



Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision
Technology Committee Meeting MINUTES

March 3, 2022 · 11:00 am ET
Video conference

Members in Attendance:

1. Chris Moore (GA), Chair
2. Sally Kreamer (IA)
3. Steve Turner (KY)
4. Mac Pevey (WA)
5. Natalie Latulippe (CT), Ex-Officio
6. Alyssa Miller (ND), Ex-Officio
7. Matthew Billinger (KS), Ex-Officio

Members not in Attendance:

1. Dan Blanchard (UT)
2. Joselyn López (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 C. Moore (GA) called the meeting to order at 11:02 am ET. Four out of six voting members were present, a quorum was established.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Commissioner M. Pevey (WA) moved to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner S. Turner (KY) seconded. Agenda approved.

Commissioner S. Turner (KY) moved to approve the minutes from January 13, 2022, meeting as drafted. Commissioner S. Kreamer (IA) seconded. Minutes approved as written.

Discussion

Executive Director A. Lippert reminded the committee that the national office was working with Appriss on an ICOTS redesign to update and improve the system and user experience. She continued that several of the ICOTS enhancement proposals submitted targeted improving user

experience. She asked the committee to identify ICOTS enhancement proposals to include in the new ICOTS design instead of paying Appriss to add them to current ICOTS.

Review enhancement request proposals: At the last meeting, the committee discussed *ER_2023_XX_GangAffiliation_West* to make ‘Gang Affiliation’ a required field on the transfer request and RFRI. The Technology Committee requested feedback from the DCA Liaison Committee on the enhancement and options to include in its drop-down field. After discussion on how the field was typically used and when POs had access to information about gang affiliation, the DCA Liaison Committee voted to reject the proposal to make the Gang Affiliation field mandatory.

The Technology Committee accepted the DCA Liaison Committee’s recommendation.

Commissioner S. Turner (KY) moved to recommend against adopting the ICOTS enhancement *ER_2023_XX_GangAffiliation_West*. Commissioner M. Pevey (WA) seconded. Motion passed.

Commissioner M. Pevey (WA) will inform the West Region about the Technology Committee’s decision.

The committee reviewed ICOTS enhancement proposal *ER_2023_XX_AddCaseNoteNotifications* proposed by the East Region. The region asks to add an email notification sent to assigned users in the compact workflow when a case note (not a case-reassignment) is added directly to a compact case.

“ER 2023 XX AddCaseNoteNotifications East

Proposed by: East Region - Pennsylvania

Users Impacted: PO (Field User), Supervisor, Compact Office

Statement of Need:

Add an email notification sent to assigned users in the compact workflow when a manually created case note (not a case-reassignment) is added directly to a compact case.

Current Practices:

This would simplify and eliminate the need to go acknowledge minutiae, which squanders time. It also wastes time for the initiator who gets an email advising that a CAR reply has been submitted: user has to log into ICOTS, navigate to the correct offender, find the CAR reply, and see that it only says something like “Thanks” or “Noted” or “ICOTS cleanup”.

Justification Submitted by Pennsylvania:

~~Eliminating these unnecessary responses would benefit all users.~~“

ICOTS Project Manager X. Donnelly stated that the national office confirmed these notifications already exist in ICOTS. No further action is needed.

The committee reviewed ICOTS enhancement proposal *ER_2023_XX_AddressValidation* proposed by the Midwest Region. The region asks to add address verification to ICOTS, similar to most e-commerce sites, where an address is validated against confirmed mailing addresses.

“ER 2023 XX AddressValidation

Proposed by: Minnesota – Midwest Region

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

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.

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 committee was in favor of the proposal. It was also noted that Google or Bing would be a better tool to integrate into ICOTS instead of the USPS address finder.

Commissioner M. Pevey (WA) moved to recommend ER_2023_XX_AddressValidation Midwest enhancement to be included in the ICOTS re-design project. Commissioner S. Turner (KY) seconded. Motion passed.

The committee reviewed ICOTS enhancement proposal *ER_2023_XX_AutoGenerateTREQ* proposed by the Midwest Region. The region asks for a function to automatically create a transfer request activity upon submission of an RFRI into the compact workflow.

“ER 2023 XX AutoGenerateTREQ

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.”

Justification and Feedback from National Office and Technology Committee:

The trigger to create a transfer request should be the submission of the request for reporting instructions into compact workflow, not just the creation of an RFRI. Otherwise, the pertinent information copied from an existing RFRI to a TREQ would not be available to reduce duplicate data entry.

The committee was in favor of the proposal.

ICOTS Project Manager X. Donnelly noted that the enhancement was functionality based and therefore would be best suited for the ICOTS re-design project, however the committee could make this decision at a later date.

Commissioner S. Turner (KS) moved to recommend ICOTS enhancement “ER_2023_XX_AutoGenerateTREQ_Midwest for Commission’s approval. Commissioner M. Pevey (WA) seconded. Motion passed.

The committee reviewed ICOTS enhancement proposal ER_2023_XX_CaseCount proposed by the Midwest Region. The region asks to add a display of "caseload count" for active users in ICOTS.

“ER 2023 XX CaseCount

Proposed by: Minnesota – Midwest Region

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

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.

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.”

The committee was in favor of the proposal. The committee discussed including the proposal into the ICOTS re-design project as part of the proposed user dashboard.

Commissioner M. Pevey (WA) moved to recommend ICOTS enhancement ER_2023_XX_CaseCount_Midwest for Commission’s approval. Commissioner S. Kreamer (IA) seconded. Motion passed.

The committee reviewed ICOTS enhancement proposal ER_2023_XX_Expand Demographic Search proposed by the Midwest Region. The region asks for additional criteria and filters on the offender demographic search screen to improve results and make finding the correct record more efficient.

“ER 2023 XX ExpandDemographicSearch

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 committee was in favor of the proposal.

ICOTS Project Manager X. Donnelly suggested that the national office expands the scope of the proposal. The national office will ask the Commission for ideas how to improve this function during the proposal comment period.

The committee discussed integrating the proposal into the ICOTS re-design project.

Commissioner S. Turner (KY) moved to recommend ICOTS enhancement ER_2023_XX_ExpandDemographicSearch for Commission's approval. Commissioner S. Kreamer (IA) seconded. Motion passed.

The committee reviewed ICOTS enhancement proposal ER_2023_XX_Justification Character Limit proposed by the Midwest Region. The region asks to increase the character limit for the Justification for Transfer text box on the transfer request activity.

“ER_2023_XX_JustificationCharacterLimit

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 must document elsewhere and attach and upload additional documents. This increases the time and frustration of users and requires the receiving state to look in multiple locations for information. Attachments are sometimes overlooked, and it would enhance user experience to have all the information in one location.

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.

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.”

Training Coordinator M. Spring suggested expanding the methods to address the overall need of improving the quality of transfer justifications. This could include examples in the help points and description of what is required, as well as the increased character limit.

The committee discussed considering additional ideas to enhance the ICOTS justification screen as well as integrating the proposal into the ICOTS re-design project.

Commissioner C. Moore (GA) moved to recommend ICOTS enhancement ER_2023_XX_JustificationCharacterLimit for Commission’s approval. Commissioner M. Pevey (WA) seconded. Motion passed.

The committee reviewed ICOTS enhancement proposal ER_2023_XX_MonitorableConditions proposed by the Midwest Region. The region asks to create an indicator or check box for monitorable conditions being completed before transfer.

“ER 2023 XX MonitorableConditions Midwest

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 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 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 CARs 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 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.”

Executive Director A. Lippert noted that currently ICOTS did not list conditions. Furthermore, conditions were different across states and individual cases. To accomplish the enhancement as written, it would require users to manually enter every condition and ensure it was clear which conditions were to be completed and ones that had been completed prior to transfer. Adopting this enhancement would result in additional data entry for users. It will be easier for the receiving state but will put more burden on the sending state.

Training Coordinator M. Spring noted that currently, users had two options - to upload a copy of conditions or enter them individually into the system. The issue the proposal was trying to address was to communicate what conditions were completed. She noted that it was more of a training issue.

The committee discussed possibly adding questions on the condition screen to have the user attest as to what conditions have been completed in the receiving state.

The committee tabled the discussion due to the loss of quorum.

The committee will meet again in March to finish its review of the remaining ICOTS enhancement proposals and the revised ICOTS Privacy Policy.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:04 p.m. ET.