

Title of Nomination: Justice Xchange
Project/System Manager: Paul C. Brown/Kathy J. Gattin
Title: Information Systems Administrator/Victim-Offender Information Services
Manager
Agency: Arkansas Department of Community Correction/Arkansas Crime Information
Center
Department: Information Systems
Address: 105 West Capitol/#1 Capitol Mall -
City: Little Rock
State: AR
Zip: 72201
Phone: 501-682-9896/501-682-9490
Fax: 501-682-9513/501-682-2269
Email: PaulB@dcc.state.ar.us / Kgattin@acic.state.ar.us
CATEGORY: Digital_Government_G_to_G
Person Nominating (if different): Mike Kemp
Title: Director of eGovernment
Address: 124 West Capitol
City: Little Rock
State: AR
Zip: 72201
Phone: 501-683-1010
Fax: 501-682-2040
Email: mike.kemp@mail.state.ar.us

JusticeXchange Executive Summary

Can you count on a criminal to tell his probation officer if he's been arrested since his last visit? Sometimes you can, but often you can't, and the only way to find out if a probation officer was getting the truth, used to require a manual search of records scattered all over the State. Now, Arkansas probation officers know the answer before they ask the question and others who need that information have it at their fingertips, available on demand. It's even available to appropriate authorities in neighboring states.

The Arkansas Department of Community Correction (DCC) and the Arkansas Crime Information Center (ACIC) have implemented an interface between two of the State's premier web-based Justice Information Systems. The interface uses IBM's MQ Series to trigger notification to the appropriate system whenever critical events occur affecting offenders on probation or parole. As a result, booking incidents on probationers or parolees causes the triggering of automatic **email notification** to the supervising officer. Additionally, all booking facilities and law enforcement agencies are notified of previously entered **cautions** and **warnings** whenever an incident occurs on probationers or parolees. **Photographs** of the offender are automatically exchanged between the two systems during these incidents. This information is available to participating law enforcement agencies throughout the State of Arkansas and three other states.

Although this interface has only been in operation for three months, it has already produced dramatic results. Several absconded offenders were located in county jails, and many of the probation and parole officers report success stories.

"I have been using JusticeXchange for approximately six months... I was surprised when I received my first email informing me that someone on my caseload had been arrested. I no longer have to rely on the truthfulness of an offender to tell he if he or she has been booked into a jail facility. JusticeXchange enhances the effectiveness of caseload management. I would recommend every law enforcement officer utilize the JusticeXchange system." – **Officer Nicholas Stewart, Little Rock Probation Office.**

Other departments in the State of Arkansas are also benefiting from similar information sharing initiatives. One effort underway will enable the State Employment Security Department to query the inmate/probation/parole database to quickly and accurately verify employer claims for participation in the Federal Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program.

As most states are facing austere budgets and revenue reductions, it is imperative that any expenditure deliver a high return on investment. These two interfaces were developed at a relatively low cost. The interface between the eOMIS system used by DCC and ACIC's JusticeXchange system was accomplished for less than \$70K. The Employment Security interface cost less than \$2K.

Information sharing initiatives such as these are relatively inexpensive for several reasons: **firstly**, the primary expense of developing and implementing the systems normally has already been made; **secondly**, new technologies such as XML provide for standardization of data elements and permit efficient data exchange across disparate computer systems and databases; and **thirdly**, the benefits of effective, timely and secure information sharing methodologies are becoming more widely accepted.

A. Description of Project

This system creates and maintains a cumulative record over the lifetime of an offender's involvement with law enforcement and the criminal justice system. It contains photographs, supervision histories, cautions and warnings and for the first time, makes true long-term recidivism studies possible. Two of the most exciting capabilities are immediate access to photo line-ups, and the monitoring of offender bookings to provide information to interested parties utilizing the "watch" feature. Law Enforcement officials can now create line-ups in minutes, not days, based on archived photographs. The JusticeXchange system is spreading nationally and now encompasses offender information not only from Arkansas, but also from three other states.

The Department of Community Correction is responsible for supervising offenders on probation and parole in the State. The Arkansas Department of Correction is responsible for individuals remanded to prison. Previously, each department maintained its own system, and would conduct an intake whenever an offender was processed. Neither system communicated with the other. Both departments contracted with Marquis Software Development, Inc. in 1999 to develop a *web-based* system both departments could use to consolidate and share information. The new system, the **electronic Offender Management Information System (eOMIS)** went online in 2001 and permits the intake of information at an offender's first contact with either department. Subsequent contacts append information to the original record.

The Arkansas Crime Information Center, utilizing grant monies from the US Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program, contracted with Appriss, Inc. of Louisville Kentucky to develop a secure web-based system accessible to law enforcement officials and capable of querying against consolidated booking information across the State. The **JusticeXchange** application leveraged the existing Victim Identification and Notification Everyday (VINE) network for the functionality, and added previously collected data to its database. JusticeXchange is accessible via a secure Internet connection and now accesses offender information from all 75 county jails, including historical arrest information, incident reports and booking photographs.

The **subject project** involved developing an interface between these two systems to accomplish the following:

1. Permit real-time notification to probation/parole officers of an offender's booking in a county jail anywhere in the State.
2. Permit booking system operators to be immediately alerted of an offender's cautions and warnings and probation/parole status at the time of the booking operation.
3. Permit the exchange of photographs (jpg format) between the two systems.
4. Permit search and retrieval of applicable portions of offender records by law enforcement officials, including the supervising officer's name and contact information.

B. Significance to the improvement of the operation of government

Jailers have been unintentionally exposed to potentially hazardous situations, since they had no access to cautions and warnings on probationers and parolees. Often, the court may order an offender to remain in a certain geographic area or may otherwise restrict their travel. Probation and parole officers had little means of verifying compliance other than the offender's truthfulness. Law enforcement officials had no information on offenders until NCIC checks were obtained (often hours or days after the initial contact, if at all). Consequently, some probation absconders and parole violators have bonded out prior to authorities being aware of their status. This interface successfully addresses and resolves all of these issues.

C. Benefits realized by service recipients, taxpayers, agency or state

County jails are safer places plus probation and parole officers are now relying on this interface to receive immediate email notification of probationer or parolee bookings. This alert permits the supervising officer to contact the jailer and arrange follow-up action. A more complete picture is now available to all levels of the law enforcement and criminal justice community including federal, state, and local agencies. This electronic notification also serves as a tool to measure the offender's truthfulness, and permits the officer to concentrate on other critical job duties. The taxpayers of the State benefit since this project leverages unique features in two existing systems.

For the first time, law enforcement can easily access one source for searching offender biographic information (age, sex, race, height, weight, etc.), and perform several other investigative functions within the system. Over 1,000,000 records are available at any one time for review. Offender photos can be viewed for comparison during the search function, photo line-ups assembled, arranged, edited, viewed, printed and sent electronically via email attachments within a matter of seconds. System users now have access to an additional 40,000 records and 34,000 photos representing active probationers and parolees. This provides additional resources to search and review photographs, crucial cautions and warnings to conduct investigative research. Although both systems provided a means of retrieving data on offender information, only through this interface can they now search probation/parole offenders only, booking incidents from Arkansas only, booking incidents from other states, or any combination of these.

D. Return on Investment

The technology used, the cost associated with the development, and the extensive amount of information provided is not replicated in any other state in the United States at the present time. The return on investment in this case is difficult to quantify. There's no doubt literally millions of dollars are saved by increased efficiency, heightened protection from criminals for the public, and improved safety for law enforcement and criminal corrections in Arkansas and surrounding states at

the state, county and local levels. This project demonstrates what may be accomplished when two agencies work together and share responsibility with their respective vendors to produce a common goal beneficial to all law enforcement and criminal justice agencies within a state and even neighboring states. By working together toward a common goal, the interface produced was implemented at a much lower cost than if each agency acted separately.