

Summary

The Center for Technology in Government (CTG), through the Using Information in Government (UIG) Program, has worked for more than a year with New York State agency project teams and partners from the public, private, and academic sectors to identify benefits and strategies for integrating and using information for program planning, evaluation, and decision making. The policy, management, and technology issues identified through our work with the agency teams are being shared with the public in a series of seminars focused on increasing the value of existing information to government programs. This report summarizes the presentations given at the third session of the **Using Information in Government Seminar Series, "What Rules Govern the Use of Information?"** which was held on October 5, 1999 at the **University at Albany**.

This seminar addressed the use of government information and the policies that govern that use. Comprehensive information use policies are necessary to guide how, why, when, and by whom information is used in organizations. This session addressed information use issues such as ownership, stewardship, liability, privacy, and confidentiality as they relate to internal, cross agency, and public use of information. Project agencies and invited speakers identified information sharing issues and discussed their experiences using relevant New York State policies. The seminar included three content presentations and a panel discussion.

- Meghan Cook, CTG project management specialist, reviewed the genesis of the Seminar Series and outlined the day's agenda.
- Sharon Dawes, CTG director, set the stage for the presentation by outlining "Information Use Principles."
- Daniel Foro, director of the Office of Systems at the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services, discussed his agency's experiences with information policies in "Use of Criminal History Information."
- Robert Dawes, assistant director, and Jane Wagner, social services representative II, of the Bureau of Housing Services at the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance shared their experiences with the "Homeless Information Management System."
- The seminar concluded with a panel discussion featuring the four content presenters.

A number of important points were made during the seminar, including:

- Common goals can be achieved when using the principles of stewardship and usefulness to govern the regulation, collection, production, provision, and use of information by public sector agencies.
- Detailed information use and dissemination agreements are necessary to specify who can access what information under which conditions.
- Sound records management policies should be devised and employed.
- Include partners in the development of rules about the collection and accessibility of data.