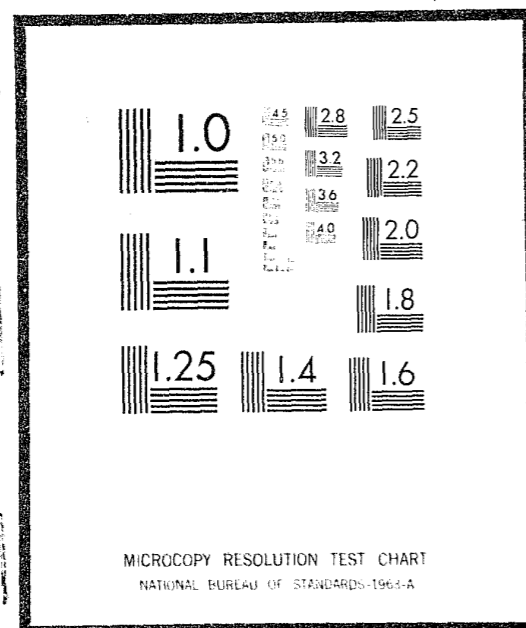


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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE  
LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION  
NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFERENCE SERVICE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20531

5/2/77

Date filmed

## LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE ADMINISTRATION (LEAA)

### POLICE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

SUBJECT: Records System Consolidation Feasibility Study.

REPORT NUMBER: 76-190-198

FOR: Wenatchee, Washington Police Department

Population: 17,000  
Police Strength (Sworn) 43  
Total 43  
Square Mile Area: N/A

Chelan County, Washington Sheriff's Office

Population: 41,000  
Police Strength: N/A  
Square Mile Area: 2,926

CONTRACTOR: Public Administration Service  
1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D. C. 20036

CONSULTANT: Robert F. Ingram

CONTRACTOR: J-LEAA-002-76

DATE: January, 1977

38916

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FORWARD

This request for technical assistance was made by the Wenatchee, Washington Police Department. The assistance requested was for a feasibility study of consolidating records system with the Chelan County Sheriff's Office. Specifically, consultant services were requested to determine to what extent the records systems should be consolidated and what is needed to accomplish that level of consolidation. In addition, advice on system design and application was requested.

Persons involved in the processing of this request included:

Requesting Agency: C. L. Haynes, Chief of Police  
Jerry T. Thompson, Project Director  
Wenatchee Police Department

State Planning Agency: Margo Flynn  
Law and Justice Planner

Dale Tiffany  
Program Manager

Jack Ickes  
Technical Assistance Advisor

Approving Agency: R. John Gregrich  
Program Development and Technical  
Assistance Division  
LEAA -- Region X

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to the Wenatchee Police Department and the Chelan County Sheriff's Office personnel for the cooperation I received from each of them during my on-site interviews.

Robert F. Ingram  
Consultant

## SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

In 1973, the Chelan County Law and Justice Office made a request for technical assistance in determining the feasibility of consolidating the records system and attendant manpower of the Wenatchee Police Department and the Chelan County Sheriff's Office for a joint criminal justice information facility. In February 1973, a consultant was assigned who provided a written report on this subject in June 1973. Three (3) years later in 1976, the consultant report was finally reviewed and as a result of this review two (2) microfilm cameras and two (2) microfilm reader-printers were purchased by the Wenatchee Police Department. Currently, this equipment has been installed and is in operation. The Chelan County Sheriff's Office is waiting for further clarification and direction before pursuing consolidation. The two agencies have come to the conclusion that additional technical assistance is needed in order to determine current program and organizational needs, system requirements and design, and possible system applications.

Law and Justice Grant application 76-C-0186 authorizes the planning for and the purchase of equipment required to consolidate and automate the respective records systems of Wenatchee and Chelan County. The two agencies have already inspected two potentially satisfactory automated systems:

- (1) Micro-disc system offered by the 3-M Company and presently in operation in the Yakima, Washington, Police Department;
- (2) A computer system offered by the Tymshare Corporation which is presently in operation at the Lewis County Sheriff's Office in Chehalis, Washington.

The assistance requested now is for someone with technical knowledge and expertise to advise the two agencies on program design, a practical approach and the application of a system to their needs.

### Technical Requirements of the Task

As a requirement, the user agencies must be evaluated to determine:

- (1) The individual and collective informational requirements for an automated and consolidated record system;
- (2) The feasibility of its implementation.

(3) Methods and approaches by which to accomplish the consolidation.

Both agencies desire the consultant to analyze and evaluate the two systems which they have already investigated; i. e. the Lewis County Sheriff's Office or the Yakima Police Department systems and to subsequently recommend one of these two systems, if appropriate. These considerations are discussed in the text of this report.

## SECTION II. UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROBLEM

The basic problem to be addressed is whether or not an automated records system shared between the Wenatchee Police Department and Chelan County Sheriff's Office is realistic and feasible. Interviews with key personnel of each department and an on-site review of the two departments' record systems was completed in order to answer these questions. The records system of each agency was reviewed and analyzed to determine what system would best serve both agencies and to estimate the cost of such a consolidation project. In so doing, it was kept in mind that future plans called for consolidating services into a county/city facility.

The original request included the Wenatchee Police Department, the East Wenatchee Police Department (Douglas County) and the Chelan County Sheriff's Office. East Wenatchee currently contracts dispatch services and jail facilities from Wenatchee. As such, they provide arrest and other data and access the data on file (manual or automated). Because East Wenatchee is in a different county it was decided at the outset of this study that they would not be included in the conceptualization and design of the consolidated records system; but instead, they as well as Douglas County would be permitted to join the system at some future point in time.

The record systems of both the Wenatchee Police Department and the Chelan County Sheriff's Office are clean and efficient operating manual systems. Each system has some minor problems that could be eliminated with the implementation of an automated system. Automation would allow ready access to the material and would increase the efficiency of the records system in terms of providing timely data to patrol and investigative personnel of each department and between the two agencies as well.

### Chelan County Sheriff's Office

The basic problem of the Chelan County Sheriff's Office records system is lack of adequate space and the absence of an organized arrangement. The records operations is spread-out over four (4) rooms. Moreover, dispatchers do not have access to any records, except arrest cards which are kept in the dispatch room. This arrangement creates duplication of files and causes extra typing of master cards, indexing and file management. For each incident, an incident card is typed and for each name mentioned in the report, three (3) or four (4) cards are typed which require file search, typing and re-filing. This task along with other necessary paperwork is more than the current staff of one full-time and one half-time records clerk can handle. The Sheriff's Office also needs to develop

a record retention schedule to comply with RCW 40.14 -- Preservation and Destruction of Public Records.

#### Wenatchee Police Department

The Wenatchee Police Department records division consists of one patrolman and two records clerks. With the aide of the dispatchers, the records unit is able to operate smoothly and effectively. There are two areas which may require attention:

- (1) Traffic Citations. The question is, "should traffic citations be put into individual files?" The consultant does not believe there is adequate justification for making a separate file package on individual citations.
- (2) The "civil" name file. The current practice of making a card on each person for each incident in which he is involved is causing this file to grow too rapidly -- it's unmanageable. An alternative might be to have a master card for each name on which contacts are filed in chronological order and by case number.

#### Problems of Both Agencies

Following are major problems found to be common to both departments:

- Neither department has a disclosure statement (RCW 42.17) which provides for protection of files by notifying the public of file exemption.
- Neither agency provides for a method of handling traffic/criminal citations according to RCW 46.64.010. Citation books need to be controlled through issuance to individual officers and a file maintained for audit purposes in numerical order.
- Both agencies also have a problem in that all department personnel have access to all files. This could cause problems in the future with the restrictions being imposed under Title 28 and the State of Washington Security Plan. The lack of control on files and master name index files is a problem of concern. Without some kind of control

plan, these files could be lost. This would necessitate duplication of files and cards and add unnecessary work.

#### Other Observations

The Chelan County Sheriff's Office has not yet used their microfilm equipment. They are waiting for further instruction as to how to proceed and how the total system will tie together. The Wenatchee Police Department on the other hand has installed and started microfilming some records, i.e., civil name file prior to 1976, 1975 accident reports and purged juvenile reports. Wenatchee has now stopped microfilming its records pending resolution of the issues at hand and so that its system will properly interface with the final consolidated system design.

The two agencies have other items of concern to address before any decision can be made regarding the type of consolidated records system to be used. Among these concerns are:

- (1) Can items such as traffic citations, accident reports and "civil" name files be included in an automated system when the system was developed with LEAA funds?
- (2) What number of personnel are needed to operate the system?
- (3) What will the annual operating costs be once the system is operational?
- (4) What historical data will the agencies want to include in the system?
- (5) What is the initial cost of an automated system? Are there enough local and federal funds to cover the cost?
- (6) Will the new system be cost effective?
- (7) What will be the cost of system development, design, and programming?
- (8) What are the additional costs that might be expected in the installation of an automated system?

### SECTION III. ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

The Chelan County Sheriff's Office record system has the problem of being spread out into too many rooms. With the use of four different rooms to store records, it makes it difficult to search files for information and it is more likely that files will be lost or misplaced. Deputies currently have accessibility to files, but with new legislation this will be eliminated and will make more work for the records' personnel. Records files are growing rapidly as each year's records are added to the system. These problems may be solved by constructing a new jointly occupied and operated county/city records and dispatch center. This matter should be given serious consideration.

It was mentioned earlier in this report that the citation file is maintained alphabetically and that it does not permit proper control and audit according to state law (RCW 46.64.010). In order to maintain system effectiveness, it is necessary to type many index cards, which require additional search time, typing time and filing time as well as space to file. This practice should be modified as soon as practicable in order to establish a higher degree of system efficiency.

The Wenatchee Police Department has a better situation in that all records, except those designated for archives, are in one room. A portion of the room is set aside for dispatch activities and the files needed by the dispatchers are centrally located in that portion of the room. In general, the Wenatchee operation is smooth and each step precise. There are, however, some improvements that could be made to insure that files are not lost or misplaced. These will be discussed elsewhere in this report.

Wenatchee Police officers also have access to all files as in the case of the county. New federal legislation will eliminate this situation and place the responsibility for records handling on records personnel. Wenatchee files don't seem to be growing as fast as those of the county. This is attributed to the organization of the Wenatchee records system.

Traffic citations are filed in individual case packages which makes the control or audit of citations difficult. The police department relies totally on the court for control of citations. Citation books are issued to vehicles and not to the individual officers which further adds to the problem of control.

The consultant's report dated June 4, 1973, has a good description of each agency's operational system. It was not necessary therefore to repeat this task. The systems were reviewed within the context of what could be done to improve them; to make them more efficient while consolidating functions and providing a mechanism for sharing information. This is the special concern of both agencies since it would be much more efficient and less time-consuming if all records in-

formation were in the same place, or combined by some method.

#### SECTION IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The two records systems were reviewed and found generally to be operating effectively; each had its own characteristics, but also had some problems in common.

Because of the physical characteristics of the area and the existing population density, there is a need for the two departments' information to be uniform, located in one area, and/or coupled together through automation. There has been some indication that there will eventually be a county/city building which would allow for a consolidated records units, but until this takes place neither agency can handle the consolidation of a records system within their agency. In planning for the future of a county/city building with a consolidated records unit, there are steps which must be taken so that the resulting system meets effectively and efficiently the total needs of the two agencies.

Some of the problems that have previously been mentioned could be resolved by microfilming records and implementing an automated indexing system shared between the two agencies.

- Microfilming would eliminate the need for numerous and voluminous files. It would also reduce the likelihood of older records being lost or misplaced.
- Automated indexing would eliminate the need for multiple card indexing and files while providing for a common link between the two agencies. The county would then be able to put their records' system into one room.
- Both departments have microfilming equipment.
- Record retention schedules are needed to prevent the build-up of files. Although the Wenatchee Police Department has a retention schedule, it was initiated before they obtained the microfilm system. The schedule should be reviewed and up-dated or modified as appropriate.
- Both agencies need to develop a disclosure policy statement.
- Citations are a problem with both agencies and there is a need to make changes. Citations should be issued to individual officers and the law enforcement copy should be filed numerically so that proper audit and control can be maintained.

- There is a need to design a viable records system that includes both manual systems as well as microfilm system with automated indexing. This should be designed with the idea of a shared county/city facility and should consider future data requirements and storage needs.
- Both agencies currently provide their staffs with some statistics and produce the Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Report on a monthly basis. This effort takes time and personnel and is costly to produce manually. An automated indexing system should reduce the time and cost of this task.

## SECTION V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The best solution to the collective problems of the two agencies is to construct a new county/city facility and to consolidate records functions. The system should be specifically designed to include a microfilming records filing and storage system with automated indexing. This recommendation represents a long-range solution; other, more immediate steps should be taken now to handle current needs and problems, and to provide the basis for a future consolidated records system. Following are the tasks recommended:

### 1. General Recommendations:

- Develop policy and comprehensive procedures for their respective manual records system.
- Design manual systems that comply with microfilming and automated indexing.
- Design the microfilming system.
- Design and purchase an automated indexing system with the capability of storing other data.
- Systems other than Yakima and Lewis County also need to be considered.

### 2. Specific Recommendations:

- Develop policy and procedures for the manual systems.
  - a. Develop policy for the handling of paper work: This would consist of methods of taking paper work out of files, which would be eliminated. No file should be taken out of its place without putting an "out card" in its place. Also no file should be allowed to leave the confines of the record room. If it is really needed copies should be made or information written down. There is also a need for a policy for the handling of RCW 42.17 and Title 28.
  - b. Develop procedures for the manual system: This would consist of written instructions for the steps each piece of paper will take so that it may be found when necessary. Also there should be

procedures for handling various situations so that records are handled in a consistent manner.

- Design a manual system to comply with microfilming and automated indexing.

- a. Hire a person from the outside to design the system.

A person from the outside is able to see the system objectively and properly offer suggestions for improvement because they are not directly involved in the system and can see some errors easier than a person working directly within the system. This person must also have the knowledge of the microfilming system and chosen automated indexing system. The idea behind design is to establish a system that can grow and expand and be able to provide what is required or desired for future use without starting all over again.

- b. This design of a manual system should take into consideration the problems that currently exist and could possibly exist in a future system.

#### Current Problems

The need to:

1. a. control and audit citations according to RCW 46.64.010.
2. b. develop a record retention schedule (Chelan County Sheriff's Office) or modify existing one (Wenatchee Police Department) so that they include microfilming and automated indexing according to RCW 40.14,
3. c. control files,
4. d. develop a public disclosure statement according to RCW 42.17; and
5. e. prevent the loss of records.

- Design the microfilming system:

1. Hire a person (if possible should be the same used to design the manual system) to design the proper and most beneficial usage of microfilming capabilities.

2. Hire a person to do the actual microfilming of historical data that is best kept on microfilm. This would probably take about two months for each agency.
- Design and purchase an automated indexing system with the capability of storing other data:
  1. Hire a person (if possible the same that has designed the manual record and microfilm systems.) This person would design the system that would provide the most efficient use of the equipment both for now and for future needs, provide the software programming for the system to operate, assist in the selection of the system hardware. One of the things to keep in mind is the possible expansion of the system to include other agencies such as East Wenatchee and Douglas County Sheriff's Office who may want to join in the future.
  2. Hire one person for each agency to put all current data into the system. These persons would be utilized for about four months each.

An Action Plan:

A. Hire someone to perform the following tasks:

1. Assist with development of policy and procedures.
2. Design a manual system to comply with microfilming requirements.
3. Design a manual system to comply with automated indexing requirements.
4. Design the microfilming system with consideration given to the future automated indexing of the system.
5. Assist with the purchase of hardware.
6. Design the automated indexing system and future data base.
7. Provide the programs for the automated indexing and future data system.

8. Make necessary changes in policies and procedures to comply with the microfilm and automated indexing systems.

B. Hire two persons, one for each agency, to:

1. Microfilm data to be included in the system -- (would take about 2 months)
2. Update the automated indexing system with current data (would take about 4 months.)

Some Additional Considerations

1. The automated system selected must be chosen with the capability of being expanded and have the capability of multiple processing (input and output at the same time.) Also to be considered, is the cost of terminal application.
2. If the automated system will have terminal capability, telephone lines must be considered. It is anticipated that this cost will be about \$30.00 per month.
3. All systems will need proper maintenance; therefore, a maintenance program should be established. This will cost approximately \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year.
4. Systems will need updating or some modification periodically. Costs for this service should be considered. This usually runs about \$20 per hour plus expenses, if from out of the area.
5. The Chelan County Sheriff's Office should expand the one half time person assigned to records to full time status.
6. The systems will need environmental control. Consideration should be given this issue at time of system purchase.

**END**

*1. 10/10/1944*