Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision

Midwest Region Meeting MINUTES

February 23, 2022 – 10:00 am ET
Video Conference

Members in Attendance:
1. Allen Godfrey (MN)
2. Mary Kay Hudson (IN)
3. Hope Cooper (KS)
4. Russell Marlan (MI)
5. Sally Reinhardt-Stewart (NE)
6. Amy Vorachek (ND)
7. Katrina Ransom (OH)
8. Bradley Lewandowski (SD)
9. Joselyn López (WI)

Members not in attendance:
10. Sally Kreamer (IA), Chair
11. Rebecca Walton (IL)

Guests:
1. Simona Hammond (IA)
2. Heather Bell (IA)
3. Holly Kassube (IL)
4. Angie Hensley-Langrel (IN)
5. April Simmons (IN)
6. Nita Wright (IN)
7. Matthew Billinger (KS)
8. Daryn Cobb (MI)
9. Tracy Hudrlik (MN)
10. Alyssa Miller (ND)
11. Jacey Rader (NE)
12. Blair Hofeldt (NE)
13. Susan Barnard (NE)
14. Suzanne Brooks (OH)
15. Chuck Frieberg (SD)
16. Sarah Ball (SD)
17. Cheryl Frost (SD)
18. Brenna Puestow (WI)

Staff:
1. Ashley Lippert, Executive Director
2. Allen Eskridge, Policy and Operations Director

3. Barno Saturday, Logistics and Administrative Coordinator
4. Mindy Spring, Administrative and Training Coordinator
5. Xavier Donnelly, ICOTS Project Manager
6. Drake Greeott, Web Development Manager

Call to Order
Chair S. Kreamer (IA) was called to another meeting, she asked Commissioner A. Godfrey (MN) to chair the Midwest region meeting. Commissioner A. Godfrey (MN) called the meeting to order at 10:00 am ET. Nine out of eleven voting members were present, a quorum was established.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes
Commissioner H. Cooper (KS) moved to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner S. Reinhardt-Stewart (NE) seconded. Agenda approved.

Commissioner M. Hudson (IN) moved to approve the minutes from November 15, 2021, meeting as drafted. Commissioner K. Ransom (OH) seconded. Minutes approved.

Discussion
ICOTS Enhancement Proposals: DCA T. Hudrlik (MN) thanked the Midwest region DCAs for their assistance with drafting these proposals.

DCA T. Hudrlik (MN) proposed an ICOTS enhancement to create address validation on all compact activities.

> "Proposal to modify/enhance ICOTS application:
> Create Address Validation on all Compact Activities
>
> Proposed by: Minnesota – Midwest Region
>
> Users Impacted: PO (Field User); Supervisor; Compact Office; State Administrators
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> Statement of Need:
> Insert or enable an address verification program into ICOTS. Much like USPS or when you order something online, the address has to be recognized or it can't be submitted- or the system suggests a "better" address. We deny a number of RI's or TR's because the address does not exist. This is usually just a result of an entry error by the sending state. For example, they may have transposed house numbers or typed in the zip code wrong. But it delays the process and takes extra work to correct and re submit.
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> Current Practices:
> When our office receives a new request for RI's or TR, we must look up the address in USPS or Google maps etc. to determine the county and who the case should be assigned to in the field. We regularly cannot find the address as it has been entered into ICOTS incorrectly. We then deny and ask the sending state to review the address and re submit with a correct location. This delays the transfer or approval of RI process and creates additional work to resubmit with the correct information.

Justification Submitted by Minnesota:
This will enable the user entering the information to ensure that it is correct and will speed up the process as well as cut down on workload by not having to deny cases and resubmit due to incorrect information."

The region supports the enhancement.

Commissioner A. Vorachek (ND) moved to recommend ER_2023_XX_AddressValidation-Midwest to the Technology Committee for consideration. Commission H. Cooper (KS) seconded. Motion passed.

DCA T. Hudrlik (MN) proposed an ICOTS enhancement to automatically generate a transfer request after an RFRI.

"Proposal to modify/enhance ICOTS application:
Automatically generate Transfer Request after RFRI

Proposed by: Minnesota – Midwest Region

Users Impacted: PO (Field User); Supervisor; Compact Office; State Administrators

Statement of Need:
A transfer request be automatically created when a request for reporting instructions to proceed to the receiving state is created. Currently, agents must create both a transfer and reporting instructions separately. If ICOTS would automatically generate the transfer agents would see it in their workflow and compact office staff would be able to see that a transfer is due before the automated email on the date it is due. By creating the transfer, like how a case closure is created when an absconder violation report is generated, more transfers will be submitted in a timely manner and states would find less cases that don't have a transfer completed on time. Creating them together automatically would also ensure that they are in the same case.

Current Practices:
Agents currently must create both a request for reporting instructions and transfers separately. In some instances, reporting instructions are created by an agent covering the office and then the case is transferred to a different agent. The new agent may not know that there is work to be done. Compact office staff is tasked with trying to cross reference cases with RI's but no transfer request before receiving that automated email that a transfer is due today.

Justification Submitted by Minnesota:
Users would see in their workflow that the transfer is due and when they must complete it by. This should help states maintain compliance with Transfer Request due dates. The enhancement would ensure that a transfer and a request for reporting instructions are submitted in the same case. Most importantly, this enhancement would save time and energy for our field agents and help make ICOTS easier to navigate."

The region supports the proposed enhancement.

Aproved on 5/10/2022. B.S.

Commissioner M. Hudson (IN) moved to recommend ER_2023_XX_AutoGenerateTREQ-Midwest to the Technology Committee for consideration. Commissioner H. Cooper (KS) seconded. Motion passed.

DCA T. Hudrlik (MN) proposed an ICOTS enhancement to add "Caseload Count" to manage a user's caseload list.

> "Proposal to modify/enhance ICOTS application: Add "Caseload Count" to Manage Caseload List
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> Proposed by: Minnesota – Midwest Region
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> Users Impacted: PO (Field User); Supervisor; Compact Office; State Administrators
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> Statement of Need:
> ICOTS to display a "caseload count" for active users in ICOTS. When running a user's active caseload listing in ICOTS- Manage Caseload-, there is no numbering of the cases, so it is not readily available or easy to know how many cases each user has active in ICOTS. Some USERS will have up to 200 outgoing cases under their supervision and agents and supervisors are forced to hand count these if they wish to know how many cases are assigned to them. If there could be an active "caseload count total" at the top or bottom of the screen, that would be very helpful to both users and supervisors to accurately monitor workloads and assign cases fairly/evenly.
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> Current Practices:
> Supervisors and users have to hand count active cases, which becomes extremely difficult and time consuming when users may have dozens or even hundreds of cases in their names. For example, all outgoing parole cases are handled by 2 users. They each have 150-200 cases in their names- It would be helpful to have a case count so that it is easily displayed when supervisors are determining who should be assigned a case and to monitor user workload.
>
> Justification Submitted by Minnesota:
> This would greatly improve user experience and especially Supervisor experience. It would reduce time and frustration in hand counting agent caseloads. This will allow supervisors to see how many cases each of their active users have and be able to monitor workload and delegate cases much more easily and quickly."

Commissioner H. Cooper (KS) moved to recommend ER_2023_XX_CaseCount-Midwest to the Technology Committee for consideration. Commissioner M. Hudson (IN) seconded. Motion passed.

DCA T. Hudrlik (MN) proposed an ICOTS enhancement to expand the offender demographic search functionality.

> "Proposal to modify/enhance ICOTS application: Expand offender demographic search functionality

Aproved on 5/10/2022. B.S.

Proposed by: Minnesota – Midwest Region

Users Impacted: PO (Field User); Supervisor; Compact Office; State Administrators

Statement of Need:
Increase flexibility and usability of the search feature in ICOTS when you don't have an ICOTS number (Offender demographics). Some suggestions:

(a) Having a similar name come up (for example, if I don't know how to spell someone's name exactly, or I have been given a misspelling, the search could come up with similar names?)

(b) Not having to put a full name in to search- Similar to a. above- we have a feature where we don't have to put a full name in, we can do a "partial search" – for example a last name and a first initial or first couple letters of the name….
  - Refine the search criteria where an offender can be looked by typing in the SSN and/or the FBI number (without having to type the full name)

  - Having an option to do a "begins with" type of search when searching for an offender whose full name is not known.

Current Practices:
- Find by demographic search is not user friendly, especially when it comes to common names. Quite often, the search result would bring up clients whose name is completely different, and you would find your client at the bottom of the list.

- The first and last name are ALWAYS required when looking for an offender which is difficult when the full name is not always available.

Justification Submitted by Minnesota:
Will assist users in locating clients within ICOTS more easily and potentially avoid not being able to locate a client in ICOTS and providing incorrect information on whether they are an ICOTS case or not."

The region supports the proposed enhancement.

Commissioner R. Marlan (MI) moved to recommend ER_2023_XX-ExpandDemographicSearch_Midwest to the Technology Committee for consideration. Commissioner S. Reinhardt-Stewart (NE) seconded.

ICOTS Project Manager X. Donnelly noted that this request could possibly be achieved via different system elements and/or best practices.

The region agreed to give the Technology Committee the option to expand the scope of this enhancement to improve the offender demographic search for users.

Motion passed.

DCA T. Hudrlik (MN) proposed an ICOTS enhancement to increase the character limit of the "Justification for Transfer" text box.

> "Proposal to modify/enhance ICOTS application: Increase character limit of "Justification for Transfer" text box
>
> Proposed by: Minnesota – Midwest Region
>
> Users Impacted: PO (Field User); Supervisor; Compact Office; State Administrators
>
> Statement of Need: Eliminate or increase the character limit on the "Justification for Transfer" comment box. We are always encouraging users to submit more information in the justification section of transfers, etc. We advise them to put as much as possible in that section to give the receiving state ample information to conduct their investigation and make decisions. We advise that this is the area where they "sell" their case, including why this is in the best interest of the client, the community, etc. However, users get frustrated when they cannot add more information when the character limit is reached, and they then have to document elsewhere and attach and upload additional documents. This increases the time and frustration of users and also requires the receiving state to look in multiple locations for information. Attachments are sometimes overlooked, and it would enhance user experience to have all of the information in one location.
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> Current Practices: Users are limited in how much information can be entered into the justification section and are frustrated because they are trained and encouraged to put as much information as possible in the transfer to give the receiving state the full picture and rationale for transfer. When they run out of space, they must then provide the information in a word document, save it and upload it to the ICOTS case. This takes more time and creates frustration.
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> Justification Submitted by Minnesota: It would enhance the user experience as it would take less time and encourage users to provide more information than the current character limit allows for. It is hoped that more information would lead to greater acceptance rates."

Commissioner M. Hudson (IN) moved to recommend ER_2023_XX-Justification-CharacterLimit-Midwest to the Technology Committee for consideration and approval. Commissioner J. Lopez (WI) seconded.

The region supports the proposed enhancement.

ICOTS Project Manager X. Donnelly stated that in addition to increasing the character limit of the "Justification for Transfer" text box, there were multiple ways to address and improve the quality of transfer justifications. He suggested proceeding with the enhancement as is and letting the Technology Committee make recommendations to address this issue.

Commissioner M. Hudson (IN) added the following to the motion:

Aproved on 5/10/2022. B.S.

"The Technology Committee will look at expanding the methods in which this enhancement addresses the overall need of improving quality of transfer justifications. This could include examples in the help points and description of what's required, as well as the increased character limit."

Commissioner J. Lopez (WI) agreed with the amendment.

Motion passed as amended.

DCA T. Hudrlik (MN) proposed an ICOTS enhancement to add a checkbox section on the TREQ for completed conditions.

> "Proposal to modify/enhance ICOTS application: Add checkbox section on TREQ for completed conditions
>
> Proposed by: Minnesota – Midwest Region
>
> Users Impacted: PO (Field User); Supervisor; Compact Office; State Administrators
>
> Statement of Need:
> Add a section or check box on the Transfer Request to list monitorable conditions and whether or not they have been completed. If there were a checkbox or some sort of notation for completion vs. needing to work on in receiving state, it would be much easier for agents to ascertain what needs to be worked on and what has already been completed. This would affect virtually every case that is transferred.
>
> Current Practices:
> We currently get sentencing orders and all of their conditions, but there is not a section or checkbox to list what has been completed already and many states don't provide that information in the transfer request. For example, many court orders have standard language that requires DNA submission/collection, so it is listed on court order/conditions, but this is often completed at arrest or prior to transfer. However, that is not always communicated to the receiving state, and it is unclear then if the receiving will need to assist in completion. This then creates a situation where multiple CAR's are submitted to request and provide the information. It delays the transfer process as receiving states must notify sending state if they cannot enforce any conditions and it may be irrelevant if the condition has already been completed.
>
> Justification Submitted by Minnesota:
> It would greatly enhance user experience as well as client experience with ICOTS as the receiving state would easily know exactly what conditions have been completed and what conditions remain to be worked on in the receiving state. It would reduce any delays in transfer investigation when receiving states must consider whether or not they can enforce that condition. Further, it would reduce the need to submit CAR's etc. to gather that information. It would easily be available in one location."

Commissioner H. Cooper (KS) moved to recommend ER_2023_XX_Monitorable-Conditions-Midwest to the Technology Committee for consideration. Indicator would be for individual conditions from the sending state on the transfer request. Commissioner R. Marlan (MI) seconded. Motion passed.

DCA T. Hudrlik (MN) proposed an ICOTS enhancement to create new notifications within ICOTS that are currently sent as email notifications.

"Proposal to modify/enhance ICOTS application: Create new notifications within ICOTS

Proposed by: Minnesota – Midwest Region

Users Impacted: PO (Field User); Supervisor; Compact Office; State Administrators

Statement of Need:
Add a notification feature in ICOTS showing activity, due date reminders, etc. that are currently only sent as email notifications. In addition, include a notification when enhancements are completed (perhaps linking to release notes) so users know what has changed in ICOTS since their last login. The notification would be in addition to emails currently sent by ICOTS to ensure the user acknowledges the information.

Current Practices:
Tasks are solely managed through a user's compact workload and email notifications. Considering users are responsible for ensuring emails are not blocked by ICOTS and many are missed due to a user's email security settings, having a task notification feature within ICOTS would ensure users receive and acknowledge ALL important notifications.

Justification Submitted by Minnesota:
Users would have an additional resource for reminders and activities due, rather than relying solely on outside emails. Compact office staff would have a better experience as it would be assumed that with this additional feature, compact staff would spend less time following up with users who have items due/overdue in ICOTS."

Commissioner H. Cooper (KS) moved to recommend ER_2023_XX_NewNotifications-Midwest to the Technology Committee for consideration and approval. Commissioner S. Reinhardt-Stewart (NE) seconded.

Executive Director A. Lippert noted that the national office was working with Appriss on an ICOTS redesign to update the system and improve the user experience. The new design will have a cleaner user interface, be more robust and user friendly. Many of the proposed ICOTS enhancements are designed to improve user experience. Instead of paying Appriss to add them to current ICOTS, the Technology Committee discussed rolling these types of enhancements into the new ICOTS design.

ICOTS Project Manager X. Donnelly recommended to move forward with the enchantment as presented to obtain feedback from the Technology Committee.

Motion passed.

DCA T. Hudrlik (MN) proposed an ICOTS enhancement to add a column for Supervision End Date to the compact workload and manage caseload screen.

> "Proposal to modify/enhance ICOTS application: Add column for Supervision End Date to compact workload and manage caseload
>
> Proposed by: Minnesota – Midwest Region
>
> Users Impacted: PO (Field User); Supervisor; Compact Office; State Administrators
>
> Statement of Need:
> Adding a column for supervision end date to users assigned clients under compact workload or "manage caseload", This would allow users/supervisors to see a full list of all supervision end dates on the current client listing. This would allow them to sort by that date and prioritize work more easily. It is assumed that this would also assist in getting case closure notices and progress reports completed in a timely manner.
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> Current Practices:
> Users cannot currently access dashboard reports, but the DCA does run a monthly report for all cases expiring in the next 90 days and forwards to users.
>
> Justification Submitted by Minnesota:
> When a PO or supervisor run their list of offenders under Compact Workload, it currently does not have any box indicating when the supervision end date is. We have had requests from our agents in MN for ICOTS system to add that box. We believe by showing the end date on this screen it could help keep agents on track with progress reports, case closure due dates, etc. We also hope this could assist in getting case closure notices and relevant information submitted in a timely manner and reduce the amount of auditing the compact offices need to conduct."

Commissioner A. Vorachek (ND) moved to recommend ER_2023_XX_SupervisionEndDate-Column-Midwest to the Technology Committee for consideration. Commissioner M. Hudson (IN) seconded. The Technology Committee may expand the scope of this enhancement but stay within the spirit for which it was proposed.

Motion passed.

Old Business
There was no old business.

New Business
Commissioner R. Marlan (MI) stated that due to increased retaking costs, they were thinking about creating their own offender transportation.

Commissioner M. Hudson (IN) stated that they had a county transportation fund derived from the offender application fees. Sometimes local counties contract the U.S. Marshall service to retake offenders.

Commissioner A. Godfrey (MN) stated that they provided their own transportation for parole cases; they deferred to the sheriff's office for probation cases.

Commissioner K. Ransom (OH) stated that Ohio was looking into alternative ways to transport offenders and looking into Northwest Shuttle.

Commissioner J. Lopez (WI) stated that Wisconsin also experienced high inflation for extradition costs. They use Interstate Compact fees to offset these costs. They also use local staff to transport offenders to bordering states. She expressed her interest in joining Ohio in exploring an alternative method for offender transportation.

Iowa and North Dakota expressed their interest in working with Ohio.

Commissioner S. Reinhardt-Stewart (NE) noted that the Nebraska Department of Correctional Services transported parole offenders.

DCA M. Billinger (KS) stated that state parole offenders were transported by Kansas DOC staff and their county probation used sheriff's or other contracted services.

Commissioner M. Hudson (IN) informed the region that the Rules Committee formed a workgroup to examine issues surrounding state's ability to toll cases in ICOTS. She expects the Rules Committee to reach out to the other committees and regions for their input. Additionally, the Rules Committee asked the DCA Liaison Committee to review the issue of remote hearing and if there was a need for a rule change.

Adjourn
Commissioner S. Reinhardt-Stewart (NE) moved to adjourn. Commissioner R. Marlan (MI) seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 11:14 pm ET.