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UNH Justiceworks Report Says Information Sharing Key to Public Safety

By [Erika Mantz](#)
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DURHAM, N.H. -- A summer camp in the Lakes Region needs to hire youth counselors, but wonders if a background check will reveal convictions in another state. This is just one example of how barriers to information exchange in the justice system can have costly consequences for public safety, according to a new report by Justiceworks, a northern New England consortium for the study of the prevention and control of crime based at the University of New Hampshire.

"Opportunities and Challenges: Building the New Hampshire Criminal Justice Information System," is the latest edition of "Benchmarks and Blueprints," a series of publications created to support the ongoing discussion of crime prevention and control. It looks at the efforts underway in New Hampshire to use advanced technologies to improve information and sharing among police, the courts and the Department of Corrections. The full report is available on-line at www.justiceworks.unh.edu.

According to John T. Kirkpatrick, director of Justiceworks and author of the report, criminal justice professionals in New Hampshire are already doing collaborative work to enhance communication, but more needs to be done to avoid situations like the death of a Manchester woman in 1996 after her abusive boyfriend lied about there being a restraining order out against him. John Malcolmson shot and killed Barbara Lussier in her office parking lot.

"Many view the justice system as a seamless, monolithic entity, but that's not always the case," says Kirkpatrick. "The criminal justice professionals who

labor on our behalf need our support in the efforts to work more collaboratively. Using advanced technologies to enhance the sharing of information within and between the various jurisdictions of law enforcement, the judiciary and corrections can be a substantial benefit to the public."

The report offers examples of advance technologies in use across the state, like AFIS, an Automated Fingerprint Identification System that can take and read offender fingerprints using laser scanning devices, and a new pilot program in distance education. A partnership between the New Hampshire Police Standards and Training Academy, the New Hampshire Department of Justice and UNH, the program will train officers over the Internet.

Based at the UNH Institute for Policy and Social Science Research, Justiceworks combines the expertise of university professors, researchers, police, judges, corrections officials and others throughout the region to serve a three-part mission:

- Provide timely and affordable evaluations of state and local programs aimed at minimizing crime and delinquency;
- Provide useful and current information about crime and crime control strategies to planners, policy makers and those with an interest in the field of criminal justice;
- Develop and provide new training opportunities in criminal justice to various audiences within the regional justice system, including victim advocates, school resource officers, and defense and prosecuting attorneys.

Printed copies of this edition of "Benchmarks and Blueprints," as well as past reports, are available at no cost. Contact Joe Pace, Justiceworks coordinator of public affairs, at 603-862-1957.

[Back to UNH News Bureau](#)