

Guiding Principles for CJCCs

Research and experience have produced a “collective wisdom” about how to create, staff, evaluate, and rejuvenate CJCCs. General guidelines derived from these principles are discussed in this section. Lessons learned from the Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI) include the following:

The Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative has shown that detention systems can change when key policy-level system actors come together and do three things: (1) develop consensus (relying heavily on data) about what is wrong with the system; (2) develop a vision of what the new system should look like; and (3) develop and implement a plan of action.

In pursuing these three activities, seven principles emerged from the successes and failures of the JDAI sites:

1. Forming a collaborative group for system reform is extremely hard work and will take longer than you think.
2. For collaboration to work, all the relevant stakeholders must be at the table.
3. In collaboration-driven reforms, the group must develop consensus about what should change and how it should change.
4. There’s no real collaboration without negotiation and willingness to compromise.
5. Without strong and able leaders, reform is unlikely.
6. Collaborative leadership must include a jurisdiction’s “movers and shakers.”
7. Self-assessment and data are essential engines for effective collaboration.¹²

Creating a Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee

Who initiates action, or by whose authority is action initiated? How does a CJCC get started? The answers to these questions vary, depending on the locality and the situation.

If there is concern about jail crowding, then that’s where you start. Give them something important to do. Start with an assessment of the current situation. Create a vision of what the system should look like. Engage them in closing the gap between what exists and what is desired.

—Bob Maccarone, former Staff Director,
Westchester County (New York)
Criminal Justice Advisory Board

Consultants who provide onsite technical assistance on behalf of the National Institute of Corrections commonly find that a community asks for technical assistance because there is uncertainty and ambiguity about who can legitimately take action or how to proceed, not because they are unaware that the situation needs attention.

The source of initiative for change can come from unlikely sources. Often, it comes from a problem everyone is concerned about. For example, a crisis can lead to increased collaboration.

Key justice agency leaders and officials of general government must provide leadership. One or more of these men and women must step forward. This leadership is most likely to emerge during times of change or crisis.

In other situations, a CJCC may emerge simply because of the cumulative weight of financial pressure. It may be nothing specific, other than a general sense that justice system expenditures are growing faster than those of general government, or recognition that the growth rate of justice agency workloads is simply not sustainable. CJCCs provide a way for officials who worry about budgets to involve themselves in the process earlier. In these situations, the CJCC may emerge slowly and incrementally.

In the early days, when energy is high but skepticism is rampant, it helps to establish a beachhead from which to work by doing something that feels like a group success. Later, when members feel that they belong to a group, more intractable obstacles can be addressed. It is important to begin with a few simple challenges, prove they can be overcome, and then move onto the bigger ones.

—Kathleen Feely, *Collaboration and Leadership in Juvenile Detention Reform*¹³

Holding a daylong workshop, with assistance from a skilled facilitator, in a retreat setting is one good way to initiate a CJCC. These workshops might be repeated, at least annually, as a way to refocus and reenergize the CJCC.

Relationship to State Justice Planning Function

CJCCs are more likely to be created and to succeed in states where state government encourages local criminal justice planning, analysis, and coordination. State governments can play a powerful role by assisting and empowering local jurisdictions. They can help localities define the needs of their communities, support local efforts to develop balanced and systemic solutions, and obtain data to guide decisionmaking.

State agencies also benefit by developing and maintaining relationships with CJCCs. Including representatives of local CJCCs on state criminal

justice planning agency boards, committees, and task forces will forge important links to improve state and local justice planning and coordination.

Suggested guidelines for states to promote better state/local justice coordination partnerships include the following:

- Ensure that state officials operating at the local level have been expected to participate and provide information for local planning efforts.
- Provide technical or financial assistance to enhance local efforts in data collection and analysis for policy purposes.
- Provide support and assistance in the development of local coordinating councils and training on policy planning.
- Provide incentives through grant awards for jurisdictions with planning boards and for jurisdictions that see the “big picture” and recognize systemic and fiscal impacts of new projects.
- Recognize there are no “cookie-cutter” approaches; avoid attempting to impose homogeneity in an environment marked by variety.
- Acknowledge that states and localities must try to overcome their negative history and agree to disagree on some issues.¹⁴

Some states have deliberately fostered the formation of local CJCCs, either as comprehensive criminal justice planning bodies or through community corrections act legislation. Oregon and Colorado are two states that have migrated toward more comprehensive CJCCs. These states built on successful experiences with community corrections acts that required state and local partnerships to improve local corrections operations through better planning, analysis, and coordination. Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia have statewide initiatives that promote collaboration across justice system components and focus on concerns and priorities at the community level.¹⁵

Geographic Scope

Justice system planning is enhanced when it encompasses as complete a “system” of justice as

possible. CJCCs benefit from geographic boundaries that are coterminous within the jurisdictional boundaries of a local justice system. Normally, this means a geographic area with the same boundaries as a county. Municipalities usually invest heavily in police services, and counties are more involved in court and correctional services. Thus, if a CJCC's coverage extends to the county boundaries, it usually deals with a complete, or nearly complete, local justice system. Even in jurisdictions with many state-administered criminal justice activities, a countywide arrangement usually pulls together most locally administered functions.

This principle leads to related notions, for example, that joint city/county CJCCs are generally preferable to either single-city or county-only CJCCs. Geography is less important than the *range* of justice functions falling within the jurisdiction of the CJCC.

A different set of guidelines appears to govern smaller cities and counties without major population centers. Smaller cities and counties can effectively combine their resources to support a comprehensive multicounty CJCC effort that none could provide alone. Small counties can be grouped in different ways. One approach is to encourage them to fall together into natural groups based on local preference or traditional intercounty alliances, such as a council of governments. Another is to organize around existing multicounty judicial districts.

Authorization and Purpose

Many coordinating groups operate informally, for example, at the request of a mayor, judge, or chief administrative officer. The effectiveness of the group, however, will be enhanced by a degree of independence and the legitimacy accorded by formal authorization. A first step in setting up a local coordinating body of the kind envisioned here is to obtain legal authorization for the CJCC to serve as a cross-agency and cross-jurisdictional planning and coordination mechanism. For example, the CJCC might be established by a joint resolution of local governments, a joint

powers agreement, a municipal ordinance, a resolution of the county government, a statute, or an executive order.

A clearly articulated purpose and mission statement should be prepared and formally adopted. Whatever form of enabling mechanism is used, its provisions should describe the CJCC's location within local government and its major purposes, duties, and powers, and outline the mutual responsibilities of the CJCC and the agencies it serves. Such a document will legitimize CJCC staff efforts to obtain line agency cooperation in collecting necessary data and to implement CJCC-sponsored plans and programs.

Structure

Most CJCCs with advanced practices are city/county collaborations. Typically, they are independent from the city and/or county administrative structure. The staff, too, is responsible to the CJCC, although they may be housed in a city or county office building.

All CJCCs have a chairperson and many also have a vice-chair. Normally, these two individuals also serve on a steering committee or executive committee that is usually required because the total CJCC membership is so large. In addition, most CJCCs have both standing and special purpose committees. For example, some have standing committees that mirror the police, courts, and corrections components of the justice system. CJCCs also may form interdisciplinary committees to consider specific problem areas, such as jail crowding or juvenile matters. These may be standing committees or committees formed for a specific duration. CJCCs often establish subcommittees that pull staff from several agencies. For example, some subcommittees include a particularly knowledgeable middle manager and technical experts who are subordinates to CJCC members.

Some CJCCs, such as the Los Angeles Countywide Criminal Justice Coordination Committee, consist solely of justice system officials. Others include citizens.

Bylaws

Bylaws should be developed to govern the day-to-day business of the CJCC and to delineate the specific powers and duties of the CJCC, its members, and its staff. The development of bylaws formalizes the process of creating a skeleton of an agreement that can serve as the basis for a CJCC (see appendix E for sample bylaws for a CJCC).

Representation and Membership

The CJCC should be governed by a membership that is broadly representative of both local elected officials of general government and elected and appointed criminal justice agency administrators from within the county's geographic boundaries. It might also include personnel of certain nonjustice agencies and private citizens. Because it deals with a number of agencies and more than one unit of government, the CJCC should be an independent body. Independence and broad representation help provide the systemwide perspective necessary for comprehensiveness, and policy direction by local government and justice officials ensures greater responsiveness to local needs.

The Tarrant County Criminal Justice Planning Group (CJPG) is chaired by community volunteers, representative of the Tarrant County community, who serve in a "countywide" capacity. The CJPG has produced a Community Plan for Criminal Justice.

—Les Smith, Manager, Criminal Justice Programs,
Tarrant County Administrator's Office, Fort Worth, Texas

The CJCC should include four categories of members: (1) justice officials, (2) officials of general government, (3) officials of related nonjustice agencies, and (4) statesmen. Justice officials form the core of these broad-based CJCCs, but this core should be embedded in a larger, more comprehensive community-based context that goes beyond the interests of the justice constituency.

There is an important distinction between a committee made up of justice officials and a committee that also includes officials of general government (e.g., a county commissioner, city or county manager, or mayor) and of related agencies (e.g., the health department, school, or social services agencies).

Broad-based representation helps to ensure that every agency affected by changes . . . has the opportunity to offer valuable insights regarding the plan for achieving program goals. This strategy also helps to prevent agencies that are not included in the planning process and/or that do not agree with the mission, goals, or strategy from scuttling a program or delaying its implementation.

—Jane Nady Sigmon et al.,
*Adjudication Partnerships: Critical Components*⁶

CJCCs also benefit from "statesmen"—one or two community leaders who are not justice system experts and have no special interest in any portion of the justice system. These statesmen can establish a sense of altruism in the CJCC by insisting, "We expect you to get along together. We expect you to solve these problems." They may also ask discerning questions. A broad base of support is important, but citizen members representing special interests should not be added; the CJCC will most likely have too many already.

Board membership should be specified in the bylaws along with the principles governing methods and terms of appointment. Overlapping terms of at least one year are important for continuity in board composition. For example, the bylaws of the Marion County, Oregon, Public Safety Coordinating Council stipulate that, at a minimum, membership must consist of:

- A police chief selected by police chiefs in the county.
- The county district attorney.

- A public defender or defense attorney.
- A county commissioner.
- A health/mental health director.
- City council member or mayor.
- A representative of the Oregon State Police (nonvoting).
- The county sheriff.
- A state court judge.
- A director of community corrections.
- A juvenile department director.
- At least one lay citizen.
- A city manager or another city representative.
- A representative of the Oregon Youth Authority (nonvoting).

Achieving broad participation may result in a large CJCC, so some balance must be worked out. For example, counties with a large number of cities may have too many local police chiefs to include on the CJCC. The solution is to invite the chair of the local association of police chiefs to participate.

Selecting the Chair

Selecting the CJCC chair almost always elicits comments about the requirements of leadership. Staff and members of CJCCs have made many observations about a chair's needed characteristics, including the following:

- We need a leader as opposed to a manager.
- He or she must have the respect of the group.
- Integrity is key.
- When they chair, it's for the good of the group.
- Our chair runs a "tight and fair" meeting.

- Everyone gets their say.
- If you stack the deck, it won't help you any.

Establishing "an air of altruism" promotes the workings of the CJCC. Using the position as chair to achieve a political advantage signals the probable demise of the CJCC.

For years, the informal practice at our CJCC has been to have a nonjustice professional serve as chair of the CJCC. For example, a professor of criminal justice chaired our CJCC.

—**Bob Maccarone, Assistant District Attorney and former Staff Director, Westchester County (New York) Criminal Justice Advisory Board**

According to Jane Nady Sigmon and colleagues:

[T]he leader must possess certain skills and take on specific responsibilities, including:

- Articulating the current problem.
- Setting forth a vision for how the local justice system will tackle the problem.
- Convincing other key people of its value so it becomes a shared vision.
- Building partnerships to achieve the envisioned change.

The leader also must be able to motivate and inspire people to commit their time and effort to the program and participate as equals around a table, despite real or perceived differences between members in power and status.¹⁷

Leadership will change over time. The CJCC will need to plan for leadership transitions to avoid crises when they occur.

Real reform is not possible without taking risks. Collaborative work mitigates that risk. One of the benefits of collaborative change structures is that once the group builds its strength and gets a sense of its power, it realizes that risks can be taken more readily. When the whole group has developed consensus about what should be done, it represents a united front of experts speaking with one voice. This is a formidable voice, one that is difficult to ignore. Collaborative leaders are wise if they are able to gauge when and how to use this voice, this power, and when not to. Leadership must manage this newly found power carefully.

—Kathleen Feely, *Collaboration and Leadership in Juvenile Detention Reform*¹⁸

Executive Committee and Standing Committees

The purposes and composition of an executive committee and standing committees and task forces must be determined. It is important to recognize that the need for staff support will increase as the CJCC forms committees and task forces. Larger boards almost always need an executive committee.

In Marion County, Oregon, the Executive Steering Committee of the Public Safety Coordinating Council meets on the last Tuesday of each month for the primary purpose of developing meeting agendas for the full council. The members include the chair and vice chair of the council and representatives of both a city police department and the Marion County Sheriff's Office.

—Bylaws, Marion County Public Safety Coordinating Council¹⁹

Voting

The bylaws of most CJCCs address voting, and most refer to a majority rule. In practice, however, many CJCCs do not actually bring issues to a vote; instead, decisions are usually made by consensus. But consensus is not always the rule. For example, when an issue comes up for a vote at the Hennepin County/City of Minneapolis CJCC, it is not adopted unless there is unanimous agreement.

The CJCC will not survive long if every issue that comes to the table is controversial and results in bloodshed.

—John O'Sullivan, former Staff Director,
Hennepin County/City of Minneapolis Criminal Justice
Coordinating Committee

The potential for a vote tends to level the playing field in which separate agencies usually differ in terms of power and authority. Representatives from small jurisdictions have an equal opportunity to express their views, and, if a vote is taken, their vote often carries the same weight as a larger jurisdiction.

Some jurisdictions, concerned about attendance, permit only the official members to vote. This means their subordinates can attend and represent them, but they cannot vote and they do not count toward a quorum.

Setting the Agenda

A clear agenda, delivered well in advance, will help promote attendance. It should include items that are clearly relevant to the participants. Informational matters and operational-level concerns should be kept to a minimum so that policy-level discussion and action can take place. As a general rule, the CJCC does not meddle in the internal affairs of any single justice agency. Agenda items focus on issues that cut across agency interests or operations. Typically, this shifts the emphasis away from looking at individual agencies and refocuses attention on the decision points where they come together to do their work, as was shown in exhibit 7.

The presiding judge of the court chairs the cabinet, and there are regularly scheduled meetings. The meetings are structured. Items on the agenda are timed, and agendas are distributed a week in advance.

—Mary Ann Treadaway, Staff Member,
Sacramento County (California) Criminal Justice Cabinet

In most CJCCs, the chair develops the agenda in concert with the staff. Members are encouraged to submit agenda items to the staff and/or the chair. They have an *obligation* to do so if an upcoming initiative is likely to affect other parts of the justice system.

Meetings

The CJCC should meet regularly, either monthly or quarterly. A schedule of future meeting dates and times should be agreed upon well in advance of the meetings. The meetings must be well organized and well run.

Discussions at meetings should be open, frank, and civil. Exhibiting civility and respect for others is critical in fostering cooperation and helping steering committee members grow in their understanding of the problems and needs of each of the participating agencies.

—Jane Nady Sigmon et al.,
*Adjudication Partnerships: Critical Components*²⁰

Financing the CJCC

Once the objectives and priorities have been set, planning activities identified, and staff needs outlined, an overall CJCC budget must be estimated and the sources of funds considered. Federal or state funds may be primary sources, particularly in the early stages of CJCC development, but local government revenues are a significant source in many jurisdictions.

Local financial investments help institutionalize the planning process within the general structure of local government, giving it greater stability and orienting it more directly to local issues. Shared local government funding also prevents domination of the CJCC by one jurisdiction or justice system component and provides a sense of commitment from all of the members.

Our CJCC is governed by a joint powers agreement containing a formula for funding by the participating jurisdictions. This is a county made up of many cities, none being dominant in size or assessed evaluation.

—Cynthia Brandon, Executive Director,
San Mateo County (California) Criminal Justice Council

This suggests that federal and/or state financial assistance be concentrated on encouraging and initiating or enhancing local planning and coordination competencies for more self-sustaining operations. The financial contribution of local governments then should be incrementally increased as local officials become convinced that the CJCC's planning, analysis, and coordination activities serve important local needs.

Staffing the CJCC

The staff support provided to the CJCC will largely depend on the size of the jurisdiction and the resources available, but a CJCC will not work well unless it receives independent, full-time staff support. The Hennepin County/City of Minneapolis CJCC has its own budget and dedicated staff who report directly to county administration. Before the 1977 reorganization of the CJCC, it had no legal status, no budget, and no full-time staff. CJCC accomplishments depended on part-time staff contributed by member agencies and available funding.

The cabinet is supported by a full-time senior administrative analyst. Funding for this position is shared by the agencies of the executive committee. In addition, the cabinet is supported by a contracted research consultant. The cabinet staff is responsible for monitoring his work plan and deliverables. The county funds this contract.

—Mary Ann Treadaway, Staff Member,
Sacramento County (California) Criminal Justice Cabinet

Planning for staffing needs should be preceded by careful consideration of CJCC objectives. The number of staff members and their qualifications will be determined by the types of planning, analysis, and coordination activities they will undertake. Members of the CJCC should invest some time in preliminary planning to maximize staff effectiveness. This is a “preparing for planning” step, as shown in exhibit 5, the 11-step general planning process model.

A wide variety of skills is needed. These are rarely found in a single individual. The traditional system designer-expediter is still needed, but so is the entrepreneurially minded new venture analyst, so is an analytic diagnostician-controller, so is a skilled forecaster-analyst, so is a computer-model builder.

—H. Igor Ansoff, quoted in
John K. Hudzik and Gary W. Cordner,
*Planning in Criminal Justice Organizations and Systems*²¹

Staff members will need skills in three basic areas. First, they should have analytical skills and experience. They should be able to collect and analyze data and convert the data into useful information. This ability will depend on the second basic skill area: practical experience and an understanding of justice system agencies and processes. The third skill area involves political, managerial, and administrative capacities to get along well with CJCC members and justice agencies.

The CJCC staff should be characterized by credibility, neutrality, and stability. Credibility with justice agencies and local government officials comes with demonstrated competence and neutrality and from the legitimacy associated with formal authorization to serve in an interagency and interjurisdictional role. Neutrality must be conscientiously practiced by the staff director and subordinates but can be promoted by insulating the CJCC staff from local politics (basing staffing on the merit system rather than on political appointments). Stability of the unit, essential to the continuity of long-range planning, is enhanced by protection from political involvement, by strong enabling legislation, and by efforts to institutionalize planning within the local government structure.

Flexibility needs to be part of the job description.

—Ann Bowland, Toledo-Lucas County (Ohio)
Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

In successful CJCCs, the staff director and the chair of the CJCC have a close, compatible, and effective working relationship. The best of both worlds is to have a talented justice planner as staff director and an effective leader as chair.

Typical Staff Assignments

The work of the CJCC can be illustrated by a quick summary of typical staff assignments. As shown earlier in exhibit 2, staff assignments may include any of the following:

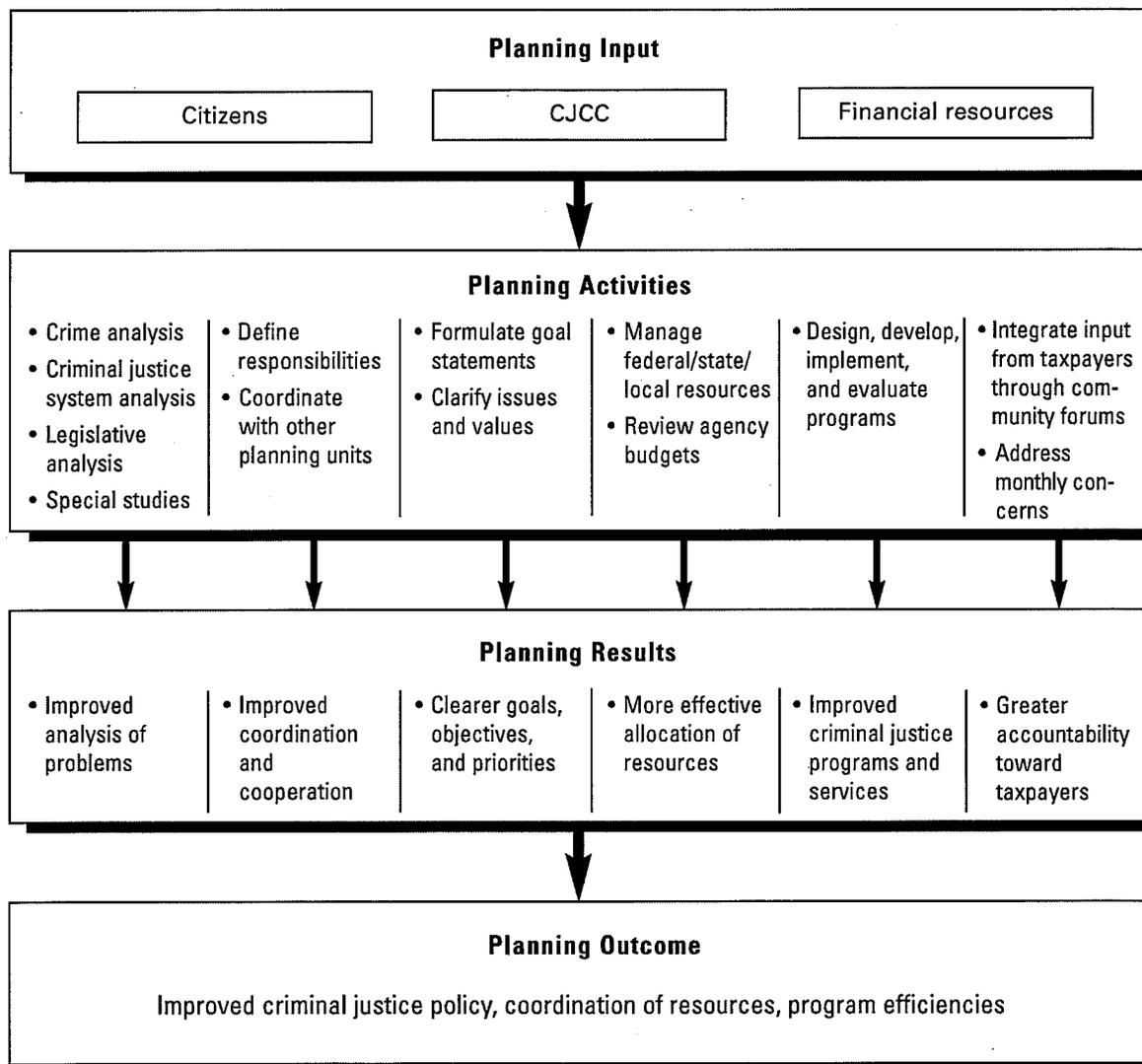
- Developing databases.
- Staffing CJCC subcommittees.
- Conducting legislative analyses.
- Gathering or disseminating public information.
- Coordinating agency efforts.
- Mediating interagency disputes.
- Helping agencies articulate goals and priorities.
- Planning for resource allocation and reviewing agency budgets.

- Preparing grant applications and managing grants.
- Designing, implementing, and evaluating programs.
- Providing technical assistance, training, and information brokerage services.
- Conducting special studies and a wide range of analysis activities.

Evaluating the CJCC

Evaluation of the CJCC can do much to convince taxpayers that justice agencies are doing their job and that justice dollars are well spent. A general evaluation approach is shown in exhibit 8. Polling the CJCC members should be part of any evaluation of the CJCC. Public opinion surveys can also provide measures of public satisfaction with the local justice system.

Exhibit 8. Framework for Evaluating a CJCC



Note: This evaluation approach was designed by Rebecca Wurzbarger and appeared in Robert C. Cushman's *Program Models: Criminal Justice Planning for Local Governments* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, U.S. Department of Justice, 1980), 93-100. The version presented here is modified from the *Marion County Public Safety Coordinating Council Annual Report, FY 1996-97*, which was used to guide evaluation of the Marion County (Oregon) Public Safety Coordinating Council.

The Palm Beach County (Florida) Criminal Justice Commission currently has a consultant evaluating their work and accomplishments.

—Sally Graham, Criminal Justice Policy Coordinator,
Sarasota County, Florida

The Marion County Public Safety Coordinating Council has conducted several surveys to measure public opinion about justice services and priorities. The objectives of the public opinion surveys were to:

- Identify registered voter opinions about the most important issue facing Marion County government, with reference to crime.
- Identify registered voter attitudes toward specific statements about fighting crime and about Marion County government.
- Identify whether registered voters support construction of a juvenile detention facility and a juvenile justice center.
- Identify how registered voters would spend money between adult and juvenile corrections; prevention, intervention, and treatment programs; juvenile delinquency programs; and prevention programs for families with children.

Hiring an outside consultant, or requesting an evaluation from the National Institute of Corrections, may lead to a more formal and more deliberate evaluation of the CJCC.

Rejuvenating the CJCC

CJCCs are fragile: Some atrophy; others pass away entirely. In a survey of 30 CJCCs, respondents were asked to list the factors that significantly contributed to and detracted from the success of their CJCC.²²

The most important *contributing* factors for success were identified as (1) good relationships with criminal justice agencies and officials of general government; (2) the CJCC's nonpartisan image and multijurisdictional approach; and (3) dedicated staff with technical ability. These assets keep a

CJCC healthy; therefore, they should be actively promoted. (Leadership, citizen support, and adequate financial support were mentioned less frequently as contributing factors.)

The factors that most *detracted* from success were (1) financial constraints; (2) staffing reductions; and (3) conflicts between agencies (over "turf"). These danger signs will need attention if a CJCC is to remain healthy.

Rejuvenating a CJCC involves answering three questions:

- What happened to the previous CJCC?
- What has changed?
- Who should revive the CJCC?

What Happened to the Previous CJCC?

Surveying previous members is a good place to begin answering this question. Chances are that the previous CJCC had weak scores on the CJCC self-evaluation questionnaire presented as exhibit 1 of this guide.

Ask: "How is the justice system less viable because the CJCC is gone?" It's likely that asking this question will help officials identify many things a CJCC could help them accomplish that they cannot possibly accomplish on their own.

—Ann Bowland, Toledo-Lucas County (Ohio) Criminal Justice Coordinating Council

Interagency conflict can cause the demise of a CJCC. But, after a period, it may be possible to revive the CJCC and start again. Another common problem is that interest wanes when a CJCC drifts from a policy-planning orientation and becomes consumed with operational concerns.

What Has Changed?

CJCCs are rarely static. They change and adapt, or they deteriorate and die. If a CJCC is dependent

on an unusually strong and effective leader, it will likely suffer when leadership changes. Elections will remove some members and new ones will replace them, possibly threatening the continuity the CJCC needs to survive. Newly elected and appointed officials may see the CJCC as a vestige of old philosophies and old ways of doing things. A new executive order, a new mission statement, a new challenge, or a reorganization may be needed to help them “own” the process.

In 1997, the Hennepin County/City of Minneapolis CJCC spent much of the year evaluating its effectiveness and direction. The end result was a reorganization, the adoption of a vision and mission statement, and a formal cooperative agreement between the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County outlining organizational basics and funding responsibilities. The new organization has fewer members with a slightly stronger suburban emphasis. In addition, a vice-chair position was added along with a provision for the orderly transfer of the chair.

—John O’Sullivan, former Staff Director,
Hennepin County/City of Minneapolis
Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee

Opportunities to reinvigorate a CJCC may come from new or pending legislation that is expected to affect justice system workloads. Examples include increased criminal penalties for drinking/driving offenses, a three-strikes law, and changes in state/local responsibilities for supervising offenders in custody or in the community. Each of these may represent an opportunity to call the local justice leadership together to conduct problem-oriented planning.

Who Should Revive the CJCC?

Reviving the CJCC is a shared responsibility, but someone must take the lead. Often, two or more officials can agree to sponsor revival of the CJCC.

An early meeting in a retreat or workshop setting, with a trained facilitator, can help a CJCC get off to a healthy, vigorous new start. Where possible, efforts to rejuvenate a CJCC should start small and build competence gradually. Organizers should avoid spending too much time and energy bringing one or two naysayers into the fold. Instead, they might attempt to build a critical mass of the key players and work “downhill,” beginning with tasks in which opportunities for success are the greatest. They should build upon small gains.

Visits to other CJCCs can also help officials see new possibilities. Even a brief telephone conversation with a counterpart in another jurisdiction can help a local official think more optimistically about the potential of a CJCC.

The skills of the CJCC members and staff will develop incrementally as they gain experience and foster the working relationships with agency and government officials necessary for comprehensive local justice planning. As these relationships develop, the CJCC should focus on strengthening the decisionmaking capacities of the cities, counties, and justice agencies in its jurisdiction, helping them to improve the way they provide the services and programs for which they are responsible.

Any change in one part of the justice system has a ripple effect. Some justice agency executives don’t appreciate the systemwide impact of the decisions they make.

—Tom Giacinti, Jefferson County (Colorado)
Criminal Justice Strategic Planning Committee

Demonstrating the Benefits

CJCCs need to continuously demonstrate the benefits of their collaborative efforts to member agencies and the community at large. They need to look for opportunities to celebrate and reinforce success. Most CJCCs prepare a list of major accomplishments at least annually. They celebrate success as they achieve key milestones and objectives. For example, the Jail Utilization Systems Team (JUST) Project of Monroe County

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(Rochester, New York) released the following public statement:

In 1992, the Monroe County (Rochester, New York) Executive required all county departments to incorporate total quality management (TQM) and work together to address county problems. Local justice system leaders joined together and developed a multi-part strategy to reduce jail crowding. They developed a continuum of graduated restrictions for out-of-custody pretrial defendants, added graduated sanctioning options for convicted misdemeanants, expedited case processing for prison/jail bound offenders, and strengthened their case processing information system. These actions reduced the average length of jail stay. As a consequence, the daily jail population was reduced by 209 beds, even though jail admissions increased from 13,587 in 1994 to 15,842 for 1997 (20 percent).²³

Some CJCCs (e.g., the Palm Beach County, Florida, Criminal Justice Commission) have a public relations subcommittee charged with interpreting the results of the CJCC to the public, to other

justice agencies, to government officials, and to the media. Effectively communicating each CJCC's success will build support for planning and coordination and ultimately improve local criminal justice programs and services nationwide.

In the world of limited resources and increased demands for system accountability, criminal justice coordinating committees provide forums for the key players within the justice system to work together, leaving their traditionally adversarial relationship behind in the courtroom. By working together toward the larger goal of improving service for the public, it is likely that criminal justice system leaders will also improve the functioning of their individual agencies.

—Mark Cunniff, Executive Director, National Association of Criminal Justice Planners
