Coordinating Federal Support for Fusion Centers

Fusion centers are state- and locally owned and operated entities that play a vital role in improving the nation's ability to safeguard the homeland. They serve as focal points within the state and local environment for the receipt, analysis, gathering, and sharing of threat-related information, including suspicious activity reporting (SAR), among federal, state, local, tribal, territorial (SLTT), and private sector partners and represent an essential element of our distributed homeland security and counterterrorism architecture. Furthermore, the Nationwide SAR Initiative (NSI) ensures that potential indicators of terrorist activity can be shared, analyzed, and compared with other information nationwide by fusion centers and Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF).

Formal decision-making and coordination processes for guiding support to fusion centers and the NSI at both the Departmental and federal interagency levels help ensure that this critical mission is fully aligned with the broader information sharing and safeguarding mission and associated programs, initiatives, and priorities. These processes also ensure that federal resources are effectively leveraged to support implementation of the Federal Resource Allocation Criteria (RAC) policy, which defines objective criteria and a coordinated approach for prioritizing the allocation of federal resources to fusion centers. Furthermore, these governance mechanisms enable the federal interagency partners to make decisions within a formalized structure—providing a solid foundation for developing fusion center- and NSI-related policy, guidance, and standards that benefit stakeholders at all levels of government.

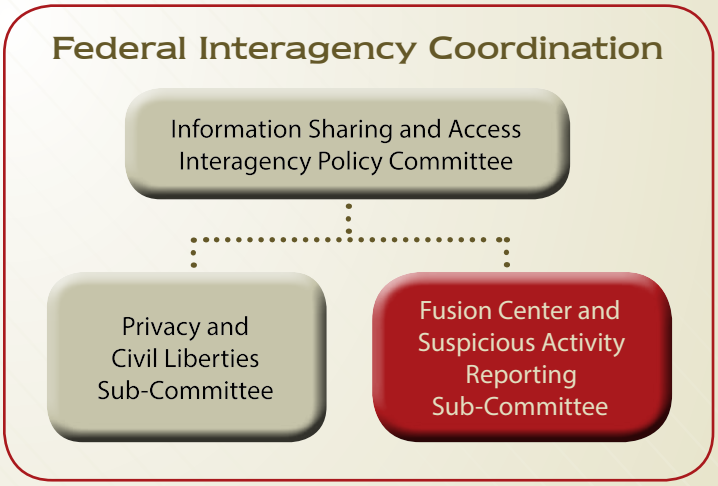
Federal Interagency Governance

Information Sharing and Access Interagency Policy Committee

The Information Sharing and Access Interagency Policy Committee (ISA IPC) is the interagency forum for overseeing the planning and implementation of the Information Sharing Environment (ISE). In this capacity, the ISA IPC prioritizes interagency efforts to develop and implement policy to facilitate the implementation of the ISE. As an integral part of the White House policy development process, the ISA IPC is the primary federal governance mechanism for information sharing and access policy issues and is cochaired by the White House National Security Staff and the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment (PM-ISE). Furthermore, the ISA IPC formally charters sub-committees to provide advice and support to the IPC on a range of related issues within their designated portfolios and inform ISE planning and implementation.

Fusion Center and Suspicious Activity Reporting Sub-Committee

The Fusion Center and Suspicious Activity Reporting Sub-Committee of the ISA IPC focuses on coordinating federal support to fusion centers and the NSI by providing the guidance and standards necessary to support interconnectivity to help ensure information sharing between and among fusion centers and all levels of government. The sub-committee is cochaired by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and includes members from the U.S. Department of Defense, the Joint Staff, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the PM-ISE, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the National Counterterrorism Center, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The chair of the Criminal Intelligence Coordinating Council (CICC) and



Federal Interagency Governance (continued)

the chair of the Regional Information Sharing Systems®(RISS) National Policy Group also serve in advisory capacities. In this capacity they represent SLTT law enforcement and homeland security perspectives and provide guidance to the sub-committee. In addition, the Privacy and Civil Liberties Sub-Committee of the ISA IPC and the National Council of Information Sharing and Analysis Centers (ISACs) serve in advisory capacities to provide unique perspectives on private sector engagement and privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties protections.

The sub-committee advises and supports the ISA IPC by:

- Recommending priorities for federal support to fusion centers and the NSI.
- Developing strategies for strengthening and maturing the National Network of Fusion Centers and the NSI.
- Preparing guidance and policy on fusion center- and NSI-related activities.
- Providing a forum for sharing best practices and lessons learned and resolving interagency issues.
- Serving as a resource to SLTT and private sector partners for the sharing of homeland security, terrorism, and law enforcement information.

The DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) serves as the sub-committee's Executive Secretariat.

Departmental Governance

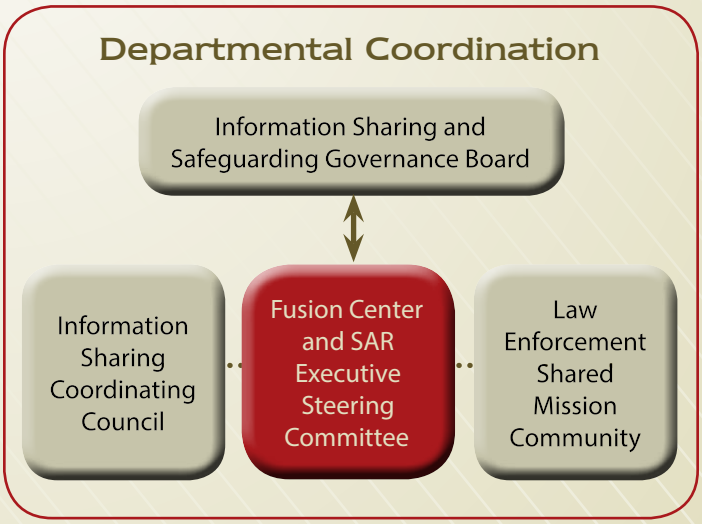
Information Sharing and Safeguarding Governance Board

The Information Sharing and Safeguarding Governance Board (ISSGB) serves as the Department's senior governance and decision-making body for all DHS information sharing and safeguarding issues. The Board is charged with developing Departmental policy recommendations and facilitating information sharing with federal, SLTT, and private sector partners, while responsibly managing risks. Chaired by the Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis and vice chaired by the Chief Information Officer, the ISSGB oversees a governance structure dedicated to improving DHS's sharing of information with both internal and external stakeholders. This governance structure is composed of the Information Sharing Coordinating Council (ISCC), the Information Safeguarding and Risk Management Council, and the Law Enforcement Shared Mission Community, as well as various Executive Steering Committees and Integrated Project Teams (IPTs).

Fusion Center and SAR Executive Steering Committee

The ISSGB's Fusion Center and SAR Executive Steering Committee (ESC) provides a formalized governance process for Departmental engagement with and support for fusion centers and the NSI. Chaired by DHS I&A, the Fusion Center and SAR ESC enables a consistent and unified approach to the development, implementation, and oversight of Departmental fusion center- and NSI-related programmatic guidance and policies, as well as related projects and initiatives designed to support fusion centers and the NSI.

The ESC works in close coordination with the ISSGB's ISCC and Law Enforcement Shared Mission Community to ensure that all ongoing efforts are fully coordinated. Furthermore, the ESC also ensures close coordination with the Homeland Security Intelligence Council to coordinate on DHS Intelligence Enterprise matters and with the ISA IPC's Fusion Center and Suspicious Activity Reporting Sub-Committee to coordinate with federal interagency partners on fusion center and NSI matters.



For More Information

If you have any questions about these governance processes or how to engage with these committees, please contact FusionCenterSupport@hq.dhs.gov.

Issued 08/12
Rev. 08/14