



Connect South Dakota Revolutionizes State's Law Enforcement and Homeland Security Information Sharing

Posted by Sheriff Michael Milstead, Minnehaha County Sheriff on Tuesday, February 12, 2013

Throughout South Dakota, as in many other states, our state law enforcement, city police departments, and county sheriffs have traditionally used a variety of different systems to manage records and jail information. Until recently, these systems were largely isolated and prevented statewide information sharing.

We knew we had to fix this, but we wanted to find a low-cost solution that could incorporate jurisdictions all across South Dakota, many of which have small budgets and only a few officers.

Today, we are proud to say that Connect South Dakota has an excellent statewide information sharing environment that continues to grow and improve.

How We Built Our Solution

Beginning in 2010, we began working with a variety of federal agencies and non-profit organizations dedicated to homeland security information sharing. Without the grants and support from these organizations, we would not be where we are today.



Image at right source: South

Dakota State News

First, we received a grant from the DOJ [Bureau of Justice Assistance](#) [1] (BJA) to build the servers and licenses that would serve as the backbone of Connect SD. **Editor's note: Learn more about finding grants and funding on [ISE Building Blocks](#)**[2].

Next, we developed a [governance](#) [3] body with state, local, and city law enforcement, sheriffs offices, and our project management team to ensure that important decisions about the program were supported by our partners. Under the leadership of the Division of Criminal Investigation Director Bryan Gortmaker and with the support of the Secretary of Public Safety and the chiefs, sheriffs, and tribes of South Dakota, we were able to build a strong, trusted system.

Then, we requested technical assistance from the [IJIS Institute](#) [4], a non-profit organization funded largely by membership and grants from DOJ BJA and DHS that is dedicated to bringing industry and government together to improve national security information sharing. In early 2011, they sent a team to South Dakota to help us write a request for proposals (RFP) for building Connect SD.

Once this was underway, we started planning more of the policies and data elements that we would support in Connect SD. We used standards from the [DOJ Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative \(Global\)](#) [5] to decide on 13 data elements related to incarceration, arrest, and booking. Next, a team of Global members from the [National Governors Association](#) [6] and now former members from the [Institute for Intergovernmental Research](#) [7] visited us in South Dakota in the middle of a blizzard to help us develop our [privacy policies](#) [8] and related line officer training. This was important because sharing information requires policies and training to protect the privacy and civil rights of the American people.

In addition, the technology and support from the following programs was integral to building an affordable program and recruiting jurisdictions to the program:

- Our information systems used the [National Information Exchange Model \(NIEM\)](#) [9] to standardize our data exchanges (specifically NIEM N-DEx IA & IB IEPDs). NIEM Director Donna Roy even called in to a meeting with potential partners to champion our cause.
- We developed our program so that we could connect with [N-DEx](#) [10], an FBI information sharing tool. N-DEx visited us and demonstrated its capabilities to our potential partners, which they found impressive.
- We used the [Regional Information Sharing Systems \(RISS\)](#) [11] to provide a secure login environment because RISS has been a longtime trusted partner in South Dakota. We used role-based permissions through a RISS implementation of GFIPM. This helped increase our partners' trust in the system.
- We reached out to police chiefs and sheriffs throughout South Dakota very early in the process to resolve their concerns and suggestions. We decided to allow significant local control over the information submitted ? we left the decision about how much information to share to each chief and sheriff. This was critical to our success.
- We used neighboring states like Nebraska as an example, which has a very robust information sharing environment built over 15 years and allows them to share with five other states in a Connect consortium. Our partners were very impressed to see their capabilities.

What's Next

We hope to continue improving information sharing in South Dakota. One important goal for Connect South Dakota is to continue adding partners and information from the Departments of Corrections, Parole, and Probation, as well as South Dakota tribes. We currently allow sworn tribal officers in South Dakota access to the information, whether or not their jurisdiction submits information. We hope that this will

continue to improve their officer safety and that, over time, we'll start increasing sharing agreements.

We're also currently working on Connect South Dakota Phase 2 with funding support from a DHS grant, in which we'll add:

- A basic web-based Records Management System (RMS) feature, which we hope many of our smaller jurisdictions, many of whom use localized databases or pay for vendor solutions, will use as a free, improved RMS,;
- Support for images for scars, marks, and tattoos; and
- Email and SMS notifications for officers.

Further into the future, we're hoping to support real-time submissions of SAR to our fusion center and interstate sharing of Connect SD.

To learn more about developing or improving your information sharing program, visit the [Information Sharing Environment Building Blocks](#) [12].

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[White House Releases New National Strategy for Information Sharing and Safeguarding](#) [14]

[Washington State Fusion Liaison Officers Advance Public Safety, Tribal Info Sharing](#) [15]

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Links:

[1] <http://www.bja.gov/>

[2] <http://ise.gov/building-blocks/acquisition#item=find-grants--funding-tid-611>

[3] <http://www.ise.gov/building-blocks/governance>

[4] <http://ijis.org/>

[5] <http://www.it.ojp.gov/global>

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[7] <http://www.iir.com/>

[8] <http://www.it.ojp.gov/default.aspx?area=privacy>

[9] <http://www.ise.gov/national-information-exchange-model-niem>

[10] <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/n-dex>

[11] <http://www.riss.net/>

[12] <http://ise.gov/building-blocks>

[13] <http://www.ise.gov/blog/col-rick-fuentes/fusion-center-coordinates-new-jersey-hurricane-sandy-disaster-response>

[14] <http://www.ise.gov/blog/kshemendra-paul/white-house-releases-new-national-strategy-information-sharing-and-safeguarding>

- [15] <http://www.ise.gov/blog/joe-laporte/washington-state-fusion-liaison-officers-advance-public-safety-tribal-info-sharing>
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