



Summary of Milwaukee County Community Justice Council Strategic Planning Session – February 21, 2014

INTRODUCTION

The Milwaukee County Community Justice Council (CJC) conducted a strategic planning session on February 21, 2014. The session – which took place a little more than two years after the previous session in late 2011 – included 13 attendees (see attached appendix for a complete list). Public Policy Forum President Rob Henken facilitated the discussion with assistance from Senior Fiscal Researcher Vanessa Allen.

District Attorney (and CJC Chairman) John Chisholm started the session with a brief welcome, which was followed up with a round of introductions and discussion of ground rules.

Henken then gave a brief review of the two-year strategic objectives that were formulated at the November 2011 session and asked members to comment on progress made toward achieving those objectives. Several successes were noted, including implementation of several components of the evidence-based decision-making (EBDM) initiative (e.g. universal screening and early interventions); efforts to identify and develop intervention strategies for individuals with mental illness who continually cycle in and out of the criminal justice system; and development of a conduct statement to help guide member involvement and participation. It also was noted that creation of a data scorecard had not yet occurred, though progress had been made in identifying scorecard metrics and on a larger data hub.

PRE-SESSION SURVEY

The next agenda item was review of responses to a pre-session survey developed by the Forum. The survey was sent to all executive committee members and session participants, but only eight individuals responded. The survey included the following four main questions:

- What are the most important organizational challenges facing the CJC that you hope are addressed at strategic planning?
- What do you consider to be the biggest strengths of the CJC?
- What do you consider to be the CJC's biggest weaknesses?
- Please indicate which of the following statements best completes the following phrase: "The purpose of the CJC should be to...."
- When the Executive Committee meets one year from now, what strategic objectives do you think it should be able to say it accomplished?

Survey results guided the strategic planning discussion and are summarized within this report along with perspectives provided during the session.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES, STRENGTHS, & WEAKNESSES

With regard to organizational challenges, respondents ranked data collection, funding, and uneven commitment among CJC officials as their top three concerns, as reflected in bold in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Organizational Challenges (survey ranking)

Rank	Issue
1	Need for enhanced data collection/synthesis for justice programs
2	Need for sufficient and sustainable funding for CJC staff and administration
3	Uneven commitment among CJC leaders and members
4	Lack of effective methods to assess the performance of the CJC
5	Insufficient community outreach and engagement
6	Lack of clear definition of subcommittee structure and subcommittee responsibilities
7	Lack of clarity and agreement on overall mission and role of CJC
8	Lack of clarity regarding how Evidence-Based Decision-Making Initiative fits into role/purpose of the CJC
<i>Other</i>	<i>Inclusion of mental health CJC media visibility</i>

Discussion ensued regarding these survey responses. While several participants echoed the need for enhanced data collection (a topic that took up a large part of the session and is further described below), many felt that the question of funding would be difficult for the CJC to address alone, as that issue would require broader participation from entities that were not present, including the county board and common council. The concern regarding uneven commitment among CJC officials resonated with session participants, with at least one noting that the conduct statement created in response to the last strategic planning session had not ensured the same level of commitment and adherence to certain types of conduct that had been envisioned. One participant suggested that perhaps better documentation and publicity regarding CJC successes would encourage greater involvement from those who were not frequently attending.

The participants next reviewed survey responses on the CJC's strengths and weaknesses. **Table 2** lists the topics most frequently mentioned (in no particular order). Both the survey responses and ensuing group discussion showed a mix of perspectives. For example, many cited the CJC's value in allowing interaction among key justice system stakeholders, but several also cited the need for greater involvement by certain officials in order to make that interaction more meaningful. Efforts to collect and share data also received prominent mention, with a lack of data sharing and a lack of performance metrics for the CJC mentioned by several participants. The group also confirmed the desire for enhanced public communications and community outreach.

Table 2: Strengths & Weaknesses (survey responses)

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Regular exchange between key stakeholders	• Lack of comprehensive, meaningful data
• Venue for collaboration and trust	• Lack of performance metrics
• Broad participation and diverse perspectives	• Need better attendance of key figures
• Capacity to implement change and consider best practices	• Lack of clear priorities
• Capacity to mobilize support for particular projects	• Poor communication to media & community
• Collective commitment	• Need for greater community outreach
	• Lack of follow-up on issues discussed at E.C.
	• Yet to take full advantage of staff
	• Lack of diversity

PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY JUSTICE COUNCIL

The conversation then turned to the Milwaukee County Community Justice Council’s purpose. Henken introduced five possible statements of purpose that were cited in the survey, which are listed below. The number of survey respondents who initially supported each definition is indicated in parentheses.

The purpose of the CJC should be to...

1. ...ensure that key justice system leaders meet regularly as a collective body to **broadly share information** and discuss system issues and challenges. (0)
2. ...ensure that key justice system leaders meet regularly to **actively coordinate** key activities and decisions so that the “system” functions cohesively and efficiently. (0)
3. ...ensure that key justice system leaders meet regularly to collectively identify and discuss systemic problems and challenges through data analysis and other information-sharing, and **act collaboratively** to address challenges and establish system-wide objectives. (4)
4. ...function as an **independent entity** governed by key justice system leaders that is **empowered** to define justice system objectives, monitor/analyze justice system performance, facilitate collaboration among justice system agencies, provide technical assistance and research, and act as a conduit between the justice system and the larger community. (2)
5. ...function as an **independent governmental unit** with its own budget that is governed by key justice system leaders and that is charged with **developing, implementing, and overseeing** new and existing justice system strategies and programs that are critical to the effective functioning of the system as a whole. (2)

Before attempting to reach consensus on a stated purpose, the group received a presentation from CJC Coordinator Nate Holton, who shared his views on the CJC’s current state of affairs and considerations that stakeholders must keep in mind as they contemplate both the CJC’s purpose and future. Holton began by recognizing the accomplishments of the CJC thus far, including its role as a venue for discussion, progress with EBDM, and the hiring of a full-time coordinator. However, he also cited the need for greater involvement by all members and greater accountability for specific results and outcomes on the part of both CJC members and himself.

Holton noted that heightened accountability could flow from adjustments to the CJC structure, including limiting the number of executive committee members to provide greater authority to a smaller set of individuals who could then accomplish more. He also suggested consideration of taking formal votes on various important justice system matters at executive committee meetings to encourage attendance. Other suggestions included dropping “County” within the name of the CJC in order to reflect the more collaborative, multi-agency work of the group.

Planning session participants then reacted to Holton’s comments in the context of a broader discussion on which purpose statement should be adopted by the CJC going forward. After considerable discussion regarding purpose statements 3 and 4, participants reached a general consensus to adopt statement 4, with clarification that it in no way usurped power from any individual entity and that it would not force their hand in decision-making. Holton agreed to provide a revised purpose statement that reflected this clarification and other input provided by the group.

CJC ONE-YEAR OBJECTIVES

The planning session culminated with a discussion of near-term objectives based on the previous discussions regarding a purpose statement, strengths, weaknesses, and challenges. Henken cited survey responses to the question on one-year objectives, which are shown in **Table 3** (in no particular order). He then facilitated discussion regarding objectives for the next year.

Table 3: One-year objectives (survey responses)

Objective
Develop IT data coordination
Identify performance metrics
Cement EBDM into criminal justice culture
Solidify stakeholder commitment
Establish clear priorities
Establish stable funding agreements
Produce measurable change in addressing mental illness
Develop mechanism to showcase CJC accomplishments

The group received an update from Mallory O’Brien, the Executive Director of the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission, who heads the CJC’s data subcommittee. She cited progress in the development of a comprehensive data hub and also reviewed recent efforts to develop a more limited data scorecard for use by the CJC that would reflect the objective established at the 2011 strategic planning session.

Participants expressed support for both efforts. They noted that while the data hub would be a longer-term project, the CJC’s immediate focus should be on the completion of a data scorecard containing 12 to 15 key metrics that would be reviewed at each executive committee meeting. O’Brien agreed to lead the effort to develop an initial scorecard with the input of the Executive Committee. In addition, participants agreed that

clarification was needed regarding the CJC’s role in participating in the data hub effort (e.g. one participant asked who would “own” the data hub) and the role of individual members in assisting with its completion.

The group also expressed support for improving the CJC’s public relations strategies, both in terms of community outreach and media relations. In particular, it was agreed that the areas of early intervention and mental health should receive prioritization for both enhanced outreach and media strategies.

Finally, participants agreed that there was a need for greater prioritization of overall CJC activities in the next year, and that strategies and activities around the issues of mental health, the juvenile justice system, and reinvestment initiatives should receive priority status. **Table 4** summarizes the agreed-upon one-year objectives that concluded the strategic planning session:

Area	One-year objective
Data Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Take the existing scorecard and refine it to 12-15 key metrics for CJC2. Develop data hub and define CJC’s role
PR Goals	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Early intervention – both community outreach and media plan2. Mental health – community outreach and media plan
Programmatic Priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Mental health2. Juvenile system3. Reinvestment initiatives

Appendix: List of 2014 Strategic Planning Session Attendees

Participant		Title
1.	Chris Abele	Milwaukee County Executive
2.	Jeff Kremers	Chief Judge, Milwaukee County Circuit Courts
3.	Kit Murphy McNally	Community representative
4.	Thomas Reed	First Assistant Public Defender
5.	John Chisholm	Milwaukee County District Attorney
6.	Mallory O'Brien	Exec. Director, Milw. Homicide Review Comm.
7.	Joel Plant	Chief of Staff, Milw. Police Department
8.	Héctor Colón	Director, Milw. Cnty Dept. of Health and Human Services
9.	Richard Schmidt	Inspector, Milw. Cnty Sheriff's Office
10.	Colleen Foley	Milw. County Corporation Counsel
11.	Michael Hafemann	Superintendent, Milw. County House of Correction
12.	Erin King	Assistant Chief, Wisconsin Department of Corrections
13.	Nate Holton	CJC Coordinator