Communities are complex ecosystems with a vast number of moving parts that can make the job of a municipal court that much more difficult. But what if the moving parts were all connected? As cities, counties, and agencies across the country are discovering, increased connectivity helps boost communication, facilitate data sharing, and streamline workflow for everyone involved.

At the heart of every connected community is the court: its ability to increase connectivity between departments, jurisdictions, and citizens plays an important role in improving its community. Read on to discover the three ways municipal courts can help create connected (and safer) communities.

1. Connecting Departments/Breaking Down Silos Within Jurisdictions

A task as straightforward as paying a traffic citation still requires complex collaboration between several departments. Information must flow seamlessly from the police officer writing the citation, to the court clerk who records it, to the finance department that ultimately processes the payment. The information pings around the city like a pinball in a machine – any miscommunication can cause the process to grind to a halt. Manual processes only add to the difficulty.

Fortunately, forward-thinking courts can leverage modern technology to help tilt the scales in their favor. They can effortlessly connect key departments by utilizing software programs designed to break down siloed databases.

When information sharing is implemented, all departments within a jurisdiction become empowered to do their jobs more effectively. Police departments enjoy instant electronic citation and warrant delivery to the proper database, while courts can automatically send data to the finance office without ever having to file paperwork. Each department has instant access to the vital information they need to do their jobs and keep each task moving forward.

The result is a smoother, faster process with enhanced communication and fewer mistakes for all departments involved.

2. Connecting Jurisdictions

The problem with catching “bad guys” is that they tend to move around. City and county lines don’t seem to matter much to criminals, nor does the separation of databases between jurisdictions. When information isn’t shared between jurisdictions, it’s entirely plausible that a criminal with a warrant out for his arrest in one city could get pulled over for speeding in another, only to receive a traffic ticket before being released just miles away from the original city’s jurisdiction.

It’s obvious that information sharing is of the utmost importance in today’s day and age. When cities and counties can link their database of records, they can access the locations of suspects and witnesses throughout multiple jurisdictions. This helps facilitate public safety and the solving of crimes, while keeping officers and citizens safer. Jurisdictions are accomplishing these goals by implementing software that can link and share information with multiple systems.

Why rely on manual methods like phone calls back and forth to confirm warrants when your software can accomplish this task instantly and accurately? Forward-thinking jurisdictions are doing exactly that, while increasing communication between multiple agencies. Everyone stays on the same page while minimizing any unforeseen surprises.

3. Connecting Citizens to the Government

Transparency has become a hot topic for agencies everywhere, and courts can address this important issue by making data easier to access for citizens. Simultaneously, they can make common tasks like ticket payments and court appearance notifications easy and convenient for customers and staff alike.

Technology, once again, paves the way to make these goals attainable. Through online portals, courts can offer ways for citizens to pay citations online, check on the status of a case, file extensions, pay court fees and more.

Integration through shared software also helps communities to communicate with citizens in a positive and productive way. Courts can automatically send electronic notifications to inform defendants of court dates or warrant notifications instead of sending letters or making phone calls.

While the city or county avoids delinquent payments and reduces failure-to-appear rates, the public experiences better customer service, fostering a more positive relationship with their community.

Another benefit: since everything is uploaded and processed electronically, employees don’t have to touch these processes at all. This saves time and eliminates the possibility of human error, helping your court keep more accurate records and precise budgets.

Interested in learning more about how municipal courts can create connected communities? Visit us at tylertech.com/smart-courts or give us a call: 800.646.2633.