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PROGRAM BRIEF

Information Guide for State and Local Prosecutors,  
and Concerned Criminal Justice Personnel

PROSECUTION MANAGEMENT SUPPORT SYSTEM



CONTENTS OF THIS BRIEF

Prosecution Management  
Support System

PREPARED IN CONJUNCTION WITH  
REGULATIONS IMPLEMENTING THE  
JUSTICE ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1984

- I. Introduction
  - A. Problem
  - B. Answer
  - C. Concept
- II. Goal and Benefits
- III. Implementation
  - A. The Plan
  - B. The Process
- IV. Impact Assessment/Data Requirements
- V. Funding and Assistance
- VI. Sources for Further Information and Assistance
  - A. Training and Technical Assistance Resources
  - B. Selected Bibliography
  - C. Federal Program Contact
- VII. Performance Indicators

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Problem

The capacity for efficient records retrieval is essential to the effective prosecution of violent and/or career criminals, particularly where large case loads overwhelm prosecutorial staff. Expanded manual records systems do not always resolve the problem. Similarly, "one-of-a-kind," automated information systems are often costly and hinder the exchange of data among prosecutors, other criminal justice agencies, and researchers, thus preventing coordination of operational and research activities.

### B. Answer

The Prosecution Management Support System (PMSS) expands a prosecutor's ability to:

1. Target prosecution activities to convict perpetrators of violent crime, especially career criminals, and to help victims through their ordeal;
2. Retrieve information to accomplish prosecution activities impacted by speedy trial deadlines or, lacking such deadlines, within 90 days of arrest;
3. Generate analytical reports to guide the use of discretionary authority;
4. Display management information and statistical data for review of the effectiveness and efficiency of the prosecution system;
5. Facilitate sharing of data among criminal justice agencies; and,
6. Efficiently utilize existing data base management or other automated information systems.

### C. Concept

The PMSS is the culmination of over ten years of Federal support for the development of prosecution management information systems. The systems that comprise PMSS permit a prosecutor to automate and realign case loads on the basis of relative seriousness of charges and in accordance with established policies. Assembly-line handling of massive case loads can be replaced with an allocation of the work force in accordance with the relative importance of each case. These systems also enable a prosecutor to secure staff adherence to established policies, e.g., attention to victims' needs.

## II. GOAL AND BENEFITS

### A. Goal

The goal of the Prosecution Management Support System is to place the chief prosecutor in a strong management position by providing a management system which addresses workload distribution, case handling, management analysis, and staff responsiveness to established policies.

### B. Benefits

The operational PMSS provides the prosecutor with many advantages, including:

1. Rapid and accurate files storage, access, and recall;
2. Better and more complete information upon which to base decisions;
3. Analytical and statistical data for administration and research;
4. Increased productivity and effectiveness;
5. Improved staff and resource management;
6. Victim/witness notification and case update; and,
7. Quick and convenient exchange of information with other organizations/entities.

## III. IMPLEMENTATION

### A. The Plan

The PMSS requires dedication and attention to detail, especially in the early stages of development. The prosecutor must understand and direct the system through personal involvement in its planning, design, and implementation. To ensure a successful PMSS, a plan should be developed which includes four basic but distinct components.

1. **Needs Assessment:** To define data necessary to support prosecution activities related to violent crime, career criminals, speedy trial requirements, prosecutor discretion, and the operations of the office.
2. **Requirements Analysis:** To integrate research and statistical data needs with the needs assessment to define the prosecution management support system for the prosecution office.
3. **Implementation Schedule:** To establish time schedules and estimate costs for phased installation of the system; and, to define the data storage and retrieval mechanism, the support activities, and the information and analytical needs.
4. **Evaluation Period:** To determine the impact PMSS implementation has had on the operations of the office, on support of the activities defined in the needs assessment, and on the ability of the prosecutor to provide information for needed research.

### B. The Process

After the plan has been developed, several questions can guide the prosecutor's oversight.

1. Does the plan define the information requirements, data mechanisms, anticipated activities (including equipment acquisition, and test and parallel operation phases), time schedules, and estimated costs necessary to implement PMSS?

2. Will the PMSS support prosecution activities (including violent or career criminal identification), case and subpoena preparation, witness notification, and other desired office actions?
3. Can the PMSS be used to monitor management decisions and staff actions to reduce case processing or preparation time and to improve office efficiency?
4. Will the PMSS provide needed analytical, research, and statistical data?
5. Will PMSS documentation be sufficient to ensure that the system can be transferred to requesting jurisdictions?

These are performance criteria that speak to both current and future prosecutive actions and should be carefully analyzed. In summary, does the **Needs Assessment** identify data elements sufficient to support objectives and achieve desired goals? Does the **Requirements Analysis** integrate research and statistical capabilities? Does the **Implementation Schedule** seem reasonable and complete? Finally, does the **Evaluation Period** provide for the required measurement of progress toward the objectives and goals?

#### IV. IMPACT ASSESSMENT/DATA REQUIREMENTS

##### A. Impact Assessment

The impact of PMSS can be difficult to measure. Impact depends upon whether and how the system is used. This is separate from the success or failure of activities the system supports. Successful prosecution of career criminals, for example, is not necessarily the same as successful support of prosecution activities. Appropriate measures of system impact would include measurable, documented:

1. Support of prosecution activities (e.g., case docketing, subpoena preparation, victim/witness notification, etc.);
2. Research and statistical information for the prosecutor;
3. Monitoring of management decisions and actions to reduce case processing or case preparation time, and to respond to victim concerns; and,
4. Narrative describing the system which facilitates transfer to requesting jurisdictions.

##### B. Data Requirements

In addition to including the data elements necessary to achieve the prosecutor's goals and objectives, the plan should ensure that certain data are included for research and operations analysis. The data are those identified by prosecutors in several studies as essential for research purposes, both internally (within the prosecutor's own office) and externally (to be shared with other prosecutors and researchers). There are several data elements that should be collected for each case.

- Victim's sex, race, and age.
- Defendant's sex, race, and age.
- Offenses charged with and dates of crime occurrences.
- Arrest data and initial prosecution screening date.
- Specific reasons, with narrative explanation, and dates for declining prosecution.
- Number and type of prosecution charges.
- Continuances, reasons and dates.
- Pretrial release, types and dates.
- Type of trial or plea bargain results and dates.
- Number of lay and expert witnesses.
- Defense attorney type, i.e., public or private.
- Specific reasons and dates for "charges dropped."
- Final charges and levels, judicial decisions, and dates.
- Sentence imposed and date of sentence.
- Appeal actions and dates.
- Final disposition and date.

#### V. FUNDING AND ASSISTANCE

##### A. Funding

The Prosecution Management Support System has been designated as a program of proven effectiveness based on its history of successful development and implementation of various prosecution management information system projects. As a proven program, PMSS is eligible for funding under the Block Grant program to states and local units of government.

To be eligible for Block Grant funding, the prosecutor should ensure that the plan includes necessary impact measures and that minimum data elements are available for research purposes.

##### B. Assistance

Within the limits of technical assistance resources available, the Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office of Justice Programs, will offer some combination of the following services to aid a prosecutor with the development of PMSS.

1. **Seminars:** To generally describe computer systems and how to use them for PMSS; to demonstrate how to conduct a **Needs Assessment**, conduct a **Requirements Analysis**, prepare an **Implementation Plan**, and undertake an **Evaluation Period**; and to demonstrate how PMSS data can be used for research purposes.
2. **Automated Indexes:** To describe PMSS computer programs available for transfer from prosecutors and other sources; and to provide limited documentation for a transfer.
3. **Peer Assistance:** To provide direct assistance (i.e., prosecutor to prosecutor, programmer to programmer, office manager to office manager) to help a prosecutor transfer PMSS; to assist in specific computer and systems operations training, through the vendor selected to install the computer equipment for PMSS.

4. **Sites:** To provide host examples of how PMSS can be developed, implemented, and used to improve prosecution activities.
5. **Federal Guides:** To provide instructions for obtaining Federal funding, for managing Federal grants, and for meeting program monitoring requirements.

## VI. SOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

### A. Training and Technical Assistance Resources

Several jurisdictions have agreed to serve as demonstration sites. These sites are illustrative of how the PMSS concept is converted into practical reality, meeting the needs of the prosecutor it serves.

1. Lynchburg, Virginia: A small prosecutor's office serving a city of 70,000 people. PMSS used internally for scheduling case loads, docketing, issuance of subpoenas, and statistical analysis.
2. Newport News, Virginia: A regional system serving several cities and counties, with automated connections to the various criminal justice agencies in the area. PMSS capabilities include victim/witness notification, case load scheduling, docketing, issuance of subpoenas, regional criminal history files, management support, and statistical analysis.
3. Colorado: A Statewide system operated by the Colorado District Attorneys Council. PMSS, while not used as a tool for active prosecution, provides feedback to the local prosecutor on the status of cases, maintains a State criminal history capability, and provides analytical data to the Governor, Legislature, and other decision-makers within the State.

### B. Selected Bibliography

The following reference materials and their available source will be useful tools in the development of PMSS.

1. "Directory of Automated Criminal Justice Information Systems" (1983): A listing of over 800 automated information systems used by police, prosecutors, courts, corrections, and other criminal justice agencies (NCJ #89425).
2. "Guidelines for Documentation of Computer Program and Automated Data Systems" (FIPS PUB 38): Federal documentation standards for information processing programs (NCJ #36706).
3. "Dictionary of Criminal Justice Data Terminology" (Second Edition, 1981): Terms and definitions proposed for interstate and national data collection and exchange (NCJ #76939).

4. "Criminal Justice Information Systems - A Selected Bibliography" (1980): Documents highlighting information systems programs at all levels of government (NCJ #68818).
5. "Assessing Needs in the Criminal Justice System" (1984): A survey conducted by the National Institute of Justice of criminal justice administrators, including prosecutors, to determine problem areas and possible solutions (NCJ #93448).

Most of the preceding information is available from the cited source or, through microfiche, from:

National Criminal Justice  
Reference Service (NCJRS)  
P.O. Box 6000  
Rockville, Maryland 20850  
Telephone: 301/251-5500 or  
Toll Free 800/851-3420

6. "SEARCH Technical Memorandum No. 6 - Criminal Justice Computer Hardware and Software Security Considerations" (1974): A guide to assist agencies in preparing requests for hardware and software proposals from computer vendors.
7. "SEARCH Technical Memorandum No 12. - Criminal Justice Information, Perspectives on Liabilities" (1977): Report concerning the consequences of misusing information.
8. "SEARCH Advisory Bulletin No 2. - An Introduction to Microcomputers for Criminal Justice Administrators" (1976): A non-technical description of microcomputer capabilities, implications of technology, and a short bibliography.
9. "SEARCH Issue Brief No. 1 - Liability and Criminal Justice Information" (1980): Describes court decisions dealing with the issue of personal liability of state and local officials for mishandling criminal justice information.
10. "Evaluating Donor Systems - A Software Transfer Technique" (1980): A guide to assist in the evaluation of candidate transfer systems.
11. "System Development Guidelines - An ICAP Manual" (1979): Guide for computerized information systems, including steps for conducting and preparing a **Needs Assessment, Requirements Analysis, Implementation Plan, and Evaluation Period.**
12. "A Guide to Microcomputers for Criminal Justice" (1982): Provides information and a sequence of steps, in non-technical terms, for the successful acquisition of a computer.
13. "SEARCH Technical Report No. 23 - Microcomputers and Criminal Justice, Introducing a New Technology" (1978): An assessment of microcomputer technology benefits to justice agencies, with a discussion of policy implications.

Most of the preceding information is available from:

SEARCH Group, Inc. (SGI)  
915 Secret River Drive  
Sacramento, California 95831  
Telephone: 916/392-2550

- 14. "Financial and Administrative Guide for Grants," OJP M 7100.1C: Instructions and procedures for managing Federal grants provided by the Office of Justice Programs.

C. Federal Program Contact

Prosecution Management Support System Program  
Bureau of Justice Assistance  
Office of Justice Programs  
U.S. Department of Justice  
632 Indiana Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20531  
Telephone: 202/724-5974 or 724-5961

VII. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

During implementation of the program described in this Program Brief, sponsoring agencies or organizations should find it useful to track and maintain certain program information in order to provide some indication of program performance. While basic in nature, this information will not only provide an indication of program progress and performance, but will also serve as a benchmark for continued program implementation and allow for comparison with similar program efforts in other jurisdictions. Attached is a suggested reporting form listing several performance indicators which should be helpful in tracking program performance.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS  
(Please type)

Program Category: Prosecution Management Support System

Project I.D. No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Limited to 10 characters)

Implementing Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Report Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Period Covered: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Performance Indicators: In order to gather basic information regarding project implementation, please provide responses to the following performance indicators.

(1) Number of staff assigned to project:

(2) Total amount of Federal/non-Federal expenditures:

(3) Case processing time during the project period and for the corresponding period prior to the project:

(4) Conviction rate during the project period and for the corresponding period prior to the project:

(5) Additional comments/information:

**END**