



Mecklenburg County Criminal Justice Advisory Group

OVERVIEW :

The Mecklenburg County Criminal Justice Advisory Group (CJAG) was created in 2005 as an informal forum where criminal justice system leaders engage in *systemic* planning and coordination. The CJAG focuses on identifying goals and priorities, developing solutions, and measuring results. Commitment is made to establishing cohesive policies and programs which are based on research and comprehensive planning. This commitment entails effective resource utilization and targeted funding strategies as part of its goal.

MISSION STATEMENT :

"The Criminal Justice Advisory Group is committed to making a positive difference in the Mecklenburg County criminal justice system through communication, research, coordination, and planning. The group collaboratively develops programs and policies, and advocates change, in the interest of improving public safety."

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES :

The goal of the CJAG is to coordinate the overall criminal justice system to make it more efficient, effective, and productive. Based on this goal, the objectives are:

- 1) To bring together key decision makers on a monthly basis to openly discuss issues that affect the criminal justice system.
- 2) To identify problems and issues, and to proactively address those issues through planning and coordination.
- 3) To facilitate the administration of criminal justice and the provision of related services and programs.
- 4) To generate system-wide data that increases knowledge of the criminal justice system and strengthens decision-making.
- 5) To produce and continually improve a comprehensive criminal justice plan that defines systemic goals and objectives, identifies areas of strength and weakness, and includes an action plan with timelines and evaluative aspects.
- 6) To initiate innovative programs and policies which enhance the functionality of the criminal justice system and increase public safety.
- 7) To review costs related to criminal justice agency activities, avoid duplicate spending, and prioritize the use of limited funds.
- 8) To determine potential grant opportunities, identify eligible agencies and programs, and synchronize the grant application process to ensure that, on balance, no opportunities are lost.

- 9) To interconnect, and possibly consolidate, existing criminal justice groups, committees, and boards operating in Mecklenburg County to avoid redundancy of efforts and to ensure cohesive systemic planning.
- 10) To develop and monitor an integrated information system that permits the timely sharing of data among criminal justice agencies.
- 11) To respond to critical issues and collectively develop resolutions before they become crises.

ORGANIZATION :

The CJAG consists of three parts: 1) an Executive Group, 2) standing committees, and 3) task groups.

1) EXECUTIVE GROUP

The Executive Group consists of key gate keepers who are the decision makers for the criminal justice system. Meetings are informal and there is no voting, since the group is advisory in nature and based on mutual interest. The purpose of the open forum style is to encourage candid discussions regarding the criminal justice system, thus it is imperative that members abide by a rule of “what is said in the room, stays in the room.”

Members of the Executive Group are selected based on the position they hold, and include the following individuals:

- 1) County General Manager
- 2) Charlotte City Manager
- 3) Criminal Justice Director
- 4) Senior Resident Superior Court Judge
- 5) Chief District Judge
- 6) Chief Magistrate
- 7) Mecklenburg County Sheriff
- 8) District Attorney
- 9) Public Defender
- 10) Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Chief
- 11) Town Police Chiefs (6)
- 12) Clerk of Superior Court
- 13) Trial Court Administrator
- 14) Pretrial Services Program Manager

Additional members may be added in the future if the Executive Group deems the positions beneficial to the planning and coordination process. The County General Manager shall serve as the chairperson of the Executive Group.

2) STANDING GROUPS

Standing groups coordinate and oversee designated elements of the criminal justice system on an on-going basis. Members and meeting times will vary. The CJAG will serve as an “umbrella” for these groups and provide direction and guidance when needed.

Standing groups of the CJAG include the following:

- **IT Governance Committee-** The IT Governance Committee is responsible for providing direction and leadership for Mecklenburg County's criminal justice system information technology planning and policies. It will promote the integration of information systems, facilitate the implementation of information technology, assure that resources are used responsibly, evaluate progress of initiatives, and monitor risks. In addition, the Committee will determine the short and long term information technology priorities for the criminal justice system and make annual budget/funding recommendations to the Mecklenburg County Manager's Office based upon a plan developed by the Committee.
- **Justice in the Community-** This Committee is responsible for developing and integrating community-based solutions to criminal behavior which restore offenders as productive citizens while bringing justice to the victim and the community. It will develop strategies that prevent individuals from becoming involved in the criminal justices system and to seek divert those that become involved but pose slight risk to public safety. As part of its objectives, the Committee will strive to reduce the demand for county jail beds by creating alternatives to incarceration, reducing length of stay, and/or lowering recidivism.

3) T A S K G R O U P S

Task groups will investigate and analyze specific issues within the criminal justice system as determined by the Executive Group. They will form recommendations and submit them to the Executive Group for action. Task groups will also assist in the implementation and evaluation of supported plans.

Task groups may include members from the public and private sector. The number of members and meetings will vary.

Task groups shall dissolve once they have completed their purpose.

M E E T I N G S :

The CJAG Executive Group meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of every month at 8:30 a.m. Additional meetings may be scheduled if needed.