



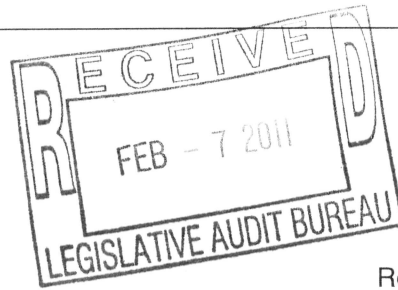
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February 3, 2011

Sen. Robert Cowles  
Room 118 South  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Rep. Samantha Kerkman  
Room 315 North  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53707-7882



Dear Sen.Cowles, Rep.Kerkman, and Joint Legislative Audit Committee members:

The Office of Justice Assistance (OJA) has prepared an update on the status and future of the Justice Gateway system for the Joint Legislative Audit Committee and Joint Committee on Information Policy and Technology as directed by the Legislative Audit Bureau's September 2010 Letter Report.

OJA has primary responsibility for carrying out the state coordination of justice information sharing among state and local criminal justice agencies. OJA's Wisconsin Justice Information Sharing (WIJIS) program provides a statewide strategic vision of justice information sharing as well as innovative technical solutions that improve information sharing between law enforcement and other justice agencies, and the flow of electronic information through the justice system.

The goals of WIJIS are to improve efficiency through justice information sharing and coordination. Justice information sharing is critical to maximize efficiency and consistency across the system, and move information forward to the appropriate criminal justice professionals. The WIJIS program provides a neutral forum to effectively coordinate system-wide solutions among multiple criminal justice agencies as well as operational real-time justice information sharing tools—including the Justice Gateway, the Workflow Engine which is responsible for routing information (like electronic citations) between justice agencies across the state, and other multi-purpose applications.

### **Justice Gateway: Part of a statewide Justice Information Sharing strategy**

Currently, different pieces of Wisconsin criminal justice data are housed in multiple state and local agencies and within disparate data systems. In some cases, each county is the repository for certain criminal justice data elements. WIJIS's long-term strategic vision is to establish connections to these disparate systems and enable real-time sharing of justice data to conduct daily justice system business. WIJIS goals include:

- Increasing the volume of data and expanding the amount of information available to criminal justice professionals
- Improving the efficiency with which justice information is passed between justice partners
- Leveraging an existing WIJIS-developed data extraction mechanism to connect other state (DOC, DOT, DOJ) and county (juvenile justice, jail population) criminal justice data sources to OJA's Statistical Analysis Center and/or the Justice Gateway.
- Serve as a forum to identify criminal justice sharing issues (driven by the criminal justice community)
- Solve identified information sharing problems, and apply for federal funding if information sharing solutions require development of new systems or approaches

- Continue to provide valuable justice information sharing services and tools for law enforcement and other criminal justice professionals

The Justice Gateway continues to be a priority for improving justice information sharing within Wisconsin, and between Wisconsin and federal justice partners.

The Justice Gateway is a web-based search tool that gives authorized law enforcement professionals a single point of read-only access to justice-related records stored by local and state agencies in disparate databases. The Justice Gateway uses 'pointer technology' to securely retrieve information that is stored in disparate databases and display all queried results. With a single search, law enforcement officers can access:

- complete case histories for charges that have been referred to a District Attorney's office (PROTECT),
- court records that may be spread over multiple jurisdictions or are in different stages of the criminal justice process (CCAP),
- pointers to traffic citations from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT),
- pointers to citations issued by Conservation Wardens in the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and
- data submitted by 168 local law enforcement agencies.

The Justice Gateway is the only way authorized justice partners can access prosecutor data, incident reports (law enforcement contacts that may not result in an arrest—such as traffic stops, citizen complaints, or notes compiled by officers during an investigation), data on suspects and open cases that do not rise to the level of an arrest, wanted persons that do not show up in the State's CJIS system, and arrest records that do not meet the threshold for inclusion in DOJ's TIME system. Participating local law enforcement agencies contribute both formal arrest records and non-arrest records (incident reports, suspicious activity reports, known associations) to the Justice Gateway.

For most, if not all, local law enforcement agencies, the Justice Gateway will play a critical role in providing Wisconsin incident information to the FBI's National Data Exchange (NDEx) project<sup>1</sup>. Wisconsin law enforcement agencies can now contribute data via the Justice Gateway. At the national level, Wisconsin is considered a model for encouraging NDEx participation.

The information unique to the Justice Gateway—incident reports and other local law enforcement data elements—that cannot be added to DOJ's TIME system would not be submitted to NDEx if the Justice Gateway ceased to exist. Without this Justice Gateway connection to NDEx, local agencies would each have to individually create a new secure interface to DOJ or directly to the FBI. It is much more cost efficient to leverage the Gateway connections that are already in place.

## Justice Gateway Progress

In one year (2006-2007) the WIJIS staff developed the Justice Gateway software and launched an operational system; compared to any information technology project this timeframe between initial development and implementation is expedient. Between 2007 and 2010 the Justice Gateway experienced exponential growth as law enforcement agencies have connected to the Justice Gateway as data submitters and Gateway users. The addition of new users and data sources is ongoing. In the past five months since the LAB report was issued, growth has been exponential<sup>2</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> NDEx is intended to bring together data from local law enforcement agencies throughout the United States.

<sup>2</sup> Figures compared to numbers reported to LAB on August 5, 2010.

- The number of Justice Gateway users has increased by 42% (more than 5000 users total)
- The number of searches conducted in a week on the Gateway has increased by 35%
- The number of law enforcement agencies with registered Justice Gateway users has increased by 48%.
- Two-thirds of the total numbers of law enforcement agencies (403 agencies) in the state now have users on the Justice Gateway.
- The number of law enforcement agencies submitting their local records to the Justice Gateway is 168; Milwaukee PD is now contributing to the Gateway
- The Justice Gateway now gives law enforcement access to 7,230,702 pointer records (this number increases daily); an 8% increase from August 2010.
- 10 law enforcement agencies (including Milwaukee PD) are now directly submitting records to the FBI's NDEX program and OJA projects this number will continue to grow; in August only one agency was submitting to NDEX.

The recent legislatively-directed traffic stop data collection requirement was able to be met quickly and at low cost to the state because WIJIS was able to leverage existing technology and mechanisms, including the Justice Gateway.

Since the Legislative Audit Bureau report, WIJIS has focused on our core mission of statewide justice information sharing and efficiency, and refined its strategic vision for Wisconsin Justice Information Sharing. Over the past five months, WIJIS has

- dramatically restructured, reducing staffing by more than 50% (from 11 down to 5),
- significantly increased the number of records available on the Justice Gateway,
- increased the number of users and agencies contributing justice information to the Justice Gateway
- focused on working to add more information from larger state agencies to the Justice Gateway
- developed a budget proposal for increased information sharing and justice data collection

### **OJA budget proposal: combined justice information sharing & justice data collection unit supported by existing program revenue**

OJA has developed a state budget proposal to merge the WIJIS and SAC programs to create a clear continuum between real-time sharing of justice data to conduct daily justice system business and long-term analysis to inform justice system decision-making.

OJA wishes to merge these two existing units for cost savings purposes, to be more competitive for federal grant opportunities, free up federal formula grant dollars that are currently supporting these needed units, preserve existing tools used by law enforcement professionals daily, and leverage existing technology to provide additional value/justice data to the state.

Combining the existing WIJIS and SAC programs would:

- Centralize criminal justice data and translate information from many data sources into a comprehensive dataset that can be used to answer diverse and basic criminal justice questions that are currently unanswerable by the state.

- Leverage an existing WIJIS-developed data extraction mechanism to connect other state (DOC, DOT, DOJ, PROTECT)<sup>3</sup> and county (juvenile justice, jail population) criminal justice data sources to the SAC<sup>4</sup>.
- Continue to provide valuable justice information sharing services and tools for law enforcement and other criminal justice professionals
- Increase the volume of data available to criminal justice professionals
- Provide valuable criminal justice data that would enable OJA and other state agencies to be more competitive when applying for federal funding, and better meet federal reporting requirements.
- Lead to better coordination among state and local agencies to further strategic decision making and solve real-world justice information sharing business problems
- Provide information for legislators, and enable data supported decision-making as fiscal and program options are considered.
- Improve government accountability for taxpayer monies invested in Wisconsin's criminal justice system.
- Provide a valuable resource for policy makers and justice professionals to access/request analysis of most criminal justice data.

OJA's budget proposal requests a reallocation of existing Justice Information Fee (JIF) money (currently directed to traffic stop data collection) to support a combined Justice Information Sharing and Justice Data Analysis unit.

JIF monies currently allocated for traffic stop data collection under 20.505(d)(kq) and (kr) could be reallocated to the existing appropriation under 20.505(d)(kp). OJA requests that language under 20.505(d)(kp) be expanded to include data gathering and analysis **and justice information sharing**. Current fee revenues would be sufficient to support the functions of a combined unit.

OJA also requests statutory changes to move the 16.971(9) and (11) authority to OJA, and expand the agencies to include those that share information now and may need to in the future (state and local law enforcement agencies, district attorneys, the director of state courts, the departments of corrections, justice and transportation and other relevant state and local agencies).

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<sup>3</sup> The SAC can already access five years of Consolidated Court Access Program (CCAP) data using the WIJIS developed data extraction mechanism.

<sup>4</sup> These connections would enable the SAC to retrieve data from these sources on a cyclical basis, clean the data so it is suitable for research purposes, and use the data for long-term trend analysis and criminal justice related questions.