

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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U.S. Department of Justice asks CTG to Spearhead Justice Information Sharing Study: Center for Technology in Government Project Designed to Improve Public Safety

Albany, NY - At a time when the nation is faced with unprecedented threats to its communities, the University at Albany's Center for Technology in Government (CTG) has received an award from the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) to identify successful tools to improve public safety through information sharing.

The \$503,000 award will enable CTG to develop a capability assessment model based on best practices in information sharing across justice agencies. The model will help justice agencies gauge their readiness to implement information sharing and integration initiatives.

The partnership project includes CTG, USDOJ, the National Governor's Association and the National Association of Chief Information Officers, and will involve the active participation of a wide range of professionals at every level and jurisdiction of the justice enterprise, including law enforcement agencies, courts, prosecutors, defense attorneys and corrections agencies.

"One of the biggest challenges facing the justice agencies in the United States is being able to manage, analyze, and share increasingly large amounts of information," said Sharon Dawes, director of the Center. "Essentially, we are exploring what it takes for these organizations to more effectively share information horizontally with other agencies, and vertically with other levels of government."

Vital information is housed in different databases in an array of agencies, collected by any number of methods using several different software applications. Yet, justice agencies rely on the integration of this information to prevent crimes, solve investigations, prosecute criminals, defend the accused, track parolees and manage court dockets.

The Washington sniper case was solved by a series of justice agencies all working to connect the dots using a range of technology databases and devices, and by overcoming traditional turf issues through constant communication across organizations. The story, and others like it all over the country, provide lessons that the project will use to assist justice organizations to assess their capability to plan for information sharing initiatives.

"The practical model that we develop will help those organizations figure out where they are and what they need to put in place to foster the effective exchange of information," said CTG Deputy Director Anthony Cresswell. "Those mechanisms can take the form of policies, technology, organizational design, or business practices."

The project builds on a previous CTG partnership initiative designed to help justice officials gain the necessary support and funding to make integrated information systems a reality. In 2000, CTG published the results of that project in "And Justice for All: Designing Your Business Case for Integrating Justice Information."

"In many ways this project is a natural extension of that work. A sound assessment of information sharing capability is essential to the construction of an effective business case that can then be used to persuade decision-makers to commit the resources needed for success," said Dawes.

The Center for Technology in Government is an applied research center devoted to improving government and public services through policy, management and technology innovation. The Center, located at the University at Albany, works with government, corporate and academic partners to pursue new ways of applying computing and communications technologies to the practical problems of information management and service delivery in the public sector.