

National Adult Compact Information System (NACIS) Provides Probation and Parolee Information to Criminal Justice Communities Nationwide

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In 1937, when Congress first allowed states to enter into offender supervision agreements, there were approximately 20,000 offenders transferring across state lines. Today, it is estimated that more than 250,000 adult offenders transfer from state to state annually. Both the tremendous increase in offenders and the lengthy paper-driven transfer processes have created a great burden on states' resources to track these individuals. Soon, however, a new database system, the National Adult Compact Information System ([NACIS](#)), will provide states with an unprecedented level of nationwide electronic sharing, transferring, and tracking of offender information.

According to G. David Guntharp, chairman of the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision ([ICAOS](#)), "The need for a paperless and efficient interstate offender management tracking system is of paramount importance to the states. The inability to quickly and accurately track offender movement is a liability issue to both public safety and citizens across the country." The criminal justice community has continually expressed the need for information regarding probationers and parolees. This information not only serves as a check on the offender to regulate his/her movement but could possibly assist law enforcement in identifying potential suspects through the location of offenders regarding specific crimes.

The original *Interstate Compact for the Supervision of Parolees and Probationers*, enacted by Congress in 1937, established the sole statutory authority for regulating the transfer of adult probation and parole supervision across state boundaries. This act was later revised to create a modern administrative structure and a means for making and adjusting rules over time. The new act, entitled *The Interstate Compact for Adult Offender Supervision* (the "Compact"), mandated the development of a multistate data collection and information sharing system. All 50 states are currently members of this interstate agreement, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

ICAOS, the administrative body that maintains day-to-day oversight authority of the Compact, was tasked with developing the nationwide information sharing system described in the revised Compact. Until this initiative, no national system was in place that uniformly collected information on probationers and parolees, tracked their movements, or consistently shared the information with local, state, and federal law enforcement.

In November 2002, a technology committee was organized to begin the task of developing a management system. Under a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), grant administered by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), ICAOS collaborated with the American Probation and Parole Association ([APPA](#)) to organize the technical committee and develop the capabilities and qualities needed for the nationwide system. Some of the goals outlined are as follows:

- Improve accuracy of the data transferred between states.
- Reduce the time required for communication between states.
- Provide Web-based access to all ICAOS member states and territories.
- Enable patrol officers to have more efficient access to supervision information.

- Develop a national database that will allow for the creation of a historical trail of offender cases and ultimately serve as a link to other national criminal justice databases.
- Allow for victims and their families to perform search queries, via a public Web interface, and to become notified of offender movements.
- Standardize the method by which states conduct business and share information.
- Enhance the ability of ICAOS to enforce the rules of the Compact.
- Provide for a continuum of supervision as offenders move from state to state.
- Generate statistical information.

In July 2004, ICAOS finalized negotiations with Softscape, Inc., to build, implement, and support the new National Adult Compact Information System. NACIS is a Web-based database application that allows state-to-state electronic facilitation of adult probation and parole transfer processes, as well as the collection, storage, and dissemination of offender information. "In my opinion this will have more impact on public safety and officer safety than anything I have seen in my 38 years of law enforcement," said Don Blackburn, ICAOS Executive Director.

During the development stages, the technology committee and Softscape, Inc., consulted with agencies, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Criminal Justice Information Services Division ([CJIS](#)), the FBI's National Crime Information Center ([NCIC](#)), and Nlets – The International Justice and Public Safety Information Sharing Network ([Nlets](#)), who are providing security guidelines.

ICAOS additionally worked with CJIS to build a link to NACIS so that when a patrol officer runs a routine warrant check through NCIC, it would search the NACIS system and provide offender information. This application is taking place in some states but is not yet being used nationwide.

The NACIS system has been developed to operate based upon DOJ's approved National Institute of Standards and Technology's ([NIST](#)) standards. These standards include a requirement that all data transfers occur through encrypted protocols using DOJ's Global Justice Extensible Markup Language (XML) Data Model ([Global JXDM](#))—an XML standard designed specifically for criminal justice information exchanges. Using XML technology will ensure the system is capable of interfacing with states' existing legacy case management applications.

The first phase of NACIS will include in its repository the transfer of all probationers and parolees from state to state under the Compact. States will interface with the system or work via the Web to update the repository with real-time information. Initial NACIS users will include probation and parole officers, supervisors, and the state Compact office. Every probation and parole officer and their supervisor will be issued a user name and password to access NACIS. Other users will be provided with search functionality, such as victim access. "This will be the first time that probationer and parolee information from all 50 states and 3 territories are gathered into one repository to be shared with the criminal justice community," said Mr. Blackburn.

At present, the system is undergoing testing and will be followed by national training and deployment in early 2006. By August 1, 2006, every state will be required to use the system to transfer probationers and parolees.