The use of fusion centers has recently emerged as an effective and efficient mechanism to support the development and sharing of information and intelligence among all levels of law enforcement, while maximizing resources, streamlining operations, and improving law enforcement's ability to fight crime and terrorism. Since this concept is relatively new, there are many different definitions of fusion centers and no specific guidance or information has been available to assist law enforcement agencies establish fusion centers.

As part of the Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative (Global), the Criminal Intelligence Coordinating Council (CICC), in support of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice's efforts to develop fusion center standards, coordinated the creation of the Fusion Center Intelligence Standards Focus Group, which is responsible for developing minimum standards specifically for the law enforcement intelligence component of fusion centers. Although the focus group members recognize the need to integrate all public safety and private partners, the first step of this initiative is to focus on law enforcement intelligence only. The focus group was also tasked with developing model policies, procedures, and guidelines to support this initiative.

The focus group initially met in Atlanta, Georgia, on August 24 and 25, 2004. The group consists of a variety of law enforcement representatives from local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies from all across the country. Throughout the meeting and subsequent communications, participants were encouraged to discuss and share best practices within their centers or initiatives.

The guiding principles outlined on the reverse side of this document summarize the preliminary and overarching issues discussed by the focus group. They are provided as a foundation to guide law enforcement agencies with establishing and operating intelligence functions within fusion centers.

The Fusion Center Intelligence Standards Focus Group developed principles to help agencies establish and operate the law enforcement intelligence function within fusion centers. These principles provide the foundation for the development of minimum standards and will be expanded and refined in the focus group's comprehensive report, which will include example policies, templates, and procedures. It is anticipated that this report will be issued early in 2005.

Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative

Guidelines for establishing and operating the law enforcement intelligence component in a fusion center for local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement
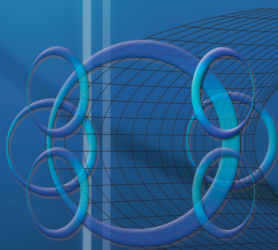
Guiding Principles

1. *Adhere to the tenets contained in the National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan*
   The *National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan* contains over 25 recommendations and action items, addressing a wide spectrum of intelligence issues and concerns. It provides model standards and policies and is the blueprint for establishing or enhancing intelligence functions.

2. *Create a representative governance structure*
   All participating agencies should have a voice in the establishment and operation of the fusion center and be adequately represented within the governance structure.

3. *Collaboratively develop and embrace a mission statement*
   Mission statements provide focus and meaning for those participating in the fusion center. Mission statements should be clear and concise and should convey the purpose, priority, and role of the center.

4. *Utilize a Memorandum of Understanding or other type of agreement as appropriate*
   Using a Memorandum of Understanding agreement defines the roles and responsibilities of the participating agencies.

5. *Integrate local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies*
   Fusion centers embody the concept of collaboration. Collaboration allows agencies to maximize available resources and work jointly toward a common goal.

6. *Create an environment in which participants can seamlessly communicate*
   Effective communications minimize the barriers that impede information sharing and exchange. Center personnel should strive to ensure that information, whether electronic, verbal, or written, is accurate, complete, timely, and relevant.

7. *Develop, publish, and adhere to a policies and procedures manual*
   Policies and procedures outline the roles and responsibilities of the center. They provide consistency and accountability, reduce liability, and professionalize the overall operation.

8. *Develop, publish, and adhere to a privacy policy*
   It is critical that the civil and constitutional rights of citizens are upheld. Centers should develop, display, adhere to, and train personnel on the center's privacy policy.

9. *Ensure appropriate security measures are in place for the facility, data, and personnel*
   Security pertains to information, documents, databases, facility, personnel, and dissemination. Centers should develop, publish, and adhere to a security policy and ensure proper safeguards are in place at all times.

10. *Integrate sworn and nonsworn personnel, and ensure personnel are properly trained*
    People are the core of a successful fusion center. Ensuring a diverse work force, with specialized knowledge and expertise, will create a trusted environment and will result in higher productivity and performance.

11. *Leverage existing systems and databases, and allow for future connectivity*
    Centers should use resources already available, as opposed to creating new systems or databases. Centers should plan for future connectivity and adhere to standards. Participating agencies should use the latest version of the Global Justice Extensible Markup Language (XML) Data Dictionary when connecting databases or other resources to communication networks.

12. *Offer a variety of intelligence services, and monitor outputs and outcomes*
    Customers of the center will expect timely and relevant intelligence services and products as well as investigative and tactical support. Centers should provide a variety of services and institute an evaluation process to ensure demands are met satisfactorily.