

# NATIONWIDE SAR INITIATIVE

## FACT SHEET



## NSI OVERVIEW

Every day, law enforcement and homeland security partners at all levels of government—state, local, tribal, territorial (SLTT), and federal—observe suspicious behaviors or receive reports of suspicious activity, either from concerned citizens or businesses. Although an action or an activity reported may not seem significant, when reviewed and/or 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) 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 shared, analyzed, and compared with other 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 fusion centers and law enforcement agencies to easily share information with the critical partners that need it to help identify and prevent terrorist threats.

The NSI has developed a comprehensive program that includes community and law enforcement outreach, standardized processes, training, privacy protections, and enabling technology, all of which are essential for successful implementation of the NSI. Through strong leadership from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the NSI has continued working with key partners at the SLTT and federal levels of government, as well as advocacy groups, to not only develop and update the policies and processes of the NSI but to also 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 SLTT law enforcement and homeland security professionals in identifying, reporting, evaluating, and sharing pre-incident terrorism indicators to identify and prevent threats of terrorism. The training is broken down into focus areas for frontline law enforcement officers, analysts, executives, and hometown partners, with each training focusing on the respective level of responsibilities and duties of various law enforcement and homeland security partners. Additionally, law enforcement or homeland security professionals must ensure that the public understands how to report suspicious activity and the role that their agency/organizational members play in supporting the collection, analysis, and submission of SAR with the fusion center or the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs).

### FRONTLINE OFFICER

The SAR Line Officer Training focuses on the critical role frontline law enforcement officers have in the effective implementation of the SAR process by identifying and documenting suspicious activity. The NSI, with support from the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies, the Major County Sheriffs' Association, the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the National Sheriffs' Association, and the National Fusion Center Association, has developed a roll call training video for 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.

### FUSION CENTER EXECUTIVE AND PARTNER BRIEFING

The SAR Briefings are provided to agency executives, leadership, and key partners and focus on policy development, privacy and civil liberties protections, agency training, and community outreach.

### HOMETOWN PARTNERS

The SAR Training for Hometown Security Partners provides SAR awareness to fire and emergency medical services professionals; public safety telecommunications professionals; emergency managers; corrections, probation, and parole officers; private sector security professionals; maritime port security professionals; and public health and health care professionals, detailing the critical role they play in identifying and reporting suspicious activity to SLTT law enforcement.



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## PRIVACY, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND 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 make up a comprehensive NSI Privacy Protection 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 different advocacy groups and stakeholders in states across the country has served an important role in successfully shaping and implementing NSI policies and processes.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND AWARENESS

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

The NSI is a critical aspect of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's **"If You See Something, Say Something™"** campaign, which is a simple and effective program to raise public awareness of indicators of terrorism and terrorism-related crime and to emphasize the importance of reporting suspicious activity to the proper local law enforcement authorities.

Both the "If You See Something, Say Something™" campaign and the NSI underscore the concept that a **secure homeland 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 between federal and SLTT 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 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 events where the NSI message can be delivered to SLTT law enforcement, homeland security, and public safety 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 share SAR.** To support the operational mission, the NSI has leveraged the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM), which allows the interoperability and seamless exchange of SAR. Through the NSI technology platform, NSI participants can make their SAR available to fusion centers and other NSI participants in an effort to instantaneously share critical information. The NSI was developed to ensure that information received and vetted by a fusion center, regardless of what mechanism is used to receive the information, can be quickly reviewed by the FBI's JTTFs for possible investigation

and shared with fusion centers and FBI Field Intelligence Groups (FIGs) for additional analysis.

*The NSI has developed a comprehensive program that includes:*

- *Standardized processes*
- *Training and technical assistance*
- *Privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties protections*
- *Community outreach*
- *Enabling technologies*

## QUESTIONS?

For more information on the NSI, please visit [nsi.ncirc.gov](http://nsi.ncirc.gov) or contact the NSI at [nsiinformation@ncirc.gov](mailto:nsiinformation@ncirc.gov).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

**NSI.NCIRC.GOV**