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## Fact Sheet

### Building Communities of Trust

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#### **Trust and Transparency Can Help Keep Communities Safe:**

- This initiative focuses on developing relationships of trust between police, fusion centers, and the communities they serve, particularly immigrant and minority communities, to address the challenges of crime and terrorism prevention.
- As new tools and business processes, such as the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative (NSI) and fusion centers, are adopted and implemented in local police departments, it is important for local law enforcement to explain how these new tools will be used while ensuring the protection of citizens' privacy and civil liberties.
- The success of the NSI largely depends on the ability to earn and maintain the public's trust. Consequently, NSI sites are encouraged to engage in outreach to members of the public, including privacy and civil liberties advocacy groups and private sector partners, in the course of privacy policy development and implementation.
- By fostering these relationships and building on the lessons of community policing, law enforcement are able to learn more about the community, making it possible for officers and analysts to distinguish between innocent behaviors and behaviors that could be indicative of criminal activity. A transparent process and collaboration with advocacy groups will reinforce the ongoing commitment to earn and maintain the public trust.

#### **Building Communities of Trust Process:**

- To help with the planning of this initiative, a National Planning Team comprised of subject-matter experts from state and local law enforcement, fusion centers, community and faith-based organizations, leadership from minority and immigrant communities, privacy and civil liberties advocates, and federal homeland security, justice, information sharing, and privacy and civil liberties officials were brought together in May 2009.
- Select sites that participated in the Nationwide SAR Initiative (NSI) Evaluation Environment volunteered to pilot the initiative, and conducted a roundtable discussion with a diverse group of representatives from the local community, police, and fusion center leadership to explore how these groups can effectively engage in meaningful and ongoing dialogue to build relationships of trust.
- Each roundtable was planned for and developed by a local planning team with representatives from the local community, fusion center, and police.

#### **Building Communities of Trust Guidance:**

- Lessons learned have been documented from a series of roundtable discussions held across the country in the past year between state and major urban area fusion centers, local law enforcement, and community advocates, and used to develop a guidance for local police agencies, fusion centers, and communities.

- The BCOT Guidance provides advice and recommendations on how to initiate and sustain trusting relationships that support meaningful sharing of information, responsiveness to community concerns and priorities, and the reporting of suspicious activities that appropriately distinguish between innocent cultural behaviors and behavior that may legitimately reflect criminal enterprise or terrorism precursor activities.
- The guidance highlights the importance of outreach and transparency for fusion centers, and the importance of working with local police in developing sensitivity to local community issues.
- The guidance also reflects the importance of collaboration between law enforcement agencies and fusion centers to understand the unique minority and immigrant community issues that need to be addressed to develop relationships of trust.

**Background:**

- The Office of the Program Manager, Information Sharing Environment, in partnership with the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), and the Department of Homeland Security, created the Building Communities of Trust initiative to build upon past efforts to improve privacy and civil liberties within the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative (NSI) and efforts to establish a national network of state and major urban area fusion centers.
- The NSI continues to be one of the ISE's most significant accomplishments, helping to address deficiencies highlighted by the 9/11 Commission.