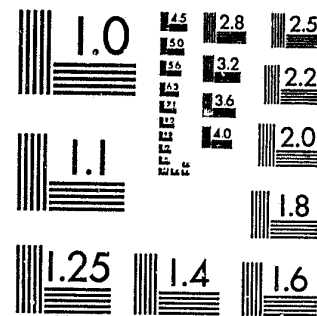


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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PRETRIAL DECISIONS: A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF  
CENTRAL INTAKE SYSTEMS

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In a climate characterized by complex legal issues, community concerns and limited resources, most criminal justice systems are being forced to reanalyze their operations in order to increase their public accountability and promote efficient and effective processing of defendants. Of particular concern in the criminal justice system is the progression of defendants from apprehension through sentencing. An area that has become increasingly visible because of its potential impact on the entire criminal justice process is that of intake. The immediate processing of persons entering the criminal justice system, through arrest and booking, can affect the defendant, law enforcement, jail, pretrial services, courts, prosecutors, legal defenders, and community service agencies. In addition, information collected at intake can affect the quality of the release/detention decision, the rapidity with which a defendant is released, and the range of conditions imposed.

### Problems Associated with Intake and Release

The concept of pretrial release based on information collected during an intake interview, usually following booking, can trace its origins to the Manhattan Bail Project/Vera Institute findings in the early 1960s. Concern for removing pretrial defendants from jail and assuring their subsequent appearance in court without relying on bond were the primary motivators for initiating pretrial release projects across the country. Today, these same issues help to define the problems associated with more modern intake and release systems.

While predicting the likelihood of future court appearance is still a major factor in determining pretrial release eligibility, the consideration of dangerousness and public safety is now permitted in 29 states (Gaynes, 1982). In some of these 29 states, judges have statutory authority to deny bail on the basis of dangerousness. In others, extremely high bond can be set which effectively denies release. Although point scales and interview guidelines have been constructed to predict fugitivity (Eskridge, 1979, 1980, 1981; Gedney, 1975; Kirby, 1977, 1979), the ability of these instruments to provide an accurate prediction of dangerousness to the community is notoriously poor (Martin, 1981; Megargee, 1976; Monahan, 1981; Underwood, 1979). Thus, the problem of how to maximize pretrial release without endangering community safety remains unresolved (Beaudin, Pryor & Henry, 1981).

Closely related to the problem of dangerousness and fugitivity is that of recidivism. A number of reports (Lazar, 1981; Sorin, Toborg & Pyne, 1979; Toborg & Sorin, 1981; Toborg, Sorin & Silver, 1978; Williams, 1979) have demonstrated that of those released pretrial, a certain percentage will be arrested for criminal activity during the release period. At issue in a given community is defining what constitutes pretrial criminality and determining what level of recidivism will be tolerated as compared to the monetary and other costs associated with pretrial incarceration (Wheeler & Wheeler, 1981), as well as consideration of potential violation of the constitutional rights of defendants.

and assessing not only release eligibility, but also defendant needs including mental and physical health services. The degree to which defendant needs were recognized and met was dependent in large part upon the availability of community resources amenable to cooperation with the criminal justice system.

Given the number and complexity of the problems facing both county and statewide criminal justice systems, the administrative processes of planning and evaluation have achieved particular importance. Evidence of this exists in the creation of criminal justice/corrections master plans (Wheeler, 1980) and further investigations into the expanded functioning of pretrial services. In attempts to cope with fair and equitable release of defendants, community safety, efficient case processing, jail overcrowding, crowded court calendars, and a host of other criminal justice system problems, many jurisdictions have focused their attention on the coordination of intake and release processes. Typically, one agency, such as a pretrial services unit, is given the responsibility for coordinating systemwide intake and release procedures with the remaining key criminal justice offices and for monitoring overall system functioning. The coordination of key criminal justice agency functions to facilitate efficient and effective intake and release through a centralized administration resulted in the creation of what is known as a central intake (CI) system.

### Approaches to Central Intake

In a landmark monograph, Galvin (1978) described central intake as "a program designed to facilitate prompt but sound decision making in the individual case, and also to recognize and take appropriate action as to immediate service needs of defendants who face problems they cannot cope with unaided." Such a program, he noted, could not exist without cooperation from the extant criminal justice agencies within a given community, regardless of its administrative organization. He noted further that such a program should embrace policies relating to arrest alternatives, pretrial release, conditional release, diversion, bail, court processing, community services and other alternatives to incarceration. He delineated administrative-organizational arrangements, staff requirements and planning, evaluation, and budgeting considerations. He also suggested the incorporation of an information system to assist in program monitoring and evaluation. Illustrative examples were provided from several jurisdictions, and sample central intake processing forms were appended.

While not addressing central intake directly, Lazar (1981) extensively studied eight jurisdictions, completing detailed analyses of release practices and outcomes. The primary focus of this study was an examination of the pretrial release process including types of release utilized and factors effecting release, fugitivity, pretrial criminality, and the role of pretrial release programs. By documenting the release practices of each jurisdiction, The Lazar Institute also recognized the cooperative role of key participants from various criminal justice agencies such as the courts, corrections, sheriff, and pretrial services in facilitating early release decisions. This study indirectly provides evidence for the feasibility of cooperation and coordination among criminal justice agencies to facilitate fair and effective release practices.

Prior to initiation of pretrial services programs, the primary method of obtaining pretrial release was through posting bond or otherwise securing through material means one's promise to appear in court. Those of indigent status were thus denied release more frequently because they had insufficient means to post bond (Goldkamp, 1979; Goldkamp, Gottfredson & Gedney, 1980). Although data have existed for some time that demonstrate court appearance can be reasonably expected on a defendant's promise to appear (i.e., Manhattan Bail Project), the use of bail has continued in many jurisdictions (Goldkamp, 1979; Landes, 1974; Rice & Gallagher, 1972; Wice, 1974). Recent reforms have included the use of guidelines in determining bail amounts to reduce the variability of bail set for a given crime, utilization of 10 percent cash deposit systems (to decrease the ultimate cost to the defendant by avoiding payment of a fee to a bonding agency), and enactment of automatic bond schedules to facilitate release prior to a bail determination hearing. However, the setting of bail still remains a controversial issue not only for the courts but also for the professional bail bonding agencies (Beaudin, 1981). For example, an initial setting of bail amount can be challenged and modified in subsequent hearings at the request of the defense or prosecution. The reluctance to rely solely on cash bail to regulate release processes can further be illustrated by the employment of preventive detention or bail denial laws and provisions. To date, there are mixed results regarding the comparability of rearrest and failure-to-appear (FTA) for those defendants released by nonfinancial means and those released by more traditional bonding methods. Pryor and Smith (1982) have summarized relevant research findings. Some studies have indicated that those released through nonfinancial means or by a pretrial release agency have lower recidivism and higher court appearance rates than defendants released on bail (Clarke, Freeman, & Koch, 1976). One explanation for this difference in pretrial releasees' performance (offered by the Denver Research Institute) is that releasees go through a screening process and in some cases, the agency provides contact and/or supervision. Other results are less clear-cut but still demonstrate few differences between overall rates regardless of the release method (Thomas, 1976; Wice, 1974).

While consideration of fugitivity, dangerousness, and pretrial criminality are concerns affecting primarily the community and criminal justice system, a defendant's constitutional rights and human service needs are also necessary considerations. Because of the overcrowded conditions existing in many county jails, defendants have successfully sued agencies of the local government for violation of their rights. Consequently, federally mandated capacities on certain jail facilities have been set. In a 1982 survey of the nation's jails, the National Sheriff's Association reported that, of those jails responding, 10.7 percent indicated that they were currently under court order to correct the following: overcrowded conditions, insufficient recreation, outdated facilities and inadequate medical care. A total of 15.9 percent reported having been under court order at one time or another. Five hundred twenty-nine jails reported that they are presently party to a pending law suit.

Many jurisdictions have explored the possibility of operating a pretrial services agency to insure early release of the pretrial detainee population and to explore alternatives to incarceration. A number of these agencies that were created were given the responsibility of interviewing arrestees following booking

and assessing not only release eligibility, but also defendant needs including mental and physical health services. The degree to which defendant needs were recognized and met was dependent in large part upon the availability of community resources amenable to cooperation with the criminal justice system.

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In 1980 and 1982 the Denver Research Institute (DRI) evaluated the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) Jail Overcrowding and Pretrial Detainee Program projects (Neubaum & West, 1982; West, Neubaum, Blumenthal, & Keller, 1980) including both Phase I (problem identification and planning) and Phase II (implementation). Because the focus of the projects selected was to reduce jail overcrowding primarily through a reduction in the pretrial population, many sites opted for the creation or enhancement of pretrial release programs to screen, interview and coordinate the release of pretrial defendants. As a condition of the Phase I grant, advisory boards were formed (which consisted of key criminal justice system officials) to become involved in planning and problem analysis as well as implementation. In instances where advisory boards remained active through Phase II, implementation of pretrial release programs and transitions to new release practices were facilitated. Information from selected sites suggested both the feasibility of a centralized administration for facilitating pretrial release and the desirability, for some jurisdictions, of maintaining active advisory boards to monitor criminal justice functions. In addition, the DRI reports indicated that jail overcrowding experienced in the sampled jurisdictions frequently was a source of leverage for instituting alternatives to incarceration programs. Because intake represented the point at which defendant information was being collected, intake processes were found to be critical in establishing not only early release eligibility of defendants, but also an information gathering procedure that would eliminate duplicate services by agencies involved in defendant processing. Emphasis was placed on pretrial decision systems and the flow of defendants and information through the criminal justice system, from apprehension through adjudication.

Taken together, the above studies demonstrated that pretrial release practices can be facilitated through cooperation and coordination among criminal justice agencies. Limited evidence also existed that a centralized administrative body or advisory board may be construed as a key component in enhancing interagency cooperation not only to improve the pretrial release decision making process, but also to increase overall system effectiveness and efficiency by providing an information collection and dissemination service. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) funded DRI in 1980 to examine the pretrial decision process; in particular, the concept of central intake, and to document its existence and development in various criminal justice contexts. As initially conceptualized, a central intake system was one that included a centralized administration, prompt defendant screening and determination of release eligibility, authority to make pretrial release recommendations and/or decisions, provisions for early entry of counsel, availability of release options, potential for activities during detention such as jail classification and treatment, offender-based tracking and system monitoring/evaluation capabilities. The central intake project was to extend the work previously cited by examining not only how an agency such as pretrial services could expedite the release decision process, but also how it might impact a variety of related criminal justice functions through centralized authority and information management functions. In addition, the DRI approach to central intake includes the examination of the capacity for a systems approach to respond to symptoms and problems that have plagued more traditionally organized criminal justice systems. Whereas previous work had defined central intake either according to certain functions (such as pretrial

screening, supervised release, etc.) or to results (speedy processing, reducing unnecessary detention while minimizing FTA and rearrest, etc.), DRI proposed an investigation that was more organizationally oriented. Emphasis was to be placed on organizational characteristics such as centralized authority, interagency cooperation, and long-range planning activities.

#### Project Goals and Products

In order to examine the applications of the central intake concept, several goals were established by the project team in consultation with NIJ. An approach was selected that would maximize an examination of the range of CI functions studied in various jurisdictions. Sites were chosen that would allow for the documentation of alternative central intake models in various jurisdictional contexts.

A major product of this project is a workbook designed to assist jurisdictions in implementing a central intake system. Exercises are included to determine if existing intake and pretrial release practices need revision, and if a new or modified system is needed, what changes should be made and how these changes might be implemented and evaluated. Appendix A contains the Title Page and Table of Contents for this workbook.

Another product of the project is the final report that blends theoretical ideas and case history findings to produce a state-of-the-art document on central intake. This report reviews the history of the concept and how it is operationalized in a variety of county and state criminal justice systems, describes representative CI systems, and makes recommendations for future policy decisions. Also contained in the full report is a general model of central intake which focuses on release decision points, interagency cooperation, and administrative organization. Models of the six sampled sites are shown through the use of transparent overlays. This document is the Executive Summary of the Final Report.

#### Project Methodology

In conjunction with the Pretrial Services Resource Center, over 30 sites were initially screened for participation in the central intake project. A substantial amount of data on their release decision systems was collected. The six jurisdictions which were selected for detailed analyses met the initial criteria of a central intake system--immediate postarrest processing, limited exclusion categories, release of both misdemeanors and felons and the employment of a variety of release alternatives. The following sites were chosen: Arapahoe County (Littleton), Colorado; the state of Delaware; Jackson County (Kansas City), Missouri; Pima County (Tucson), Arizona; Salt Lake County (Salt Lake City), Utah; and San Mateo County (Redwood City), California.

These sites were included because of geographic location, type of government (county vs. state), degree of program development, inclusive categories of release eligibility, range of release options, type of release authority (statutory vs. administrative), basis of release recommendations,



administrative organization, and degree of interagency cooperation achieved. Jurisdictional demographics are contained in Table 1. In addition, jurisdictions were selected that had data available for at least some of the following: number of clients processed, FTA rates, pretrial criminality figures, Uniform Crime Report figures, budget breakdowns and jail management characteristics. Of primary consideration in determining site selection was the assured cooperation of local criminal justice officials. No financial incentives were provided to the cooperating jurisdictions. Letters detailing the nature of the study, the type and amount of involvement, and requesting cooperation with DRI were sent to each site and were returned signed by the appropriate agency officials. Specific requests by the project team included access to existing site records for available data and to criminal justice personnel for interviews.

Because of the need to gather in-depth information pertaining to concepts that were not readily quantifiable such as interagency cooperation and coordination, a case study approach was adopted. The project team determined that a series of site visits spaced throughout the duration of the contract would allow for extensive examination of the criminal justice and community agencies involved in maintaining central intake systems. Because central intake was viewed as a dynamic system, it was important to document how the system adapted as new criminal justice problems arose. During each site visit, data were collected pertaining to intake and release processes and subjective information was gathered from interviews with relevant agency personnel. Also, members of the media were interviewed about their views of community perceptions of criminal justice issues relating to central intake. Between the site visits, follow-up contacts were made by telephone to insure collection of timely information. This was necessary because of the developing nature of several of the intake systems and the problems such as jail overcrowding and limited funds facing others.

Emphasis was placed on an analysis of central intake projects as intake/release decision systems. Methods for determining release eligibility, including release criteria, objective and subjective recommendation schemes, and the validation of interview instruments were documented. Of particular interest was the source of release authority within each central intake system. Examples of both statutory and administrative authority were observed in the sample as well as differences between granting authority to pretrial services to release as compared to those jurisdictions where recommendations had to be acted on by the court prior to release.

#### Development of a General Model of Central Intake

Central intake is conceived as a "system" of separate units with distinct and often conflicting mandates working together towards the shared goal of more efficient and effective criminal justice operation. Intake as a "system" can benefit from the work done by engineers who have studied and designed physical systems and from the experiences of organizational psychologists who have worked with systems made up of groups of people and their organizations. A common finding of both engineers and psychologists is that some systems, either physical or social, can become unwieldy and either operate extremely inefficiently or break down completely. The experts in these fields have learned

Table 1

## Characteristics of Sampled Central Intake Systems

Jurisdiction Demographics	Arapahoe County	Jackson County	Pima County	Salt Lake County	San Mateo County	Delaware
1. Population - 1976*	225,900	630,000	449,100	525,187	584,100	581,832
Population - 1980*	293,621	629,266	531,443	619,066	588,164	594,338
2. UCR Part 1 Crimes - 1981	3,274	49,275**	8,531	18,381	6,270	7,533
3. Professional Bonding Agencies		6	6	3	4	2
4. Rated Jail Capacity	55	500***	450***	495	250	360
5. Jail Overcrowding (existing facilities)	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
6. Release Officials	sheriff, courts	courts	CVC, courts	PTS, courts	sheriff, courts	courts
7. Release Criteria	point scale	point scale	point scale	point scale & subjective assessment	point scale	interview
8. Release Options	Jail PR OR SR	OR 10% Work Release	PBR OR SR	NBR OR SR Automatic Bond Schedule	Jail OR ROR Supervised	OR SR
9. Percentage of Eligible Defendants Interviewed	100%	90-95%	98%	93%	100%	100%
10. 1981 Annual Operating Costs	\$197,000	unknown	\$563,043	\$843,613	\$356,911	\$400,000****

\* U.S. Census Data

\*\* 49,275 total offenses reported in 1980 Police Department Annual Report for Kansas City metropolitan area

\*\*\* Jail facilities under construction

\*\*\*\* For 16 hours (daily) of intake center operation

that it is possible to avoid extremes of functioning or complete breakdown by building into the system a unit with the dual responsibility of monitoring system functions and informing other functionally related system units when some change in their performance is necessary. Thermostats are familiar examples in the physical systems that surround us; they keep furnaces from overheating our houses, they "inform" automatic cooling systems when to circulate water, and "order" air conditioning units to turn on or off. In much the same way, economic indicators such as projections of the annual inflation rate, also serve to regulate the flow of money in the economy, influence interest rates, and affect unemployment and business growth.

In criminal justice, system breakdown frequently occurs when jails exceed their capacity, when defendants who are perceived as threats to the community are released and when defendants unnecessarily occupy corrections space prior to trial. In some jurisdictions, legislation has been passed that required resources that the criminal justice system did not have. For example, recent drunk driving legislation mandates jail for convicted drunk drivers but often no jail space is available. Fortunately, there is a way of informing appropriate components of the system when breakdown or inefficiencies are probable so that corrective measures can be taken. Thus, central intake has been conceived as a "thermostat" for monitoring selected aspects of intake, corrections, and adjudication processes, for anticipating impacts and for responding to observations of the entire criminal justice system by changing its policies and by informing other decision making units of the system of the need for changes within their own spheres of operations. Thus, an important function of central intake is to provide information as well as to act as a forum for both discussion and accommodation of key actors and agencies in the criminal justice system.

However, even the best designed "thermostat" can only function within a selected range of conditions and may be overwhelmed when the range is exceeded. Thus, CI is no guarantee against such problems as jail overcrowding when jurisdictions are faced with a massive increase in arrests, court ordered ceilings on capacity, defendant suits, etc.

The DRI conceptualization of central intake includes many of the same concerns of a pretrial release agency in that CI is concerned with timely and appropriate release of defendants by nonfinancial means during the pretrial period. CI, however, assumes a larger realm of responsibility to the criminal justice system by going beyond pretrial intervention strategies by providing feedback and facilitating interagency policy formation and cooperative decision making (Rovner-Reczenik, 1976). A decision making forum may be created by the formation of a criminal justice Advisory Board which serves not only to regulate release policies but also to function as a centralized authority for formulating plans, to avoid recurring problems within the criminal justice system or to prepare for those problems anticipated to occur as the result of other nonsystem changes (i.e., the economic climate, public attitude toward crime, etc.). Central intake provides the structure for constructive interchange among agencies and facilitates adaptation to system change. Many excellent pretrial release and pretrial services agencies around the country are currently performing or have as

goals the services DRI defines as central intake without having applied the CI label to their operations.

A general derivative model of CI was created from components, processes and functions judged most relevant to the previously stated goals of CI. The idealized model was designed to portray the flow of information and defendants through the criminal justice system from apprehension through arrest, the relationships among criminal justice agencies, and the points in the system where interagency agreements were needed. The rationale for the construction of DRI's central intake model is contained in the final report along with a discussion of the major factors that influence CI and six case studies that illustrate alternative approaches to CI.



## II. COMPARISONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Because of the diversity of the CI sites, this section has been included to facilitate comparison of the DRI observations made among jurisdictions on major CI components. The comparisons are based on the site visits which included extensive process observations as well as interviews and a review of documents provided by criminal justice agency officials, and media reports. Of particular utility were minutes from advisory committee meetings, quarterly and annual reports of criminal justice agencies, in-house agency evaluations, newspaper articles and program summary statistics. The team also had the opportunity to visit various facilities at each site and was able to interview administrators and staff of key criminal justice agencies, community referral organizations, county government officials and representatives from the media.

The CI projects differed widely in terms of their own data collection and evaluation efforts, the degree of record computerization, means of calculating cost effectiveness, the definition of key terms such as FTA, and the availability of baseline data for measuring program changes over extended periods of time. Because of the differences in quality, quantity, and availability of data, information available, including interview data from sources on-site, achieved significant importance. The design, implementation, and maintenance of such CI concepts as interagency cooperation among criminal justice offices, the role of advisory boards, coordination of services, community responsiveness to criminal justice needs, and the brokering of services to meet defendant needs were documented qualitatively.

The following sections explore the importance of various issues affecting the processes, functions and overall operations of central intake. From all the possibilities, the list was narrowed to those issues believed to be critical to the success or failure of central intake. Portrayal of these key issues attempted to capture central intake systems as they developed rather than viewing them in a static state. Because the sites differed in number of years in existence and operationalization of central intake concepts, the differences among systems may, in part, be attributable to the developmental process. In addition, information was sought from as many different perspectives as possible--defendant, law enforcement, counsel, courts, corrections, pretrial services, community service groups, media, and local government--in order to present the most accurate description of individual central intake systems and their resolution of common problems.

Presentation of the general observations of the CI sites follows closely the introduction of the DRI central intake model. Observations relating to the release decision process, relationships among criminal justice agencies and central intake administration are presented first, followed by information pertaining to the use of pretrial information, program evaluation, and related programmatic factors.

#### Program Components Relating to the Release Decision Process

The DRI central intake model and the site case histories (contained in the Final Report) provide documentation for the importance of such key program characteristics as arrest options, automatic bond scheduling, pretrial services processing, pretrial court hearings, detention processing options and presentence investigations. Whereas no one jurisdiction totally illustrated the DRI central intake model framework, each release decision element was present in at least one central intake site. The DRI site visit team noted that those programs that had earlier established a credible OR release project had branched out to fill other central intake functions. Own recognizance release, if development was to occur in a stepwise fashion, was usually established first, followed by supervised release (Pima, Salt Lake, and San Mateo Counties). The addition of a field citation program was often concurrent with the development of alternatives to incarceration and often was the result of jail overcrowding. In cases where citation, OR release, or automatic bond schedules were used, the court needed to relinquish some of its authority. In most instances, information was initially provided to the court for release decisions. However, as projects gained a general criminal justice acceptance, more release authority was granted to pretrial services. Interestingly, two projects (San Mateo and Delaware) view their primary functions as providing only recommendations and information, respectively, to the court. Neither desires actual release authority, particularly over felony defendants. In another jurisdiction, Salt Lake, felony offenders (who have met release criteria) can be released on a telephone call to a judge. The older the system and the more threatened by law suits or jail overcrowding, the more likely additional functions, such as alternatives to arrest, presentence reports and jail classification, were added. Analogous to the development of more sophisticated criminal justice processing was the implementation of a management information system that allowed for offender-based tracking.

Observations across sites indicated that the degree of sophistication of defendant processing adopted by a jurisdiction and the order in which CI components were added was dependent upon the problems each criminal justice system was facing. Use of pretrial services information for presentence reports was facilitated in two sites by burgeoning probation case loads. Jail classification was added to the San Mateo ROR project because of inmate to inmate violence. It is predicted that as the CI sites mature, additional functions will be added to help the criminal justice system respond to its own changing needs, community expectations and defendant populations.

#### Advisory Boards and Centralization of Authority

Regardless of the current developmental state of the sample sites, almost all could trace their origins to the development of release alternatives and the need to establish a policy or advisory board to oversee system changes resulting from implementation of pretrial release practices. In some cases, such as in Salt Lake County, the initial OR project grew out of need of the judiciary to have available more information about defendants at bond hearings. In others, such as San Mateo and Pima Counties, a concern for human rights and jail reform provided the motivation for change and the necessity of a steering or advisory

panel. In the remaining cases, however, advisory councils were formed to help solve serious jail overcrowding problems (Arapahoe County, Jackson County, Delaware). In almost all instances, a single individual or agency took initial responsibility for conveying the need for system change and for instilling a spirit of cooperation among agencies with differing organizational goals.

Over time, it appears that one of two things happened to the advisory boards. In systems such as Pima County where CVC has been active for over 10 years, its advisory panel meets relatively infrequently and mainly to review the performance of CVC in the current criminal justice system. The primary central intake organization has become an integral part of the overall justice picture and is, itself, consulted on long-range planning issues. In a similar vein, the advisory committee in Arapahoe County has focused its efforts for several years on only one criminal justice problem--the jail overcrowding situation and the related issue of new jail construction. The overall coordination of other planning and policy efforts has been left to the director of the pretrial services program.

The use of an advisory panel to spearhead an effort to eliminate or reduce one problem at a time is similar to the modular approach to central intake outlined by Galvin (1978). Rather than implement a systemwide change to create central intake, one problem or component related to central intake is addressed at a time. In this type of developmental scheme, the policy and planning functions were executed by a single person acting on behalf of the interest of the entire criminal justice community (i.e., Arapahoe County). In other configurations of central intake, an advisory panel representing all criminal justice agency factions was found to be the more common approach (i.e., Delaware, Jackson and Salt Lake Counties).

The second pattern advisory councils seem to follow is that early successes, such as the operation of a pretrial release program, insured their continued operation in addressing different or more long-range planning efforts. For example, the advisory council for the criminal justice system in Salt Lake started out as two committees dealing with two separate issues--jail space and alternatives to incarceration. However, even after the completion of planned detention facilities, the new consolidated committee continued to meet to address additional issues such as 10 percent bail. As a whole, it is less concerned with the day-to-day operations of the existing central intake agencies, such as the pretrial release unit, than it is with planning for future criminal justice needs of both the community and the defendant.

Long-range planning and policy change becomes more complex for those jurisdictions where more than one type of government plays a role in the criminal justice process. The two sites where advisory committees seemed to take a less active role in criminal justice planning and decision making initially were Jackson County where the interests of state, county, and city officials were at odds and the state of Delaware. Only recently a new advisory committee has been convened to oversee long-range planning. This committee was formed by an executive order from the governor. Also, an administrator has been appointed recently to coordinate criminal justice activities at the new facility. Without some form of centralized authority, criminal justice functions, such as planning, seemed split between various government and criminal agency groups. One of the

advantages of an advisory committee for some sites was that it provided a forum for establishing control over jurisdiction's intake and release processes. Individually, some members of the advisory committees interviewed expressed reluctance over relinquishing some of their agency's power or authority and mentioned differences in philosophy regarding detention and release. When confronted by a group whose function was to centralize authority and instill cooperation, individual interests were more easily sublimated to the greater effectiveness of the whole system.

Given the variety of criminal justice agencies involved in the various central intake systems, the composition of the advisory boards appeared relatively uniform. Typically they consisted of members of the judiciary; law enforcement; corrections; counsel, both the defender and prosecutor; and the pretrial services agency. A point of variation usually was the inclusion of representatives from community referral agencies or private citizens. The effectiveness of such boards seemed to depend upon the regular participation of its members and the board's overall commitment to cooperation and coordination.

#### Central Intake Organizational Location Among Criminal Justice Agencies

As mentioned previously, the majority of central intake systems can trace its origins to the development of pretrial release programs. Therefore, most of the agencies responsible for implementing and maintaining central intake processes were those also involved in pretrial release. However, within the individual criminal justice systems observed, the pretrial services agencies were located administratively in a variety of places. In Arapahoe County, the pretrial program was administered initially through the county Probation and Parole Department. The Court Volunteer Center, as its name implies, is under the jurisdiction of the Pima County Superior Court. Whereas Salt Lake County PTS is responsive to a judicial advisory board, it is administered through the county Department of Human Services. In San Mateo County, the ROR project reports directly to the local bar association which, in turn, reports on contracted services to the county Board of Supervisors. The release program and intake services are split between the Jackson County Department of Corrections and the State Board of Probation and Parole. Administratively, the state of Delaware is dependent upon the state pretrial release program which previously functioned in the postarrest processing center, the state Department of Corrections and the input of the public defender and prosecutor. Recently, a central administrator has been appointed to coordinate release efforts in Delaware among county and city interests.

The organizational configurations of the intake/release system for each jurisdiction initially had an impact on the image that was acquired throughout the rest of the criminal justice system. In instances where they were associated with defendant services, programs were often viewed, particularly by the court and Prosecutor's Office, as being too liberal and concerned solely with release rather than accurate decision making regarding defendant release/detention status. Over time, however, the more mature systems have become viewed as primarily neutral, making only release recommendations or detention decisions in instances

where they are clearly warranted. This position of neutrality was viewed as essential by most pretrial services directors to insure accurate interview information from defendants and to maintain their credibility with the courts, defense and prosecution. The image of a neutral position appeared to be enhanced when agencies charged with intake/release decision making were located organizationally, outside of the normal criminal justice system. Sites that have maintained such an image throughout the system include Salt Lake and Arapahoe County. In San Mateo, the project is administered by members of the local bar, many of whom have served as members of the judiciary as well, and it has maintained an image of credibility because of its strict adherence to release policies. Subjective opinions expressed by criminal justice agency officials in other jurisdictions frequently characterized programs as being too defendant-oriented, too pro-court, opposed to law enforcement, etc., because of what appeared to be their administrative location rather than their actual functioning or their perceived variability in determining release eligibility.

#### Multiple Uses and Confidentiality of Central Intake Information

Because one of the initial premises in the investigation of CI was that an efficient intake/release decision system would eliminate unnecessary duplication of defendant information, the flow of information throughout the criminal justice system was examined. Again, in the more mature systems such as San Mateo, Salt Lake and Pima Counties, offender-based tracking systems that allowed various system members access to criminal records were in operation. Surprisingly, not all of the systems were computerized, yet efficient manual record keeping was still maintained. Such management information systems provided for tracking of defendants from arrest through adjudication and allowed multiple access by various criminal justice users. A systemwide record keeping approach was deemed necessary in those jurisdictions because it reflected the most accurate data on defendant status if rearrest occurred while on pretrial release or probation and parole and if changes occurred regarding the status of the case (i.e., dismissal of charges, changes of court dates, etc.).

One of the first steps taken by several systems was the creation of multiple copy intake interview forms. Once the initial pretrial interview was completed, color or office coded forms were automatically forwarded to the appropriate agencies such as the courts, corrections, defense attorney, prosecutor and, in cases where immediate defendant needs were apparent, to the appropriate medical or mental health authorities. Such rapid dissemination of information increased defendant processing speed and may have had an impact on the number of potential lawsuits filed for inadequate pretrial defendant care. When the court reviews the intake release information, not only is an action taken regarding release or detention, but conditions can also be imposed to maintain pretrial release status. Frequently during the course of the pretrial interview, information will be obtained regarding substance abuse, mental or physical health circumstances that mitigate assignment of straight OR. The judge, relying on this information, can then make a determination of the type of conditions or amount of supervision needed by an individual defendant.

An agency that seemed particularly sensitive to the use of pretrial services intake information was that of the public (or private) defender. Conflicting views were expressed. On the one hand, collection and verification of financial information by the intake services unit was viewed as useful by most courts since it assisted in the determination of indigency status at first appearances. However, defense attorney organizations were often opposed to the brevity of the intake interview questions, usually restricted to employment information, rather than inclusion of a more detailed financial statement. In some jurisdictions, such as Arapahoe County and Jackson County, Public Defender Offices are already working well over capacity and do not have the time or staffing to engage in any additional collecting of information regarding a client's ability to afford private counsel. Frequently, the attitude of the courts is expressed as it is better to have some form of representation than none at all.

An additional side of this dilemma is also posed by the court-appointed defense attorney. Frequently clients view their previous contacts with the system after they are arrested as pro-incarceration and are sometimes suspicious of the intentions of the representation that they have been assigned. Therefore, as in Arapahoe County, the defender views the initial interview as a time to "break the ice" with clients even though similar types of information may have already been requested.

As mentioned before, one of the unique aspects of multiple information use was for pretrial housing classification in San Mateo. Also in that jurisdiction, information regarding compliance with supervised release conditions is made available to probation and parole at the time presentence investigation reports are being compiled. At the new Gander Hill facility, efforts are being made to make available information from both pretrial and probation and parole not only for initial release eligibility determination, but also for sentencing recommendations.

Intake information was also used in some jurisdictions as a basis for recommending participation in pretrial diversion programs. Although in most cases, prosecuting attorneys received whatever information was available at booking, they expressed relatively little interest in any information other than the current charges and the past criminal history information. In relatively new systems, prosecutors sometimes expressed concern about noninterview-related information that might be discussed with the pretrial interviewer. Usually such concern dissipated when the brevity and nature of interview questions became apparent.

The multiple use of defendant information and the presence of automated or manual management information systems presents an opportunity for the potential misuse of all or part of the defendant's criminal history record. In some jurisdictions, attempts have been made to limit the type of information received by each agency to the data that are most useful to them. For example, in San Mateo, a multiple copy interview form is used. However, the copy forwarded to the medical staff contains only that information pertaining to the defendant's medical background. In jurisdictions where consideration of past criminal history is prohibited, this information is deleted from the report sent to

the court (Arapahoe County). In other locations, additional forms are required in some types of cases and not in others. Sometimes more detailed employment and residency data are compiled for felony defendants in Salt Lake County and are forwarded to the court.

Even though the amount and type of intake information available to each criminal justice agency is controlled to some extent when an MIS is employed, a potential hitch in the system exists in protecting the confidentiality of information told by the defendant to the pretrial interviewer. Because the credibility of a pretrial services program with defendants could be destroyed by violations of privacy and confidentiality, several jurisdictions have taken steps to insure those defendant's rights. In Salt Lake County, an informal agreement between pretrial services and the courts (through the Judicial Advisory Board) exists that does not permit the court to subpoena pretrial interviewers regarding client/screener interchanges. In Pima and Arapahoe Counties, similar informal arrangements exist. In San Mateo, advisement of rights follows the pretrial interview. Because defendants were not advised of their rights, interview information is not admissible evidence in court. Although several jurisdictions have had cases where important case-related information was revealed and a motion was made to subpoena the pretrial interviewer, the courts have granted such information privileged status, thus protecting the client/interviewer relationship.

The protection of defendant-related information and the early interviewing by a pretrial services screener prior to counsel availability can present a serious dilemma to jurisdictions implementing CI systems. In at least one case, the problem was viewed as serious enough for public defenders to advise their clients not to speak to anyone but their attorney. Only after sufficient privacy and confidentiality safeguards were insured, were pretrial screeners given immediate access to defendants.

Although none of the sampled jurisdictions have totally automated tracking systems at this point, all have considered safeguards to the protection of privacy for criminal history records. One of the reasons stated for the continued use of a manual system by one pretrial agency was the knowledge of who requested information and for what purpose. With a large number of clients, however, such a system may become too cumbersome for efficient use. Safeguards to erroneous information usage or unapproved access to computerized records were being developed along with most expanded, computerized management information systems.

#### Program Evaluation

One of the most interesting observations recorded by the site visit teams concerned the need for well integrated CI system organizations to justify annually their existence to local government funding sources. Regardless of the level of maturity, degree of system institutionalization, number of services provided, or the strength of their advisory boards, most funding requests, usually located in the budget of the pretrial services agency, were reviewed on an annual basis. For this



reason alone, ongoing program evaluation was viewed by most project directors as an essential task. Project evaluation was usually based on the following factors: the performance of the pretrial services agency in predicting court appearance and the noncommission of pretrial crime; the degree to which the courts, prosecutors, and defense attorneys followed recommendations regarding forms of release, bail or indigency determination, and pretrial diversion; the impact of central intake on jail management issues; and the cost per defendant for central intake processing.

FTA and recidivism. Each jurisdiction developed and subsequently validated its release criteria using either a subjective or objective process, or a combination of both. Content of the interview form was usually dictated by requirements for consideration of fugitivity in release decisions. Emphasis in all cases was placed on community ties as measured by employment, residency and support of other community members. Approval of the form was usually a result of review by the advisory board. Also such a board frequently determined the acceptable ranges for a given system's failure-to-appear and recidivism rates. Although various judges, law enforcement and corrections officers expressed a philosophical commitment to a zero rate on both parameters, the realities of their situations required them to live with some degree of FTA and pretrial rearrests. Observation of the site data indicates a varying range of acceptable pretrial crime and fugitivity levels. Part of the variation can be traced to differences in FTA calculation—whether fugitivity was calculated on a defendant or appearance basis and whether or not a distinction was made between willful and nonwillful FTAs. Recidivism rates were calculated less frequently and were dependent upon the presence of an up-to-date offender-based tracking system. Recent pretrial status information had to be available at the time of arrest to determine if a pretrial crime had, in fact, occurred.

Another factor determining the level of reported pretrial fugitivity rates was the presence of a tracking unit that took responsibility for locating FTAs. A common practice witnessed across jurisdictions was a 1 to 2 day delay of the issuance of bench warrants by the courts if the pretrial services representatives thought the fugitives could be located. As long as the defendant was returned to court in an acceptable time period, an FTA was not recorded. This was particularly true in cases of nonwillful FTA when a defendant appeared at the wrong courtroom, or the wrong day, was delayed by circumstance or did not receive proper notification. In those jurisdictions where a tracking unit was not present, and, in cases where no follow-up contact was established for scheduling and making court appearances, higher FTA rates were tolerated, particularly for misdemeanor arrestees.

Agreement with pretrial services recommendations and release authority. Usually the courts received recommendations from the pretrial services units regarding release eligibility, conditions to be imposed, and the amount of bail to be set. Some variations were apparent in the release authority granted by the courts to the intake unit. The greatest release powers were delegated to those civilian agencies with the longest history of operations—Salt Lake and Pima County. In both instances, misdemeanants can be released pretrial by the interviewer, providing release criteria are met. In Salt Lake, after an

additional interview by a felony caseworker, felons can be released with verbal approval from a judge on call 24 hours a day. In both Arapahoe and San Mateo Counties, misdemeanants can be released through the jail on a personal recognizance bond or jail OR. Only in the state of Delaware is a personal appearance in front of a magistrate necessary to secure release.

Generally, mature pretrial services agencies enjoyed a higher percentage of agreement with the court on their recommendations than younger, still developing systems. Whereas agreement rates on release recommendations between the judiciary and pretrial services hovers about 90 percent for the older sampled sites, the current agreement rate in Jackson County is about 30 percent and has been recorded as low as 20 percent. Part of the reason for this difference may be the need for systems to develop credibility for their recommendations over time and for a validated release decision instrument to be established. The lack of continuity from one judge to the next on rotating criminal bench assignments and the need for each judge to personally determine the reliability of release or bail recommendations may be contributing factors to depressed or fluctuating agreement rates. In the systems that have agreement rates over 90 percent, the usual source of disagreement is not having a recommendation for release denied by the court, rather the court orders release over no recommendation or a negative recommendation by the project. Although only San Mateo monitored the number of judicial releases, the other jurisdictions reported on a subjective basis that the judicial releasees frequently had higher FTA rates for both misdemeanors and felons.

A variety of perspectives were taken by the central intake sites regarding the delegation of release authority. Some focused on strict interpretations of state statutes regarding the release of felons by judicial officers. Others expressed concern for the amount of responsibility entailed and the possible liabilities associated with assuming release authority. Another more favorable view toward release authority was advanced by pretrial services which had already dealt efficiently and effectively with release of misdemeanors and felons alike. In part, the degree of release authority granted to a pretrial services agency may be the result of the proven credibility of the release agency that had developed over the years and may be a developmental phenomenon. As Neubaum and West (1982) observed in their study of sites participating in the LEAA jail overcrowding program, release authority contributed to the efficiency and cost savings of pretrial release. In most of the sampled jurisdictions, a high rate of agreement existed between the judiciary and pretrial services. A similar result has already been noted for the central intake sites. The determining factors in expanded release powers for an agency other than the court center around the amount of risk agencies are willing to assume in the release process, judicial attitudes toward delegation of release authority, the efficiency and effectiveness of release practices, proven competence on the part of the pretrial services agency, and jail overcrowding.

Prosecutors, in the case of the now discontinued Salt Lake County Diversion Program and in the anticipated Jackson County and Gander Hill systems, will be given the opportunity to utilize intake-related information to assist in making pretrial diversion decisions. Because its information at intake is



the most complete and most readily available, pretrial services is often consulted in making diversion program suggestions for placement. In the one known case, prosecutors were reluctant to delegate diversion supervision to an outside agency and frequently went against project recommendations for termination of active clients. Because of the lack of cooperation, the project was discontinued. However, even if viewed as an unsuccessful attempt, prosecutor/pretrial services joint selection of diversion clients did illustrate the use of a larger data base on which to base diversion recommendations rather than on charges filed.

As discussed previously, little disagreement exists between court recommendations regarding appointment of counsel based on intake information and acceptance of cases by the public defender. However, this apparent agreement is not on the basis of cooperation but rather on the lack of resources available to provide additional verification for determination of indigency status or the recovery of defense costs from those who can afford to pay.

Jail management. Because central intake was designed to track the flow of information and defendants through the criminal justice system, a variety of jail impacts were documented. In those jurisdictions where pretrial screening and release options were available to the majority of misdemeanor and at least a portion of felony defendants, jail populations composition changed to reflect the more serious nature of charges of the detained defendants (cf. Salt Lake County). In addition, most corrections officials, while admitting their philosophical differences with the concept of pretrial release, indicated that CI, including defendant needs assessment and release practices, was saving their jails from even more severe overcrowding and inmate law suits (Pima and Arapahoe Counties). In most instances, all available releases had been made and no immediate alternatives for release were being considered for those detained.

Whereas central intake did not offer a "cure" for jail overcrowding experienced by the CI sites, it did provide a management tool whereby the portion of pretrial defendants incarcerated was reduced, those charged with violent or otherwise serious crimes were detained, and few if any defendants became lost in the system. Despite increased use of central intake concepts, three sites engaged in new jail facility construction during the course of the project (Salt Lake, Delaware, and Pima) and another is engaged in feasibility studies for new correctional building efforts (Arapahoe County).

Cost effectiveness. The most frequent means used to justify intake/release decision system costs was to calculate the number of jail days saved both in terms of those defendants who were released initially and those who had reduced length of stay as the result of more efficient case processing. Some projects further analyzed cost savings by estimating not only jail costs but also staff allocations for the interview and supervision processes. Although this level of specificity was often hampered by the means used to calculate jail costs (variable vs. fixed costs) and the division of each staff member's time (screening, administrative, etc.), an amount for individual case processing was estimated. Most program bottom-line justifications were based on dollar amounts, even though many of the benefits of such systems remained qualitative rather than quantitative (improved interagency cooperation and coordination, meeting of

defendant needs, reduction in unnecessary incarceration, etc.). Many of the observed jurisdictions were caught up in a conservative fiscal climate. Despite presenting evidence of cost effectiveness, they were forced to operate on reduced budgets (Salt Lake and Pima Counties). Ironically, the capabilities used to justify their existence for a number of years (tracking, program evaluation, and research) were those that were eliminated first, rather than reduction of services to defendants and other criminal justice agencies.

Whereas most of this discussion has focused on program evaluation to justify expenditures, staffing, etc., evaluation among programs was not limited to external criteria. Frequently, evaluation efforts at some period in the development of CI systems were focused on establishing release criteria (Bench & Baak, 1980). In those jurisdictions relying on point scales, validation studies and changing criminal needs sometimes lead to a revision of the point scale or interview instrument (Jackson County, Salt Lake County, San Mateo County). A discussion of the merits of objective (point scale) and subjective (interviewer discretion) recommendation schemes is beyond the scope of this report. The interested reader is referred to a discussion of release criteria in the DRI companion volume (Central Intake Workbook: Diagnosing and Improving Intake and Release Decision Systems) and to release criteria published by the Pretrial Services Resource Center (Pryor & Smith, 1982).

In summary, if various performance measures are determined to establish the effectiveness of central intake components, these same measures can be used to recognize changes in system functioning (change in arrest trends, jail population, court processing time, etc.) and used as a basis for system adaptation.

#### Other Critical Central Intake Programmatic Factors

Program staffing. This report has documented a variety of qualitative issues without highlighting key roles played by various administrators at both county government and criminal justice agency levels. Without exception, the successes of the various central intake sites could be traced to the drive and perseverance of one group of individuals--the pretrial services directors. Their commitment to the equitable release of defendants, the insurance of public safety, the provision of systemwide data, and their openness to investigation from both within their own systems and from outside evaluators has made possible numerous criminal justice processing improvements. In those jurisdictions where a recent change of director took place (Salt Lake) or where no one person was responsible for overall system maintenance, change occurred at a slower rate and often with dissension. In three jurisdictions (Arapahoe, Pima, and San Mateo) the long-term tenure of the pretrial services director has facilitated system functioning including the addition of new policies, computerization of management information systems, new jail construction, release/intake instrument revision, research, etc. These directors have frequently been supported by county government officials, such as commissioners, mayors, and legislators who recognized the need for system improvement. In addition, low staff turnover rate was observed in the more mature projects. This also

facilitated credibility with other system members, such as the judiciary who saw the same agency representatives year after year.

External community factors. Two other key factors are external to the program itself but can influence the functioning of any criminal justice intake/release system. They are the community and the media. Frequently, community safety has been mentioned in regard to proposed changes in release determination. This very same community, however, is relatively uninformed about the entire release decision process. In almost every jurisdiction, publicity regarding the criminal justice system was focused on sensational events including felony pretrial crime, editorial complaints by local bondspersons concerning "wholesale" pretrial release practices, and inability of law enforcement to stem increasing crime. In several jurisdictions, however, community awareness was not limited to media reports. In Pima County, volunteers are actively recruited to participate in CVC programs. In Salt Lake and San Mateo, citizens serve on criminal justice advisory panels so their interests are voiced from their own rather than a third party perspective.

### Conclusions

The DRI central intake project resulted in three major findings. First, when central intake is defined as a centralized administrative organizational structure charged with facilitating interagency cooperation and coordination of intake and release functions in a criminal justice system, community, defendant, and system needs in the sampled jurisdictions were viewed as being met with greater efficiency and effectiveness. The goals of more rapid defendant processing, provision of defendant services, reliance on nonmonetary forms of release and increased use of alternatives to incarceration were facilitated by management information systems which assisted in the tracking of defendants and the flow of information concerning their cases, from apprehension through adjudication. Planning efforts, system change and problem resolution were primary motivators in adopting a central intake approach to criminal justice processing. The success of these activities was frequently attributable to an active advisory board composed of criminal justice agency representatives, members from community referral groups and concerned citizens. The administrative location of the agency charged with the majority of central intake functions was associated with perceptions of neutrality by judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and defendants, if it was located outside of the criminal justice system itself. Frequently however, a criminal justice agency such as the court became an advocate of the pretrial services/CI unit. Despite the presence in at least four sites of management information systems, quantitative or baseline data relating to system changes for extensive pre-post comparisons were unavailable. Although evaluation was generally recognized as necessary to justify continuing financial support from funding sources, additional evaluation or research efforts were given lower priority than providing defendant or other criminal justice-related services. With continued budget cutbacks, the previous expansion of services to the criminal justice system may be halted, and, in some jurisdictions, a reduction of services may take place. At only one site was extensive use of volunteers made to supplement paid professional staff.

The second major finding was that of the six jurisdictions studied, of which three were considered mature central intake sites, all had followed a similar development sequence. Most systems began as either an OR program, designed as part of a bail reform/human rights movement in late 60s or early 70s, or as a release program designed to reduce jail overcrowding. Implementing changes in release policies required a concurrent change in intake procedures and the coordination of law enforcement, pretrial services, corrections, courts, legal counsel and the community. Once the OR release project had firmly established its credibility and had validated its release/detention criteria, additional services to both the defendant and the rest of the criminal justice system were added and release authority was expanded in some instances. The quantity and quality of additional services and release responsibilities was dependent upon the perceived needs of all groups involved, the availability of community resources, and the means to keep track of the additional information flow generated by increasing the number of services. When well developed systems were faced with financial hardships, internal services, usually informational or evaluative in nature, were eliminated first rather than services to other agencies or to defendants. These same, older systems, perhaps because of their past history at adapting to criminal justice problems, spent more time, effort and resources on planning for future needs rather than reacting to immediate problems.

Last, as discussed in the introduction, a central intake system was not a panacea for all the problems that plagued the sampled jurisdictions. For example, three of the sites' utilization of alternatives to incarceration pre- and posttrial did not preclude the construction of new jail facilities. In another jurisdiction, the lack of new judicial appointments has hampered court processing. Even though central intake was not able to eliminate these types of system problems, in most cases, they were kept below a crisis level requiring immediate system change by CI until more effective remediation could be instituted. Central intake, as DRI has examined it, is not a singularly defined action program with measurable outcomes. The adoption of CI, however, appears to facilitate the timely initiation, appropriate modification and supportive maintenance of programs that can have a direct impact on the fairness, efficiency and effectiveness of postarrest-pretrial processes.

Based on the qualitative information collected from all the sites sampled in the CI survey, DRI recommends that other jurisdictions that are interested in modifying their existing intake/release systems or wish to institute a new system based on central intake concepts, consider several key implementation and policy-related issues. These issues are summarized in Table 2. In addition, a separate volume, Central Intake Workbook: Diagnosing and Improving Intake and Release Decision Systems, has been prepared in workbook fashion to assist jurisdictions in diagnosing existing system problems related to central intake and in the selection, implementation and evaluation of new CI system remedies.

Table 2

Issues Facing Intake/Release Systems and  
DRI Central Intake Recommendations

Issue	Recommendation
A. Advisory Boards	The success or failure of implementing central intake, regardless of whether changes occur in a modular or systemwide fashion, depends on the centralization of authority in the form of a representative criminal justice advisory council charged with policy formation and long-range planning. Although one participant in the criminal justice process can facilitate progress toward central intake in a step-wise fashion, DRI recommends that the formation of an advisory council precede system changes and that such a board remain active in planning for future criminal justice system needs by scheduling regular sessions.
B. Program Components	Although no one developmental sequence seems appropriate for all criminal justice systems, central intake systems should consist of the following characteristics: arrest options, including arrest alternatives (transportation to community detoxification or mental health centers); nonbooking release (stationhouse type or utilization of an automatic bond schedule); pretrial services processing (provision of verified defendant information to key criminal justice agencies involved in release decision making); establishment of well defined release criteria; consideration by the courts of delegation of release authority, pretrial release options, and the hearing of pretrial motions; detention services (treatment-classification, reconsideration for release); and the use of available information by probation in the preparation of presentence investigations. If not already present, steps should be taken to gear a management information system to the needs of these CI components.
C. CI Organizational Focus	If possible, the organizational focus of a central intake system should be located outside of the jurisdiction of any single criminal justice agency and preferably placed in what is viewed by the rest of the system as a neutral position. Such a neutral image assists in both defendant processing and in the maintenance of the role of an unbiased release/intake decision maker.

Table 2 (cont.)

Issue	Recommendation
D. Multiple Uses of CI Information	Because of the CI emphasis on multiple uses of intake information, DRI suggests multiple copy dissemination procedures for interview information to key criminal justice agencies to determine release status, indigency, defendant needs, pretrial diversion eligibility, jail classification, probation and presentence recommendations and the collection of data for offender-based tracking. In cases where there is a conflict between the courts and the defender regarding determination of eligibility for court appointed counsel, agreements with the intake unit should be reached regarding the amount and type of financial information needed for adequate determination of indigency status. In addition, a management information system allowing for an offender-based tracking system from arrest through adjudication is viewed as a key element to accurate defendant processing.
E. Privacy and Confidentiality of Defendant Information	Regardless of the existence of an automated or manual information system, steps should be taken by each jurisdiction to limit the access to defendant records to those agencies directly involved in case processing. Whether by formal or informal agreements, the courts should protect the confidentiality of the information exchanged between the defendant (client) and the pretrial screener.
F. Ongoing Program Evaluation	Ongoing monitoring of central intake functions is absolutely necessary to establish credibility with those agencies receiving program recommendations, for tracking FTA and rearrest rates, for measuring impacts on jail management, for determining cost effectiveness, for long-range planning and justification of continuing program operation. Evaluation can also establish a program's credibility when delegation of release authority is considered. Judicial attitudes toward delegation of release authority, proven agency competence, and the degree to which pretrial services will assume the risk associated with greater release powers are all factors influencing delegation of release authority. Release authority is recommended for those agencies that meet these criteria. It is recommended that the advisory panel establish systemwide performance criteria and an overall evaluation plan adapted to the needs of individual jurisdictions.

Table 2 (cont.)

Issue	Recommendation
G. Other Critical CI Programmatic Factors	<p>Pretrial service directors and/or central intake administrators should be chosen not only on the basis of their criminal justice credentials and experience but also on their abilities to work with existing criminal justice and county government agencies.</p> <p>It is advisable to include community representatives and the media on advisory panels to give them the opportunity for a firsthand view of the criminal justice system.</p>



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CENTRAL INTAKE WORKBOOK:  
DIAGNOSING AND IMPROVING INTAKE AND  
RELEASE DECISION SYSTEMS

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APPENDIX A

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**END**