



Follow-Up Recommendations for the Dane County Criminal Justice Council

Prepared by the Institute for Justice Planning

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These recommendations are intended to assist the Dane County Criminal Justice Council (CJC) in maintaining its momentum and effectiveness throughout the remainder of 2013.

Background

In 2007 and 2011, the Institute for Law and Policy Planning performed criminal justice system assessments for Dane County policymakers. The assessments' reports included several recommendations that addressed (1) the process and structure of planning, decision-making, and collaborative problem-solving as it relates to the functioning of a policymaking and advisory body, such as the CJC, and (2) the content and substance of specific areas of focus to make the justice system more effective and efficient. In follow-up to the 2011 assessment, the Dane County CJC hired a consultant to assist the CJC with its planning and decision-making.

Michael R. Jones, Senior Project Associate of the Institute for Justice Planning, a subsidiary of the Pretrial Justice Institute, provided consultation to the CJC, which met nearly monthly from April 2012 through January 2013. In January 2013, the contract for consultation expired, and Michael Jones worked with Tim Saterfield, who was appointed as interim CJC staff, to transition the staff support role from Dr. Jones to Mr. Saterfield. All of the following recommendations have been discussed with Mr. Saterfield.

Recommendations

CJC Process

1. Update the water barrel analysis and corresponding written summary of the Dane County Jail to include 2012 jail population data.

Dr. Jones performed this analysis in May 2012 using jail data from 2003 through 2011, and submitted a brief written report summarizing the analysis. This analysis should be updated to help the CJC understand whether there have been any changes to the jail's average daily population, bookings, and length of stay. It also serves as a gauge for better understanding how the county's justice system is changing. Mr. Saterfield has the spreadsheet and report, and he and Dr. Jones discussed how to update the formulas in the spreadsheet.

2. Update the criminal justice trends analysis to include 2011 data (and 2012 data when available).

Dr. Jones performed this analysis in May 2012 using data from 2007 through 2011, and submitted a brief written report summarizing the analysis. This analysis should be updated to help the CJC understand the nature of the changes in various criminal justice indicators, such as crime, arrests, case filings, etc. It too serves as a gauge for better understanding how the county's justice system is changing. When patterns are identified, the CJC is better equipped to anticipate and plan for future demands on the justice system. Mr. Saterfield has the spreadsheet and report, and he and Dr. Jones discussed how to update the spreadsheet.

3. Perform a “Post-test” using the CJC Self-Evaluation Questionnaire to assess the CJC’s relative strengths and weaknesses.

Dr. Jones performed this analysis in May 2012 using ratings provided by CJC members. The survey demonstrated that the CJC members perceived many strengths of the CJC, and a few weaknesses. Dr. Jones targeted the identified weaker areas during his consultation. Specifically, Dr. Jones focused on the CJC’s not having sufficient analytical staff support and not having yet evaluated its efforts. To address these areas, Dr. Jones worked with CJC Chairperson Joe Parisi to obtain internal staff support (i.e., Tim Saterfield), and has recommended the CJC use the self-evaluation questionnaire in late 2013 to evaluate its efforts over the past year and a half.

4. Perform a water barrel analysis of other client populations of interest.

The water barrel spreadsheet can easily be adapted to analyze client populations outside of the jail. For example, if the number of cases opened annually and the average number of daily open cases is known, the analysis can be performed on the prosecutor’s, public defender’s, and criminal court’s caseloads, as well as the caseload of any program of interest, such as probation or mental health services. Dr. Jones and Mr. Saterfield discussed these possible analyses, and directions are included in the spreadsheet.

5. Maintain a close link between the CJC and its work groups.

Currently, the CJC is working on three priority areas (electronic efficiencies, Huber population, racial disparities), and has formed three work groups to address these issues, respectively. I recommend that Tim Saterfield, in his capacity as CJC staff, assist the chairpersons and work group members in establishing regular meeting times, meeting agendas, project goals and timelines, and mechanisms for reporting progress to and obtaining guidance from the CJC.

6. Engage in policy-level work

The CJC’s long-term success will largely depend on the extent to which it engages in policy-level analysis, discussion, and decision-making. That is, the focus should be on “What should we do and why?” When a good portion of the CJC’s meeting time is devoted to answering this question about its chosen priority areas, CJC members will be engaged in the CJC’s work and more effective in using their influence and experience to address systemic issues.

7. Re-examine the CJC’s strategic priority areas.

After the CJC decides that it has made sufficient progress on its current strategic priority areas, it should reassess the extent to which these areas should be kept or retired and which new priority areas should become the focus of the CJC’s work. The list of possible priority areas that CJC members provided to Dr. Jones in May 2012 can be updated to help the CJC identify any new priorities.

8. Obtain suggestions and collaborate with other Wisconsin criminal justice coordinating committees.

Dr. Jones provided Mr. Saterfield with the names of several Wisconsin counties that have criminal justice coordinating committees. He and Dane County CJC members may find it useful to observe one of these jurisdictions' committee and/or subcommittee meetings, talk with their counterparts in those jurisdictions, and/or collaborate on issues of joint interest, such as funding changes, new criminal justice legislation, or the state's new criminal justice coordinating committee.

9. Consider the guidelines in NIC's publications for criminal justice coordinating committees and their staff.

Two National Institute of Corrections' publications contain suggestions that would assist the CJC and its planning/analytic staff in maximizing their effectiveness over the long-term:

- Guidelines for Developing a Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee, by Robert Cushman, 2002
- Guidelines for Staffing a Local Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee, by Michael Jones, (in press)

For example, the importance of committee membership and leadership, focusing on policy-level issues, and ways for staffing coordinating committees are presented. Regarding staffing, I recommend the CJC continue to explore ways to use existing county staff to perform various staffing responsibilities until funding for permanent staff is available. In addition, the self-evaluation questionnaire and a discussion about the differences between policy planning and other levels of planning are discussed in the first publication listed above.

CJC Content

10. Address the jail's current population driver – inmates' relatively long length of stay.

While the CJC and Sheriff's Office is waiting for the contractor to provide the results of the jail's space and needs analysis, the CJC has a wonderful opportunity to enlist the services of Tim Saterfield and another sources of analytical support (e.g., university professors, interns) to perform a current jail population analysis to identify the group(s) of inmates who have the longest lengths of stay. Dr. Jones provided Mr. Saterfield with a spreadsheet designed for this kind of analysis. After the CJC is equipped with this information, it will be in a position to identify practices under local control (e.g., pretrial bond setting, sentencing, responding to probation violations) for which it can recommend changes in an effort to reduce some inmates' longer lengths of stay. This activity would also provide the CJC with an added benefit: It would give CJC members more experience with and a sense of accomplishment for identifying potential changes to local decision-making as a way to manage workload and address local issues, rather than solely or primarily relying on the obtainment of more resources (e.g., jail beds, staff) as the preferred option for managing workload and addressing issues.