



## Supporting the National Network of Fusion Centers

Posted by Kshemendra Paul, ISE Program Manager on Friday, October 5, 2012

Our state and major urban area-led fusion centers have been and continue to be a critical component of our nation's information sharing capabilities. By design, the national network of fusion centers are a direct reflection of our federated democracy and the sovereignty of state and local governments.

In the several years since I have been in my current role as the Program Manager, Information Sharing Environment, I have participated in and witnessed an evolution and rapid maturation of the national network of fusion centers. Certainly, challenges remain, but the fusion centers have become a more cohesive network, in which their organizations share information and intelligence, as well as best practices amongst each other and with their federal partners.

### National Strategy for Information Sharing

The [National Strategy for Information Sharing](#) <sup>[1]</sup> clearly articulates the necessity and role of the national network of fusion centers. The National Strategy remains a valid and important articulation of the importance of information sharing and our fusion centers to national security.

State and major urban area fusion centers are vital assets critical to sharing information related to terrorism. ... As a part of this Strategy, the federal government is promoting that state and major urban area fusion centers achieve a baseline level of capability and become interconnected with the federal government and each other, thereby creating a national, integrated, network of fusion centers to enable the effective sharing of terrorism-related information. The federal government will support the establishment of these centers and help sustain them through grant funding, technical assistance, and training to achieve a baseline level of capability and to help ensure compliance with all applicable privacy laws. This approach respects our system of federalism and strengthens our security posture.

? National Strategy for Information Sharing, 2007

### PM-ISE Reporting on Fusion Centers

In recent years, PM-ISE has reported on progress in the national network of fusion centers.

- The [2010 ISE Annual Report to the Congress](#) <sup>[2]</sup> discussed the Baseline Capabilities Assessment (BCA) pilot in 2009 and the nationwide BCA in 2010, a comprehensive assessment of the critical operational capabilities at each of the fusion centers.
- The [2011 ISE Annual Report to the Congress](#) <sup>[3]</sup> included results from the BCA that found that some centers were more mature than others, but, critically, it led to the development of a critical operational capability gap mitigation strategy that lays out the roadmap to strengthen the whole national network.

- The [2012 ISE Annual Report to the Congress](#) [4] highlighted progress from the 2011 National Network of Fusion Centers Final Report, and also points to some ongoing gaps, challenges, and opportunities. For example, there are opportunities to increase tribal information sharing through the fusion centers, through expanded tribal participation in Fusion Liaison Officer Programs and foundational policy.

Our state and local partners have taken ownership of the national network of fusion centers in a deep and meaningful way. I've seen tremendous development across the national network over the last several years, and I know they remain a critical component of our information sharing environment.

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