

The image features a close-up of an American flag, showing the blue field with white stars and the red and white stripes. The flag is draped over a light-colored, textured surface that resembles aged paper or parchment. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the fabric and the paper.

2014–2017

National Strategy
for the
**National Network of
Fusion Centers**

July 2014

The development of the *2014–2017 National Strategy for the National Network of Fusion Centers* was a collaborative effort, completed in partnership by various law enforcement, homeland security, and public safety personnel, representing several national associations and agencies.

Representatives from the following associations contributed to the development of the document:

- ◀ National Fusion Center Association
- ◀ Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies
- ◀ International Association of Chiefs of Police
- ◀ National Sheriffs' Association
- ◀ Major Cities Chiefs Association
- ◀ Major County Sheriffs' Association
- ◀ National Governors Association
- ◀ Regional Information Sharing Systems® Centers
- ◀ High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Investigative Support Centers

In addition, representatives from the fire service and emergency management sectors were instrumental in the development process.

As part of the strategy development process, an Executive Steering Committee (ESC) was established to oversee development efforts and endorse the *2014–2017 National Strategy for the National Network of Fusion Centers*. ESC members include:

- ◀ Colonel Steve Flaherty, Virginia State Police
- ◀ Colonel Rick Fuentes, New Jersey State Police
- ◀ Sheriff Doug Gillespie, Las Vegas, Nevada, Metropolitan Police Department
- ◀ Mr. Bart R. Johnson, Executive Director, International Association of Chiefs of Police (retired)
- ◀ Mr. Aaron Kennard, Executive Director, National Sheriffs' Association
- ◀ The Honorable David Paulison, Former Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency
- ◀ Mr. Ron Sloan, Director, Colorado Bureau of Investigation
- ◀ Sheriff Richard Stanek, Hennepin County, Minnesota, Sheriff's Office

The contributions of key federal partners were also integral in this process, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Terrorist Screening Center, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Office of the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



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Executive Summary

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, galvanized law enforcement leaders across the nation to improve the sharing of criminal intelligence needed to prevent future terrorist attacks. The resulting rapid evolution of fusion centers has underscored the need to formalize a forward-looking, national-level strategy specific to the fusion center network. The *2014–2017 National Strategy for the National Network of Fusion Centers (2014–2017 National Strategy)* establishes a vision, a mission, goals, objectives, and initiatives that are needed for the National Network of Fusion Centers (NNFC or National Network) to systematically improve intelligence information sharing beyond existing and successful criminal intelligence in support of law enforcement investigations.

The vision of the *2014–2017 National Strategy* is to connect the geographic and public safety diversity of over 38,000 states, counties, cities, and towns together in a way that creates a national information sharing asset that is coordinated with and contributes to federal information sharing efforts. Federal efforts to connect the knowledge and capabilities of the Intelligence Community (IC) often involve state and local law enforcement joining federal efforts. The NNFC is the reversal and broadening of this framework, inviting federal partners to join state and local public safety information sharing efforts. In carrying out this strategy, IC professionals have an opportunity and avenue to bring their knowledge and capabilities to state and major urban area fusion centers, designated by governors and staffed by state and local professionals. As a unique national asset, this state and local network must work seamlessly with field-based intelligence and information sharing entities, providing geographic and interdisciplinary knowledge and perspective without interrupting or replicating federal efforts. The *2014–2017 National Strategy* integrates with other criminal intelligence sharing efforts supported by the Criminal Intelligence Coordinating Council.

This strategy crosses boundaries of discipline and jurisdiction in support of public safety professionals who serve on America's front lines every day, protecting individual civil rights, civil liberties, and privacy as they secure the safety and security of the nation. The landscape of America is diverse and so are the homeland security challenges faced by individual jurisdictions. This requires fusion centers to do more than push homeland security information; it requires a robust network of experts who can integrate local information with national intelligence to customize intelligence products to meet both needs and expectations. This strategy builds a framework for initiatives aimed to improve interdisciplinary, cross-jurisdictional sharing of information so that our public safety providers possess the right information, in the right context for their discipline and jurisdictions, to effectively implement strategies in information-driven and risk-based major crime/terrorism prevention, protection, response, and recovery. The foundational structure of this strategy integrates this multidisciplinary, cross-jurisdictional vision of information sharing. The four strategic goals address what might in a different context be considered "customer" bases. Yet, in order to best understand the *2014–2017 National Strategy*, these

“customers” are identified as partners; this strategy acknowledges the interdependence of partners and the shared responsibility for major crime and terrorism prevention, protection, response, and recovery.

The first goal—and the central reason for the NNFC—addresses partnership with the public served by the fusion center. State and local public safety providers who staff fusion centers, by the very nature of their positions, are charged with protecting individual rights, liberties, and privacy as they secure the safety and security of their jurisdiction and the nation. The *2014–2017 National Strategy* recognizes that a trust-based relationship with the public is critical to the success of the National Network and that the public is served when the National Network is utilized to support information sharing needs in both steady state and emergency operations.

The second goal addresses the needs of those who serve the public within an individual fusion center’s area of responsibility. Although the vast majority of crimes are solved by law enforcement patrol, violent crime is also a significant public health issue. The terrorist attacks of 9/11 were the deadliest day in history for our firefighters and emergency management systems, and emergency medical systems are impacted by and play a central role in bringing effective and lifesaving assistance to emergencies daily. Therefore, all public safety providers must be included in—and served by—the NNFC.

The third goal recognizes that the value of the NNFC is greater than the sum of individual fusion centers; cross-disciplinary intra-fusion center performance is enhanced by active network collaboration. Because violent crime and terrorism are threats to our nation, the specialized knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience of one center must be available to all centers, while the increased capacity and analytical capability of the National Network must be available to all governors and major urban areas.

The fourth goal builds the network into an even greater strategic national asset, taking advantage of state and local vantage points to analyze data and merge it into a national analytical system, adding both capacity and capability to federal efforts. No one in government knows more than state and local officials know about what is normal or abnormal in their cities and towns. That vantage point and information sharing ability make the National Network a national asset that must be available to federal partners as part of greater efforts to protect our nation. While federal partners have great capabilities and significant resources, they lack the intimate knowledge and understanding of the unique threats to every part of every community and the millions of public safety providers in over 87,000 jurisdictions. Therefore, federal partners must be included in and served by the NNFC.

The NNFC provides an essential capability required for national, homeland, and hometown security. This strategy will strengthen the National Network’s ability to tie the entire country together in a way that serves our nation as it protects our communities, bringing a trust-based, whole-of-community approach to information sharing that not only is unique but arguably cannot be done by the federal government alone. By implementing this state- and locally driven *2014–2017 National Strategy for the National Network of Fusion Centers*, the NNFC will increase partnerships, fill capability gaps, build resilience, and encourage the robust cooperation and information sharing needed to realize its full potential as a partner in the national and homeland security enterprises.



Introduction and Overview

The National Network of Fusion Centers is a decentralized, distributed, self-organizing national asset composed of state and major urban area fusion centers and their respective nodes within each center's AOR. The function of the National Network is to collaborate across jurisdictions and sectors to effectively and efficiently detect, prevent, investigate, and respond to criminal and terrorist activity.

After the horrific events of 9/11, many states and major urban areas established fusion centers to improve the sharing of information between state, local, tribal, territorial, and federal government entities and the private sector. What emerged from these state- and locally owned and operated fusion centers was the National Network of Fusion Centers (National Network or NNFC), composed of fusion centers and the partnerships and collaborative efforts formed within the centers. To understand this network and its purpose and mission, a national strategy has been developed. This strategy identifies the purpose and role of the network and describes the goals and objectives of the National Network over the next three years. In addition, multiple initiatives have been identified that support the network in achieving its goals and objectives, supporting the implementation of the strategy as a whole.

A fusion center is a state- or locally operated entity, designated and recognized by each state's Governor, addressing crime prevention, response, and investigation (including terrorism).¹ The fusion center concept is defined as "a collaborative effort of two or more agencies that provide resources, expertise, and/or information to the center with the goal of maximizing the ability to detect, prevent, investigate, apprehend, and respond to criminal and terrorist activity."² Since 2004, there has been a concerted effort to establish state and major urban area fusion centers (fusion centers) throughout the nation to further aid in and improve information sharing among state, local, tribal, territorial (SLTT), private sector, and federal partners. A key component of a fusion center's success, as identified in the *Fusion Center Guidelines*,³ is the integration of government and private sector partners into center operations and activities,

as appropriate, such as emergency services, criminal justice, health and public health services, private security, and government.⁴ Many federal partners, including but not limited to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Office of the Program

¹ In 2007, the Secretary for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Attorney General issued a letter to each Governor, requesting the designation of "a single fusion center to serve as the statewide or regional hub to interface with the federal government and through which to coordinate the gathering, processing, analysis, and dissemination of terrorism, law enforcement, and homeland security information." Further, the letter requested the development of a strategy that "is consistent with federal efforts to constitute the ISE," which also includes any major urban area fusion center.

² *Fusion Center Guidelines*, p. 12, <http://it.ojp.gov/gist/94/Fusion-Center-Guidelines--Law-Enforcement-Intelligence--Public-Safety--and-the-Private-Sector>.

³ The *Fusion Center Guidelines* were developed in 2005 to provide guidance to state, local, and tribal agencies on how to develop a fusion center in a consistent manner. The document is available at: <https://it.ojp.gov/gist/94/>.

⁴ A complete list of the functional categories that identify the levels and sectors of the government and the private sector is specified in the *Fusion Center Guidelines*.



Figure 1: Map of the 78 state and major urban area fusion centers across the country (as of June 2014).

Network: A group of people or organizations that are closely connected and that work with each other.

—Merriam-Webster
Dictionary

Manager for the Information Sharing Environment (PM-ISE), and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), have supported this nationwide effort, providing assistance in various forms—such as training, technical assistance, funding, and/or personnel—to fusion centers, which enhances the value and impact of individual fusion centers as well as the National Network and mitigates center capability gaps.⁵

The culmination of fusion centers is the National Network of Fusion Centers, a term first noted in the 2007 *National Strategy for Information Sharing*. The National Network, which is composed of fusion centers as well as fusion center nodes⁶ and partners, serves to bring together fusion centers in a coordinated effort.⁷ The role of fusion centers in the network is to serve as focal points within the state and local environment for the receipt, analysis, gathering, and sharing of threat-related information (including terrorism information and information on traditional crime activities) between the federal government and SLTT and private sector partners.⁸ The National Network is the aggregation of these efforts, establishing a nationwide enterprise that connects fusion centers and strengthens national security efforts.

As stated in the 2013 “Majority Staff Report on the National Network of Fusion Centers,” released by the United States House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security, “The National Network [of Fusion Centers] is on a path of continued growth, improvement, and increasing value to both the Federal Government and the

⁵ As identified in the Annual Fusion Center Assessment. Additional information on the assessment is available at: <http://www.dhs.gov/annual-fusion-center-assessment-and-gap-mitigation-activities>.

⁶ A fusion center node may include any field-based information sharing program within a fusion center’s AOR, including, but not limited to, law enforcement intelligence units, real-time crime centers, or nonprimary or recognized fusion centers.

⁷ A listing of state and major urban area fusion centers is available at: www.dhs.gov/fusion-center-locations-and-contact-information.

⁸ SLTT and private sector partners refer to the agencies and organizations identified as a part of the functional categories within the *Fusion Center Guidelines*. These partners include, but are not limited to, emergency management, fire rescue and emergency medical services, health and public health services, and private security.

fusion centers' individual customers."⁹ This path began after the tragic events of 9/11, which served as a catalyst for the establishment of fusion centers throughout the country. The National Network is designed to connect the fusion centers as an enterprise through their information sharing efforts with federal partners and within their area of responsibility among SLTT and private partners, creating a national asset that serves as a front line of defense in protecting the homeland.

To document and provide a way ahead for the NNFC, in late 2013, the National Network began work on a three-year strategy—the development of this strategy, which comprises long-standing priorities of state and local leaders, will comprehensively and accurately fulfill the role and purpose of the National Network. The 2013 "Majority Staff Report on the National Network of Fusion Centers" further reemphasized this need, identifying the establishment of a national strategy for fusion centers as its number one recommendation.¹⁰

The *2014–2017 National Strategy for the National Network of Fusion Centers (2014–2017 National Strategy)* identifies the vision, mission, and values of the National Network and articulates the goals, objectives, and priorities of fusion centers and the National Network over this time period. The strategy will be used to guide resource and planning allocation at state, local, tribal, and federal levels and to further support individual fusion center and National Network-wide assessments. It is anticipated that the federal strategy will complement the *2014–2017 National Strategy*.¹¹

The Value of a National Strategy

A national strategy is critical to articulate the vision, mission, fundamental goals, and objectives of the National Network. Furthermore, a strategy will identify the expectations of the NNFC and clearly articulate the path forward to accomplish those expectations, demonstrating the effectiveness of the National Network in supporting and enhancing the value of fusion centers to state, local, tribal, and federal (including the Intelligence Community) law enforcement and public safety partners and the private sector, as well as policymakers, key stakeholders, and the public.

To develop this strategy, a partnership was formed by the National Fusion Center Association (NFCA), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA), the Major County Sheriffs' Association (MCSA), the Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies (ASCIA), the National Governors Association (NGA), and other public safety partners. Federal partners, including DHS, FBI, ODNI, PM-ISE, and DOJ, provided important input and feedback in this effort. The culmination of this partnership is the *2014–2017 National Strategy*. The intent of the strategy is to increase the value of the National Network as a national asset, critical to the safety and security of the nation.



9 "Majority Staff Report on the National Network of Fusion Centers," p. iv, <http://homeland.house.gov/sites/homeland.house.gov/files/documents/CHS%20SLFC%20Report%202013%20FINAL.pdf>.

10 Ibid, p. vii.

11 Ibid, p. 8.

The History of the National Network

Foundational Guidance

To accurately define the National Network and articulate its role in national security, it is important to understand its evolution. The foundational elements of the National Network, notably that of information sharing, are first traced back to *The 9/11 Commission Report*, which proposed that “information be shared horizontally, across new networks that transcend individual agencies,”¹² and the 2003 *National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan* (NCISP). The NCISP serves as the blueprint to improve the sharing of information and criminal intelligence nationally. The focus on information sharing and incorporating state, local, and tribal entities was then further addressed in the 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA). The IRTPA called for the creation of the Information Sharing Environment (ISE) and, for the purposes of the National Network, the specification that the ISE will provide and facilitate “the means for sharing terrorism information among all appropriate Federal, State, local, and tribal entities, and the private sector through the use of policy guidelines and technologies.”¹³



Figure 2: Foundation of Fusion Centers

To begin to realize the new requirement of expanded information sharing, DHS’s Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) issued the “Intelligence and Information Sharing Initiative: Homeland Security Intelligence and Information Fusion” report in April 2005.¹⁴ The report introduced the notion of homeland security intelligence/information fusion as the overarching process for managing the flow of information and intelligence across all levels and sectors of government, including state and local governments, to support the rapid identification of emerging terrorism-related threats. This fusion process leverages the information and intelligence developed to support rapid identification of pattern and trends that may be indicative of an emerging threat condition. The

12 *The 9/11 Commission Report*, p. 418, <http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report.pdf>.

13 Section 1116, 6 U.S.C. 485, Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, Public Law 108-458, December 17, 2004, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-108publ458/pdf/PLAW-108publ458.pdf>.

14 http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/HSAC_HSIIntellInfoFusion_Apr05.pdf.

report further recommends that efforts to implement the fusion process should be organized and managed on a geographic basis and be scalable so adjustments can be made based on changes in the operating and/or threat environment.

A concurrent initiative to the DHS HSAC report was the development of the *Fusion Center Guidelines: Developing and Sharing Information and Intelligence in a New World (Fusion Center Guidelines)*, a joint effort by the Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative and DHS. The *Fusion Center Guidelines* resource was first released in July 2005 and identified 18 guidelines to assist agencies in establishing a fusion center. The resource initially focused on information and intelligence sharing among the law enforcement intelligence component and was then enhanced and rereleased in 2006, incorporating the public safety and private sector components.¹⁵ The *Fusion Center Guidelines* provides guidance for state and local agencies as they establish and operate a fusion center, incorporating various tenets and recommendations of the NCISP. Key to the success of fusion centers is information sharing, and the *Fusion Center Guidelines* offers suggestions on the various partners to consider including in the fusion process to effectively share information.

The release of the HSAC report and the *Fusion Center Guidelines* saw a rapid increase in fusion centers at the state and local levels as well as an increase in support from federal partners. To organize the proliferation of fusion centers, in 2007, the Secretary of DHS and the U.S. Attorney General signed a joint letter to every Governor, asking for the designation of a single fusion center to serve as the statewide or regional hub to interface with the federal government. Also requested in the letter was the development of a strategy that includes major urban area fusion centers. As the number of fusion centers began increasing, the *National Strategy for Information Sharing (NSIS)* was released in October 2007.¹⁶ The NSIS focused on addressing the successes and challenges in improving terrorism-related information sharing. One of the unique components of the NSIS was the elevation of state, local, and tribal governments as critical in the prevention of future terrorist acts, crucial in response to acts, and also important information sharing partners. The report called out state, local, and tribal entities as “full and trusted partners with the Federal Government in our Nation’s efforts to combat terrorism, and therefore must be a part of an information sharing framework that supports an effective and efficient two-way flow of information enabling officials at all levels of government to counter and respond to threats.”¹⁷ The NSIS also included an appendix focused solely on the establishment of a national integrated network of state and major urban area fusion centers, addressing the roles of federal, state, local, and tribal authorities in this National Network. Key components of the appendix included achieving and sustaining baseline operational capabilities for state and major urban area fusion centers; suspicious activity and incident reporting; alerts, warnings, and notifications; and situational awareness reporting.

To address the recommendations of the NSIS and further support this burgeoning network, the *Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers (Baseline Capabilities)* was released in September 2008.¹⁸ The *Baseline Capabilities* document was designed to serve as a supplement to the *Fusion Center Guidelines* by identifying the foundational, or baseline, capabilities for fusion centers and the operational criteria to achieve each of the capabilities. The intent of the document was to encourage all fusion centers to achieve the baseline capabilities by providing various operational options that fusion centers can use to achieve the capabilities. This resource continued the transformation of individual fusion centers into a national network by creating continuity among centers of baseline operational capabilities, such as the implementation of a suspicious activity reporting process, the development of a center privacy policy, and the creation of an analytic product production plan.

As the National Network was established, its “lane in the road” in the Information Sharing Environment (ISE) was also in need of articulation. As such, the *National Strategy for Information Sharing and Safeguarding (NSISS)*, released in 2012, further established the National Network as a full and trusted partner in the ISE. One of the

15 <https://it.ojp.gov/gist/94/Fusion-Center-Guidelines--Law-Enforcement-Intelligence--Public-Safety--and-the-Private-Sector>.

16 <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/infosharing/index.html>.

17 *National Strategy for Information Sharing*, 2007, p. 3.

18 <https://it.ojp.gov/gist/39/Baseline-Capabilities-for-State-and-Major-Urban-Area-Fusion-Centers>.

“We will continue to integrate and leverage state and major urban area fusion centers that have the capability to share classified information; establish a nationwide framework for reporting suspicious activity; and implement an integrated approach to our counterterrorism information systems.”

—National Security Strategy (2010)

priority objectives of the NSISS is to complete the implementation of certain programs in the National Network, as well as achieve the Critical Operational Capabilities (COCs), the Enabling Capabilities (ECs), and other prioritized objectives across the National Network to enable effective and lawful execution of the National Network’s role as a focal point within the state and local environment for the receipt, analysis, gathering, and sharing of threat-related information. The *National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan* (NCISP) was updated and rereleased in 2013 and, in addition to identifying new recommendations to continue to improve the development and sharing of criminal intelligence, further emphasized the critical role of fusion centers and the National Network.¹⁹ The reissued NCISP reiterates the vital role of fusion centers as focal points for the receipt, analysis, gathering, and sharing of major crime and threat-related information among SLTT, private sector, and federal partners. Fusion centers are imperative to the successful completion of the intelligence process, and as such, as recommended in the NCISP, it is critical that SLTT partners and fusion centers collaborate in all aspects of the intelligence process.

¹⁹ The *National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan* (NCISP), Version 2.0, is available at: <https://it.ojp.gov/gist/150/National-Criminal-Intelligence-Sharing-Plan-Version-2-0>.



The National Network of Fusion Centers: Vision, Mission, and Values

The NNFC is a multidisciplinary information sharing network that helps protect the nation's security as well as the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of our citizens.

Vision

The vision of the National Network of Fusion Centers is to be a multidisciplinary, all-crimes/all-threats/all-hazards information sharing network that protects our nation's security and the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of our citizens.

Mission

The mission of the National Network is to use the capabilities unique to the NNFC and the state and major urban area fusion centers included in the National Network to receive, analyze, disseminate, and gather threat information and intelligence in support of state, local, tribal, territorial, private sector, and federal efforts to protect the homeland from criminal activities and events, including acts of terrorism.

Values

Integral to and woven throughout the vision and mission are the values of the National Network. These values drive the National Network and provide the foundation on which it operates. The values of the National Network are as follows:

- ◀ **Respect**—Individually and as a National Network, we respect the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of all.
- ◀ **Integrity**—We, as members of the National Network, are accountable and demonstrate impartial service to the law.
- ◀ **Professionalism**—As leaders, our behavior is ethical and our information is safeguarded.



Defining the National Network of Fusion Centers

“A fusion center is a collaborative effort of two or more agencies that provide resources, expertise, and/or information to the center with the goal of maximizing the ability to detect, prevent, investigate, apprehend, and respond to criminal and terrorist activity.”

—Fusion Center Guidelines

The foundation of the National Network is state and major urban area fusion centers. Fusion centers are designated and acknowledged by the Governor of their respective state, are owned and operated by state or local entities, and utilize the authorities granted by their state and the authority having jurisdiction (AHJ) over each center. At a minimum, each fusion center uses the authorities granted to law enforcement officers assigned to that center. In accordance with the Federal Resource Allocation Criteria (RAC) policy,²⁰ which defines objective criteria and a coordinated approach for prioritizing the allocation of federal resources to fusion centers, the federal government recognizes these designations and has a shared responsibility with state and local governments to support the National Network.

What Is a Fusion Center?

To understand the value and responsibility of the NNFC, it is important to understand the role of state and major urban area fusion centers. The *Fusion Center Guidelines* provides the foundational definition of a fusion center, developed after 9/11, and the need for improved collaboration and partnerships among SLTT entities, the private sector, and federal partners.

The fusion center concept expands on the traditional role of law enforcement criminal intelligence units by expanding partnerships and information sharing opportunities. The principal role of the fusion center is to compile, analyze, and disseminate criminal/terrorist information and intelligence and other information (including, but not limited to, threat, public safety, law enforcement, public health, social services, and public works) to support efforts to anticipate, identify, prevent, and/or monitor criminal/terrorist activity. This information and intelligence should be both strategic (i.e., designed to provide general guidance of patterns and trends) and tactical (i.e., focused on a specific criminal event).

To accomplish their mission, fusion centers are designed to serve as a focal point for vertical and horizontal information sharing within their respective area of responsibility (AOR). As critical information sharing nodes, centers connect state- and local-level entities with the federal government for the purpose of advancing

²⁰ *Coordinating Federal Support for Fusion Centers*, p. 1, http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/coordinating-federal-support-for-fusion-centers-flyer-compliant_0.pdf.

homeland security priorities, including the prevention of crime and terrorism. The federal government relies on fusion centers to process federal threat information and provide a local overlay of threat and risk before passing the information on to the intended customers.²¹ To accomplish this mission, fusion centers, both as members of the National Network and individually, serve as “touch points” for criminal intelligence and information sharing and engagement and understanding between the foreign focus of the Intelligence Community (IC) and the domestic focus of SLTT officials. This all-encompassing framework that identifies a domestic approach to national intelligence is integral in the collective terrorism-related warning, interdiction, prevention, and response efforts.²²

Fusion centers also fulfill their purpose and mission through their response to the needs of their wide-ranging customer base. Requests from fusion center customers may include intelligence and/or analytic assistance for a variety of activities, such as identification of emerging criminal activity, an assessment of current crime trends, analytic support, or support for counterterrorism and emergency management professionals. Fusion centers utilize their enhanced and wide-ranging analytic function and application of the analytic tradecraft to support and assist agencies and personnel within their AOR and further demonstrate their value in homeland security protective efforts.

It is important to note that fusion centers are not managed by the federal government and do not focus solely on counterterrorism. Fusion centers do not take the place of other field-based information sharing programs, such as Regional Information Sharing Systems® (RISS) Centers, High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Investigative Support Centers (ISC), Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs), real-time crime centers, local law enforcement intelligence units, or emergency management programs, nor do they replicate the functions of these respective programs. Rather, fusion centers work collaboratively with these field-based programs, serving as adjuvants to increase crime and terrorism prevention efforts and information sharing efforts.²³ Through this cooperative effort, resources are better utilized and partnerships are formed and enhanced, leading to greater and more effective crime-fighting activities.

What Is the National Network of Fusion Centers

The combined effort of fusion centers and fusion center nodes across the nation is the foundation of the National Network. It serves as an information sharing coordination hub for the broader homeland security enterprise, supporting collaboration efforts with federal counterterrorism and crime prevention efforts and other homeland security priorities. The NNFC is a self-organizing, self-governing network that operates on a foundation of common purpose and trusted relationships. It is decentralized and distributed, with each member (or fusion center) free to innovate and develop operations that are effective in their unique legal, political, geographical, and cultural operating environment. What connects fusion centers together to create the National Network is a common bond of protecting the homeland by expanding information and intelligence sharing with SLTT and

Fusion centers do not take the place of other field-based information sharing programs, such as Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS) Centers, High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Investigative Support Centers (ISC), Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs), real-time crime centers, local law enforcement intelligence units, or emergency management programs, nor do they replicate the functions of these respective programs.

The function of fusion centers is to work collaboratively with field-based information sharing programs, serving as facilitators in crime and terrorism prevention efforts and information sharing efforts.

²¹ This is done through the operationalization of the Critical Operational Capabilities (see p. 10).

²² *National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan*, Version 2.0, p. 12, <https://it.ojp.gov/gist/150>.

²³ Comparisons between fusion centers and JTTFs and HIDTAs are available at: [http://www.dhs.gov/fusion-centers-and-joint-terrorism-task-forces and http://www.dhs.gov/fusion-centers-and-hidta-investigative-support-centers](http://www.dhs.gov/fusion-centers-and-joint-terrorism-task-forces-and-http://www.dhs.gov/fusion-centers-and-hidta-investigative-support-centers).

private sector partners, with support and input from federal partners, and also providing federal partners with locally and state-driven information and criminal intelligence, adding value to federal priorities and initiatives. Though the NNFC is decentralized, connection among fusion centers is created and maintained through sustained and institutionalized information sharing, a key tenet of the National Network.

There is not a static number of fusion centers within the National Network. The number of centers may increase or decrease, depending on the collective designations of governors. The value and relevancy of fusion centers will define the number of centers in the NNFC. This market-driven approach ensures that fusion centers meet the needs of the SLTT partners, while also supporting federal efforts and priorities. This dynamic idea ensures the effective sharing of information and also supports an individual state's ability to build, trim, and/or refine the number of fusion centers within the state, based on the current operating environment.

The National Network is an integral component of the nation's homeland security infrastructure. Through the collaboration effort of fusion centers with SLTT partners and their partnerships with federal agencies and entities, the NNFC serves as a national asset, supporting and enhancing the full national security enterprise. The National Network is an integral partner in linking national security concepts and strategies to fully realize a domestic approach to national intelligence that contributes to the safety of the nation. As such, it is in a unique position to empower frontline law enforcement, public safety, emergency response, and private sector personnel to lawfully and appropriately gather, analyze, and share information to identify emerging threats and respond to incidents (both manmade and natural).

The NNFC is built on several key elements. These elements are designed to show the maturation of individual fusion centers and, when combined, the National Network as a whole. The operational priorities of the National Network are classified as Critical Operational Capabilities (COCs), and with these operational priorities are four Enabling Capabilities (ECs) that assist in realization of the COCs. The COCs and ECs provide a foundation for the fusion process as a whole.

The Critical Operational Capabilities are:

- ◀ **Receive:** Ability to receive classified and unclassified information from federal partners
- ◀ **Analyze:** Ability to assess local implications of that threat information through the use of a formal risk assessment process
- ◀ **Disseminate:** Ability to further disseminate that threat information to other state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector entities within their jurisdiction
- ◀ **Gather:** Ability to gather locally generated information, aggregate it, analyze it, and share it with federal partners as appropriate

The Enabling Capabilities are:

- ◀ **Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties (P/CRCL) Protections**—The ability and commitment to protect the P/CRCL of all individuals
- ◀ **Sustainment Strategy**—The ability to establish and execute a sustainment strategy to ensure the long-term growth and maturity of the National Network
- ◀ **Communications and Outreach**—The ability to develop and execute a communications and outreach plan
- ◀ **Security**—The ability to protect the security of the physical fusion center facility, information, systems, and personnel

The successful and comprehensive achievement of these capabilities empowers fusion centers and the National Network to support federal priorities and initiatives, as well as SLTT efforts to protect their communities.



Goals and Objectives

To realize the vision of the National Network and implement its mission, the NNFC has four formative goals that will drive its activities over the next three years. These goals and related objectives all reflect the value of the National Network as a national asset, highlighting the support to SLTT, private sector, and federal partners. These priority areas also demonstrate how individual area fusion centers, while state- and locally owned and operated, connect together as a national enterprise and become the National Network.

Goal 1

Uphold public confidence through the safeguarding of information and the protection of the person and the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of individuals.

Ensuring and upholding public confidence in fusion centers is integral in the success of the National Network. One of the first priorities of the NNFC at large was that every fusion center have a privacy and civil liberties policy (privacy policy). To date, all fusion centers in the National Network have a privacy policy. In addition to the development of a privacy policy, fusion centers also ensure implementation of the tenets of their privacy policy. What has resulted is an ongoing and continual process to ensure that in all fusion center actions, the protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties is upheld and that all information is diligently safeguarded. The objectives for this goal are focused on this effort, all for the mission to continue to build and maintain public confidence in the work and the mission of fusion centers and the NNFC.

- ◀ **Objective 1:** Continue the consistent and comprehensive application of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties protections across the National Network.
- ◀ **Objective 2:** Enhance and sustain a trusted network through which information can be collected, maintained, and shared, in a manner that protects our communities and the privacy and legal rights of the public.
- ◀ **Objective 3:** Promote fusion center accountability and transparency among all fusion center partners and with the public.

By 2012, “All centers achieved the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) requirement to have a P/CRCL policy that has been determined by DHS to be at least as comprehensive as the Information Sharing Environment Privacy Guidelines.”

—2012 National Network of Fusion Centers Final Report

Goal 2

Support fusion center engagement with state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) partners; private sector partners; field-based information sharing programs; and federal partners to enhance decision making and resource allocation, improving the information sharing environment within fusion centers' areas of responsibility.

Fusion center engagement with SLTT and private sector partners (such as but not limited to health care providers, emergency managers, fire and emergency medical service personnel, and private security officers); field-based information sharing programs, such as police and sheriff intelligence units, real-time crime centers, RISS Centers, and HIDTA ISCs; and field-based federal partners, such as local FBI Field Offices, is important for the successful realization of the fusion process.²⁴ Engagement and outreach efforts will vary among fusion centers. Examples of these interactions range from fusion center leadership meetings with chiefs and sheriffs to fusion centers establishing a Fusion Liaison Officer (FLO) program²⁵ or analytic exchanges with local agencies within an AOR. Imperative in engagement is that the outcome leads to increased partnership and collaboration between the fusion center and agencies within its AOR, resulting in greater information sharing opportunities for all agencies within the AOR, within the National Network, and with federal partners. The objectives for this goal focus on supporting fusion center engagement and collaboration efforts with partners within a center's AOR.

- ◀ **Objective 1:** Identify opportunities for continued outreach and engagement with SLTT (including field-based information sharing programs), private sector, and federal partners to enhance the fusion process.
- ◀ **Objective 2:** Increase the capability and expertise among the cadre of fusion center SLTT and private sector partners to improve their ability to analyze and prioritize raw intelligence.
- ◀ **Objective 3:** Provide access to technology solutions to fusion center partners with limited funding and expertise, such as the use of shared services.
- ◀ **Objective 4:** Advocate for visibility of local homeland security priorities within the standing information needs and priority intelligence requirements for fusion centers' AORs.
- ◀ **Objective 5:** Improve the information sharing enterprise within fusion centers' AORs, including increasing the relevance of information shared and facilitating the identification of state and local partner priorities through the implementation of the Criminal Intelligence Enterprise (CIE)²⁶ and similar initiatives.

Goal 3

Strengthen the integration and interconnectedness of fusion centers to share and leverage information, analysis, and expertise.

The National Network is founded upon state and major urban area fusion centers. As such, to ensure the success of the NNFC, connectivity and integration of state and major urban area fusion centers must strengthen and increase. Enhanced communication will improve information sharing, expand analysis, and build up expertise among fusion centers, further demonstrating the value of the National Network as a national asset. Important to the achievement of this goal is interoperability of systems, training and education of analysts, and the

²⁴ The *Fusion Center Guidelines* states that the fusion process refers to the management of the flow of information and intelligence across levels and sectors of government and private industry.

²⁵ FLO programs may also be referred to as Intelligence Liaison Officer (ILO), Terrorism Liaison Officer (TLO), or Liaison Officer (LNO) programs. Different jurisdictions may use a slightly different term in their respective centers, but for the purposes of the National Strategy, the program is referred to as FLO. For more information on the FLO program, see page 15.

²⁶ Additional information on the Criminal Intelligence Enterprise is available at: https://majorcitieschiefs.com/pdf/news/mcca_criminal_intelligence_enterprise_initiative_20120329.pdf.

identification and documentation of best practices within and among fusion centers to share across the National Network. Also critical to this goal is optimizing technology investments through the use and reuse of business and technological frameworks that have been effectively implemented in relevant state and national initiatives.

- ◀ **Objective 1:** Develop National Network-wide Fusion Center Doctrine to capture fusion center lessons learned, best practices, example processes, and product templates to support the institutionalization of critical fusion center operations.
- ◀ **Objective 2:** Develop Centers of Analytic Excellence to better share tradecraft, areas of unique expertise, and analytic processes horizontally and vertically with members of the National Network.
- ◀ **Objective 3:** Promote the development and interoperability of fusion center information sharing and intelligence management systems and common technology services while ensuring local control of information through processes such as shared services, standards-based acquisition, and strong identity/access/discovery capabilities.
- ◀ **Objective 4:** Develop a rapid response or augmentation capability to physically and virtually support fusion centers during large-scale events, critical incidents, or long-term crisis situations that exceed the primary responding center's organic ability to support.
- ◀ **Objective 5:** Support institutionalization of information sharing objectives within each fusion center to ensure sustainability through leadership and personnel turnover throughout the National Network.

Improving connectivity between fusion centers and the federal government may also occur through the development and implementation of a statewide and/or regional Concept of Operations (CONOPS). Predominantly within areas with multiple fusion centers (including states), a CONOPS may provide for more coordinated information flow to federal partners, as well as enhanced deconfliction of efforts within the state or region.

Goal 4

Increase the overall connectivity between fusion centers and the federal government to strengthen analytic and information sharing capabilities and enhance situational awareness through collaborative efforts to protect the homeland.

Fusion centers serve as focal points within the state and local environment for the receipt, analysis, gathering, and sharing of threat-related information between the federal government and SLTT and private sector partners. As such, connectivity between fusion centers and federal partners must continue and be enhanced, amplifying fusion centers' ability to support federal efforts to protect the nation from criminal acts, including terrorism, and respond to or mitigate hazards. Improved connectivity will lead to fusion centers providing federal partners with timely and accurate information on potential threats, contributing to and informing investigations initiated and conducted by federal entities, contributing raw information to IC partners to assist in identifying previously unknown threats or trends, and responding to or preventing large-scale disasters.

Success in connectivity between fusion centers and federal partners has been already demonstrated through various endeavors, such as colocation with JTTFs, HIDTA ISCs, or RISS Centers; regular meetings and briefings to communicate and coordinate information and criminal intelligence; and access to common information systems. Centers currently add value to federal efforts, but partnerships and collaboration must continue and be broadened to enable federal partners to maximize the wealth of information available at the state and local levels, accessible via the National Network.

- ◀ **Objective 1:** Contribute to federal partners as a national security asset, improving smart practices in crime prevention, with a priority on counterterrorism, providing a return on investment for federal partners.
- ◀ **Objective 2:** Encourage the development and implementation of information sharing agreements aimed at sustainability.
- ◀ **Objective 3:** Promote interoperability among national information sharing systems.
- ◀ **Objective 4:** Enhance situational awareness efforts by fusion center partners through collaboration and formalized production of joint products.
- ◀ **Objective 5:** Increase analytic efforts to strengthen the understanding and augment awareness of the current threat environment.
- ◀ **Objective 6:** Collaborate with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to identify and improve smart practices regarding Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs).

The goals and the objectives of the National Network are incomplete without a set of initiatives that, when implemented, achieve the vision of the National Network. Appendix A lists these initiatives.



The Impact of the National Network to the Nation

The key to the success and institutionalization of the National Network is demonstrating the value and relevancy of fusion centers to the nation, specifically showing how fusion centers positively contribute to the safety and security of the country and its citizens at the state, local, and federal levels.

These tangible demonstrations must show how fusion centers collectively implement the concept of the National Network, which, in turn, contributes to the nationwide Information Sharing Environment. There are several areas that correspond with the National Network's goals and highlight the effectiveness of the National Network, including diligent protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties; widespread engagement and support of SLTT partners; increased access to information; enhanced analysis; institutionalized partnerships; deliberative support and oversight; and active participation in federal national security partnerships. These areas provide a few illustrations of how the National Network contributes to the safety of the nation by providing concrete services to state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector partners, as well as federal partners.

Widespread Engagement and Support of State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Partners

The National Network must continue to engage and support SLTT partners to be successful. Be it with state and local law enforcement, federal partners, public safety entities, or private sector organizations, continued and effective outreach and engagement will provide useable information for fusion center operations, enhance analysis, and thereby increase the safety and security of the nation. Further, fusion centers and their collaborative partnerships with field-based information sharing programs, including the alignment and coordination of their respective missions, further enhance the value proposition of all programs, providing additional protection to the nation.

There are numerous initiatives being undertaken within the National Network to show the depth and the extent of the National Network in engaging partners.

Example: Fusion Liaison Officer Programs

One proven method of engagement with state and local law enforcement and public safety agencies as well as private sector organizations is the Fusion Liaison Officer (FLO) program. A FLO program provides an effective opportunity for law enforcement and public safety agencies, as well as private sector partners,

to engage with fusion centers, since FLOs serve as liaisons between their agency and the fusion center. FLOs help to facilitate their agency's participation in regional information exchanges, ensuring that their respective agency is a full partner in the fusion center and information sharing processes. One value of the FLO program is that it may offer part of the solution to effectively support information sharing between fusion centers and local agencies, in coordination with other initiatives, such as the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative.

In addition, FLO programs are a valuable tool to support fusion centers in building their relationships with state and local law enforcement and multidisciplinary fusion center partners. By expanding fusion centers' networks, FLO programs enable the National Network to grow stronger, broader, and deeper. The FLO program builds on two well-regarded models of successful law enforcement operations—community-oriented policing and intelligence-led policing—and enables fusion centers and participants to establish extensive information sharing opportunities. Through the FLO networks, the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques proactively addresses situations and conditions that may give rise to public safety issues and ensures that resulting information, intelligence, or relevant products inform decision making at both the tactical and strategic levels.²⁷

Increased Information Sharing With State, Local, Tribal, Territorial, and Federal Partners

As part of the fusion center's mission and function, fusion center representatives gather and receive information from a plethora of sources, for a variety of threats and hazards, and assess and analyze this information to provide a state and/or local perspective and context to the information. Fusion centers then provide this "value-added" information to their SLTT and federal partners for further use. The culmination of this information sharing effort reveals the relevance of the National Network. With all fusion centers in the National Network performing this capability, information sharing is not only expedited (federal partners can quickly provide information to a limited number of centers rather than 17,000-plus law enforcement agencies and other partners), but also information, once analyzed by the center, becomes more valuable and beneficial to partners. Examples of this increased information sharing effort can be seen in the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative and the widespread use of the Homeland Security Information Network within the NNFC.

Example: Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative

One of the notable information sharing initiatives within the National Network is the Nationwide SAR Initiative (NSI). The NSI provides law enforcement with another tool to help prevent terrorism and other related criminal activity by establishing a national capacity for gathering, documenting, processing, analyzing, and sharing SAR information.²⁸ The NSI establishes standardized processes and policies that provide the capability for state, local, tribal, territorial, campus, and federal law enforcement to share timely, relevant terrorism-related suspicious activity reports while working to ensure that privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties are protected.²⁹ Fusion centers are key components of the NSI. Fusion center analysts participate in the vetting of SAR information to determine whether the information is an ISE-SAR.³⁰ Once the data is determined to be an ISE-SAR, a fusion center analyst makes the information available to all fusion centers in the National Network, as well as federal partners. Fusion centers are integral in the NSI

27 Saupp, Kevin. *The Police Chief*, Vol. LXXVII, No. 2, February 2010, http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/magazine/index.cfm?fuseaction=display_arch&article_id=2013&issue_id=22010.

28 <http://nsi.ncirc.gov>.

29 *A Call to Action: A Unified Message Regarding the Need to Support Suspicious Activity Reporting and Training*, p. 2, [http://nsi.ncirc.gov/\(S\(uy4p1monuzshugawk21slyk\)\)/documents/A_Call_to_Action.pdf](http://nsi.ncirc.gov/(S(uy4p1monuzshugawk21slyk))/documents/A_Call_to_Action.pdf).

30 The ISE-SAR Functional Standard defines *suspicious activity* as "observed behavior reasonably indicative of preoperational planning related to terrorism or other criminal activity." http://nsi.ncirc.gov/about_nsi.aspx.

as they gather information from local agencies, analyze this information to determine whether there is a terrorism nexus, and then provide the analyzed information to other partners to enable the homeland security enterprise to more successfully “connect the dots” and determine trends in terrorism-related preoperational planning.

Example: Homeland Security Information Network

To share information quickly and accurately with SLTT and federal partners, the National Network uses the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN). HSIN is a user-driven, Web-based unclassified information sharing platform that connects all homeland security mission partners, including fusion centers, SLTT partners, and federal partners.³¹ The use of HSIN supports and increases information sharing efforts among fusion centers and with SLTT and federal partners through the ability of fusion center personnel and other partners to post and distribute analytic and other products via HSIN for greater accessibility. In addition, the National Network established a National Situational Awareness Room via HSIN to expeditiously share information in times of crisis. The use of HSIN as an information sharing platform demonstrates how fusion centers apply federally developed efforts to support their mission of improved and increased information sharing, expanding and institutionalizing collaboration efforts through technology.

Enhanced Analysis That Increases Value and Relevance of Products

One of the main steps in the fusion process is analysis. Analysis is a component of all fusion center activity and is therefore imperative to the mission and function of the National Network. As part of the analytic focus, fusion centers create analytic products for customers and partners, provide strategic analytic services for their jurisdictions, and develop analytic specializations among their analytic staff.³² Fusion center analytic efforts are wide-ranging and may focus on law enforcement support (both tactical and strategic), critical infrastructure support, analysis of SAR information, or specialized topic areas (counterterrorism, cybercrime, gangs, narcotics, homegrown violent extremism, etc.). In states with multiple fusion centers, it is imperative to coordinate and collaborate among centers to establish a statewide threat picture that accurately and comprehensively identifies and analyzes the threat environment within the state. This coordination enhances the value of analysis by each center and also minimizes both gaps in analytical products as well as redundancy of effort.³³ In addition, fusion centers’ ability to provide enhanced analysis and facilitate coordination among fusion centers, as appropriate, allows centers to provide a tailored local context to the national threat picture, based on local and state vulnerabilities. This ability and the subsequent product development inform federal, as well as state and local, efforts, including recommendations to local community engagement efforts and protective measures.

As the *2012 National Network of Fusion Centers Final Report* indicates, one of the capabilities of the National Network is the ability to conduct analysis to help homeland security partners prevent, protect against, and respond to crime and terrorism. In 2012, the Fusion Center Assessment found that there are 984 analysts within the National Network who are involved in the production of 86,000 products.³⁴ The ability of fusion centers to perform in-depth analysis, leveraging the critical-thinking skills of their analysis with the application of techniques from training opportunities provided by federal partners, is critical to the success of the National Network. This in-depth analysis demonstrates how the National Network operates to share information with state and local partners and provide additional context and meaning to the information by analyzing it from a state and/or local perspective.

31 <https://hsin.dhs.gov/>.

32 *Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers*, p. 19, <https://it.ojp.gov/gist/39/Baseline-Capabilities-for-State-and-Major-Urban-Area-Fusion-Centers>.

33 The creation of a statewide threat picture is one of the recommendations identified in the “Majority Staff Report on the National Network of Fusion Centers.”

34 *2012 National Network of Fusion Centers Final Report*, p. 5.

Deliberative Support and Oversight Within the National Network

Continued support and operational oversight are both important elements of the sustainment of the National Network. Oversight helps to ensure accountability and compliance of all members in the NNFC. In addition, oversight can serve to inform and educate others on the activities and efforts of the National Network, creating a greater understanding and buy-in on the efforts of the National Network as a whole and the individual centers in the National Network. Since fusion centers are state and local entities, oversight starts with state and local governments, including law enforcement and homeland security leadership as well as fusion center governance boards. The National Fusion Center Association (NFCA) also provides a level of oversight to the National Network through peer-based leadership.

Example: State and Local Agencies

As state- or locally operated entities, fusion centers are first and foremost accountable to state or local law enforcement or homeland security agencies. As such, the first oversight body for fusion centers is state and local law enforcement or homeland security leadership, such as the state law enforcement commissioner or colonel or the local police chief or sheriff. This first level of oversight helps to ensure that the fusion center is meeting the needs of its first line of customers—the law enforcement and public safety personnel within the center’s AOR. In addition, this initial and important level of oversight makes sure that the center operates under the appropriate policies, plans, and regulations that also govern the parent agency.

Example: Fusion Center Governance Boards

In addition to state and local agency leadership, fusion center governance boards provide a level of oversight and direction to fusion center priorities and activities. In many fusion centers, governance boards include representation from SLTT partners, including non-law enforcement partners. A governance board may help provide high-level direction to the fusion center, enhance the current mission of the center, and support fusion center outreach efforts in the community. In addition, members of the governance board may serve as champions for the center, speaking on behalf of the center to show the value and importance of the center within the AOR.

Example: National Fusion Center Association (NFCA)

The NFCA was created to represent the interests of state and major urban area fusion centers, as well as associated interests of states, tribal nations, and units of local government, in order to promote the development and sustainment of fusion centers to enhance public safety; encourage effective, efficient, ethical, lawful, and professional intelligence and information sharing; and prevent and reduce the harmful effects of crime and terrorism on victims, individuals, and communities.³⁵ As a part of this mission, the NFCA provides a voice to the National Network and also provides support for the development of effective fusion center policy for the nation’s state and local government elected officials and tribal leaders.

To further support and enhance oversight and accountability, as well as partnerships and communication, the NFCA incorporates the National Network’s four regions—Northeast, Southeast, Central, and Western—into leadership positions. Each region has two chairpersons, who facilitate in-region meetings, communication, and workshops in partnership with DHS and other federal partners (such as the FBI, ODNI, and PM-ISE). The regional chairpersons sit on the executive board of the NFCA and are involved in the decision-making process of the board and provide additional input from the field.

³⁵ <https://nfcausa.org/default.aspx/MenuItemID/135/MenuGroup/Public+Home.htm>.

Active Involvement in Federal National Security Priorities

The National Network is designed not only to assist SLTT and private sector partners in protecting state and local communities but also to support federal partners and their national security priorities. National security priorities are wide-ranging and include countering violent extremism; protecting the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of the public; and focusing on cyber-related threats and criminal activity. Fusion centers, through their use of subject-matter experts, FLOs, and diverse analytic capabilities, are positioned to assist federal counterparts in meeting these priorities, further demonstrating the value of fusion centers as a national asset that benefits federal efforts and provides the state and local context to these priorities. There are numerous examples of how fusion centers support national security priorities, three of which are privacy protections, countering violent extremism, and supporting the Building Communities of Trust initiative.

Example: Privacy Protections

One of the first successes of the National Network was the development and implementation of a privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties (P/CRCL) policy (privacy policy) within each center. P/CRCL protections are a priority of the federal government: in the IRTPA, Congress established the need to protect privacy and civil liberties as a core tenet of the ISE. As such and in accordance with IRTPA Section 1016(d) and in furtherance of Executive Order 13388, the President of the United States approved for issuance and implementation the ISE Privacy Guidelines.³⁶ The ISE Privacy Guidelines establish a protection framework for P/CRCL for both federal agencies as well as non-federal agencies. For non-federal entities, notably fusion centers, the ISE Privacy Guidelines state that “non-Federal entities develop and implement appropriate policies and procedures that provide protections that are at least as comprehensive as those contained in these Guidelines.”³⁷ Fusion centers understood and supported this requirement and established Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties Protections as one of their Enabling Capabilities. To implement this capability, fusion centers have created a comprehensive framework to ensure that P/CRCL protections are upheld. All fusion centers have a P/CRCL policy that meets the ISE Privacy Guidelines. Since all fusion centers used a common template for policy development, all fusion center policies have a requirement for an annual review of their policy. In addition, a majority of fusion centers have a designated privacy officer, and many have participated in a compliance verification process to assess how their privacy policy is being implemented and to provide annual training to fusion center personnel. The emphasis on privacy protections is a cornerstone of all fusion center activity.

Example: Countering Violent Extremism

Fusion centers play an important role in countering violent extremism and protecting local communities from violent crime through daily operations, including the gathering, analyzing, and sharing of threat information with both partners within their AOR and federal counterparts. As a part of this mission, fusion centers, through their unique position as focal points for information sharing, can empower frontline personnel to understand the local implications of national intelligence. This is done by using analytic tradecraft learned through federal and state training and experience and tailoring national threat information into a local context, helping frontline personnel recognize terrorist and criminal threats they could encounter in the field, while at the same time protecting the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of individuals in their communities. Fusion centers can also inform and support federal partners, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of Justice, of the threats and issues encountered by personnel in the field, which in turn assists federal partners to better support local efforts.

³⁶ *Privacy and Civil Liberties Implementation Guide for the Information Sharing Environment*, http://ise.gov/sites/default/files/PrivacyImpGuide_0.pdf.

³⁷ *Guidelines to Ensure That the Information Privacy and Other Legal Rights of Americans Are Protected in the Development and Use of the Information Sharing Environment*, p. 6, <http://ise.gov/sites/default/files/PrivacyGuidelines20061204.pdf>.

Example: Building Communities of Trust

The Building Communities of Trust (BCOT) initiative is designed to encourage and improve information sharing among law enforcement officers, fusion centers, and the communities they serve in order to address the challenges of crime control and terrorism prevention. Established trust-based relationships between law enforcement and the community are a critical component of homeland security because they allow law enforcement to distinguish between innocent cultural behaviors and behaviors indicative of criminal activity. BCOT is a priority for federal partners because it supports the work of the NSI and serves to reiterate the priority fusion centers and law enforcement put on the protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of citizens. Fusion centers have an important role in this initiative as centers work with law enforcement and other partners to keep communities safe from terrorism, crime, and violence. Participation in the BCOT efforts has helped fusion centers with outreach and engagement in their communities, providing additional understanding and awareness of the fusion center and its mission and also encouraging citizens to participate in crime prevention efforts in their communities, such as the “If You See Something, Say Something™” initiative.³⁸

³⁸ Additional information on the “If You See Something, Say Something™” campaign is available at: <http://www.dhs.gov/if-you-see-something-say-something%E2%84%A2-campaign>.



Measuring the Success of the National Network

To effectively gauge the effectiveness of an initiative or endeavor, metrics must be identified and an assessment of the initiative should be conducted. The *Fusion Center Guidelines*, the *National Strategy for Information Sharing*, the *Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers*, and the Critical Operational Capabilities and the Enabling Capabilities provide the groundwork for measuring the effectiveness of fusion centers. In 2010, the annual Fusion Center Performance Program began, creating a starting point by which to measure fusion centers, focusing on the maturity level of the National Network.³⁹ Since the inception of the assessment in 2010, the process has been enhanced and refined, with DHS taking an instrumental role in supporting the assessment process.

Critical Operational Capabilities and Enabling Capabilities

The concept of Critical Operational Capabilities (COCs) for fusion centers, based on stages in the intelligence cycle, was first introduced in March of 2009 as a result of discussions held during the spring Fusion Center Directors Meeting. The 2009 iteration of the Critical Operational Capabilities defined them as “those capabilities [as identified in the *Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers*] that ensure timely and effective communication during a time of heightened threat, between the Federal Government and fusion centers; and fusion centers and the State, local and tribal authorities, the private sector, and the general public within their geographical area of responsibility.”⁴⁰ The original COCs included elements of the baseline capabilities, such as the reporting process to receive information from collectors (Information Gathering/Collection and Recognition of Indicators and Warnings—I.B.); define and exercise the process for dissemination of federal products to state, local, and tribal authorities, the private sector, and the general public (Intelligence/Information Dissemination—I.E.); and have a communications plan to identify and exercise how the center and partners will communicate during an incident or emergency ID databases, systems, and networks (Information Technology/Communications Infrastructure, Systems, Equipment, Facility, and Physical Infrastructure—II.E.3. and 4.).⁴¹

³⁹ The 2010 Baseline Capabilities Assessment (BCA), the predecessor to the Fusion Center Performance Program, was conducted by the PM-ISE, in coordination with fusion center directors, DHS, the FBI, and other federal interagency partners. See <http://www.dhs.gov/2010-baseline-capabilities-assessment-fusion-centers-and-critical-operational-capabilities-gap> for additional information.

⁴⁰ “2009 Baseline Capabilities Priorities: An Interagency Action Plan to Support State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers,” June 2009.

⁴¹ I.B., I.E., and II.E.3. and 4. refer to capabilities identified in the *Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers*, <https://it.ojp.gov/gist/39/Baseline-Capabilities-for-State-and-Major-Urban-Area-Fusion-Centers>.

The Critical Operational Capabilities were further refined and, as presented during the 2010 National Fusion Center Conference, represented those activities that fusion centers must engage in to be a full participant in the National Network of Fusion Centers. These activities include:

- ◀ Ability to receive classified and unclassified information from federal partners
- ◀ Ability to assess local implications of that threat information through the use of a formal risk assessment process
- ◀ Ability to further disseminate that threat information to other state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector entities within their jurisdiction
- ◀ Privacy and CRCL protections
- ◀ Sustainment
- ◀ Communications and outreach
- ◀ Clearances

After the 2010 conference, the COCs were further clarified to the current iteration:⁴²

- ◀ Receive: Ability to receive classified and unclassified information from federal partners
- ◀ Analyze: Ability to assess local implications of that threat information through the use of a formal risk assessment process
- ◀ Disseminate: Ability to further disseminate that threat information to other state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector entities within their jurisdiction
- ◀ Gather: Ability to gather locally generated information, aggregate it, analyze it, and share it with federal partners as appropriate

In addition to clarification of the COCs, four Enabling Capabilities (ECs) were established, designed to support the continued maturation and institutionalization of fusion centers:

- ◀ Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties Protections
- ◀ Sustainment Strategy
- ◀ Communications and Outreach
- ◀ Security

Upon finalization and release of the COCs and ECs, DHS and other federal partners sponsored trainings, technical assistance deliveries, and workshops to support fusion centers in developing policies, procedures, and plans to meet the COCs. The COCs and ECs, along with the tenets of the *Fusion Center Guidelines* and the *Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers*, also provided the premise to establish an annual assessment of fusion center capabilities.

⁴² *Critical Operational Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers: Gap Mitigation Strategy*, p. 3, December 2010.

Fusion Center Performance Program

With the establishment of state and major urban area fusion centers throughout the country and the creation of the National Network, it became important to measure the maturation of the NNFC and show the return on investment (ROI) of federal, state, and local partners in supporting fusion centers through the implementation of the COCs and ECs. As such, in 2010, federal agencies began working directly with fusion center directors to develop an over-arching performance management framework, or the Fusion Center Performance Program (FCPP). This program is designed to evaluate the value and impact of individual fusion centers and the National Network as a whole, in support of national information sharing and homeland security outcomes. The FCPP framework consists of three interconnected elements:

- ◀ Measuring the capability and performance of the National Network through a structured, standardized annual assessment.
- ◀ Hosting and participating in prevention-based exercises that test fusion center capabilities against real-world scenarios.
- ◀ Mitigating identified gaps in order to increase capabilities, improve performance, and sustain fusion center operations.

Each element of the FCPP is adjusted and repeated annually based on findings from the previous year, fusion center needs and national priorities, and the evolving threat environment. Understanding that communicating the value and impact of the National Network is a shared responsibility, fusion centers support the FCPP and the collaboration with federal partners in the program. As a part of the FCPP, fusion centers are also encouraged to capture, document, and share how their individual efforts impact the safety and security of their individual communities, adding value to the National Network and findings of the FCPP.

Performance Metrics

The FCPP is important in evaluating the maturity of the National Network at large, but additional “value-based” performance metrics are needed to further guide investments made by local, state, and federal partners. The goals and objectives identified in the *2014–2017 National Strategy* (including associated initiatives) will be used to create performance metrics to further assess the National Network and ultimately measure the value of federal investment in fusion centers and the value of centers in protecting the homeland.



The Future of the National Network

The goal of the 2014–2017 *National Strategy* is to detail the current state of the National Network and, importantly, identify where the NNFC will be in three years. The goals, objectives, and initiatives identified in this document are all designed to show how the National Network is an essential asset to the safety and security of the nation, providing a unique and necessary perspective within the national security mission. The fulfillment of the goals identified in this strategy will further support and institutionalize the National Network as a vital component in the domestic approach to intelligence, providing federal partners, as well as SLTT and private sector partners, with the expertise, analysis, and products that demonstrate an indisputable return on investment for fusion centers as an asset, nationally.

Over the next three years, the National Network and its partners will work to implement the initiatives identified in this strategy, thereby fulfilling the goals and objectives and achieving its mission to use the capabilities unique to the NNFC and the state and major urban area fusion centers included in the National Network to receive, analyze, disseminate, and gather threat information and intelligence in support of state, local, tribal, territorial, private sector, and federal efforts to protect the homeland from criminal activities and events, including acts of terrorism. The comprehensive implementation of this strategy will realize the vision of the NNFC to be a multidisciplinary, all-crimes/all-threats/all-hazards information sharing network that protects our nation's security and the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of our citizens. The end goal of this widespread, multipartner effort is the enhancement and sustainment of an information sharing network that helps protect the nation's security as well as the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of our citizens.

Fusion centers are a central element in preventing future acts of terrorism.⁴³ Fusion centers also enhance the awareness of decision makers at all levels of government of threats and hazards that may affect their jurisdictions. Without the National Network, the sharing of criminal intelligence and information would revert back to silos and a system of disconnected structures. Sustaining fusion centers is critical to the nation's homeland security efforts.⁴⁴ Sustainment is imperative to preserve the progress made since 2004, but it needs to continue. This decentralized and organically developed National Network is a national asset, advancing the work and missions of SLTT, private sector, and federal partners (including the Intelligence Community). Continued support and sustainment of this asset is critical to crime prevention, including terrorism.

43 2010 *National Security Strategy*, p. 20, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.

44 *The McGraw-Hill Homeland Security Handbook*, p. 316.



Appendix A—Initiatives of the National Network of Fusion Centers

The initiatives of the National Network of Fusion Centers are designed to realize the goals and objectives of the *2014–2017 National Strategy*. The completion of these initiatives is a partnership among state and major urban area fusion centers, law enforcement and homeland security associations, federal partners, field-based information sharing programs, and state and local law enforcement agencies.

The following table identifies the initiatives of the National Network as well as the associated goals/objectives as identified in the strategy.

Initiative	Associated Goal/ Objective
1. Providing continuing training and education to law enforcement and public safety partners on the fusion center’s role in protecting communities and the protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties.	Goal 1, Objective 1 Goal 2, Objective 3
2. Evaluating and assessing technology, using resources such as the IACP Technology Policy Framework and other applicable guidance documents, before procurement and implementation in a fusion center.	Goal 1, Objective 1 Goal 1, Objective 2 Goal 1, Objective 3 Goal 2, Objective 4 Goal 3, Objective 3 Goal 4, Objective 3
3. Continuing the development and adoption of national model policies for fusion centers and applicable to fusion centers.	All Goals, All Objectives
4. Demonstrating and articulating the value and importance of intelligence systems and how fusion centers protect the public and uphold P/CRCL protections.	Goal 1, Objective 2 Goal 1, Objective 3 Goal 4, Objective 1 Goal 4, Objective 6

Initiative	Associated Goal/ Objective
5. Developing and implementing Fusion Liaison Officer (FLO) programs and related training/education on information needs and intelligence requirements, incorporating public safety partners into the fusion process.	Goal 2, Objective 1 Goal 2, Objective 3 Goal 2, Objective 5 Goal 4, Objective 1
6. Conducting annual threat assessments to identify and measure priority threats and threat groups within a fusion center's AOR. Upon identification of threats and threat groups, fusion nodes and FLOs should be provided the collection needs and information requirements for the top threats.	Goal 2, Objective 3 Goal 2, Objective 5
7. Identifying AOR-specific tactical and strategic intelligence requirements (with input from AOR stakeholders), considering them in conjunction with national intelligence requirements, and creating a comprehensive set of requirements for the fusion center and its AOR.	Goal 2, Objective 5 Goal 4, Objective 1 Goal 4, Objective 4 Goal 4, Objective 6
8. Developing a national information sharing dissemination matrix that identifies how information and intelligence should flow from federal partners to state, local, and tribal partners via state and major urban area fusion centers.	Goal 2, Objective 1 Goal 2, Objective 5 Goal 3, Objective 1 Goal 4, Objective 1 Goal 4, Objective 4
9. Developing and enhancing fusion center analytic product feedback mechanisms and processes to ensure that products are easy to understand and useful, meeting partner needs and expectations. All fusion center partners (state, local, tribal, territorial, private sector, and federal) should be included in the feedback process. As part of the feedback process, a plan should be identified to reassess products that do not meet customer needs.	Goal 4, Objective 1 Goal 4, Objective 2 Goal 4, Objective 3 Goal 4, Objective 6
10. Developing an outreach and engagement strategy for state, tribal, and regional ⁴⁵ law enforcement and public safety organizations and associations. The strategy should address providing information on fusion center activities, capabilities, and demonstrations of the value of the fusion center to leadership, including how fusion centers collaborate and partner with other field-based information sharing programs, including JTTFs, RISS Centers, and HIDTA ISCs.	Goal 1, Objective 1 Goal 1, Objective 3 Goal 2, Objective 1

⁴⁵ Regional associations and organizations may include RISS Centers, HIDTA ISCs, in-state Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) entities, and regional law enforcement coordinating committees.

Initiative	Associated Goal/ Objective
11. Ensuring that fusion center engagement strategies identify how engagement and collaboration should occur with other public safety providers, including how to conduct critical infrastructure assessments and standardizing information sharing in emergency operations (both natural and man-made).	Goal 2, Objective 1
12. Developing a National Network-wide standardized protocol to identify and collect best practices and lessons learned. This protocol should focus on highlighting successes in fusion center operations, including products that meet partner needs, effective partnerships, and after-actions from significant events.	Goal 2, Objective 1 Goal 3, Objective 1
13. Using nationwide information sharing networks to continue the development of the Centers of Analytic Excellence project, providing greater opportunity to share analytic tradecraft and expertise within the National Network and collaborate on analytic products and initiatives.	Goal 3, Objective 1 Goal 3, Objective 2
14. Identifying and developing, as needed, a baseline set of common technology services, assisting fusion centers in achieving the Critical Operational Capabilities.	Goal 3, Objective 3 Goal 3, Objective 5
15. Establishing an analyst partnership to cross-train analysts between two fusion centers, creating a surge capability to provide analytic support to a state or major urban area fusion center that is overwhelmed for any reason.	Goal 3, Objective 4
16. Supporting and participating in the PM-ISE's Project Interoperability, which is designed to create a living series of tools, templates, and guides used to drive the development of a common architecture methodology, repeatable exchange patterns, and harmonized standards between government and nongovernment organizations.	Goal 3, Objective 3 Goal 4, Objective 3
17. Supporting the development and implementation of statewide information sharing environments, which provide secure access to appropriate systems and enhance the responsible flow of information in support of statewide law enforcement, homeland security, and emergency management missions.	Goal 3, Objective 3
18. Enhancing and expanding the fusion center analytic tradecraft through the identification of a baseline level of training for all analysts (at minimum), specialized training, education, professional development plans, and exchanges.	Goal 3, Objective 1 Goal 3, Objective 2 Goal 3, Objective 3 Goal 4, Objective 4 Goal 4, Objective 5
19. Developing a methodology to support state, local, tribal, and federal partners assigned to fusion centers, identifying how partners benefit from fusion center efforts, how the fusion center integrates partners into center activities and operations, and the recommendation of positive outcomes for partners as a result of their assignment in the fusion center.	Goal 2, Objective 5 Goal 4, Objective 1 Goal 4, Objective 4 Goal 4, Objective 5

Initiative	Associated Goal/ Objective
20. Identifying and implementing additional opportunities for collaboration among fusion center information and intelligence sharing systems, with the assurance of interoperability of systems while maintaining local control of information.	Goal 3, Objective 3
21. Establishing a technology advocacy body for the National Network to monitor technology needs of the National Network, help ensure that technology proposed to the National Network is easy to use and beneficial, and support common testing, procurement, and usage.	Goal 3, Objective 3
22. Developing production plans, distribution plans, and policies and plans that address Critical Operational Capabilities and Enabling Capabilities, posting these plans on HSIN, and making them available to other centers in the National Network.	Goal 3, Objective 5
23. Using annual exercises (for example, tabletop, functional, full-scale) to support fusion center continuous improvement, including information sharing plans and processes. Annual exercises may include national, state, and/or local-level exercises.	Goal 2, Objective 1 Goal 3, Objective 1 Goal 3, Objective 4 Goal 3, Objective 5 Goal 4, Objective 1 Goal 4, Objective 4
24. Including information/intelligence from correctional facilities, including county jail systems, in fusion processes and partnerships. Jails with no formal intelligence unit should be active in FLO programs and referred to resources such as the National Sheriffs' Association's "Jail Information Model" and the Naval Postgraduate School's "Creation of a Homeland Security Jail Information Model" to ensure involvement in the National Network.	Goal 2, Objective 1 Goal 2, Objective 3 Goal 2, Objective 5 Goal 4, Objective 1
25. Continuing to improve information sharing (including real-time notifications and amplified automated notifications) among law enforcement officers in the field, fusion centers, and the Terrorist Screening Center (TSC) to enhance analysis and to strengthen the understanding and awareness of the current threat environment.	Goal 4, Objective 1 Goal 4, Objective 3
26. Providing local context on national security priorities, including countering violent extremism and analyzing current threats and potential impacts of these threats within fusion centers' AOR and on a national scale (in collaboration with federal partners).	Goal 4, Objective 1 Goal 4, Objective 4 Goal 4, Objective 5
27. Developing a strategy on increasing the reporting of suspicious activity by SLTT and private sector partners to the fusion center.	Goal 2, Objective 1 Goal 2, Objective 5
28. Developing a fusion center cyber strategy that incorporates state, local, tribal, and federal partners (including the state criminal investigative agency, the U.S. Secret Service, U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team, the FBI Field Office, and others as appropriate) to address how cyber-related crimes and threats will be addressed within the center's AOR.	Goal 2, Objective 5 Goal 4, Objective 1

Initiative	Associated Goal/ Objective
29. Identifying and using a single common platform/system for sharing fusion center products and for analytic collaboration, during both routine operations and critical incident response.	Goal 2, Objective 5 Goal 3, Objective 1 Goal 3, Objective 2 Goal 4, Objective 1 Goal 4, Objective 4
30. Defining (by federal partners) a standard baseline level of engagement/ expectation, including common and consistent practices (and associated implementation and execution practices) common across all regions and field offices associated with (1) clearance level and (2) system access.	Goal 4, Objective 1 Goal 4, Objective 4 Goal 4, Objective 6
31. Increasing the value-proposition of fusion centers within their AOR across all stakeholders, including partnering with fire and emergency management communities to demonstrate how fusion centers support emergency operations centers and respective systems, through the identification and sharing of smart practices of fusion centers within the national emergency management system.	Goal 1 Goal 2 Goal 3 Goal 4
32. Supporting and helping lead national efforts to align information sharing with field-based intelligence and information sharing partners, including RISS, HIDTA, JTTF, and fusion nodes, in a manner that increases the actionable knowledge of public safety partners and improves information sharing efficiency and effectiveness.	Goal 2, Objective 5 Goal 4, Objective 1
33. Actively contributing toward a domestic approach to criminal intelligence, including specific strategies, projects, and initiatives that improve the information sharing required to reduce the impact of crimes on centers' communities.	Goal 3, Objective 1
34. Leveraging and improving integration with law enforcement criminal justice information services (CJIS)/records management system (RMS)-based infrastructure, understanding that law enforcement information is critical to the public's safety, the nation's security, and the success of the National Network.	Goal 2, Objective 3 Goal 3, Objective 3
35. Contributing towards the implementation of the <i>National Strategy for Information Sharing and Safeguarding</i> , which informs, drives, and supports our information sharing mission; it is central across all goals, objectives, and initiatives of the National Network.	Goal 1 Goal 2 Goal 3 Goal 4
36. Continuing to implement and enhance a process to measure the performance of the National Network.	Goal 1 Goal 2 Goal 3 Goal 4
37. Continuing to collaborate with federal partners to demonstrate the value and usability of fusion centers in achieving national goals and initiatives, resulting in fusion centers becoming a funding priority among federal, state, and local partners.	Goal 2, Objective 1 Goal 3, Objective 1 Goal 4, Objective 1

