

Guideline 4

Create a collaborative environment for the sharing of intelligence and information among local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies, public safety, and the private sector.

Collaboration

Justification

To maximize intelligence sharing, all levels of law enforcement and public safety agencies and the private sector must communicate and collaborate. The objective is to leverage resources and expertise while improving the ability to detect, prevent, and apprehend terrorists and other criminals. Fostering a collaborative environment builds trust among participating entities, strengthens partnerships, and provides individual as well as a collective ownership in the mission and goals of the center. The *National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan* speaks to this as well: “Sharing is founded upon trust between the information provider and the intelligence consumer. Such trust is most often fostered on an interpersonal basis; therefore, law enforcement task forces and other joint work endeavors succeed where colocated, interspersed personnel from different agencies and job types convene for a common purpose.”³⁷

Fostering a collaborative environment is not only important to sharing, collecting, developing, and disseminating intelligence but also to sharing decisions and ownership. It discovers solutions and expands capacity. In an environment where some resources are decreasing while demands are increasing, collaboration has become even more essential. The purpose of collaboration is to increase capacity, communication, and continuity of service while decreasing duplication.³⁸ A key to the success of fusion centers is to ensure that feedback occurs between the fusion center and the entities that provide information and intelligence. Inherent in a collaborative environment is two-way communication; entities that provide information to fusion centers should also receive information from fusion centers. This will result in buy-in from all participants and will aid in the success of the information sharing environment. Fusion centers should also continually seek outreach opportunities to ensure that public safety agencies and the private sector are represented, thereby meeting the needs of their constituents.



Successful collaboration is contingent upon a trusting environment. Fusion centers should seek to establish an information sharing system that aids in collaboration, while ensuring the security of the information within the system and the system itself. This environment should also be equipped to handle various types of information that public safety and the private sector submit, including public, sensitive, proprietary, and secret information. This environment may include e-mail, a virtual private network, a secured Internet site, listservs, or face-to-face meetings. Collaboration begins with interpersonal relationships, and fusion centers should institutionalize these relationships through ongoing dialogue and information sharing. Issue-based collaborative techniques may be utilized by the fusion center when a specific threat is identified. These techniques allow the private sector to change its participation within the fusion center, based on the identified threat. For example, a transportation entity may have a liaison in the fusion center, but if a threat is identified that affects transportation, that organization may provide full-time participation until the threat is neutralized.

There are a variety of public safety and private sector entities to include in fusion centers. Each jurisdiction has different needs, and collaboration will be based on these needs. Fusion centers should seek to network with various public safety and

³⁷ *National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan*, November 2004, p. 9.

³⁸ C. R. Pete Petersen, M.Ed., “Community Collaboration,” March 4, 2003, www.communitycollaboration.net.

private sector organizations and associations. The greater the effort by the fusion center, the greater the incorporation and partnership with public safety and the private sector. Examples of these organizations and associations include InfraGard, Sector Coordinating Councils (SCC),³⁹ Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISAC),⁴⁰ and the United States Public-Private Partnership (USP3).⁴¹ Overarching functional categories have been developed in which individual agencies, companies, and organizations can be grouped together. Though not comprehensive, these categories and accompanying entities serve as a foundation and will aid fusion centers in determining what entities should be involved in the center. Governance bodies should identify the needs and vulnerabilities, organizations with a large employee base, and major economic drivers within the jurisdiction of the fusion center. The goal is to determine what entities should participate and be integrated into the fusion center. To ensure the effectiveness of collaboration within the fusion center, lines of communication should be established with the various entities that make up the categories according to the needs of the fusion center and jurisdiction. A list of the functional categories and associated entities is located in Appendix C of this report.

An example of effective collaboration is the Texas Coastal Region Advisory System (TCRAS). TCRAS is a Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) initiative and is used to quickly disseminate information to law enforcement partners, as well as other companies and agencies that are responsible for critical infrastructure operations in the area.⁴² TCRAS demonstrates an effective information sharing environment that incorporates the law enforcement, public safety, and private sector components of a fusion center.

³⁹ The roles of Sector Coordinating Councils (SCC) are to serve as a single forum into the respective sector for the entire range of homeland security issues; institutionalize the sector's coordination of policy development, sector-wide strategy, and planning; ensure program promulgation and implementation; monitor sector progress; provide provisions of best practices and guidelines; develop requirements for information sharing, research, and development; and serve as the point of cross-sector coordination (*Homeland Security Information Sharing Between Government and the Private Sector*, August 10, 2005, p. 17).

⁴⁰ Additional information on SCCs and ISACs can be found at www.dhs.gov.

⁴¹ The United States Public-Private Partnership (USP3) (formerly known as the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) HSIN-CI) was implemented as a DHS program that is regionally administered and governed by its private and public members. Current membership is approximately 40,000, ninety percent of which are from the private sector, who are actively using the programs vertical and horizontal information sharing strategies for local, regional, and national routine information sharing and all-hazards 24/7 alerts and warnings. Due to its success, DHS and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) will continue to jointly sponsor and grow the program nationally, with a goal of 200,000 members.

⁴² Additional information on TCRAS can be found at www.tcras.org.

Issues for Consideration

Collaboration Principles

A successful collaboration must continually provide value to its participants, customers, and constituency. To foster and enhance collaboration, consider implementing the following principles:

- Maintaining a diverse membership to include representatives from local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement; all sectors of public safety; and key private sector companies and organizations.
- Including private sector associations when incorporating the private sector. Two examples are FloridaFirst and ChicagoFirst, banking coalitions created to work with government agencies to help financial institutions prepare for national disasters and terrorism.⁴³
- Utilizing a phased approach when integrating private sector entities to accurately identify and address the needs of the entities.
- Developing and participating in networking groups and organizations that exist locally, regionally, statewide, nationally, and internationally.
- Working with JTTF, Anti-Terrorism Advisory Council (ATAC), the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), DHS, other state and local entities, and other relevant organizations or groups.
- Compiling a contact list of public safety and private sector representatives, including after-hours numbers.
- Conducting regular meetings for the purpose of collaboration and information sharing.
- Establishing procedures for maintaining the continuity of personal, organizational, and institutional relationships.
- Educating and training the law enforcement, public safety, and private sector communities on the intelligence and fusion processes and fusion center operations.
- Educating and liaising with elected officials, private sector executives, and other community leaders to promote awareness of the fusion center functions.
- Ensuring feedback to entities that provide information to fusion centers (e.g., the results of the information that has been provided to the fusion center).
- Ensuring, at a minimum, contact information is collected and up to date for mission critical entities (e.g., utilities, public works, and telecommunications).

Available Resources on Fusion Center CD

- "Community Collaboration," www.communitycollaboration.net

⁴³ Jim Freer, "Banks Band Together," *The South Florida Business Journal*, October 2005, www.bizjournals.com/southflorida/stories/2005/10/17/daily1.html.