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**Management
Overview of PROMIS**

PROMIS

PROSECUTOR'S MANAGEMENT
INFORMATION SYSTEM
An Exemplary Project of LEAA

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INSTITUTE FOR
LAW AND
SOCIAL RESEARCH
1125 15th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

PROMIS (Prosecutor's Management Information System) is a management information system (computerized or manual) for public prosecution agencies and the courts. Developed under a grant from the United States Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), PROMIS has been in operation in Washington, D.C., since January 1971 and is in various implementation stages in more than 30 other jurisdictions.

LEAA has designated PROMIS an Exemplary Project. Such designation is reserved for criminal justice programs judged outstanding, worthy of national attention, and suitable for adoption by other communities.

The Institute for Law and Social Research (INSLAW) has prepared a series of 21 briefing papers to explain to nontechnical audiences of prosecutors, court administrators, criminal justice planners, and members of the bar the underlying concepts of management and organization inherent in PROMIS. It is expected that these briefings will assist other jurisdictions to evaluate and when appropriate, implement PROMIS in part or in its entirety. The implementation can range from adoption of the concepts of management and organization, to the use of PROMIS forms and paperwork procedures, to the application of the manual or semiautomated version of PROMIS, and, finally, to the installation of the computer software.

Other PROMIS documentation produced by INSLAW under grants from LEAA includes a handbook on *PROMIS For The Nonautomated or Semiautomated Office*, research designs for using PROMIS data bases in statistical studies of criminal justice policies, a six-volume set of computer software documentation, and a 20-minute color documentary of PROMIS (16mm film or video cassette) for nontechnical audiences. The 21 briefings are as follows:

1. Management Overview of PROMIS
2. Case Screening
3. Uniform Case Evaluation and Rating
4. Special Litigation (Major Violators) Unit
5. Witness Notification Unit
6. Paralegals
7. Comprehensive Training
8. Reasons for Discretionary and Other Actions
9. Counting by Crime, Case and Defendant
10. Research Uses of PROMIS Data
11. Uniform Crime Charging Manual
12. Police Prosecution Report
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14. Processing and Trial Preparation Worksheet
15. Police Intake Worksheet
16. Standardized Case Jacket
17. Interface with Other CJIS
18. Privacy and Security
19. Analysis of Costs and Benefits
20. Transferability
21. Optional On-Line Inquiry and Data Input Capability

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PROMIS
BRIEFING SERIES***ACQUISITIONS****1. Management**
Overview of
PROMIS

To cope with burgeoning case loads, there is no substitute for skilled, experienced prosecutors. This is hardly news to anyone. The problem, however, is that, at least in the foreseeable future, skilled prosecuting attorneys will be in short supply, particularly in the major urban centers. Though sufficient prosecutive manpower is unavailable, this does not mean that the challenges facing large prosecution offices must go unanswered.

Chief Justice Warren E. Burger pointed the way when he said, "...we must assign priorities." Continuing, he commented, "I would begin by giving priority to methods and machinery, to procedures and techniques, to management and administration of judicial resources even over the much-needed reexamination of substantive legal institutions." 1/

In other words, maximize what manpower and prosecutory expertise are available by at least assuring that office operations are conducted in the context of modern managerial and administrative methods.

President Ford's June 1975 crime message to Congress noted that the logical place to begin a discussion of how to improve criminal justice is the prosecutor's office: "...it is there that important decisions are made as to which offenders should be prosecuted, what cases should be brought to trial, when plea bargains should be struck, and how scarce judicial resources should be allocated. Many prosecutors' offices currently lack the manpower or management devices to make those decisions correctly.... In too many cases, they lack efficient systems to monitor the status of the numerous cases they handle. If improved management techniques could be made available to prosecutors, the likelihood of swift and sure punishment for crime would be substantially increased."

This is what PROMIS is all about.

Essentially, PROMIS permits a prosecutor's office to accumulate a wealth of information on each case and to receive reports and analyses based on these data so that prosecutors can identify and concentrate on

*One of a series of 21 Briefing Papers for PROMIS (Prosecutor's Management Information System), this publication was prepared by the Institute for Law and Social Research (INSLAW), Washington, D.C., under a grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), which has designated PROMIS as an Exemplary Project. Such a designation is reserved for criminal justice programs judged outstanding, worthy of national attention, and suitable for adoption by other communities. Presenting a bird's-eye view of PROMIS capabilities, the Briefing Papers are one facet of INSLAW's LEAA-funded program designed to assist local prosecutors evaluate and, when appropriate, implement PROMIS. In January 1971, the computerized information system was initiated in Washington, D.C., where prosecutors continue to rely upon PROMIS to help them manage more effectively an annual work load involving allegations of 8,500 serious misdemeanors and 7,500 felonies. (A manual version of PROMIS is also available and parallels the capabilities of the computerized system.)



priority areas and exert positive and productive control over their work load, instead of merely reacting to it on a best-guess basis. Not only does this promote effective utilization of prosecutory time and personnel, but it also serves to attract and retain experienced attorneys. And when local government is aware that existing prosecutive resources are not wasted by being subjected to operational inefficiencies, requests for additional staff may be looked upon in a more favorable light.

PROBLEMS PROMIS COMBATS

PROMIS is designed to meet head on such operational problems as those highlighted in the following not-so-hypothetical example.

Struggling to keep pace with a massive influx of cases, hard-pressed prosecutors often work assembly-line fashion: each is responsible for cases at a given stage in the proceedings--at screening, arraignment, or trial. No one is in overall control of a case from start to finish. Responsibility and control are fragmented. Cases are lost through cracks in the system: files are misplaced; witnesses fail to appear; numerous continuances result in court dismissals.

The habitual, courtwise criminal buries his recidivism in the anonymity of large-scale, assembly-line case processing. He seeks one delay and postponement after another until the government's witnesses are so exasperated and inconvenienced, or their memories of the crime so obscured, that charges are either dropped or dismissed. If the case goes to trial, the prosecutor is oblivious that there are other cases pending against the accused, or that he is a fugitive, or that the seriousness of his current offense warranted special pretrial preparation of the case. (President Ford took note of this problem in his first presidential speech on crime when he described the need to "assign priority to cases of habitual criminals and expedite the process by which they are brought to justice." ^{2/} In his June 1975 crime message to Congress, the President again underscored the problem: "Prosecutors often lack information on a defendant's criminal history and thus cannot identify habitual criminals who should be tried by experienced prosecutors....")

In addition to the problem of seasoned career criminals who seek to manipulate the system to their advantage, there are internal managerial and operational problems. For example, police officers, expert witnesses, and defense attorneys are scheduled to appear at the same time in different courts on different cases, with the court too often unaware that the conflicts exist until the day of trial.

With massive and constantly shifting calendars, case principals are not notified of expected court appearances or of changes and cancellations. Analyses of evidence by chemists, handwriting experts, and other



specialists are frequently unavailable on the trial date because of the difficulty of scheduling, coordinating, and monitoring the completion of those activities for a large volume of cases.

Furthermore, the chief prosecutor is often in the dark about whether results within the prosecutor's office are caused by subordinates' adhering to his policy or departing from it. For example, since the reasons for discretionary decisions by screening assistants are not recorded, the chief prosecutor is unable to determine if refusals to prosecute are consistent with, or contrary to, office policy.

Often having only a matter of minutes to review a case before presenting it, a trial prosecutor discovers that essential case documentation is missing or that notations by attorneys who processed the case at previous stages of the proceedings are not clear. He or she is not sure if essential witnesses are present nor reasonably certain about what aspects of the case their testimony will address. The trial prosecutor is also in the dark regarding possible problems with the case--such as those relating to search and seizure or identification--and is unaware of prior defense-requested continuances and thus is not in a position to determine if another such defense request represents an abuse.

Having been put to the test for several years by the prosecutor's office in Washington, D.C., 3/ PROMIS has proven that it can effectively address such problems and significantly upgrade the performance of urban prosecution agencies. 4/ (Though this Briefing and others in the series generally focus on the computerized version of PROMIS, a manual version is also available and parallels the capabilities of the automated system. 5/ And--its acronym notwithstanding--PROMIS can effectively serve the needs of the judiciary as well as those of the prosecutor, as noted later.)

KEY MANAGERIAL GOALS PROMIS HELPS YOU ACHIEVE

Some consider as the centerpiece of PROMIS its ability to help prosecuting attorneys identify the more serious cases from among the thousands that flow through the prosecutor's office each year. Typically, the relative importance of pending cases is hidden by their sheer number and by the masking effect of legal charges. For example, out of dozens of pending assault cases, some may involve defendants who are career criminals and who inflicted serious injury; other assault cases may involve first offenders who are perhaps guilty of only technical violations of the law.

PROMIS cuts through these difficulties by assigning ratings to cases on the basis of data obtained by attorneys and arresting officers



at the screening stage. 6/ This information pertains (1) to the gravity of the crime in terms of the amount of personal injury, property damage or loss, and intimidation involved and (2) to the seriousness of the accused's criminal history based on prior arrests and convictions, aliases used, and the like. 7/

Several days prior to the trial date assigned to a group of cases by the court, PROMIS prints out a copy of the court's calendar for that date but instead of listing the cases in the order the court will call them (e.g., oldest first, or alphabetical order, or in ascending order by docket number), PROMIS ranks them in descending order of their seriousness according to the gravity of the prior record of the accused and the gravity of the crime. High-ranked cases can be assigned to a special attorney team which would assure that such cases receive a superior degree of pretrial preparation. When a specially prepared case is called by the court, the team would deliver a detailed case work-up to the courtroom prosecutor. 8/ The conviction rate for cases that received this special preparation is reported to be 25 percent higher than that for those processed routinely in the jurisdiction where PROMIS began.

A second major managerial objective PROMIS addresses is the control and/or elimination of scheduling and logistical impediments that tend to block adjudication of cases on their merits.

A common assumption in industry and commerce is that assembly-line mass-production processes require carefully planned controls. To keep pace with the influx of cases, large prosecution agencies frequently operate on an assembly-line basis; different lawyers frequently attend to different aspects or problems of the same case as it progresses down the "production line" from inception to final disposition. As with industry, prosecution offices need a mechanism to compensate for problems induced by this fragmentation of responsibility and control, such as those related to notifying witnesses and monitoring postponements.

PROMIS is such a mechanism. It automatically produces subpoenas, witness and victim telephone lists, a pending-case list for any given witness, and notices for expert witnesses so that all parties concerned can be routinely informed of scheduled appearance dates. 9/ PROMIS keeps track of postponements of individual cases and notes, along with the reasons therefor, whether the prosecution, defense, or court is responsible. In addition, PROMIS:

- Automatically alerts the prosecutor when the accused has other cases pending against him. 10/

- Regularly produces lists of fugitives so that the cognizant law enforcement agencies can systematically seek to apprehend them.



- Routinely prints lists of cases pending at various stages of prosecution for more than a specified number of days so that problems of delay can be resolved promptly. 11/

A third principal management objective PROMIS focuses on is the monitoring and enforcing of evenhandedness and consistency in the exercise of prosecutive discretion. The chief prosecutor in a large, urban agency must inevitably exercise broad discretionary authority through many assistant prosecutors. The problem, of course, is to assure that the discretion exercised by assistants reflects the consistent and evenhanded application of the chief prosecutor's policies, not theirs. Such policies could govern discretion in these areas:

- The decision not to prosecute.
- The decision to upgrade, reduce, add to or subtract from the charges recommended by the arresting officers.
- The negotiation and acceptance of pleas.
- The decision to allow defendants entry into diversion programs.
- The decision to nolle prosequi or dismiss a case.
- The initiation, or concurrence in, case postponements.

To monitor and enforce the proper application of discretion in these areas, the related decisions must be visible; that is, they must be recorded and retrievable for subsequent review. Not only must the nature of the discretionary action be recorded (e.g., case rejected for prosecution) but also the reason why the action was taken (e.g., case rejected because of illegal search and seizure). Only when reasons for discretionary decisions are known can supervisory prosecutors be in a position to determine whether subordinates' discretionary decisions reflect compliance with office policy. This is easily accomplished with PROMIS, because it can generate statistics on the reasons for several different types of prosecutive actions, ranging from modification of police charges to requests for continuances. 12/

Monitoring the evenhandedness of discretionary prosecutive decisions is also facilitated by PROMIS' Uniform Case Evaluation and Rating capability, discussed earlier. For example, are defendants with comparable criminal backgrounds and charges (in terms of PROMIS case ratings) given equal treatment? Is one permitted to plead to a misdemeanor charge while the other is forced to go to trial on a felony? Is this apparent lack of evenhandedness explained by the reasons cited for these decisions? If not, should office policy in this area be more clearly defined?



Finally, the fourth major management objective addressed by PROMIS pertains to the analysis and research of problems associated with the screening and prosecution of criminal cases. For example, in the District of Columbia prosecutor's office, PROMIS is probing a wide array of questions, many of which relate to, or interface with, police and correctional concerns as well:

1. What percent of police arrest charges are modified by screening assistants? What percent of police-initiated cases are totally rejected?

2. What are the reasons for charge modification or rejection? Do these reasons indicate that the prosecution agency should brief police about such matters as search and seizure?

3. Why do assistant prosecutors nolle prosequi cases? Do the reasons indicate witness-related problems?

4. What are the reasons cited for court dismissals? Do the reasons pertain to case weaknesses that should have been identified at the screening stage?

5. What proportion of cases considered for prosecution over the last six months involve arrestees who were on parole or probation, or free on bail at the time?

6. What effect does a close victim/accused relationship have on case dismissal rates and guilty dispositions?

7. What have been the final dispositions of all narcotics cases over the past 12 months?

8. What effect does an increase or decrease in the time between arrest and trial have on the disposition rate?

9. Does expeditious case processing reduce recidivism?

10. Are certain correctional programs associated with abnormally high recidivism?

11. What is the relationship between the prosecutor's decision to file charges and the victim's or defendant's personal characteristics, such as race, income, sex, place of residence, etc.?

12. What are the patterns of criminal behavior in the community and what is the likelihood of finding specific forms of criminality in certain sections of the city?

13. What would be the effects of alternative case-scheduling systems?



14. What are the respective impacts of proposed speedy-trial rules on the rights of the accused and on the public safety of the community?

15. What would be the effects of curtailing or modifying plea negotiations? 13/

THE FACTS IN PROMIS

A comment by the National Advisory Commission serves to underscore the basic value of PROMIS: "Official judgment in criminal justice as in other policy areas is not likely to be sounder than the available facts." 14/ PROMIS is synonymous with facts--over 170 of them for every case. With access to these data, prosecutors in high-volume jurisdictions can achieve technologically the same detailed knowledge of their case load and operational problems that small-town prosecutors acquire as a matter of course with regard to their relatively light work loads. The facts in PROMIS fall into six major categories:

1. Information about the accused or defendant. This includes name, alias, sex, race, date of birth, address, facts about prior arrests and convictions, and employment status. If judged appropriate, additional data could be added, such as information about alcohol or drug abuse. Some of this information is used to rate the gravity of the case in terms of the defendant's criminal history.

2. Information about the crime. The date, time, and place of the crime; the number of persons involved in the crime; and a numerical rating reflecting the gravity of the crime in terms of the amount and degree of personal injury, property damage or loss, and intimidation.

3. Information about the arrest. The date, time, and place of the arrest, the type of arrest, and the identity of the arresting officers.

4. Information about criminal charges. The charges originally placed by the police against the arrestee, the charges actually filed in court against the defendant, the reasons for changes in the charges by the prosecutor, the penal statute for the charge, the FBI Uniform Crime Report Code for the charge, and the Project SEARCH Code for the charge.

5. Information about court events. The dates of every court event in a case from arraignment through motion hearing, continuance hearing, final disposition, and sentencing; the names of the principals involved in each event, including the defense and prosecution attorneys and judge; the outcomes of the events and the reasons therefor.

6. Information about witnesses. The names and addresses of all witnesses, the prosecutor's assessment of whether the witnesses are essential to the case, and any indications of reluctance to testify by the witnesses.



This and other information enables the Washington prosecutor's office to utilize PROMIS to track the work load of the criminal court process from three separate vantage points. First, the work load is tracked from the vantage point of the crime or criminal incident. This is accomplished by including in PROMIS the complaint number which the police department assigns to a reported crime. With this number, prosecutors can follow the full history of the court actions arising from the crime even though those actions may involve multiple defendants, multiple cases, and multiple trials and dispositions.

Second, PROMIS tracks the court work load from the vantage point of the accused or defendant. This is achieved by incorporating in PROMIS the fingerprint-based number the police department assigns to the individual following his or her arrest. This identification number is used again by the department if the same individual is subsequently arrested. Through this number, prosecuting attorneys accumulate criminal history files on offenders and note incidents of recidivism.

Finally, PROMIS tracks from the vantage point of the court proceedings. This is accomplished by including in PROMIS the docket number the court assigns to the case pending before it. With this number, prosecutors trace the history of any formal criminal action from arraignment through final disposition and sentencing, and account for the separate fate of each count or charge.

The inclusion of these three numbers appears simple but is unique with PROMIS and extremely significant. The numbers provide an "instant replay" capability to track the criminal incident, the defendant, or the court actions and provide a basis for communication among the various constituent agencies of the criminal justice system. 15/

HOW DOES DATA GET INTO PROMIS?

About 80 percent of the data contained in PROMIS is "captured" at the intake and screening stage as the by-product of the case documentation process. Carbon copies of various forms completed immediately before or during the case screening stage serve as input documents for PROMIS. 16/

As a case moves through the subsequent proceedings, additional information about its status is fed to PROMIS. This is achieved through turnaround forms or TV-like preformatted screens generated by PROMIS in advance of a court event--on which the results of a given proceeding (e.g., preliminary hearing, sentencing, etc.) are recorded and then entered in PROMIS.

Because of the extent of its acquired data, PROMIS dovetails very closely with the informational requirements of other criminal justice



agencies/information systems. For example, PROMIS contains the vast majority of data needed by the Computerized Criminal History and Offender-Based Transaction Statistics components of LEAA's Comprehensive Data Systems program. The acronym notwithstanding, the facts acquired by PROMIS can service the police and courts. For instance, most of the judiciary's case-related information is provided by and through prosecutors in their capacity as the intake and screening mechanism of the court. In view of this, more and more jurisdictions are addressing this question: Given the common informational requirements of prosecuting attorney and court, why not take advantage of economic and other efficiencies by sharing--not duplicating--an information system, such as PROMIS? 17/

REPORTS PRODUCED BY PROMIS

As implemented in Washington, D.C., PROMIS generates, on a recurring basis, five categories of reports which are of particular value to supervisory and trial prosecutors: misdemeanor calendars, felony calendars, case status reports, work load reports, and special reports. In addition, the Management Report Package and Generalized Inquiry Package permit prosecutors to respond quickly to a wide array of questions whose specificity has, traditionally, precluded timely attempts to answer them. Many of these reports are of assistance to police and courts as well.

Misdemeanor Calendars. These calendars assist management and trial prosecutors to process, in a timely and orderly manner, serious misdemeanor cases scheduled for trial or sentencing. The calendars inform management of the case work load, aid in the preparation of case documentation for trial, and identify cases warranting special pretrial preparation. There are five types of misdemeanor calendars:

1. Five-Day Misdemeanor Calendar. Listing all misdemeanor cases scheduled for trial five days hence, this calendar contains such information as the defendant's and codefendant's name(s), case number, charges, arrest date, witnesses and their addresses and phone numbers, arresting police officers, number and dates of continuances and reasons therefor, prosecutor's and defense attorney's names, and ratings reflecting the gravity of the crime and of the defendant's criminal history. (See Figure 1.)

2. One-Day Misdemeanor Calendar. One day in advance of the trial date, PROMIS produces a calendar similar in content and format to Figure 1.

3. Five-Day Misdemeanor Priority Calendar. This advance calendar ranks upcoming cases according to their seriousness as determined by





DEFENDANT'S NAME	CASE NO.	J/NJ	ARREST TYP	APO/WITNESSES	NC	DATES	CONTINUANCES	PROSECUTION
1 JXXXXXXX, JXXXXX DEFEND: 10.0 CRIME 04 RELEASE: PERSONAL RECOG DEFENSE: MXXXXXXX, JXXX CO: RXX, IXXX CXXXX	03864173	NJ	11/05/73	AE HXXXXXXX, DXXXX R BADGE 0874 UNIT 2D RXXXXXXXXX, CXXXXX T BADGE 2999 UNIT 20	01	06/39/73	C-CONTINUED TO TRIAL	CXXXXX, R PENDING 01358673 FEL
2 MXXXXXX, AXXXXX DEFEND: 15.0 CRIME 02 RELEASE: CASE BOND DEFENSE: HXXXXXXX, AXXX CO: NONE	04864173	J	11/15/73	AE SXXX, JXXXX R BADGE 0248 UNIT 3D MXXXXXXX, HXXXXX 202-3682598 301-2681594	05	06/30/73 07/15/73 08/01/73 09/15/73 10/15/73	C-CONTINUED TO TRIAL D-DEFENSE COUNSEL LATE G-CW NO SHOW G-CW UNAVAILABLE G-CW NO SHOW	KXXX, W PENDING 02568573 MIS

FIGURE 1
PROMIS FIVE-DAY MISDEMEANOR CALENDAR
FOR CASES CONTINUED TO 12/04/73

JUDGE: SMITH DEFENDANT'S NAME	CASE NO	INDICTED	DISP DATE	PROSECUTOR	CHARGES	FINAL DISPOSITION	PENDING CASE NO TYP
JXXXXXX, DXXXXX L DEFEND: 10.0 CRIME:10	01234573	12/01/73	12/20/73	HXXXXXXX, P	BURGLARY II	GUILTY-JURY	02235673 FEL
PXXXXXXX, DXXXXX L DEFEND: 20.0 CRIME:02	01356273	12/02/73	12/22/73	MXXXXX, J	ROBBERY	PLEA GUILTY THIS CHG	03572673 MIS
TXXXX, JXXX T. JR DEFEND: 21.0 CRIME:10	02233473	11/05/73	11/30/73	PXXXXX, T	ADW-GUN	FOUND GUILTY JURY	

FIGURE 2
PROMIS MISDEMEANOR SENTENCING CALENDAR
FOR CASES CONTINUED TO 12/12/73

their PROMIS-computed case rating. 18/ Thus the most important cases are identified in a timely manner so that they can receive special pre-trial preparation. 19/

4. One-Day Misdemeanor Priority Calendar. The purpose, content, and format of this calendar are similar to Number 3 above.

5. Misdemeanor Sentencing Calendar. Issued one day prior to the date of sentencing, this calendar alerts prosecutors so they can prepare documentation for sentencing recommendations. (See Figure 2 for the content and format of this calendar.)

Felony Calendars. PROMIS generates four types of felony calendars: (1) One-Day Preliminary Hearing Calendar, (2) Five-Day Felony Trial Calendar, (3) One-Day Felony Trial Calendar, and (4) One-Day Felony Sentencing Calendar. The purpose, content, and format of the first three felony calendars are similar to the misdemeanor calendar illustrated in Figure 1; the felony sentencing calendar corresponds to Figure 2.

(Far from merely providing a means by which to automate calendar preparation, PROMIS helps prosecutors and court administrators to achieve the full range of case-scheduling goals: monitoring calendars to keep account of the availability of court resources and of scheduled resource commitments; setting dates and times of court events; controlling conflicts in attorney schedules; managing police officer appearances to minimize travel and waiting time and limit conflicts; effecting last-minute adjustments to the calendar; and notifying all participants.)

Work Load Reports. The following reports allow management to monitor the progress of cases that are specially assigned to individual prosecutors for preparation and trial:

1. Misdemeanor Specially Assigned Cases. This report lists, by attorney, all misdemeanor cases that could be assigned to a Special Litigation (Major Violators) Unit, which would give intensive pretrial preparation to the most important cases. 20/ With this report, the chief of the Unit could assign cases on an equitable basis. The report contains the information for each case handled by a given prosecutor: judge, docket number, defendant's name, defense counsel, indictment dates, charges, witness data, other pending cases against the defendant.

2. Felony Specially Assigned Cases. This PROMIS-generated work load report provides each prosecutor with a listing of all pending felony cases to which he or she is assigned. The report contains the same type of information as noted for Number 1 above.

3. Attorney Felony Case Work Load by Type of Charge. Listing the types of felony charges by number and as a percentage of total case load for each prosecutor, the report can assist the manager of a felony trial division in assigning new cases to prosecutors.



Case Status Reports. In addition to calendar and work load reports, PROMIS generates four different summaries on the status of cases pending at various prosecution stages. A series of three reports lists defendants who have had bench warrants issued against them for failure to appear before the court as directed:

1. Misdemeanor Fugitive List. Noting all misdemeanor cases involving outstanding bench warrants for defendants, the report furnishes to police information contained in PROMIS about any given fugitive-defendant.

2. Preindictment Felony Fugitive Listing. The cases of the fugitive-defendants in this listing are pending between screening and the grand jury stage.

3. Postindictment Felony Fugitive Listing. This report lists indicted fugitive-defendants whose cases are awaiting felony trial.

These three fugitive listings contain the following information: defendant's name, police fingerprint-based identification number, court docket number, police criminal complaint number, date the bench warrant was issued, the name of the judge issuing the warrant, charges, and defendant's race, sex, date and place of birth, and home address.

The fourth case status report lists all cases pending in the grand jury, oldest cases appearing first, and contains the following data for each defendant: case number, defendant's name and police identification number, arrest date and date bound over to the grand jury, release status, defense counsel, arresting officer, charges, and other pending cases.

All of these case status reports are of obvious importance to the prosecutor inasmuch as the cases remain at a standstill until the grand jury acts or the defendant is apprehended.

Special Reports. Comprising this fifth major category of PROMIS reports are Witness Subpoenas, Subpoena Summary Listing, and the Statistical Report.

Special preprinted subpoena forms are generated to advise witnesses where and when to appear for a scheduled misdemeanor trial upon entry into PROMIS of a new or modified trial date. 21/

If PROMIS detects an error in the name or address of the witness (e.g., no street number) or if there is insufficient time for the subpoena to reach the witness by mail, this will be noted on a Subpoena Summary Listing. 22/ Thus alerted, the Washington, D.C., prosecutor's Witness Notification Unit, staffed primarily by paralegals, 23/ telephones or otherwise contacts witnesses to whom subpoenas have not been issued.



The Statistical Report provides management with an overview of the case work load for a given period:

- Screening: Misdemeanor and felony cases considered, charged, rejected, or reduced.

- Preliminary Hearings: Cases bound over, dismissed, aborted through a nolle prosequi action, or reduced.

- Grand Jury: Cases indicted, ignored by the grand jury, dismissed, or referred to misdemeanor prosecution.

- Dispositions: Dispositions are separated into four groups--felony trials, unassigned misdemeanors, special litigation (major violators), and total misdemeanors. Within each of these four groups, the total cases are separated into types of outcomes (e.g., guilty, not guilty, dismissed, aborted through nolle prosequi).

- Delays: Average delays for cases disposed between arrest and indictment, between indictment and disposition for felonies, and between arrest and disposition for misdemeanors.

- Pending Cases: The number of pending cases at various points in the prosecutive process.

- Fugitives: The number of bench warrants issued and quashed during the period and the number of pending fugitives at the end of the period.

Management Report Package. A recent enhancement to PROMIS, the package not only adds 13 statistical reports 24/ to those already generated by the system but also permits prosecutors to obtain them with the convenience, speed, and level of detail, heretofore unavailable. District attorneys may fine-tune each report by adjusting its range and focus--without additional programming--so that the office can respond with maximum relevance to often unanticipated queries from the media, legislative committees, other justice agencies, research groups, or internal sources.

For instance, for a given computer run prosecutors may request any or all of the 13 reports, which pertain to office and court operations from arrest to sentencing, and limit them to any or all of five charge types regarding cases handled during each of up to four time periods by any or all branch offices (if any). In addition, users of the package have the option of restricting reports to cases involving (or not involving), for example, male defendants, a given judge or police officer, or assistant prosecutor, guns or other weapons, defendants with extensive criminal histories, or any of dozens of other individual factors.



Also, prosecuting attorneys may specify that the reports present either work load or tracking statistics. Work load statistics total the appropriate case-related activities taken by the prosecutor during the period(s) studied. The figures associated with the tracking statistical tables reflect, as of today, prosecutory actions taken regarding cases that entered the system during the specified past period(s).

Generalized Inquiry Package. In contrast to the "how many" information (number of cases accepted, dismissed, etc.) provided by the Management Report Package, the Generalized Inquiry Package, another recent PROMIS enhancement, presents not aggregate numbers but reports the descriptive details (names of defendants, arrest dates, lead charge, names and addresses of witnesses, etc.) associated with each case selected for study by the prosecuting attorney.

The package permits the chief prosecutor to receive highly specific descriptive case data in response to a broad array of unanticipated and unpredictable queries without the aid of additional programming efforts. For example, a prosecutor may request the following: "Except for armed robbery cases, list descriptive data about all cases--past and present--where Harry Brown was the arresting officer and John Smith was the defense attorney."

One of two types of inquiry reports, the summary report presents a single line of information for each case meeting the criteria of the prosecutor's request. The detailed inquiry report, however, includes a full page of information on each case, virtually all the data stored in PROMIS about it. 25/

A NEW DIMENSION OF OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

Some two years after PROMIS was implemented by the prosecutor's office in Washington, D.C., PROMIS II became operational. This is an on-line version of PROMIS--that is, certain queries can be directed at PROMIS' computer and the answers will immediately appear on the television-like screen of any of several remote terminals located at the prosecutor's office and at each police district station house.

Among the information that can be displayed on a terminal's screen are the following:

- Docket number and status of each of any given defendant's pending cases. This information serves to identify suspects who have been arrested while on some form of pretrial release.

- All pending cases, along with their status, at which a given police officer is scheduled to testify.



- Docket number, current status, next trial date, and witness address for any witness in any pending case.

- All cases pending at a specified stage in the proceedings for over a given number of days (e.g., all cases that have been awaiting grand jury action for more than 30 days).

- All misdemeanor and felony cases scheduled for trial and preliminary hearing, respectively, on a given date. Optionally, the listing can be limited to those cases whose seriousness (as determined through PROMIS' case rating capability) exceeds a given level.

- All data contained in PROMIS regarding a specified case.

The terminals utilized for on-line inquiries can perform double duty by also serving as the hardware for on-line data entry. That is, data is entered onto a disk (temporary storage file) in the computer room through any of the several terminals located throughout the office, with the master file updated at the end of each day's operation via the disk on a batch basis. 26/

IN CONCLUSION...

The foregoing aspects of PROMIS, as well as other facets of the system, are explored in greater detail elsewhere in this PROMIS Briefing Series, including how PROMIS conforms to many of the criminal justice standards recommended by the American Bar Association and by the National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals.

Because of the managerial and administrative leverage offered by PROMIS, the chief prosecutor is in a much better position to shape and exert positive control over office effectiveness. The office not only can move cases but is able to control them as well. In essence, the chief prosecutor can now exercise authority in a manner commensurate with the extent to which the public holds the office accountable. Furthermore, PROMIS is not static but is evolving continually as new enhancements and applications are developed, evaluated, and passed on to the system's users at no cost by INSLAW as part of its LEAA-financed program of transferring the technology to jurisdictions nationwide. 27/

Interacting not only with the court but with police and corrections as well, prosecutors play a pivotal role, with their reach extending from one end of the criminal justice system to the other. Thus one can conclude, without exaggeration, that because PROMIS is located within the prosecutor's office, it has the potential to strengthen the management and administration of the entire criminal justice process and to address effectively the problems referred to by Chief Justice Burger when he asked, "If we do not solve what you call the problems of criminal justice, will anything else matter very much?"



FOOTNOTES

1/ National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, Courts (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 171.

2/ President Gerald R. Ford (Address to the 81st Annual Convention of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C., September 24, 1974).

3/ In the District of Columbia, the U.S. Attorney serves as the local prosecutor. About 75 lawyers are assigned to the D.C. Superior Court (equivalent to a state court of general jurisdiction), where prosecution of local "street crime" cases is conducted. About 16,000 allegations of such crimes are considered for prosecution annually.

4/ For a discussion of PROMIS, see William A. Hamilton and Charles R. Work, "The Prosecutor's Role in the Urban Court System: The Case for Management Consciousness," Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology, June 1973, p. 184.

5/ See Institute for Law and Social Research, PROMIS for the Non-automated or Semiautomated Office (Washington, D.C.: 1976).

6/ See Briefing No. 2, Case Screening, for an explanation of how PROMIS relates to intake and screening.

7/ Briefing No. 3, Uniform Case Evaluation and Rating, explains in detail PROMIS' uniform case evaluation and rating capability and the associated benefits.

8/ See Briefing No. 4, Special Litigation (Major Violators) Unit.

9/ Briefing No. 5, Witness Notification Unit, discusses the witness-notification capability of PROMIS and contains an illustration of the PROMIS-generated Witness Subpoena, Subpoena Summary Listing, and the display of pending cases for witnesses.

10/ See Briefing No. 21, Optional On-Line Inquiry Capability, for a display of this information.

11/ Ibid.

12/ The range and uses of PROMIS "reason data" are explained in Briefing No. 8, Reasons for Discretionary and Other Actions.

13/ See Briefing No. 10, Research Uses of PROMIS Data.



14/ National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, Criminal Justice System (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 2.

15/ See Briefing No. 9, Counting by Crime, Case and Defendant, for a further discussion of the use of these three identifying numbers.

16/ See Briefing No. 2, Case Screening, for a description of the screening process and Briefing Nos. 11-16, Uniform Crime Charging Manual, Police Prosecution Report, Crime Analysis Worksheet, Processing and Trial Preparation Worksheet, Police Intake Worksheet, and Standardized Case Jacket, for explanations and illustrations of key forms.

17/ See Briefing No. 17, Interface with Other CJIS, for more details.

18/ See note 7.

19/ See Briefing No. 4, Special Litigation (Major Violators) Unit, for an illustration of the Five-Day Misdemeanor Priority Calendar.

20/ Ibid.

21/ See Briefing No. 5, Witness Notification Unit, for an illustration of this report.

22/ Ibid.

23/ See Briefing Nos. 5 and 6, Witness Notification Unit and Paralegals.

24/ The Management Report Package is described more fully in INSLAW's Special Report No. 1: Management Report Package for PROMIS. A technical description of the package appears in Volume VI, System Options, of INSLAW's PROMIS documentation series. The package's reports are as follows: Screening Statistics, Rejection Reason Summary, Release and Bail Decisions, Preliminary Hearing and Grand Jury Dispositions, Grand Jury Dismissal and Nolle Reasons, Disposition Summary, Prosecution Dismissal and Nolle Reasons, Court Dismissal Reasons, Speedy Trial and Time Delay Statistics, Pending Case Aging Statistics, Continuance Summary, and Sentencing Summary.

25/ Additional details about the Generalized Inquiry Package are contained in INSLAW's Special Report No. 2: Generalized Inquiry Package for PROMIS. A more technical description appears in Volume VI, System Options, of INSLAW's PROMIS documentation series.

26/ More information about on-line inquiries and data entry are contained in Briefing No. 21, Optional On-Line Inquiry Capability. See also Briefing Nos. 2, 5, 17: Case Screening, Witness Notification Unit, and Interface with Other CJIS.

27/ See Briefing No. 20, Transferability, for more details about INSLAW's role in this regard.





END