

# NATIONWIDE SAR INITIATIVE



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## NSI OVERVIEW

Every day, law enforcement officers at all levels of government—state, local, tribal, and federal—observe suspicious behaviors or receive reports of suspicious activity, either from concerned citizens or businesses. Although an action or activity reported may not seem significant, when combined with other similar actions or activities, it may become an essential element in preventing criminal or even terrorist activity.

The Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative (NSI) Program Management Office (PMO) initiated operations in March 2010 with the challenge of ensuring that regardless of where in the country suspicious activity is reported, these potential indicators of terrorist activity can be analyzed and compared to other SAR information nationwide. The NSI has worked hard to incorporate the informal processes that traditionally exist within law enforcement agencies into the standards, policies, and processes developed by the NSI that allow law enforcement agencies to easily share information with the critical partners that need it to help prevent terrorist attacks.

The NSI has developed a comprehensive program that includes community and law enforcement outreach, standardized processes, training, a privacy framework, and enabling technology, all of which are essential for successful implementation of the NSI. Through strong leadership and outreach, the NSI PMO has continued working with key partners at the state, local, tribal, territorial, and federal levels of government, as well as advocacy groups, to not only develop and update the policies and processes of the NSI but also help ensure that Americans' privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties are protected throughout implementation and institutionalization of these processes.

## TRAINING

The NSI training strategy is designed to increase the effectiveness of state, local, and tribal law enforcement professionals in identifying, reporting, evaluating, and sharing pre-incident terrorism indicators to prevent acts of terrorism. The training is broken down into focus areas for the Frontline Officer, Analyst, Executive, and Hometown Partners, with each training focusing on the various law enforcement professionals and their respective level of responsibilities and duties.

### FRONTLINE OFFICER

The SAR Line Officer Training focuses on the critical role frontline officers have in the effective implementation of the SAR process by identifying and documenting suspicious activity. The NSI PMO, with support from the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major County Sheriffs' Association, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, and the National Sheriffs' Association, is working to deliver the 15-minute training video to all law enforcement and support personnel across the country.

### ANALYST

The SAR Analytic Role Training is designed to increase the awareness of the NSI by enhancing fusion center analysts' understanding of behaviors and indicators indicative of terrorism activities while also highlighting the importance of protecting privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties as information is documented, vetted, and shared nationwide.

### EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

The SAR Executive Briefings focus on executive leadership, policy development, privacy and civil liberties protections, agency training, and community outreach.

### HOMETOWN PARTNERS

The soon-to-be-released SAR Hometown Security Partners Training will provide SAR awareness for other key non-law enforcement constituencies, or "hometown security partners," such as public safety and those charged with protecting the nation's critical infrastructure, who are important to the SAR effort.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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## PRIVACY, CIVIL RIGHTS, CIVIL LIBERTIES

The protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties is paramount to the success of the NSI. Given this importance, the NSI has worked with various advocacy groups, such as the American Civil Liberties Union, to develop protections that, when consolidated, make up a comprehensive NSI Privacy Framework. The NSI requires each fusion center to consider privacy throughout the SAR process by fully adopting this framework prior to NSI participation. Working with these different advocacy groups and major stakeholders in states across the country has served an important role in successfully shaping NSI policies and processes.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND AWARENESS

The Building Communities of Trust (BCOT) initiative focuses on developing relationships of trust between law enforcement, fusion centers, and the communities they serve—particularly immigrant and minority communities—to help prevent crime and/or terrorist-related activities and keep our communities safe.

In July 2010, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), at Secretary Janet Napolitano's direction, launched a national "If You See Something, Say Something™" public awareness campaign—a simple and effective program to raise public awareness of indicators of terrorism and violent crime and to emphasize the importance of reporting suspicious activity to the proper state or local law enforcement authorities. This campaign is being launched in conjunction with NSI rollout sites, with both programs underscoring the concept that homeland security begins with hometown security, where an alert public plays a critical role in keeping our nation safe.

## STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

The NSI is a collaborative effort of federal, state, local, and tribal agencies, along with a number of law enforcement organizations across the country, working hand-in-hand to advocate the importance of the NSI. The efforts of

these organizations—the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the Major County Sheriffs' Association, and the National Sheriffs' Association—have provided ongoing support and input to the development and implementation of the NSI by promoting the SAR training and by inviting the NSI to participate in conferences where the NSI message can be delivered to state and local law enforcement agencies.

## TECHNOLOGY

Technology plays a vital role in the NSI process. In order for the information to be shared across the country, each agency must have a process and a system in place to send and receive these suspicious activity reports (SARs). To support the operational mission, the NSI has leveraged the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM), which allows the interoperability and seamless exchange of SAR information.

There are two ways in which NSI participants can make their SARs available to the NSI Federated Search: by installing an NSI-provided server that leverages an existing legacy computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system or records management system (RMS) that is in line with NIEM standards or by creating an eGuardian account. NSI participants can access the NSI Federated Search through either RISSNET™ or Law Enforcement Online (LEO), and participants will be able to access the search through Homeland Security Information Network-Law Enforcement (HSIN LE) in the future. Regardless of what mechanism is used to receive the information, the NSI was developed to ensure that information received and vetted at a fusion center will be quickly reviewed by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF) for possible investigation and shared with a host of analysts for the purpose of analytical pursuits.

## QUESTIONS?

For more on the NSI, please visit [nsi.ncirc.gov](http://nsi.ncirc.gov).

Or, contact the NSI Program Management Office at [nsipmo@usdoj.gov](mailto:nsipmo@usdoj.gov)  
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