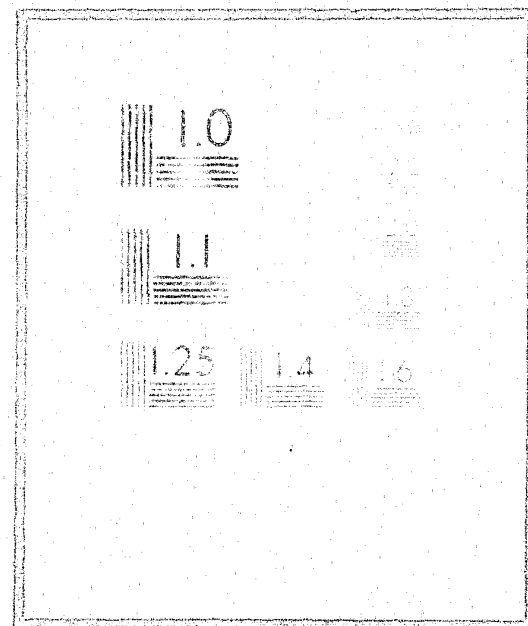


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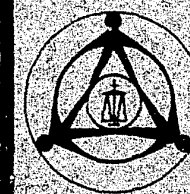
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A STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING A STATEWIDE COURT DATA COLLECTION SYSTEM IN WYOMING



THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Criminal Courts Technical Assistance Project
Institute for Advanced Studies in Justice
The American University Law School
Washington, D.C.

T/A Assignment #199

A STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING
A STATEWIDE COURT
DATA COLLECTION SYSTEM IN WYOMING

September 1975

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ACQUISITIONS

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I. INTRODUCTION

As a result of a recent constitutional amendment, implemented by legislation, the Wyoming Supreme Court has substantially increased its supervisory responsibility over the state's lower courts. In 1974, the Office of the Court Coordinator was established within the Wyoming Supreme Court to coordinate the caseload and functions of the minor courts in the state, and the Hon. Ruel Armstrong was appointed as Court Coordinator. Upon assuming his position, Judge Armstrong instituted procedures for gathering information relating to caseload, dispositions, and other aspects of court activities in the state's District and minor courts which, together, number more than 100. This data was collected manually on a monthly basis from the minor courts and on a quarterly basis from the District Courts.

In an effort to improve this data collection effort, Judge Armstrong requested technical assistance through LEAA's Criminal Courts Technical Assistance Project at The American University for the purpose of determining whether a computerized data collection system might be instituted. Judge Armstrong's specific concerns were to determine whether the information collected was appropriate for computerization, whether or not additional data should be sought, and if his methodology for gathering courts data might be revised or possibly expanded.

In transmitting Judge Armstrong's request the Wyoming Governor's Planning Committee on Criminal Administration (SPA) expanded its scope to take into account the feasibility of developing a coordinated and uniform statewide approach to the collection of courts data for all

interested agencies, with the expectation that such a system could improve the data collection and processing capabilities of these various agencies as well as eliminate the duplication of effort which had been a recurring problem. It was anticipated, therefore, that this technical assistance request would result in the development and initial implementation of a courts information system for the state which would incorporate the data collection needs of the Office of the Court Coordinator, as well as other agencies in the state.

A preliminary planning meeting was held in Cheyenne on August 12 at which time Geoffrey Corbett, the consultant assigned by the project, met with local officials to discuss the state's information gathering efforts to date and the possible scope and direction these efforts might take in the future. Mr. Corbett, formerly with the District of Columbia Office of Criminal Justice Plans and Analysis (SPA) was selected because of his familiarity with court information and statistical systems and the planning processes involved in their development. Attendees at this meeting included Judge Armstrong, Mike Morgan, court specialist with the Wyoming SPA, and Larry Backus and John Jones of the LEAA Region VIII office in Denver.

During the course of this meeting, it became apparent that additional data collection was essential before any computer information system planning could begin. Accordingly, Mr. Corbett developed a suggested plan of activity which, coordinated by the SPA,

could provide the necessary basis from which further planning could begin. This report documents the plan proposed by Mr. Corbett at that meeting. To assist Wyoming in embarking upon the suggested plan, the regional LEAA office representatives made available relevant materials from other states bearing upon Wyoming's data gathering effort and needs.

The primary focus of the technical assistance provided was to review the data collection activities which are currently being undertaken by the Office of the Court Coordinator and the Governor's Planning Committee of Criminal Justice. In particular, the study focused on the following:

- 1) review of current reports of data collected from the District and Municipal Courts;
- 2) evaluation of the data collection process;
- 3) preliminary assessment of the possibility of automating the data collection process; and
- 4) review of the feasibility of developing a state-wide data collection system which will service the needs of the Office of the Court Coordinator, the Governor's Planning Committee on Criminal Justice, and the Wyoming Division of Identification.

II. ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SITUATION

The Office of the Court Coordinator has developed a set of reports which reflect various facets of the criminal and civil caseloads in the twenty-three counties (which are grouped into seven judicial districts) of the State. The information contained in the reports relates only to case filings, backlogs, and dispositions. This report is an adequate first step in developing a reporting system for the Courts.

The Wyoming Division of Identification is particularly concerned with the incompleteness of criminal history records. This is primarily due to the lack of an adequate process for obtaining dispositions for each defendant for which WDI has an arrest report. In addition, WDI is not currently receiving on a timely basis all of the arrest reports from police departments and sheriff offices.

The Governor's Planning Committee on Criminal Justice develops and publishes a periodic data book on all facets of the criminal justice system. The data collection process is time consuming and, in certain instances, duplicative of the efforts carried out by other criminal justice agencies. For instance, data on the courts is collected by reviewing case jackets in each court or requesting summarized data from individual courts. The information collected in this manner is quite similar to that collected by the Office of the Court Coordinator.

In summary, there is apparent recognition of the mutual requirements of both the judicial and executive agencies for certain types of information. However, there is no clearly delineated plan which identifies those requirements and lays out each agency's responsibilities related to meeting these requirements.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

The criminal justice agencies with responsibility for information collection and analysis of the criminal justice process should form a committee to develop a data collection system.** This committee could be set up as part of the SPA's board and utilize the SPA as staff.

Prior to convening such a committee, the following actions should be undertaken:

A. Conduct a feasibility study of a data collection system with emphasis on:

1. reviewing capabilities of the courts to determine the potential problems in collecting the required data;
2. identifying common data elements within a case/defendant environment which will satisfy the reporting and/or information requirements of the Court Coordinator as well as the PCCJ and the WDI;
3. developing a preliminary statement of information requirements related to the data elements; and
4. defining in detail the responsibilities of participating organizations relative to:
 - data collection
 - data base management
 - access to data base
 - report preparation
 - audit of data base

.....

**NOTE: A data collection system as opposed to an information system is recommended to provide for a wider variety of reporting and analytical requirements.

IV. SUMMARY

The conclusions and recommendations presented in this report have been developed as the result of a brief review of the current data collection activities of the State of Wyoming. The recommendations, therefore, should be utilized as guidance in undertaking more extensive system development activities.

The organizations participating in the review have indicated a desire and willingness to pursue a joint systems development effort. This cooperation is essential in an environment which involves both the executive and judicial branches of government.

It is the understanding of this consultant that the Office of the Court Coordinator, the Governor's Planning Commission on Criminal Justice, and the Wyoming Division of Identification do not have the requisite staff and/or skills to undertake the system design and implementation recommended in this report. Therefore, it is recommended that outside expertise be utilized to develop the system design in conjunction with these organizations and that the actual system development and implementation be undertaken by an independent contractor.

B. Assuming that it is feasible to develop and implement a data collection system, the participating criminal justice agencies should undertake a cost/benefit analysis of an automated data system which would be responsive to the data collection and reporting requirements.

C. Redesign the existing docket sheet (attached) to provide for identification of individual defendants and for notification to other agencies of case/defendant dispositions. This form should be designed so that it can be readily used as an input document to an automated system. Consideration should also be given to the use of color coding the docket sheet to easily distinguish between criminal and civil cases.

ATTACHMENTS

JUSTICE CRIMINAL DOCKET NO. CASE NO. PAGE NO.

STATE OF WYOMING THE STATE OF WYOMING } ss. BEFORE
CITY OF COUNTY OF JUSTICE
vs.

DEFENDANT(S) ATTORNEY FOR DEFENDANT
Retained Appointed Waived

, 19 Citation No. issued by
, 19 Criminal complaint signed by
, 19 Criminal warrant issued to
, 19 Criminal warrant returned.

Defendant charged with crime of
, 19 Defendant appeared initially in Court; stated that his name was correctly shown; the nature and penalty of the crime was explained; and he was advised of his constitutional rights.

IF CHARGE IS MISDEMEANOR, COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

Pleaded: GUILTY NOT GUILTY DEMANDED JURY

Defendant's bond set at \$; O.R.

, 19 Trial date and hour M.
, 19 Forfeited bail.
, 19 Defendant failed to post bond; commitment issued.
, 19 Trial was held. Trial by Justice or jury

Finding: GUILTY NOT GUILTY DISMISSED

Sentence: FINE \$; JAIL; COSTS \$
Suspended Fine Suspended Jail Sentence

, 19 Commitment or probation issued. (Strike One)
, 19 Judgment entered and copy sent to defendant.
Found factual basis for plea of guilty Defendant was notified of his right to appeal upon conviction by court or jury.
, 19 Filed notice of appeal.
, 19 Filed bond on appeal.
, 19 Transmitted record, docket, bail to District Court Clerk.
, 19 Defendant paid fine and costs.

Bail receipt No. for \$ Fine receipt No. for \$
Treasurer's receipt No.

IF CHARGE IS A FELONY, COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

Bond for appearance \$
, 19 Date set for preliminary hearing. Continued , 19
, 19 Preliminary hearing; Waived Bound Over Discharged
, 19 Bond reviewed; continued; reset at \$
, 19 Bench warrant issued for failure to appear at preliminary.
, 19 Transmitted to Clerk District Court, papers, docket and bail.

JUSTICE

Following orders mailed to each party pursuant to Rule 3 (c).

, 19
, 19

ATTACHMENT 2.

Backlog & Case Dis-

position, as of

4/1/75

(Civil)

BACKLOG AS OF 4-1-75
CIVIL CASES

1.	Niobrara	5
2.	Weston	21
3.	Crook	21
4.	Goshen	41
5.	Sublette	44
6.	Johnson	47
7.	Uinta	48
8.	Platte	61
9.	Big Horn	73
10.	Converse	83
11.	Washakie	90
12.	Park	100
13.	Lincoln	122
14.	Sheridan	130
15.	Carbon	165
16.	Teton	172
17.	Campbell	174
18.	Fremont	195
19.	Sweetwater	217
20.	Albany	250
21.	Natrona	648
22.	Laramie	719
23.	Hot Springs	No Reports

Reports received
June, 1975CASES DISPOSED OF FROM 1-1-74 THRU 4-1-75
CIVIL CASES

1.	Natrona	2018
2.	Laramie	1575
3.	Sweetwater	662
4.	Carbon	547
5.	Sheridan	474
6.	Campbell	460
7.	Fremont	446
8.	Park	415
9.	Albany	405
10.	Big Horn	291
11.	Teton	249
12.	Converse	200
13.	Goshen	180
14.	Uinta	158
15.	Platte	157
16.	Washakie	147
17.	Johnson	120
18.	Crook	108
19.	Weston	104
20.	Lincoln	103
21.	Sublette	58
22.	Niobrara	57
23.	Hot Springs	No Reports

Reports Received
June, 1975

4/1/75

(Criminal)

BACKLOG AS OF 4-1-75
CRIMINAL CASES

1.	Crook	1
2.	Weston	2
3.	Sublette	2
4.	Niobrara	3
5.	Washakie	5
6.	Johnson	7
7.	Goshen	11
8.	Albany	12
9.	Platte	13
10.	Lincoln	14
11.	Carbon	15
12.	Uinta	16
13.	Teton	18
14.	Big Horn	20
15.	Sweetwater	21
16.	Sheridan	21
17.	Converse	25
18.	Campbell	28
19.	Fremont	35
20.	Park	60
21.	Natrona	132
22.	Laramie	134
23.	Hot Springs	No Reports

Reports received
June, 1975CASES DISPOSED OF FROM 1-1-74 THRU 4-1-75
CRIMINAL CASES

1.	Natrona	295
2.	Laramie	216
3.	Albany	128
4.	Sweetwater	111
5.	Fremont	96
6.	Park	68
7.	Carbon	63
8.	Campbell	54
9.	Sheridan	51
10.	Teton	49
11.	Converse	40
12.	Uinta	37
13.	Big Horn	34
14.	Johnson	28
15.	Platte	25
16.	Washakie	23
17.	Lincoln	19
18.	Weston	18
19.	Niobrara	10
20.	Goshen	6
21.	Crook	4
22.	Sublette	1
23.	Hot Springs	No Reports

Reports received
June, 1975

ATTACHMENT 4

JUDICIAL DISTRICT CASELOADS

AS OF APRIL 1, 1975

BY DISTRICT

FIRST JUDICIAL DISTRICT CASELOAD
As of April 1, 1975

	LARAMIE		PLATTE		GOSHEN	
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal
1973 and older cases pending 4-1-75	12	49	7	0	4	1
1974 cases filed	1450	155	143	20	166	13
1974 cases pending 4-1-75	522	35	35	7	22	7
1975 cases filed first quarter	332	67	35	8	31	3
1975 cases pending 4-1-75	185	50	19	6	15	3
Total Backlog As of 4-1-75	719	134	61	13	41	11
1973 and older cases disposed of 4-1-75	500	79	33	10	20	0
1974 cases disposed of 4-1-75	928	120	108	13	144	6
1975 cases disposed of 4-1-75	147	17	16	2	16	0
Total Dispositions	1575	216	157	25	180	6

SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT CASELOAD
As of April 1, 1975

ATTACHMENT 4b.

	ALBANY		CARBON		SWEETWATER	
	<u>Civil</u>	<u>Criminal</u>	<u>Civil</u>	<u>Criminal</u>	<u>Civil</u>	<u>Criminal</u>
73 and older cases pending 4-1-75	60	6	34	0	21	3
74 cases filed	422	110	459	38	593	102
74 cases pending 4-1-75	132	6	52	11	110	10
75 cases filed first quarter	95	24	105	9	151	13
75 cases pending 4-1-75	58	6	79	4	96	8
Total Backlog As of 4-1-75	250	12	165	15	217	21
73 and older cases disposed of 4-1-75	78 ?	5 ?	114	23	124	14
74 cases disposed of 4-1-75	290	104	407	35	483	92
75 cases disposed of 4-1-75	37	19	26	5	55	5
Total Dispositions	405	128	547	63	662	111

THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT CASELOAD
As of April 1, 1975

	LINCOLN		UINTA		TETON		SUBLETTE	
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal
973 and older cases pending 4-1-75	35	0	18	1	39	0	?	?
974 cases filed	129	19	155	37	241	39	83	2
974 cases pending 4-1-75	62	7	11	11	80	8	32	1
975 cases filed first quarter	38	8	33	15	63	17	19	1
975 cases pending 4-1-75	25	7	19	4	53	10	12	1
Total Backlog As of 4-1-75	122	14	48	16	172	18	44 ?	2
973 and older cases disposed of 4-1-75	23	6	?	?	78	11	?	?
974 cases disposed of 4-1-75	67	12	144 ?	26 ?	161	31	51	1
975 cases disposed of 4-1-75	13	1	14	11	10	7	7	0
Total Dispositions	103	19	158	37	249	49	58	1

FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT CASELOAD
As of April 1, 1975

	SHERIDAN		CAMPBELL		JOHNSON	
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal
3 and older cases pending 4-1-75	?	?	15	0	2	0
4 cases filed	517	47	348	67	111	21
4 cases pending 4-1-75	76	4	67	18	18	0
5 cases filed first quarter	87	25	119	16	46	13
5 cases pending 4-1-75	54	17	92	10	27	7
Total Backlog As of 4-1-75	130	21	174	28	47	7
3 and older cases disposed of 4-1-75	?	?	152	6	8	1
4 cases disposed 4-1-75	441	43	281	49	93	21
5 cases disposed 4-1-75	33	8	27	1	19	6
Total Dispositions	474	51	460	54	120	28

FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT CASELOAD
As of April 1, 1975

	PARK		WASHAKIE		BIG HORN		HOT SPRINGS	
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal
1973 and older cases pending 4-1-75	0	5	5	0	5	3	5	2
1974 cases filed	347	69	184	12	247	23	169	10
1974 cases pending 4-1-75	57	24	53	2	34	8	27	4
1975 cases filed first quarter	94	34	46	3	49	9	38	8
1975 cases pending 4-1-75	43	31	32	3	34	9	27	4
Total Backlog As of 4-1-75	100	60	90	5	73	20	54	8
1973 and older cases disposed of 4-1-75	74	20	2	13	63	19	No Reports	
1974 cases disposed of 4-1-75	290	45	131	10	213	15	No Reports	
1975 cases disposed of 4-1-75	51	3	14	0	15	0	14	6
Total Dispositions	415	68	147	23	291	34	14	6

SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT CASELOAD
As of April 1, 1975

	WESTON		NIOBRARA		CROOK	
	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal	Civil	Criminal
73 and older cases pending 4-1-75	1	0	2	1	5	1
74 cases filed	76	13	49	11	51	1
74 cases pending 4-1-75	8	0	2	1	7	0
75 cases filed first quarter	20	3	4	0	9	0
75 cases pending 4-1-75	12	2	1	1	9	0
Total Backlog as of 4-1-75	21	2	5	3	21	1
73 and older cases disposed of 4-1-75	28	4	7	0	64	3
74 cases disposed of 4-1-75	68	13	47	10	44	1
75 cases disposed of 4-1-75	8	1	3	0	0	0
Total Dispositions	104	18	57	10	108	4

SEVENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT CASELOAD
As of April 1, 1975

ATTACHMENT 49.

	NATRONA		FREMONT		CONVERSE	
	<u>Civil</u>	<u>Criminal</u>	<u>Civil</u>	<u>Criminal</u>	<u>Civil</u>	<u>Criminal</u>
1973 and older cases pending 4-1-75	85	5	54	10	14	1
1974 cases filed	1561	238	468	97	175	37
1974 cases pending 4-1-75	281	74	54	11	42	15
1975 cases filed first quarter	380	61	119	17	39	12
1975 cases pending 4-1-75	282	53	87	14	27	9
Total Backlog As of 4-1-75	648	132	195	35	83	25
1973 and older cases disposed of 4-1-75	640	123		7	55	15
1974 cases disposed of 4-1-75	1280	164	414	86	133	22
1975 cases disposed of 4-1-75	98	8	32	3	12	3
Total Dispositions	2018	295	446	96	200	40

