CJCC Essential Elements

A Companion to the National Standards for Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils

NIC

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Abstract

The *CJCC Essential Elements* document is a companion publication to the *National Standards for Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils.* The essential elements consist of ten key attributes associated with high-performing criminal justice coordinating councils (CJCCs). The ten essential elements are: 1) systemic focus, 2) participation, 3) leadership, 4) consensus building, 5) organized meetings, 6) committees and workgroups, 7) strategic planning, 8) data and research, 9) community engagement, and 10) director and staff. Each essential element is described in the publication, and a set of key factors is also presented. The key factors are items that indicate the presence of the essential element, and they are drawn from the national standards of CJCCs (and the corresponding guiding principles of CJCCs).

Using the essential elements and key factors, the publication provides a checklist for CJCCs, along with a CJCC essential elements assessment tool. Both the checklist and the essential elements assessment tool are designed to assist jurisdictions seeking to form a CJCC, by providing a framework of effective practices. For jurisdictions with an existing CJCC, the essential elements assessment tool serves as an instrument for assessing the health and effectiveness of their council. The assessment compares the jurisdiction's CJCC with the ideal model, as defined by the national standards of CJCCs, and suggests areas in which a council could be strengthened to make it more productive and effective.

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About the National Network of Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils

The National Network of Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils (NNCJCC) was established in 2012 by the Justice Management Institute (JMI) with support from the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The NNCJCC is an association of local criminal justice coordinating councils (CJCCs), and its membership is composed of leadership and staff from well-developed and long-standing CJCCs. The mission of the NNCJCC is to advance the creation and sustainability of high-functioning CJCCs across the country. The network also promotes information sharing between CJCCs and the development of evidence-based solutions with the goal of improving local criminal justice systems. An important objective of the NNCJCC is to advocate and support the work of CJCC directors responsible for leading systemic initiatives on behalf of their councils.

Although the NNCJCC is a selective, membership-based association, it strives to be a peer resource for any jurisdiction. If you are interested in learning more about the NNCJCC or about CJCCs, please visit https://www.jmijustice.org/.

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Introduction

The Essential Elements of CJCCs

In 2023, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) partnered with the Justice Management Institute (JMI) to introduce the national standards for criminal justice coordinating councils (CJCCs).[1] CJCCs, also referred to as councils, are established bodies of key criminal justice, government, and community stakeholders that convene regularly to identify systemic challenges and work collaboratively to improve the local criminal justice system. The national standards were created to formalize CJCC best practices and to assist jurisdictions in forming and sustaining productive councils.[2]

This publication is a companion to the national standards for CJCCs. It captures the essence of the national standards and creates a construct of essential elements for jurisdictions to consider when developing a CJCC or enhancing an existing CJCC. The essential elements represent the core characteristics of high-performing councils.

National Standards:

The national standards were created to formalize CJCC best practices and to assist jurisdictions in forming and sustaining productive councils.

Essential Elements:

The essential elements represent the core characteristics of high-performing councils.

The essential elements for CJCCs are as follows:

1) **Systemic Focus** – The CJCC takes a systemic approach to coordinating the criminal justice system and is guided by a vision statement and a mission statement.

2) **Participation** – The CJCC has executive-level decision-makers as members, and they actively participate in the council.

3) **Leadership** – The CJCC has an effective leadership structure that includes officers and an executive committee.

4) **Consensus Building** – The CJCC makes consensus-based decisions and relies on voting for procedural matters.

5) **Organized Meetings** – The CJCC, including committees and workgroups, has structured meetings regularly.

6) **Committees and Workgroups** – The CJCC has standing committees and workgroups that advance the strategic initiatives and work of the council.

7) **Strategic Planning** – The CJCC has a strategic plan that guides the work of the council and produces desired outcomes.

8) **Data and Research** – The CJCC produces quantitative and qualitative data on the criminal justice system and uses the data to inform decision-making.

9) **Community Engagement** – The CJCC engages the community by sharing information and by involving the community in the work of the council.

10) **Director and Staff** – The CJCC has a director and staff who coordinate and advance the council's strategic initiatives.

A Quick Word on Guiding Principles of CJCCs[3]

The national standards for CJCCs are based on a set of guiding principles that encapsulate the fundamental precepts of CJCCs. The guiding principles should be the foundation for any council, and, like the national standards, they are incorporated into the framework of the essential elements. The guiding principles for CJCCs are as follows:

- Create a criminal justice system that is fair, just, and equitable.
- Enhance public safety and trust.
- Think systemically and strategically.
- Communicate and share information.
- Collaborate, build consensus, and share responsibility.
- Use data and research.
- Pursue innovation and evidence-based solutions.
- Maximize existing resources and taxpayer funds.
- Inform and involve the community.
- Include diverse perspectives in all regards.
- Embrace transparency and accountability.

How to Use the CJCC Essential Elements

Each **essential element** is briefly described in the pages that follow. Accompanying each essential element is a subset of **key factors** that capture the intent of the essential element. The key factors should be present for the essential element to be operationalized. The national standards for CJCCs, specifically the commentary, should be consulted for additional information and context about the essential elements and key factors.[3]

Like the national standards for CJCCs, the essential elements are model practices for operating robust and productive CJCCs. They are intended to make councils more successful in improving their local criminal justice systems. Full compliance with the essential elements may not be feasible for all jurisdictions; however, this eventuality should not dissuade a jurisdiction from

Appendix A:

Checklist of items derived from the essential elements. Particularly beneficial for jurisdictions interested in creating a CJCC.

Appendix B:

Assessment tool for evaluating an existing council to compare with model practices and reveal potential opportunities.

Appendix C:

Rubric to assist jurisdictions with performing an assessment.

having a CJCC. A jurisdiction should apply the essential elements as best as possible, realizing that the process may be gradual.

The appendices to this publication offer helpful tools to assist jurisdictions interested in forming a CJCC or improving an existing CJCC. Appendix A contains a checklist of crucial items derived from the essential elements necessary for a council to operate effectively. This tool is particularly beneficial for jurisdictions interested in creating a CJCC. Appendix B presents a CJCC essential elements assessment tool that is useful for evaluating an existing council. This assessment tool is designed to compare a CJCC with model practices to reveal potential opportunities for strengthening a council. A rubric to assist jurisdictions with performing the assessment is available in Appendix C.

Essential Element 1: Systemic Focus

The CJCC takes a systemic approach to coordinating the criminal justice system and is guided by a vision statement and a mission statement.

The CJCC shall exist to improve the local criminal justice system. Its purpose is to 1) facilitate communication and collaboration between criminal justice agencies; 2) identify and address problems and challenges facing the criminal justice system; 3) ensure the criminal justice system is fair, just, and equitable; 4) develop and implement strategies for improving the criminal justice system; and 5) promote public safety and reduce crime. In fulfilling its purpose, the CJCC shall take a systemic approach that focuses on multiple priority areas and brings together internal and external strategic partners to better serve its community.

A critical component of a systemic approach is shared responsibility. Members of the CJCC shall come together in good faith to make the criminal justice system better for each justice agency and the community. This approach requires that council members partner on tasks and initiatives, maximize existing system resources, and support the decisions agreed upon by the CJCC. Furthermore, the CJCC and its members shall strive to work in unison when difficult situations emerge, recognizing that troubles in one area may have negative effects on other parts of the system.

The CJCC shall create a vision statement and a mission statement that capture the council's purpose. The vision statement should reflect the CJCC's ideal state that the council desires to achieve for the justice system and the community, whereas the mission statement should explain the CJCC's purpose and describe what the CJCC is pursuing to achieve its vision. The vision and mission statements are essential for guiding the CJCC's activities, unifying the council's membership, and conveying the role of the CJCC to the community. The statements should be reviewed on a regular basis—every five years at a minimum.

Additionally, the CJCC shall have bylaws that reflect the systemic nature of the council and its full responsibilities. The bylaws should outline the operating structure the council will follow to help achieve its vision.

Key factors for this essential element:

✓ *The CJCC focuses on systemic issues that cross multiple agencies and systems. (Guiding principles)*

✓ *The CJCC maximizes system resources and available justice system funding. (Guiding principles)*

✓ *The CJCC pursues a system that is fairer and more just and equitable. (Guiding principles)*

✓ *The CJCC responds to crises affecting the criminal justice system. (Guiding principles)*

✓ *The CJCC has a vision statement and a mission statement that reflect the systemic role of the council. (Standard 1.1 and Standard 1.2)*

✓ *The CJCC has bylaws that outline the systemic purpose and structure of the council. (Standard 2.1[a] and Standard 2.5)*

Essential Element 2: Participation

The CJCC has executive-level decision-makers as members, and they actively participate in the council.

The CJCC membership shall include key justice system officials who have decision-making authority for their organization. Members may include, but are not limited to, the chief judge of the felony criminal courts, chief judge of the misdemeanor courts, police chief, sheriff, jail administrator, chief prosecutor, public defender and/or chief defense bar attorney, clerk of court, probation/parole chief, pretrial services director, officials of general government (e.g., county/city manager), and directors across the continuum of care (e.g., substance use disorder, mental health, housing). In addition, the CJCC should include at least one member from the community as a voting member. The total number of members will vary by jurisdiction, and the CJCC should strive to keep the council to a manageable size so that the council is productive.

It is crucial that key executive-level leaders actively participate in the CJCC meetings and help guide the work of the council. Executive-level leaders are important because they have the authority to make decisions and to enter into collaborative partnerships on behalf of their agencies. The use of proxies or delegates for executive-level leaders should be minimized. Whenever proxies or delegates participate on behalf of a member, the proxies or delegates should be able to make decisions on behalf of the organization to ensure council meetings are productive.

Members shall get involved in the CJCC beyond attending council meetings. The expectation is that members will participate by contributing information, collaborating on initiatives, and sharing resources to enhance the criminal justice system. The council members should have a shared sense of responsibility.

Key factors for this essential element:

✓ *CJCC membership includes executive-level leadership representing key entities from municipal, county, and state justice agencies. (Standard 3.1[a] and Standard 3.1[b])*

✓ *The CJCC's membership size is appropriate to fulfill the council's mission. (Standard 3.4)*

✓ *CJCC membership includes at least one representative from the community. (Standard 3.3)*

✓ *CJCC bylaws outline expectations for council members. (Standard 3.5)*

✓ *CJCC members attend and participate in council meetings regularly; use of proxies and delegates is limited. (Standard 3.7)*

✓ *The CJCC has a formal process for onboarding new members. (Standard 3.2)*

✓ *The CJCC's membership list is publicly posted and updated annually. (Standard 3.6)*

Essential Element 3: Leadership

The CJCC has an effective leadership structure that includes officers and an executive committee.

The CJCC shall have officers and an executive committee to lead the council. At a minimum, two officers from different disciplines should be selected from the membership to serve as chair and vice chair or as co-chairs. The primary role of the officers is to preside over the CJCC and the executive committee. Other duties typically assigned to the officers include, but are not limited to: 1) encouraging members to attend and participate, 2) finalizing the CJCC meeting agendas, 3) representing the CJCC at meetings and events when necessary, 4) serving as spokesperson for the CJCC to the media and public, 5) signing official correspondence from the council, 7) ensuring representative positions on the council are filled, and 8) advocating for the CJCC and its initiatives with funders and decision-makers. Officers should be selected by a vote of the CJCC and serve set terms.

Ideally, individuals selected as officers will be highly respected, system thinkers, and collaboration builders. Officers shall focus on the best interests of the criminal justice system in their role as CJCC leaders.

The executive committee shall oversee the operation and progress of the CJCC. Specific responsibilities of the executive committee should include, but not be limited to, the following: 1) prioritizing CJCC initiatives; 2) monitoring council endeavors, including the work of committees and workgroups; 3) advising the CJCC officers; 4) identifying nominees for officer and representative member positions through a fair and transparent process; 5)

ensuring the bylaws and strategic plan are updated; 6) drafting the agenda for CJCC meetings and ensuring matters are ready for council meetings; 7) selecting the CJCC director; 8) providing direction to the CJCC director; and 9) contributing to the performance evaluations of the CJCC director. Officers shall automatically serve on the executive committee with a small number of key decision-makers from the CJCC.

Key factors for this essential element:

✓ *The CJCC has designated officers from different disciplines. (Standard 4.1[a])*

✓ *The CJCC has a fair and transparent process in place to select officers; officers serve set terms. (Standard 4.2[a] and Standard 4.2[b])*

✓ *Officers keep the activities and initiatives of the CJCC and executive committee on track. (Standard 4.3[a])*

✓ *CJCC officers and the executive committee work in consultation with CJCC staff to prepare for CJCC meetings and advance CJCC initiatives. (Standard 4.3[b] and Standard 5.2)*

✓ *CJCC bylaws clearly outline appropriate duties and responsibilities of the officers and the executive committee. (Standard 4.3[a], Standard 4.4, and Standard 5.1[a])*

✓ *The executive committee includes CJCC officers and a small fraction of the CJCC membership. (Standard 5.1[b])*

Essential Element 4: Consensus Building

> *The CJCC makes consensus-based decisions and relies on voting for procedural matters.*

Although a handful of states have codified CJCCs and some jurisdictions have enacted local resolutions or ordinances establishing their CJCCs, most CJCCs are formed informally and have no direct authority or power other than the influence derived from the composition of their membership. Furthermore, a CJCC cannot make decisions or take direct actions affecting any independently elected official or their office or any official or agency under the authority of another (e.g., the city, county, or state) without the consent of the independently elected official or the authority. As a result, the CJCC shall rely on consensus to reach agreement on important issues and decisions.

Consensus building is a critical component of the CJCC's influence, and operating a council under unanimity is beneficial: consensus encourages effective and open communication during meetings while promoting member engagement and overall collaboration. This dynamic also heightens the possibility that decisions will be more thorough and that the support of those decisions will be stronger.

The CJCC shall reserve voting for addressing procedural matters, such as approving minutes or electing officers. Councils may also use voting to strengthen the consensus process by taking an informal preliminary vote to discern where members initially stand on an item and/or to confirm that members agree on an action. In situations where the CJCC has oversight over

funds, for example when serving as a pass-through for state or federal grant funds, the council shall use voting to formalize decisions and ensure transparency. When a vote takes place, the CJCC shall record the outcome in the meeting documentation.

The CJCC shall review state laws on conflict of interest and adopt a formal policy accordingly. At a minimum, the CJCC shall enact a policy that restricts a member from voting on an item before the council when the member has a personal or fiduciary conflict.

Key factors for this essential element:

- ✓ *The CJCC is advisory in nature and relies on consensus for decision-making. (Standard 8.1)*

- ✓ *The CJCC discusses matters productively and professionally to find common ground and possible solutions. (Standard 8.1)*

- ✓ *CJCC voting is reserved primarily for procedural matters and for times when it is required by the CJCC's bylaws or legislative mandate (if applicable). (Standard 8.2[a])*

- ✓ *CJCC bylaws outline the councils' voting procedures. (Standard 8.2[a])*

- ✓ *The CJCC includes the perspective of underrepresented communities when making decisions. (Standard 11.1)*

- ✓ *The CJCC has a conflict-of-interest policy. (Standard 8.3)*

Essential Element 5: Organized Meetings

The CJCC, including committees and workgroups, has structured meetings regularly.

CJCC meetings should be well organized to ensure they are productive and constitute a good use of members' time. It is the responsibility of CJCC leadership and staff to establish a meeting structure that is conducive to advancing the work of the council.

The CJCC shall meet regularly—either monthly or every other month—so that members can share information and collaborate on initiatives intended to improve the criminal justice system. Preferably, the CJCC should meet on the same day and at the same time of the month so that members get accustomed to the event being on their calendars. Additionally, the meeting location should be convenient for a majority of the members and easily accessible for both members and the public.

Agendas for the meeting should be provided to CJCC members at least three working days before the council meeting. As part of the agenda, the CJCC should allow the time for public comment. Occasionally, it may be necessary for the CJCC officers or executive committee to call an emergency meeting. In these cases, members should be provided with 24 hours' advance notice. Only items included on the agenda should be covered during council meetings.

The CJCC should produce meeting documentation (e.g., minutes, notes, summaries) to capture what occurred during meetings. Meeting notes are important for maintaining a record on matters discussed, updating members who were absent, sustaining

momentum from meeting to meeting, etc. All meeting documentation should be provided to members and posted on the council's website.

Every CJCC should review its state's statutes to ensure that it is following open meeting laws properly.

Key factors for this essential element:

- ✓ *CJCC meetings are productive and well organized. (Standard 4.3[a] and Standard 5.1[a])*

- ✓ *The CJCC meets monthly or bimonthly and has a set meeting time and date throughout the year. (Standard 7.1[a])*

- ✓ *The CJCC provides agendas at least three working days before a meeting and 24 hours before an emergency meeting. (Standard 7.1[a] and Standard 7.2[b])*

- ✓ *CJCC meetings are open to the public and allow time for public comment on the agenda. (Standard 7.3)*

- ✓ *Requirements for a quorum are stipulated in the bylaws. (Standard 7.5)*

- ✓ *The CJCC produces meeting documentation and posts it on the council's website. (Standard 7.4)*

- ✓ *The CJCC follows open meeting laws. (Standard 7.1[b])*

Essential Element 6: Committees and Workgroups

The CJCC has standing committees and workgroups that advance the strategic initiatives and work of the council.

The CJCC shall use committees and workgroups to develop and advance initiatives, under the guidance and direction of the council. Standing committees shall be formed to work on complex problems that are ongoing in nature and align with the CJCC's priorities and strategic plan. Workgroups shall be created to address specific items that are narrow in scope and time limited. Both committees and workgroups should be formed by a formal vote of the CJCC and given explicit goals and objectives set by the council.

The committees and workgroups should have a chair and a vice-chair, or co-chairs, appointed by the council. The leadership of the committees and workgroups shall be responsible for the following activities: 1) presiding over meetings; 2) keeping committee members informed about pertinent matters; 3) establishing meeting schedules; 4) setting the agenda for meetings; 5) ensuring preparation of meeting notes or minutes; and 6) reporting activities and progress to the CJCC, the executive committee, and/or CJCC officers.

Membership of committees and workgroups should consist of CJCC members and nonmembers with subject matter expertise. Committees and workgroups offer an excellent opportunity to expand the involvement of various agencies/organizations and stakeholders in the work of the CJCC, including community members.

CJCC staff should support and coordinate the committees and workgroups. Staff should assist with meeting preparations, announcements, and meeting documentation (e.g., planning and research, agendas, and meeting notes) to ensure the committees and workgroups meet regularly, advance toward their stated purpose and goal, and function at a high level.

Key factors for this essential element:

✓ *The CJCC uses committees and workgroups to advance the work of the council. (Standard 6.1[a] and Standard 6.1[b])*

✓ *Committees and workgroups have chairpersons appointed by the CJCC. (Standard 6.3[a])*

✓ *Committees and workgroups include CJCC members and nonmembers with subject matter expertise and include community members. (Standard 6.2 and Standard 11.1)*

✓ *Committees and workgroups routinely update the CJCC and the executive committee on their progress. (Standard 6.3[c] and Standard 5.1[a])*

✓ *CJCC staff support the committees and workgroups. (Standard 6.3[b])*

✓ *Committees and workgroups produce meeting documentation that is made available to the public. (Standard 7.4)*

Essential Element 7: Strategic Planning

The CJCC has a strategic plan that guides the work of the council and produces desired outcomes.

CJCC members shall collaborate to create a strategic plan that specifies the council's priorities and core initiatives. The plan should be data-informed and contain a reasonable number of goals, and each goal may have a subset of short-, medium-, and long-term initiatives. In addition, the strategic plan should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. The initiatives should be ascribed the utmost importance, as they will serve as the council's foundational work and consume a substantial amount of time and resources. A desirable time frame for a CJCC strategic plan is three to five years.

The CJCC should include the community in developing and implementing the strategic plan. Strategic initiatives should be assigned to committees and workgroups to develop and implement. The officers and the executive committee should ensure that the goals, initiatives, and tasks outlined in the strategic plan are moving forward at the anticipated pace, and they should offer assistance and guidance if progress is not being made. CJCC staff should routinely keep the officers and the executive committee informed about the status of the goals, initiatives, and tasks, especially if unforeseen issues are arising.

At least annually, the CJCC should dedicate a meeting to reviewing the entire strategic plan to assess implementation progress and determine whether modifications should be made. It may be necessary to make modifications to the strategic plan because of unanticipated events or a shift in priorities over time.

The plan should be shared with the public on the council's website, and annual progress updates should be provided by the council.

Key factors for this essential element:

✓ *The CJCC creates and adopts a data-informed strategic plan every three to five years. (Standard 9.1[a] and Standard 9.1[b])*

✓ *The strategic plan is produced collaboratively by CJCC members and the community. (Standard 9.1[a] and Standard 11.1)*

✓ *The strategic plan is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. (Standard 9.1[c])*

✓ *The strategic plan includes short-, medium-, and long-term initiatives. (Standard 9.1[a])*

✓ *The strategic plan and related deliverables are reviewed annually and updated as needed by CJCC. (Standard 9.2)*

✓ *The strategic plan is shared with the public, and progress reports are provided at least annually. (Standard 9.3)*

Essential Element 8: Data and Research

The CJCC produces quantitative and qualitative data on the criminal justice system and uses the data to inform decision-making.

The CJCC shall use local, state, and national data, both quantitative and qualitative, in conducting its business. Leveraging data improves the council's ability to understand topics, problem-solve issues, and make informed decisions. Data can also spur innovation, decrease biases, identify cost savings, reduce risk, bolster messaging, and measure progress. The council should always strive to be research-informed and to pursue evidence-based solutions.

A primary responsibility of the CJCC should be to collect and analyze local criminal justice data. To assist with this endeavor, primary criminal justice agencies in the jurisdiction, especially member agencies of the CJCC, shall share pertinent data in a timely fashion with the council on a regular basis. The council shall use the data primarily to monitor volume (e.g., arrests and cases), trends, outcomes, and strategic plan progress. Monitoring volume and trends will strengthen the council's ability to manage the system effectively. The CJCC should publish an annual report using the data gathered and share that report with the public.

In addition, the CJCC shall identify, collect, and analyze data metrics that inform the council about the performance of the criminal justice system and council initiatives. Ideally, as described in the commentary of the standards, the CJCC will produce two types of data metrics: 1) key performance indicators and 2) performance measures. These metrics will also inform the council about the effectiveness of its strategies, the efficiency of operations, and the quality of services.

The CJCC shall also seek assistance from independent outside partners to enrich the council's research and evaluation efforts. Using external partners, both local and national, ensures objectivity and introduces new perspectives and expertise that may benefit the council's work.

Key factors for this essential element:

✓ *The CJCC uses data and research to inform decision-making and pursue evidence-based solutions. (Standard 10.1)*

✓ *The CJCC collects and analyzes local data to monitor trends and proactively manage the criminal justice system. (Standard 10.2[a])*

✓ *CJCC members and their agencies share pertinent system data with the council. (Standard 10.2[b])*

✓ *The CJCC tracks specific data metrics to discern progress made toward strategic goals and objectives. (Standard 10.3[a])*

✓ *The CJCC produces an annual systems data report that informs the council and the community. (Standard 10.3[b])*

✓ *The CJCC engages independent outside partners to assist with research efforts. (Standard 10.4)*

Essential Element 9: Community Engagement

> *The CJCC engages the community by sharing information and by involving the community in the work of the council.*

The CJCC shall constructively engage the community it serves by actively sharing information and by involving the community in the decision-making process. Including residents will help ensure that the council's initiatives respond to the needs of the community and improve community support. Engagement efforts should include a CJCC website with information about, and resources related to, the council and the criminal justice system. Additionally, the CJCC should meaningfully engage the community through surveys, focus groups, community dialogues, educational forums, town halls, social media, etc., especially when developing and implementing the CJCC strategic plan.

Two-way information sharing is a critical piece of community engagement. The CJCC shall prioritize educating and informing the public about the council and the criminal justice system via community outreach and ensuring that opportunities exist for community members to dialogue with members of the CJCC. At a minimum, the CJCC should share information about the work of the council, including challenges, opportunities, and decisions. The CJCC should use knowledgeable and experienced spokespersons to engage the public, and those spokespersons should be made available for community events and interactions with the media. The CJCC should build a relationship with the broader community and with local media to amplify messaging about

the council and its vision for the criminal justice system.

The CJCC should develop a communications plan that outlines how the council will strategically convey information to the public and the media. The plan should include the CJCC's communication goals, core messaging principles, methods for communication outreach, and target audiences. It should also include a strategy for responding to any potential crises that may arise.

Key factors for this essential element:

✓ *The CJCC purposefully engages the community and includes the community in decision-making. (Standard 11.1)*

✓ *The CJCC proactively educates and informs the community about the work of the council, including progress and challenges. (Standard 11.2)*

✓ *The CJCC has created a communications plan for conveying information to the public and the media. (Standard 11.2)*

✓ *The CJCC uses knowledgeable and experienced spokespersons from the council for community outreach efforts. (Standard 11.3)*

✓ *The CJCC maintains a website to provide information about, and resources related to, the council and the criminal justice system. (Standard 11.4)*

Essential Element 10: Director and Staff

> *The CJCC has a director and support staff who coordinate the council and advance the council's strategic initiatives.*

The CJCC shall have a dedicated director position responsible for the council, executive committee, subcommittees and workgroups, and all related initiatives. The CJCC director shall be a professional, executive-level position within the jurisdiction, ideally funded by local government. The director shall be considered an elevated leadership position because of the position's responsibility to coordinate the criminal justice system through the CJCC and to work across numerous justice agencies and partner systems (e.g., behavioral health, education, social services, and housing).

The director shall report to the CJCC's executive committee so that the position can be responsive to the direction of the executive committee, without any conflicts or competing expectations. Therefore, it is imperative that the CJCC director be selected using a hiring process that includes direct input from the executive committee members, given that the director will be working closely with the executive committee. Furthermore, the executive committee, through the officers, shall be responsible for conducting the annual performance review of the CJCC director.

For the council and CJCC director to be highly effective in achieving goals and objectives, it may be necessary to incorporate additional support staff members to assist with the council's operation. Examples of additional support staff positions may include, but are not limited to, executive assistant, project manager, management analyst, grants manager, and/or information technology specialist. All CJCC support staff shall report to the director, without interference from the officers, the executive committee, or the CJCC, to ensure continuity in managing the council's operations.

The CJCC director and staff shall focus on the "big picture" and think systemically when pursuing the council's vision and mission. They should be neutral and objective parties, operating in the best interests of the criminal justice system.

Key factors for this essential element:

✓ *The CJCC has a dedicated director who is accountable to the council's executive committee. (Standard 12.2[a] and Standard 12.2[b])*

✓ *The CJCC director is a professional, executive-level position in the organization. (Standard 13.1 and Standard 13.3)*

✓ *The CJCC director has staff appropriate to support the CJCC's operations. (Standard 12.2[c], Standard 13.2, and Standard 13.3)*

✓ *The CJCC director and staff have job descriptions that clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of the positions. (Standard 13.4)*

✓ *The CJCC director and staff have performance reviews commensurate with their job duties; the executive committee contributes to the performance of the director. (Standard 13.5)*

Appendix A: CJCC Essential Elements Checklist

The ten essential elements are the fundamental characteristics that effective CJCCs should possess. These elements contain crucial components, such as bylaws and annual reports, that contribute to the success of a council. This appendix presents a checklist derived from the essential elements that jurisdictions should strongly consider when establishing or starting to strengthen an existing CJCC.

Implementing a CJCC is often a gradual process, and it may take significant time for a council to become fully established. For that reason, the checklist is compartmentalized into three phases: 1) planning, 2) implementation, and 3) sustainability. The **planning phase** is devoted to components that comprise the purpose and organization of the council. Next, the **implementation phase** contains components that enhance the structure of the CJCC and advance the work of the council. Finally, the **sustainability phase** introduces key components that will help the CJCC to strengthen the operation of the council for long-term success. These phases are not linear, and a CJCC should implement the checklist components as it deems appropriate for its jurisdiction.

CJCC Essential Elements Checklist

Planning Phase

Item	Explanation	Completed
Vision and mission statements	The CJCC shall have vision and mission statements that accurately convey the purpose of the council. *(Essential Element 1, Standard 1.1, and Standard 1.2)*	☐
Bylaws	The CJCC shall have written bylaws that formalize the structure and responsibilities of the council. *(Essential Element 1, Standard 2.1[a], and Standard 2.5)*	☐
Members	The CJCC shall have executive-level decision-makers as members, along with, at a minimum, one community representative. *(Essential Element 2, Standard 3.1[a], Standard 3.1[b], Standard 3.3, Standard 3.4, and Standard 3.7)*	☐
Officers	The CJCC shall have officers that oversee the council and lead meetings, along with any additional duties and responsibilities assigned in the bylaws. *(Essential Element 3, Standard 4.1[a], Standard 4.2[a], Standard 4.2[b], Standard 4.3[a], Standard 4.3[b], and Standard 4.4)*	☐
Executive committee	The CJCC shall have an executive committee that manages the operation of the council, along with any additional duties and responsibilities assigned in the bylaws. *(Essential Element 3, Standard 5.1[a], Standard 5.1[b], and Standard 5.2)*	☐
Decision process	The CJCC shall have a defined decision-making process that includes requirements for voting, including requirements for a quorum. *(Essential Element 4, Standard 7.5, Standard 8.1, and Standard 8.2[a])*	☐
Meetings	The CJCC shall have a set schedule of regular meetings that complies with local open meeting laws. *(Essential Element 5, Standard 7.1[a], Standard 7.1[b], and Standard 7.3)*	☐
Meeting documentation	The CJCC shall produce meeting documentation (e.g., agendas, minutes, reports) that informs the CJCC and the community about important information and provides a record of the council's work. *(Essential Element 5, Standard 7.1[b], Standard 7.2[a], Standard 7.2[b], and Standard 7.4)*	☐

Implementation Phase

Item	Explanation	Completed
Onboarding process	The CJCC shall have a formal onboarding process for new CJCC members. *(Essential Element 2 and Standard 3.2)*	☐
Director	The CJCC shall have a director position that coordinates the council under the guidance and direction of the executive committee. *(Essential Element 10, Standard 12.2[a], Standard 12.2[b], Standard 13.1, Standard 13.3, Standard 13.4)*	☐
Committees and workgroups	The CJCC shall have committees and workgroups that develop and implement initiatives under the guidance and direction of the council. *(Essential Element 6, Standard 5.1[a], Standard 6.1[a], Standard 6.1[b], Standard 6.2, Standard 6.3[a], Standard 6.3[b], Standard 6.3[c], Standard 7.4, and Standard 11.1)*	☐
Strategic plan	The CJCC shall have a strategic plan that reflects the CJCC's vision and contains a reasonable number of initiatives to enhance the local criminal justice system. *(Essential Element 7, Standard 9.1[a], Standard 9.1[b], Standard 9.1[c], Standard 9.2, Standard 9.3, and Standard 11.1)*	☐
Community engagement plan	The CJCC shall have a plan for purposefully engaging the community and conducting community outreach. *(Essential Element 9, Standard 11.1, and Standard 11.2)*	☐
Website	The CJCC shall have a website that contains information about the council and pertinent documents (e.g., agendas, minutes, bylaws, strategic plan, and annual report). *(Essential Element 9, Standard 3.6, Standard 7.4, Standard 9.3, Standard 10.3[b], Standard 11.2, and Standard 11.4)*	☐
Conflict-of-interest policy	The CJCC shall have a conflict-of-interest policy that requires members to disclose personal interests outside of their official position that may be a source of conflict on specific matters before the council. *(Essential Element 4 and Standard 8.3)*	☐

Sustainability Phase		
Item	**Explanation**	**Completed**
Annual report	The CJCC shall produce an annual report that contains an overview of the CJCC, a summary of initiatives, and pertinent performance data from across the criminal justice system. *(Essential Element 8 and Standard 10.3[b])*	☐
Data sharing agreement	The CJCC shall have a written agreement between the council and justice agencies providing data that specifies the information to be provided and how it will be used by the council. *(Essential Element 8 and Standard 10.2[b])*	☐
Data metrics	The CJCC shall identify and produce key performance indicators and performance measures. *(Essential Element 8, Standard 10.1, Standard 10.2[a], Standard 10.2[b], Standard 10.3[a], and Standard 10.4)*	☐
Staff	The CJCC shall have the necessary staff to support the council and the director. *(Essential Element 10, Standard 12.2[c], Standard 13.2, Standard 13.3, Standard 13.4)*	☐
Director and staff performance reviews	The CJCC director and staff shall receive performance reviews that include, at a minimum, input from the executive committee. *(Essential Element 10 and Standard 13.5)*	☐
Communications plan	The CJCC shall have a communications plan that outlines how the council will strategically convey information to the public and media. *(Essential Element 9, Standard 11.2)*	☐

Appendix B: CJCC Essential Elements Assessment Tool

What is the CJCC essential elements assessment tool?

The CJCC essential elements assessment tool is a comprehensive list of all the essential elements and corresponding key factors. It serves as a useful framework for comparing an existing council with the national standards of CJCCs. By using the tool, a CJCC can discern whether it aligns with characteristics of high-performing councils.

The CJCC essential elements assessment tool is intended to help a council identify potential areas for improvement. However, it may not be feasible for a CJCC to fully comport with every aspect of the national standards. For example, a CJCC may be required to follow state laws that differ from the national standards, or a jurisdiction may not have the resources to implement one or more key factors. In such cases, it is essential for the CJCC to apply the national standards and assessment findings as best as possible, taking into account the unique circumstances of its jurisdiction.[4] The tool is intended to help the council achieve the highest level of performance, recognizing that each CJCC's path to success may be different.

How do you use the CJCC essential elements assessment tool?

The essential elements tool enables a quick and straightforward face-value assessment of the CJCC when conducted by an individual familiar with the CJCC. For example, an experienced CJCC director or chairperson could use this tool to gauge the council's compliance with national standards based on its engagement with the council. However, a more in-depth analysis is advisable, which can be achieved by combining the essential elements tool with a comprehensive information-gathering process. This thorough analysis may encompass one-on-one interviews with CJCC members and system stakeholders; a web-based survey targeting both members and stakeholders; an extensive review of vision and mission statements, bylaws, strategic plans, annual reports, meeting documentation, and the council's website; and direct observation of CJCC meetings, including the executive committee, standing committees, and workgroups. In situations where the CJCC is facing challenges, engaging an external expert to conduct the assessment using the essential elements tool may prove advantageous. An external expert can offer objectivity and technical assistance to enhance the council's performance.

To use the essential elements tool, the individual (i.e., the assessor) conducting the assessment shall determine whether the CJCC complies with the key factors listed under each essential element. The assessor shall then assign an overall rating for each of the ten essential elements based on the level of compliance. The rating criteria for the key factors and essential element are as follows:

1. **Fully compliant** – The CJCC fully comports with the key factor/essential element.

2. **Mostly compliant** – The CJCC comports with a majority of the key factor/essential element; the council deviates from the key factor/essential element, but aspects of the key factor are mostly present.

3. **Somewhat compliant** – The CJCC comports with a minority of the key factor/essential element; aspects of the key factor/essential element are somewhat present.

4. **Not compliant** – The CJCC does not comport with the key factor/essential element.

When evaluating the CJCC using essential elements assessment tool, the assessor should avoid assigning a rating based on binary thinking ("yes" or "no") as it may oversimplify the intent of the assessment. For example, for the key factor "the CJCC has bylaws that outline the systemic purpose and structure of the council," the assessor should not rate the factor as "fully compliant" simply because the council has written bylaws present. The assessor should review the bylaws to ensure that the bylaws meet all the criteria specified in the national standards to be fully compliant. If, for instance, the council's bylaws do not define the roles and responsibilities of the CJCC officers or staff, then the CJCC is not "fully compliant" on the key factor (i.e., bylaws) but rather "mostly compliant" or "somewhat compliant" based on the overall level of compliance.

The assessor shall always refer to the national standards for CJCCs when using the CJCC essential elements tool. Referencing the standards is particularly important when assigning an overall rating to the essential element, as the national standards provide useful contextual information in the commentary. A rubric is also provided in Appendix C to assist the assessor in determining an appropriate overall rating to assign.

Once the assessment is completed, the results will reveal the strengths of the CJCC and potential opportunities for improvement. For example, if the assessment reveals that the CJCC is only somewhat complaint with the "participation" essential element, then the CJCC shall refer to the key factors where the CJCC was not fully compliant and develop a plan to bolster the council's performance in those areas. Again, the national standards for CJCC should be consulted for guidance on making improvements. NIC also offers additional useful resources for CJCCs at https://nicic.gov/projects/criminal-justice-coordinating-committees and on the CJCC microsite at https://info.nicic.gov/cjcc/.

The findings of the essential elements assessment tool should be shared with the CJCC officers and members to generate discussion on strengthening the council. In some situations, it may be beneficial to form a workgroup to develop a plan for bringing a CJCC into compliance with the national standards and then having the workgroup share their proposed plan to the council for their approval.

CJCC Essential Elements Tool

Essential Elements and Key Factors	Fully Compliant	Mostly Compliant	Somewhat Compliant	Not Compliant
Systemic Focus – *The CJCC takes a systemic approach to coordinating the criminal justice system and is guided by a vision and a mission statement.*				
The CJCC focuses on systemic issues that cross multiple agencies and systems.				
The CJCC maximizes system resources and available justice system funding.				
The CJCC pursues a system that is fairer and more just and equitable.				
The CJCC responds to crises affecting the criminal justice system.				
The CJCC has a vision statement and a mission statement that reflect the systemic role of the council.				
The CJCC has bylaws that outline the systemic purpose and structure of the council.				
Overall Ranking for System Focused				
Participation – *The CJCC has executive-level decision-makers as members, and they actively participate in the council.*				
CJCC membership includes executive-level leadership representing key entities from municipal, county, and state justice agencies.				
CJCC membership size is appropriate to fulfill the council's mission.				
CJCC membership includes at least one representative from the community.				
CJCC bylaws outline expectations for council members.				
CJCC members attend and participate in council meetings regularly; use of proxies and delegates is limited.				
The CJCC has a formal process for onboarding new members.				
The CJCC's membership list is publicly posted and updated annually.				
Overall Ranking for Participation				

Essential Elements and Key Factors *(continued)*	Fully Compliant	Mostly Compliant	Somewhat Compliant	Not Compliant
Leadership – *The CJCC has an effective leadership structure that includes officers and an executive committee.*				
The CJCC has designated officers from different disciplines.				
The CJCC has a fair and transparent process in place to select officers; officers serve set terms.				
Officers keep the activities and initiatives of the CJCC and the executive committee on track.				
CJCC officers and the executive committee work in consultation with CJCC staff to prepare for CJCC meetings and advance CJCC initiatives.				
CJCC bylaws clearly outline appropriate duties and responsibilities of the officers and executive committee.				
The executive committee includes CJCC officers and a small fraction of the CJCC membership.				
Overall Ranking for Leadership				
Consensus Building – *The CJCC makes consensus-based decisions and relies on voting for procedural matters.*				
The CJCC is advisory in nature and relies on consensus for decision-making.				
The CJCC discusses matters productively and professionally to find common ground and possible solutions.				
CJCC voting is used primarily for procedural matters and when it is required by the CJCC's bylaws or legislative mandate (if applicable).				
CJCC bylaws outline the council's voting procedures.				
The CJCC includes the perspective of underrepresented communities when making decisions.				
The CJCC has a conflict-of-interest policy.				
Overall Ranking for Consensus Building				

Essential Elements and Key Factors *(continued)*	Fully Compliant	Mostly Compliant	Somewhat Compliant	Not Compliant
Organized Meetings – *The CJCC, including committees and workgroups, has structured meetings regularly.*				
CJCC meetings are productive and well organized.				
The CJCC meets monthly or bimonthly and has a set meeting time and date throughout the year.				
The CJCC provides agendas at least three working days before a meeting and 24 hours before an emergency meeting.				
CJCC meetings are open to the public and allow time for public comment on the agenda.				
Requirements for a quorum are stipulated in the bylaws.				
The CJCC produces meeting documentation and posts it on the council's website.				
The CJCC follows open meeting laws.				
Overall Ranking for Organized Meetings				
Committees and Workgroups – *The CJCC has standing committees and workgroups that advance the strategic initiatives and work of the council.*				
The CJCC uses committees and workgroups to advance the work of the council.				
The committees and workgroups have chairpersons appointed by the CJCC.				
The committees and workgroups include CJCC members and nonmembers with subject matter expertise, include community members.				
Committees and workgroups routinely update the CJCC and the executive committee on their progress.				
CJCC staff support the committees and workgroups.				
Committees and workgroups produce meeting documentation that is made available to the public.				
Overall Ranking for Committees & Workgroups				

Essential Elements and Key Factors *(continued)*	Fully Compliant	Mostly Compliant	Somewhat Compliant	Not Compliant
Strategic Planning – *The CJCC has a strategic plan that guides the work of the council and produces desired outcomes.*				
The CJCC creates and adopts a data-informed strategic plan every three to five years.				
The strategic plan is produced collaboratively by CJCC members and community.				
The strategic plan is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound.				
The strategic plan includes short-, medium-, and long-term initiatives.				
The strategic plan and related deliverables are reviewed annually and updated as needed by CJCC.				
The strategic plan is shared with the public, and progress reports are provided at least annually.				
Overall Ranking for Strategic Planning				
Data and Research – *The CJCC produces quantitative and qualitative data on the criminal justice system and uses the data to inform decision-making.*				
The CJCC uses data and research to inform decision-making and pursue evidence-based solutions.				
The CJCC collects and analyzes local data to monitor trends and proactively manage the criminal justice system.				
The CJCC members and their agencies share pertinent system data with the council.				
The CJCC tracks specific data metrics to determine progress toward strategic goals and objectives.				
The CJCC produces an annual systems data report that informs the council and community.				
The CJCC engages independent outside partners to assist with research efforts.				
Overall Ranking for Data and Research				

Essential Elements and Key Factors *(continued)*	Fully Compliant	Mostly Compliant	Somewhat Compliant	Not Compliant
Community Engagement – *The CJCC engages the community by sharing information and by involving the community in the work of the council.*				
The CJCC purposefully engages the community and includes the community in decision-making.				
The CJCC proactively educates and informs the community about the work of the council, including progress and challenges.				
The CJCC has created a communications plan for conveying information to the public and the media.				
The CJCC uses knowledgeable and experienced spokespersons from the council for community outreach efforts.				
The CJCC maintains a website to provide information about, and resources related to, the council and the criminal justice system.				
Overall Ranking for Community Engagement				
Director and Staff – *The CJCC has a director and support staff who coordinate the council and advance the council's strategies and initiatives.*				
The CJCC has a dedicated director who is accountable to the council's executive committee.				
The CJCC director role is a professional, executive-level position in the organization.				
The CJCC director has staff appropriate to support the CJCC's operations.				
The CJCC director and staff have job descriptions that clearly articulate the roles and responsibilities of the positions.				
The CJCC director and staff have performance reviews commensurate with their job duties; the executive committee contributes to the performance of the director.				
Overall Ranking for Director and Staff				

Overall rankings for each essential element from the CJCC essential elements assessment tool should be entered into the table below for a synopsis of the assessment results. The summary should reveal the strengths of the CJCC as well as opportunities to potentially improve the council. Ideally, the assessment findings will be shared with the CJCC and used to generate meaningful discussion on shaping a council that is vibrant and is successful in fulfilling its purpose.

As noted earlier, the CJCC should consult the national standards for CJCCs for guidance on strengthening a council's performance, as well as NIC's CJCC resource page at https://nicic.gov/projects/criminal-justice-coordinating-committees and on the CJCC microsite at https://info.nicic.gov/cjcc/.

CJCC Essential Elements Assessment Summary				
Essential Elements	**Fully Compliant**	**Mostly Compliant**	**Somewhat Compliant**	**Not Compliant**
Overall Ranking for Systemic Focus				
Overall Ranking for Participation				
Overall Ranking for Leadership				
Overall Ranking for Consensus Building				
Overall Ranking for Organized Meetings				
Overall Ranking for Committees & Workgroups				
Overall Ranking for Strategic Planning				
Overall Ranking for Data and Research				
Overall Ranking for Community Engagement				
Overall Ranking for Director and Staff				

Appendix C: CJCC Essential Elements Self-Assessment Rubric

In this appendix, a rubric is presented to aid in evaluating an existing council using the CJCC essential elements assessment tool. The rubric provides an illustration of how to apply the rating criteria to each of the ten essential elements. However, it should be noted that the rubric is not exhaustive or conclusive, as there may be varying degrees of compliance. Therefore, it is highly recommended that assessors evaluate the totality of each essential element and its level of compliance when assigning a rating. To accomplish this, assessors should have a good understanding of the national standards for CJCCs and the essential elements.

	Fully Compliant The CJCC fully comports with the ratings criteria.	Mostly Compliant The CJCC deviates from the criteria, but elements are mainly present.	Somewhat Compliant The CJCC comports with some criteria; elements are slightly present.	Not compliant The CJCC does not comport with the ratings criteria.
Systemic Focus *The CJCC takes a systemic approach to coordinating the criminal justice system and is guided by a vision and a mission statement.*	The CJCC consistently focuses on systemic issues that cross multiple agencies and systems, taking a collaborative approach that maximizes system resources and available justice system funding to address identified challenges, crises, and opportunities for improvement. The council's efforts to create a fairer and a more just and equitable system are clearly reflected in its mission and vision statements and are outlined in its bylaws. Members of the council actively partner on tasks and initiatives, working in unison to improve the criminal justice system and promote public safety.	The CJCC mostly focuses on systemic issues, but some key factors may be overlooked or not fully addressed. Although the council maximizes available resources and funding, there may be room for improvement in terms of identifying and addressing crises affecting the criminal justice system. The council's mission and vision statements may not fully reflect the systemic role of the council, and its bylaws may not outline the systemic purpose and structure of the council.	The CJCC focuses partly on systemic issues, with some aspects of the key factor/essential element slightly present. The council may not fully maximize available resources and funding, and its efforts to create a fairer and a more just and equitable system may not be clearly reflected in its mission and vision statements or outlined in its bylaws. Members of the council may not always partner on tasks and initiatives, and the council may not always work in unison when difficult situations arise.	The CJCC does not prioritize systemic issues, and the council does not maximize available resources and funding to address challenges, crises, and opportunities for improvement. Efforts to create a fairer and a more just and equitable system are absent or insufficiently reflected in the council's mission and vision statements or inadequately outlined in its bylaws. Members of the council do not collaborate on tasks and initiatives, and the council does not work in unison when difficult situations arise.

	Fully Compliant **The CJCC fully comports with the ratings criteria.**	Mostly Compliant **The CJCC deviates from the criteria, but elements are mainly present.**	Somewhat Compliant **The CJCC comports with some criteria; elements are slightly present.**	Not compliant **CJCC does not comport with the ratings criteria.**
Participation *The CJCC has executive-level decision-makers as members, and they actively participate in the council.*	All CJCC members attend and actively participate in council meetings, contribute information, collaborate on initiatives, and share resources to enhance the criminal justice system. The CJCC membership includes executive-level leadership representing key entities from municipal, county, and state justice agencies and at least one representative from the community; the CJCC bylaws outline expectations for council members. The CJCC membership size is appropriate to fulfill the council's mission, and the CJCC has a formal process for onboarding new members. The CJCC's membership list is publicly posted and updated annually.	Most CJCC members attend and actively participate in council meetings, contribute information, collaborate on initiatives, and share resources to enhance the criminal justice system. The CJCC membership includes executive-level leadership representing most key entities from municipal, county, and state justice agencies and at least one representative from the community; the CJCC bylaws outline most expectations for council members. The CJCC membership size is mostly appropriate to fulfill the council's mission, and the CJCC has a somewhat formal process for onboarding new members. The CJCC's membership list is publicly posted and updated somewhat regularly.	Some CJCC members attend and actively participate in council meetings, contribute information, collaborate on initiatives, and share resources to enhance the criminal justice system. The CJCC membership includes executive-level leadership representing some key entities from municipal, county, and state justice agencies and at least one representative from the community; the CJCC bylaws outline some expectations for council members. The CJCC membership size is somewhat appropriate to fulfill the council's mission, and the CJCC has a limited process for onboarding new members. The CJCC's membership list is publicly posted and updated occasionally.	Few CJCC members attend and actively participate in council meetings, contribute information, collaborate on initiatives, and share resources to enhance the criminal justice system. The CJCC membership does not include executive-level leadership representing key entities from municipal, county, and state justice agencies and at least one representative from the community; the CJCC bylaws do not outline expectations for council members. The CJCC membership size is not appropriate to fulfill the council's mission, and the CJCC has no formal process for onboarding new members. The CJCC's membership list is not publicly posted or updated.

	Fully Compliant The CJCC fully comports with the ratings criteria.	Mostly Compliant The CJCC deviates from the criteria, but elements are mainly present.	Somewhat Compliant The CJCC comports with some criteria; elements are slightly present.	Not compliant The CJCC does not comport with the ratings criteria.
Leadership *The CJCC has an effective leadership structure that includes officers and an executive committee.*	The CJCC has designated officers from different disciplines who are selected through a fair and transparent process, serve set terms, keep the activities and initiatives of the CJCC and executive committee on track, work in consultation with CJCC staff to prepare for CJCC meetings, advance CJCC initiatives, and follow the appropriate duties and responsibilities outlined in the CJCC bylaws. The executive committee includes CJCC officers and a small fraction of the CJCC membership.	The CJCC has designated officers from different disciplines who are selected through a somewhat transparent process, serve set terms, keep most of the activities and initiatives of the CJCC and executive committee on track, work in consultation with CJCC staff to prepare for CJCC meetings, advance some CJCC initiatives, and follow most of the appropriate duties and responsibilities outlined in the CJCC bylaws. The executive committee includes CJCC officers and a small fraction of the CJCC membership, but there may be some deviations from the key factors.	The CJCC has designated officers from the same disciplines who are selected through a somewhat transparent process and serve undefined terms. Officers keep some of the activities and initiatives of the CJCC and executive committee on track, work loosely in consultation with CJCC staff to prepare for some CJCC meetings, advance a few CJCC initiatives, and follow some of the appropriate duties and responsibilities outlined in the CJCC bylaws. The executive committee includes CJCC officers and a small fraction of the CJCC membership, but there are several deviations from the key factors.	The CJCC does not have officers designated from different disciplines who are selected through a fair and transparent process, serve set terms, keep the activities and initiatives of the CJCC and executive committee on track, work in consultation with CJCC staff to prepare for CJCC meetings, advance CJCC initiatives, and follow the appropriate duties and responsibilities outlined in the CJCC bylaws. The executive committee does not include CJCC officers and a small fraction of the CJCC membership.

	Fully Compliant The CJCC fully comports with the ratings criteria.	Mostly Compliant The CJCC deviates from the criteria, but elements are mainly present.	Somewhat Compliant The CJCC comports with some criteria; elements are slightly present.	Not compliant CJCC does not comport with the ratings criteria.
Consensus Building *The CJCC makes consensus-based decisions and relies on voting for procedural matters.*	The council operates in an advisory capacity, relying on consensus for decision-making. The council engages in productive and professional discussions, encourages open communication and member engagement, and actively seeks input from underrepresented communities. The council uses voting primarily for procedural matters and when required to do so by the council's bylaws or legislative mandate. The council's bylaws outline voting procedures. The council includes the perspective of underrepresented communities when making decisions and has a formal conflict-of-interest policy.	The council operates in an advisory capacity and generally relies on consensus for decision-making but may occasionally deviate from this approach. Although the council engages in productive discussions and encourages member engagement, there may be occasional lapses in open communication or in seeking input from underrepresented communities. The council's bylaws generally outline voting procedures but may be unclear or incomplete. The council generally includes the perspective of underrepresented communities when making decisions but may not always be successful. The council has a conflict-of-interest policy, but it may not be formal or comprehensive.	The council operates in an advisory capacity but may not consistently rely on consensus for decision-making. The council may struggle to engage in productive discussions or to encourage member engagement, and limited communication or input may be sought from underrepresented communities. The council may use voting for matters other than procedural matters and may not always record the outcome of the vote. The council's bylaws may not clearly outline voting procedures. The council may not always include the perspective of underrepresented communities when making decisions. The council may not have a conflict-of-interest policy, or the policy may be insufficient.	The council does not operate in an advisory capacity or does not rely on consensus for decision-making. The council struggles to engage in productive discussions or to encourage member engagement. Voting rather than consensus is used frequently for decision-making. The council's bylaws do not outline voting procedures at all. The council does not include the perspective of underrepresented communities when making decisions. The council does not have a conflict-of-interest policy, or the policy may be absent or inadequate.

	Fully Compliant **The CJCC fully comports with the ratings criteria.**	Mostly Compliant **The CJCC deviates from the criteria, but elements are mainly present.**	Somewhat Compliant **The CJCC comports with some criteria; elements are slightly present.**	Not compliant **The CJCC does not comport with the ratings criteria.**
Organized Meetings *The CJCC, including committees and workgroups, has structured meetings regularly.*	CJCC meetings are well-organized, productive, and efficient. The CJCC meets monthly or bimonthly at a set date and time. Agendas are provided to members at least three working days in advance, and 24 hours in advance of emergency meetings. Meetings are open to the public, and ample time is allowed for public comment. The bylaws stipulate requirements for a quorum, and meeting documentation is produced and posted on the council's website. The CJCC follows open meeting laws.	CJCC meetings are mostly well-organized, productive, and efficient. The CJCC meets monthly or bimonthly at a set date and time, but there may be some deviations from this schedule. Agendas are provided to members at least three working days before the meeting and 24 hours before an emergency meeting; but occasionally, the agenda may not cover all the necessary items. The council allows time for public comment, but it may not always be sufficient. The bylaws stipulate requirements for a quorum, and some meeting documentation is produced and posted on the council's website. The CJCC mostly follows open meeting laws.	CJCC meetings are occasionally productive, and the council has some structure to support the meeting's objectives. The council meets regularly, either monthly or every other month, but the day and time may not always be consistent, making it difficult for members to plan. Agendas may not always be provided to members at least three working days before the meeting. The council allows time for public comment, but it may not always be available. The council's bylaws do not specify quorum requirements, and the CJCC produces meeting documentation, but it may not always be provided to members or posted on the council's website. The CJCC only somewhat follows open meeting laws.	CJCC meetings are not well-organized, productive, or efficient. The CJCC does not meet monthly or bimonthly or has no set date and time. Agendas are not provided to members at least three working days in advance or at all, and there is no provision for public comment. The bylaws do not stipulate requirements for a quorum, and no meeting documentation is produced or posted on the council's website. The CJCC does not follow open meeting laws.

	Fully Compliant — The CJCC fully comports with the ratings criteria.	Mostly Compliant — The CJCC deviates from the criteria, but elements are mainly present.	Somewhat Compliant — The CJCC comports with some criteria; elements are slightly present.	Not compliant — The CJCC does not comport with the ratings criteria.
Committees and Workgroups *The CJCC has standing committees and workgroups that advance the strategic initiatives and work of the council.*	Committees and workgroups are effectively used to advance the CJCC's work. Chairpersons are appointed by the CJCC and demonstrate strong leadership by organizing meetings, setting agendas, and regularly updating the council and the executive committee on progress. Membership is diverse and includes CJCC members, nonmembers with subject matter expertise, and community members. CJCC staff provide appropriate support, and meeting documentation is produced and made available to the public.	Committees and workgroups are used to advance the CJCC's work, but some aspects are missing. Chairpersons are appointed by the CJCC, but their leadership may be less effective for organizing meetings, setting agendas, and regularly updating the council and the executive committee on progress. Membership includes CJCC members and nonmembers with subject matter expertise, but community members may not always be included. CJCC staff provide some support, and meeting documentation may not always be produced or made available to the public.	Committees and workgroups are not fully used to advance the CJCC's work, and key factors/essential elements are only slightly present. Chairpersons may not be appointed by the CJCC, and their leadership may be inadequate for organizing meetings, setting agendas, and regularly updating the council and the executive committee on progress. Membership may not include non-members with subject matter expertise or community members. CJCC staff provide minimal support, and meeting documentation may not be produced or made available to the public.	Committees and workgroups are not used to advance the CJCC's work, and key factors/essential elements are missing. Chairpersons are not appointed by the CJCC, and their leadership is ineffective for organizing meetings, setting agendas, and regularly updating the council and the executive committee on progress. Membership does not include nonmembers with subject matter expertise or community members. CJCC staff provide no support, and meeting documentation is not produced or made available to the public.

	Fully Compliant	Mostly Compliant	Somewhat Compliant	Not compliant
	The CJCC fully comports with the ratings criteria.	The CJCC deviates from the criteria, but elements are mainly present.	The CJCC comports with some criteria; elements are slightly present.	The CJCC does not comport with the ratings criteria.
Strategic Planning *The CJCC has a strategic plan that guides the work of the council and produces desired outcomes.*	The CJCC creates a data-informed strategic plan collaboratively with the community every three to five years. The plan is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound, and it includes short-, medium-, and long-term initiatives. The plan and related deliverables are reviewed annually and updated as needed, and progress reports are provided at least annually and shared with the public.	The CJCC creates a data-informed strategic plan collaboratively with the community every three to five years. The plan is mostly specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound, and it includes short-, medium-, and long-term initiatives. The plan and related deliverables are reviewed annually and updated as needed, but progress reports may not be provided or shared with the public.	The CJCC creates a strategic plan every three to five years, but it may not be data-informed or produced collaboratively with the community. The plan may not be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound, and it may not include short-, medium-, and long-term initiatives. The plan and related deliverables may not be reviewed annually or updated as needed, and progress reports may not be provided or shared with the public.	The CJCC does not have a strategic plan, or the plan may not be data-informed or produced collaboratively with the community. The plan is not specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound, or it does not include short-, medium-, and long-term initiatives. The CJCC does not review the plan annually or update it as needed. The plan may not be shared with the public, or progress reports may not be provided at least annually.

	Fully Compliant The CJCC fully comports with the ratings criteria.	Mostly Compliant The CJCC deviates from the criteria, but elements are mainly present.	Somewhat Compliant The CJCC comports with some criteria; elements are slightly present.	Not compliant The CJCC does not comport with the ratings criteria.
Data and Research *The CJCC produces quantitative and qualitative data on the criminal justice system and uses the data to inform decision-making.*	The CJCC fully uses data and research to inform its decision-making processes and frequently pursues evidence-based solutions. The council collects and analyzes local data to proactively manage the criminal justice system, and members and their agencies consistently share pertinent system data with the council. The CJCC tracks specific data metrics to determine progress toward strategic goals and objectives, produces an annual systems data report that informs the council and the community, and actively engages independent outside partners to assist with research efforts.	The CJCC regularly uses data and research to inform its decision-making processes and generally pursues evidence-based solutions. The council generally collects and analyzes local data to proactively manage the criminal justice system, and members and their agencies share pertinent system data with the council, although there may be occasional deviations from this practice. The CJCC tracks some data metrics to determine progress toward strategic goals and objectives and produces an annual systems data report that provides some insight into the council's activities. The CJCC occasionally engages independent outside partners to assist with research efforts.	The CJCC rarely uses data and research to inform its decision-making processes and seldom pursues evidence-based solutions. The council collects and analyzes some local data to proactively manage the criminal justice system, although there may be several key areas where data is lacking. Members and their agencies may not consistently share pertinent system data with the council. The CJCC tracks a few data metrics to determine progress toward strategic goals and objectives, but there may be gaps in the data collected. The CJCC produces an annual systems data report that provides limited insight into the council's activities. The CJCC rarely engages independent outside partners to assist with research efforts.	The CJCC does not use data and research to inform its decision-making processes and does not pursue evidence-based solutions. The council does not collect or analyze local data to proactively manage the criminal justice system, and members and their agencies do not share pertinent system data with the council. The CJCC does not track data metrics to determine progress towards strategic goals and objectives and does not produce an annual systems data report. The CJCC does not engage independent outside partners to assist with research efforts.

	Fully Compliant The CJCC fully comports with the ratings criteria.	Mostly Compliant The CJCC deviates from the criteria, but elements are mainly present.	Somewhat Compliant The CJCC comports with some criteria; elements are slightly present.	Not compliant The CJCC does not comport with the ratings criteria.
Community Engagement *The CJCC engages the community by sharing information and by involving the community in the work of the council.*	The CJCC purposefully engages the community and consistently includes the community in decision-making. The council proactively educates the community and informs it about the work of the council, including progress and challenges, through a comprehensive communications plan that uses knowledgeable and experienced spokespersons. The CJCC maintains a robust website to provide information about, and resources related to, the council and the criminal justice system.	The CJCC mostly engages the community and includes the community in decision-making, but there are some instances where engagement could be improved. The council generally educates and informs the community about the work of the council, including progress and challenges, through a communications plan that uses knowledgeable and experienced spokespersons. The CJCC website provides some information about, and resources related to, the council and the criminal justice system and is mostly up-to-date.	The CJCC somewhat engages the community and includes the community in decision-making, but there are significant areas for improvement. The council occasionally educates and informs the community about the work of the council, including progress and challenges, but lacks a comprehensive communications plan and experienced spokespersons. The CJCC website provides limited information about, and resources related to, the council and the criminal justice system, or it is not up-to-date.	The CJCC does not engage the community or include the community in decision-making. The council does not consistently educate and inform the community about the work of the council, including progress and challenges, and does not have a communications plan or experienced spokespersons. The CJCC website does not provide any information about, or resources related to, the council and the criminal justice system.

	Fully Compliant	Mostly Compliant	Somewhat Compliant	Not compliant
	The CJCC fully comports with the ratings criteria.	The CJCC deviates from the criteria, but elements are mainly present.	The CJCC comports with some criteria; elements are slightly present.	The CJCC does not comport with the ratings criteria.
Director and Staff *The CJCC has a director and support staff who coordinate the council and advance the council's strategies and initiatives.*	The CJCC has a dedicated director who has a professional, executive-level position in the organization, with appropriate staff to support the council's operations. The director and staff have clear job descriptions, and performance reviews are conducted regularly with input from the executive committee. The director establishes and maintains relations with other justice system stakeholders.	The CJCC has a dedicated director who has a professional, executive-level position in the organization, with some staff to support the council's operations. Although the director and staff have job descriptions, there may be some areas where responsibilities are not clearly defined, and performance reviews may not be conducted as regularly as needed. The director maintains mostly favorable relations with CJCC members/ stakeholders.	The CJCC has a director, but the position may not be fully professional and executive-level, or there may be insufficient staff to support the council's operations. The job descriptions for the director and staff may not be clearly articulated, and performance reviews may be infrequent or not involve input from the executive committee. The director does not maintain relations with CJCC members/ stakeholders well.	The CJCC does not have a dedicated director position responsible for the council, executive committee, subcommittees and workgroups, and all related initiatives. There may be no staff or inadequate staff to support the council's operations, and job descriptions and performance reviews may be nonexistent or inadequate. The director does not maintain relations with CJCC members/ stakeholders.

Endnotes

[1] Thomas Eberly and Aimee Wickman, *National Standards for Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils* (U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections, 2023), NIC Accession #033675.

[2] Throughout this publication, the term "CJCC" (or "council") will be used although jurisdictions may have a different name for their council, such as criminal justice advisory group, community justice council, or criminal justice board. Regardless of the name used, these councils often exist for similar reasons. In this publication, a CJCC shall refer to any established body of key criminal justice, government, and community stakeholders who convene regularly to identify systemic challenges and work collaboratively to improve the local criminal justice system.

[3] The national standards for CJCCs are intended to be both practical and aspirational, providing a framework for jurisdictions to establish a robust and productive CJCC that is sustainable over time. Although some standards, or aspects of a standard, may not be applicable to or feasible for all jurisdictions, it is important to strive to apply these standards as best as possible. Additionally, jurisdictions should always refer to any state laws that may be applicable to a CJCC and adhere to those laws regardless of the national standards. By adhering to the standards, jurisdictions can ensure that their CJCC is well-equipped to meet the needs of their community.

[4] It should be noted that some CJCCs represent multiple counties or jurisdictions. This is more common in rural areas with small populations and shared courthouses, jails, etc. The essential elements assessment tool may still be used in these situations.