



State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers

Role of Fusion Centers

Our nation faces an evolving threat environment, in which threats emanate not only from outside our borders but also from within our communities. This new environment demonstrates the critical role state and major urban area fusion centers (fusion centers) have in supporting the receipt, analysis, gathering, and sharing of threat-related information between the federal government and state, local, tribal, territorial (SLTT), and private sector partners.

Located in states and major urban areas throughout the country, fusion centers are uniquely situated to empower frontline law enforcement, public safety, fire service, emergency response, public health, and private sector security personnel to understand local implications of national intelligence, thus enabling local officials to better protect their communities. Fusion centers provide multidisciplinary expertise and situational awareness to inform decision making at all levels of government. They conduct analysis and facilitate information sharing while assisting law enforcement and homeland security partners in preventing, protecting against, and responding to crime and terrorism.

Fusion centers are owned and operated by state and local entities with support from federal partners in the form of deployed personnel, training, technical assistance, exercise support, security clearances, and connectivity to federal systems. Fusion centers provide the federal government with critical state and local information and subject-matter expertise that it did not receive in the past—enabling the effective communication of locally generated threat-related information to the federal government. Fusion centers receive information from a variety of sources, including suspicious activity reporting (SAR) information from stakeholders within

their jurisdictions, as well as federal information and intelligence. They analyze the information and develop relevant products to disseminate to their customers. These products assist homeland security partners at all levels of government to identify and address immediate and emerging threats.

Fusion Center Priorities

In 2010, fusion center directors, in partnership with the federal government, distilled the *Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers* into priorities, including four Critical Operational Capabilities:

- ◀ **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

Strengthening the ability of fusion centers to execute the Critical Operational Capabilities while ensuring privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties (P/CRCL) protections are critical to building an integrated National Network of Fusion Centers capable of providing resources, expertise, and information, with the goal of maximizing the nation's ability to detect, prevent, investigate, and respond to criminal and terrorist activity.



Federal Support to Fusion Centers

Fusion Center Resources

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has established a web site to share information on state and major urban area fusion centers. This web site, <http://www.dhs.gov/fusioncenters>, includes relevant overviews and fact sheets related to:



- ▶ The National Network of Fusion Centers
- ▶ Fusion Center Assessment Program
- ▶ Critical Operational Capabilities Gap Mitigation Strategy
- ▶ Fusion Center Success Stories
- ▶ Fusion Centers and Joint Terrorism Task Forces
- ▶ Fusion Centers and FBI Field Intelligence Groups
- ▶ Fusion Centers and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas
- ▶ Fusion Centers and Emergency Operations Centers
- ▶ Deployed Intelligence Officers and Protective Security Advisors

Nationwide SAR Initiative (NSI)



The NSI Program Management Office (NSI PMO) has established standardized processes and policies that provide the capability for federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement to share timely, relevant SAR information—that has been determined to have a potential nexus to terrorism—through the fusion centers, while working to ensure that P/CRCL are protected. The National Network of Fusion Centers is a critical part of this connectivity. To support the implementation of NSI, the NSI PMO has created a web site that includes resources, front line officer training, and other items of interest related to the NSI. The web site is available at <http://nsi.ncirc.gov>.

Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties Protections

Fusion centers, DHS, and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) have identified the protection of P/CRCL as a key priority and an important enabling capability to ensure that fusion centers protect P/CRCL, while supporting homeland security efforts.



To support this priority, DOJ and DHS partnered to develop a privacy and civil liberties web site. This page, available at <http://www.it.ojp.gov/privacyliberty>, includes:

- ▶ Training resources
- ▶ Authorities and guidance
- ▶ Privacy and civil liberties resources
- ▶ Relevant government reports

DHS, in partnership with DOJ, has also developed a P/CRCL training program, pursuant to Section 511(a) of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, that provides training for fusion center personnel. Additional information on this training is available at www.it.ojp.gov/PrivacyLiberty, which serves as a single point of access to resources on these issues.



revised 07/12