

Background

SUMMARY

In Minnesota, information sharing among law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice professionals is impeded by variations in work practices and stand-alone criminal justice information systems. CriMNet is a multi-jurisdictional program to integrate these various systems, allowing criminal justice professionals to share select data on individuals' criminal histories and their current status in the justice system. CriMNet is being implemented incrementally through a series of projects managed by state and local agencies. A central program office in the Minnesota Department of Public Safety coordinates various CriMNet support activities and is also responsible for a central technology system expected to connect the state's various criminal justice information systems. The CriMNet Policy Group, made up of judicial and executive branch representatives, sets CriMNet policy and governs overall progress of the program.

In Minnesota, criminal justice information is created and maintained on separate systems by state courts and state and local agencies. Historically, this separation of information has caused problems for law enforcement officers, judges, public defenders, and other criminal justice professionals who need full and accurate information to do their jobs. For example, a judge making a sentencing decision needs to know if the individual has a history of other convictions. Minnesota's efforts to better integrate criminal justice information started with planning in the early 1990s. In 2001, the state adopted a statewide integration plan and started making significant investments in new or enhanced information systems. It designated these and future integration efforts as "CriMNet."

As background for our evaluation, this chapter addresses the following questions:

- **Why have Minnesota policymakers invested in integrating criminal justice information?**
- **What is the CriMNet program?**
- **How much has the state invested in CriMNet?**

To answer these questions, we reviewed state laws, legislative reports, and various documents that discuss the history of criminal justice information integration in Minnesota and the CriMNet program in particular. We reviewed criminal justice

literature describing national efforts to integrate criminal justice information and the principles that should guide these efforts.¹ In addition, we obtained and analyzed data on state and federal funding for criminal justice information systems for fiscal years 1996-2005 and CriMNet program budget data for fiscal years 2002-05. Finally, we interviewed legislators, executive branch officials, and other policymakers about the CriMNet program.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section, we describe the history behind Minnesota's decision to invest in integrating the state's criminal justice information and the general approach Minnesota is taking to achieve this goal. In the second section, we describe the CriMNet program more specifically—CriMNet objectives, the information sharing model, how the program is organized and managed, and the state and local projects that currently comprise CriMNet. In the third section, we present funding information.

INTEGRATING CRIMINAL JUSTICE INFORMATION

Criminal justice information is considered “integrated” when it can be shared electronically at key decision points during the criminal justice process. In this section, we describe the people and processes that make up the criminal justice system, the types of information needed at critical decision points, and the extent to which Minnesota's criminal justice information systems supported statewide information sharing a decade ago.

The Criminal Justice System

Minnesota has hundreds of state and local criminal justice information systems.

As shown in Table 1.1, Minnesota's criminal justice system includes state agencies, the state court system, and multiple jurisdictions at local levels of government.² The criminal justice system encompasses arrest, prosecution, adjudication, detention, and probation functions. Minnesota has approximately 1,100 criminal justice-related agencies, such as city police departments, county sheriffs, and county attorney offices, and about 8,000 sworn law enforcement officers. The state has 10 judicial districts, about 280 judges and justices, and about 600 county attorneys. In addition, Minnesota has 10 adult and juvenile state correction facilities, locally-run detention facilities in most counties, about 1,200 probation officers, and numerous other corrections professionals. In all, Minnesota has about 500 separate information systems containing criminal justice information.³

¹ We relied heavily on reports from two organizations—the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) and SEARCH (The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics).

² For convenience, we include the state courts in general references to “agencies.”

³ Heather Morton, *Integrated Criminal Justice Information Systems* (Denver, CO: National Conference of State Legislatures, 2001); <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/lis/intjust/report01.htm>; accessed June 4, 2003.

Table 1.1: Criminal Justice Functions and Jurisdictions

Law Enforcement	Prosecution and Public Defense	Courts	Corrections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Police Departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Attorney Offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Courts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Corrections Departments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Sheriff Departments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Attorney Offices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appellate Court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Corrections Departments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Public Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State Patrol - Bureau of Criminal Apprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Defender Offices • Office of the Attorney General 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supreme Court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City and County Detention Facilities • Department of Corrections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State Detention Facilities - Probation

SOURCE: Office of the Legislative Auditor.

At each stage of the criminal justice process, information is collected about individuals and incidents, as illustrated in Table 1.2. This information is used to make critical decisions, including those regarding arrest or release, whether to prosecute, the appropriate prosecution charge, and proper sentence if convicted. The better the information decisionmakers have, the more likely their decisions will be appropriate to the circumstances.

The Need for Greater Integration

Historically, most criminal justice information systems in Minnesota were designed to serve a single jurisdiction, such as a local police department, a county prosecutor’s office, or a jail. As recently as the early 1990s, only a few statewide repositories existed—the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension’s Computerized Criminal History system and “Hot Files” and the courts’ Total Court Information System (TCIS), described in Table 1.3. Collectively, they provided only a partial picture of criminal justice events. Under most circumstances, accumulating information about offenders was time consuming, requiring numerous telephone calls and extensive exchange of paperwork.

Figure 1.1 illustrates how Minnesota’s criminal justice information was fragmented, both within and across functions and levels of government. Although local law enforcement agencies contributed certain types of data to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension’s Hot Files, only certain law enforcement personnel were able to obtain information from the system. Other law enforcement data continued to be held in local systems. As shown in the figure, information for other criminal justice agencies—county correction departments, local detention facilities, public defense offices, and local prosecution offices—also was not shared electronically.

A decade ago, Minnesota had only a few statewide repositories for criminal justice information.

Table 1.2: Examples of Criminal Justice Information That Should Be Shared Among Jurisdictions

Originating Jurisdiction	Examples of Information to Be Shared
Law Enforcement	<p>Individual identification: Name, gender, race, date of birth, photographs, fingerprints</p> <p>Arrest and Charge: Formal statutory cite of the offense alleged and a description of the incident</p> <p>Booking and Custody: Status of individuals in local detention facilities</p> <p>Investigation Data: Gang affiliations, victim and witness information, vehicle information, predatory offender location and classification</p>
Prosecution and Defense	<p>Prosecution Charge: Prosecutors' formal criminal charges following investigation</p> <p>Pre-Trial Diversion: Status and outcomes of individuals' compliance with pre-trial diversion programs, such as chemical dependency treatment, counseling, and restitution</p>
Courts	<p>Court Schedule and Hearing Dates</p> <p>Warrants: For arrest or to appear in court</p> <p>Criminal Case Dispositions: Case outcomes (convictions, dismissals) and final offense level (felony, gross misdemeanor, misdemeanor)</p> <p>Sentences and Conditions: Length of confinement, fines, or other sanctions</p> <p>Post-Sentence Court Appearances: Case outcomes and sentences following probation violations</p>
Probation and Detention	<p>Probation Status: Length and terms of probation; history of violations or compliance</p> <p>Custody Status: Location of offenders detained in local or state facilities while on probation</p>

SOURCE: SEARCH, *Planning the Integration of Justice Information Systems: Developing the Justice Information Exchange Model* (Sacramento, CA: SEARCH/The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, 2002).

In the early 1990s, policymakers reached a consensus that Minnesota needed to improve criminal justice information sharing.

In 1993, the Legislature created a forum for representatives of state and local criminal justice jurisdictions to talk formally about the impact of fragmented criminal justice information and how the state might address the problem.⁴ From those discussions, a consensus emerged that the state should invest in improved criminal justice information systems and that the effort should be statewide.

Minnesota opted for a “system of systems” approach. Under this approach, described in more detail later in this chapter, state and local agencies would continue to develop and maintain the criminal justice information systems and data they need, with integration occurring through a statewide technical

⁴ *Laws of Minnesota* (1993), ch. 266, sec. 33.

Table 1.3: Statewide Criminal Justice Information Systems Available in the Early 1990s

System and Source	Description
Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA)	
Computerized Criminal History System (CCH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statewide repository for local law enforcement, incarceration, and court data on adults' interactions with the criminal justice system • Data limited to: arrests, charges, case dispositions, and sentences of adults for felony, gross misdemeanor, and some misdemeanor offenses • BCA staff entered criminal history data from fingerprint cards submitted by law enforcement agencies, and if a positive match could be made, linked the new information to an individual's criminal history
"Hot Files"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statewide central repository listing (1) wanted or missing persons, and (2) stolen property, such as vehicles, guns, or electronics
Access to CCH and Hot Files	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through BCA's computer network, about 5,000 users at 300 agencies could access CCH, Hot Files, Minnesota Driver Vehicle Services databases, and certain national criminal justice information databases
State Court Administrator's Office	
Total Court Information System (TCIS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statewide case management information system for district, appellate, and supreme court activities including defendant information, case dispositions, sentences and conditions, and post-sentence court appearances • System access limited to court staff • System does not link or compile information about individuals • Hennepin and Scott County criminal courts are not included, requiring separate processes to transfer their data to the BCA for compiling criminal histories

NOTE: As of January 2004, all three of these systems are still being used. The Computerized Criminal History system has been updated several times. TCIS is being replaced with a new court information system.

SOURCE: Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and State Court Administrator's Office system descriptions.

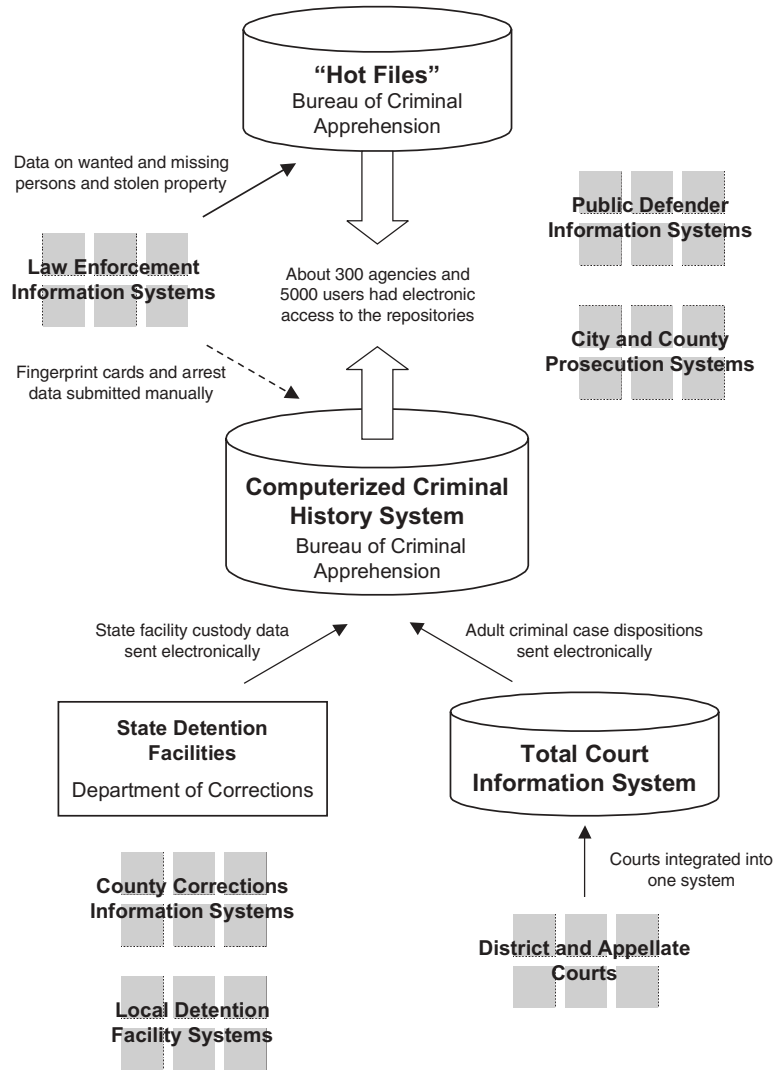
In the mid-1990s, the state started investing in criminal justice information system improvements.

infrastructure. In the mid- to late-1990s, the state started taking incremental steps to improve access to criminal justice information. As shown in Table 1.4, the state completed a number of projects to make certain types of information, such as individuals' gang affiliations, more readily available statewide and to improve the technical capacity of other systems to support information sharing.

The process of building a statewide model to guide integration efforts moved further still in 1999 when the Legislature funded a project in Hennepin County to develop a plan for sharing information between the county, its municipalities, and the state. When Hennepin County completed its work in 2000, the state accepted

Figure 1.1: Criminal Justice Information Systems Integration, Early 1990s

Minnesota's plan called for integrating data held in separate city and county systems.



In 2001, the program to integrate criminal justice data was first called "CrimNet."

NOTE: See Table 1.3 for descriptions of the three central data systems.

SOURCE: Office of the Legislative Auditor analysis of CrimNet program documents.

the plan as a statewide integration model. Responsibility for maintaining and improving it then moved to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

In 2001, state investments to improve criminal justice information systems increased significantly, and the state designated its effort to improve and integrate criminal justice work processes and information systems as "CrimNet." That same year, the Legislature created a central program office and governance structure to coordinate and oversee the CrimNet program.

Table 1.4: Completed Criminal Justice Information System and Integration-Related Projects, Initiated 1995-97

Project	Description	Years in Development
Targeted Misdemeanor Criminal History	Expanded the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) Computerized Criminal History system to include certain misdemeanor offenses pertaining to domestic assault, harassments, and DWI violations.	1995-2000
Orders For Protection System	Developed a statewide database to allow law enforcement and probation officials to track information about domestic abuse victims, offenders, and orders for protection.	1995-2000
National Instant Check System	Developed a system to comply with the federal Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, which requires a criminal background check for handgun buyers.	1995-2000
Juvenile Criminal History Database	Modified the BCA's Computerized Criminal History system to add criminal histories for juveniles prosecuted for felonies and gross misdemeanors.	1995-2002
Automated Fingerprint Identification System Expansion—Phase I	Upgraded the BCA's fingerprint system to increase its capacity and to comply with standards for the FBI automated fingerprint identification system.	1996-1997
Computerized Criminal History Standardization	Standardized the Computerized Criminal History record format to comply with national standards and to make it easier to read and interpret the results of criminal history searches.	1996-1999
Gang File	Created a statewide system to compile information about offenders' gang status, affiliation, and other gang-related data.	1997-1998
Law Enforcement Message Switch (LEMS)	An electronic switch that facilitates the exchange of information among systems, this project upgraded the LEMS from a proprietary system to a vendor's packaged system, allowing for future enhancements.	1996-1998

NOTE: We identify these projects as completed in that the systems are now in a maintenance phase. Some systems will require enhancements as system integration and technology evolve and equipment reaches the end of its useful life.

SOURCE: The Criminal and Juvenile Justice Information Data Group, *Master Project Plan: Information Technology Projects for the Criminal & Juvenile Justice Community, Revised* (St. Paul, December 1998); and Bureau of Criminal Apprehension project descriptions.

CRIMNET

CriMNet is Minnesota's program to integrate criminal justice information. It involves deciding what information criminal justice professionals need, identifying barriers that prevent sharing of that information, formulating work rules and data definitions, and creating the technical structures (such as software, networks, and interfaces between systems) that make it possible to access and move data across organizational boundaries. In this section, we describe the CriMNet program according to its various aspects, including: (1) the results CriMNet is expected to achieve, (2) the integration model it is using, (3) the roles and responsibilities of various state and local entities, and (4) integration projects that have been implemented under the CriMNet program thus far.

Vision and Goals

As discussed above, Minnesota's vision for integrating criminal justice information systems has been evolving for over a decade. The authoritative statement of CriMNet's vision and goals as currently conceived is conveyed in the program's strategic plan, dated September 2003.⁵ It sets forth the results CriMNet is intended to achieve in the long term and its objectives for the next three to five years.

CriMNet's intended results are:

- To accurately identify individuals;
- To make sure that criminal justice records are complete, accurate, and readily available;
- To ensure the availability of an individual's current status in the criminal justice system;
- To provide standards for data sharing and analysis; and
- To maintain the security of information.

**CriMNet
adopted a
strategic plan in
September 2003.**

As we said earlier, achieving this vision has been, and will continue to be, an incremental process. As shown in Table 1.5, CriMNet officials have organized their work to achieve these results around two goals and related objectives. The first goal is to develop an integration "blueprint." Like a blueprint for a building that includes such things as the structural design, electrical wiring diagrams, and specifications for materials, the CriMNet blueprint is a set of diagrams, instructions, and guidance for criminal justice information integration. It should include, among other things: (1) a prioritized set of requirements from criminal justice professionals stating the specific information they need at various decision points; (2) definitions of the data that need to be collected or shared when a criminal justice event, such as an arrest or conviction, occurs;⁶ and (3) common work practices for gathering, recording, and sharing information.

CriMNet's second goal is to implement the blueprint through specific state and local integration projects. CriMNet's objectives in this regard are aimed at (1) making needed information available across jurisdictions, and (2) developing a statewide approach to accurately identify individuals and link their criminal justice records across systems. CriMNet's approach is to positively identify individuals using unique information, such as fingerprints, rather than less reliable

⁵ Criminal and Juvenile Justice Information Policy Group, *CriMNet Strategic Plan* (St. Paul, September 2003). That this statement of goals and objectives was not clearly articulated until September 2003 is a point of discussion in Chapter 4 regarding how the CriMNet program has been managed since its inception in 2001.

⁶ These criminal justice events are often referred to as "exchange points." An exchange point model, which could be part of an integration blueprint, shows criminal justice events, the data needed to support a criminal justice professional's decisions during that event, and the flow of information needed from other sources and resulting from the event.

Table 1.5: CriMNet Strategic Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Develop a blueprint for the integration of criminal justice information

Objectives:

- Develop and maintain a statewide integration plan that includes and incorporates local planning and implementation efforts, paying particular attention to the collaborative reengineering of business practices.
- Provide expertise and assistance to facilitate the development of state and local integration plans and services.
- Develop technology standards.
- Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of criminal justice processes.
- Identify and remove barriers to data sharing within the criminal justice community.

Goal 2: Make available consolidated, complete, and accurate records of an individual's interaction with criminal justice

Objectives:

- Integrate select state and local criminal justice information through collaboration with agencies.
- Develop a statewide approach to accurately identify individuals and to link records based on the business need.
- Comply with data practices laws and court rules of access.
- Develop and monitor data quality standards.
- Provide for appropriate security of information.

SOURCE: Criminal and Juvenile Justice Information Policy Group, *CriMNet Strategic Plan* (St. Paul, September 2003).

Compliance with state data practice laws has been a long-standing, and still unresolved, concern for CriMNet.

identifiers, such as name or date of birth.⁷ Meeting these objectives requires concurrent activities to establish data accuracy and security standards and to ensure that CriMNet proceeds in compliance with Minnesota's data practice laws.

Compliance with data practice laws has been a long-standing, and still unresolved, concern for CriMNet. CriMNet is considered a statewide data system subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, which regulates the handling of data by executive branch agencies and local governments.⁸ Under the act, data on individuals, including criminal justice data, are classified as either public, private or confidential. Public data are available to anyone for any reason. Private data are available only to the data subject and to anyone authorized by the data subject or law to see them. Data classified as confidential are not available to the public or to the data subject (other than to know the data exist). CriMNet raises a number of issues regarding how shared data will be classified and the process

⁷ Fingerprinting is considered a "biometric" form of identification, meaning that it is unique to the individual. Other biometric identifiers might include DNA or retinal scans. But at this time, the state uses fingerprints to biometrically link criminal history records. Use of biometric identification is an important aspect of CriMNet because accurate identification of individuals is key to creating accurate criminal histories. Identifiers such as name, race, and date of birth provide only a partial, and sometimes inaccurate, picture. Photographs can help identify individuals but, alone, also are not considered sufficient to establish positive identity.

⁸ *Minn. Stat.* (2002), §13.

through which data subjects may access information about themselves.⁹ CriMNet integrates data from many sources, and data held in each of these systems can have similar or competing data practice classifications. For example, arrest data are public when held by local police departments or the courts, but are classified as private when transferred to Bureau of Criminal Apprehension databases. In addition, judicial branch data are not subject to the Data Practices Act but to court rules of access. The Data Practices Act currently does not provide for the treatment of data that move from the judicial branch to another government agency. These conflicting rules and data classifications need to be resolved. As we discuss later in the report, uncertainty regarding compliance with the Data Practices Act has slowed some aspects of CriMNet system design and has affected some local jurisdictions' willingness to share data through CriMNet.

Integration Model

Under the CriMNet integration model, the data to be shared does not reside in a single location. Rather, CriMNet is called a "system of systems" in which jurisdictions retain the right to design, operate, and maintain the information systems and data they need, but within certain parameters. These parameters define such things as network capabilities, data standards, and security requirements. Local jurisdictions are not expected to share all information with other CriMNet participants, only the data elements that CriMNet has deemed necessary. Local participation in CriMNet is voluntary.

It is important to note that the information-sharing model described below is the *vision* of how criminal justice professionals will be able to share information. As we discuss in detail throughout the rest of the report, implementing this model will happen through a series of incremental steps. Specifically, in Chapter 2 we discuss the current technical capabilities of the Integration Backbone and the state's progress in using it to connect data from various information systems.

According to Minnesota's model, CriMNet data sharing will happen through a technical infrastructure, akin to a computer network, that distributes data among many agencies and systems. The central component of this technology is the "Integration Backbone."¹⁰ It will provide the means of organizing information, with an "index" of data elements being shared and "pointers" needed to locate and access the data at various locations.¹¹ Along with the Integration Backbone, CriMNet will rely on a secure computer network (called the Criminal Justice Data Network, or CJDN) operated by the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension for secure transmission of data from system to system.

**Under
CriMNet, local
jurisdictions
maintain their
own criminal
justice
information
systems and
control access to
their data.**

⁹ Criminal and Juvenile Justice Information Policy Group, *2003 Report to the Legislature* (St. Paul, 2003), Appendix D.

¹⁰ Quite often, the term "CriMNet" is used narrowly to refer to this information system. In our report, we use CriMNet more broadly to refer to the entire program, which includes governance, work practices, standards, and technology that together comprise criminal justice information integration efforts.

¹¹ As envisioned, the registry will accept or create unique identifiers for individuals, incidents, and cases, and the unique identifier for individuals will be based on biometric identification. The locator service will work like an Internet search engine. If a user enters a suspect's name, the locator will provide links to the systems that have records matching that name.

Participating state, county, and municipal criminal justice agencies will be connected to the Integration Backbone through a “hub.” A hub is a combination of hardware and software that provides the access, rules, and data formats needed to register and share information with the Integration Backbone. Local jurisdictions will have control over access to their own data and determine how and when data are made accessible to other users. Statewide information systems or data repositories can also be connected to the Integration Backbone via a hub.

Under CriMNet’s information sharing model, criminal justice professionals will be able to exchange information various ways. For example, as shown in Table 1.6, users could search CriMNet’s component systems for records that match specified criteria. This search capability is the type of information exchange that most closely reflects the essential intent of CriMNet—being able to obtain complete information about individuals’ criminal histories and status in the criminal justice system. Other envisioned features would provide enhanced

Table 1.6: Types of Criminal Justice Information Exchange Envisioned for CriMNet

Service	Description	Examples
Search	A request for information that meets certain criteria	Determine whether an individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is wanted by another jurisdiction, • has charges pending in another jurisdiction, • is currently on probation, • has prior convictions, or • has served time in a correctional facility.
Push	Automatic transfer of information to another system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report arrest information, fingerprints and arrest photos to the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. • Send arrest information to the prosecuting attorney’s office for use in its case intake process.
Pull	Automatic extraction of information from another system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a correctional facility information system record with information captured in the pre-sentence investigation together with court sentencing information.
Publish	Information made available to a wide audience of recipients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper or electronic posting of scheduled court events or public criminal history records.
Subscribe	A request to receive certain information automatically when a particular event occurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify a probation officer by e-mail if a probationer is arrested anywhere in the state. • Automatically notify the presiding judge if an individual violates the terms of a suspended sentence.

Capability to do a statewide search of criminal justice information systems is an important CriMNet goal.

SOURCES: The Macro Group, Inc./Labrynth Consulting, Inc., *Integration Backbone Logical Design Report* (St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Public Safety, 2001), 19-21; SEARCH, *Integration in the Context of Justice Information Systems: A Common Understanding* (Sacramento, CA: SEARCH/The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics, 2001), 10.

information sharing capabilities and efficiencies. For example, the “push” capability can automatically transmit data collected at the point of origin to the information system associated with the next step in the criminal justice process (for example, sentencing information could be sent to the detention facility where the offender will be incarcerated).

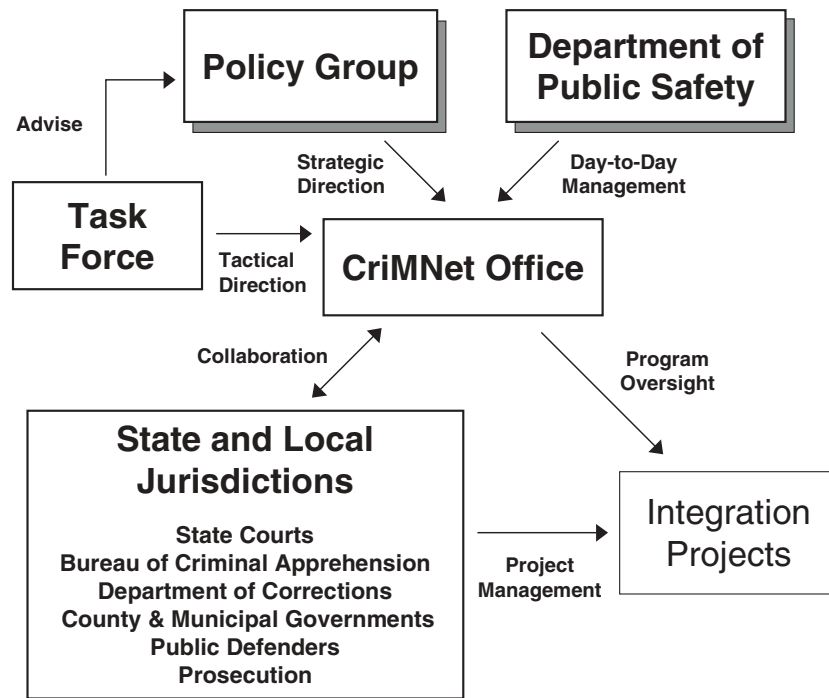
The Integration Backbone technology is designed to support CriMNet data practice and security standards. For example, each user will be given a security profile that defines the types of systems and data that the user may access, and the Backbone can be programmed to ensure the user is granted access only to those data and systems. Similarly, the Integration Backbone can be programmed to allow or deny access to certain data based on their classifications.

Governance

CriMNet is a multi-jurisdictional effort, and the governance structure reflects this. As illustrated in Figure 1.2, CriMNet governance is defined by a set of relationships among various agencies and branches of government. The Legislature established the Policy Group, comprised of executive and judicial branch leaders, to play a central role in planning and executing Minnesota’s approach to integrating criminal justice information. A central program office and other state and local entities implement the integration strategy through specific

CriMNet’s governance structure reflects the multi-jurisdictional nature of the program.

Figure 1.2: CriMNet Governance



SOURCE: Office of the Legislative Auditor analysis of Criminal and Juvenile Justice Information Policy Group meeting materials and minutes, June-December 2003.

projects. Below, we describe the roles and responsibilities of these groups, and in Chapters 3 and 4, we discuss in detail the extent to which they have met their various responsibilities.

Four executive branch officials and four judicial branch officials comprise the CriMNet Policy Group.**The Policy Group**

State law places responsibility for governing CriMNet with the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Information Policy Group (referred to as “the Policy Group” throughout this report).¹² The Policy Group is comprised of eight members, four each representing the judicial and executive branches of state government. For the executive branch, the members are the commissioners of Corrections, Administration, Finance, and Public Safety. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court appoints the four judicial branch representatives, which in 2004 include the State Court Administrator and three justices representing the Supreme Court, the Appellate Court, and the District Courts. In addition, the law allows the Policy Group to appoint additional, non-voting members, which it has chosen to do. In 2004, the chair and vice-chair of the Policy Group’s advisory body (the Task Force, discussed below) sit as non-voting members. The Commissioner of Public Safety is designated as the permanent chair of the Policy Group.

State law gives the Policy Group specific responsibilities regarding how the state approaches integration and how CriMNet projects should proceed.¹³ As shown in Table 1.7, the Policy Group is supposed to govern the state’s progress toward integrating criminal justice information, determining the types of data that should be shared and the processes through which the data should flow. The Policy Group is to review and prioritize state and local integration project funding requests and report the results to the Legislature. The Policy Group is required to report to the Legislature by December 1 of each year. In its report, the Policy Group must make recommendations concerning any legislative changes or appropriations that are needed to ensure that criminal justice information systems operate accurately and efficiently.

State law authorizes two entities to assist the Policy Group in meeting its many obligations—an advisory task force and a CriMNet program manager. The role of each is described quite generally in statute, with more specific duties having evolved over time.

The Task Force

By law, the purpose of the 37-member advisory group, called the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Information Task Force (or more simply, the Task Force), is to assist the Policy Group in developing recommendations for its annual report to the

¹² *Minn. Stat.* (2002), §299C.65, subd. 1.

¹³ *Ibid.* The law goes into some detail regarding project management and procurement practices. For example, accepted project management techniques include (1) clear sponsorship; (2) scope management; (3) project planning, control, and execution; (4) cost management; (5) quality reviews; (6) communication management; and (7) use of proven methodology. The procurement process should include the following four steps: (1) defining the required product or service, (2) a request for proposal process to identify potential vendors, (3) competitive selection, and (4) contract administration and closeout. *Minn. Stat.* (2002), §299C.65, subd. 1(b) and 1(c).

Table 1.7: Statutory Responsibilities of the Policy Group

The Policy Group is responsible for the successful statewide integration of criminal justice information systems.

- Successfully complete statewide criminal justice information system integration.
- Review criminal justice information system funding requests from state, county, and municipal government agencies for compatibility with statewide criminal justice information system standards, and forward the results of this review to relevant Legislative committees.
- Study and make recommendations to the Governor, Supreme Court, and Legislature regarding:
 - a model for integrating criminal justice information,
 - roles and responsibilities of various criminal justice jurisdictions,
 - data privacy,
 - data accuracy, and
 - criminal justice information system equipment, training, and funding needs of state and local jurisdictions.
- Ensure that CriMNet projects follow generally accepted project management techniques.
- Ensure that vendor products and services are obtained through an appropriate procurement process.

SOURCE: *Minn. Stat.* (2002), §299C.65.

A 37-member advisory task force assists the Policy Group.

Legislature.¹⁴ In practice, the Task Force does not function quite so narrowly; instead, it serves in a general advisory capacity.¹⁵ In June 2003, the Policy Group approved a new charter for the Task Force that expanded the group's responsibilities beyond those it traditionally held.¹⁶ According to the current charter, in addition to providing insight on CriMNet's long-term strategy, the Task Force is also supposed to monitor the progress of CriMNet projects to ensure that they are being appropriately managed and meeting their objectives.

The CriMNet Office

CriMNet's authorizing statute allows the Policy Group to hire a CriMNet program manager to manage CriMNet projects and to be responsible for day-to-day

¹⁴ *Minn. Stat.* (2002), §299C.65, subd. 2(b). The 37 members encompass a broad spectrum of perspectives. By law, each member of the Policy Group or a designee sits on the Task Force. Most of the other members are specified in law by constituency, with a designated authority to appoint the actual Task Force members. The various constituencies include, among others, sheriffs, police chiefs, county and city attorneys, public defenders, community corrections and probation officers, district court judges, and court administrators. The Task Force also includes one delegate each from the Minnesota House and Senate and four members of the public, one of whom has been a victim of crime and two who are members of the private business community and who have expertise in integrated information systems. The law also instructs appointing authorities from state and local jurisdictions to choose delegates who have expertise in integrated data systems or best practices. The Policy Group approves Task Force appointments.

¹⁵ In its annual report for 2003, the Policy Group recommended that the Legislature amend the language authorizing the Task Force to better reflect this broader advisory role. Criminal and Juvenile Justice Information Policy Group, *2003 Report to the Legislature* (St. Paul, 2003), 33.

¹⁶ Minnesota Department of Public Safety, *Criminal and Juvenile Justice Task Force Charter* (St. Paul, June 2003).

The CriMNet Office manages day-to-day program operations.

CriMNet operations.¹⁷ The 2001 Legislature appropriated funds for the program manager to hire staff, thus creating the CriMNet Office.¹⁸ In general, the CriMNet Office is responsible for developing the state’s integration blueprint and supporting the state and local entities that implement the blueprint through integration projects. As shown in Table 1.8, the CriMNet Office undertakes a broad range of activities to meet its program management responsibilities. To do its work, the CriMNet Office often forms teams with participating state and local agencies to work on specific tasks, such as reviewing grant applications or resolving conflicting work procedures.

Table 1.8: Select CriMNet Office Responsibilities

- Develop and maintain the CriMNet strategic plan.
- Monitor and track progress of state and local integration projects and coordinate common issues among them.
- Communicate with criminal justice jurisdictions, the Legislature, and the public.
- Define user requirements—the information sharing that criminal justice professionals need to do their jobs, along with their priorities among various needs.
- Identify barriers to information sharing and define new processes through which information will be shared.
- Identify the data that will be shared and develop standards regarding data format and accuracy.
- Provide technical support to state and local agencies.
- Define security standards to protect agency systems and the CriMNet network.

SOURCE: Office of the Legislative Auditor analysis of CriMNet Office documents.

Although the CriMNet Office is an arm of the Policy Group, it operates within the Department of Public Safety. The department provides support services, such as human resources and procurement, and it acts as the CriMNet fiscal agent. As we discuss in more detail in Chapter 4, the department recently started playing a stronger role in supervising the CriMNet Office’s day-to-day operations.

Integration Projects

State and local agencies plan and implement integration projects related to their information systems.

As described above, the CriMNet Office, on behalf of the Policy Group, has several program management responsibilities related to integrating criminal justice information systems. But, the primary responsibility for planning and managing most integration projects rests with the state and local agencies that “own” the systems.

As shown in Table 1.9, state agencies implementing CriMNet projects include the Department of Corrections, the Department of Public Safety (the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and the CriMNet Office), and the Courts. This list of active and completed projects includes some initiated after the CriMNet program was officially established in early 2001. It also includes projects that started earlier, but were pulled under the CriMNet umbrella because they were clearly

¹⁷ *Minn. Stat.* (2002), §299C.65, subd. 1(b).

¹⁸ *Laws of Minnesota* (1sp2001), ch. 8, art. 4, sec.10, subd. 3.

Table 1.9: State Agency CrimNet Projects, as of January 2004

Agency and Project	Description	Estimated Cost to Date
Bureau of Criminal Apprehension		
Livescan	Hardware and software system to take digital fingerprint images to replace the traditional ink and roll fingerprint cards	\$ 4,949,000
Cardhandler	A technology interface that allows electronic fingerprint files to be transmitted to or from the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension	645,000
Criminal Justice Data Network (CJDN)	Upgraded the state criminal justice network to increase its capacity	2,512,000
Predatory Offender Registration System (POR)	A central repository for information on every registered predatory offender in Minnesota	999,000 ^a
Minnesota Repository of Arrest Photos (MRAP)	Database of digital photographs with corresponding descriptive data taken at the time of arrest and booking	3,570,000
Criminal History Suspense File	A set of projects to correct and prevent incomplete criminal history records	1,796,000 ^b
CrimNet Office		
Integration Backbone	Technical infrastructure to connect criminal justice information systems and to organize and distribute data among jurisdictions	7,994,000
Department of Corrections		
Statewide Supervision System (S ³)	A statewide system to integrate state and local probation, jail, and prison records	2,494,000 ^c
Sentencing Guidelines Worksheet ^d	An electronic means of transferring sentencing information to appropriate agencies	148,000
Courts		
Court Web Access (CWA)	A system to access select court data, including non-confidential adult criminal case information from felony, gross misdemeanor, and select misdemeanor court cases	578,000
Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS)	A statewide offender-based database for records on individuals appearing before the courts, including criminal, probate, civil, and other cases	18,077,000 ^e
Statute Table	A standard, electronic listing of criminal justice statute citations intended to be integrated into criminal justice systems	Unknown ^f

NOTE: This table excludes CrimNet projects currently in preliminary planning stages. Estimated costs are as reported by the agencies through project completion or, for ongoing projects, through December 2003 unless otherwise noted. The status of these projects is discussed in Chapter 2.

^aThe estimate does not include some hardware and operational costs.

^bEstimate includes fiscal years 2002-03 only.

^cThe estimate excludes 1996-97 planning expenditures and includes grants to counties for information system improvements needed to support local connection to the Statewide Supervision System.

^dThis was a joint project with the Sentencing Guidelines Commission. The cost estimate does not include additional vendor programming costs incurred for integrating the worksheet into the Statewide Supervision System.

^eProject is expected to be completed in fiscal year 2006 at a total cost of \$32,000,000.

^fCourt staff could not provide detailed cost data for this project. The courts received a \$50,000 grant in 2000 from the Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation for work on this project.

SOURCE: Office of the Legislative Auditor analysis of project planning, status, and cost data from the departments of Public Safety and Corrections, the Sentencing Guidelines Commission, and the State Court Administrator's Office.

Local governments may receive state and federally-funded grants to support integration planning and implementation.

related to criminal justice integration.¹⁹ In Chapter 2, we discuss how these projects have furthered criminal justice integration efforts. In Chapter 3, we discuss the extent to which the projects met schedule, cost, and scope expectations.

The Legislature has authorized a grant program to support local criminal justice systems integration planning and implementation.²⁰ Grants may go to counties, cities, or local government consortiums for developing an integration plan or implementing one or more integration projects. The grant process involves a number of steps. The Department of Public Safety, with Policy Group approval, publishes grant criteria. Subsequently, counties or other local entities submit proposals.²¹ The Task Force considers each grant proposal and forwards a final recommendation to the Policy Group, which has final approval authority.

By law, grant recipients must provide matching funds to help pay for up to one-half of the project costs.²² The Policy Group determines the specifics regarding the match, such as the proportion of total costs, but its policy must stay within certain parameters. For example, the law states that the matching fund obligation may be met with “in kind” resources and specifies that local operational or information technology staffing costs may be considered as meeting the match requirement. The law also requires the Policy Group match policy to be applied consistently to all recipients.

Originally, five Minnesota counties were designated as CriMNet “pilot counties,” and each received planning grant funds. But, as shown in Table 1.10, CriMNet implementation grants went primarily to four counties: Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, and St. Louis.²³ The types of local projects funded include intra-county integration, such as the Anoka County project to integrate its dispatch and police record systems, and enhancements to facilitate integration, such as the Dakota County project to improve its countywide network. In Chapter 4, we discuss in more detail how the criteria for CriMNet grants have changed and some of the issues involved in allocating grant funds.

¹⁹ We did not include planned CriMNet projects that are not actively underway or criminal justice information systems that may eventually be linked via the Integration Backbone, such as the state’s database of driver’s license information. Also, some agencies may have integration activities underway that are not reflected in our list.

²⁰ *Minn. Stat.* (2002), §299C.65, subd. 5-9.

²¹ The law includes a highly detailed list of components that must be included in requests for integration planning grants. For example, the grant proposal must, among other things, identify the data sharing problems that drive the need for an integration plan, certify that the requesting officials have consulted with local criminal justice practitioners to identify these problems, attest that the plan will integrate the major criminal justice functions (such as incident reporting), and certify that the final plan will include a specified set of products (such as a technology model). *Minn. Stat.* (2002), §299C.65, subd. 6(a).

²² *Minn. Stat.* (2002), §299C.65, subd. 8.

²³ Ramsey County was the fifth pilot county. It applied for implementation grant funds in 2002, but chose not to complete the grant process.

Table 1.10: CriMNet Local Integration Grant Projects, 2001-04

Grant Recipient and Project	Description	Grant Award Amounts
Anoka County		
Computer-Aided Dispatch/Law Enforcement Record Management System (CAD/RMS) Integration	Project (1) integrates local police departments' common records management system with the county's dispatch system, and (2) will allow expanded use of mobile data computers in squad cars to enter and retrieve data.	Grant: \$ 119,000 Local Match: 229,000 Total: 348,000
Detention Information System	Project to create a single information system for the county's three detention facilities, including arrest and booking data and inmate records.	Grant: \$ 750,000 Local Match: 817,000 Total: 1,567,000
Dakota County		
CAD/RMS/Mobile Communications Systems Integration	Project updates and integrates local law enforcements' Computer Aided Dispatch, mobile communication, and records management systems, thereby relying less on the use of radio for transmitting data and focusing on capturing information at the source and sharing data electronically.	Grant: \$ 255,000 Local Match: 255,000 Total: 510,000
Expand County Integration Network System	Project expands local law enforcements' ability to search and report information via the web, and automates the jail booking and reporting process.	Grant: \$ 800,000 Local Match: 810,000 Total: 1,610,000
Anoka and Dakota Counties		
Joint Attorney Case Management System	A project to develop a common prosecuting attorney case management system, using web technology to exchange information between counties. The design is expected to facilitate eventual integration with the state's systems.	Grant: \$ 600,000 Local Match: 694,000 Total: 1,294,000
St. Louis County		
Criminal Justice Integration Project	Project (1) integrates data from the various law enforcement and prosecution systems from St. Louis County and surrounding counties, and (2) creates a repository accessible through the Internet and wireless technology.	Grant: \$ 800,000 Local Match: 800,000 Total: 1,600,000
Hennepin County		
Planning projects	Planning projects to assess user needs and make "build or buy" decisions for new Minneapolis City Attorney case management and county workhouse records management systems. Also, work practice reengineering project for county arrest and booking process.	Grant: \$ 420,000 Local Match: 420,000 Total: 840,000
Minnesota Counties Computer Cooperative		
Court Services Tracking System	Project creates a new system for case management and tracking of clients under the supervision of 86 counties' Court Services departments.	Grant: \$ 640,000 Local Match: 641,000 Total: 1,281,000
Local Government Information Systems (LOGIS)		
Public Safety Information System Integration	For participating jurisdictions, the project will integrate certain criminal justice systems into a common network and standardize processes for reporting information and statistics on crime and arrests. Through the new network, users will be able to search the other jurisdictions' systems and access the Integration Backbone.	Grant: \$ 390,000 Local Match: 390,000 Total: 780,000

NOTE: The table excludes \$1,300,000 state integration planning grants awarded during the 2000-01 biennium to each of the counties listed in the table and to Ramsey County. The CriMNet Office was not able to provide complete cost data for these planning grants. The table also excludes Department of Corrections grants to local jurisdictions for integration with the Statewide Supervision System.

SOURCE: Office of the Legislative Auditor analysis of CriMNet Office grant documents.

INTEGRATION COSTS

It is difficult to tally CriMNet's total costs to date.

For a number of reasons, it is difficult to precisely tally actual CriMNet costs. First, the state does not have a clear definition of the types of criminal justice information system spending that should be included. For example, to some stakeholders, integration should include only the cost of connecting separate information systems; to others, the definition should also include system enhancements needed to facilitate integration. Still other stakeholders distinguish between systems spending that would have happened anyway and “new” integration spending. Second, CriMNet is a term used to describe the state’s program to integrate criminal justice information from 2001 forward, but the state has been investing in integration since the mid-1990s. As a result of these differences in perspective, stakeholder estimates of total spending on CriMNet vary widely, ranging from \$60 million using a narrow definition to nearly \$180 million using a more expansive definition.

Stakeholders disagree over what should be counted.

In this section, we describe CriMNet funding sources, and then we present fiscal year 1996-2005 estimates of funding designated for general criminal justice information system improvements. Last, we present CriMNet program biennial budget data for fiscal years 2002 through 2005, and we discuss why these program budget amounts differ from the larger appropriation amounts for the same biennia.

Our discussion of funding also relies on our office’s financial audit of CriMNet expenditures, conducted at the Legislature’s direction. That report, entitled *CriMNet Financial Audit*, discusses how CriMNet is funded and problems tracing this funding to the state’s accounting system. It also describes expenditures by category, including administrative services, professional/technical contracts, and commodities.²⁴

Funding Sources

CriMNet is funded from various sources. The CriMNet Office and state integration projects are financed through a combination of state appropriations and federal grants. Local integration efforts are funded through grants from both state and federal sources and through local government operating funds.

Although the Policy Group presents the Legislature with biennial spending plans for CriMNet, it does not directly receive or disburse funds. State agencies with criminal justice information systems include requests for new or ongoing projects in their budget submissions to the Legislature. The Legislature then appropriates money directly to agencies. State and federal funds for local integration grants go to the Department of Public Safety, which serves as fiscal agent for the CriMNet Office. Grants are disbursed as approved by the Policy Group.

²⁴ Minnesota Office of the Legislative Auditor, *CriMNet Financial Audit* (St. Paul, 2004).

Cost Estimates for Criminal Justice Information System Improvements, Fiscal Years 1996-2005

State funding for CriMNet is generally given through appropriations designated as being for “criminal justice information system improvements.” With our office’s financial audit division, we examined appropriations for fiscal years 1996-2005 to estimate how much has been allocated over the long term for criminal justice information integration (both before and after CriMNet was officially designated as a state program). We included appropriations to state agencies and the courts, state appropriations for grants to local units of government, and federal grant awards that we could clearly identify as being for criminal justice information technology.²⁵ We did not include three other sources of funding because data were not readily available: (1) direct local government spending, (2) grants directly from the federal government to local governments, and (3) state agency spending from general operating funds.

As shown in Table 1.11, for fiscal years 1996 through 2005, state and federal funding for improving and integrating Minnesota criminal justice information systems totals nearly \$180 million, with the state share exceeding \$135 million.²⁶

Table 1.11: Estimated State and Federal Funding for Criminal Justice Information Systems Improvements by Biennium, FY 1996-2005

<u>Fund Source</u>	<u>1996-97</u>	<u>1998-99</u>	<u>2000-01</u>	<u>2002-03</u>	<u>2004-05</u>	<u>Total</u>
State	\$2,474,000	\$12,804,000	\$37,983,000	\$45,072,000	\$39,343,000	\$137,676,000
Federal	<u>2,373,000</u>	<u>2,113,000</u>	<u>3,556,000</u>	<u>12,042,000^a</u>	<u>20,904,000</u>	<u>40,988,000</u>
Total	\$4,847,000	\$14,917,000	\$41,539,000	\$57,114,000	\$60,247,000	\$178,664,000

NOTES: We included those appropriations to state agencies or the courts in which (1) legislative language specified criminal justice systems improvements or “information systems integration,” (2) legislative language specified the project and/or funds are subject to oversight or approval by the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Information Policy Group, or (3) the project is managed as part of CriMNet. The state appropriation amounts include funds that continue on from earlier appropriations for ongoing information system maintenance, operation, or improvement. We added federal grant awards that we could clearly identify as being for criminal justice information technology.

As part of the CriMNet financial audit conducted by our office, audit staff traced these appropriations and federal grants to the state’s accounting system. Their analysis identified state and federal funds totaling approximately \$106 million as of December 31, 2003. They could not separately identify some state appropriations that went to agencies’ general operating accounts. In addition, the financial audit funding totals include federal receipts drawn down from federal grants, not the total federal grant award.

^aDoes not include a \$4 million federal grant that went directly to Hennepin County.

SOURCE: Office of the Legislative Auditor analysis of Minnesota Laws and Minnesota House Fiscal Analysis Department data on criminal justice information technology investments.

²⁵ We included those appropriations to state agencies or the courts in which (1) legislative language specified criminal justice systems improvements or “information systems integration,” (2) legislative language specified the project and/or funds are subject to oversight or approval by the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Information Policy Group, or (3) the project is managed as part of CriMNet.

²⁶ Of the \$180 million, our office’s financial audit staff were able to trace approximately \$106 million to the state’s accounting system, as of December 31, 2003. They could not identify some appropriation amounts that went to agencies’ general operating accounts, and their accounting of federal funding was limited to amounts drawn down from federal grants, not the total federal award. See Office of the Legislative Auditor, *CriMNet Financial Audit*.

State appropriations ranged from a low of \$2.5 million for the 1996-97 biennium to a high of about \$45 million for the 2002-03 biennium. The significant increase in funding beginning in the 2000-01 biennium reflects the shift from integration planning to implementation of integration projects, including a new statewide information system for the courts and the other projects shown in Table 1.9.

CriMNet Program Costs, Fiscal Years 2002-2005

We reviewed CriMNet budgets to assess changes in CriMNet program costs. As shown in Table 1.12, CriMNet program costs increased from about \$25 million for the 2002-03 biennium to about \$30 million for the current biennium. State funding decreased from about \$22 million to \$19 million between the two biennia, but federal funding increased by over \$8 million—more than a three-fold increase. The CriMNet Office budget includes funding for the Integration Backbone project, CriMNet Office operations, and funds (such as grants) that pass through to other entities. Of the approximately \$10.9 million in federal funding shown for the 2004-05 biennium, for example, about \$5.6 million is designated for local grants, most of which has been committed to approved grant projects.²⁷

The CriMNet program budget totaled about \$55 million for fiscal years 2002-05.

Table 1.12: CriMNet Program Budget by Biennium, FY 2002-05

	<u>FY 2002-03</u>	<u>FY 2004-05</u>
CriMNet Office		
State	\$ 4,975,000	\$ 5,086,000
Federal	<u>2,532,000</u>	<u>10,880,000</u>
Total CriMNet Office	\$ 7,507,000	\$15,966,000
Bureau of Criminal Apprehension	\$ 1,796,000	\$ 1,215,000
Department of Corrections	1,227,000	1,060,000
Courts	<u>14,344,000</u>	<u>11,640,000</u>
Total CriMNet	\$24,874,000	\$29,881,000

NOTES: All federal funds for state and local projects and state funds for local government grants are included in CriMNet Office totals. Amounts shown for the 2002-03 biennium are actual expenditure totals; those for the 2004-05 biennium are budgeted amounts. Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Department of Corrections, and Court funding is from the state general fund.

SOURCE: Criminal and Juvenile Justice Information Policy Group, *2003 Report to the Legislature* (St. Paul, 2003), and CriMNet monthly status report, November 2003.

The criminal justice information system funding amounts shown in Table 1.11 differ quite noticeably from the CriMNet program budget for the 2002-03 and 2004-05 biennia shown in Table 1.12. These differences occurred for several reasons. Primarily, the state appropriation amounts include funds that continue on from earlier appropriations for ongoing information system maintenance,

²⁷ Some stakeholders are concerned that the courts have received a disproportionate share of limited funds for criminal justice technology projects. The courts include funding for the Minnesota Court Information System (MNCIS) in its CriMNet budget, although only some of the system’s components are specific to criminal justice-related processes. For example, MNCIS also includes information for probate, civil, and housing court matters. We do not make a judgment regarding the allocation of CriMNet resources.

operation, or improvement.²⁸ In large part, these continuing funds are not included in the CriMNet program budget. Second, agencies may not consider all of an information system appropriation to be for CriMNet. For example, the Department of Corrections includes funding for the Statewide Supervision System in its CriMNet budget but explicitly excludes spending on the department's operational technology needs. Third, some appropriation or federal award amounts are designated in one fiscal year, but agencies may draw the funds down over a multi-year period. The CriMNet budget, for example, only shows the federal award amount used in a given biennium, not the total amount awarded.

²⁸ These flow-through amounts are sometimes called appropriation "tails."