

# ***State of Iowa Justice Information Systems Integration Summary***



Justice agencies throughout the nation increasingly recognize the importance of integrating their information systems in order to share critical data, documents, images and key transactions. In recognition of this need to share information, many state and local jurisdictions, including the State of Iowa, are actively developing and implementing plans for comprehensive integrated justice information systems. Integrated systems improve the quality of information and thereby: improves public safety, eliminates data entry errors and redundant data entry, provides complete, current and timely data, improves the ability to evaluate policy decisions and changes, maximizes available resources, improves data retrieval response time, provides for better, more informed decision making, and improves the operational effectiveness of existing systems.

It is well known that each justice agency makes decisions regarding persons or cases that should be shared with other persons or agencies. However, many systems have been developed in isolation of one another. This results in independent systems that may share common data concepts but cannot easily communicate with each other. The goal of integration is to design a system or “variety of functions” to enable the efficient, accurate and timely sharing of information within and between justice agencies.

The challenge of criminal justice integration is widely known to those in the field, and to many, if not all policymakers. Communication among law enforcement, the judicial branch, and corrections at the local, state, and federal levels remains a major challenge in maximizing the equity, efficiency, and effectiveness of the national justice system. The Executive and Judicial branches play a lead role in bringing justice information users within their states together to achieve the benefits of information integration through the use of information technology (IT).

The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs (OJP) has been promoting information integration, working closely with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, and other federal and state officials to find ways that its programs can be more catalytic in creating effective cooperation between levels of government and across agency boundaries. Through a series of activities with various state and local government associations, OJP has laid the groundwork for integration and cooperation at the technical level, and recent developments in technology are reenergizing efforts at the local, state, and federal levels.

This is an opportune time for political and policy leadership and cross-agency collaboration to make integration become a reality.

In 1998, the National Governors Association (NGA) Chairman, Governor Tom Carper, appointed an eight-member Information Technology Task Force to examine ways in which states can more effectively use IT to meet citizen needs and improve state government operations. Criminal justice integration is a prime example of using IT to solve problems and improve service to citizens. A survey of the Governors of all 50 states was conducted in the spring of 1999 to determine Governors top priorities for IT applications, and nearly every responding governor listed criminal justice integration as a major near-term priority.

Through a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the National Governors' Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices, Iowa is launching an initiative to integrate criminal justice information technology systems.

***The goals of this initiative are to:***

- Bring together the Governor and his designees, the Iowa Supreme Court and their staff, and policymakers from federal, state, and local governments and criminal justice agencies together to develop statewide plans to implement information technology solutions that integrate law enforcement, corrections, and criminal justice systems.
- Build on previous work supported by OJP including the National Criminal Justice Association state governance survey, the technical strategies developed by the National Association of State Information Resource Executives, the information exchange analysis being conducted by SEARCH, the Strategic Planning Model developed by the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), and other ongoing activities to develop leadership capacity at the state level for information technology integration.
- Provide a forum for public policymakers to discuss criminal justice integration in a less technical, more policy-oriented environment.
- Identify barriers and use team consulting among the participating entities to develop strategies and action plans for eliminating the barriers.
- Provide expert and peer technical assistance opportunities to state agencies in the development and implementation of criminal justice integration strategies.
- Disseminate the results of state team activities to all states and the broader integrated criminal justice information systems community.
- Develop a governance and planning model for statewide criminal justice implementation and integration.
- Provide feedback to the Office of Justice Programs and Bureau of Justice Assistance in their supporting efforts to integrate state, federal and local information systems.

## **Where are we now? (October 2004)**

Iowa is positioned to take the necessary steps towards ensuring safer communities and enhanced public safety through the sharing of critical criminal justice information and data. During the last two years Iowa has demonstrated a commitment and shown progress towards an integrated justice information system. This progress is detailed below.

- Iowa received two grants through the National Governor's Association for the initial planning phase of an integrated criminal justice information system.
- A cross section of key stakeholders representing the Judicial Branch, the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Corrections, the Information Technology Department, the Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning of the Department of Human Rights, and the Iowa Association of Chiefs of Police and Peace Officers, participated in national forums and training sessions intended to provide a background knowledge and understanding of integrated justice information systems to prepare for the implementation of such a system in Iowa in the future.
- A Criminal Justice Information Systems Integration Strategic Planning team was established consisting of representatives of the Judicial Branch, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Public Safety, the Information Technology Department, and the Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning of the Department of Human Rights.
- A Criminal Justice Information Systems Integration Strategic Plan for the State of Iowa was developed (March 2001).
- A Criminal Justice Information Systems Integration Statement of Work was prepared (May 2001).
- A Criminal Justice Information Systems Integration Project Implementation Plan was created (July 2001).
- The Information Technology Department has dedicated a full time staff person and related resources to coordinate the criminal justice information integration effort.
- The strategic planning team has met regularly to provide direction and guidance to the criminal justice integration project.
- A group of leaders from the State's justice community participated in a planning session to discuss the State's criminal justice information integration effort and to determine "next steps".
- Iowa received four allocations of federal Byrne Grant funds (and the related state match) for planning purposes related to the integration of justice information. Additionally, Iowa received two grants from the National Criminal History Improvement Program for the same purpose.

- A site visit by a team of nationally recognized criminal justice information systems integration experts from SEARCH, the National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, was held in November 2001 to provide technical assistance on Iowa's initiative.
- The Information Technology Department is working with the Homeland Security Advisor and staff within the Emergency Management Division to ensure that Iowa's justice information systems integration effort ties into Iowa's homeland security needs.
- An outreach effort among state and local stakeholders has been initiated by the Information Technology Department to explain Iowa's Justice Information Systems Integration Initiative.
- Iowa is an active member of the Upper Midwest Justice Consortium, which is working to establish common standards to allow information sharing between upper Midwestern states.
- The Information Technology Department and the Department of Corrections worked with the Polk County Sheriff's Office to provide for the transmission of offender information from Correction's ICON system to the COPLINK system. COPLINK provides real time information to the law enforcement agencies in Polk County.
- A proof of concept (project Kaleidoscope) is underway which links the Department of Corrections, the Department of Public Safety, the Polk County Sheriff's Office, and the Polk County Attorney's Office with a common system in order to allow the real-time sharing of criminal justice information within and between those jurisdictions.
- The Division of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Planning and the Information Technology Department conducted a statewide assessment of the status of automation in county jails and county attorneys offices.
- The Information Technology Department in conjunction with URL Integration (technology vendor) conducted a statewide, system wide analysis of adult criminal justice information transactions (exchange points) to identify problems with the flow of adult criminal justice information.
- The Department of Transportation is coordinating an effort to establish a mechanism to provide for the electronic submission of OWI information from law enforcement officers to prosecuting attorneys via TRACS.
- The Department of Corrections and the Board of Parole are integrating the Board of Parole's operating system into the Department of Corrections ICON system, thereby merging two independent systems into one common information-sharing network.
- A statewide working group is in the process of developing a method to provide for the electronic submission of pre-sentence investigations from the Department of Corrections to the Court system. Currently, this is a paper-based process.

- The Governor and the Chief Justice have signed a memorandum of understanding to establish a governance structure to provide oversight and decision-making for the integration initiative.
- The Department of Public Safety obtained thirty “Cyberlinxx” licenses to provide browser-based access to the Department of Public Safety’s Iowa System by thirty additional criminal justice practitioners in Iowa. This increases the ability of the justice community to access critical information.
- The Department of Public Safety will be installing an online testing and certification system for dispatchers. This enhances Iowa System security and ensures that only qualified users access the Iowa System. Additionally, this ensures that data is not compromised and that Iowa is in compliance with NCIC 2000 standards.
- The Judicial Branch and the Department of Public Safety refined interface and connectivity processes between the ICIS System (Courts) and the Iowa System (DPS) related to the electronic transmission of protective orders. This ensures that protective orders are processed in the most effective, efficient, and timely manner possible.
- The Department of Administrative Services worked with the Prosecuting Attorneys Training Council to provide a government e-mail address to those prosecuting attorneys who do not possess one. This allows them to access deferred judgment information from the court system.
- The Department of Administrative Services in conjunction with URL Integration (technology vendor) conducted a statewide, system wide analysis of juvenile justice information transactions (exchange points) to identify problems with the flow of juvenile justice information.
- The CJIS Board developed the mission, scope, and objectives of Iowa’s Criminal Justice Integration Initiative.
- Iowa received an allocation of Homeland Security funds for the development of a comprehensive, statewide criminal justice integration plan as well as an allocation of Pooled Technology funds to enhance the integration efforts of the Department of Corrections (ICON System) and the Department of Public Safety (IOWA System).
- The CJIS Advisory Committee has begun meeting and is in the process of developing statewide policy recommendations to be presented to the CJIS Board.
- The Department of Administrative Services worked with the Judicial Branch to integrate the information in ICIS, CJIN and the drug courts in Polk County.