

Improving Public Safety
and the
Administration of Justice
with Information Sharing

IJIS Coordinating Council
Biennium Report

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Prepared for
Governor Mike Huckabee
Chief Justice W. H. “Dub” Arnold
Joint Committee on
Advanced Communications and
Information Technology
of the **General Assembly**

by the
IJIS Coordinating Council

Arkansas Crime Information Center ♦ Administrative Office of the Courts
Arkansas State Crime Laboratory ♦ Department of Correction
Arkansas Sentencing Commission ♦ Department of Community Correction
Arkansas State Police ♦ Department of Information Systems
Office of the Prosecutor Coordinator ♦ Public Defender Commission
Department of Human Services Division of Youth Services

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1. Acknowledgement

The Integrated Justice Information Systems Coordinating Council, which was established by Act 848 in 1999 and continued by Act 1272 of 2001, is responsible for evaluating the existing justice information systems in Arkansas, making suggestions for improvements, and developing plans for an integrated justice information system. The Council is comprised of the directors of the following state agencies:

Arkansas Crime Information Center
Administrative Office of the Courts
Arkansas Sentencing Commission
Arkansas State Crime Laboratory
Arkansas State Police
Department of Community Correction
Department of Correction
Department of Information Systems
Division of Youth Services
Office of the Prosecutor Coordinator
Public Defender Commission

Jim Clark, ASCL Director, serves as chairman and John Stewart, Deputy Director of the AOC, as vice-chairman of the Council. Other directors, or their designees, serving on the Council are Sarah Heffley, ACIC; Sandy Moll, ASC; Captain Kathy Sparks, ASP; David Guntharp, DCC; Larry Norris, ADC; Sanford Cothren, DIS; Bill Steele, DYS; Bob McMahan, PCO; and Jacque Alexander, PDC.

As the designated support agency for the IJIS Coordinating Council, ACIC employs Brenda Barber as Project Director and Paul Waits, Jr., as Pilot Project Coordinator.

The council meets monthly, on the second Tuesday of the month, at 1:30 p.m. Meeting locations rotate among the member agencies' offices. Meeting information is posted on the IJIS web page at www.ijis.state.ar.us.

2. Executive Summary

Criminal justice agencies in Arkansas are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of integrating their information systems. Recognizing that integration has great potential to improve the administration of criminal justice, agencies have begun working together to integrate existing and new systems. The electronic sharing of information provides for more timely, accurate, and complete data throughout the criminal justice process. Integration will allow criminal justice resources to be more efficiently and effectively utilized across all agencies, potentially reaching to disaster response teams and homeland security offices.

The Coordinating Council has been evaluating existing systems and preparing for integrated justice information systems. The Council anticipates that this integration effort could extend over a period of years and require substantial funding to achieve the full potential and benefits of an integrated justice information system.

A federal grant has provided for IJIS project staffing and a pilot project. The intent of the pilot project is to allow for an early success that can create synergy and support for the broader statewide effort and provide the creation of a model for other counties to follow. To accomplish this, the pilot project will integrate the Faulkner County offices of the Sheriff and the county detention facility, the Prosecuting Attorney, and the Circuit Court.

This report, required by Act 1272 of 2001, provides a brief description of integration, the progress made to date, and recommendations for continuation of the effort.

3. Background on Integration

In Arkansas, individual criminal justice agencies on the city, county, and state levels have utilized a variety of computer systems to perform their individual duties. The Arkansas Crime Information Center is statutorily authorized to design and administer uniform record systems, uniform crime reporting systems, and “other programs to be used by criminal justice agencies to improve the administration of justice.” Ark. Code Ann. §12-12-207. ACIC administers a comprehensive data system that is accessible by criminal justice agencies in over 250 locations in Arkansas and is interfaced with the FBI National Crime Information Center as well as similar systems in the other 49 states. *See* § Ark. Code Ann. 12-12-208. At this time, no other overall structure exists that allows information to be exchanged among all agencies in the criminal justice community.

As agencies process a defendant through the criminal justice system, they must enter information into multiple databases. Making these duplicate entries is not only a waste of time, but also provides opportunities for errors and delays. Critical data on an offender must be available to various agencies in a timely manner.

Before justice system leaders can integrate their information systems, they must understand the current business practices that govern the flow of information. The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, SEARCH, developed a research tool to capture detailed information regarding the events, agencies, and information exchange conditions associated with justice information integration. This tool, Justice Information Exchange Model (JIEM)¹, was tested in five states, and then made available for use by other states. It is a browser-based application hosted on SEARCH’s web servers.

IJIS staff applied to SEARCH for the tool and on August 13-14th, 2002, SEARCH representatives came to Little Rock and provided training to the staff and to members of the IJIS Technical Committee. This tool will be used to document the exchange of information at the local level, beginning in Faulkner County. To date, 133 data exchange business rules have been identified.

Integration Principals

- **Accurate.** *Information is collected once and used many times, thereby avoiding the misunderstandings and keying errors associated with multiple collection.*
- **Timely.** *Information can often be made available instantly rather than waiting for a separate collection effort.*
- **Complete.** *Information from multiple sources can be assembled into a full description.*
- **Less Expensive.** *It costs less to store data and send it to another user than it does to collect it again.*

¹ Additional information on JIEM is available at www.search.org/integration/info_exchange.asp

4. Progress in Arkansas

4.1. Mission and Goals

The mission of the Coordinating Council is to create and maintain integrated criminal justice information processing with accurate, complete, and timely data on individuals and events, in order to promote and support the effective administration of justice in a timely and cost effective manner at all levels of government in Arkansas.

To achieve the mission, the following strategic goals must be accomplished:

- Capture data at the source event.
- When possible, use existing systems.
- Establish consistent technological standards.
- Integrate at all levels and branches of government.
- Provide guidance on the planning and administration of criminal justice information systems.
- Create an architecture to accommodate future integrated justice information systems.

4.2. Pilot Project

In 2001, a competitive, federally funded opportunity became available to develop a relatively short-term project (18-24 months) that would contribute directly to improving information sharing among designated criminal justice agencies. Because a completely integrated criminal justice system begins at the local level, the Coordinating Council selected a single county to serve as a pilot county to implement integration and serve as a representative project.

Pursuant to Act 1272 of 2001, on behalf of the Coordinating Council, ACIC applied for, and received, \$910,563 from the National Governors Association in cooperation with the Bureau of Justice Assistance of the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs. This grant, received in December 2001, will fund the Arkansas IJIS project office and the pilot project through October 2003.

This pilot project will provide for the creation of a model for other counties to follow. Once success can be demonstrated, it is believed that many counties will want to

implement integration projects. The project also will provide experience and opportunities that will enhance the development of the statewide sharing plan.

The council chose Faulkner County as the pilot county. The goal of the pilot project is to integrate the offices of the Faulkner County Sheriff and Detention Facility, the Prosecuting Attorney of the 20th Judicial District, the Faulkner County Circuit Clerk and the Circuit Court. The steps to achieve this goal have been divided into two phases.

On behalf of the Council, ACIC contracted with Appriss, Inc., of Louisville, Kentucky, to deliver Phase I, which was completed by its October 11, 2002, due date. This phase will include a project design, plan, and budget, as well as an XML Interface design.

Phase II will involve the selection of vendors to install additional automation at the jail, prosecutor, and courts. In addition, the middleware layer will be tested for exchanges of information. The pilot project will be operational by the conclusion of Phase II. A Request for Proposal is being prepared for Phase II.

4.3 Coordination with other Projects

During the planning of integrated systems, no moratorium has been, or can be, placed on new projects. However, a coordinated effort does exist between new projects, ongoing projects, and the integration plans.

Arkansas Court Automation Project

In May 2001, the Arkansas Supreme Court initiated the Arkansas Court Automation Project.² ACAP and the Supreme Court Committee on Automation developed a preliminary strategic technology plan for the judicial branch, which was approved by the Court in October. In June 2002, the Arkansas Supreme Court authorized the Administrative Office of the Courts to enter into a contract with ACS Government Systems for a statewide license of their Justice Information System. The ACS case management system was selected by the Supreme Court Committee on Automation with the assistance of judges and clerks from Arkansas courts.

ACAP began its pilot project in August 2002. One of the pilot courts, the Faulkner County Circuit Court, is also a pilot site for the IJIS project. The ACAP project also includes the Conway District Court, and will include data exchanges with the Circuit Court. The IJIS Office and the ACAP office are carefully coordinating their efforts.

² Additional ACAP information can be found at <http://courts.state.ar.us/courts/acap/index.html>.

JusticeXchange and eOMIS Integration

JusticeXchange is an electronic “warehouse” of information on offenders in our state containing current and historical arrest information collected from jails across Arkansas’ 75 counties. This central repository of information is offered to each level of law enforcement, and other criminal justice agencies in our state, including federal, state, county, and city. The database is viewed through a secure and restricted website, and includes offender photos, incident reports on behavior, and charge information related to an individual’s arrest. JusticeXchange also allows jails to automatically query the ACIC/NCIC “hot files” to determine status on outstanding warrants, sex offenders, and orders of protection.

In the summer of 2001, DCC converted to eOMIS, a new records-management system that houses more than 100,000 adult probation and parole offender records. ADC will be fully converted to eOMIS during the fall of 2002, adding the remaining state correction’s records. This system will establish a comprehensive correctional tracking system for adult offenders in the state of Arkansas.

A collaborative effort between the Arkansas Crime Information Center and the Department of Community Correction is underway to link JusticeXchange and eOMIS in order to provide the exchange of jail and probation/parole information among all criminal justice agencies using these systems.

5. Recommendations

Providing for the safety and security of our citizens is a fundamental and primary responsibility of Arkansas government. Criminal justice agencies and citizens depend on accurate and timely data to provide a safer state. Arkansas is at a pivotal point in its efforts for integrated justice.

Other states are beginning to recognize the need for all organizations involved in the criminal justice system to share information. A few states, like Minnesota, Colorado and Pennsylvania, are leading the integration effort nationally. Many have not come as far as Arkansas. Making use of existing assets, such as successful programs, funding for the pilot project, and statewide systems that are ready for integration, Arkansas can vault to the front of this effort nationally and be recognized as a leader in this area.

An integrated criminal justice information system for Arkansas is a comprehensive effort. It requires major commitment by all levels of government in this state. The Integrated Justice Information Systems Coordinating Council respectfully submits the following recommendations:

1. Make implementation of an integrated justice information system in Arkansas a high priority, encouraging support from all levels of state and local government.
2. Re-authorize the Integrated Justice Information Systems Coordinating Council, adding representation of the Chief Information Officer.

Arkansas has a statewide governmental commitment to e-Government. Integration of the criminal justice information systems will directly support the effort of the State of Arkansas to use technology in order to provide services and a greater measure of safety to its citizens.