



Why This Matters

To promote greater information sharing and collaboration among federal, state, and local intelligence and law enforcement entities, state and local authorities established fusion centers throughout the country. In July 2009, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary approved a request for the Department to recommit to a DHS State and Local Fusion Center Initiative in recognition of its previous inability to institute a well-coordinated, department-wide approach to support and interact with fusion centers. In September 2009, the Secretary testified before Congress that DHS was establishing an office to address these shortcomings.

DHS Response

DHS concurred with the seven recommendations made to assist in improving its support to fusion centers.

DHS' Efforts To Coordinate and Enhance Its Support and Information Sharing With Fusion Centers

What We Determined

DHS leadership has made supporting the National Network of Fusion Centers a priority for the Department. The Office of Intelligence and Analysis' (I&A) reorganization has empowered the State and Local Program Office (SLPO) to lead the Department's recommitment. Since 2009, SLPO has increased field support to fusion centers, worked to enhance fusion center capabilities, and engaged DHS components in this recommitment. Although SLPO efforts to develop a department-wide fusion center support strategy are ongoing, improvements are needed to address remaining challenges. The following areas need attention to improve DHS' efforts to coordinate and enhance its support and information sharing with the National Network of Fusion Centers:

- 1) Increasing training opportunities for fusion center analysts and I&A Intelligence Officers
- 2) Enhancing DHS component support to fusion centers
- 3) Developing and publishing guidance that ensures continued DHS support to fusion centers
- 4) Defining roles, responsibilities, and expectations

What We Recommend

Director, State and Local Program Office, Office of Intelligence and Analysis:

- 1) Establish a plan to expand current analytical training opportunities to fusion centers.
- 2) Develop a plan that ensures sustainable component deployments to the National Network of Fusion Centers.
- 3) Develop and publish a strategy that reflects the department's commitments, ongoing work, and plans for future engagement to support the National Network of Fusion Centers.
- 4) Survey component participation at fusion centers to ensure that the department's presence is appropriately reported, and align results with fusion center needs.
- 5) Work with DHS component leadership to develop and issue written guidance that ensures requirements and expectations for supporting the National Network of Fusion Centers are communicated and implemented.
- 6) Expand the Intelligence Officer orientation and training process to include a formal mentoring program where Intelligence Officers can network and discuss issues and concerns with peers.
- 7) In coordination with fusion center leadership, develop and document a process to identify and define roles, responsibilities, and expectations among Regional Directors and Intelligence Officers.

For Further Information:

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