enforcement and criminal justice agencies via TLETS.

The State Agency Justice Information Coordinating Committee (SAJICC) was created in 1999 to coordinate the development of justice systems maintained or managed by the participating state agencies so that those systems are able to share information in a manner that maximizes the services provided to justice information users in Texas. Service on SAJICC is voluntary and most of its members have direct management responsibilities in their own agencies. The committee has no staff to support its coordination efforts.

The Judicial Committee on Information Technology (JCIT) evolved from the recommendations of the 1996 Texas Commission on Judicial Efficiency. The Commission began a major initiative to address, among other things, the courts'

⁷ *The Criminal Justice Information System: An Assessment of Current Status*, March 2001.

information needs. The mission of JCIT is to establish standards and guidelines for the systematic implementation and integration of information technology into the trial and appellate courts in Texas. While JCIT addresses court needs, its recommendations can have significant impact on the flow of data through other systems. There are mutually beneficial opportunities for more coordination among the courts and the other state and local justice agencies within Texas. For example, a prosecutor in Fort Worth needs to know if the suspect he has in custody has prior convictions in Dallas, Houston, or any other city or county in Texas that would affect the current charge. Only 59 of Texas' 254 counties currently report conviction information electronically. Accurate criminal records require not only the courts' disposition data, but also the corresponding arrest information, so the JCIT is coordinating with state and local law enforcement agencies to implement electronic arrest reporting (EAR) capabilities in counties in conjunction with electronic disposition reporting (EDR) of the case.

The Office of Court Administration (OCA) is mandated to collect and analyze information related to court activities throughout the state. The statistics are collected in a manner that focuses on significant issues and accomplishments in the judicial arena, and are used for identifying opportunities for improvement in the judicial system. OCA and DPS are evaluating ways to eliminate redundancies in data collection, better share data with other entities, and streamline both the acquisition and dissemination of data. OCA has made some initial, low-cost gains in providing statistical data to the public online and in enabling trial court monthly reporting online.

Senate Bill 1458 (77th Leg., R.S.) created the Electronic Government Program Management Office (PMO) within the Department of Information Resources. The PMO is to provide an enterprise approach to the development and deployment of electronic government projects. In SB1458, "electronic government project" means the use of information technology to improve the access to and delivery of a government service, including a project that uses the Internet as a primary tool for the delivery of a government service or performance of a governmental function. The PMO is charged with coordinating among state agencies by identifying the resources necessary for projects and opportunities among multiple agencies, as well as local and federal government, for the coordination of these projects. To accomplish this, the PMO will create state agency

coordination teams, as appropriate, to reduce information technology expenditures and eliminate unnecessary duplication.

Texas Conference of Urban Counties (CUC)

In addition to the TJI³ Plan, the Texas Conference of Urban Counties (CUC) has also recently initiated an Integrated Justice Program. In August 2002, a meeting was held in Austin, Texas to identify potential synergies for the development of an Integrated Justice Information System for use by CUC member Counties. The following Counties were represented:

Collin
Dallas
Harris
Tarrant
Travis

Each County provided a brief presentation consisting of the following topics:

Vision or Goal – Definition of integrated justice information system (IJIS)
Governance or Coordination Structure
Departments/Agencies Included
“As-Is” Environment
“To-Be” Environment
Project Management/Development Tools Adopted
Software Packages Purchased - percent of modification from original
IJIS Modules or Components Installed
Project Development/Implementation Plan Components
Test and Quality Assurance Strategy
Lessons Learned
Cost Projection

At the conclusion of the presentations, a discussion was facilitated to establish potential deliverables of the CUC project. Consensus was reached on the following items:

A consolidated requirements document based on the collective efforts of Collin and Harris Counties.

A comprehensive data dictionary for Integrated Justice Information requirements.

An XML-based schema for Integrated Justice Information Exchange.

Challenges

Traditionally in Texas, information systems operated by individual justice agencies have been discrete, and incapable of linking and exchanging information; consequently, the Integrated Justice Community must address the

following significant issues that handicap its efforts to deliver effective and efficient justice-related services:

- Incomplete and often outdated information;
- Dependence on paper forms as a primary means of data exchange;
- Ineffective processes that result in the duplication of data and effort;
- Information is not always readily accessible when it is required;
- Incompatible technical environments;
- Lack of consolidated information for decision support.

It is imperative that justice agencies at all levels of government collaborate to exchange justice and emergency management information. The vision statement for Texas Justice Information Integration Initiative Plan is: “The TJI3 Plan provides a foundation for the improved administration of justice through collaboration among governmental entities to provide accurate, secure and timely information to users in a format that is simple and useful.” The mission statement is “to coordinate the development and operation of justice systems maintained or managed by participating justice entities so that those systems are able to share information consistently, accurately, and potentially electronically in a manner that maximizes the services provided to justice information users in Texas.”

This effort takes the next step in furthering the TJI3 plan by developing a dictionary of the data elements required by state agencies from local justice agencies. This dictionary will then become a standard for the state-level reporting data elements used when developing future integrated justice systems, thereby facilitating timely exchange of data.

Shannon: This looks good.

Opportunities

At the federal government level, representatives from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) and a number of other collaborators have agreed that future transactions for information exchange will be established in extensible Markup Language (XML) format. XML is a flexible, nonproprietary set of standards for annotating or “tagging” information. XML-tagged data can be transmitted over a network such as the Internet and can be readily interpreted by other computer systems that understand XML tags. It eliminates the requirements to understand each particular program, to prepare system for data conversion, and to structure an implementation for all users simultaneously to maintain virtual compatibility between senders and receivers. XML is a family of technologies with products available from multiple vendors. XML use does not require one centralized database as the standards support the exchange of information in a decentralized, distributed environment, as necessary. As government and private industry have sought to eliminate costly

private networks and take advantage of the Internet, XML adoption has grown significantly.

Much work has been done by OJP to establish a Justice XML Data Dictionary using the Interstate Criminal History Transmission Specification, the Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS) Data Exchange Specification, the Electronic Court Filing Standard and the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA). The OJP Reconciliation Data Dictionary Task Force, the XML Committee of Global Infrastructure and Standards Working Group (ISWG), and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) have established a baseline for the Justice XML Data Dictionary and its associated principles and concept of operations.

Section 2 – Executive Summary

Vision

Provide a foundation for the improved administration of justice through collaboration among governmental entities to provide accurate, secure, and timely information to users in a format that is simple and useful.

Mission

To coordinate the development and operation of justice systems maintained or managed by participating justice entities so that those systems are able to share information consistently, accurately, and potentially electronically in a manner that maximizes the services provided to justice information users in Texas.

Goals

To establish and promote standards for justice information, relationships, and definitions among all participating entities that facilitates a proactive information-sharing environment.

To identify all justice information that can be shared without compromising the legal, privacy, and security requirements of participating entities.

To enable participating entities to contribute and retrieve justice information that is accurate, timely, and complete.

Section 3 – Program Approach

The TCJIUG initiative will require development of a Texas justice data dictionary, and related XML data dictionary and schemas.

Develop a Texas Justice Data Dictionary

One of the major goals of this effort is to eliminate the duplicate data entry that burdens municipalities and counties. Much of the duplication is a direct result of disparate systems being developed without regard to the information needs of others.

The State Agency Justice Information Coordinating Committee (SAJICC) has already convened its members to identify data elements in each of their unique systems that would be required for a Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS). The members – Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), Texas Juvenile Probation Commission (TJPC), Texas Youth Commission (TYC), Office of the Attorney General (OAG) and Office of Court Administration (OCA) – have identified common data elements that would be used to exchange information with local government and among state agencies. This data element identification document could be used as a starting point to create the data dictionary. Assistance from local government agencies would be required to ensure that all state-required data elements have been identified. Once the data dictionary is complete, an XML data dictionary and schema should also be established.

As of November 25, 2002, these agencies have all agreed to work with DPS, as part of the DPS Computerized Criminal History (CCH) re-write project, to complete the required data dictionary, and XML data dictionary and schema, for state-required data elements. The CCH project is scheduled to begin in early 2003. DPS is already involved with the federal-level XML standard setting process, and this work will be reconciled with the national Justice XML Data Dictionary.

All of the agencies agreed to dedicate current resources to work with DPS as early in the project as possible, and understand the need to complete this work in a timely manner in light of the integrated justice information system efforts in Harris County and the CUC. Considering the state's need for one, DIR will continue to follow the federal efforts regarding a registry for the XML data dictionary, and the PMO will provide assistance where needed.

This TCJIUG initiative can use the justice data dictionary to identify specific state-required data elements and reconcile the state data requirements with the federal efforts. This data dictionary can then be used by any local government as a standard to incorporate into the development/acquisition of future Integrated Justice Information System(s). Local governments could use any information technology solution/platform since they must be able to adopt technologies that are appropriate for their jurisdiction. However, they should develop/acquire systems that are based on industry-accepted standards and best practices, and use the TCJIUG data dictionary as a standard for exchanging information with the state. More federal grants are requiring the adoption of the federal data standards (especially the XML standards), and this effort will incorporate these standards. This may help local governments secure funding for future development/procurement of integrated justice information systems.

Section 4 – Program Management Strategy

Management Priorities

The development of a state-reporting data dictionary is a priority since the CUC is set to develop a consolidated requirements document for future development of an integrated justice information system for its members. The data dictionary should be used as part of the standards for the CUC effort. Standards provide rules by which information technology products interact with each other, and are essential in ensuring that systems can communicate.

Program Organization

This initiative is sponsored by TCJIUG. At its annual conference in October 2002, TCJIUG created a Steering Committee, which consists of the following members:

- Tom Cowan, Chief of Police, Burleson Police Department
- Shannon Porterfield, Texas – Department of Information Resources
- G. K. Maenius, Tarrant County
- Les Smith, Tarrant County
- David Gavin, Texas Department of Public Safety
- Mike Griffith, Texas Office of Court Administration
- Stan Reid, County Information Resources Agency
- Mimzi Forman, Galveston County
- Kirk M. Green, Galveston County
- Joe Fierro, Collin County
- Mike Shannon, Harris County
- Jimmy Ray, Harris County
- Clete McAlister, Tarrant County
- Tammy Cannon, Texas Department of Criminal Justice
- Joe Harlow, Travis County

This governance structure will be used for this effort. The steering committee can consider expanding its membership to include representatives from justice and non-justice-related agencies, members from state, county and municipal governmental entities, representatives of the Texas business community, and members of the general public.

Assumptions

The following statement represents the major assumptions made in the preparation of the Program Charter:

Commitment exists from the TCJIUG Steering Committee and SAJICC agencies to provide appropriate staff resources to meet with DPS to complete the data dictionary, and XML data dictionary and schema.

Risks and Constraints

The following represent the known risks and constraints of the TCJIUG initiative.

The Justice Community is made of autonomous entities that are not required to function as an enterprise. There is no single authoritative person to make decisions about this initiative.

Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) or Byrne Memorial grant funds will be allocated to Homeland Security in fiscal year 2003 and may not be available to support an IJIS program.

Section 5 – Implementation Strategy

Program Initiation – October 2002 – March 2003

- Program Charter
- Collaboration Agreement(s), if necessary

Program Execution – March 2003 – June 2004 (depending on the schedule for the CCH re-write project)

- State-reporting data dictionary
- XML data dictionary of state-reporting elements
- XML schema for XML data dictionary of state-reporting elements

Program Closing – June 2004 – July 2004

- Administrative
- Artifacts
- Lessons Learned

Section 6 – Steering Committee Approval

Tom Cowan, Chief of Police, Burleson Police Department
Shannon Porterfield, Texas – Department of Information Resources
G. K. Maenius, Tarrant County
Les Smith, Tarrant County
David Gavin, Texas Department of Public Safety
Mike Griffith, Texas Office of Court Administration
Stan Reid, County Information Resources Agency
Mimzi Forman, Galveston County
Kirk M. Green, Galveston County
Joe Fierro, Collin County

Mike Shannon, Harris County
Jimmy Ray, Harris County
Clete McAlister, Tarrant County
Tammy Cannon, Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Joe Harlow, Travis County

