

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Quick Hits Summary Document represents an addendum to the End-State Vision for the Focus Phase of the Dakota County Criminal Justice Information Integration Network (CJIN) Implementation Plan. This document identifies short-term business and technology solutions to information needs that might be implemented either partially or completely at relatively little cost. These recommendations are not intended to be final; the CJIN should encourage additional dialogue between agency management and information technology staff to refine these recommendations and estimate costs before moving forward. Recommendations include:

- Providing criminal justice organizations increased access to each other's databases
- Streamlining reporting processes
- Enhancing usage of existing systems
- Constructing a web-based query tool to existing legacy systems

This document is specifically designed to:

- Recommend changes in business process practices and technology solutions that will have immediate positive impact on criminal justice information flow within Dakota County
- Identify low cost solutions that if implemented will increase the interest in and momentum of the overall integration project among criminal justice personnel throughout the County
- Elicit other creative solutions from criminal justice personnel throughout the County for streamlining business processes and using technology to improve information exchange
- Focus future discussion of business process and technology improvements

This document should not be interpreted as a critique of any employee, agency, or technology. We are simply (1) identifying easy, low cost solutions to current business processes that may improve efficiency and (2) identifying technologies that would improve access to information at critical information exchange points.

CLIENT VALUE

This addendum to the End-State Vision deliverable is important because it provides some immediate low-cost solutions to business process and technology shortcomings discovered during interviews with County criminal justice staff. Validation of this document indicates that the Dakota County CJIN and KPMG Consulting share a common understanding of the range of short-term initiatives capable of improving access to criminal justice information within the County.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Interviews with criminal justice agency staff identified a number of short-term solutions to information needs. These solutions included:

- Providing criminal justice organizations increased access to each other's databases
- Streamlining reporting processes
- Enhancing usage of existing systems
- Constructing a web-based query tool to existing legacy systems

A. PROVIDE INCREASED ACCESS TO DATABASES

A common concern mentioned often during our interviews with Dakota County criminal justice personnel is the lack of access to data in the systems of other criminal justice agencies.

A1. Increase Access To ENFORS In Law Enforcement Agencies Throughout The County And In Dakota County Community Corrections

Law enforcement investigators could benefit from access to ENFORS data for historical information on suspects. With access to ENFORS, law enforcement investigators throughout Dakota County would save time collecting data on suspects and could avoid querying multiple databases to obtain suspects' historical data. Access would also be beneficial to check Jail bookings. If law enforcement investigates an individual who gets arrested and booked, that information does not get communicated to them.

Community Corrections could benefit from access to ENFORS data to verify incarceration status of clients. Probation officers in Dakota County are not notified if someone on their caseload is arrested and booked in the Dakota County Jail. This information can be critical to them in initiating probation violations. If probation officers had easy access to ENFORS they could check the Jail booking reports on a regular basis. In addition, access to the ENFORS database would help probation officers monitor their incarcerated clients.

A2. Provide Access To CSTS In Law Enforcement Agencies Throughout The County And In The Dakota County Jail

Law enforcement investigators could benefit from access to CSTS data for current and historical information on suspects. Access to CSTS would provide a broader picture of the suspects they are currently investigating even if those individuals are not currently on probation. This is especially important for access to any sanctions a suspect has received for misdemeanor convictions, which are extremely difficult to find.

Dakota County Jail personnel could benefit from access to CSTS for current status and history of probation on inmates. A critical benefit to Jail personnel's access would be to identify when a suspect is booked and whether he is currently on probation in Dakota

County. If a suspect is on probation, Jail personnel could notify the probation officer who then could immediately initiate the probation violation process. The other benefit of having access to CSTS is for historical information on the inmate. This information could help Jail personnel determine the appropriate housing unit and jail activities during incarceration.

A3. Provide Remote Access To CSTS To Probation Officers Assigned To Work In The Schools

Currently, the four probation officers assigned to schools do not have access to CSTS. As a result, they must return to the Juvenile Detention Center to enter client information into CSTS. Juvenile Center personnel mentioned that even within the Center access to CSTS is limited and that more CSTS terminals would make their jobs easier.

A4. Provide TCIS Access To Dakota County Law Enforcement Investigators, Jail/Juvenile Detention Center Personnel And Probation Officers

Law enforcement investigators could benefit from access to the TCIS database for historical disposition information on suspects. Currently, law enforcement investigators have no direct access to disposition information on individuals they are investigating. The primary access to disposition information is to phone the Court and to request the information from a court clerk. Access to TCIS is especially important in obtaining information about misdemeanors that is not stored in the State and Federal CCH files. This has become increasingly important in the prosecution of domestic abuse cases where past misdemeanor convictions can result in enhanced penalties.

Dakota County Jail and Juvenile Detention Center personnel could benefit from access to the TCIS database for court calendar and disposition information on inmates. Currently, communication regarding hearing dates and dispositions are often not timely and recorded strictly on paper. The Jail relies on notes taken by the Jail Deputy during a hearing to determine what to do with inmates when they return from Court. If a sentence is complicated, the Deputy may have difficulty capturing all of the conditions. It is often the following day before a notification with sentencing conditions arrives via paper from the Court. Access to TCIS would provide more accurate and timely data for the Jail.

Community Corrections personnel could benefit from increased access to TCIS terminals to track court calendar, disposition, and restitution information. Community Corrections personnel have limited access to TCIS because of the number of terminals available to them. For probation officers with large caseloads, this creates difficulty in managing their caseload. A probation officer's responsibility includes monitoring clients' progress in paying restitution to the Court. If they have limited access to TCIS terminals throughout the day when they are meeting with their clients, they often have to do additional follow-ups with clients after their visits to encourage restitution payment.

A5. Establish Access To Dakota County Attorney's CAPS Database To Adult And Juvenile Court Personnel

Establishing Adult Criminal Court personnel access to County Attorney CAPS system would help them transfer complaint information to court files and TCIS. Court personnel rely on information provided in the Complaint document to open a Court case file. Accessing information from the County Attorney's CAPS would allow them an additional source of information to complete the case file. This would decrease the number of phone calls to the County Attorney's office to verify information or track down missing information.

Providing Juvenile Court personnel access to County Attorney CAPS system would help them transfer complaint information to court files and TCIS. Court personnel rely on information provided in the Complaint document to open a Court case file. Accessing information from the County Attorney's CAPS would allow them an additional source of information to complete the case file. This would decrease the number of phone calls to the County Attorney's office to verify information or track down missing information.

A6. Establish Access To Law Enforcement Agency Records Management Databases To Other Law Enforcement Agencies Throughout The County And In The Dakota County Jail

Establishing law enforcement investigators access to other Dakota County law enforcement agencies records management systems would assist them in gathering timely information on current investigations and historical information on suspects. If investigators throughout the County had access to other records management systems, it would save many hours collecting basic information on suspects they are investigating. In addition, an investigator would know if another agency within the County has an open investigation on an individual. Investigators currently rely on word of mouth or investigator meetings to share information on their current investigations. They often find that an individual is being investigated for a similar offense in a number of other jurisdictions.

Establishing Dakota County Jail personnel access to law enforcement agency records management systems would be helpful for booking purposes. Dakota Jail personnel could save considerable time during the booking process if they had access to law enforcement agency records management systems. Much of the information that jail booking officers gather during booking has already been gathered by law enforcement investigators and stored in the agency records system. Eliminating this duplicative effort would substantially decrease time required for booking.

B. STREAMLINE REPORTING

Transmitting regular reports between various entities of the justice system is primarily accomplished through faxing, inter-office and U. S. mail delivery. These methods often require considerable time on the part of personnel and require unnecessary copying of reports. The following are recommendations that would provide more efficient means of distributing these reports.

B1. Transmit Weekly Warrant Reports Via E-Mail For Increased Efficiency

The Dakota County warrant clerk currently faxes weekly warrant reports to the Social Security Administration, the FBI Task Force, and appropriate law enforcement agencies. This process is time consuming. Establishing e-mail links to appropriate agencies to transmit the weekly warrant reports would save time for the warrant clerk and provide a more dependable mode of transferring information.

B2. Transmit Daily ENFORS Jail Reports via e-mail for Increased Efficiency

Dakota County Jail Administrative staff currently fax and inter-office mail eight reports to over 60 individuals and agencies throughout the County everyday. An automated generation and distribution of these reports would save considerable staff time as well as paper.

B3. Transmit Court Disposition Information to the Jail via e-mail Immediately Following Court Hearings

Jail administration would benefit by enabling TCIS to directly e-mail inmate disposition information immediately after court or as soon as possible the next business day. Currently, disposition information is communicated on paper and often not on a timely basis. The Jail relies upon notes taken by a Jail Deputy during a hearing to determine what to do with inmates when they return from Court. If a sentence is complicated, the Deputy may have difficulty capturing all of the conditions. It is often the following day before a notification of sentencing conditions arrives via paper from the Court. Provided disposition information is entered in TCIS in a timely manner, an automatic e-mail notification from the Court immediately after hearings or as soon as possible the following day would ensure accuracy of disposition information and increase the timeliness of the information.

C. ENHANCE USAGE OF EXISTING SYSTEMS

In our interviews, Dakota County personnel identified a number of training and basic technology issues that represent barriers to effective use of existing technology. Resolution of these issues would require minimal staff time and financial investment. The following are a few examples of solutions to those issues identified.

C1. Provide Additional Training for Jail Personnel on the ENFORS System

Currently, the Jail's administration office receives numerous calls from Jail personnel requesting information from the ENFORS system. Training Jail personnel to retrieve information themselves on the ENFORS System, and requiring them to use it, could considerably reduce these phone calls. Subjects interviewed believe that that ENFORS is difficult to use and that a lack of training has resulted in staff not using the system and instead relying on phone calls to Jail administration. Additional training and a clear management directive to query the system would significantly reduce the workload of administrative personnel.

C2. Allow Dakota County Investigators Access to CJIS and NCIC CCH and Hot Files

Under the current system, Dakota County investigators are required to request criminal history and hot file information from dispatchers. The ability to access this information on their own would save time and allow the investigators access to the data even when dispatchers are busy.

C3. Fix Juvenile Detention Center Fingerprint Machine

The fingerprint machine that the Juvenile Detention Center acquired from the Dakota County Jail does not work. This requires booking officers to ink print inmates, a more timely exercise than taking electronic prints. Fixing the electronic fingerprint machine would increase the efficiency of the booking process and improve the flow of fingerprint information to the BCA.

D. DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT WEB QUERY APPLICATION FOR LEGACY SYSTEMS

Many of the short-term recommendations presented here focus on providing criminal justice agencies access to each other's systems. In some cases, providing read-only access may be relatively straightforward. In other cases, however, providing access may be difficult due to technical considerations, security concerns, difficulties with ease of use for end-users, and the training requirements of adding additional users.

Access to other systems might be better implemented through a web-based query tool that uses any Internet browser to query either a) source tables in existing systems, b) a data warehouse composed of only those data elements required, or c) a combination of both.

A web-based approach would have the benefit of standardizing the interface for the user, simplifying use, and would be deployable in any workstation or mobile computer with web access. Security could be maintained by standard SSL encryption technology embedded in most Internet browsers.

Implementation of a web-based query tool could begin with data from ENFORS, the Detention Center's jail management system, and roll out to encompass local police department's record management systems for incident reports and TCIS data for court case disposition information. Simple queries by name and street address would return references in multiple systems.