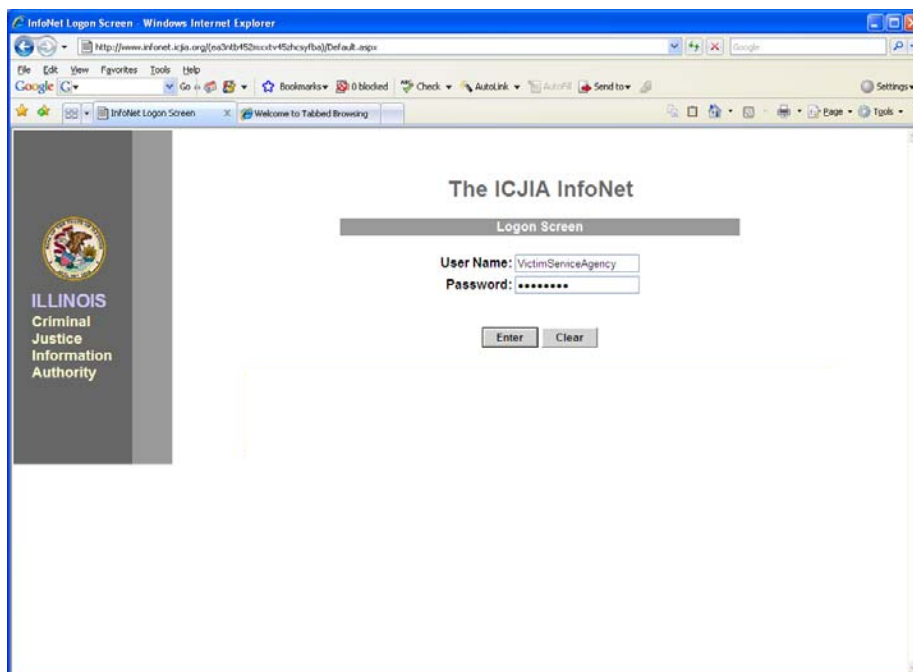




INFONET: The development, implementation, and operation of a web-based information system for victim service providers in Illinois



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I. An overview of InfoNet

What is InfoNet?

InfoNet (information network) is a web-based data collection and reporting system used by victim service providers in Illinois. It is a state-of-the-art system that has been recognized nationally for using the latest technologies for facilitating data collection and reporting. The initial development and implementation of the system was a collaborative effort between the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA), the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA) and the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV). Since 2004, InfoNet has grown to include partnerships with the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and the Children's Advocacy Centers of Illinois.

The purpose of InfoNet is to maintain a statewide system that:

- Standardizes data collection and reporting, thereby improving the capacity to analyze information statewide, regionally, and locally;
- Provides a central repository for statewide victim service data;
- Facilitates mandatory reporting for victim service agencies that receive grants from multiple funding agencies – which often require different types of information across funding agencies; and
- Facilitates program planning for improving services and system response to victims.

What data are collected in InfoNet?

Basic information about all clients – victims and significant others – who receive service from an agency is entered into InfoNet, including demographic, health insurance, employment, education, marital status, income source, referral source, and special needs. The type of victimization, or presenting issue, and severity of abuse is also captured, as well as victim interactions with court and health care systems. User agency staff also enter information about the offender's involvement with the criminal justice system, including arrest, charge, case disposition, and sentencing information. Information is added to a client's record over time, creating a history of services and events. Information that could be used to identify a client, such as name or birth date, is not entered into InfoNet. Rather, a unique number is used to track each client.

Agencies also enter services provided by staff and volunteers, including direct client services, hotline contacts and outreach efforts such as training, education and system advocacy. Administrative information entered into InfoNet includes details about staff funding sources, which is used to generate reports that reflect grant specific information.

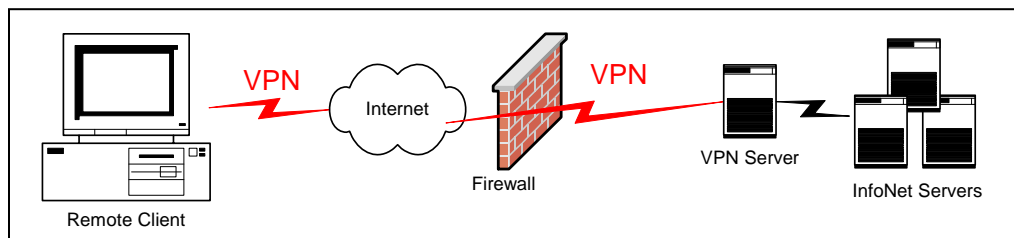
How is the system structured?

Remote users access a centralized database at ICJIA using a web-browser. Data are transmitted between users and the ICJIA database via a high-speed Internet connection. Several levels of security have been built into the system, including

password-protected logons and a virtual private network (VPN) that utilizes data encryption to securely transfer data over the Internet.

This centralized system shifts technical responsibility from victim service agencies, which often have little or no resources for information technology, to technical professionals at the ICJIA. Victim service agencies can use InfoNet at no cost; they are responsible only for obtaining a computer, a high-speed Internet connection, and a web-browser.

Diagram of InfoNet System Structure



Who uses InfoNet?

Three types of agencies utilize InfoNet – domestic violence centers, sexual assault centers, and child advocacy centers. All the data are maintained in the same database, but data elements and user interfaces are tailored to the unique needs of each agency type. As of this report's printing, 70 domestic violence centers, 38 sexual assault centers and 16 child advocacy centers access InfoNet from 194 sites throughout Illinois. InfoNet is available to ICASA and ICADV member agencies, as well as domestic violence programs that receive grant funds from the Illinois Department of Human Services. In addition, ICJIA has partnered with the Children's Advocacy Centers of Illinois to make InfoNet available for child advocacy centers in Illinois.

How do agencies use the data?

InfoNet includes a comprehensive set of reporting tools that facilitate data mining and analysis. These tools include standard reports that meet state and federal reporting requirements, as well as management reports and data filters that assist case tracking and staff management. InfoNet reports are also utilized on a local, regional and state level to identify emerging trends and to target limited resources for victim services where they are most needed.

How much data have been entered in InfoNet to date?

At the date of this printing, InfoNet contains nearly ten years of client level data, totaling more than one half million client records and seven million service contacts.

II. History

The primary impetus for InfoNet was a desire by ICJIA to obtain a better, more complete picture of emerging trends and needs such as service gaps or under or unserved populations in the area of crime victim services. Being able to better identify such patterns improves the capacity of statewide agencies like ICJIA that are responsible for coordination of victim services to more efficiently target limited resources.

Increase in public resources available for victim services

Over the past three decades, there has been substantial increases of government funding available for victim services. One example is the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), which was enacted in 1984, and specifies that fines collected from convicted federal offenders be deposited into the national Crime Victims Fund. These monies must be used to improve justice systems' response to crime victims. ICJIA is the state agency responsible for administering the victim assistance portion of VOCA to programs across Illinois. Another example is the Violence Against Women Act or VAWA, enacted in 1994. This legislation also allocates substantial funding for crime victim services, specifically for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. ICJIA is also the state agency responsible for administering VAWA funds in Illinois.

During the mid-nineties, ICJIA was new to administering Illinois' VAWA funds, which was about four million dollars each year during that time. Although ICJIA had administered VOCA funds for several years by this time, the amount received each year could not be predicted due to how the funds are supported – fines from federal offenders – which made statewide planning more difficult. In 1996, Illinois' VOCA award for victim assistance projects was just over five million dollars. In 1997, the award increased to nearly 17 million. Although this was great news, ICJIA was faced with the important and challenging responsibility of ensuring that these substantial resources were allocated where they were most needed.

Paucity of meaningful data

Upon recognizing the increased amount of resources ICJIA would need to administer, a planning process was initiated that undertook two primary information gathering steps. The first step was to collect anecdotal information from experts in the field, including staff who have been providing victim services for several years. These individuals had a good sense of what the greatest needs were and where service gaps existed. It was important to obtain feedback from experts from different geographical areas of the state, as well as those who worked with different types of programs and populations.

The second step was pairing the anecdotal information obtained with meaningful data collected consistently statewide. As this second step was undertaken, ICJIA recognized that data that could inform decision making with regard to victim services was scarce at best. Following are descriptions of some of the sources ICJIA examined for this purpose.

Official crime statistics reported by law enforcement are one of the most common sources of information used to help identify such needs. However, this information sheds light only about crimes that come to the attention of law enforcement. The National Crime Victimization Survey, which is conducted annually by the U.S. Department of Justice, tells us that less than half of all crimes are reported to police.¹ When only domestic or sex crimes are considered, this percentage decreases substantially. Further, Illinois' crime statistics are mostly limited to aggregate numbers of incidents. Thus, nothing is known about the nature of these crimes—who committed them, how and why they were committed, who was victimized, or how these crimes impacted the victims.

Although criminal court data in Illinois are publicly available for the most part, the information yields little to inform decision making about needs or service gaps regarding system response to crime victims. The Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts (AOIC) publishes an Annual Statistical Summary Report, which provides aggregate data on the number of criminal cases filed, disposed of, dispositions, and sentences rendered in Illinois' circuit courts. However, these statistics are only distinguished by felonies and misdemeanors, not by crime type. This is not enough information to examine how system response may differ between domestic, sex, or other violent crimes involving victims compared to other types such as property or drug crimes.

ICJIA staff also tried to obtain data directly from the local agencies that provide services to victims. However, these agencies had different methods for collecting and reporting data, primarily driven by requirements of individual funders. This made any information received inconsistent and inefficient. Further, several victim service agencies did not have resources to collect automated information. Rather, data were reported by using tally marks and counting files.

Together, the victim service community and ICJIA staff recommended that efforts be undertaken to enhance and improve the quality of victim service information in Illinois. ICJIA board members and the federal Office for Victims of Crime, the federal agency that dispurses VOCA funds to the states, approved that a small percentage of Illinois' VOCA victim assistance award could be used to develop and implement a statewide data collection system for victim service providers.

The original InfoNet

InfoNet was developed between 1996 and 1997 originally as a Microsoft Access database. Copies of the empty database files were provided to ICADV member agencies for staff to begin entering data in October 1997. ICASA member agencies followed closely, beginning data entry in March 1998. Thus, to date of this printing, nearly ten years of case-level victim service data from domestic violence and sexual assault centers have been entered into the InfoNet system. Each agency's database was maintained locally by the agency, but ICJIA staff was responsible for backing up

¹ Catalano, Shannan. *Criminal Victimization, 2005*, National Crime Victimization Survey, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, September 2006, NCJ 2146444.

database files for each user agency, training, and providing technical assistance. User agencies would send updated databases to ICJIA weekly to back up and maintain statewide data. Since ICJIA was responsible for coordination and administration of more than 100 agency-specific databases, it was challenging to maintain statewide data and provide the necessary assistance to each user agency.

Migration to a web-based system

In 2001, ICJIA hired an information technology consultant to help migrate InfoNet into a centralized, web-based system maintained at ICJIA. This migration allowed the system to be more efficiently coordinated and administered by ICJIA staff, more user friendly for user agency staff, and lessened the technological burdens for victim service agency (or user agency) staff. Users only needed to be responsible for knowing how to enter and retrieve data from the database. After release of the web version of InfoNet, information was transmitted between remote users and the central database via a private network that utilizes data encryption to securely transfer information over the Internet.

III. Partnerships

InfoNet could never have been implemented without active partnerships from other agencies responsible for providing and/or coordinating victim services. The success of implementing a statewide data collection and reporting system is so dependent on these partnerships, that an entire section of this report is devoted solely to this discussion.

One of the most positive impacts of InfoNet is that it has fostered collaborations among both statewide and local, as well as government and nonprofit agencies. This helped avoid duplication in data collection activities and redundancy in analysis and planning efforts, resulting in more efficient coordination of victim service efforts statewide.

It is critical that two types of agencies are actively involved in the development of a statewide system. First, victim service agency staff – those who provide services to victims and directors of victim service agencies must be co-developers of the system. Second, staff from agencies responsible for statewide or regional coordination of victim service agencies, and particularly those that provide funding for victim service agencies, must also be directly involved.

Input from staff who serve victims must be included to ensure the system is useful to them. An important key to successfully implementing a statewide system is that the user agencies find the system useful for purposes beyond fulfilling grant requirements. Their input is also critical for ensuring that the system requirements make business sense.

Statewide or regional agencies responsible for the coordination of victim services also should be active partners in developing user requirements, particularly funding agencies. Different funding agencies will likely have varying reporting requirements and definitions for terms. Funding agencies need to come to consensus on these issues so the system can be used to satisfy requirements for multiple funders. Victim service agencies typically have several funders with varying reporting requirements. If the system cannot help users comply with a funding agency's requirements, the overall utility of the system is threatened. Even if an agency does not allocate grant funds, but simply provides coordination and/or guidance for local victim service agencies, they should also be included as a partner to further ascertain that user requirements will apply and make business sense statewide.

Partnerships to develop InfoNet

To develop system requirements and ensure buy-in from users, ICJIA first initiated partnerships with the two statewide coalitions, the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ICADV) and the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA). These are non-profit, statewide agencies responsible for coordinating victim services and community efforts to improve the criminal justice system's response to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Additionally, their governing bodies are comprised of directors of local victim service agencies, all who have several years of

experience in serving crime victims. Thus, these two coalitions were ideal agencies to begin partnerships with to develop InfoNet.

Advisory committees were formed and regular meetings were held specifically to identify and define the data elements that would later make up the InfoNet system. Prior to InfoNet, there were many inconsistencies in how victim service agencies were defining terms, especially for different types of services. Advisory committee members had to spend considerable time creating definitions for data elements and categories that would apply to agencies across the state.

Advisory committees not only had the tasks of identifying and defining a standard set of data elements and agreeing on uniform reporting requirements for users, they also had to discuss critical concerns of client confidentiality, system security, and determine who would have rights and access to the data. These issues are discussed in more detail in the next section.

In 2004, ICJIA entered into a formal agreement with the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS). IDHS provides state grant funds to several domestic violence and sexual assault agencies. As part of this agreement, IDHS mandated that their grantees adopt InfoNet as their primary data collection and reporting tool. Although most of these agencies were already using InfoNet because they were also member agencies of at least one of the two statewide coalitions, this agreement resulted in an additional 20 domestic violence programs that began using InfoNet in July 2004. Additionally, IDHS agreed to share financial support of InfoNet by providing \$100,000 annually to ICJIA.

ICJIA also partnered with the Child Advocacy Centers of Illinois to develop system requirements for Illinois' 36 child advocacy centers. Sixteen of these agencies decided to adopt InfoNet as their primary data collection and reporting tool. More centers may decide to begin using InfoNet as the system is better able to meet their needs.

Future partnerships

It is crucial to remain open to future partnerships with other agencies that become involved in providing or coordinating victim services. If user agencies start receiving a new grant from a funding agency that was not previously administering grant funds for victim services, ICJIA must reach out to this new funder to familiarize them with InfoNet. InfoNet may already provide all the information necessary to comply with their grant requirements. If this is not the case, revised requirements must be negotiated among ICJIA, user agencies, and the new funding agency.

For example, the federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently began mandating that all recipients of their grant funds comply with new reporting requirements. Some domestic violence agencies, that are also InfoNet user agencies, receive grants from HUD to provide emergency shelter services for domestic violence victims.

ICJIA met with domestic violence user agencies that receive HUD funding to compare the information InfoNet collects with the new HUD reporting requirements. This examination revealed that InfoNet already collects some of the information, but some data fields would need to be added and/or modified to fully comply with the new requirements. It was also decided which data elements that staff might try to negotiate with HUD to modify or exclude from their proposed reporting requirements. After several meetings and discussions among staff from HUD, ICADV, domestic violence user agencies, and ICJIA, a final list of modifications was completed. Together, partners came to a consensus about how InfoNet would be modified to meet HUD's reporting requirements. These modifications are scheduled to begin in May 2007.

IV. Critical issues

Client confidentiality

Client confidentiality was the probably the utmost concern among advisory committee members and continues to be closely monitored as InfoNet modifications are made to meet changing user needs. Advisory committee members decided that absolutely no identifying information about clients could be entered into InfoNet. Thus, InfoNet does not include individual names, full or partial social security numbers, addresses, and not even date of birth. Rather, a client's age at intake is entered.

To ensure identities are confidential, a unique identifier is assigned to each client. These identifiers are typically alphanumeric and must not contain any information potentially yielding the person's identity. It is recommended that user agencies assign unique identifiers to each individual sequentially, but each center may come up with a system that best suits their needs. The only numbering system user agencies are strictly prohibited from using any identifying information as part of this identifier (e.g. social security numbers, birthdates, initials). This unique identifier is entered into the system just once at intake, and users update the client's record with subsequent contacts and events over time.

The associations between client unique identifiers and their respective identifying information are maintained locally at each agency and are never entered into InfoNet. This makes certain that only staff from the user agency are able to match unique identifiers entered into InfoNet with client identifying information.

System security

When the decision was made to migrate InfoNet to a web-based system, security of the information as it transported over the Internet was of paramount concern among users. In spite of the fact that no information is entered into InfoNet that could identify a client, ICJIA and its partners needed to ensure that the data could be safely transported between remote users and the centralized database at ICJIA.

Through a competitive bid process, ICJIA and its partners identified the same software company used by the U.S. Pentagon and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to create a secure network – or a virtual private network (VPN) – to encrypt the data as it transports between remote users and the centralized database. This software also allows for individual authentication, meaning that each staff person who uses InfoNet has their own password to utilize the software. This keeps individuals who may work at a user agency but do not enter or retrieve data from InfoNet from having access to the system.

Another concern of users was that no agency could access data from another agency. To satisfy this, each user agency has a user name and randomly generated password so that no one agency can access another agency's data. This also ensures that when a user agency logs on to the system, access is restricted to their own agency's data. The agency user name and password information is provided only to the agency's

executive director, who is then responsible for providing the information to staff who need to use InfoNet.

Data ownership and access

Data ownership and conditions of use

Another important key for encouraging buy-in from user agencies is establishing formal agreements that each user agency has exclusive rights to their own data entered into InfoNet. ICJIA owns and is responsible for operating the InfoNet system, but ICJIA (as well as any other funding agency) can only use Infonet data under the two conditions listed below. Any other use of the data must be approved by the user agency's executive director.

- Aggregate or summary data that is agency specific can be accessed and used by funding agencies to monitor compliance with grant requirements. *Example: IDHS (a funding agency) can access quarterly summary data from Agency X (their grantee) to determine whether or not the agency is meeting program objectives.*
- Aggregate or summary data that is NOT agency specific can be provided to funding agencies for research and planning purposes, policymakers and practitioners, or anyone from the general public as long as the data are not identifiable to an individual agency. *Example: If the Chicago Tribune contacts the InfoNet manager requesting the number of domestic violence victims who were served by victim service providers in Chicago last year, the InfoNet manager can provide this information because it would be a figure reflecting combined data for several agencies.*

There is one additional purpose for using InfoNet data that may not necessarily need prior authorization of the user agency, but one of the state coalitions instead. When a user agency's director signs an InfoNet user agreement with ICJIA, one section allows directors to grant a statewide agency (ICADV or ICASA or IDHS) power to act on their behalf when authorizing ICJIA to examine client level data for research purposes. Directors may elect not to exercise this option, but most of them do because the research benefits local as well as statewide agencies. These ownership rights and conditions of use can be viewed in the sample user agreement shown in Attachment A.

Access

The only agency that has access to record level data entered into InfoNet are staff from agencies that enter the data. Although funding agencies may have access to aggregate or summary data, they do not have access to client level data. Additionally, no local user agency has access to data from any other user agency. Access to InfoNet is restricted to the agency's own data.

The one exception to this rule applies to ICJIA staff who are part of the InfoNet team. These staff provide assistance to the users, maintain and operate the system, and work to improve the system's utility. It is necessary for InfoNet staff to have full access to

records to maintain the integrity of the data and to provide technical assistance to users. Because these staff persons have such access, their work duties never include any monitoring responsibilities involving grant contracts between ICJIA and InfoNet users. Any record level data seen by InfoNet staff at ICJIA should remain confidential between InfoNet staff and the InfoNet users, and should never be shared or discussed with grant monitoring staff at ICJIA. Like other funding agencies such as ICADV, ICASA, and IDHS, grant monitoring staff at ICJIA only have access to summary data from agencies submitting InfoNet reports in compliance with ICJIA grant requirements.

System maintenance

To effectively operate InfoNet and continuously improve the system's utility for statewide and local agencies, three primary services must be provided to users on an ongoing basis: trainings, technical assistance, and convening regular user group meetings to gain feedback regarding the system's utility from users.

Trainings

ICJIA staff currently provide three types of trainings for InfoNet users: New User, Funding for Staff, and Generating Reports. All trainings are conducted in computer labs alternating between Chicago and Springfield, and are provided at no cost to attendees. The first part of each of these trainings focuses on the history and purpose of InfoNet to provide attendees the "big picture," thereby conveying more knowledge about not only *how* to enter and utilize InfoNet data, but also *why* it is so important to do so.

New user trainings are held about every three to four months for each user agency type (domestic violence, sexual assault, and child advocacy centers), and last four hours between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., which includes a one hour lunch. New User Trainings are designed for staff who enter and/or retrieve data from InfoNet. This training provides hands on experience with entering client intake information, different types of services and activities conducted by staff, client interactions with court and medical systems, and generating reports. This training is designed for staff with little or no experience with InfoNet, but can also serve as a "refresher" for those more experienced with the system.

Funding-for-Staff (FFS) Trainings are two hours in length and are provided about every six months or as necessary for each user agency type. This training teaches attendees a) the concept of FFS, b) how to create a FFS statement, c) how to enter and validate a FFS statement in InfoNet, and d) how to generate a grant-specific report based on FFS statements. This training is appropriate for fiscal officers or directors who are familiar with grant budgets and staff funding sources, and staff who are responsible for entering and maintaining FFS information in InfoNet.

Report Trainings are also two hours and conducted every three to six months for each user agency type. These sessions provide an overview of the types of reports available followed by a demonstration of how programs can use reported information by itself as well as in conjunction with other sources of data (e.g. census data, crime data) for program development and to help identify service gaps. This training is appropriate for

staff who are responsible for entering data into InfoNet and staff who generate and/or review reported data, including data entry specialists, counselors, advocates, supervisors and/or directors.

Beginning in state fiscal year 2008, ICJIA staff will offer a more advanced report training targeted for directors and managers of victim service agencies. This training will provide more advanced data analysis techniques using InfoNet data and Microsoft Excel. This will involve hands on experience developing charts in Excel using InfoNet data, how to analyze trends in client populations and service contacts, and other suggestions for creating charts to facilitate program planning and enhancement of service delivery.

Technical assistance

ICJIA staff provide technical assistance to InfoNet users during regular business hours. With the current number of users, ICJIA handles an average of 7-10 calls per day. The most common types of technical assistance calls entail questions about installing the security or virtual private network software on their computers, how to enter or retrieve data from InfoNet, and questions about the data generated from reports. Technical assistance calls typically increase in volume during times when quarterly or end of year reports are being compiled – January, April, July, and October.

User group meetings

Another critical factor for encouraging continued use and improved utility of InfoNet is the user group meetings held with each of the three user agency types from two to four times per year. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss ways InfoNet could be more useful to both local and statewide agencies. The InfoNet manager obtains feedback from users about what is working well and not working well, obtains consensus about how to modify InfoNet to improve system utility, and implements these recommendations with technical developers at ICJIA. Thus, InfoNet is always being modified to meet changing or newly identified user needs.

Any modification requiring additional data fields or changes to existing data fields are implemented only at the beginning of each calendar and fiscal year (January 1st and July 1st). This helps ensure that such changes do not cause inconsistencies in reporting and misinterpretations of data throughout the year. Other modifications that do not impact the data elements such as new reporting tools, changes to ease data entry, and superficial improvements can be implemented as they are completed.

V. Reports

One of the most important keys to successfully implementing a statewide data collection system is that the users must have a system that not only allows them to comply with grant reporting requirements, but also enhances their capacity to efficiently manage their programs and improve services to victims and the community. To ensure InfoNet could be useful to local user agencies for these purposes, a comprehensive set of reporting tools were developed to extract data in different ways. Three types of reporting tools were developed for local user agencies: exception reports, management reports, and standard reports.

Exception reports

Exception reports help maintain the integrity of the data by identifying potential data entry errors or records that need to be updated. For example, one exception report for the domestic violence programs highlight client identifiers that have open or lengthy shelter entries. This helps highlight those client records that may have a date for entering shelter but no end date was ever entered. Another exception report identifies client identifiers with unknown or missing intake information. This report will provide the client unique identifiers along with the corresponding intake information that is missing or unknown, i.e. marital status, referral source, etc.

Management reports

Management reports reflect record level detail for clients who receive services. This set of reports allows user agencies to build their own reports. They can select from several data elements to be included in the report, select sorting orders, and apply filters to provide subsets of data reflecting the specific criteria they need. For example, user agencies can generate a report that provides demographic data (including age, race, and gender) for each individual client who received criminal justice advocacy services during the month of January 2007. Management reports are often used by supervisors to examine staff caseloads and resources committed for certain services. They are also used by victim service staff to help manage client caseloads and assist in providing case management services to clients.

Standard reports

Standard reports reflect aggregate or summary data and are commonly submitted by local user agencies to funders in compliance with grant reporting requirements. For example, standard reports include (but are not limited to) total numbers of clients served, clients between ages 13 and 17 served, service hours and number of staff contacts devoted to each service type, or offenders who were convicted of felony crimes within a given time period. Standard reports also provide data that can give user agencies influential leverage in advocating for improved system response to victims. Finally, standard reports facilitate program development by providing user agencies a more complete picture of their client caseload over time. Standard reports include several filters so that user agencies can retrieve more specific data according to their needs. For example, user agencies can generate a report reflecting data for clients

served age 13 to 17. This can assist user agencies with developing new service approaches tailored to meet specific needs of this age group.

VI. Grant-specific information (Funding for Staff utility)

Several funding agencies require grantees to report only those activities supported with grant funds rather than activities conducted with all agency resources. To accommodate this need, InfoNet contains a utility known as Funding for Staff (FFS) that allows users to generate grant-specific data. Victim service providers often have staff whose salaries are supported by two or more different funding sources. Moreover, each of these grants will typically have guidelines as to what types of services these funds can and cannot support. Prior to InfoNet, tracking of grant specific information tedious, time consuming, and burdensome for victim service providers.

User agency staff enter grant-funded staff persons into the FFS utility, along with the fundable services each staff person provides and the percentages for which these services are supported by each funding source. For example, if advocate Jane Doe's salary was 100% funded with a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant, user agency staff would enter three key pieces of information into the FFS utility: 1) the name of the grant-supported staff person (Jane Doe); 2) the services she provides (civil, criminal justice, and personal advocacy); and 3) each of the three services is linked to the correct funding source and percentage – VOCA 100%. InfoNet uses this information to recognize that 100% of Jane Doe's hours spent providing these three advocacy services should be reflected on a VOCA report. Using the same example, let's now say that only 50% of Jane Doe's salary was supported by a VOCA grant, while the other half of her salary was supported by a grant from the Attorney General's Office. The third piece of information mentioned above would change from VOCA 100% to *VOCA 50%; Attorney General's Office 50%*. This information would allow InfoNet to generate a VOCA report correctly in that it would count only half of Jane Doe's service hours. Similarly, an Attorney General's Office report would also count half of Jane Doe's service hours.

Another critical piece of information entered into the FFS utility is the effective date. User agencies may have staff turnover in grant-funded positions, and even when staff persons remain consistent, directors may decide to change how staff salaries are funded over time. The FFS utility collects and retains date sensitive funding information so that grant-specific reports are accurate even when the report reflects data for a time period overlapping these changes. Whenever there is a change in a grant-funded position or how grants support staff, user agency staff add a new FFS effective date. When the new effective date is created, all information from the earlier effective dates remain effective for only their respective time periods. This allows user agencies to make necessary changes when they occur, while retaining all the historical funding information to produce accurate grant-specific data over time.

To illustrate, let's use the same example cited above using Jane Doe's salary, an advocate who provides civil, criminal justice, and personal advocacy. Jane Doe was originally hired by the agency director on July 1, 2006, and 100% of her salary was supported with a VOCA grant. Six months later, the director decided to change how the agency paid for Jane's salary. As of January 1, 2007, the director wanted only half (50%) of Jane's salary to be supported with this grant and fund the other half with a new

grant received from the Attorney General's Office. She decided to use the remaining funds from the VOCA grant to support a new part-time counselor. On or after January 1, 2007, the director viewed her FFS utility to see the most recent effective date from July 1st, 2006. She adds a new effective date of January 1st, 2007, and changes Jane Doe's funding sources for the three services she provides from VOCA – 100% to VOCA 50% and Attorney General's Office – 50%. Thus, the correct information is retained since July 1st, 2006. Between July 1st and December 31st, InfoNet would count 100% of Jane Doe's service hours toward the VOCA grant; but after January 1st, InfoNet would only count 50% of Jane's service hours. At the end of the state fiscal year, which ends June 30th, the director can generate a VOCA report for the entire fiscal year that will apply these rules and produce an accurate, grant-specific report using a VOCA funding filter.

Once all the necessary information is entered into the Funding for Staff utility, user agency staff can generate a grant-specific report by simply applying a funding filter before generating the report. With no filters applied, InfoNet reports will generate agency-wide information. Funding filters allow user agency staff to select one or more funding sources so that the report will only reflect services supported by that specific funding source(s).

VII. Administrative report utility

InfoNet has an administrative report utility that is accessible to funding agencies, which allows them to generate standard reports reflecting aggregate data for their grantees. Funding agencies that currently utilize the administrative report utility include ICJIA, ICADV, ICASA, and IDHS.

Every quarter and at the end of each state fiscal year, statewide agencies submit standard reports to be generated for each of their grantees. They also submit reports that generate combined data for multiple agencies. Thus, statewide funding agencies have the capacity to not only generate agency-specific data reports, but also reports that reflect statewide, regional, or project specific data. These statewide agencies only have access to aggregate data, not record level, for the local agencies receiving grant funds. Reports reflecting agency-level data are used for grant monitoring purposes, while reports reflecting combined data for multiple agencies – typically yielding regional or statewide data – are used to facilitate informed decision making and responsible, efficient resource allocation for victim services.

The administrative utility has a built in system of checks and balances to ensure that data entered into InfoNet and subsequently used to comply with grant reporting requirements are complete and accurate. When a statewide funding agency submits reports, they are not generated immediately. Rather, each of their grantees are notified upon logging into InfoNet that reports have been submitted by the funding agency to be generated on a certain date and time, usually three to seven days before the reports are actually generated. This provides local user agencies ample time to ensure that all data are entered for the time period the report will reflect. Once the reports have been generated, local user agencies receive another notification upon logging into InfoNet – that the reports are ready for review and approval. The final step is for user agencies (and grantees of the funding agency) to review and approve the report.

When user agencies review the report, they may either approve or reject their report. If the data look accurate and seem to reflect the agency's actual activities, reports are approved by simply clicking an "Approve" button. If data in the report do not seem accurate, user agency staff may also click a "Reject" button. If a report is rejected, user agency staff are then prompted to cite the reason for rejection in a text box, which will later be reviewed by the funding agency. For example, if the director of a local user agency is reviewing a quarterly data report generated by IDHS, they may examine the data and recognize that clients served by one advocate have not been entered. In this instance, the director would reject the report, and then type in the explanation for the rejection – that one staff member (who perhaps has been out the past week) was unable to finishing entering his or her client data. After the funding agency receives responses from each agency that rejected reports, the funding agency will submit a final round of reports only for these agencies.

Not only does this process improve the quality and completeness of data maintained in InfoNet, but it also provides a paperless exchange of information between funding

agencies and grantees to comply with grant reporting requirements. Prior to InfoNet, each grantee would complete paper data reports to funders. Funding agencies would maintain years of data in paper reports that may not have been entered into an automated system to facilitate data analysis and using the data to target resources effectively. InfoNet's administrative reporting utility produces more efficient reporting about grantee activity, provides funding agencies with timely, easy access to grantees' aggregate data, eases data exchange burdens on both funding agencies and grantees, and provides an instrumental tool for informing statewide policy and planning initiatives.

VIII. How InfoNet data are used

InfoNet is changing perceptions and revolutionizing the way victim service information is utilized and services are provided in Illinois. When InfoNet was first implemented, service providers did not have access to the latest technologies, and they were more familiar with counseling clients than using computers or analyzing data. Service providers traditionally perceived data collection and reporting as a necessary burden undertaken to receive grant funds. Gathering and analyzing data were not considered activities that could enhance the delivery of victim services. While some mechanisms for collecting data existed before InfoNet, analysis was cumbersome and not conducted on a regular basis. Service providers and funding agencies utilize InfoNet data to analyze client populations, measure program effectiveness, manage caseloads, and help improve service plans and coordination of crime victim services across Illinois.

Use by statewide agencies

State agencies that support services to victims of crime have confirmed InfoNet's utility. These agencies have access to accurate and timely information, which is used to assess program performance and support statewide policy and planning initiatives. Further, InfoNet has fostered collaboration between state entities, which now work together to avoid duplication in data collection activities and redundancy in analysis and planning efforts.

Grant monitoring

Statewide agencies use InfoNet standard reports reviewed and approved by local agencies to assess program performance. Reports help them determine the extent to which an agency is meeting specified goals and objectives for the grant, as well as to see if the targeted jurisdiction or population is being served.

Planning and coordination of resources

Another important function of funding agencies is to ensure that resources are allocated efficiently by targeting the greatest areas of need. InfoNet data are used to help identify these areas by analyzing data in different ways. Emerging trends may appear statewide, in a specific region, or among a certain subpopulation. When needs are identified, a funding agency should coordinate efforts to address them. After these efforts have been implemented, InfoNet data can help determine the extent to which these needs have been addressed.

Research projects

Because statewide funding agencies only have access to aggregate and not record-level data, they can reach out to professional researchers to conduct more in-depth analyses using record-level data with the permission of local agency executive directors. Such studies can produce findings with instrumental implications for policy and practice for both local and statewide agencies. When research projects are conducted, there are strict rules for ensuring the data are kept confidential and used only for the purposes intended. No agency-specific findings are published (unless

requested for and approved by the agency's executive director). Rather, findings reveal trends and patterns among clients served statewide and regionally, as well as among different subpopulations (e.g. teen victims, victims in rural areas) to foster changes in policy and practice aimed at improving services and system response to crime victims.

Use by local user agencies

Reporting to funders

User agencies frequently use InfoNet to comply with reporting requirements mandated by funding agencies. Standard reports were developed that generate aggregate data about clients served and services provided, which satisfy reporting requirements for several state and federal funding agencies.

Justify need for new or continued funding

InfoNet has enhanced the capacity of local agencies to demonstrate the valuable work they are doing in their communities, thereby justifying to funders that grant money is being well spent. Additionally, InfoNet data has helped agencies leverage for new funding in response to patterns suggesting growing needs that the agency is not able to address with existing resources. For example, if a local user agency noticed that the number of victims served who did not speak English was increasing, they could use this information to leverage funds for hiring a new counselor or advocate who speaks the language fluently.

Case management and staff supervision

Management reports combined with use of data filtering tools enhance local user agencies' capacity to provide case management services to clients and help manage client caseloads among staff. Advocates and counselors can generate reports reflecting basic intake and service contact information for their clients over a specified time period, thereby providing staff an "at a glance" record of client characteristics and services received. This information helps service staff develop, monitor and modify client service plans according to changing or newly identified client needs. Directors and supervisors can use these same tools to analyze staff caseloads and services provided by staff, as well as to gain a clear sense about resources committed for specific services and client populations.

Program development

More and more, local agency staff are recognizing how powerful their information can be for improving programs and services. Statewide agencies primarily use InfoNet data to help identify needs, service gaps, and under or unserved populations. Not only can local agency staff use InfoNet data for the same purposes at the community level, they have means to do it better because they are embedded in the community. They have more knowledge about the local populations and cultures, community resources outside their agency, and how justice and health systems generally respond to victims in their community. Statewide agencies may be able to identify needs in specific region of Illinois or among certain subpopulation, but local agencies can target neighborhoods and more specific resident populations in need.

Standard and management reports can be used to develop client profiles and analyze client populations over time. Now that years of data are available to them within minutes, they can use these tools to identify changes in their client population over time. For example, one local agency noticed an increase in the number of clients age 60 or older in recent years, which prompted staff to develop new service approaches for this population – as a 65 year old victim will likely have a completely different set of issues than a more typical victim in their 20's or 30's.

Reporting tools can also be used in conjunction with other data sources such as crime or census data to help improve prevention and outreach services to the community. Local user agencies can compare client population data generated from InfoNet with census data for the jurisdiction served. For example, one user agency learned that five percent of their client caseload over the past year were Hispanic. When staff from the agency examined census data, they learned that 10 percent of the general population in the area served was Hispanic. This prompted agency staff to provide more outreach services to the Hispanic community.

Another example is from a sexual assault user agency that examined the percentage of victims served by their relationship to offenders. Because so many relationships comprised close friends, acquaintances, and intimate partners, these statistics are now presented as part of community prevention efforts to dispel myths about sex offenders being more likely to be strangers to the victim.

Affect system change

Because InfoNet allows user agencies to enter information about other systems – the offender's contact with police and state's attorney's offices and victim interactions with court and medical systems, staff are able to efficiently collect and examine this information. They do not have to rely on other agencies as the sole source of information about offenders or other systems' responses to victims they are serving.

InfoNet data collected on other systems has given user agencies a powerful tool for identifying areas where system response could be improved and affect systems change. For example, local agency staff can use their InfoNet data to show their local chief judge how offenders may be convicted of violent crimes, but receive light sentences or no jail time. This information can also be used by statewide and regional agencies to advocate for certain funding priorities or policy changes aimed to improve services and/or system response to crime victims.

Assess impact of institutional advocacy and outreach efforts

Local agencies can use InfoNet data to help measure the impact of institutional advocacy and outreach efforts. Since InfoNet collects staff service contacts for these important services as well as other information that might change over time in response to these efforts, InfoNet data can shed light about whether these efforts are making a difference in the communities they serve. For example, let's say a director of a user agency decides to increase resources to conduct institutional advocacy at three

community hospitals. Advocates from the agency begin spending more time providing trainings to emergency medical staff at these hospitals about how to better identify victims of abuse. After some months of these enhanced efforts, this agency might notice an increase in the number of clients referred to their agency from these hospitals. This would support that stepped up efforts devoted to improving skills of medical staff are making a difference in the community – providing more victims with access to free services they may need.

Local agencies can also use other data elements as baseline measures for determining impacts of services. If a domestic violence agency devotes more staff and service hours talking to local police departments about the dynamics of domestic violence, that agency might hope to see an increase in the number of victims whose offenders were arrested or who were interviewed by a patrol officer and/or detective.

IX. Total operating budget

InfoNet has been supported with federal and state funding. ICJIA secured funds for system development and maintenance from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime. State general revenue funds have been used to provide the required 20 percent match for use of VOCA funds. ICJIA also secured funds from the Illinois Department of Human Services to share maintenance costs for InfoNet. IDHS provides \$100,000 per year to operate and maintain InfoNet for their victim service grantees. The current annual operating budget for InfoNet, which includes costs for ongoing maintenance as well as system development and expansion is \$450,000. Generally, about 70 percent of these funds is expended on personnel salaries and benefits, 18 percent is for computer equipment and software, seven percent is for rent and utilities, while the remaining five percent is for miscellaneous expenses such as information technology training for staff, travel, or other needed supplies.

To some this may seem expensive, but for Illinois, it has been an investment resulting in much more valuable benefits to communities, particularly crime victims. When the millions of dollars and other resources expended on crime victim services in Illinois are considered, the operating costs for InfoNet amount to less than one percent of this total. Moreover, victim service provider agencies do not pay fees to utilize InfoNet. Although they invest time entering and analyzing data, this is something they have always done but it was more time consuming, inefficient and generally not used to facilitate improved services and system response to victims.

X. Keys to successful implementation of a statewide data collection system

1. Collaboration/Partnerships

The number one reason why InfoNet has reaped benefits for Illinois is because of the active partnerships from other agencies responsible for providing and/or coordinating victim services. The success of implementing a statewide data collection and reporting system literally hinges and the quality and input gathered from these relationships.

One of the most positive impacts of InfoNet is that it has fostered collaborations among both statewide and local, as well as government and nonprofit agencies, to work together. This collaboration has helped avoid duplication in data collection activities and redundancy in analysis and planning efforts, resulting in more efficient coordination of and enhancement of victim service efforts statewide.

It is critical that two types of agencies are actively involved in initial and continued development of a statewide system. First and foremost, victim service agency staff – those who provide services to victims and directors of victim service agencies must be co-developers of the system. Second, agencies responsible for statewide or regional coordination of victim service agencies, and particularly those that provide funding for victim service agencies, must also be directly involved. It is important to initiate plans to develop a statewide system in cooperation with both types of agencies, and it is equally important to be ready for future partnerships with additional agencies over time.

2. System utility

The second most important key for ensuring a successful statewide data collection system is dependent on the utility of the system for both statewide and local user agencies. Drawing from Illinois' experience, one of the most motivating factors initially for local user agencies was to have a system that facilitated less burdensome, more efficient, timely, and accurate data reporting functions to satisfy grant reporting requirements. As users became more comfortable with InfoNet and aware of how powerful the information could be for improving programs and services, InfoNet data was increasingly used to analyze client populations, measure program effectiveness, manage caseloads and enhance service plans. The more useful local agencies find the system, system utility also increases for statewide agencies as the data are more complete and accurate.

Although grant reporting requirements are important, the InfoNet team's mission should be focused on the ideal of improving the system's utility so much that local user agencies would continue to use and benefit from InfoNet even if they had no funding requirements to satisfy.

3. Application of system data for informed decision making and planning

To maintain continued user buy-in and use of a statewide system, the integrity and application of the information yielded are critical factors. Nothing will demonstrate this more than when statewide agencies use the data to inform changes in policy and practice. Such action demonstrates how these data are revolutionizing the way victim service data is utilized and services are provided in Illinois. Service providers traditionally perceived data collection and reporting as a necessary burden undertaken to receive grant funds. Gathering and analyzing data were not considered activities that could enhance the delivery of victim services. When data are used to inform policy or practice, particularly by statewide funding agencies, this provides a model for local agencies to use the information similarly at the community level where more targeted service gaps can be identified.

4. Providing local user agencies with exclusive rights to own data and restricting access to client level data

Another critical factor for a statewide system to expect continued user buy-in and use of system data is to grant exclusive ownership rights to the agency that enters the data, and to clearly explicate under what conditions and by whom their data may be used. This should be completed with the use of formal agreements between the system's administrative agency and each user agency (see Appendix A for sample of agreement). The system contains sensitive information about crime victims and the services and activities provided by agency staff that only they should have exclusive control over. Statewide or funding agencies should only exercise control over data that yield information regarding compliance with grant requirements and that facilitate more efficient and responsible resource allocation.

5. Quality service by the system's administrating agency

To effectively operate InfoNet and continuously improve the system's utility as well as the capacity of victim service providers to use the system, three primary services must be provided to users on an ongoing basis: trainings for using InfoNet and the information it generates: technical assistance for users, and convening user group meetings to gain feedback regarding the system's utility from users. See Section IV of this report for more details about what these services entail for Illinois.

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APPENDIX A

Sample InfoNet User Agreement

INFONET USER AGREEMENT (DV)

1. Parties to the Agreement. This agreement is entered into by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (hereinafter referred to as "AUTHORITY") and the XX (hereinafter referred to as "InfoNet USER").

2. Background and Purpose. The AUTHORITY and victims service providers recognize the need to enhance data collection efforts and strengthen reporting capabilities in Illinois. The AUTHORITY and service providers rely on accurate and available client, service and program information for developing and implementing strategies for victim services statewide. Victim service providers that receive Federal funds from the AUTHORITY are also required to submit program data to the AUTHORITY as a measure of program performance.

The AUTHORITY is the lead agency for the design and implementation of a statewide information network (InfoNet) for victim service providers in Illinois. A server database is at the core of the network. USER's access the database with a web-browser and then transmit information to the AUTHORITY's server database through secured channels. The database system includes standard reports that can be automatically generated and electronically transmitted to funders. Information that may be used to identify individuals served by participating agencies is not collected in the InfoNet system.

3. Consideration. In exchange for the AUTHORITY providing the InfoNet System to InfoNet USER, the InfoNet USER will provide data to the AUTHORITY for planning and other purposes, as outlined in Section 9 of this agreement.

4. Services to be Furnished. The AUTHORITY InfoNet system will provide a central data repository that can be accessed over the Internet through a secure virtual private network. The Authority will provide training on the InfoNet to the designated Infonet Manager.

5. Term and Termination. The term of this agreement shall commence on XX and shall remain in effect through June 30, 2001. The term of this agreement shall be extended for one-year periods unless written notice of intent by either party not to renew this agreement is received at least 30 days before the end of any contract period.

The AUTHORITY or the InfoNet USER may suspend or terminate performance of this agreement for nonconformance with, or violation of, any applicable

law or regulation, or with the terms or conditions of this agreement.

Upon termination or expiration of this agreement, the AUTHORITY shall immediately deliver to the InfoNet USER copies of InfoNet USER'S data contained in the InfoNet database in an appropriate electronic format. Upon termination, the AUTHORITY will continue to retain InfoNet USER data, subject to the limitations set forth in Section 9.

6. InfoNet User's Group. There shall be InfoNet User's groups, whose members shall be selected from the subscribing InfoNet USERS. These user's groups shall assist the AUTHORITY in the design and upgrade of the InfoNet to assure that the InfoNet is compatible with existing InfoNet USER operations.

7. Standards and Guidelines. The InfoNet User's group may recommend to the AUTHORITY standards and guidelines necessary for the effective operation of the InfoNet and to ensure the quality of the information entered, and the AUTHORITY may promulgate standards and guidelines based on such recommendations or on its own initiative. InfoNet USER shall follow all such standards and guidelines. InfoNet USER shall follow and be bound by all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. InfoNet USER shall take appropriate action by instruction, agreement, or otherwise to inform its employees of such standards and guidelines.

8. InfoNet Manager. InfoNet USER shall designate an InfoNet Manager, who shall be InfoNet USER's primary contact with the AUTHORITY regarding InfoNet operations and will be responsible for training its new users on InfoNet operations.

9. Ownership of Data/Disclosure. For the purposes of this agreement, all data that are entered into the InfoNet by InfoNet USER shall be deemed the property of InfoNet USER. The AUTHORITY may review all information entered by InfoNet USER for the purpose of ensuring the integrity of the data in the InfoNet and ensuring the proper operation of the InfoNet system. In addition:

- a) Any and all data related to the performance of InfoNet USER pursuant to an interagency agreement for grant funds from the Authority may be reviewed, analyzed, and/or disseminated by the AUTHORITY.
- b) Other data entered by InfoNet USER, combined with data entered by other InfoNet USERS, may be used by the AUTHORITY

for research and planning purposes, but such data may not be identifiable to any individual InfoNet USER.

- c) Unless required by law or court order, any other data entered by InfoNet USER and identifiable to InfoNet USER, may only be reviewed, analyzed, disseminated and/or published by the AUTHORITY with written permission from InfoNet USER. To request permission to use data as described in this subparagraph (c) the Authority must submit a written request that clearly states which data will be used, the purpose of the use of the data, how the results will be used and, if applicable, where the work will be published. It shall remain within the power and authority of the InfoNet USER to reject a request without cause.

InfoNet USER may delegate to the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence its authority to provide such written permission required in section 9(c) above by initialing in the space provided below. InfoNet USER may revoke such delegation by sending notice in writing to the AUTHORITY and to the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

By initialing below, InfoNet USER agrees to allow the Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence to determine whether to allow the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority to review, analyze, disseminate, and/or publish data or information identifiable to InfoNet USER and contained in the InfoNet as described in subsection 9(c) above.

Initials _____

10. Ownership of Software/Programs. All software and computer programs developed by the AUTHORITY are copyrighted and shall remain the property of the AUTHORITY. InfoNet USER shall have a nonexclusive license to use InfoNet software and computer programs, without cost, so long as InfoNet standards and guidelines and the terms of this agreement are followed.

11. Publication and Reporting of Research and Analysis. Subject to the provisions of Section 9, the AUTHORITY reserves the right to publish or report findings of research and analysis done on information included in the InfoNet system. The AUTHORITY will provide InfoNet USER with prior notice of any publication or report using InfoNet information identifiable to InfoNet USER as described in subsection 9(c) above, and will provide a copy of the publication or report to the InfoNet User.

12. Confidentiality/Privacy. The AUTHORITY shall design, develop, configure, and maintain the InfoNet system so that no database elements representing

fields that will include information identifying clients will be maintained or accessible at AUTHORITY or InfoNet USER premises. The InfoNet USER shall not enter any such personally identifiable information into the InfoNet system. The AUTHORITY shall not enter any such personally identifiable information into the InfoNet system.

13. Security. The AUTHORITY shall protect the security, confidentiality and integrity of the InfoNet system and any information transmitted through or stored on the InfoNet system, through firewall protection, maintenance of independent archival and backup copies of the InfoNet system and data, and protection from any network attack and other malicious, harmful or disabling data, work, code or program. The AUTHORITY computer facility shall be under the direct control of AUTHORITY personnel.

InfoNet USER shall at all times maintain procedures, provisions, conditions and equipment for the security of its site. Such procedures and provisions shall assure that: effective hardware and software designs are instituted to prevent unauthorized access to, disclosure of, and dissemination of InfoNet data and files; access to the InfoNet program is restricted to authorized personnel; and confidentiality agreements, delineating the importance of a need for security and confidentiality of data and files maintained in or available through the InfoNet are executed. Any InfoNet related software that is installed on a computer used to access the InfoNet private network must be removed prior to the disposal of the computer or transfer of the computer for another use. The Authority should be notified so that the account registered to that computer may be disabled.

14. Maintenance of Data. InfoNet USER is solely responsible for entering, updating and maintaining data in the InfoNet. InfoNet USER is responsible for correcting data problems with InfoNet USER data upon discovering any data problems or when notified of such by the AUTHORITY.

15. Indemnification/Limitation of Liability. The accuracy of data that are transmitted through or entered into the InfoNet is the sole responsibility of the InfoNet USER. The AUTHORITY shall have no liability of any kind for any damages caused by or arising out of the loss of data stored by the AUTHORITY, or any incidental, special, or consequential damages. InfoNet USER shall indemnify and hold harmless the AUTHORITY for InfoNet USER's errors, omissions, and liabilities that arise from InfoNet USER's use of the InfoNet or data contained therein or while the AUTHORITY is acting in the capacity of agent serving as custodian for and processing and storing data which the InfoNet USER has input into and/or has removed from the InfoNet. InfoNet USER shall not be liable or responsible for nor indemnify the AUTHORITY for errors, omissions,

or liabilities of any other InfoNet USER or any person or entity acting at the direction of the AUTHORITY.

16. Compatibility of Equipment. The InfoNet USER shall obtain and use equipment for access to the InfoNet that adheres to specifications developed by the AUTHORITY. The AUTHORITY is not responsible for developing, configuring, or maintaining the InfoNet system to accommodate the use of any equipment that does not adhere to AUTHORITY equipment specifications.

17. Independent Contractor. The parties and their respective personnel, are and shall be independent contractors and neither party by virtue of this agreement shall have any right, power or authority to act or create any obligation, express or implied, on behalf of the other party.

18. Assignment. InfoNet USER may not assign, subcontract, or transfer any interests in the work subject of this agreement without AUTHORITY'S prior written consent. In the event the AUTHORITY gives such consent, the terms and conditions of this agreement shall apply to and bind the party or parties to whom such work is subcontracted, assigned, or transferred as fully and completely as InfoNet USER is hereby bound and obligated.

The AUTHORITY may transfer the subject matter of this agreement to another State agency after giving written notice to InfoNet USER. In case of assignment, the InfoNet User has the right to terminate the contract before the expiration of the contract period as stated in Section 5.

19. Waiver. No waiver of any provision hereof or of any right or remedy hereunder shall be effective unless in writing and signed by the party against whom such waiver is sought to be enforced. No delay in exercising, no course of dealing with respect to, or no partial exercise of any right or remedy hereunder shall constitute a waiver of any other right or remedy, or future exercise thereof.

20. Severability. If any term or condition of this agreement is declared illegal, void, unenforceable, or against public policy, that term or condition shall be ignored and shall not affect the remaining terms and conditions of this agreement. The remaining terms and conditions shall remain in full force and effect, and the agreement shall be interpreted as far as possible to give effect to the parties' intent.

21. Applicable Law. This agreement shall be governed and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois.

22. Amendments and Modifications. No amendment, change, waiver, or discharge hereof shall be valid unless in writing and signed by both parties.

23. Survival. The definitions herein and the respective rights and obligations of the parties under Sections 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 15 shall survive any termination or expiration hereof.

24. Force Majeure. In the event that either party is unable to perform any of its obligation under this agreement or to enjoy any of its benefits because of (or if loss of the services is caused by) natural disaster, action or decrees of governmental bodies or communication line failure not the fault of the affected party (hereinafter referred to as a "Force Majeure Event") the party who has been so affected immediately shall give notice to the other party and shall do everything possible to resume performance. Upon receipt of such notice, all obligations under this agreement shall be immediately suspended. If the period of nonperformance exceeds 30 days from the receipt of notice of the Force Majeure Event, the party whose performance has not been so affected may, by giving written notice, terminate this agreement.

25. Availability of Appropriations. The AUTHORITY will use its best efforts to secure sufficient appropriations to fund the InfoNet. However, the AUTHORITY'S obligations hereunder shall cease immediately, without penalty or further performance being required, if the Illinois General Assembly or federal funding source fails to make an appropriation sufficient to continue support of the InfoNet. The AUTHORITY shall determine whether amounts appropriated are sufficient. The AUTHORITY shall give InfoNet USER notice of insufficient funding as soon as practicable after the AUTHORITY becomes aware of the insufficiency.

26. Integration. This agreement, including any attachments, constitutes the complete and exclusive statement of agreement between the parties, which supercedes all proposals or prior agreements, oral or written, and all other communications between the parties relating to the subject matter of this agreement.

27. Acceptance. The terms of this agreement are hereby accepted and executed by the proper authorized officers and officials of the parties hereto.

APPENDIX B

BACKGROUND ON THE ILLINOIS CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION AUTHORITY

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority was created in 1983 to coordinate the use of information in the criminal justice system; to promulgate effective criminal justice information policy; to encourage the improvement of criminal justice agency procedures and practices with respect to information; to provide new information technologies; to permit the evaluation of information practices and programs; to stimulate research and development of new methods and uses of criminal justice information for the improvement of the criminal justice system and the reduction of crime; and to protect the integrity of criminal history record information, while protecting the citizen's right to privacy (see 20 ILCS 3930 *et seq.*). The specific powers and duties of the Authority are delineated in the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Act (Illinois Compiled Statutes, Ch. 20, Sec. 393/7).

Composition & Membership

The Authority is governed by a 21-member board of state and local leaders in the criminal justice community, plus experts from the private sector. The Authority is supported by a full-time professional staff working out of the agency's office in Chicago. The Authority is led by a chairman, who is appointed by the governor from among the board's members. By law, the Authority meets at least four times a year in public meetings. Authority members are responsible for setting agency priorities, tracking the progress of ongoing programs, and monitoring the agency's budget.

By law, the Authority includes:

- Two police chiefs (Chicago and another municipality)
- Two sheriffs (Cook and another county)
- Two state's attorneys (Cook and another county)
- Two circuit court clerks (Cook and another county)
- Illinois attorney general (or designee)
- Director, Illinois State Police
- Director, Illinois Department of Corrections
- Director, Office of the State's Attorney's Appellate Prosecutor
- Director, Office of the State's Attorney's Appellate Defender
- Executive Director, Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board
- Cook County Board President

- Six members of the public

The Authority accomplishes its goals through efforts in four areas: 1) information systems, technology and data quality; 2) research and analysis; 3) policy and planning; and 4) grants administration.

1. Information systems, technology, and data quality

The Authority: (1) Develops, operates, and maintains computerized information systems for criminal justice and victim service agencies; (2) Serves as the sole administrative appeal body for determining citizen challenges to the accuracy of their criminal history records; and (3) Monitors the operation of existing criminal justice information systems to protect the constitutional rights and privacy of citizens.

2. Research and analysis

The Authority: (1) Publishes research studies that analyze a variety of crime trends and criminal justice issues; (2) Acts as a clearinghouse for information and research on crime and the criminal justice system; (3) Audits the state central repositories of criminal history record information for data accuracy and completeness; and (4) Develops and tests statistical methodologies and provides statistical advice and interpretation to support criminal justice decision making.

3. Policy and planning

The Authority: (1) Develops and implements comprehensive strategies for drug and violent crime law enforcement, crime control, and assistance to crime victims, using federal funds awarded to Illinois; (2) Advises the governor and the General Assembly on criminal justice policies and legislation; and (3) Develops and evaluates state and local programs for improving law enforcement and the administration of criminal justice.

4. Grants administration

The Authority: (1) Implements and funds victim assistance and violent crime and drug law enforcement programs under the federal Anti-Drug Abuse Act, Victims of Crime Act, Violence Against Women Act, and other grant programs as they become available; (2) Monitors program activity and provides technical assistance to grantees; (3) Coordinates policy-making groups to learn about ongoing concerns of criminal justice officials; and (4) Provides staff support to the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council, an 11-member board working to curb motor vehicle theft.

ICJIA

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Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor
Sheldon Sorosky, Chairman
Lori G. Levin, Executive Director
