

# NATIONAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE MODEL (NIEM)

## APPLYING NIEM TO FACILITATE SHARING OF ALABAMA UNIFORM CRIME AND SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY REPORTS

### Synopsis

The purpose of this case study is to highlight the successful development of two NIEM 2.0-conformant Information Exchange Package Documents (IEPDs) and electronic data transmission involving the N-DEx subset of Uniform Crime Report (UCR) incident/offense and arrest data and Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) data, through the Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center (ACJIC).

### Agency Overview

The Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center (ACJIC) is a state agency that serves citizens by providing local, state, and federal criminal justice agencies with critical information. ACJIC is the central point of integration for the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) and International Justice and Public Safety Network (Nlets) within Alabama. It is a resource for law enforcement agencies throughout the state for sharing both information and technology resources. Its responsibility extends to data collection and processing of incident, arrest, and other criminal justice information. ACJIC's information sharing systems are designed to help law enforcement agencies make good decisions that result in the safety and security of citizens of Alabama. ACJIC also serves as the information technology and information sharing arm of the Alabama Department of Homeland Security and the Alabama Fusion Center.

The Alabama Criminal Justice Information Center (ACJIC) has been highly successful in developing a new Uniform Crime Report (UCR) processing system, the UCR Local Template for Reporting and Analysis (ULTRA). ULTRA will provide officers with the flexibility of entering and updating their UCR reports either on laptops within their patrol cars or on desktop computers within their office environments. Pushing the data entry out to the officer in the field ensures that the data is complete, internally consistent, timely, and immediately available for information sharing and analysis. In addition, the data is more accurate since it is being provided by the people who know most about the incident—the investigating officers themselves.

### Executive Summary

#### Challenge

The ACJIC intrastate UCR Local Template for Reporting and Analysis (ULTRA) was developed prior to the establishment of NIEM 2.0 as the national standard. Additionally, ACJIC's intrastate Secure Homeland Access and Reporting Environment (SHARE) must be complemented by the amount of SAR information that it collects and has been limited by the amount of information that gets entered by law enforcement and private sector security personnel.

#### Solution

The funds appropriated to ACJIC through the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) were used to ultimately develop two NIEM 2.0-conformant Information Exchange Package Documents (IEPDs) and transmit data for sharing Alabama's Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data with other states through N-DEx and Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) data generated by Alabama law enforcement agencies and private security personnel with fusion centers located in other states.

#### Results

Results include the ultimate creation of two NIEM 2.0-conformant IEPDs.

Alabama also recently received a major grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Information Technology Evaluation Program (ITEP) to develop an environment for a virtual fusion center. As a result, an environment was developed specifically for the fusion center known as the Secure Homeland Access and Reporting Environment (SHARE). SHARE has a large number of data access and information sharing features. It is unique, however, in having a terrorist incident case management system that is able to receive reports directly from field officers (including both law enforcement and private sector security personnel). While these individuals do not have "read access" to SHARE, any Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) that they submit

go immediately to the SHARE environment for review and disposition.

Law enforcement access to ULTRA and the SAR submission to SHARE is enabled in Alabama by the success of a companion product called the Mobile Officer's Virtual Desktop (MOVE). MOVE is a suite of field applications available to patrol officers from patrol car-based laptops, and it has been widely deployed within the Alabama Department of Public Safety as well as a number of local police agencies. MOVE also provides a shortcut to the Alabama Communications and Operations Portal (AlaCOP), the state law enforcement portal for direct access to criminal and court information. It is also through AlaCOP that law enforcement officers can submit SARs to SHARE.

## Challenge

While the ACJIC ULTRA system will be a major improvement over the largely manual form-based system used by most agencies in Alabama, the system was developed prior to the establishment of NIEM as the national standard. Additionally, while SHARE has a large number of data access and information sharing features, it is limited by the amount of information that gets entered by law enforcement and private sector security personnel.

This project required that two levels of information sharing be addressed:

- **Intrastate sharing**—UCR reports produced with ULTRA are electronically uploaded to a central data center at ACJIC. These reports will be shared within the state as part of the search engine component of AlaCOP called the Law Enforcement Tactical System (LETS). These reports must be shared with the fusion center, since they may contain information relative to terrorism and crimes used to support terrorist activities.
- **Interstate sharing**—The ULTRA reports that reside at the ACJIC data center are best shared with other states via the National Data Exchange (N-DEx). ACJIC was selected to be part of the N-DEx "Increment 1" prototype test bed, and a major effort is continuing to ensure that ULTRA data complies with all network and data format protocols established by N-DEx. In addition, it is essential to share certain SARs with other states' fusion centers within the region, as well as with relevant federal agencies.

## Solution

The funds appropriated to ACJIC through the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) were used to ultimately develop two NIEM 2.0-conformant Information Exchange Package Documents (IEPDs) and to transmit data for sharing Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data with other states through N-DEx and Suspicious Activity Report (SAR) data. The ACJIC IEPDs were developed using IEPDs and other artifacts created by other states, with input from subject-matter experts, and using established methodology, including UML modeling, NIEM contributor mapping documentation, sample XML schema, and development and validation of XML.

## Results

Results include the ultimate creation of two NIEM 2.0-conformant IEPDs and plans for a streamlined version of an offense report that law enforcement or security personnel may submit in lieu of a full-blown incident or SAR report. The purpose of this reporting instrument is to allow law enforcement or security personnel to provide the relevant details of a suspicious activity without the need to complete lots of extra data entry screens. Fusion center analysts will be responsible for reviewing these "mini-SAR reports" and

*"Alabama is proud of our participation in the NIEM Policy Academy. The enhanced level of information available to law enforcement and fusion center personnel that result from these efforts will help protect the safety of citizens in Alabama and beyond."*

*Maury Mitchell, ACJIC Director*

determining whether follow-up action is needed. In a case requiring follow-up, an analyst will contact the original reporting officer and ask additional questions relative to the reported incident. Information gathered at this stage

will be entered by the analyst and will capture data elements consistent with those in the NIEM IEPD for SAR exchanges.