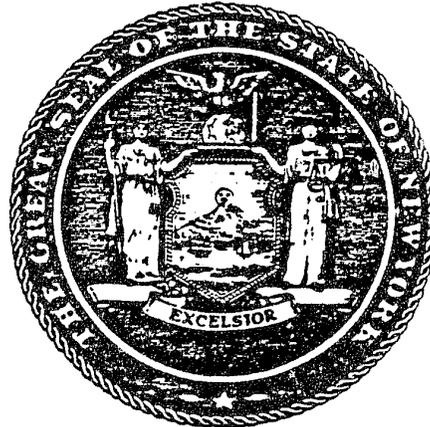


**SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENTS FOR ENHANCED COMMUNITY SAFETY**



**A PLAN  
FOR  
REGIONALIZED  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
FORMATION MANAGEMENT  
JANUARY 1986**

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INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

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January 1986

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## Section I

### Data Sharing In Criminal Justice

#### Problems And Solutions

#### 1.1 A Regional Approach

The need for a regional approach to fill information gaps in the criminal justice system is underscored in the Consolidated Law Enforcement System Study Report as follows:

"All law enforcement teams have cited in their individual State I Reports a lack of coordinated criminal justice information and resource sharing, together with a great need for a coordinating body to address, unify and implement their requirements on a multi-jurisdictional, inter-criminal justice agency basis."

#### 1.2 The Need For Multi-Jurisdictional Sharing Of Law Enforcement Data

Persons committing crimes are highly mobile and are not limited by geographical or jurisdictional boundaries. In New York State, this problem is exacerbated by an elaborate system of highways that link the state. The criminal justice system is deficient in its ability to effectively share data across jurisdictions. For Example:

1. Historically, a Police officer stopping a subject in one jurisdiction has not been able to run a comprehensive warrant check on the subject even though major warrants are normally placed on the NYSPIN system and are available to the officer.

This inability may jeopardize officer, as well as, community safety. Furthermore, officers in the field may be discouraged from conducting routine warrant checks due to the lack of a comprehensive warrant file within a region.

2. A suspect may be arrested in one jurisdiction while investigators in an adjacent department, not always aware of the new arrest, continue to search for the suspect on another matter.
3. With the lack of correlation among modus operandi files, a local law enforcement agency may spend days searching for leads on a case while the information sought is buried in the file of a nearby department.

### 1.3 The Need For Effective Interagency Sharing Of Criminal Justice Information

One of the general complaints found in the system study reports from all sectors of the criminal justice community was the failure to receive consistent and timely notification of the status of individuals in the criminal justice system, such as whether the individual was wanted, detained, incarcerated, under probation or parole supervision, released on bail or on temporary release. For Example:

1. A warrant may be issued for a subject who is already within the criminal justice system on probation, parole or in a local correctional facility. Currently this subject's status may only be ascertained after hours or days of police investigation.

2. Local correctional facilities and police lockups process inmates with a past history of incarceration in other facilities and may be unaware of previously exhibited dangerous behavior such as suicide attempts or fire starting.

#### 1.4 Computerization

Effective data sharing on a multi-jurisdictional, inter-agency basis, requires the speed and accuracy of a computer. Information stored in manual files in one agency is generally unavailable to other agencies within the time frame necessary to make a decision on how to process a subject, solve a case, or arrest a wanted person.

The continuing development of local information systems within criminal justice may result in the development of two distinct scenarios:

1. A centralized system where a single large computer is shared by local users and interfaces with state computers.
2. Decentralized systems where individual agencies possess their own computers and communicate with each other as well as other computers within the state criminal justice system.

#### 1.4.1 Regional Computer Systems

Most impediments to data sharing, via computerization at the local level, may be overcome when local users share a common system that interfaces with other local and state computers. For Example:

1. A regional computer system enables local agencies to share a central computer, at one location, where a small staff manages and operates the system. This approach eliminates the redundancies in equipment, space requirements and personnel that result in higher costs per user. Users realize reduced fixed costs due to economies of scale. This feature should appeal to local governments operating within tight fiscal constraints.
2. A number of decentralized systems require an extensive effort to effect programming modifications. This drawback is compounded by the current lack of costly technical expertise at most local agencies. A shared system requires little programming maintenance on the part of local user agencies.
3. The development of decentralized systems, collectively, require considerable time and money. A centralized system is developed faster and at less expense.
4. In a decentralized arrangement the chances of one or more machines being down, or out of service at any time, are greater than for a shared system. A central computer site provides increased reliability through more extensive redundancy backup arrangements.

5. Under the decentralized arrangement many interfaces are required to effect comprehensive data sharing. Where all users share a single system, fewer interfaces are needed and faster response times are realized.

Regional computer systems potentially serve a second role as repositories for distributed data. In this capacity the system can capture data with regional and State applications from independent local systems and make this data available to other users in the region as well as the State. In either role the regional data center becomes a logical site for communication equipment. Thus regional data centers may potentially serve as communication nodes of the statewide criminal justice data communications network (CRIMNET) which is discussed in more detail in Section 1.5.

#### 1.4.2. Independent, Single Agency Systems

Despite the advantages of regional data centers, the small, single agency computer will probably continue to proliferate and play a significant role in the improvement of data sharing in criminal justice. This trend is particularly likely to develop in thinly populated, low crime areas of the state where regional data centers are not apt to evolve. The declining costs of hardware and the design of more user friendly, turn key systems will further support the spread of small, single agency systems.

## 1.5 CRIMNET

Although computerization offers a solution to data sharing problems it is not without pitfalls. Due to the decentralized structure of the criminal justice system, a patchwork of incompatible systems, with limited ability to communicate, has evolved. Both State and local agencies have purchased computers and designed systems without adequately considering their capabilities for data exchange with other systems.

One measure that poses a solution to the communication problem among existing systems, and generates a favorable climate for the growth of computerization within criminal justice, is the development of a statewide criminal justice data communications network (CRIMNET). This initiative is already proceeding under the auspices of The Systems Improvement For Enhanced Community Safety Task Force (SIFECS) Project.

The data communications team, charged with studying and planning the project, list the features of such a network as follows:

1. Connects information systems at the local level with the computers of State agencies and the federal government in order to permit the automated transfer of data.
2. Enable a single terminal to have access to a variety of computers and databases. In this manner, a single terminal could perform a variety of functions. In a parole office, for example, a terminal could be used to access the parole management information system at one moment and then be used to request State criminal histories the next.

3. Spans the major populations centers of the State so that entry into the network from any point in the State would involve simply a local connection. A small department with a single terminal would have the capability of communicating with other local and State criminal justice computers without having to incur the cost of long distance communications.
4. Have sufficient capacity and flexibility to efficiently support a wide variety of "sub-networks", both new and old, which have a range of different needs. For example, CRIMNET would support the terminal oriented, time-critical NYSPIN network, as well as the high volume, batch oriented disposition reporting link between the Division of Criminal Justice Services and the Office of Court Administration.
5. Allows establishment of common security procedures and mechanisms for interagency data sharing.

The network will enhance the ability to share information, promote the compatibility of information systems and effect a planned growth to criminal justice data communications.

## Section II

### Current Computerization Efforts

#### 2.1 Local System Development

The evolution of regional data sharing will vary, according to area, depending upon such variables as the current degree of automation, local fiscal support, the history of interagency cooperation, the size of the jurisdictions and agencies, the degree of technical expertise as well as the agencies' vision of the capabilities of criminal justice information systems. The full range of criminal justice systems, from regional data centers to single micro-systems, already exist. A brief survey of those larger systems that may be classified as regional is given below:

#### 2.2 Onondaga County

In Onondaga County, the Onondaga Law Enforcement Information System (OLEIS) was established in 1971. The system currently serves 13 law enforcement agencies and is funded through the county government. This system uses the following applications:

1. Computer Aided Dispatch (C.A.D.) - Complaints are entered via computer terminal and the system returns pre-dispatch data such as address verification, cross references for the radio car and previous

history for the address including hazardous conditions or previous calls for service within a given time period. This system provides quicker and more efficient dispatching of cars and enhances officer safety by advising of any potential hazards at the call location.

2. Incidents Collection System - Incidents are collected via C.A.D. and incident cards. Collection of incident data provides a vehicle for the automatic generation of Uniform Crime Reports. Incident collection provides users with crime analysis capabilities and enables them to improve the efficiency of manpower and equipment allocation. Utilizing this data will enable Onondaga County and adjacent jurisdictions to identify and attack common problems.
3. Arrest System - Arrest information is entered into OLEIS and simultaneously updates a local criminal history file. Quick access to this multi-jurisdictional data base enables law enforcement officers to make an informed decision regarding whether the subject requires incarceration or should be released prior to a court appearance.
4. Warrant Systems - All warrants including those for violations, traffic violations, and felony and misdemeanor offenses are entered on the system. OLEIS retains those warrants rejected by NYSPIN which have a significant subset of the data elements required by NYSPIN. OLEIS interfaces with NYSPIN and is able to automatically transmit warrant information to the statewide warrant system NYSPIN. This capability eliminates redundant keying of information as well as the need for NYSPIN terminals. The larger warrant database afforded by this system provides incentive for officers in the field to make more warrant checks.

5. Property/Evidence System - All stolen and recovered property is entered onto this system which currently does not interface with OLEIS.

This system allows the department to search for property items by using parameters to specify the type of property sought.

Examples:

- Blue 26", 10 speed bicycle
- Property recovered from an arrest occurring on January 1, 1985.
- Property reported stolen from 1 Main Street.

It is anticipated that this application will interface with OLEIS at a later time. Utilizing this system on a regional basis would enhance an investigator's ability to trace the trail of stolen property across jurisdictions.

Currently the Onondaga County Sheriff's Department is endeavoring to expand its law enforcement systems into a criminal justice system that will encompass Local Corrections, Courts, Probation, Parole and the District Attorney. The department is now in the early stages of developing this system which will be called the Criminal History Arrest Incident Reporting System (CHAIRS).

### 2.3 Monroe County

In Monroe County, the Law Enforcement Administrative Data Entry Retrieval System (LEADERS) is a local county system that has been in operation for two years. It currently serves twelve departments and is funded through the county government.

In addition to warrant and arrest applications, the system has begun to generate hot sheets on vehicles and license plates reported stolen within the 12 department jurisdiction during the previous 72 hours. This information, distributed at roll call, should increase the speed and rate of arrests for these offenses as well as facilitate the recovery of stolen property.

#### 2.4 Erie County

Erie County Central Police Services is a shared county system serving 22 law enforcement agencies and 55 terminal locations. Operational expenses are funded through the county government. As in the case of OLEIS, this system runs applications for incidents, warrants and arrests and interfaces with NYSPIN.

Erie County has also developed an arson application that serves to indicate potential arson sites based upon the amount of back taxes owed on the property, as well as the geographic location.

#### 2.5 Potential of Regional Systems

##### 2.5.1 Other Applications

Other law enforcement information, such as modus operandi and field interview data, provides benefits to agencies when shared on a multi-jurisdictional basis. Although this information is not currently placed on any of the systems discussed above, future sharing of this data would greatly benefit local law enforcement agencies.

Modus operandi information, when correlated on a regional level, enhances the ability of police investigators to solve cases. A police agency may be investigating a rash of burglaries where a similar modus operandi is apparent. Lacking a local suspect match, officers may search against the regional data base of M.O. information and develop several leads. In the absence of this application an investigator could spend days searching for leads. Even if one or more adjacent agencies had a suspect match and regularly shared information with the investigating agency, it would be a formidable task to locate this information.

Another important investigative tool for a law enforcement agency is the data collected from contacts made by field officers. Many times these bits of data are relegated to the memory of individual officers for their own use. With a regional system, this data can be entered into computer files, shared with all user agencies and be available for subsequent investigations. For example, to have information available on vehicles parked in unusual places such as a blue 1978 Chevrolet in Macy's parking lot at 3 A.M. can be useful if it is later discovered that Macy's was burglarized the same night.

A law enforcement system, with appropriate computer programming, enables an investigator to access information in many forms in a timely manner, thus enhancing a detective's investigative capabilities.

Such a system has the capability of providing the detective with a list of facts and their relationship to other facts. It may provide a list of

persons matching a certain modus operandi and physical descriptors. Data pertaining to each suspect, including address, phone number, aliases, etc. may be provided. Lists of incidents and field interview reports regarding the suspects might also be available.

Furthermore, by using parameters to specify the exact type of information the detective would be able to research the data base for almost anything he needs such as:

- All caucasian males between 5'7 and 6'0 tall with the tattoo of a snake on the right fore arm.
- All males with the alias "Zeke".
- All incidents occuring within 4 blocks of a murder within 2 hours of the event.

#### 2.5.2 Regional Center As Status System

The Liman Report noted that each agency deals with only a "slice of time" of the total criminal justice process and each agency requires information collected at previous stages. This notion was restated by criminal justice agencies during the State I Process. The development of a status tracking system was suggested as a means to ameliorate this problem.

Regional data centers, serving as central processors and repositories of distributed data from courts, jails, probation, prosecution and booking in a given area, and interfaced via CRIMNET to Parole, DCJS and DOCS, facilitate the automation of the status tracking system. This is particularly true if these centers serve entire counties since the majority of the criminal justice agencies operate at or below the county level.

Changes in an individual's status could be recorded throughout the system. An on-line status system could enable one segment of the criminal justice system to electronically transfer that data to another and initialize that system with the information. For example, the booking system could provide the prosecutor and court with selected data such as details of offenses charge and identification information. Furthermore, criminal justice agencies could also possess inquiry capability to the system to receive status system reports.

Communications among regional centers may be facilitated via an index of status information stored at DCJS. (For a through presentation of the status system concept refer to the Criminal Justice Information System Improvement Project Interagency Conference document of September 25-26, 1984.)

Section III  
Considerations In The State Financing Of Efforts  
To Improve Data Sharing

3.1 General Areas Of Funding

Considering the potential of regional computers to improve information sharing via their roles as central processors, repositories for distributed data, and as communication nodes for CRIMNET, increased utilization of these systems, stimulated through State funding, should be considered. This may be achieved in the following ways:

1. Fund existing criminal justice regional systems beyond their jurisdictional boundaries or the agency types they were initially intended to serve.
2. Fund new regional systems in areas where existing systems are not accessible.

3.2 Criteria For Selecting Projects For Funding

3.2.1 Guidelines For Site Selection

Prior to expanding or creating new regional systems the following guidelines for site selection should be considered:

- Need as determined by such factors as crime density and the availability of computer equipment

- Interest, as gauged by the degree of interagency and political cooperation within the area and a willingness to comply with funding conditions.
- Ability and willingness to finance the ongoing operational cost of the system.
- Proximity of the site to existing regional systems and the ability of those systems to provide expanded service.

### 3.2.2 Proposal Evaluation and Requirements

Agencies seeking funds for the expansion or creation of regional systems should submit proposals which achieve one or more of the following objectives:

1. The creation of a new regional site to develop and implement criminal justice software applications that would provide a benefit to surrounding agencies within the region.
2. The development or expansion of a regional site that will utilize existing software in a unique way.  
for example: - Utilization of a warrant management system in a system serving multiple counties.  
- Interfaces between existing applications such as on-line booking and prosecution.
3. The ongoing implementation of a proven project developed under one and two above with a high benefit/cost ratio.  
for example:
  - Expansion of existing regional systems to include other jurisdictions.

Proposals achieving one or more of the above objectives would be judged upon such variables as the following:

- Impact upon data sharing among multiple criminal justice agencies
- Potential to enhance public safety, support the administration of justice and enable policy planning and administration
- Degree of innovation

Where appropriate proposals should include detail such as:

- Analysis of project cost
- Evaluation of hardware needs
- Sources of other funding
- Plans for continued project funding
- Proposed site for location of computer equipment

### 3.2.3 Funding of Projects:

The funding concept behind this initiative is for New York State to provide a one time financial outlay of seed money to establish and expand regional computer systems. Funding formulae would need to be developed to insure an equitable distribution of funding as well as an expression of future funding commitment from locals. All or a percentage of the requested funding may be provided to the requesting agency based on the degree of financial commitment expressed in their proposal.

#### 3.2.4 Conditions of Funding

Where appropriate regions funded by the state should adhere to the following conditions:

- Utilize the standard protocol adopted by CRIMNET
- Utilize standardized screens, forms and data definitions developed under the auspices of SIFECs and accepted by the Criminal Justice Community
- Establish a group designated to develop mechanisms to assure continued local funding.
- Establish a Coordinating Council as a vehicle for the creation of policies and procedures with respect to system usage and as a forum for discussion and coordination

#### 3.3 Expansion Of Existing Regional Systems - Impact

This initiative provides numerous benefits to the user agency establishing a connection into an existing system.

- Use of a system designed to meet the needs of the region, without the delay of system development.

- Use of a well developed criminal justice system for less than the cost of a new system
- No need for technical expertise at the local agency level
- Capability of sharing a database of warrants, incidents and arrests for a larger region

The host site also benefits by expanding its database of warrant, incident and arrest information.

### 3.3.1 Initial Plan

Efforts have been made to expand the Onondaga County OLEIS system to include six law enforcement agencies in Madison County. These agencies will participate in the use of all OLEIS applications except for CAD. As a prototype site, the project is funded for \$15,000 through SIFECs.

### 3.3.2 Long Term Plan

Considering the benefits derived from expanding regional systems, funding the expansion of services to interested proximate regions should be continued. During negotiations with Onondaga and Madison Counties, a study was conducted to determine the cost to implement the same interface between Onondaga and surrounding counties. The estimated communications costs were not dissimilar to those associated with the Onondaga-Madison County interface. Realizing that each county would have a unique set of logistical considerations, and would require separate negotiations to develop a contract to suit their requirements, it appears feasible to provide counties with a \$15,000 start up package as an incentive to join existing, nearby regional systems.

### 3.4 New Regional Systems

#### 3.4.1 Initial Plan

The plan is to establish a regional warrant management system, in one or more areas, meeting the criteria referred to previously. The warrant management system was developed by SIF ECS staff in response to the concern over the lack of a systematic approach to warrant processing, failure to meet due diligence requirements and the presence of significant warrant backlogs in many departments. These concerns were expressed by local law enforcement agencies during the State I process.

The warrant system provides a set of procedures outlining a step-by-step approach to the processing of warrants. Designed to resolve some of the warrant problems noted above, the system provides management reports such as:

- Warrant statistics including performance measures such as percentage of warrants executed, the median time required to execute a warrant, and warrant execution frequency by division, shift and officer.
- Lists of warrants requiring further investigation. These assist agencies to better meet due diligence requirements.
- Lists of warrants that are scheduled for a purge review process. Warrant cases remaining active for an extended period of time are reviewed to determine if they are still prosecutable. If not, they are reviewed by the prosecutor who may request the issuing court to void them.

The regional warrant management system would include those criminal warrants possessing the data items required by the NYSPIN system as well as criminal warrants with a significant subset of those data items, and possibly traffic violation warrants. Consequently, the regional system, within its jurisdictional and geographic boundaries, will possess a larger number of warrants than those contained on New York Statewide Police Information Network (NYSPIN). A significantly larger warrant file may encourage officers to transact more warrant checks and consequently execute more warrants.

Ideally, the regional warrant system would interface with the NYSPIN system, which will eliminate redundant data entry. The regional warrant system, through the provision of management reports, should provide local law enforcement agencies with the incentive to enter an increasing number of warrants into NYSPIN as well as the regional system. The system will enhance the NYSPIN system and provide locals with a mechanism for improving warrant management and execution.

#### 3.4.2 Regional System Development

Subsequent to meeting the short range goal of implementing the warrant management application, users may wish to expand the system. Utilization of other applications that provide regional benefits should be considered. As demonstrated above, law enforcement information such as modus operandi, arrest, offense, property and field interview, when shared on a multi-jurisdictional basis produces synergistic effects including enhanced investigative capabilities, more efficient resource allocation, reduction in duplication of effort and more timely receipt of information critical to the performance of the user.

Furthermore, the system should consider utilization of other criminal justice applications for local corrections, probation, prosecution and courts as well as interfaces with other state agencies as a means to support a status tracking system.

### 3.5 State Cost

Until such time that proposals are submitted to SIFECs, it is difficult to ascertain the potential cost of these initiatives over five years. Initially, a pool of discretionary funds should be utilized to fund these projects and later funding would be contingent upon the approval of each individual proposal.

### 3.6 Risk Of Failure

Until now regional systems have developed incrementally within single counties. The emergence of these systems over time has been a function of a number of variables including need, interest, inter-agency cooperation, fiscal and technical support. It is difficult to ascertain the exact time when the right combination of factors, essential to the successful implementation of a new regional system, have evolved in a particular area. This calculation represents the downside risk to funding new systems. Financing data centers in areas prematurely could spell failure and the waste of tax dollars. This line of reasoning dictates a conservative, incremental approach to funding new regional systems.

By expanding promising existing systems, we build upon an established entity by providing a viable system with data sharing capabilities to new users at less than the cost of most new systems. This approach represents considerably less downside risk and an excellent opportunity to assist local criminal justice agencies.

## Section IV

### SIFECS ROLE

As a catalyst whose role it will be to stimulate and coordinate regional data sharing SIFECS will continue involvement in the following areas:

- 1) Assist in the establishment of local coordinating councils. This is already occurring in the capital district.
- 2) Coordinate the design of standardized forms, procedures and common data definitions for statewide use as a means to facilitate effective data sharing.
- 3) Provide the manual warrant system, developed through SIFECS efforts, to locals interested in a systematic approach to warrant processing. This package has enhanced data sharing among users in the same vicinity and serves as the basis for a micro computer warrant management application currently under development by SIFECS staff.
- 4) Provide technical expertise to local law enforcement agencies with respect to software and hardware selection. This service is presently provided to locals through the SIFECS Consulting Group.
- 5) Promote a clear understanding of the benefits of computerized regional data sharing. Many criminal justice agencies lack a clear vision of the computer's potential to assist them in the administration of criminal justice.

The concept to provide and enhance regional information processing services through-out the State is a message heard loud and clear from the Law Enforcement State I Reports. In order to orchestrate this development, great care must be taken to involve all potential users from the very beginning.