

Integrated Justice Information Systems
Governance Structures,
Roles and Responsibilities

— A Background Report —

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Delegation of Authority and Decision-making in Managing
Integrated Justice Information Systems:**

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Structures of Statewide and State-level Integrated Justice
Information Systems Initiatives*

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Introduction

The dawn of a new millennium marks an exciting time for the nation's justice community, as it embraces — more enthusiastically than ever before — advanced information technology and the integration of information systems.

Information technology and systems integration is not a phenomenon isolated to the justice community; indeed, all government has recognized the value and myriad benefits associated with information sharing, including improved information quality, enhanced decisionmaking, elimination of error-prone and redundant data entry, and timely access to information when it is needed most.

But for the justice community in particular, major initiatives at the federal, state and local levels, combined with growing user needs and public demand for justice information, together with exciting advances in information and security technologies are driving efforts to exchange and integrate data among justice agencies, and with other agencies critical to their mission. During this past decade, states across the nation have established governance structures to guide development of integrated justice information systems (IJIS).

This report provides detailed insight into the establishment of these governing structures, their responsibilities and roles. This chapter will examine recent developments in IJIS planning and implementation across the country, and how and why states have established committees governing these projects.

Integration: defined for justice information systems¹

Justice information systems integration is not a new idea – agencies throughout the nation recognize the importance of integrating information systems to share critical data, documents, images and key transactions. State and local jurisdictions are actively developing IJIS plans and programs.

Integrated systems improve the quality of information, and thereby the quality of decisions, by eliminating error prone redundant data entry. In addition, by sharing data between systems, integration typically improves the timely access to information, a critical factor at many justice decision points (e.g., setting bail). Moreover, integration enables the sharing of crucial information without regard to time or space; multiple users can access the same records simultaneously from remote locations around the clock.

The concept of “integrated justice information systems,” however, means different things to different

¹ This section adapted from “Organizing For Change”, David J. Roberts, SEARCH for the 1999 Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice and SEARCH National Conference on Integrated Justice Information Systems, February 1999.

people in different contexts. The extent to which justice agencies across the country are integrating depends on a number of variables, not the least of which is the definition and scope of the individual integration project. In many cases, integration takes the form of a single agency integrating its many information systems, such as a state police agency integrating its criminal records system with mugshot and fingerprint identification databases. Significant improvements in efficiency and effectiveness can be achieved when internal information systems communicate critical data in a timely manner.

Other projects have taken a broader approach, integrating information systems between different agencies with different functions, but that need to share key pieces of data at critical points in the justice process. Integration encompasses a variety of functions designed to enable the timely and efficient sharing of information² within and between agencies.

It is important to recognize that building IJIS does not mean that *all* information between agencies is shared, without regard to the event, the agencies

² The term “information” is used here in its broadest sense to include data, images (photo, document and fingerprint), case records, calendar events, and electronic messages.

involved or the sensitivity of the information available. Rather, it means sharing critical information at key decision points throughout the justice process.

At arrest, for example, the arresting agency typically transmits certain information regarding the arrestee to the state criminal history records repository (e.g., name, age, sex, race, driver's license number, electronic image of the arrestee's fingerprints, etc.) to record the arrest transaction in the instant case, but also to verify the arrested person's identity and determine whether they have a criminal history record in the resident state, or in other jurisdictions around the nation.

In addition, the agency will also query other state and national systems to determine whether there are any outstanding warrants, detainers, or other holds on the arrestee. For these transactions, the arresting agency does not need to share *all* information regarding the arrestee or the event which led to the arrest, but only that information necessary for the discrete transaction "check for outstanding warrants" or "verify identity and report arrest transaction to the criminal history repository."

Beyond improving the internal operations of justice agencies, integration is more expansively viewed as

enabling the sharing of critical information between agencies. Integration efforts are often referred to as horizontal (e.g., among different divisions of the same court system, or between the state police, court and correctional systems) or vertical (e.g., from limited to general jurisdiction courts, from trial to appellate and state supreme courts, and from local agencies to state and national/federal systems).³ Interagency integration, whether horizontal or vertical, generally refers to the ability to access and share critical information at key decision points throughout the justice process.

Justice agencies throughout the nation already share considerable information. It is important to recognize that regional, statewide and national systems currently exist to facilitate access to and sharing of key information among many of the actors in the justice enterprise. In addition, some of the information exchange is currently accomplished with existing technology or is being developed in new systems, but much is also still done by hand through the ceaseless efforts of justice practitioners. Integration efforts are

³ “Report of the National Task Force on Court Automation and Integration,” prepared by SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, 1998, page 3, published by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, June 1999.

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designed to automate many of these operations, reengineer systems and processes, and achieve new capabilities with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

State responsibilities for integrating justice

It is important to differentiate responsibilities at the local, state and federal levels regarding integrated systems planning, implementation and support. Local justice agencies are responsible for acquiring, creating and maintaining information systems that meet their internal operational needs. In addition, they have an interest and responsibility to share information with other agencies within and outside their immediate jurisdiction, and a continuing need to access and report information to regional, statewide and national systems.

The state has responsibility for creating a statewide infrastructure that will enable agencies to share information with other local jurisdictions throughout the state in a common format, and to share information with statewide systems so local agencies throughout the state will have access to the information, as well as to other states and localities. The state, therefore, is largely responsible for building the infrastructure necessary to support horizontal integration initiatives, and has primary responsibility for creating, adopting and maintaining state information systems and serving

as the gateway for national and federal systems.⁴ Generally, it is not the state's responsibility to ensure that local justice agencies electronically share person, event, case or process data within the local unit of government, but rather, to build and maintain the infrastructure necessary to enable that level of integration.

In a similar vein, the federal responsibility is primarily for building and maintaining the national information infrastructure necessary to enable sharing of key information between states and to serve as a gateway for state and local agencies to various national and federal information systems.

⁴ It should be noted, however, that in some jurisdictions, the state has opted to create and maintain information systems that meet the operational needs of local users as a method of enabling integration. This distributed approach means that the State has assumed a significant data processing support strategy.

Forces driving justice system integration

Why is justice information system integration such a key issue at this particular time? For decades, the justice community has considered how to better share data and integrate information systems. But during the 1990s, a number of major events have conspired to place justice system integration at the top of many state IT priorities lists. In particular, recent technological advances, combined with national and state initiatives, and growing user and public demand for justice information are responsible for renewed capabilities and interest in IJIS.

Technology: the enabler

Technology provided the jump-start to effective integration. Rapid advances in information system and identification technologies have steadily driven justice agencies toward the automation and integration of their information systems.

With the advent of distributed processing systems, open architecture⁵ and powerful database applications,

⁵Distributed Processing System: a computer system designed for multiple users that provides each user with a fully functional computer. Open architecture: a system in which all the systems specifications are made public so that other companies will develop add-on products,

information systems integration can be accomplished faster, cheaper and easier – with more robust applications – than ever before.

Although justice agencies collect much of the same data, albeit for different uses, they no longer must agree on identical hardware and software systems to achieve integration. Internet technology, middleware applications and data warehousing solutions, to name a few, allow individual agencies to acquire and maintain hardware and software components that best meet their operational needs, but also allow participation in an open network. Today's technology can easily accommodate and incorporate crucial data stored in existing, older systems into the integrated system. The greater challenge is the condition and structure of the data.

The Colorado Integrated Criminal Justice Information System (CICJIS), which went live in May 1998, uses state-of-the-art technology, including advanced middleware products, to integrate existing statewide criminal justice information systems (Department of Public Safety, Colorado District Attorneys' Council, Department of Corrections,

such as adaptors for the system. Both definitions from *Webster's New World Dictionary of Computer Terms, Seventh Edition, 1999.*

Judicial Branch, Department of Human Services). By allowing the individual agencies to maintain information systems that meet their daily, operational business needs, and accomplishing integration through linkages and data transfer, CICJIS was able to overcome the concern that agencies must sacrifice functionality or autonomy to participate in an integrated system.

Information system Year 2000 compliancy issues have also impacted the pace at which states have moved to integrated systems. Realizing the need to replace existing non-compliant systems, many states wisely took advantage of this opportunity to begin planning for IJIS.

Users demand more

Justice practitioners have become comfortable with computers in their agencies, and recognize the functionality that effective information systems can provide. This has caused a paradigm shift in the industry from developing computer systems merely to house data, to designing robust, interactive information systems that work proactively to effectively target crime and improve decisionmaking.

Police agencies use incident data to map criminal activity and analyze trends for better resource allocation; judges access complete, accurate and up-to-the-minute record information on defendants to make informed bail and sentencing decisions; and correctional agencies use offender information to make appropriate housing and release decisions. For users, data sharing and exchange is an essential tool for the effective administration of justice.

Public expectations and demands

As the public becomes more savvy in its use of computers and the Internet, they expect justice agencies are likewise taking full advantage of the latest technology. It is only when a tragic crime occurs that may have been prevented by the sharing of key information that the public often becomes aware of the lack of data sharing among justice agencies.

Melvin J. Carraway, Superintendent, Indiana State Police, and Lester C. Miller, Special Counsel to the Superintendent, wrote an article in 1997 aptly titled *Integrated Law Enforcement: "You Mean They Are Not Doing It Now?"* The authors note, "The public has certain expectations regarding how law enforcement fights crime. When they are informed of this

[Indiana's] project to integrate law enforcement, one of two responses is invariably given: 'You mean they are not doing it now?' or 'Well, it's about time.'"

In addition, public demand for crime control has given rise to a number of federal and state laws authorizing access and use of criminal justice information. In addition to authorizing access to criminal history background information for noncriminal justice decisionmaking (such as employment or handgun purchases), other laws have established registries and notification programs for certain types of offenders, such as sexual predators. These well-intentioned laws assume a level of automation and integration that is only just emerging in justice agencies throughout the nation.

Local initiatives

States are aware that local jurisdictions are beginning to integrate their justice systems as well. States realize that setting standards and undertaking more comprehensive planning efforts are critical to ensuring that local IJIS can effectively and efficiently communicate and share information with each other and the state and are, therefore, assuming leadership roles in this area.

National initiatives

U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno has recognized the importance of integrated information systems strategic planning and coordination, and is sponsoring two important national projects. The Global Criminal Justice Information Network and the Office of Justice Programs Strategic Funding Initiative are both designed to look at justice information system integration and how the Department can best assist states in their move toward integration.

In addition, near the end of 1998, Congress passed, and the President signed, historic legislation that will vastly improve the business of justice and ultimately enhance public safety. Beginning Fiscal Year 1999, Public Law 105-251, which includes The Crime Identification Technology Act, authorizes \$250 million per year for each of the next five years (\$1.25 billion) for state grants to promote the integration of justice system information and identification technology. The Technology Act included the first sizable grant program to support justice information systems

integration, overcoming one of integration's main obstacles.⁶

Together, these driving forces have placed pressure and renewed emphasis on states to integrate their justice information systems and pursue critical data exchange.

⁶ It is important to recognize, however, that while this new law *authorizes* funding of up to \$250 million each year; thus, Congress must also pass legislation each year *appropriating* the funds. Early indications are that CITA will be funded at \$130 million for FY 2000.

Why governance structures are critical to IJIS success

Sharing and exchanging justice information in an automated fashion is a complicated process. It requires the state to play a leadership role in building the infrastructure that enables statewide information sharing, and to create, adopt and maintain state information systems and standards. Clearly, this is a significant challenge for state and local public policymakers and justice administrators.

The administration of justice includes numerous justice and non-justice agencies, many of which operate myriad systems for collecting, maintaining, analyzing and sharing data and information critical to carrying out their respective missions. Creating the capacity to share information and data among and between agencies, levels of government and a variety of disciplines means overcoming established barriers to data exchange. Representatives of the various agencies, disciplines and levels of government, therefore, must come together and formulate and agree to a unified strategy for achieving interoperability. These are not exclusively technical issues that can be addressed by programmers and data processing managers. To the contrary, planning for and

implementing integrated justice is a complicated business that involves a multifaceted array of political, organizational, legal, technical, cultural and personal issues that must be addressed. Because of the inherent complexity of these issues and the constitutional separation of powers that is also present, some formal organizational structure is a necessary first step to ensure that the principal participants, stakeholders and users are intimately involved in the project.

Defining a governing body, whether by executive order, statute, informal organization or by a memorandum of understanding that establishes a mission, membership, decisionmaking structure, etc., is arguably one of the key components to planning and implementing a successful state IJIS. The governance structure ensures a place at the table for all relevant agencies and users and formalizes and ensures equality in decisionmaking (e.g. all members have an equal vote in decisions at hand). It is the vehicle through which agencies, stakeholders and users participating in IJIS strategically plan for integrated systems implementation, and, as such:

- articulate a united vision and determine the scope and focus of integrated justice;

- identify legal, policy, administrative, funding and technical requirements and other obstacles to achieving integration;
- define and sanction project objectives, tasks and timetables;
- garner support from other state decisionmakers;
- monitor planning, implementation and management activities;
- define IJIS operational requirements;
- oversee systems acquisition;
- resolve obstacles to implementation; and
- review system performance and make recommendations concerning systems improvements, enhancements and next phases.

Structure

States have structured their governing bodies in different ways, but all IJIS governance structures contain three key components that focus on the following tasks: providing project leadership, defining the business of justice, and analyzing technical environments, policies and solutions.

IJIS projects require significant buy-in at the executive level and thus an oversight or decisionmaking committee is the critical first

component to the governance structure. This “executive committee”⁷ comprises the elements of authority and the decisionmaking processes and procedures that a state has put in place to oversee the planning, implementation, operation and management of an IJIS. This committee is comprised of justice agency leaders/decisionmakers and other key representatives in the integration project who represent all involved agencies and disciplines, from a variety of jurisdictional levels.

The executive committee might be a committee whose chair is vested by the governor or through statute with all decision-making authority, or it could be a committee that makes recommendations to an agency official who, in turn, makes decisions (e.g. the governor, legislature, finance offices, state chief information officer).

⁷ For purposes of this report, we will refer to the oversight/decisionmaking committee as the “executive committee”, though the term “executive” does not refer to branch of government, but rather that the heads of agencies or the “executives” generally participate in this group (e.g., the governor, chief justice, attorney general, chief of state police, commissioner of the department of corrections, etc.).

To complete the governance structure, two other components are essential: operational and technical committees. While the executive committee sets policy, makes key decisions and commits agency resources, its members are not generally involved in the daily operational information flow within and between the agencies, nor do they (or should they) know the technical solutions to these issues. The operational committees are essential for understanding, analyzing and defining the business of justice within a state, while the technical committees assess current technical environments and the technical policies and solutions that enable IJIS.

Any number of operational and technical committees may be established, depending on the vision and scope of the IJIS. Operational committees may include those that focus on specific policy issues, such as data access and availability issues; information flow; and funding strategies. Similarly, technical committees may be numerous and include groups to focus on technical standards, infrastructure and security to name a few.

This essential three-tiered committee structure incorporates expertise, leadership and specialized skills from different groups of individuals. Each group

addressing the three key components to successful IJIS planning: leadership, defining the business of justice, and analyzing technical environments and solutions.

The IJIS governing structure will then form any additional number of necessary subcommittees, working groups and ad hoc committees and rely on them to focus on particular issues, tasks and business processes that require in-depth analysis, documentation, development and/or reorganization, or to carry out the research on and development of a variety of project-specific plans, models, policies, and directions. In fact, these groups will provide most of the research and recommendations on the major issues identified in this section, and then bring the results to the governing body for review and endorsement.

Formation

Often the idea to integrate justice information systems is driven by operational users of the information systems. Other than in high profile cases, operational users — the street cop, the court clerk, the jailer — are the individuals who most often experience the frustrations with a system that fails to accurately and efficiently exchange and share data and information. They are impacted by the failure to access

instant information on warrant or bail status or the inability to access criminal history information for appropriate decisionmaking, etc. But as passionately as the users often campaign for an IJIS, without a proper governance structure, successful planning, acquisition and implementation of an IJIS project cannot move forward. Those who have tried, have failed to move the idea of an IJIS past the concept stage to reality.

So important is the governance structure that many are formalized in state statute or executive order. Not only does this formalization help garner legislative/gubernatorial support for the effort, but also makes the governing structure a formal and permanent mechanism for integration planning and implementation. Other states' governing body representatives have signed memoranda of understanding or executive agreements to insure agency commitment. Given the long-term nature of integration projects and the often constant turnover in leadership of state-level and elected positions, a formal and binding agreement or a mandate can be an effective means for states to ensure the continued existence of the IJIS governing body.

Membership

Members of the governance structure include representatives of relevant state and local entities that contribute to, use and have a vested interest in the criminal justice system and generally include representatives from all three branches of government, thereby recognizing the critical issue of separation of powers. Key stakeholders are engaged in the early stages of integrated systems planning so that they help define the effort, invest in its development, and recognize their continuing responsibility for its success.

Members of the executive committee are the highest-level officials of the identified entities, such as the state court administrator, director of corrections, superintendent of state police, state senators and representatives, as well as mayors, police chiefs and county prosecutors (and, in some cases, even the governor, attorney general, and chief justice of the supreme court). These are the people who have the power to dedicate agency resources and commit personnel to get the project done. They have the ability to drive the project forward, remove barriers, and provide powerful leadership.

In addition, the state chief information officer or information technology representative is an important member of the executive committee. This individual's participation is essential in assuring that IJIS planning contemplates statewide IT planning efforts and vice versa.

Funding agency representatives should play a role in the governance structure. Involving funding representatives early gives them a stake in the project and educates them on IJIS, which, in turn, assists in selling IJIS, come budget time.

Beyond justice agency leadership representation, depending on the scope of the project, it may be necessary to include representatives of other important agencies and organizations on the committee.

If health, education and/or social service agencies are expected to provide and receive information from the IJIS, representatives should be involved in the governance structure. In some cases, such as when health, education and social services are *not* agencies within the scope of the current IJIS effort, *ex officio* roles may be created on the committee to allow input from these and other interested constituencies. This will assist in developing IJIS consistent with other major statewide technology initiatives, and vice versa.

Membership on subcommittees, working groups and ad hoc committees consist of a cross section of representatives from the scope agencies. Generally they are comprised of various levels of staff from upper and middle management, technical departments and end users.

In short, IJIS project success depends on user involvement in the planning process and governance structure. Without it, even the most well intended and state-of-the-art technology is likely to fail, as it was designed without the support, input and commitment of the end users.

Getting the right players involved is crucial for securing buy-in to the project and developing a comprehensive vision. Having all affected and participating parties represented on the governing body is essential when it comes to establishing credibility with other government officials, decisionmakers and funding agencies and will, most importantly, assist in achieving commitment to, as well as a sense of ownership for the project, by all of the agencies and groups involved.

Roles and responsibilities

The IJIS governing body will have myriad issues to contend with during the planning, implementation, management and future enhancement of integrated systems. Although the number and complexity of those issues will vary from state to state, key issues all governing bodies will have to contend with center around on-going strategic planning and incorporate such major issues as developing the IJIS vision, scope and objectives; developing operating procedures for the governing body; defining IJIS operational requirements; dealing with technology and standards; securing funding and providing continuing leadership throughout the life of the project.

Vision, scope and objectives

The governing body provides critical leadership in IJIS strategic planning, and one of its initial responsibilities is articulating a vision, defining the scope, and establishing objectives for the integrated system. Completion of these tasks provides specific guidance to project staff in planning and designing a system that will meet the operational requirements defined by the executives at the outset. The vision brings a tangible reality to what it is the state will

address by integrating justice information systems. The vision articulated for IJIS will play a major role in defining the scope and developing realistic project objectives and milestones.

The mission defined for the Kentucky Unified Criminal Justice Information System, for example, is: to provide for the collection and availability of accurate up-to-date information relating to individuals charged with or convicted of a criminal offense in a timely and easily accessible manner to the criminal justice community while maintaining appropriate security and privacy standards.

From these broader “visionary” statements, project personnel can derive and pursue the objectives that will define what agencies and processes are to be included within the integration initiative, and they can be sufficiently narrow from a practical standpoint to enable successful completion and demonstrative benefits, such as these objectives from the Kansas Criminal Justice Information System:

Develop and maintain the systems necessary to ensure an accurate, timely and comprehensive collection of criminal history information that meets local, state and federal standards for data quality and timeliness;

- Develop and maintain the system in such a way to ensure that it is compatible with the emerging national criminal justice information environment;
- Increase utilization of the system by providing on-line access to the appropriate information for the system’s primary and secondary customers;
- Ensure the system’s ability to migrate over time with technology advancements;
- Increase cost effectiveness of the system by reducing the manpower associated with the inputs and outputs of the system at both the state and local level;
- Ensure the state’s ability to manage and continue to expand the functionality of the system;
- Increase public safety by developing and implementing a centralized criminal justice information repository;

Defining the scope of an IJIS allows the governance structure to accomplish two necessary tasks. First, it establishes realistic boundaries for the effort so that work can begin and milestones reached. Second, defining scope assists in identifying which agencies are “in” the project and should be involved in

the planning effort, while acknowledging the expanding breadth and scale of the justice enterprise (e.g., the growing noncriminal justice use of criminal justice data, as well as the growing movement to community-based justice model). While ultimately the IJIS governing body must decide where the project boundaries lie, the exercise of defining scope allows the governing body to take into consideration other agencies that, while not in scope during initial IJIS planning phases, in the future, may become part of scope.

Operational issues

As the governance structure is key to successful IJIS planning and implementation, it must become a dynamic organizational structure that can effectively manage and commit to on-going planning and systems management. Thus, members of the governing structure must develop shared decisionmaking processes that recognize the operational priorities of the constituent agencies while coordinating funding and development activities.

The governance structure must carefully contemplate the varying agency responsibilities associated with different levels of government,

constitutional separation of powers, privacy and security of data and emerging role of the state chief information officer. The governing structure must also be capable of evolving as systems mature.

In short, IJIS governance requires leaders and decisionmakers to make a paradigm shift from equipment management to strategic information technology planning and, in doing so, must address the needs of a variety of agencies and disciplines.

Given the diverse structure and membership of the governing committees, they must develop operating procedures that dictate how they will conduct business and make decisions. Those procedures range from establishing policies for electing Chairs, to agreeing upon voting procedures and management strategies. How will the committees make decisions on difficult issues, such as prioritizing acquisition among agencies? What will be the criteria for making decisions? How will conflicts/difficulties — if they occur — be resolved? Early in its formation, the governing structure must decide how it will deal with a host of issues during planning and once the system is operational.

In addition, governing body members must acknowledge that inter-organizational turf issues, as

well as personal differences between agency administrators, staff and/or technical people are common. A process for dealing with these challenges needs to be established. The IJIS will also have to address and respect the operational differences from agency to agency, such as the differences that occur between agencies that track cases, versus those that track individuals.

Another major operational issue that committees wrestle with is how to deal with constant changes in committee membership. For the executive committee, many of the high-level representatives hold elected positions, which means membership is in constant flux. How these positions will be filled is an important consideration as an IJIS project can come to a halt if important decisionmakers are absent.

Resource availability is of primary concern to effective governance. Ample resources, measured both in terms of funding and staff time, are critical for committee members to travel to meetings and for accomplishing specified tasks, conducting research, developing documents and other project deliverables, as well as for providing guidance and consultation.

Analyzing and improving business processes

Planning for IJIS presents the perfect opportunity to carefully analyze the current “business” of justice and enhance and improve inter-agency workflow to realize improved efficiency, quality and timeliness of information.

Agency operational experts (managers and end users) and those who are intimately involved with the processing of justice information must develop the operational specifications for the IJIS. This involves a realistic assessment of the way business is currently conducted and contemplating ways to make processes more efficient, effective and accurate. It will also result in the development of rules about the sharing and exchange of justice information. Many times it requires introspective analysis of why things have historically been done the way they are, and making decisions about changing those process (e.g. is this done because there is a law or mandate? Or is this done because this is the traditional way of doing things?). The governance structure will make important decisions about business processes and improving the business of justice in the state.

Technology and standards

Although the governing body and its associated committees will not necessarily be responsible for designing technical solutions for the IJIS, they will have to address policy issues associated with current and future technical implementation. Of major concern to all members of the governance structure will be the existing investment each agency has in current automated systems and data. Many agencies have developed systems that effectively meet the individual agency's operational needs, however, were not specifically designed with integration in mind.

The technical committee will also grapple with historical information systems development that failed to incorporate information sharing standards, and that rarely was completed according to a comprehensive plan. The result for many states is that individual agencies have developed information systems that often duplicate, many times conflict, and often do not readily communicate with other information systems.

Another major concern for the governing body is the availability and expertise of existing technical staff support. Government agencies often find that qualified technical staff is not readily available and, when they are, hard to keep in government service. Technical

staffs are generally insufficient in number, inadequately trained, and splintered among the various agencies. They are often also committed to their own agency's information system projects and cannot dedicate the additional time necessary to focus on integrated systems development. The governing body will have to address how it will dedicate sufficient number and appropriately trained operational and technical staff to the integration project.

IJIS requires the adoption of standards so that agencies can share critical data at key decision points. There are a wide range of standards that have been developed at both the state and federal level to help insure justice information sharing capabilities. In addition, private industry has developed standards for much the same purposes. States must understand and incorporate these existing federal and state standards as they develop automated systems and contemplate industry standards. Failure to do so risks the future information sharing benefits of integrating the nation's justice information systems. The lack of standards furthers the piecemeal approach to technology implementation and aggravates integration attempts when agencies later find their systems fail to communicate with others. This is particularly critical

as IJIS will ultimately have to communicate with other statewide automated systems.

The state must also maintain a central place for state and local government level agencies to obtain, update, and review those standards as they develop their own automated systems to comply with the standards.

Funding issues

Clearly, how to fund IJIS planning, acquisition, implementation, management and future enhancement is a paramount issue. Historically, funding for such systems has taken place in a piecemeal fashion — in past years, rarely was funding made available for the full planning and implementation of IJIS. But that situation is changing at both the state and federal levels with the growing recognition of the importance of IJIS and major national initiatives discussed earlier, such as the funding component for the Crime Identification Technology Act, and the Attorney General’s initiatives.

Federal funding is critical as it provides necessary “seed monies” for the IJIS. But beyond that, state governing structures must also pursue different methods of planning and using state and local funding

streams to provide ongoing support for the IJIS. Members of the IJIS governing structure must make a fundamental shift in historic approaches to funding technology. Given the explosive growth and accelerated evolution of technology (e.g., computer storage capacity and processing speed is doubling more than annually), agency directors, policymakers, legislators and other funding decisionmakers must plan to fund technology on an ongoing and continuous basis, and develop annual budget and strategies that do so. IJIS poses a unique challenge in that budgets do not necessarily exist to fund a state IJIS. Development of IJIS presumes a coordinated funding strategy across constituent agencies. Obviously, this requires comprehensive planning, financial commitments and shared decisionmaking among the agencies.

Another key funding challenge is that agencies participating in IJIS generally have made major investments in existing technologies and legacy systems that may have limited long term utility, yet still effectively meet the daily operational needs of the agency. The role and functionality of these systems in the IJIS will have to be considered by the executive committee.

Effective fiscal planning for integrated systems development should also evaluate the operational benefits of the integration strategy. Although financial planning often suggests a “cost” benefit strategy, IJIS planning is often more functional when an operational benefit approach is taken. Realistically, IJIS will require significant financial investment and simply attempting to assess “money saved” is not an effective strategy for assessing the benefits to integration. Instead, it will be important to analyze the improvement in the administration of justice (e.g. quicker positive identification of suspects, improved and accurate data essential for critical decisions about offender sentencing, employment and gun purchases, enhanced public safety, etc.).

Finally, nationwide, a shift is occurring in the way states fund information technology. States are recognizing the need for a coordinated approach to systems development and have incorporated life cycle planning for systems. There has been a move toward not only coordinated funding for systems development, but also attempts to look at alternative funding strategies. In addition, a concentrated effort is being made to reform traditional government procurement strategies, particularly when it comes to information

technology. State IJIS governing structures must be aware of and incorporate statewide strategies for funding, procuring and supporting major technology implementation.

Other key issues

There are numerous other policy and management issues that must be addressed. For instance, the governing body will be concerned with appropriate security of the IJIS. It will be essential for the governing structure to develop and adopt clearly articulated policies and effective technical solutions for securing the system, as well as determine access and availability of the system and data. Other major access and privacy issues will arise, such as will the public have access to IJIS, and to what data? Does information acquire new privacy rights as it is integrated with other data, and, if so, how will these issues be addressed in the state IJIS?

Continuing leadership

The responsibilities of the IJIS governance structure continue beyond strategic planning for the integrated system. Indeed, the governing responsibilities may change significantly throughout

the life of the IJIS project, from planning, to pursuit of funding, to system implementation oversight, to new system management and testing, to planning for system enhancements.

The governing body's role is dynamic and will continue to change, but it does not end with the purchase of technology. Rather, the governance structure must remain, although its structure, membership and primary focus may change with each phase of system implementation.

States whose IJIS governing bodies have been in place for a significant period of time have reported a new challenge, "keeping the momentum." The problem, some say, is keeping members interested and attending committee meetings — a challenge when some members have dedicated time and effort to the committee for a number of years or since its inception. But just as systems development and implementation follows a continuing and cyclical life (planning, design, implementation, testing and planning), so must that of the governance structure. The implications are manifesting themselves in many states as the realization of the need to do business differently. IJIS is no longer a "project" with a set lifespan, but an

ongoing method of doing business in the justice community.

Conclusion

The trend across the country is clear: states rely on governance structures to successfully move the IJIS project from concept to reality. Every state planning for and implementing an IJIS has one, because they all must have a formal mechanism for shared decisionmaking. States have taken different approaches in defining their governing bodies, and there are experiences and lessons to be learned from these varied efforts that can help other states involved or beginning to plan for IJIS. These issues are explored in detail in *Who Decides? — An Overview of How States are Addressing Delegation of Authority and Decisionmaking in Managing Integrated Justice Information Systems* where results of a national survey of statewide and state-level governance structures were presented. (The report is available for download at <http://www.it.ojp.gov/manage/governance.html>.)