

November Workshop Launches Justice Information Sharing Project

At a time when our nation is faced with unprecedented threats to our communities, the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) has turned to CTG to identify and develop innovative ways for justice agencies to improve public safety through more effective information sharing.

The need for this study stems from the increasing amounts of information that justice professionals are being asked to process and share horizontally across justice agencies and vertically with different levels of government. Justice agencies rely on the integration of this information to prevent crimes, solve investigations, prosecute criminals, defend the accused, track parolees, and manage court dockets.

While sharing information is a key success factor for improving public safety, it's more difficult than ever. Vital information is housed in different databases in an array of agencies, collected in any number of methods containing data in many different software applications. As challenging as these technology issues are, they are only part of the equation. There are also systemic social and organizational challenges that stand in the way of information sharing.

The goal of the project is to develop a self-assessment tool that will help justice professionals and organizations plan for information sharing initiatives, communicate those initiatives to potential supporters, and serve as a self-assessment for ongoing projects.

We are working with USDOJ, Office of Justice Programs, the National Governor's Association, and the National Association of State Chief Information Officers to develop a capability assessment model that will help justice agencies gauge their readiness to implement information sharing and integration initiatives. We are looking at best practices in information sharing from across the country to identify key success factors and sample cases to help develop the tool.

The first workshop of this project was held in November at the New York City Police Academy. The Center brought together representatives from justice organizations across the US to review the first draft of a capability assessment model that CTG had created. Workshop participants came from local, state, and federal justice agencies, and included representatives from law enforcement, courts, corrections, prosecution, defense, and parole, as well as universities and professional associations.

The project team is using the information collected at the November workshop to refine the capability model and develop an assessment tool, which will be critically reviewed by the same set of justice professionals. Following that work, the model and tool will be field tested in real-life criminal justice situations before it is finalized.

Additional information about this project is available by contacting Project Manager Donna Canestraro at (518) 442-3892, or by visiting CTG's Web site at www.ctg.albany.edu/projects/dj2.

A wide range of justice professionals from all over the country participated in the November Justice Information Sharing Workshop in New York City.