



BJA Bureau of Justice Assistance Fact Sheet

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The SEARCH National Technical Assistance and Training Program

The National Technical Assistance and Training Program, administered by SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, offers onsite, no-cost technical assistance to justice agencies across the country in the development, management, improvement, acquisition, and integration of automated information systems. In addition, in-house services are offered through the program at the National Criminal Justice Computer Laboratory and Training Center.

SEARCH is a private, nonprofit justice organization dedicated to helping state and local justice agencies improve the use, management, and exchange of justice and criminal history information through information and identification technologies and the application of responsible laws and policies. SEARCH is governed by a membership group comprising 53 appointees—one from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The National Technical Assistance and Training Program was created in 1986 to address the critical information management needs of state and local justice agencies. Hundreds of agencies and thousands of practitioners have benefited from this multifaceted program since its inception.

Program Goals

The primary goals of the National Technical Assistance and Training Program are to:

- ❑ Improve justice agency information management through state-of-the-art technology.
- ❑ Improve information and data sharing among local, state, and federal agencies.

- ❑ Ensure state and local agencies adopt technology that meets national and industry-accepted standards.
- ❑ Assist states in developing comprehensive plans for justice information management that meet Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) formula grant program and other federal reporting requirements.
- ❑ Assist criminal justice professionals in investigating and prosecuting crimes that involve computers and other information technologies.

Key Program Elements

Technical Assistance

Through comprehensive technical assistance activities, SEARCH assists local and state justice systems in the development, operation, improvement, and particularly integration of all types of justice information systems. Technical assistance is available to law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, public defenders, jail administrators, court officials, corrections officers, probation and parole officers, and associated agencies.

Technical assistance activities, services, and products are designed to assist state and local justice agencies in determining system needs, establishing system requirements, and designing or procuring cost-effective, integrated information and workload management systems. Technical assistance projects include working with law enforcement agencies to implement mobile computing, computer-aided dispatch, mugshot and fingerprint identification, and records management system technologies; assisting prosecutors, public defenders, and court officials with case management information systems; working with jails, corrections, and probation and parole agencies

to implement offender tracking programs; and, most important, helping each agency work toward integrating its information management system technologies.

Technical assistance includes both in-house and onsite assistance. In-house assistance includes consultation with agencies via telephone, mail, and the Internet about automation and planning issues, agency automation/integration planning materials, needs assessments, data modeling, requests for proposals, and so forth.

Onsite assistance is provided to help agencies and jurisdictions effectively plan for, design, develop, procure, and implement automated information systems. This involves conducting needs assessments, identifying system requirements, developing or reviewing site-specific planning documents, planning projects to integrate information systems across functional and/or political boundaries, and assisting in writing and evaluating technical proposals. Through onsite assistance SEARCH also provides technical consultations on operational and policy issues, proposes solutions to system problems, develops system security policies and assesses system security, and locates expertise and information systems for transfer.

Training

SEARCH training courses focus on justice agency use and implementation of information technology to investigate and prosecute computer-related crime and the increasing number of crimes perpetrated over the Internet.

Through lectures, discussions, exercises, and hands-on computer use, trainees learn the skills necessary to deal with the application of computer technology to criminal justice. Most courses run from 3 to 5 days. Onsite training is provided at SEARCH's National Criminal Justice Computer Laboratory and Training Center in Sacramento, California. The training center, equipped with state-of-the-art training technology, is configured with 20 microcomputers using various operating systems. It serves as a hands-on resource for criminal justice practitioners to learn and evaluate computer technology. Outreach training is provided at regional training facilities nationwide.

SEARCH offers training courses to local, state, and federal agencies on such topics as:

- ❑ Seizure and examination of microcomputers.
- ❑ Investigation of computer crime.
- ❑ Internet crime investigation.

- ❑ Investigation of online child exploitation.
- ❑ Basic local area network investigations.
- ❑ Child pornography and the Internet (provided to the U.S. Customs Service).

SEARCH adds new courses to address the growing and changing need for technical training in computer-related crime. For the most updated listing, please visit the SEARCH Web site at www.search.org.

Other Technical Assistance and Training Resources

In addition to its extensive range of in-house and onsite technical assistance, SEARCH provides other information technology resources that help agencies and jurisdictions implement new technologies and integrate their information systems. Those resources, also funded by BJA under the National Technical Assistance and Training Program, are:

Technical bulletin series. These biannual publications are designed to examine emerging technologies in criminal justice information management. The bulletins identify, describe, and assess new and emerging technologies that have existing or potential application in criminal justice information management. The documents in this series alert practitioners to technologies that may improve their management of information.

World Wide Web services. Through its Web site, SEARCH provides local, state, and federal justice agencies with the latest information related to new and emerging—as well as established—technologies with application to justice information systems management. Visitors can access the status of justice information system integration efforts under way throughout the country; published articles and documents; links to agencies and organizations that have experience with the technology; news about justice agencies that are implementing this technology; information on technology standards; a database of information technology acquisition documents, such as requests for proposals; vendor listings; and other useful sources of information. Visitors also can access upcoming SEARCH training activities.

Conferences, workshops, and symposia. BJA and SEARCH sponsor a number of national and regional conferences, symposia, and workshops each year for local, state, and federal justice practitioners. A February 1999 symposium focused on a range of technical information implementation and management issues, such as new technologies and systems integration.

For Further Information

For further information about the SEARCH National Technical Assistance and Training Program, contact:

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Clearinghouse staff are available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. eastern time. Ask to be placed on the BJA mailing list.

U.S. Department of Justice Response Center

1-800-421-6770 or 202-307-1480

Response Center staff are available Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. eastern time.

FS 000253
October 1999