

**National Summit on Court Safety & Security:
Follow Up Meeting 17 November 2005**

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Appendix

Recommendation 1: The Conference of Chief Justices should take a leadership role to make emergency preparedness an integral part of court operations at all levels of courts. (Priority for Summit Workgroup 2)

Status: In August 2005, the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators passed a resolution in support of the importance of court security. See Attachment A for the text of the resolution, including action items.

Recommendation 2: Provide those who work in Judicial Branch Security an agreed upon set of guidelines/checklists/templates for court security and response.¹ (Priority for all three Summit Workgroups)

Status: This recommendation involves several steps. The steps and status of each are presented below.

- *Step 1. Identify areas of need.* All three workgroups identified several court security areas that should have guidelines, checklists, and templates available as resources for practitioners working in the court security area. (See summary table of needed resources in Appendix B.)
- *Step 2. Identify existing resources.* Based on a review of the literature and discussions with practitioners, staff identified several resources already available to address some of the areas of need identified by the workgroup. (See current draft of summary table of existing resources in Attachment C.)
- *Step 3. Establish a Court Security Forum to review resources and discuss policy issues.* In some areas of expressed needs, there are several resources available but little information on the usefulness/effectiveness of the resources. In other areas, new resources may need to be developed or existing resources updated based on the experience of all stakeholders. Summit participants called for a network or partnership of stakeholders to serve as a national forum for reviewing and recommending resources and discussing relevant policy issues. Staff is seeking

¹ In drafting these recommendations, the scope and definition of court security arose. Some jurisdictions include the personal safety of those in the courthouse, the physical security of the courthouse, disaster planning and response, continuity of operations, and cyber security within their definition of court security. Other jurisdictions define court security more narrowly. It is suggested that initial work on identifying guidelines and other resources focus first on physical and personal safety, a concern of all court security efforts. Subsequent efforts in more specialized court security areas, such as cyber security, can draw from work already underway by other experts/groups concerned with these issues.

Summit participants' suggestions regarding the composition, structure, and role of the Forum.

Recommendation 3: Develop a clearinghouse of information. The National Center for State Courts should serve as a clearinghouse for information on emergency preparedness and security for state and local courts. The clearinghouse should not only serve as a repository of information but should also be used to push information out to registered users to keep them informed of new information added to the repository or events concerning emergency preparedness. Consideration should be given to the development of a secure Web site for information so as not to compromise the safety of persons using court facilities. (Priority for Summit Workgroup 2)

Status: Discussions are underway at the NCSC to expand current court security resources available through the NCSC's CourtTopics database. The expanded database will include information identified as a result of Recommendation 2, discussed above, as well as new resources and information on policy issues emerging from the Court Security Forum. The NCSC will seek additional funding, as needed, to assist with the implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 4: Develop a national threat assessment and incident-reporting database. Following the Summit, a phone survey of state court offices revealed that 26 states and the District of Columbia have a statewide incident reporting system. Summit participants called for a national database to enhance (a) information sharing across jurisdictions, (b) understanding regarding patterns of threats—i.e., which judges and court staff face the greatest risks and under what circumstances, and (c) assessment and management of threats at the state and local level. (Priority for Summit Workgroup 3)

Status: Staff is exploring what information currently is captured by existing national databases as well as options for developing a prototype database to link state information on court security threats together. This effort will require additional funding.

Recommendation 5: Address training and education needs to enhance incident reporting and threat assessment. The effectiveness of incident reporting and threat assessment systems is dependent on the availability and accuracy of information. Many judicial officers and court staff are unclear regarding what should be reported and to whom, and local law enforcement may not know how to respond when incidents are reported. Training and education is needed to address these issues. (Priority for Summit Workgroup 3)

Status: The Secret Service has a risk assessment curriculum that has been delivered to a judicial audience. Staff has contacted the Secret Service to learn more about the curriculum and determine whether it could be used to train both judicial officers and staff and local law enforcement regarding threat responses. Because the number of individuals across the country who will need such training is very large, staff also is

identifying other training options that might be available and exploring distance learning options.

Recommendation 6: Provide support to state and local jurisdictions to implement a security program. Once guidelines and protocols have been identified (see Recommendation 2), resources in the form of technical assistance should be available to help courts establish or improve existing security efforts. (Priority for Summit Workgroup 2)

Status: Several organizations offer technical assistance in the security area. As the clearinghouse function discussed in Recommendation 3 is expanded, staff will include a list of TA vendors and available funding for services.

Recommendation 7: Develop staffing standards. There are no clear guidelines regarding the number of security officers needed to adequately protect the judicial system in a local jurisdiction. Summit participants called for staffing standards that would identify roles and responsibilities as well as the number of each position needed. In addition to ensuring the effectiveness of court security programs, Summit participants thought that such standards would provide direction to funding sources as well. (Priority for Summit Workgroup 1)

Status: This recommendation will require funding to implement. A methodology for assessing court staff workload needs currently exists and could be adapted with assistance from the law enforcement community.

Recommendation 8: Pursue funding to assist state and local jurisdictions with their security efforts. (Priority for all three Summit Workgroups)

Status: The House Judiciary Committee's Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security Subcommittee approved The Secure Access to Justice and Court Protection Act of 2005 (H.R. 1751) on June 30, 2005. As approved by the Subcommittee, Section 19 of the bill addresses eligibility of state courts for certain federal grants and explicitly makes state courts eligible to apply directly for discretionary grant programs administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The bill also adds another purpose to the Correctional Options Grant program and authorizes "grants to State courts to improve security for State and local court systems." As a result of additional concerns raised by court leaders, two amendments will accompany HR 1751 when it is considered by the full Judiciary Committee. One amendment includes legislative language (1) to include "courts" in the definition of "local units of government" and (2) to require state and local agencies to consider court needs in the disbursement of federal funds. The second amendment will establish a new state court security grant program.