

Five key steps to forming a CJCC from Robert Gibson

The following are key steps to ensure the successful deployment of a criminal justice collaborating council.

1) Involve all the primary decision-makers in the justice system – the presiding judge, the sheriff, the lead prosecutor. Stand-ins cannot be sent on a regular basis. The people at the table must have the authority to make decisions.

2) Provide the council with staff support, whether in the form of a new county hire, a contractor, or an existing employee. This person will take minutes, schedule meetings, and handle all the other details.

3) Conduct a local system assessment and then hold a strategic planning session to create the council. Decide the basics, such as membership. While there are individuals who must be involved, councils do have some discretion; for example, they might choose between the police chief and the head of the chiefs' association, among mayors of various major cities, and among a group of interested citizens.

4) Develop an information process. The information should be gathered, and the work of the council done, by committees comprised of staff members of the various agencies represented and public members.

5) Hold strategic planning sessions at least once a year to evaluate earlier plans and make new ones. Planning sessions orient new members and reporting to counterparts in other agencies provides a check on any freelancing tendencies individual members might have.