

McLean County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
Council Meeting – July 5, 2012

Chief Judge Elizabeth Robb welcomed the group and led introductions.

ISU Stevenson Center Data Report

Dr. Frank Beck gave an overview of the current data analysis. Over the past 6 months there has been significant time dedicated to the restructuring of the data management process. This was done to merge the sentencing data and out-of-county warrant data in the jail bookings and length of stay analysis. The aggregated data set contains information from 2007 to 2012 in the following general categories:

- Arrival and release dates
- Booking information (initial charge, most severe charge, disposition charge)
- Violent and non-violent offenses
- Whether the charge involved drugs
- Demographic data – age, sex, ethnicity

Dr. Beck gave an overview of the number of beds used by case category; total number of persons incarcerated by charge severity; average number of beds used (felony charge); average number of beds utilized (non-felony); and information related to length of stay.

The next steps for Dr. Beck and Dr. Wells are to:

- Update the jail analysis by month and quarter
- Update case processing analysis (time to disposition) as 2011 cases are concluded
- Further analysis regarding length of stay for violent and non-violent offenses
- Merge demographic data into the above analysis

There was limited discussion regarding case disposition standards. The goal is to compare the practices of McLean County to the National Center for State Courts recommended case disposition standards.

Legislative Update

Kim Campbell (McLean County Public Defender) distributed information on revised Supreme Court Rules 15, 402, 431 and 651. She also distributed information regarding FY 2013 budget reductions for various state agencies and programs.

SB 2621 has been signed by Governor Quinn on June 22, 2012 and reinstated meritorious good time credit to most IDOC inmates. This will assist the Public Defender in negotiating plea agreements. The Sheriff's Office reported that they expect to see an uptick in the number of inmates participating in GED and Life-Skills classes to obtain the MGT credit.

Ms. Campbell is still working on the end-of-session legislative information and will have a full report in October.

Juvenile Justice Council

Cathy Waltz (Superintendent, Juvenile Detention Center) gave a report on the Council.

There has been a change in leadership in the Council, and their current focus is the summer jobs program for at-risk youth in Bloomington/Normal. There are two programs (through Project Oz and Western Avenue Community Center) that began operations in the first week of June.

The Council is working on gathering some performance statistics with the assistance of Dr. Kethineni (Illinois State University Department of Criminal Justice Sciences). Dr. Kethineni is also conducting the evaluation of the Juvenile Redeploy Illinois program [see – ***Redeploy Illinois Program: The Impact on Juveniles, Families, and the Juvenile Justice System***, Dr. Sessa Kethineni, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Journal; Volume 63, Number 2 (Spring 2012)].

The Juvenile Abuse- Child Protection Roundtable is being wrapped into the Juvenile Justice Council.

Strategic Planning for the CJCC

Judge Robb stated that the CJCC Executive Committee has identified strategic planning as a priority for the coming months and will be developing a long-range vision and focus on a number of projects in pursuit of those goals. Dr. Frank Beck has agreed to facilitate the strategic plan. The planning process will be initiated following the change in the State's Attorney to Mr. Jason Chambers. This should occur in October 2012.

Other

Robert Sutherland (League of Women Voters Representative) asked about the status of the discussion in the Executive Committee regarding the McLean County Sheriff's office and the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) policy on detaining persons arrested for deportation.

Judge Robb responded – *At the last CJCC meeting, Cheryl Gaines asked the Executive Committee of the CJCC to consider placing Mr. Sonny Garcia, of Latinos United for Change (LUC) on the next CJCC agenda. Judge Freitag, Chair of the Executive Committee, which determines the agenda an issues to be addressed by the CJCC, gave his card to Mr. Garcia and asked him to contact him so that Mr. Garcia could meet with the members of the Executive Committee to discuss this request. Mr. Garcia has not contacted Judge Freitag.*

Mr. Garcia did contact me (Judge Robb), several days after the last Executive Committee meeting (on June 13) to ask if the LUC issues would be on the CJCC agenda. I told him no. He then asked if he could speak at the CJCC meeting, and I told him that we have not followed that practice previously and did not intend to do so at this meeting today.

We remain willing to discuss Mr. Garcia's concerns at an Executive Committee meeting, or at some other time.

As Chair of the CJCC, I would like to comment on the purpose and structure of the CJCC:

The CJCC was formed in July 2009. Membership includes the Chief Judge of the Circuit and Presiding Judge of the Criminal Division of McLean County, the Sheriff, State's Attorney, Public Defender, Director of Court Services, the Circuit Clerk, Chair of the County Board, Chiefs of Police of the City of Bloomington, Town of Normal, and ISU Police, the Director of the Health Department, the Superintendent of the Jail and Jail Chaplain, a representative from the ISU Criminal Justice Sciences Department, the Director of the Chamber of Commerce, a representative from PATH, the League of Women Voters and a public member.

This membership consists of elected officials and department heads, in addition to, others who are a part of the CJCC by virtue of their employment or community interest.

Non-voting members include the Chair of the County Justice Committee, the County Administrator, 1st assistants from the Sheriff, State's Attorney, Public Defender, Court Services and Circuit Clerk's offices, Bloomington and Normal Council designees, the Trial Court Administrator, the Superintendent of the Juvenile Detention Center and representatives from the Rural Police Chiefs, the Bar Association and ISU Criminal Justice Sciences Department.

The mission of the Council is to examine the policies and procedures of the criminal justice system, identify model practices, identify deficiencies and formulate policies, plans and programs based on well established research and statistical methodologies designed to promote change when opportunity presents itself.

The CJCC was initially formed in response to significant overcrowding in the jail population. Sheriff Emery invited experts from the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) to conduct a study and analysis of the jail operations and the agencies and department that interact with the jail. One of the NIC recommendations was to establish a CJCC. Sheriff Emery was a strong proponent and was a leader in establishing the CJCC. Since the creation of the CJCC we have endeavored to examine the criminal justice system in McLean County in an effort to improve it and adhere to the fair administration of justice to all who come in contact with it. We have contracted with the Stevenson Center at ISU to obtain critical analysis of the jail population in order to examine where delays occur and how to better manage the jail and criminal caseloads.

The work of the CJCC is collaborative and requires a commitment from a broad cross-section of agencies, elected officials and individuals to study the data compiled on a monthly basis about jail usage and caseload management of those charged with criminal offenses in McLean County and to work to improve the management of those cases and persons through the system. We offered a fellowship position to an ISU graduate student to conduct research on our practices – she presented her research on the pre-trial services program to the CJCC at our last meeting. We regularly disseminate research from the National Center of State Courts and the Council on State Governments to the CJCC members concerning best practices for criminal justice systems.

I am sure that many in this room and who are members of the CJCC are sympathetic to the concerns of the LUC. There is a time and a place for such discourse – the LUC conducted a press conference before this meeting and has held several public meetings, which is, of course, their right to do.

However, using the CJCC to be used as a forum to publicly criticize an elected official for the manner in which he or she carries out the duties of their office would be the death knell for the CJCC and further, would poison the strong working relationships that have developed among department heads and

elected officials in McLean County for more than two decades. The CJCC was not created to advocate for legislative changes, whether that be local, state or federal – in fact, if that were the purpose neither myself or Judge Freitag would be able to participate.

I speak only for myself in making these remarks and I remain willing to meet with Mr. Garcia and to listen to his concerns.

Mr. Sutherland responded – he believes the CJCC to be an important body, but he is concerned, and the CJCC should be concerned, if a large segment of the population perceives there is a problem in the criminal justice system. He then quoted a portion of the CJCC Mission Statement:

The Council recognizes that collaborative-driven reforms will require the group to identify priorities, accept changes in policy and procedures designed to effectuate positive changes in performance and system efficiency, and that there is no collaboration without negotiation and willingness to compromise.

The Council will make recommendations of policy and procedural changes that will affect the entire criminal justice system and it will be the role of all Council members to become agents of change, to provide leadership in communicating the need for self-examination and participation in data gathering efforts, and to be open to monitoring program implementation and evaluating policy decisions.

He is concerned that there is a procedural mindset in the justice system officials (in relation to the ICE issue) that promotes fear in the Latino community, and this fear creates an atmosphere lacking in trust between both groups. If this problem persists, he implores the CJCC to determine the appropriate forum for addressing the issue.

Judge Robb stated that she hopes that avenues can be made available to allow the LUC to communicate the problem and resolve these problems.

There being no further discussion among members of the CJCC on the issue, the meeting was adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Next CJCC Meeting: **Thursday, October 4, 2012 at 1:00 p.m.**
McLean County Board Room
Government Center RM 400
115 E. Washington Street
Bloomington, IL