On-site Consultation to Review
Office IT Applications and for Staff Training
in the use of Computer Resources

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REPORT

Bureau of Justice Assistance
CRIMINAL COURTS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT
A Joint Program of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice, and
American University School of Public Affairs
On-site Consultation to Review
Office IT Applications and for Staff Training
in the use of Computer Resources

November 14, 1998

Consultants
Larry Polansky
Jonathon Stout
Edward Braunstein
Noble Kennemar
November 14, 1998

Joseph A. Trotter, Jr., Esq.
Director - Justice Programs Office
The American University
4400 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

Re: Technical Assistance Project - Cook County Office of the Public Defender

Dear Joe:

Sorry it took so long to write you about the Cook County Public Defender TA. As you know, I left shortly thereafter for Kazakhstan and have just returned.

The presentations by the three Public Defender Office technology specialists (Ed Braunstein - Legal Aid Society of New York; Noble Kennamer - L.A. Public Defender's Office; and Jonathan Stout - Dade County (Miami) Public Defender's Office) were extremely interesting and I believe tremendously helpful for the Cook County P.D. staff. As the attached Thursday agenda indicates, we covered a lot of ground and believe we gave the Cook County staff a thorough and realistic picture of what technology support is available for Public Defender offices and, most important, how difficult it is to accomplish the kind of technical support in place in those three locations. In addition, we reviewed the current status of automation at the Cook County Public Defender Office and the three experts gave their best advice regarding how and in what sequence improvements should be accomplished. (Attached also is a transcript of the flip charts developed during the Thursday session.)

On Friday, I took them through a planning exercise where they determined which of the recommended improvements were most critical for them and the priority in which they should be addressed. (A copy of the worksheet used to begin to develop the actual plan is also attached.)

From the comments received at the meeting and the attached letter subsequently received from Ms. Fry, the Cook County Public Defender, it is clear that they appreciated the help and feel it has put them on the proper path for a successful automation upgrade.

Sincerely,

Larry Polansky
Cook County Public Defender's Office
Technology Roundtable Agenda

8:30-9:00 AM Coffee and Rolls

9:00-9:15 AM Introduction of Participants

9:15-9:30 AM Overview of Cook County Public Defender's Office
Coverage: Description of Organization (Type of Practice, Size, Location(s))
Hardware & Software Configuration
Technology Support (County MIS)
Technology Training
Major Public Defender Applications/Databases

9:30 AM Presentation by the Three Experts (Messrs Braunstein, Kennamer & Stout)
To 10:45 AM (20-30 minutes each + audience interaction)
Coverage: Description of Organization (Type of Practice, Size, Location(s))
Hardware & Software Configuration
Major Public Defender Applications
Technology Support (P.D. Staff &/or County MIS)
Technology Training (Staff & Other Training Approaches)
Technology Funding Source(s)

10:45-11:00 AM Break

11:00 AM Roundtable Discussion
To 12:15 PM
1. Overcoming "Crisis Management"
2. Integrating Multiple Platforms in a Multi-Site Environment
3. Closing the Generation Gap: Transition from DOS Based Word Processing to Windows and Corel Suite (Frank Ralph)

12:15 PM Lunch & Technology Presentations
To Expert(s) on Applications for Investigators
1:15 PM Speech Recognition (Larry Polansky)
Other Applications of High Interest and Value to Public Defender Offices

1:15-1:30 PM Break

1:30 PM Roundtable Discussion (Continued)
To 3:00 PM
4. Developing a Comprehensive Technology Training Program for Staff
5. Cultivating the Corporate /Business Community
6. Funding, Support & Organizational Placement of MIS Divisions
7. Making Automation of the Public Defenders's Office a Priority for Funding and Other Agencies
8. Efficiently Installing, Implementing and Training on New Equipment and Software Applications

3:00-3:15 PM Break

3:15 PM Expert & Group Discussion of the Suggested Actions Necessary to Bring Cook County P.D. up to the Current State-of-the Art in Technological Support
To 4:30 PM (and the sequence in which those actions should occur)
Cook County Public Defender’s Office - Technology Roundtable

Overview of Cook County Defender’s Office

AS-400       OS/400
836 Authorized Employees
567 Attorneys
184 Support Staff
85 Investigators
100 Vacancies

6 Districts & 13 Office Sites
380,000 - 400,000 appointments per year
60,000 felonies
12,000 civil

Homicide
Felonies
Misdemeanors
Traffic
Domestic Violence
Paternity
Mental Health
Appeals
Post conviction Relief
Conflicts (Multiple Defendant Unit)

Budget $50 Million ($46 Million Personal Services)
Information System Budget $568,000 (1987=$400,000 & 1986=$300,000)

Statistics - Standalone Computer
Legal Research - Standalone + AS-400 Terminals
Have access to Clerk’s case tracking system via AS-400
(Information isn’t reliable for P.D. assignments etc.)
Several site specific databases

Two grants - Juvenile & Appeals

No Public Defender Information System staff - County supports AS-400 & installs equipment
4 AS-400 servicing P.D. - 20 AS-400 County-wide - County plans to consolidate on 1 AS-400
Going to Novell Network
JEMS - Integrated Juvenile System
County Planning Improved Help Desk & Training (9 Months?)
Linda Jackson (Install/Configure)

No Internet Capability Right Now
Los Angeles Public Defender - Noble Kennamer

“Centralized Information Services have positive and negative effects”

43,000 felonies - 315,000 Misdemeanors - 55,000 Juvenile - 100,000 Miscellaneous

$94,000,000 Budget ($83,000,000 staff)

611 Attorneys 323 Support Staff

41 Branch Offices

Information System Advisory Board (ISAB) of Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CCJCC)

CCJCC has $4.5 Million Annual Budget shared by the justice agencies - Projects are:
PIX (Pro-active information exchange) is major project
Jams
Library
Video (Teleconferencing) P.D. opposes video arraignment
Imaging
CHAIRS (Rap sheet information)

P.D. has 750 Networked PCs running Windows 95 (125 just 3 years ago)
Mid-range HP is platform
Intranet access for all PCs providing e-mail and terminal emulation for access to justice system databases

7 Full Time P.D. Information System Staff + Contract for County I.S. Services

Applications:
Defense Management System (Most data downloaded from Court Database)
Juvenile System
Video Applications
Administrative Services system

First Step = “DEFINE BUSINESS NEEDS”

Legal Research
Case Management
Case Preparation (Investigation, Paralegal, Discovery)
Trial Notebook - In Process

Advocacy
Manager’s Case Management
Office Administration

Notebooks?
New York Legal Aid Society - Ed Braunstein

200,000 Cases

In the 1980's:
In-House Developed Case Tracking System
Multiple Platforms & Software

Now:
Shared Data for 5 Divisions
Time-Out New Applications for each division

1. Common platform & software (rewrote existing applications)
2. Litigation Support application
3. Network all locations
4. Roll-out PC LANS - Novell
5. 45-50% PC LANS
   50-55% Terminals (UNIX based) - (3 year plan to replace with PCS)
6. Corel W/P
   GroupWise - Novell
   CD-ROM Based Legal Research
   Internet Access
   Library Catalogue
   Gateway to CJIS Databases
7. Access to State Court System (Working on Download to populate Legal Aid Database)
8. PCs for attorneys who want to work from home (after hours)
   Log-on via phone - e-mail, attach documents, receive documents

Legal Aid M.I.S. Department - 26 Positions Authorized - 14 Vacancies - 12 Filled
(Can't seem to keep good information system personnel - "Wall Street Steals Them")

Future Applications
Video (Client Interviews, teleconferencing, etc.)
Electronic Filing
Automatic Uploads (Downloads)
Document Management & Imaging
Intranet Expanded Opportunity
Replace all Terminal with PCs (Annual cost reduction via Leasing)

Break/Fix Issue - PCs vs. Terminals
(Emergency After-Hours Services - Staff get on-call bonus pay)
Training department (New)
Help Desk (Working on Improvement)

"Standardize the Desktop"
"If you Lease PCs - With or Without Maintenance Contract is another issue"
Dade County (Miami) Public Defender's Office - Jonathan Stout

Ten Years ago - Dedicated Word Processing Equipment

"What Do You Want The System To Do?"
"Whatever Hardware works for you is O.K."
"Applications Must Serve Business Needs"
   A. Act as Information base - centralize information storage
   B. Act as Work-product tool - download as much data as possible
      (CJIS do all that is needed)
   C. Provide management statistics & information

Public Defender is state agency - another level of problem
"Who really needs the I.S. services - SECRETARY IS FIRST!"

Video/Audio Presentation
First Secretary signs-on with password

1. Schedule
2. Court Audit - Calendar
3. E-mail
4. Cancel interview - connect to Western Union
5. Answer attorney Question re: client case
6. Access CJIS
7. New Case - download data and add small amount of P.D. info, print labels, refer to Social Services
8. Check social Services for past referrals
9. Instructions to Social Services
10. Chat room capability (Voice & Text?)
11. Beep-alog
12. Reschedule Police Officer interview appointment
13. Prepare motion for attorney signature
14. Computer signals e-mail alert
15. Data Entry

Support staff= 20 secretaries (4-5 attorneys to each secretary)

2 week basic training on P.D. business and PC for each new secretary

P.D. has desktop in the courtroom
Support for Investigators

New York

Not well staffed

Investigations Tracking System
Subpoenas Generated
Motions Filed
Minutes Ordered
Experts

Have Investigations been ordered
What type of Investigation
Who Assigned
Successful
Compile costs and number of cases, etc.
Access to Databases for locating, etc.
Mapping Software

(Provides copy of “Case In Point” software & suggests getting a demo)

Los Angeles

Word Processing for investigators
Level of Complexity
Investigators using their own notebook computers (25)
Investigators buy mobile phones - P.D. pays monthly charges

Future: Request for investigation forwarded electronically
Record reports from investigators electronically
Provide investigators with access to database
Receive Discovery electronically
Receive Prosecutor Witness List Information
Receive graphic information electronically
Internet access to Reverse Directory
Limited access to Motor Vehicle Bureau
Automate case notes and time sheets
Access to existing P.D. Intranet website
Work toward electronic access to rap sheets

Dade County

On-line request for services
Access to databases
Access to Business Registration database
Question 1. Overcoming Crisis Management

A. Prioritized "Realistic" Plan
B. Involve Broad & Multi-Level People in Plan Development
C. Keep All Players (TOTAL STAFF) Informed and Involved
D. Tactical Decisions - Strategic Plan Based on Environment
E. Realistic Assignment of Implementation Responsibility
F. Business Plan/Needs/Cost Effectiveness (Bang for the buck) Drives Plan
G. Prioritization of Needs Over Time
H. Flexibility of Plan
I. Don’t Over Commit

Question 2. Integrating Multiple Platforms in a Multi-Site Environment

Clerk has own data center
County = Main Frame IBM Shop
20 AS-400s - Trying to centralize on a single AS-400 (Main Frame Mentality)
Small County Office Automation Unit supports PC based functions
Some Distributed case tracking applications
Inherited Multiple Platforms
May or May Not have to run on AS-400
Opportunity for sharing Justice System data eliminates, for the moment, the decision on platform
Lack of In-House Staff inhibits move to office-wide LAN and local platform for case management

Need Agreements on Data Sharing
Need Some Method of Handling the Data
Need a Way to Query & Manipulate Data

Question 3. State Appellate Defender - Transition from DOS Based W/P to Windows & Corel Suite

1996 10% of Appellate P.D.s have PCs
All Attorneys in One Office have networked (Ethernet) PCs (286) with W/P 5.1 - DOS

Have Bought Pentiums for all attorneys

Primarily Windows 3.1
10% Windows 95 - Corel W/P 6.1

Lost Macros and Preference Settings when changed over

Future;
Want computer professionals (I.S. staff)
Need adequate training
Question 4. Comprehensive Technology Training

COTS (Commercial Off The Shelf) Programs - Can Use Outside Trainers

In-House Applications Require In-house trainers

Probable Use of Train the Trainer Approach
- Reduced Cost
- Retain training capability in-house

Provide Written Materials

Do an office at a time

Utilize County Training Facilities

Staged Training - ie: Provide Novice, Intermediate and “Pro” level classes

Consider Use of Commercial CD-ROM &/or Video Based Training Materials for Office Automation Software Packages
- Use for Basic Training and/or refresher courses
- Staff can utilize at convenient times
- Utilize Tutorials contained in most software packages

Question 5. Cultivating the Corporate/Business community

Bring in computer company experts to expound on their capability to service P.D. Offices
- Try using partnership grants to involve corporate /business community in your efforts

Question 6. Funding, Support & Organization of M.I.S. Divisions

New York - Has its own M.I.S. Unit and it is a separate division of the office

Los Angeles - Uses CJIS staff for technical services
- Has some in-house expertise and liaisons to CJIS (7 staff)
- Staff report to RAG (TAG) & Administration

Miami - Has own M.I.S. Unit
- County does Wiring, hubs, etc.
- M.I.S. Unit Reports directly to the Public Defender (Who is a pretty good techy)

Question 7. Making P.D. Automation a Priority for Funding & Other Agencies

- Join in the CJIS efforts
- Emphasize cost effectiveness for the entire justice system
- Try L.A. approach of using matching funds from CJIS grants
- Argue fundamental fairness and even playing field
Question 8. Efficiently Installing, Implementing and Training on New Equipment & Software

Train/Find and designate Angels & Rovers to help at each location
Training - Purchase for packages use in-house for in-house applications
New Systems - Pilot testing, parallel processing
Staged Roll-out - one unit at a time, but some small roll-out to everyone
Develop a trained user base (these will be your angels or rovers)

Action Necessary to Bring P.D. up to state-of-art in Technology

Identify THE PERSON Responsible for Furthering TAG Goals


Work With Criminal Justice Coordinating Board (& Task Forces) to Include P.D. Inclusion in Projects (Especially I.S. Projects)

Get New PCs & Software installed and operating quickly

Determine the business needs that need to be serviced by automation

Identify Your Mission Critical Tasks

Visit some well automated P.D. sites around the country for ideas

P.D. Automation will require a strong foundation - Devote earliest effort to developing the electronic infrastructure required to support the ultimate system you desire.

Set standards for hardware and software and develop a plan for the standard to be implemented office-wide

Address backlog
October 14, 1998

Mr. Joseph Trotter, Jr.
Director, Justice Programs Office
Criminal Courts Technical Assistance Project
School of Public Affairs - American University
Brandywine 660
4400 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20016

Dear Mr. Trotter:

Thank you very much for your financial and professional support of the Technology Roundtable for the Public Defender’s Office through the Criminal Courts Technical Assistance Project.

By all reports, the October 8th Technology Roundtable and the Technology Advisory Group’s strategic planning session on the 9th were a complete success. The expert consultants and facilitator were extremely knowledgeable and kept us on focus. They provided direction and helpful insights that will be useful to our development of a strategic implementation plan for technology improvement of the office. They especially understood and were sensitive to the special needs of a large public defender’s office and were able to translate those concerns into realistic approaches and objectives that we can apply in Cook County.

I truly recommend the continued federal support and replication of this type of technical assistance networking and consulting for other public defender’s offices as well.

Again, thank you for providing the where-with-all to make this a showcase event for all who participated. BJA’s and your continuing support of the work of public defender offices is truly appreciated.

Sincerely,

RITA A. FRY
Public Defender