



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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MILWAUKEE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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***County and City Officials Announce New Tools for Police
Groundbreaking Agreement to Help Address Juvenile Violence***

MILWAUKEE – Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn and Milwaukee County District Atty. John Chisholm announced a groundbreaking agreement Tuesday to better protect the public by giving police officers long-sought direct access to juvenile probation information.

The agreement closes a gap in the juvenile justice system that police and prosecutors say has long prevented officers from getting critical background quickly about juveniles they encounter.

It was reached through consultation with the judiciary and based on work initially conceived and prioritized by the Community Justice Council and supported by the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission. Officials say the agreement increases interagency cooperation and facilitates timely decision-making by those dealing with juveniles.

With this more timely information and new conviction to identify and implement new collaborative opportunities with the Milwaukee County Delinquency & Court Services Division, which oversees county juvenile probation services, police will be able to readily adjust their response to youth, resulting in more efficient use of resources and improved accountability and swifter intervention when necessary.

Officials said the agreement also includes protections that require information to be used only for legitimate law enforcement purposes and prevent unnecessary disclosure of information that must be kept confidential under state and federal laws.

"Police need this important information quickly to identify repeat offenders when they encounter juveniles and take steps that will help better protect the public," Abele said. "By working cooperatively with the chief and district attorney, we have developed a new tool for police that will improve public safety while helping prevent misuse of confidential information. This is an example of a purposeful and strategic use of information through systems collaboration and responsible use of resources."

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Flynn, who has long advocated for such information sharing, said the agreement ends a practice that hindered his officers' efficacy. "This agreement will send a message to offenders that law enforcement and community leaders are united in keeping our community safe. I'm pleased that the county executive, DA and County's Health and Human Services Department have worked with me to give vital and timely information to our police officers."

Chisholm said he had long supported efforts to improve information sharing and had backed 2007 state legislation, ultimately vetoed by then-Gov. Jim Doyle, aimed at giving police, prosecutors and others faster access to juvenile records. "This agreement gives prosecutors and police in Milwaukee County valuable new tools that have been long overdue," Chisholm said.

Mayor Barrett praised the agreement and said it was an important step in improving the juvenile justice system. "I'm pleased that the city and county are working closely together on this issue, and I look forward to continued collaboration to strengthen ways to deter youth who are considered threats to community safety," Barrett said.

Under the agreement, information on youths under probation supervision by Milwaukee County will be regularly entered into an MPD data base. Such information will include warrant data, probation worker contact numbers with future inclusion of non-standard conditions of supervision and reciprocal contacts between the youth and police. Parties to the agreement must protect the confidentiality of information and prevent disclosure that would violate state or federal laws.

Abele directed negotiations. The agreement was signed in December by Flynn and Hector Colon, the director of the Milwaukee County Department of Health & Human Services.

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