

Law Enforcement Information Technology Standards Council Meets at 26th Annual LEIM Conference

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Over the past decade, the proliferation of information technology in law enforcement has led to the development of disparate systems that do not communicate with one another. Clearly, the integration of these systems is in the best interest of public safety and makes sound business sense. In order to move towards interoperability and a fully integrated justice information system so that the public safety community can share critical information, decision makers must be educated about the value of technical and practical standards in law enforcement information technology.

Law enforcement information technology standards must be developed to provide a set of national guidelines that law enforcement executives may use when making decisions regarding the implementation of information technology within their agencies. These standards will ultimately influence the integration of justice information technology solutions that meet the technical, practical, and political needs of the public safety community and the citizens it serves.

The Law Enforcement Information Technology Standards Council (LEITSC) was created to ensure that the law enforcement community is involved in the development of such standards. Established through a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance at the U.S. Department of Justice, LEITSC brings together the nation's primary law enforcement executive membership associations - the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), which will serve as the coordinating body for the council; the National Sheriffs' Association; the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives; and the Police

Executive Research Forum - to address law enforcement technology standards.

LEITSC met for the first time last month at the IACP's 26th Annual Law Enforcement Information Management Section Conference in Westminster, Colorado. Two representatives from each membership association were present at the meeting to discuss project direction and action items. The group supported the idea of focusing on both law enforcement information technology standards and related solutions.

To pursue this goal, the council will solicit input from technical experts who will both review existing protocols and draft necessary new ones, in all areas of law enforcement technology standards, including functional standards and technical solutions such as XML. Representatives also agreed upon a project mission statement, and scheduled future meetings for July and September. Subsequent meetings will be held quarterly.

The council is composed of one staff representative and one membership representative from each of the participating membership associations. The staff representative is responsible for coordinating specific association responsibilities, such as hosting one LEITSC meeting per year. The membership representative is a law enforcement executive who is familiar with law enforcement technology initiatives and information technology standards, and is able to communicate to and speak for the association's membership. A full time project manager, located at IACP headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, is responsible for coordinating daily and long-term activities of the council.

The representatives, realizing the important role that the council will play in the future of integrated justice, focused on defining its mission and goals. The council's mission will be to "provide advice and leadership to the nation's law enforcement community on information technology standards; share practical solutions; and educate the public safety community on the merits and technical aspects

of information systems integration." LEITSC will support this mission in the following ways:

- * Leveraging the political, technical and practical assets of the participating membership associations
- * Creating a formal council composed of senior decision makers from each executive membership association to represent the national law enforcement community
- * Providing OJP agencies with a forum of technical and practical subject matter experts
- * Establishing a multidisciplinary forum of information technology end users that represents the entire justice enterprise
- * Identifying and promoting integrated justice systems that have maximized the benefit of information technology standards
- * Facilitating the inclusion of technology standards in the development of new systems, both large and small
- * Expanding the reach and impact of the Global Criminal Justice Information Network Presidential Advisory Commission

The council looks forward to representing each law enforcement executive association's membership on initiatives and issues associated with information technology standards. More importantly, it is eager to provide the law enforcement profession with a formal and direct body of representatives at the table to influence federally funded initiatives associated with technology standards. The ultimate goal of the council is to facilitate the development of standards that make practical and technical sense. It then hopes to convince the law enforcement community to embrace and adopt IT standards. The council will strive to promote the importance of integrated and interoperable justice information systems in the interest and effective public safety.

For more information on LEITSC, including meeting minutes and presentations made, go to the IACP Technology Clearinghouse Web site at www.IACPtechnology.org or contact Jennifer Hicks, project manager, at hicksj@theiacp.org.