

State of Iowa Department of Public Safety



CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION SHARING PROJECT

SYNOPSIS

The State of Iowa Criminal Justice Information Sharing (CJIS) project leveraged the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM) to reduce delays and address major information gaps between agencies as well as redundancies in the processing of crucial public safety information. As a result, the Iowa CJIS project has achieved cross-boundary collaboration, a more transparent justice enterprise, and measurable results.

AGENCY OVERVIEW

The Iowa CJIS project is a statewide initiative to create safer communities by using technology to connect, integrate, and automate existing criminal justice information systems – and the critical public safety and justice workflow that they support.

The ongoing CJIS project, which first went live in February 2008, has continued to expand and now encompasses 24 information exchanges transmitting over 600,000 messages annually. To date, the CJIS project supports workflow-driven information sharing among 11 State agencies and the Judicial Branch, 99 County Attorneys and Sheriffs, and more than 300 state and local agencies in the State of Iowa. By the end of 2012, the CJIS effort holds plans to provide incident, arrest, and booking data to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Law Enforcement National Data Exchange project so that federal, state, and local investigators across the country can benefit. The State's pioneering efforts and long-term, continuous commitment to the Project has resulted in one of the most ambitious and successful statewide integrated justice information systems in the country and an exemplar for other states.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHALLENGE: Over a decade of manual and paper-based information sharing resulted in ineffective cooperation between levels of government and across agency boundaries.

SOLUTION: In February 2008, CJIS used technology to automate existing criminal justice information systems by implementing previously developed NIEM-based Information Exchange Package Documents (IEPDs) for high-return exchanges, such as arrest warrants, electronic citations, protective orders, and victim-related notifications and updates.

RESULTS: Creation of a more transparent justice enterprise; increased cross-boundary collaboration; measurable efficiencies; and elimination of data

CHALLENGE

How can the State of Iowa design a system that provides efficient, accurate and timely sharing of information within and between justice agencies? That was the question that had been challenging Iowa's Department of Public Safety. In the 1990s, state and local criminal justice agencies in Iowa had used automated information systems that were designed to meet individual and agency-specific processes. For more than a decade, the use of these standalone, legacy systems resulted in the practice of paper driven, cross-agency information sharing. Consequently, agencies experienced major gaps, delays, and redundancies in the processing of crucial public safety information.

SOLUTION

With these challenges in mind, in 2002, Iowa requested Bureau of Justice Assistance-funded Technology Assistance (TA) to provide advice and direction on how Iowa could undertake a statewide information exchange integration initiative. Using ideas generated by the TA, Iowa conducted two in-depth Justice Information Exchange Model exchange modeling exercises – one to model information flow relating to adult criminals and the other for the juvenile criminal process. Representatives from every agency and department in the State of Iowa were brought together to discuss how information flows through the justice enterprise could be streamlined.

Then in 2005, the State of Iowa completed a 5-year strategic implementation plan for Iowa CJIS. The plan outlined specific cost projections and proposed an implementation approach; including a pure application of service-oriented architecture (SOA) based on Global Reference Architecture, Web services standards, and eXtensible markup language (XML) standards, including the Global Justice XML Data Model which later evolved to the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM). The benefit of using SOA and related standards offered Iowa the flexibility to employ an Enterprise Service Bus that acts as the superstructure on-top of, in-between, and separate from agency legacy systems. As a result, the architecture was able to scale and adapt much more effectively across agencies. In addition, standard descriptions of the data (through Web services and NIEM) gave existing solution providers the ability to add-on using a common language and/or replicate from one jurisdiction to another, notwithstanding the specific applications that were in place in any particular agency.

"We have invested a significant amount of time and effort in our approach, which leverages justice best practices and standards in order to enhance public safety and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the justice enterprise in the State."

--Leon Fredrick, Iowa Department of Public Safety's CIO & Interim Iowa CJIS Coordinator

RESULTS

The Iowa CJIS project has achieved measurable efficiencies and results, including:

- **Increased Public Safety:** CJIS is the first statewide initiative to create safer communities by using technology to connect, integrate, and automate existing criminal justice information systems. For example, the automated exchange of information between the Iowa Department of Corrections and the County Attorneys allow victims to be notified of offender releases days sooner, thus enhancing victim safety.
- **Increased Efficiency:** Prior to the Iowa CJIS project, ordering and receiving pre-sentence investigations was a paper-intensive process that could take days to complete and often had to be printed multiple times. Today, the process for orders and report distribution is done entirely electronically where once a report is released, it is available instantly online thereby increasing the efficiency of the courts.
- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Over 100 state and local agencies are actively using the system which, as the "network effect" increases, more agencies connect to share data and increase interoperability.