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November 30, 2012

MEMORANDUM

To: Katie Tepas
Carmen Gutierrez
From: Thomas MacLellan
Jeff McLeod
Re: Debrief of *Alaska In-State Policy Workshop*

This memorandum provides an overview of outcomes from the *Alaska In-State Policy Workshop* that the National Governors Association (NGA) and Alaska's Multi-Agency Justice Integration Consortium (MAJIC) convened in Anchorage, Alaska on August 23, 2012. MAJIC was created in 2004 after several agencies joined together to improve justice information sharing in Alaska. Participation in MAJIC by agencies is voluntary, and its mission is to help agencies more efficiently share complete, accurate, and timely information with each other in order to enhance the performance of the criminal justice system as a whole. NGA and MAJIC convened the policy workshop to develop a strategic action plan for improving how the state tracks offenders through its justice system so that it can more accurately measure recidivism rates.

This memorandum also provides background information about NGA's work in Alaska since 2010 to improve the state's justice information sharing capabilities, and it makes preliminary recommendations that Alaska may consider adopting to improve its information sharing practices which in turn will improve its ability to effectively measure recidivism rates.

Background

In September 2010, NGA and the Alaska Department of Corrections co-sponsored a statewide forum on sentencing and corrections reform with support from Alaska Common Ground and Partners for Progress. That forum, *Cost-Effective Justice: New Directions for Prisoner Rehabilitation and Reentry*, brought together state correction agencies, courts, treatment providers, interest groups, and nationally recognized criminal justice experts and practitioners.

Among the issues discussed at this forum was the need to better apply evidence-based practices to reduce recidivism rates, improve outcomes for offenders, and maximize the use of scarce corrections resources. What became evident through the discussions and presentations is Alaska's limited ability to accurately measure offender recidivism rates. Central to this is Alaska's inability to seamlessly, systematically, and reliably track offenders across its justice system, from law enforcement, to courts, to corrections, and to treatment. Because Alaska cannot easily track offenders, it is difficult and costly for the state to determine its recidivism rate. Without accurate information about offender recidivism, Alaska cannot efficiently and reliably determine which programs are effective and should be funded, and which programs are not effective and should be defunded.

As follow-up to the 2010 forum, NGA invited Alaska to participate in its Global Reference Architecture (GRA) Policy Academy meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah in June 2011. The purpose of the GRA Policy Academy was to help six states apply national justice information standards to solve a “justice business case.” At this meeting, state officials had the chance to learn about the U.S. Department of Justice’s Global Justice Initiative (Global) from their peers around the country as well as a national faculty of experts and practitioners. The Alaska team explored how Global tools and resources—in particular, the GRA—could help the state improve how it tracks offenders and measures recidivism rates. Alaska’s team included Teri Carns, Special Projects, Alaska Judicial Council; Carmen Gutierrez, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Corrections; Kathryn Monfreda, Chief Criminal Records and Identification, Department of Public Safety; Alan McKelvie, Director, Statistical Analysis Center, University of Alaska Anchorage Justice Center; Travis Morrison, Enterprise Security Architect, Department of Administration; Tony Newman, Policy and Planning Manager, Division of Juvenile Justice, Department of Health and Social Services; Melissa Stone, Director of the Division of Behavioral Health, Department of Health and Social Services; Richard Svobodny, Deputy Attorney General, Department of Law; and Katie Tepas, Special Assistant and Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Initiative Coordinator, Office of the Governor.

As an outcome of the meeting, the Alaska team identified its mission as: *To improve Alaska’s ability to link data across agencies to help the state understand recidivism.* A second outcome of the meeting was agreement that in order to collect recidivism related information on offenders, all state justice agencies should adopt a standard, common single-person identifier that can reliably be used to track individuals through the state’s criminal justice system.

The group concluded that wider adoption of the APSIN (Alaska Public Safety Information Network) ID could serve this purpose. MAJIC has adopted the APSIN ID as the person standard for data exchanges and it is already being used by several agencies. Although use of the APSIN ID is mandatory on all criminal court pleadings filed with the Alaska Court System, use of the APSIN ID by other justice agencies and state entities is largely voluntary and dependent on whether they choose to participate. As a result, its use across the state is inconsistent and unreliable. In addition, some technical hurdles remain to full integration across agency systems, such as ensuring the accuracy and reliability of a person’s identifying information.

August 2012 Alaska In-State Policy Workshop

As follow up to the policy academy meeting in Salt Lake City, NGA and MAJIC convened an in-state policy workshop for agency officials in Anchorage, Alaska on August 23, 2012. The key objective of the workshop was to develop an action plan based on GRA principles for integrating the APSIN ID across all agencies interested in exchanging criminal justice data. That meeting brought together the Alaska team, most of whom are also members of MAJIC, other MAJIC member agencies, as well as a national faculty of experts and practitioners including Scott Came, Deputy Executive Director, SEARCH; Becki Goggins, Privacy and Data Specialist, Alabama Health Insurance Exchange; Clay Sato, Data Processing Systems Manager, Hawaii Criminal Justice Data Center, Department of the Attorney General; Laureen Uwayne, Assistant Administrator, Hawaii Criminal Justice Data Center, Department of the Attorney General; and Glenda Winn, System Analyst, Department of Public Safety, Maine State Police.

While the goal of the meeting was to develop a plan for achieving the mission statement identified in Utah—to link data across agencies so that Alaska can better understand recidivism—by the end of the meeting there was a lack of consensus among meeting participants about what steps Alaska should take next to successfully integrate the APSIN ID. Although there was some agreement on specific technical challenges that must be resolved first, participants were not able to build consensus around

policy and governance priorities and objectives. At one point late in the discussion, some participants questioned why there was a need to adopt the APSIN ID across the state and what the business justification was for doing so.

Strategies for Improving Justice Information Sharing in Alaska

Based on outcomes from the August 2012 workshop, NGA's work in Alaska over the last couple of years, and follow-up conversations with senior state leadership, we recommend several strategies that will help Alaska greatly improve its information sharing practices overall and its ability to track offender recidivism in particular.

- **Establish and implement a formal governance structure for justice information sharing.** Alaska's MAJIC plays an important role in helping Alaska share justice information. It focuses on enterprise-wide open architecture, infrastructure and interfaces, and it addresses the need for governance, organization, laws, policies, practices, and standards used or needed to support interagency information sharing. MAJIC is, however, a consensus-based consortium and has no authority to require the adoption of a particular standard, to mandate exchanges, or to determine statewide priorities.

Many states have opted to provide needed authority by formalizing governance structures through executive orders, legislation, or memoranda of understanding between agencies. The advantage of a more formalized structure is that it sets clear expectations for agencies and can improve agency leadership buy-in and commitment to project goals. For example, Tennessee and Alabama, who participated with Alaska in NGA's GRA Policy Academy, relied on governance bodies to balance competing agency interests, ensure that relevant agencies and users were included, and create and implement a strategic plan and cross-agency memorandum for the adoption of GRA.

- **Develop a privacy policy for justice information sharing.** Related to the development of formal governance, Alaska has the opportunity to strengthen its justice information sharing practices through the development and implementation of a standards-based privacy policy. Privacy policies outline the fair use of information, who can access what and when, and sanctions for misuse. Other states, such as Alabama, Hawaii, Indiana, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming have already implemented or are developing privacy policies. Privacy policies support governance bodies by serving as the concept of operations for the justice information sharing system.
- **Adopt national standards such as NIEM and GRA across Alaska's justice system.** Alaska can improve its ability to share justice information by adopting reusable standards that support interoperability across a system's business enterprise, such as the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM) and GRA. NIEM is a local, state, tribal, and federal interagency initiative designed to facilitate the exchange of information between agencies and jurisdictions. NIEM helps facilitate this exchange by providing a framework for standardizing and defining shared information. GRA represents the "next generation" of justice information sharing through development of a coordinated information sharing strategy that helps states to identify and reduce process and system incompatibilities, guide service providers and organizations on how to fit components together, and facilitate communication between disparate communities and systems. Granting agencies within the federal government currently require that state justice information sharing systems adopt national standards, such as GRA and NIEM, in order to be eligible for justice information sharing related funding. By moving toward adopting these standards now,

Alaska will better position itself to take advantage of federal grant opportunities in the future. However, the greater value by adopting these standards is that Alaska will be able to seamlessly, systematically, and reliably track offenders across its justice system so that it can efficiently and reliably determine which programs are effective and should be funded, and which programs are not effective and should be defunded. Adopting these standards will also have utility in other areas, such as health, communications, and disaster management.