

### Executive Summary

The Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement (LCLE) is applying for funding to conduct an access project under the category of public safety.

Louisiana is a geographically and culturally diverse state whose law enforcement community has significant technological needs. Many of the rural law enforcement agencies have limited access to information systems which are characteristic of larger, more modern agencies. In addition to a lack of technology, there is also a lack of coordination in information sharing which will be addressed by the current proposed program.

The LCLE is proposing to implement a statewide network for the exchange of information on children and children's issues. LCLE proposes to implement the Louisiana Children's Network (LCN), through its existing Louisiana Criminal Justice Bulletin Board Service (LCJBBS).

The LCJBBS has been developed to provide information to state and local agencies with interests in criminal justice. The proposed LCN will be a multi-faceted network, dovetailed onto the LCJBBS, which will assist law enforcement officials and other social service agencies in reporting and sharing information on issues concerning children. A list of the programs currently in existence or in development for the network includes:

- \* Louisiana Child Advocacy Center (LCAC) Information File Library
- \* Database of Sexual Offenders (Secure)
- \* Information on training or seminars for social service providers
- \* Reading lists for those involved in child care concerns (parents, teachers, social workers, non-profit organization administrators, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.)
- \* Grant information
- \* Missing children
- \* Crime victim's reparation and assistance
- \* Juvenile Boot Camp Tracking System
- \* Juvenile Offender Profile Development System

All of these projects are geared toward providing our children with a safe and nurturing environment in which to grow and prosper. Of particular importance to this project are three components: the Missing Children Files, the Louisiana Child Advocacy Clearinghouse (LCAC), and the Juvenile Boot Camp Files. The Missing Children Files will be comprised of written descriptions of abducted, lost, or missing children along with graphic images of both the children and possible suspects. Further, the Louisiana Child Advocacy Clearinghouse component will track sex offenders to ensure that they are registering with local sheriff's offices as mandated by (Louisiana Revised Statute 15:542). The database on sex offenders will simplify the task of background checks on day care workers, foster care providers, and residential home workers. Another component, the Juvenile Boot Camp Files, will help juvenile boot camp administrators to track juveniles released from the boot camp facilities. In this way, the LCN will help measure boot camp success by providing information on recidivism rates. Further, the LCN will assist boot camps in developing profiles of juvenile offenders.

**Background.** The Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement was created under the Office of the Governor in 1969, to engage in comprehensive criminal justice planning and to disburse federal funds under the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968. Through the years, LCLE has evolved from an agency which primarily disbursed federal funds to a central coordinating point within state government for criminal justice policy, planning, and development. Recently, the Louisiana State Legislature mandated the creation of the Louisiana Child Advocacy Clearinghouse (LCAC) to be administered through the Office of the Governor. The agency is further asked to "(A)ssist in planning coordinated programs throughout the state in areas related to the police, the courts, and corrections" (R. S. 15:1204 Section 5). The present project requires the participation of several entities including approximately 430 law enforcement agencies (approximately 365 police departments, 64 sheriff's offices, and the state police), 41 District Criminal Courts, a juvenile boot camp, and the Louisiana Office of Children Services (OCS).

The goal of the bulletin board service is to provide information to a variety of users. For example, access to files concerning sex offenders and missing children will be available to law enforcement agencies throughout the state. Many of the files will include data intended for law enforcement agencies that will enhance public safety. Passwords and keys will be used to ensure that sensitive data will not be accessed by unauthorized users. The bulletin board will also provide information on treatment for sexual abuse victims and perpetrators to help law enforcement agencies and social service agencies provide their services to those in need. LCLE will also work with

juvenile justice officials to track offenders released from boot camp facilities to help determine the effectiveness of their programs.

This project has been designed to meet an immediate need using developing technology. The project will work in conjunction with several other information systems in addition to Info Louisiana which are currently being implemented such as the Court Management Information System (CMIS). The CMIS system will allow the staff of LCLE to access the dispositions of criminal cases so that sexual offenders can be identified and tracked from the time a conviction is returned.

### **Advisory Board**

Under this project, LCLE will assemble an advisory board to insure end-user oversight of and participation in ongoing planning efforts. The board will provide suggestions and help define the needs of the various agencies and entities benefiting from the Louisiana Children's Network. In addition to the staff of LCLE, the entities to be represented on the advisory board will include members of the following:

- Law enforcement officials
- Educators
- Social Service providers
- Mental Health officials
- Prosecutors
- District Criminal Courts & State Supreme Court
- Child Advocacy Clearinghouse Staff
- Staff of Interagency Council on the Prevention of Sex Offenses
- Health Care Providers (including coroners)
- Juvenile Boot Camp Administrators

This project proposes the use of today's technology to expand the ability of law enforcement agencies, social services agencies, and juvenile justice officials to share information. Through the LCN, the project will provide a cooperative exchange between law enforcement agencies and social service agencies statewide.

### **Equipment and Access**

The State's Office of Telecommunications Management (OTM) has developed a statewide data communications network known as LaNet. This network links government agencies, education and research users, and is the superhighway for Internet access in Louisiana. LCLE will maintain a home page for the LCJBBS on the Internet through Info Louisiana as a part of the statewide information sharing system. Info Louisiana is a home page under which many governmental agencies have home pages. There will be two ways to access the files on the LCJBBS. LCLE will have a home page on the Internet under Info Louisiana which will allow users to jump to the LCJBBS. Those without an Internet account will be able to access the bulletin board service through a direct dial-in using most communications software packages. The project proposes to provide modems and communications software to a portion of the law enforcement jurisdictions where funding constraints will hamper access. Once users have gained access to the bulletin board, the system will provide information and allow for information exchange on many topics.

The LCJBBS was developed with The Major BBS Software and was later updated to World Group Software, both products of Galacticomm. The Bulletin Board is running on a Digital XL590, 486 speed processor with 32 megabytes of RAM, and a 1 Gigabyte harddrive. Currently there are three modem lines attached to 14.4 bps modems that provide concurrent sessions to users. To increase access, the BBS will be connected to LaNet and the Internet. LCLE will purchase a router and lease a T1 line in order to connect to LaNet and increase efficiency. Once the router is installed, there will be a monthly fee of \$1600 to maintain the connection. With increased access, it is anticipated that technological upgrades will be made periodically. LCLE anticipates increasing demands on harddrive and phone line capabilities. By monitoring the level of traffic and number of users, the advisory board will periodically determine if a need to upgrade exists.

LaNet is currently in place, but technicians are working to get more state agencies integrated into the system. Most of the agencies are expected to be connected by the end of 1996. Users will be able to access LCJBBS through the Internet, or through dial-in access. This will make the information on the network more widely available to the agencies in need. The agencies will have not only the ability to receive information from the network, but will also

be able to send information to be included on the network. A statewide LCN will provide important information to all of its end users in a timely fashion.

**What problem or need will you address in this project?**

LCLE has identified several problems that this project addresses: many law enforcement and social service agencies, particularly rural ones, have little or no access to the information that will be provided on the LCN; currently, no information system exists to provide graphics (such as photographs of missing children or suspects) to law enforcement agencies; and the State lacks resources to connect all of the agencies to the network. The majority of the parishes in Louisiana are rural and are underserved by existing information systems. The juvenile justice system currently has no tracking mechanism to determine the effectiveness of intervention efforts. Further, none of the existing systems provide the information to be included on the LCN.

One of the most serious problem areas resulting from a lack of technology is in the area of reporting missing children. Louisiana state law (Revised Statute 14:403.3) requires that "any state or local law enforcement agency receiving a report of a missing child and having reasonable grounds to believe such a report is accurate shall within forty-eight hours after the date of the receipt of the report notify each of the following of the fact and contents of such report:

- (a) The Department of Health and Human Resources.
- (b) The Department of Public Safety and Corrections, if it did not originally receive the report.
- (c) The office of the sheriff for the parish in which such report was received, if it did not originally receive the report.
- (d) The office of the sheriff for all parishes adjacent to the parish in which such report was received.
- (e) The National Crime Information Center

At this time, notification consists of a written teletype description of the child and any suspects. In the rare instances where a suspected missing child is brought to law enforcement attention, there may be a faxed photograph from the office originally reporting the child missing. Otherwise photographs are generally not available. This information system will enable the necessary agencies to be notified in a timely fashion of missing children and the notification will include high quality gif or jpeg graphics. By cross referencing the databases, within seconds information can be retrieved to determine if known sex offenders are registered in the parish from which the missing child report originated. Witnesses or escaped victims can examine a photograph lineup of sex offenders to identify the suspect. In this manner, the law enforcement and social service agencies can better utilize their personnel and resources.

**Why is this an important problem, and why does your project fit the TIAP?**

This project is important because it addresses problems that affect families in our communities. This information system will be a resource for a wide variety of people who are interested in providing a safe and healthy environment for our children. While only approved agencies will have full access to information such as sex offender files, other information will be available to parents, Scout leaders, day care centers, libraries, educators, and other entities.

LCN provides the state of Louisiana with a mechanism for tracking sex offenders so that if a child is reported missing, resources can quickly be focused on those known to be a threat to children. Further, law enforcement workers will be quickly notified across the state of any missing children reports so that runaways, lost children, and abducted children can be more readily located. The lack of information sharing and technological resources makes it extremely important to develop new strategies to deal with these public safety issues. This project will assist in linking agencies together by providing access through the Internet, and through dial-in access to ensure that agencies with a variety of technology levels will be able to benefit from the information system.

This project fits the TIAP because it provides access to underserved areas and expands the use of that access to benefit the public and government agencies. The project will encourage the sharing of information and provide a mechanism to explore the uses of technology to help combat a number of problems facing our communities. This end can only be achieved by demonstrating to end users the many benefits they can receive by becoming an active member of an information system.

**Shared Information.** LaNet was developed to provide governmental agencies and educational institutions with the capacity to share information. Due to a lack of resources, however, the various agencies have not been able to develop new and innovative uses of this interconnectivity. Geographically, the northern part of the state is isolated

from the southern region, and there exist cultural differences as an additional impediment to communication. The development of LCN will greatly improve the ability of rural parishes to access information and maximize the limited resources at their disposal as well as fostering interagency cooperation.

Below are a couple of examples of how the information system might increase the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies.

- ✓ **Case 1.** A 14-year old girl runs away from her home in Donaldsonville, La. and a missing child report is filed by distraught parents. The Donaldsonville police department notifies neighboring law enforcement and social service officials.  
**Without LCN.** In the neighboring St. James parish, a man is stopped on a routine traffic violation and detained because he has a child in his car who matches the teletype description of the missing child. Thirty minutes later, a thorough check determines that the girl is not the missing child.  
**With LCN.** The officer stops the speeding vehicle, observes that the child fits the description of a missing child, and checks the photograph printed at the station only 45 minutes earlier. After determining the girl is not the missing child, the officer releases the father with a warning and resumes his patrol. The officer has saved nearly thirty minutes during which he could be attending to other duties.
- **Case 2.** A day care center in Houma, La., is seeking applicants to work in their day care facility doing maintenance and janitorial duties. One applicant, who gives his name as John Jones, is qualified for the position and has experience in construction.  
**Without LCN.** A records check shows that there is a felony arrest for a John Jones for indecency with a child. Although the driver's license numbers do not match the center is overly cautious and does not hire the applicant.  
**With LCN.** A record check shows that there is a John Jones with a felony indecency charge, but further examination shows that the photograph of the sex offender does not match the applicant and he is hired.
- **Case 3.** A patrol officer in Bossier encounters a young man loitering in a parking lot. The officer questions the young man, and the youth convincingly tells the officer he has never been in trouble with police and assures the officer he is on his way home.  
**Without LCN.** The officer has not received any information on a runaway matching the youth's description, so he sends the 14 year-old on his way.  
**With LCN.** The officer notices the adolescent and recalls a report of a runaway from Natchitoches Parish the previous day. After consulting the photograph, he determines that it is indeed the missing child. He detains the youth until the 14 year-old's parents come to pick him up.

These cases demonstrate only three of the ways in which the LCN can increase the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies in the performance of their responsibilities.

Social service agencies will also benefit from the other files containing information on reading lists, training seminars, grant information, and other programs.

#### How will you carry out this project?

~~Those agencies with Internet access will have instant access to the LCJBBS, and those who do not will be able to access the LCJBBS by remote dial in to a toll-free 800 number. This project will also provide modems and communications software to extremely underserved areas.~~

LaNet supports multiple communications protocols including DECnet, Novell IPX, SNA, and TCP/IP. Agencies will be visited by representatives of LCLE who will conduct training sessions with the communications/data processing staff of each of the agencies in order to address specific questions on how to access and best utilize the various programs included on the LCJBBS.

The staff of LCLE will work with officials at the Office of Telecommunications Management to address any technical problems that may occur when bringing on several sites simultaneously. The project will be monitored closely by the LCJBBS Project Coordinator and the technical staff at LCLE.

- ✓ The lease of the T1 line and purchase of a router will address the issue of efficiency and speed of data transfer. LCLE currently has three phone lines for the direct dial-in access. The agency plans to add five more lines as the system goes on line, with the ability to expand to 16 as needed. This is in addition to the access provided through Internet access. A toll-free technical support line will also be available to assist with any problems the end users might encounter. During working hours, the technical line will be manned, and an answering machine will be available to handle calls after business hours. Users will also be able to e-mail LCLE with any problems they might have gaining access to the information contained in the files.

The first priority will be to get the hardware in place to provide full access to the agencies to be served by the information system. LCLE will work with OTM to establish LaNet connectivity. Additional phone lines will be

added during this time to provide greater access to direct dial-in users. After the completion of this stage, the staff of LCLE will provide training seminars to the agencies to be served in order to disseminate information on the benefits of the information system. This will also provide the staff of LCLE with feedback on how to better serve those in need of access.

The project will be monitored by the LCJBBS Project Coordinator working directly with the agencies being served by the LCN Network. Representatives from the technical staff of each agency will be in contact with LCLE staff members and will continue to work closely to define the changing needs of the various entities using the LCJBBS. Each of the agencies in large jurisdictions have committed resources to ensure the success of the program and efforts are continuing to provide modem and personal computers to smaller agencies that currently have little or inadequate technology available.

#### **Who will benefit from the project?**

~~Public.~~ The LCJBBS will aid in efforts to locate missing children, identify sexual offenders, and track juvenile offenders released from boot camp. The network will be a valuable tool for law enforcement and social service agencies in their efforts to provide a better environment in which the children of Louisiana can grow. The network will provide information on treatment programs for the victims of child abuse as well as for perpetrators. Juvenile justice officials will be better able to protect the public from those juvenile offenders not suited for boot camp programs, and to provide other interventions for those offenders.

~~Law Enforcement/Juvenile Justice Officials.~~ Law enforcement officials will benefit from increased information on missing children and sex offenders. ~~In addition to increasing the likelihood of finding missing children, law enforcement officers will have access to information on treatment programs for the victims of child abuse.~~ Juvenile justice officials will be able to analyze the effectiveness of boot camp and other intervention strategies through empirical research.

Juveniles. By reviewing intervention programs, juvenile justice officials will be able to tailor programs to meet the needs of the delinquent population. Research has demonstrated that juvenile delinquency is a very strong indicator of adult criminal behavior, and it is in the best interest of both society and the juveniles to develop effective strategies in dealing with delinquency. The tracking of juveniles released into aftercare is one way of determining the effectiveness of the boot camp program.

#### **How will you know if your project is successful?**

The ability to access information from the Internet or direct dial-in will be the major criteria upon which success is based. LCLE will determine the percentage of agencies who are able to access the LCJBBS, as well as determining the percentage of agencies who could have taken advantage of the network but did not. LCLE will measure the number of "hits" on its Internet page by the public as well as the number of "hits" on the secure files intended for law enforcement officials only. LCLE will also send questionnaires to agencies who are trained to use the LCJBBS to ask for evaluations on how well the bulletin board service meets the needs of the end users.

✓ The evaluation of the LCJBBS will be completed by the Advisory Board using information compiled by technical staff (at the various agencies and at LCLE), end users, and the staff of the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement. The Advisory Board will evaluate the network on:

- the ability to access the network from the many agencies;
- the ability to enter information to the network for use by other agencies;
- \* the ability to keep sensitive information secure;
- the ability to work with different agencies to solve interface problems;
- the ability to provide information in a timely manner to all user agencies;
- \* the absence of negative impact on user agency system's operational performance.