

JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Committee Policy Statement

[As amended: January 31, 2001; Reviewed September 26, 2017; Revised September XX, 2025]

JURISDICTION

The IAC Justice and Public Safety Committee is responsible for monitoring and advising the IAC on all matters relating to criminal justice and public safety, including, but not limited to, law enforcement, courts, corrections, firearm control, criminal justice planning, crime prevention, civil law matters, emergency communications, adult and juvenile detention facilities, death investigations, and matters pertaining to juvenile delinquency.

STATEMENT OF BASIC PHILOSOPHY

Idaho's counties have primary responsibility in the state for providing a justice and public safety system. Counties are best suited to coordinate local criminal justice activities since all major law enforcement agencies are located within county boundaries. Counties should have primary responsibility in planning, coordinating, and establishing priorities in allocating resources since they are faced with increased law enforcement and detention costs, as well as obligations imposed by the legislature and courts. Counties should embrace a strong leadership role in planning and problem-solving at the local level. It is essential that partnerships exist with other governmental entities to achieve success in meeting the needs of the justice system.

COURTS

Court Fees and Fines—IAC opposes the establishment of any additional court fees or fines proposed to fund non-court programs unless sufficient money is returned to the county to offset the cost of operation. However, IAC strongly supports the use of fines and fees for the cost of providing the Peace Officer Standards and Training program, including the existing fee and any future fee increases.

Federal Peace Officers—IAC opposes legislation that defines federal peace officers as Idaho peace officers.

Law Clerk Court Staff Attorney Salaries/Trial Court Administrators—IAC strongly supports legislation that requires the state to pay the salaries and benefits of law clerks/staff attorneys as employees of the state. In addition, IAC strongly supports legislation that would require the state to pay the salaries, benefits, and support costs for the support staff of the trial court administrators' offices.

Technology—IAC supports the funding and encourages the Idaho Supreme Court to designate funds to maintain and update court software and equipment, as well as continuing

to provide training and support to counties for said equipment and software. IAC believes the counties should be provided adequate opportunities to contribute to the Idaho Supreme Court's "Technology Committee."

Court Assistance Office—IAC supports the Court Assistance Office program funded by the state and the efforts to improve access to the judicial system.

JAILS

Minimum Jail Standards—IAC supports the Minimum Jail Standards adopted by the Idaho Sheriffs Association and each county. IAC also supports the annual update of those standards to keep with current practices as long as the updated standards are financially feasible.

State Inmates—Since state inmates housed in county jails continue to pose a significant fiscal impact, staffing, and liability burden on counties, IAC recommends the following:

- A. The state recognizes county fiscal problems and makes all efforts to adequately fund the Department of Corrections in order that counties receive timely reimbursement for holding state prisoners at a reasonable rate.
- B. IAC supports and encourages the Department of Corrections to remove all problem state prisoners from county jails upon notice by the county.
- C. IAC supports state transport systems, which ensure the timely transport of state inmates out of county detention facilities where state incarceration has been ordered.

DRUGS

IAC recognizes that drug trafficking is one of the single most important challenges to the criminal justice system and recommends the following:

- A. IAC supports all efforts at the federal, state, and local levels to continue expanding substance abuse prevention efforts.
- B. IAC supports adequate funding of drug task forces at the federal, state, and local levels to continue to fight drug trafficking and support substance abuse treatment.
- C. IAC supports adequate state or federal funding to clean up drug labs.
- D. IAC supports sentencing structures that are tailored to reduce recidivism and deter drug trafficking. Such sentencing structures may include, but not be limited to:
 - 1. Sentencing alternatives for entry-level offenders, including drug courts and other treatment-based programming;

2. Stricter sentencing and mandatory minimum sentences for habitual offenders;
3. Adoption of legislation for mandatory minimum sentences for drug traffickers.

JUVENILE CORRECTIONS

IAC supports the “Balanced Approach-Restorative Justice” model on which the Juvenile Corrections Act is based. Consistent with this model, IAC supports alternatives to incarceration for juvenile offenders to include:

- A. Continued funding of the Department of Juvenile Corrections.
- B. Support for non-secure holdover facilities by multi-county or regional programs where troubled youth can be held for a brief period of time.

IAC supports and encourages local grants and technical assistance provided through the Department of Juvenile Corrections.

IAC supports the availability of an appropriate mix of facilities and programs aimed at rehabilitating troubled youth and urges ongoing and stable funding for the Department of Juvenile Corrections to assist counties and cities with diversion and prevention programs to avoid incarceration of juveniles.

IAC supports the minimum standards and training established by the Juvenile Justice Training Council for county juvenile detention and probation officers, including the certification of county juvenile detention and probation officers through POST Academy.

IAC supports the funding for and encourages the Idaho Department of Juvenile Corrections to designate funding to implement the Idaho Juvenile Offender System (IJOS) and provide or make available funding through grants or other means for connectivity, equipment, training, and any other technology needs necessary for counties to carry out their responsibility mandated under the Idaho Juvenile Corrections Act.

IAC recognizes as a formal subcommittee of the IAC Justice and Public Safety Committee, the Youth and Justice Advisory Committee, or similar entity created to review juvenile issues and make recommendations to the IAC membership concerning funding, programs, other services, policies, and procedures.

JURISDICTION OF COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT

IAC recognizes that pursuant to Idaho Code § 31-2227, Sheriffs and Prosecuting Attorneys are the chief law enforcement officers in each county, irrespective of city and state officers, and IAC will oppose any legislation that contradicts the intent of Idaho Code § 31-2227.

IAC supports cooperative agreements, multiagency task forces, and other collaborations

between counties and other governmental entities that advance the goals and philosophies of criminal justice as outlined herein.

IAC supports the use of legible front and rear license plates as a positive aid to law enforcement and public safety.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

IAC supports additional funding at both the state and local levels for the transition of emergency communication systems to NextGen 911.

CORONERS

IAC supports a thorough review of the coroner system, including, but not limited to, education, standards, roles and responsibilities, and funding.