



United States  
Department of Justice



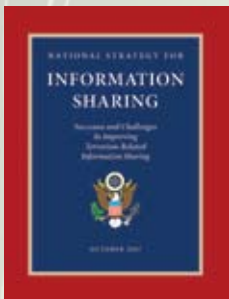
## DHS/DOJ Fusion Process Technical Assistance Program and Services

# Tribal Participation in Fusion Centers

As the national, integrated network of fusion centers continues to be implemented, it is important to understand the role that tribal representation can bring to fusion center efforts. Many state and major urban area fusion center jurisdictions include tribal land. To fully maximize fusion center effectiveness, centers should include tribal representatives in their information and intelligence collection, analysis, and sharing efforts. The guidance identified in the *Fusion Center Guidelines, National Strategy for Information Sharing*, and *Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers* can assist fusion centers in successfully integrating tribal entities into the center.

that tribes should be afforded appropriate opportunities to participate as full partners in the ISE through a common framework related to the sharing of terrorism information, homeland security information, and law enforcement information between and among federal departments and agencies of local, state, and tribal governments as well as private sector entities. Again, this implies a mandate for inclusion of tribal representation in fusion centers.

The NSIS calls for enabling tribal governments to gather, process, analyze, and share information and intelligence. Amidst discussion of roles and responsibilities, it states that tribal governments have specific responsibilities in relation to the establishment and continued operation of state and major urban area fusion centers. These roles and responsibilities were developed in partnership with local, state, and tribal officials and represent a collective view. The NSIS encourages tribes to take steps to ensure that state and major urban fusion centers achieve and sustain a baseline level of capability.

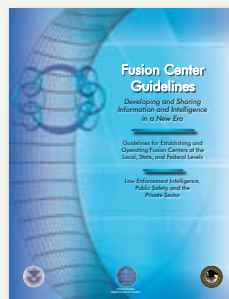


### National Strategy for Information Sharing

The *National Strategy for Information Sharing* (NSIS) (October 2007) mandates the inclusion of tribal governments in the Information Sharing Environment (ISE). This implies a mandate for inclusion of tribal representation in fusion centers. As first “preventers and responders,” they are

seen as critical to efforts to prevent future terrorist attacks and for responding to any attacks that might occur. To do this, they must have access to and share information that enables them to protect our communities. The NSIS goes on to say that tribal governments are best able to identify threats that exist within their jurisdictions and are full and trusted partners with the federal government in efforts to combat terrorism. Therefore, they 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.

The NSIS draws on Guideline 2 of the Presidential memorandum creating the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment. This guideline states



### Fusion Center Guidelines

Guideline 4 of the *Fusion Center Guidelines* calls for the creation of a collaborative environment for the sharing of intelligence and information among local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement. In a discussion of Information Flow, the guideline states, “With the establishment of fusion

centers around the country, it is important to have a clear understanding of who should receive and disseminate information and how it flows both vertically and horizontally among all local, state, tribal, and federal government agencies and private entities. Successful counterterrorism efforts require that local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies, along with public safety and private



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sector entities, have an effective information sharing and collaboration capability. This will ensure that they can seamlessly collect, collate, blend, analyze, disseminate, and use information and intelligence.” Without participation in fusion centers, it will be difficult for tribes to be a full partner in the flow of information envisioned in the *Fusion Center Guidelines*.

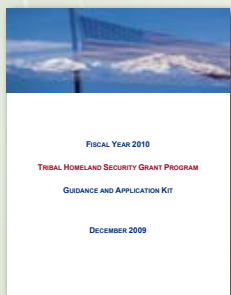


## Baseline Capabilities for State and Major Urban Area Fusion Centers

The Baseline Capabilities document mandates that fusion centers identify and incorporate local and tribal law enforcement, homeland security, or other discipline analytic centers that do

not meet the definition of a fusion center but are within the fusion center’s geographic area of responsibility and develop and maintain coordination procedures and communications methodologies. In response to federally generated alerts, warnings, and notification messages and/or significant events, the fusion center shall support or facilitate the identification of actions that were taken by local, state, and tribal authorities and the private sector and report those back to the appropriate federal agency.

The document calls for leveraging and/or coordinating with the JTTF and other local, state, tribal, federal, and private sector information sharing and counterterrorism efforts; leveraging databases, systems, and networks available from participating entities to maximize information sharing; and planning for future connectivity to other local, state, tribal, and federal systems under development. This can best be accomplished with the participation of tribal representatives in fusion centers.



## DHS Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program (THSGP)

DHS is encouraging tribes to prioritize the allocation of THSGP grant fund resources so they can participate in and/or share

information with those DHS and FBI jointly designated State and Major Urban Area fusion centers.

## Additional Reasons for Including Tribal Representation in Fusion Centers

There are more than 2,300 tribal law enforcement officers nationwide in 171 tribal police agencies and 37 Bureau of Indian Affairs agencies, for a total of 208 agencies associated with the 564 federally recognized tribes in the United States. If properly utilized by fusion centers, these resources can be leveraged to aid in achieving counterterrorism, all-crimes, and all-hazards objectives. Many tribes do not have the resources required to dedicate individuals to full-time work in fusion centers, but strategies that employ part-time involvement or remote participation through Fusion Liaison Officer training could strengthen the baseline capabilities of fusion centers.

By participating in fusion centers, tribes can contribute to the safety of officers and general public safety and could aid in protecting the 260 miles of international borders, resulting in countering illegal drug activity and human trafficking that takes place across those borders. Significant critical infrastructure and key resources are present in Indian Country. Participation in fusion center activities could improve the chances for protecting dams, transportation routes, waterways, and power lines, as well as other resources that are critical to the country. Including tribal representation in fusion centers would enable a more timely response to events through the use of mutual aid and compacts with tribes that might have more resources to better protect and serve.

Planning exercises by extremists are sometimes conducted in very remote areas. Many of the tribes have very large land masses where these types of exercises could take place. In addition, there is growing concern that criminal offenders are traveling to and from different reservations for criminal activity, and many fear that this will grow. Information sharing programs among tribal police and local, state, and federal governments are needed to reduce this threat. Tribal participation in fusion centers could help with this issue.

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