



Facilitating Private Sector Engagement With Fusion Centers



The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recognizes the essential role that the nation's private sector partners play in contributing to our national and economic security and resilience. To build a stronger and more effective collaborative effort that improves the security and resilience of our communities, DHS includes the private sector as a key stakeholder constituency in the "homeland security enterprise." This information serves as a primer for private sector partners, including critical infrastructure owners and operators, businesses, colleges and universities, nongovernmental organizations, nonprofit groups, and other partners looking to initiate and maintain a formal relationship with the fusion center in their area. This fact sheet provides private sector partners with an overview of how their organization can best collaborate with the fusion center in their local area.

What Are Fusion Centers?

Fusion centers are owned and operated by state and local entities and serve as the primary focal points within the state and local environment for the receipt, analysis, gathering, and sharing of threat-related information among federal and state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) and private sector partners. Located in states and major urban areas throughout the country and in U.S. territories, fusion centers are uniquely situated to empower frontline law enforcement, public safety, the fire service, emergency response, public health, critical infrastructure owners and operators, and the private sector to understand the local implications of national intelligence, thus enabling state and local officials to better protect their communities. Fusion centers provide multidisciplinary all-crimes and all-hazards expertise and situational awareness to help inform decision making at all levels of government and throughout the private sector. They conduct analysis and facilitate information sharing, while assisting law enforcement and homeland security partners in preventing, protecting against, and responding to criminal activity, including terrorism, and hazards—both man-made and natural.

Private Sector Engagement With Fusion Centers

Private sector and critical infrastructure partners should work with their respective fusion center to identify opportunities for engagement, through new or existing mechanisms, including:

- ◀ Participation in governance and/or advisory processes.
- ◀ Collaboration or provision of specialized expertise on the development of analytic products.
- ◀ Access to or inclusion on product distribution lists.
- ◀ Participation in training and/or exercises.
- ◀ Receipt of unclassified and classified briefings.
- ◀ Sharing of suspicious activity reporting (SAR).

Each center may have a unique process by which it works with the private sector, and some centers may have very limited engagement with private sector partners based on unique requirements or restrictions of their jurisdiction. Private sector and critical infrastructure partners should also recognize that there are limitations and restrictions on what access fusion centers can provide to federal information.

Private sector and critical infrastructure partners should engage their respective DHS partners in their jurisdiction, including their DHS Protective Security Advisors, for additional guidance.

What Can Fusion Centers Do for My Organization?

Private sector partners are often the first to detect precursor terrorist or criminal activity. Building a strong partnership between the private sector and fusion centers helps both government and industry decision makers to better understand, identify or detect, prepare for, and respond to emerging threats while also working to reduce risks to the community. This collaboration uniquely positions fusion centers to provide analytic and information sharing services to SLTT governments, the federal government, and the private sector. Depending on their focus and the individual needs of their customers, fusion centers provide the following types of products and services:

- ◀ **Responses to Requests for Information** – Solicitation for specific information from a customer
- ◀ **Situational Awareness Products** – Information regarding developing events or incidents
- ◀ **Bulletins** – Information concerning criminal threats and incidents and/or potential terrorist threats
- ◀ **Intelligence Warning Bulletins** – Credible reports or analytic indications of a specific or imminent threat
- ◀ **Advisory Notifications** – Information regarding regional cyber and physical security incidents and developing criminal trends and tactics
- ◀ **Formal Reports** – Formalized periodic and situational reports
- ◀ **Threat Assessments** – Detailed information about the nature of a particular threat and current and future trends
- ◀ **Risk Assessments** – Comprehensive assessments based on analyses of threats, vulnerabilities, and consequences

These products enable customers to understand the local implications of national intelligence, thus enabling state and local officials to better protect their communities and private sector partners to protect their facilities and operations. These products are often provided to private sector partners directly from the fusion center, and many products may also be accessible via the Homeland Security Information Network - Critical Infrastructure (HSIN-CI) community of interest, which facilitates the sharing of products and information with all participating partners.

How Do I Contact and Work With My Fusion Center?

Each private sector organization has a role to play in homeland security, and fusion centers have an equally important role to play in ensuring that partners in the private sector can efficiently access and share information, as appropriate. There are several ways to engage with a fusion center: (1) through participation in a fusion center governance or advisory body; (2) through distribution lists or online information sharing portals; (3) through deployed personnel from DHS, including [Intelligence Officers and Protective Security Advisors](#); or (4) through a fusion center's liaison officer responsible for private sector outreach. In addition, many national-level organizations and entities, such as the [Domestic Security Alliance Council \(DSAC\)](#), [Information Sharing and Analysis Centers \(ISACs\)](#), [InfraGard](#), and [Business Executives for National Security \(BENS\)](#), can facilitate engagement with fusion centers in your area.

The following are questions to consider as you develop relationships with fusion centers:

1. What type of information is my organization looking to receive?
2. What information is my organization prepared to share?
3. Will my organization designate (or is it willing to designate) a dedicated liaison to work or engage with the fusion center?
4. Are my organization's personnel trained to identify and report suspicious activities?
5. What policies, procedures, and training are in place to protect proprietary and sensitive information, including the protection of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties?

For Additional Information

For more information on the fusion center in your area, please visit <http://www.dhs.gov/contact-fusion-centers>.