

National Data Exchange (N-DEx) Program
Funding Position Statement

Background

On August 15, 2005, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCC), National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), and Major County Sheriffs' Association (MCSA) released a joint position statement about the feasibility of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Data Exchange (N-DEx) Program. There were three significant issues raised in the joint position statement, specifically, (1) the development of a Statement of Requirements for N-DEx with law enforcement input and utilization in mind; (2) the need for Funding Projections to address the anticipated costs for each phase of N-DEx, which should include the development and implementation of N-DEx at all levels of law enforcement -local, tribal, regional, state, and federal; and (3) the need for a formalized process through which the FBI and U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) are able to effectively communicate a consistent message about the mission, goals, strategy, and status of N-DEx.

On February 3, 2006, the FBI published a response to the joint position statement and addressed the three aforementioned areas of concern. In response to the need for a Statement of Requirements, an Executive Concept of Operations (CONOPS) was developed with input from the four Associations, subject matter experts, as well as law enforcement practitioners from local and state agencies. The Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Advisory Policy Board (APB) was presented the Executive CONOPS on December 7, 2005, and subsequently endorsed the continued development of N-DEx.

With regard to the issue of communicating an on-going, consistent message about N-DEx to the law enforcement community, the N-DEX Program Management Office (PMO) has made significant progress in sending out standardized messages through their various outreach activities to members of the four organizations. The associations received the N-DEX CONOPS, jointly developed by the FBI and subject matter experts from participating local, state, federal, and tribal agencies, and the RFP. In addition, the N-DEx PMO has participated at the major conferences hosted by IACP and NSA.

Regarding the issue for Funding Projections, the FBI, in conjunction with the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the DOJ, the FBI CJIS Division, and the N-DEx PMO have identified and established a funding stream specifically for the FBI to develop the N-DEx core application through Fiscal Year 2007. However, we must emphasize that sustained funding, beyond Fiscal Year 2007, is required to complete the N-DEx system and to continue to maintain it. And we are extremely concerned that no funding options or opportunities have yet been identified for local, tribal, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to be able to participate in the N-DEx program. Although the N-DEx PMO and representatives of our organizations have engaged in preliminary discussions with the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) as a possible funding conduit for local, tribal and state law enforcement agencies, no federal funding has yet been identified to assist law enforcement agencies so that they will be able to actively participate in N-DEx. Additional resources must be identified and funding strategies must be in place for law enforcement to participate in N-DEx. Furthermore, cost estimates and/or models for local, tribal, regional, state, and federal law enforcement agencies to participate in N-DEx have not been developed. A comprehensive cost estimation to participate in N-DEx is in the best interest of all stakeholders.

Current Funding Issue

We believe the success of N-DEx will be driven by the participation of all law enforcement agencies. The majority of data that is critical for law enforcement and homeland security exists at the local level. Therefore, the benefits of sharing basic incident and arrest data across jurisdictional boundaries are infinite. In order to promote and ensure nationwide participation in N-DEx, several issues related to funding must be addressed and answered.

We believe the following funding issues must be addressed:

First, two separate types of cost models should be developed with input from local and state agencies. The first is a scalable set of cost models that address the various sizes and complexity of participating agencies and/or regions. This cost model will address what enhancements each individual agency must complete in order to be able to interface and participate with N-DEx.

The second cost model focuses on the readiness of the state infrastructure to effectively transfer their respective agencies' data. Many of the states have very old switches that will be unable to handle XML or the volume of data. An assessment needs to be conducted of the readiness of every state to participate with associated cost models to bring the states to an acceptable level. This assessment needs to begin immediately to allow adequate time for the states to acquire and implement the necessary enhancements to their switches.

The IACP, MCC, NSA, and MCSA, representing the leadership of the nation's law enforcement community, strongly believe that the financial cost of N-DEx must be addressed in order for law enforcement to participate and benefit from this project. Establishing cost models and identifying funding strategies for law enforcement to participate in N-DEx will ultimately strengthen the community's responsiveness and support of N-DEx.

The funding issues we have identified are critical and must be addressed while moving forward. Without adequate funds to support local, tribal, and state participation, the funds being spent on developing the core FBI system will be wasted.