The Cuyahoga County Criminal Justice Council (CJC)

Collaboration Agreement

I. System Overview:

While the Criminal Justice System is established and organized under the authority of the State
of Ohio, the administration of the justice system is primarily a responsibility left to local
government through the efforts of multiple justice system entities and stakeholders. In
Cuyahoga County the administration of the criminal justice system includes both the General
and Juvenile Divisions of the Cuyahoga County Court of Common Pleas, the 13 Municipal Courts
and a number of Mayor’s Courts across the County which are supported by its clerks’ offices,
probation departments, and pretrial services offices. These court systems include the
operations of various diversion courts, drug courts, mental health courts, veteran’s courts, re-
entry courts, and other specialty dockets. The system also involves the County Prosecutor’s
Office and the work of Municipal Prosecutors across the County’s 59 jurisdictions. It involves
the County Public Defender’s Office and the work of hundreds of private local criminal defense
attorneys. The criminal justice system also includes the involvement of the County Sheriff’s
Department, the County Medical Examiner’s Office, and the local police departments of the 59
municipalities in the County as well as other jurisdictional police departments covering
universities, park districts, and housing and transit authorities. Further, the system includes the
County Witness/Victim Center and the Family Justice Center and on-going involvement of the
Cuyahoga County ADAMHS Board and a number of social service agencies from across the
County. Additionally, the County criminal justice system runs parallel and works cooperatively
with the state and local federal criminal justice system including the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the
FBI, ATF, DEA, and Attorney General’s Office. And finally, integral to the criminal justice system
is the involvement of numerous community institutions, agencies, organizations, alliances,
groups, and individuals that have an abiding interest in public safety and criminal justice for all
our citizens.

II. System Challenges:

Among the challenges confronting this complex criminal justice system include the impact of
societal and behavioral health issues on judicial system outcomes including the persistence and
insidiousness of substance abuse and addiction, the institutionalization of the mentally ill into
our jails, questions of access to justice and the impact of poverty and the disproportionality of
contact and/or outcomes in classifications such as race, nationality, gender, income, education
or family setting. Other challenges include the prevalence and impact of domestic violence, gun
violence, delinquency and gang violence, and the potential for occurrences of victimization,
recidivism, and collateral consequences as a result of criminal convictions.
III. Mission:

Building on the long tradition of system collaboration in Cuyahoga County and the progress made under the Justice System Reform Committee and other County-wide criminal justice initiatives, the undersigned criminal justice system stakeholders wish to continue their commitment to making a positive difference in the Cuyahoga County Criminal Justice system by creating a Criminal Justice Council (CJC) in order to communicate, coordinate, plan and advocate for system improvements, programs, and polices in the interests of advancing justice, fairness and public safety.

IV. Goal and Objectives:

The goal of the CJC is to coordinate the overall Cuyahoga County criminal justice system to make it more efficient, effective, and productive. Based on this goal, the objectives in no specific order are:

1. To bring together key decision makers on a regular basis to openly discuss issues that affect the criminal justice system.
2. To identify problems and issues, and to proactively address those issues through planning, coordination, and cooperation.
3. To generate agreed upon system-wide data that increases knowledge of the criminal justice system and strengthens decision-making.
4. To initiate programs and policies which enhance the functionality of the criminal justice system and increase public safety.
5. To review costs related to criminal justice agency activities, identify possible savings, and to help prioritize the use of limited funds in the most effective and equitable ways possible.
6. To identify potential grant opportunities, identify eligible agencies and programs, and maximize collaboration in the grant application process.
7. To interconnect and possibly consolidate, existing criminal justice groups and committees operating in the County to avoid redundancy of efforts and to ensure cohesive systemic planning.
8. To respond to critical issues and collectively develop solutions.

V. Organization:

The CJC consists of four parts: 1) an Executive Committee, 2) Council Membership, 3) Standing Committees, and 3) Task Groups.
1. **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee consists of key stakeholders in the criminal justice system. The Executive Committee will meet quarterly or as needed and there is no voting since the group is collaborative in nature and based on mutual interest and no stakeholder will be compelled to follow any particular course of action. The County Executive and the Court of Common Pleas Presiding Judge will serve as Co-chairs of the Executive Committee. One Executive Committee meeting each quarter will be designated as a public forum open to all justice system stakeholders and interested parties to hear and discuss committee and task force reports and related issues where members of the public will be encouraged to participate. The Executive Committee members are selected based on the position they hold, and include the following individuals:

1. County Executive
2. Administrative Judge Common Pleas Court
3. Administrative Judge Juvenile Court
4. Administrative Judge Cleveland Municipal Court
5. Representative Judge of the Northern Ohio Municipal Judges Association
6. County Prosecutor
7. County Public Defender
8. County Sheriff
9. Public Safety Chief Cuyahoga County
10. Public Safety Director City of Cleveland
11. Chief Prosecutor City of Cleveland
12. Representative Prosecutor of the Northeast Ohio Municipal Prosecutors Association
13. Representative Chief of the Police Chiefs Association
14. Representative Attorney of the Cuyahoga County Defense Lawyers’ Association

Additional members may be added if the Executive Group deems the positions beneficial to the planning and coordination process. Executive Group members may appoint an alternate to attend any meeting scheduled by the Executive Group.

2. **Council Membership**

In addition to the members of the Executive Committee, the Coordinating Council Membership will include any interested County or Municipal Court Judge and also include the following:

1. County Medical Examiner
2. County Clerk of Court
3. County Director of Regional Corrections
4. County General Division Court Administrator
5. County Juvenile Division Court Administrator
6. County Chief Probation Officer
7. County Bond Commissioner  
8. County Chief Pretrial Services  
9. County Director of Office of Re-Entry  
10. County Witness/Victim Director  
11. County Family Justice Center Director  
12. County Council President/representative  
13. County Chief of Staff  
14. County Law Director  
15. County Chief Information Technology  
16. County Director of Justice Affairs  
17. County ADAMHS Board Director  
18. Cleveland Municipal Clerk of Court  
19. Cleveland Municipal Court Administrator  
20. Cleveland Municipal Chief Probation Officer  
21. City of Cleveland Mayor  
22. City of Cleveland Council President  
23. City of Cleveland Chief of Police  
24. City of Cleveland Law Director  
25. City of Cleveland Community Relations Director  
26. Mayors & Managers Association representative  
27. United States Marshal at U.S. Department of Justice  
28. Legal Aid Society representative  
29. Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association representative  
30. Norman Minor Bar Association representative  
31. Hispanic Alliance representative  
32. United States Attorney and/or representative  
33. Attorney General Office representative  
34. FBI representative  
35. ATF representative  
36. DEA representative  

3. Committees

The Executive Committee may create committees to coordinate and oversee designated elements of the criminal justice system or to conduct research and recommend a solution to an agreed justice system issue to meet the goals and objectives of the CJC. Members and meeting times will vary.
4. Task Forces

The Executive Committee may create “Task Forces” to investigate and analyze specific issues within the criminal justice system as determined by the Executive Committee. Task Forces will include CJC Members and other interested individuals from the public, non-profit, and private sectors. They will help identify best practices, form recommendations and submit them, in written form, to the Executive Committee for consideration. Task Forces will report quarterly to the Executive Committee as its regularly scheduled public meetings.

Armond Budish, County Executive

Judge John Russo, Administrative & Presiding Judge, Court of Common Pleas

Judge Kristin Sweeney, Administrative Juvenile Court Judge

Judge Michelle D. Earley
Administrative & Presiding Judge, Cleveland Municipal Court

Judge K.J. Montgomery,
Northern Ohio Municipal Judges Association Representative

Michael O’Malley, County Prosecutor

Mark A. Stanton, County Public Defender

Clifford E. Pinkney, County Sheriff

County Chief of Public Safety

Michael McGrath, City of Cleveland Director of Public Safety

Barbara Langhenry, City of Cleveland Law Director and Prosecuting Attorney

Northeast Ohio Municipal Prosecutors Association Representative

Kelly J. Stillman, President Police Chiefs

Lorraine Coyne
Cuyahoga County Defense Association Lawyers Association Representative