

[As approved]

DATA SHARING TASK FORCE
FINAL RECOMMENDATION PRESENTED TO THE
COLORADO COMMISSION ON CRIMINAL AND JUVENILE JUSTICE
January 8, 2016

FY16-DS #01 Information Sharing Council

Recommendation FY16-DS #01

Create a strategic planning committee composed of municipal, county, and state representatives with expertise in criminal justice and behavioral health data systems, governance structures, privacy laws, and related issues, and that it is supported by sufficient resources to develop a cross-agency data collection and information sharing system.

Discussion

In Colorado, criminal justice data largely exists in silos. Almost every agency and every department has a different method of collecting and storing important criminal justice planning information. Often that information is not freely shared or access is not easily obtained at the time it is most needed from other criminal justice stakeholders. As a result, evaluation for system effectiveness and planning for future effectiveness is significantly hampered. Additionally, the effectiveness of service delivery for a specific individual involved in the justice systems is diminished by the silos. Health and behavioral health information, often critical to an offender's success and well-being, cannot always be easily accessed by those responsible for a person's treatment.

Over the years, technological solutions to answer singular data and research questions have been developed by criminal justice agencies. With today's technological advancements, a long term, ultimately more cost-effective solution, can be developed that will aid Colorado in answering the difficult questions that need to be asked regarding the use and effectiveness of the criminal justice system. Information sharing efforts and models are demonstrating effectiveness both inside and outside of Colorado. Technology has advanced so that information can be shared without requiring entities to relinquish their individual data systems. The primary lesson from these successful efforts has been that in-depth planning with experts from all levels of policy, as well as research and technology, are needed to create a governance structure that considers both control and access to the data, and help determine system structure.

An adequate planning process takes years to achieve and personnel to focus full time on this effort. This investment could answer today's questions and those that arise in the future.

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The Task Force has been educated on the multiple efforts occurring around the state related to data sharing. However, many of these efforts are not linked and there is a need to include non-traditional criminal justice partners (e.g., mental health). In addition, systems need to work cross-jurisdictionally, including but not limited to municipalities, in order to touch every point in the justice system.

The task force recognizes that a state-wide endeavor through a council as suggested above is a lengthy and costly process and more information is needed before creating a new body. The task force will concentrate future efforts on developing a plan for moving forward, including how such an effort could advance in a phased approach and what financial or other resources might be necessary in each phase.