CORRECTIONS TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION

If the world is Flat, how come Corrections is still Round?

Integrating Correctional Authorities into the Fusion Center Rubric

Whitepaper brief:

A CALL TO ACTION FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO BUILD CAPACITY FOR INFORMATION AND INTELLIGENCE SHARING WITHIN THE CORRECTIONS INDUSTRY TO FACILITATE CORRECTIONS' PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL FUSION CENTER OPERATIONS THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY GRANTS PROGRAM

September 2007

Corrections Technology Association – CTA

Establishing the Business Case

The number of inmates in our nation's prisons and local jails continues to increase, causing corrections departments throughout the country to improve the means by which they manage the vast quantity of prisoner data and associated records that they handle every day.

Corrections professionals are becoming more and more aware that the data they are collecting is pertinent intelligence data that can be useful to our nation's law enforcement and homeland security efforts. And this nation's correctional leaders are now poised to begin to share this data with the law enforcement community.

Toward that end, corrections leaders are asking their Chief Information Officers to develop plans and strategies that will allow corrections to participate in this unprecedented wave of national intelligence gathering and dissemination.

The relevant operation question though is how does one unleash the vast stores of data that reside within the corrections enterprise and connect that data and intelligence to the law enforcement community outside of corrections so that we can optimize our crime fighting and national homeland security efforts?

The answer to that question is the focus of this Whitepaper. It is the belief of the Corrections Technology Association (CTA) that the federal government has a valuable role to play in this effort by providing the necessary funding that will allow correctional authorities to begin to build capacity and to create a technology framework that will facilitate information gathering and foster the dissemination of intelligence data.

The need to develop and share information and intelligence across all levels of criminal justice has significantly changed within the

last few years.[1] And while there is recognition of the requirement to identify and share information and intelligence, the sharing of this data is not an easy task. It requires the commitment of leadership, the dedication of staff and the trust of a diverse group of law enforcement professionals who believe in the power of collaboration.

Just as importantly, it requires support from the federal government to create and sustain funding streams that will nurture and sustain environments that encourage information and intelligence sharing efforts. Initiatives like the development of intelligence Fusion Centers are good examples of how federal funding can favorably facilitate operational progress.

To date, the Department of Homeland Security has provided more than $380 million to state and local governments in support of state and local fusion centers. There are presently 40 such fusion centers around the country, which have been designed to blend law enforcement and intelligence information analysis and to coordinate security measures in order to reduce threats to local communities and to the country.

Fusion Centers

- Provide critical sources of unique law enforcement and threat information
- Facilitate data sharing across jurisdictions and functions
- Provide a conduit between women and men on the ground protecting their local communities and state and federal agencies.[2]

This rise in Fusion Centers is representative of the dramatic shift in the proactive approach that law enforcement has taken in recent

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[1] Fusion Center Guidelines, United States Department of Justice August 2006
[2] ibid

years.[3]   Moreover, fusion centers exemplify the recognition of non-traditional actors who now have an important role to play in homeland defense and domestic security.

If fusion centers are a representation of those changes, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) believes that they are, then they will invariably need to have available to them all of the pertinent information that the criminal justice community can muster, including information from non-traditional sources like corrections.

Significant elements of that non-traditional information and intelligence resides within these corrections IT systems. In fact, corrections is uniquely positioned to gather information that other law enforcement entities are not able to gather. Information like inmate visitor data, criminal associate data and telephone record data are but a few of the intelligence sources that have the potential to provide valuable insight to law enforcement and homeland security agents seeking to develop a framework for social networking to better determine the synergistic relationship between the criminal enterprise and the terrorist network(s) that threaten our country.

Law enforcement entities are beginning to see the benefits of this type of information and correctional leaders are more willing to share this data than they have been in the past. However, corrections leaders frequently find themselves unable to provide it, due to the lack of organizational and operational capacity to gather it, automate it and to share it electronically.

This is where the CTA believes that the federal government can play a pivotal role.

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[3] CRS report for Congress on Fusion Centers July 2007

Research indicates that there may be a misconception that all states and regions are operating sophisticated intelligence management systems and that they have access to all databases available within their jurisdiction.[4] The fact is that many states do not have state-wide intelligence systems and correctional authorities are usually among the last participants in any such systems as they are developed.

Corrections authorities have historically lagged behind other law enforcement professions in building Information Technology capacity. However, there now appears be a unique opportunity for the federal government to help reconcile that shortcoming through the Homeland Security Grant Program which is comprised of five interconnected grant programs:

(1) The State Homeland Security Program,
(2) The Urban Area Security Initiative -UASI,
(3) The Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program -LETPP,
(4) The Metropolitan Medical response System – MMRS, and
(5) The Citizens Corp Program -CCP.[5]

CTA strongly recommends that the grant programs outlined above be modified to allow corrections authorities to submit grant proposals directly associated with their desire to build an information sharing capacity that will facilitate information and intelligence sharing with state and local fusion centers. Presently, no such option exists for correctional authorities and most of the federal dollars available under these programs is directed toward entities other than correctional authorities.

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[4] CRS Report to Congress
[5] See DHS, Office of Grants and Training, FY 2007 Homeland Security grant Program – Program Guidance and Application Kit, January 2007.

CTA believes that correctional authorities, if properly funded, have the ability to provide valuable, almost indispensable, information to facilitate our national intelligence gathering efforts.

CTA further believes that the federal authorities can, through a redirect of the existing appropriations for Homeland Security and Fusion Center Development, achieve a substantial impact by providing the means for correction authorities to develop capacity within their respective jurisdictions to provide this data to their fusion center colleagues.

Toward that end, CTA is calling on the federal authorities to consider redirecting the DHS Homeland Security Grant Program to provide opportunities for corrections authorities to submit grant proposals directly to DHS to help build capacity in this critical area.

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About CTA

The Corrections Technology Association (CTA) is a public, non-profit network of professionals actively involved in leveraging technology in the field of Corrections. Members of our association consist primarily of Chief Information Officers, IT Directors and operational and administrative staff from State and Provincial Departments of Correction, as well as from Federal, county and local correctional agencies.

Since 1999 CTA has provided a forum to promote exchange of information, experience and knowledge among correctional agencies. Through the years, the association has actively led development of standards and promoted collaboration and sharing of data and systems across states. CTA's annual conference offers its members an unsurpassed opportunity to learn of new technologies and, above all else, affords corrections technologists the opportunity to network with their peers.

CTA's VISION

An association of professionals that is the nationally recognized leader in Corrections Technology.

CTA's Mission

CTA provides technology leadership to Corrections organizations by:

Providing a forum for exchange of information, experience and knowledge;
Identifying emerging technologies related to the application of technology in Corrections;
Addressing the challenges and opportunities for improving Corrections operations and promoting public safety through the use of technology;
Promoting collaboration and information sharing among local, state, tribal and federal agencies;
Developing and promoting standards for the deployment of Corrections technology solutions nationwide;
Providing continuing educational opportunities to technology professionals.