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Winter 2007 Newsletter for NIC's Large Jail Network

NJC Jails Division Networks' Mission Statement

The Jails Division networks' mission is to promote and provide a vehicle for the free and open exchange of ideas, information, and innovation among network members. In addition, NIC networks reinforce the assumption that knowledge can be transferred from one jurisdiction or agency to another, and this knowledge can serve as a stimulus for the development of effective approaches to address similar problems or opportunities.

Our belief is that, collectively, network members are likely to have developed successful strategies for meeting challenges that arise. As a group, network members are an available resource to each other. The network provides a systematic way for information to be shared, which not only benefits the network member, but also those they serve and represent--the local government, state, community, staff, and inmate.



National Institute of Corrections Large Jail Network

Network Goals

- To explore issues facing jail systems from the perspective of network members with administrative responsibility.
- To discuss strategies and resources for dealing successfully with these issues.
- To discuss potential methods by which NIC can facilitate the development of programs or the transfer of existing knowledge or technology.
- To develop and improve communication among network members.
- To seek new and creative ways to identify and meet the needs of network members.

15th Year Anniversary

William Collins, Attorney

Please welcome William (Bill) Collins, attorney-at-law, as he returns to update the Large Jail Network on general legal issues.

Collins has written and trained extensively on issues in correctional law. He is author of *A Practical Guide to Inmate Discipline and Correctional Law for the Correctional Officer*, and co-founder and co-editor of the *Correctional Law Reporter*, a nationally circulated periodical that addresses legal issues pertinent to correctional administrators.

James Austin, Ph.D.

Dr. James Austin comes to the LJN as current president and founder of the JFA Institute and project director for a research project entitled "Assessment of Change and Improvement in Large Jail Systems." While at our winter meeting, Dr. Austin will: 1) explain the research project, 2) provide preliminary results from completed interviews, 3) seek responses to additional questions and issues that have been posed to other administrators, and 4) interview selected meeting participants.

Austin began his career in corrections in 1970 as a correctional sociologist at the Joliet and Stateville prisons in Illinois and has thirty years of experience in criminal justice planning and research. He received his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California-Davis in 1980. He has served as the director of the Institute on Crime, Justice, and Corrections at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C., and as executive vice president of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, where he was employed for 20 years.

As recipient of the American Correctional Association's 1991 Peter P. Lejin's Research Award and the Western Society of Criminology Paul Tappin Award, Austin is known for his outstanding contributions in the field of criminology. He has authored numerous publications, including co-authoring three books, and is a member of the American Society of Criminology National Policy Committee.

"LJN is best forum for professional growth!" --Escambia County, FL

Carol Flaherty-Zonis

Carol Flaherty-Zonis returns for her second meeting with the LJN as an expert in organizational culture. This meeting, she will help each member diagnose strategies for promoting a positive healthy culture.

As president of Carol Flaherty-Zonis Associates, Zonis has worked with departments of corrections and community corrections across the country since 1985.

Zonis currently is directing two projects for NIC, "Building Culture Strategically" and "Promoting a Positive Corrections Culture," and was involved in the development of NIC's Executive Leadership for Women program.

The majority of Zonis' work concentrates on the individual's development, including leadership and management; group concerns, such as conflict resolution, team building, and collaboration; and organizational concerns, like planning and organizational culture and change.

Fred C. Osher, M.D.

Dr. Fred C. Osher is a community psychiatrist with clinical, research, and policy interests on effective services for persons with serious mental illnesses and co-occurring substance use disorders. Over the past 25 years he has led initiatives targeting incarcerated persons with co-occurring disorders, as well as similarly affected persons living in community settings without adequate housing. Osher has a long history of public-sector service at the local, state, and federal levels. His previous positions include director of the Center for Behavioral Health, Justice, and Public Policy; director of Community Psychiatry at the University of Maryland; director of the Division of Demonstration Programs for SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services; and deputy director of the Office of Programs for the Homeless Mentally Ill at the National Institute of Mental Health. Osher has published extensively and has provided years of comprehensive training in the areas of homelessness, community psychiatry, co-occurring mental and addictive disorders, and effective approaches to persons with behavioral disorders who have contact with the criminal justice system. Osher is currently the director of Health Systems & Health Services Policy at the Council of State Governments.

Improving Collaboration between Corrections & Mental Health Systems

The Council of State Governments Criminal Justice/Mental Health Consensus Project (CSG) has worked with the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) for the past three years to improve collaboration between corrections and mental health systems in jurisdictions across the country. CSG's and NIC's early work involved providing programmatic technical assistance to four "learning sites" across the country, where corrections and mental health systems were engaged in collaborative efforts to improve front-end alternatives to incarceration or back-end jail and prison re-entry strategies. The four initial learning sites were Orange County, Florida; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Rhode Island; and Kansas. CSG and NIC recently added Travis County, Texas, as a fifth learning site. CSG's current work with NIC involves translating the lessons learned at the programmatic level with the learning sites into statewide strategies. Dr. Fred Osher and Seth Prins will provide a brief overview of CSG's work with NIC and then facilitate an open discussion on the issues.

"The LFN is simply the bringing together of the nation's experience to share what is going on in their area. What a wealth of information!" --Kern County, CA

Mentor Reminder

Even though there is transition and a relocation occurring in the NIC western office, the LFN Mentorship Program is alive and well. We introduced the mentor concept in July of last year, and now, in the 15th year of the Large Jail Network, we want to develop it. In response to comments by participants, each first time participant at the meeting will have a mentor "assigned" to them to help them get acquainted, feel more comfortable, and meet other members. Please, give us more suggestions on how we can expand and improve this idea at the close of the meeting on your evaluation or on the LFN forum when you return home. Read more about mentors in your meeting information folder and on the LFN forum.

"The resources and the talent are abundant, and the willingness to share ideas and interact are terrific." --Anonymous

National Study on Suicides

Through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Justice Department's National Institute of Corrections (NIC), the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives (NCIA) is currently conducting a national study on jail suicides. The 18-month project, representing the third such national study conducted by NCIA for NIC, will determine the extent and distribution of jail suicides (i.e., city, county, and police department facilities) during 2005 and 2006. It will include descriptive data on demographic characteristics of each victim, characteristics of the incident, and characteristics of the jail facility which sustained the suicide. NCIA will then develop a report of the findings to be utilized as a resource tool for both jail personnel in expanding their knowledge base, and correctional (as well as mental health and medical) administrators in creating and/or revising policies and training curricula on suicide prevention.

Data provided by individual agencies/facilities will be coded and held in the strictest confidence. Results of the study will be presented in summary fashion, thus preventing the linkage of any data to the particular agency/facility from which the information originated.

Initial surveys will be distributed in early 2007. Both NIC and NCIA would greatly appreciate the cooperation of all agencies/facilities receiving the initial survey request.

For further information on the project, please contact: Lindsay M. Hayes, project director at the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, 40 Lantern Lane, Mansfield, MA 02048, 508-337-8806, lhayesta@msn.com.

Seth Prins

Seth Prins is a research associate for the Council of State Governments Justice Center in New York, where he coordinates efforts to promote collaboration between corrections and mental health systems and to improve those systems' response to individuals with mental illnesses.

Reflecting on 15 Years of the Large Jail Network

by David Parrish

The Large Jail Network (LJN) was created under the auspices of the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) Jails Division in 1990. Membership was limited to the sheriff/chief executive or jail administrator from jurisdictions where the average daily census exceeds 1,000 inmates.

As the commander of the Hillsborough County (Florida) Jail System since 1981, I, David Parrish, have been active in national correctional organizations. I previously held the position as president of the American Jail Association (AJA), treasurer of the American Correctional Association (ACA), and chairman of the Jail Manager Certification Commission. While I have benefited professionally from participation in AJA and ACA, the LJN has been of even greater value to me in the performance of my duties as a jail administrator.

In a single word, the LJN is "practical." It serves as a forum for the exchange of useful information. The LJN is so important to me that since 1990, I have missed only two meetings. The following statements reflect some of the factors that have made the LJN such a valuable resource to large jail administrators:

- Participation is limited to the commander of the jail system.
- There are two meetings per year--often enough to be current without being time consuming, which minimizes the administrators' time out of the office.
- Topics are selected by the participants.
- The participants attend class together, eat meals together, and are housed together.
- The forum facilitates the exchange of ideas and practices.
- A nationally recognized expert on legal issues provides an annual update.

by Art Wallenstein

The Large Jail Network was a success largely from the day it started. There is a reason it works. It has spoken directly to the needs of the participants, improved with some "for our benefit" additions of NIC staff. When we added the network and the list-serv, the work of the network escalated, and the value further improved.

I, Art Wallenstein, remember the early days when the ride to Longmont included a long wait at the Conoco Station in the small sleepy village of Longmont. I well remember two meetings where we waited in the snow and the cold fearful of entering the gas station lest we miss the connection. It was almost like a backcountry hiking trip and arrival at the old Raintree Hotel was clearly a victory. I always hoped to run into a thoughtful elected sheriff at the airport to hitch a ride to Longmont, but it only happened once in all these years.

As I was recently retained by a new county executive, the first issue I noted was the need to attend LJN. Serving at the "pleasure of" elected officials for the past 30 years as a jail director has been a fascinating experience, and, at times, a real challenge. LJN was always the constant.

I have spoken with colleagues in other government public policy areas and nothing approaches LJN. New folks that join the ranks and the networks immediately have a home base for professional collaboration. The value of this network makes it the finest in the corrections profession--nothing is even close. Onward and long live LJN!

NJC Jails Division

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LJN News Brief

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