# TIPS AND LEADS
## AND THREATS TO LIFE
### TASK TEAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GLOBAL JUSTICE INFORMATION SHARING INITIATIVE (GLOBAL) ADVISORY COMMITTEE

*Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative*

<h1 align="center">Tips and Leads & Threats to Life Task Team:<br>Executive Summary and Recommendations to the<br>Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative (Global) Advisory Committee</h1>

Federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial (FSLTT) law enforcement agencies, school officials, tip line operators, and social media companies have expressed concerns about potential gaps in existing programs that negatively impact the way that tips and leads (TL) and threats to life (TTL) information is reported, assessed, and acted upon.[1]  Stakeholders agree that the timely and efficient identification, triage, and dissemination of credible threat-related information is of paramount importance.  This is particularly true of tips and leads and information related to threats to life (both to self and others).

As the existing disparate systems currently function at the FSLTT levels, the identification, triage, and routing of credible and actionable threats present challenges.  In today's digital world, it is increasingly common for TL and TTL information to originate on social media platforms.  Moreover, threat reporting to law enforcement agencies is often received via the Internet or through anonymous or confidential tip lines and applications (apps).  Many partners recognize the need to report potential threat information to appropriate law enforcement entities and seek streamlined reporting methods and processes that comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies.

The Criminal Intelligence Coordinating Council's (CICC) Tips and Leads and Threat to Life task team developed resources to support the efficient and timely sharing of TL and TTL information originating from tip lines and social media platforms.  These resources highlight the importance of coordination, collaboration, and streamlined information sharing among FSLTT law enforcement entities and offer guidance and promising practices related to the proper handling of TLs and TTLs.  Responsible multidisciplinary information sharing will enhance stakeholders' abilities to evaluate relevant data, identify and mitigate credible threats, and route the information to the entities that can provide appropriate support for individuals in need of assistance.

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[1] For purposes of the Threat to Life Initiative, the term "*threat to life*" (TTL) is defined as "an emergency involving danger of death or serious physical injury to any person."  See Electronic Communication Privacy Act (ECPA), Voluntary Disclosure of Customer Communications or Records, Title 18 U.S.C. §§ 2702 (b)(8) and (c)(4).  TTLs involve:

- A threat to kill or seriously injure others.
- A threat to kill or seriously injure oneself.

Such threats may be imminent or potential.  Examples of TTLs include but are not limited to threats to public safety, crisis calls, active shooters, and threats to law enforcement.

"*Tips and Leads Information or Data*" is defined, in part, as "generally uncorroborated reports or information generated from inside or outside a law enforcement agency that allege or indicate some form of possible criminal activity.  Tips and leads are sometimes referred to as suspicious incident report (SIR), suspicious activity report (SAR), and/or field interview report (FIR) information.  However, SAR information should be viewed, at most, as a subcategory of tip or lead data."  *Fusion Center Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties Policy Development Template (Fusion Center P/CRCL Template)* (March 2019), at 44.

**Recommendations to Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative (Global) Advisory Committee and the Attorney General:**  As part of this project, the task team developed the following three primary recommendations for the Global Advisory Committee to make to the U.S. Attorney General:

I.  **A framework for regional criminal intelligence sharing nodes should be developed and implemented to ensure that "threats to life" (TTL) are collected, triaged, analyzed, and disseminated to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.**

The Tips and Leads & Threats to Life (TLTTL) Task Team has assessed information sharing gaps and has developed a sustainable model for TTL reporting, triage, analysis, dissemination, and feedback. The volume of reporting, the exigent nature of TTLs, and the absence of the equivalence of a national 9-1-1 call center underscore the need to create a streamlined process that leverages existing capabilities. A distributive regional model should be adopted to ensure that TTLs are collected in a timely manner, triaged, analyzed, and disseminated to the appropriate local law enforcement agencies, with feedback provided to reporting entities as appropriate. This approach complements the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Threat Operations Center's (NTOC) processes and leverages the existing capabilities and resources of the National Network of Fusion Centers[2] and the Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS).

> **Definition of "Threat to Life"**
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> For purposes of the TTL Initiative, the term "threat to life" is defined as "an emergency involving danger of death or serious physical injury to any person." See Electronic Communication Privacy Act (ECPA), Voluntary Disclosure of Customer Communications or Records, Title 18 U.S.C. §§ 2702 (b)(8) and (c)(4). TTLs involve:
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> - A threat to kill or seriously injure others.
> - A threat to kill or seriously injure oneself.
>
> TTL information is considered a subset of tips and may be imminent or potential. Examples of TTLs include but are not limited to threat to public safety, crisis calls, active shooters, and threats to law enforcement.

To support the implementation of this model, formal guidance should be developed to address how, where, and when social media companies report threat information that is detected on their platforms or reported by users of their various services.  In addition, standard operating procedures should be developed, adopted, and implemented by each regional node.

For further information, refer to *Preliminary Recommendation for the Development of a Potential Framework for Regional Criminal Intelligence Sharing Nodes; Threat to Life (TTL) Initiative:  Standard Operating Procedures for the Criminal Intelligence Sharing Nodes.*

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[2] For further information, refer to the National Fusion Center Association;  U.S. Department of Homeland Security, National Network of Fusion Centers Fact Sheet.

**II. Where feasible, the FBI should adopt a standard requirement that field offices participate in the NTOC's TTL dual routing initiative.**

The NTOC serves as the FBI's central intake point through which the public can provide tip information about potential or ongoing crimes. The NTOC assesses all tips to determine whether they require FBI action or referral to another agency, to include state and local law enforcement. [3] The FBI has enhanced the unclassified eGuardian information sharing system to dual-route TTL tips from the NTOC directly to the appropriate fusion center or other law enforcement agency for action, with a simultaneous notification to the affected FBI field office via the FBI's Guardian system.

The FBI processes a staggering volume of tips and dual-routes nonfederal TTL tips to 26 participating FBI field offices and 23 state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) partners to enhance the law enforcement community's ability to mitigate violent criminal activity. All tips received by the NTOC are retained in the [Threat Intake Processing System (TIPS)](), pursuant to applicable federal laws. The TLTTL Task Team proposes that Global consider recommending that, where feasible, the FBI adopt a standard requirement that field offices participate in the dual-routing initiative.

**III. The privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties (P/CRCL) policy development templates[4] developed by Global for major state and urban area fusion centers and SLTT law enforcement entities should be revised.**

**a. The definition of "threat to life" should be included in policy development templates.**
The term "threat to life" should be a defined term in the policy templates. For the text of the definition, refer to the text box in Section I.

**b. The definition of "tips and leads" should be updated in the template to remove the reference to "computer-aided dispatch (CAD) data and to include a reference to TTL information."**

The definition of "tips and leads" set forth in the current P/CRCL policy development templates states that CAD data is not considered tips or leads information. The TLTTL Task Team proposes the following revisions to the "tips and leads" definition:

Tips and Leads Information or Data—Generally uncorroborated reports or information generated from inside or outside a law enforcement agency that allege or indicate some form of possible criminal activity. Tips and leads are sometimes referred to as suspicious incident reports (SIR), suspicious activity reports (SAR), and/or field interview report (FIR) information. TTL and SAR information should be viewed as a subcategory of tip or lead data. Tips and leads information does not include criminal history records or incidents that do not have a criminal offense attached or indicated. Tips and leads information should

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[3] For a list of participating agencies, refer to Appendix I below.

[4] *[Fusion Center Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties Policy Development Template]()* (March 2019*)*; [Privacy, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties Policy Development Template for State, Local, and Tribal Justice Entities]() (April 2012).

be maintained in a secure system, similar to data that rises to the level of reasonable suspicion.

A tip or lead can come from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, the public, field interview reports, and anonymous or confidential sources. This information may be based on mere suspicion or on a level of suspicion that is less than "reasonable suspicion" and, without further information or analysis, it is unknown whether the information is accurate or useful. Tips and leads information falls between being of little or no use to law enforcement and being extremely valuable depending on the availability of time and resources to determine its meaning.

The understanding of the nature of CAD data has evolved over time. While CAD systems vary based on jurisdiction and vendor, all CAD systems serve the same function: providing a coordinated system in which dispatchers can assign and track law enforcement resources to specific calls for service. CAD systems are critical because they are often the very first point of storage and transmittal of key information collected during law enforcement interactions with members of the public. CAD data is now viewed as potentially containing a tip or a lead. Some agencies with intelligence units and fusion centers have established a CAD query and integration process to enhance their intelligence analysis programs. Through this process, the agency incorporates CAD data into the review and analysis of suspicious activity reports (SARs); develops search queries to identify indicators of emerging threats, such as targeted violence, by aggregating and reviewing CAD information with SAR information to identify patterns; and shares threat reports derived from the review and analysis. For these reasons, the definition of "tips and leads" should no longer exclude CAD data as a form of tips or leads information, and the definition should be revised accordingly.

**In addition to the task team recommendations to the GAC, the package includes the following deliverables:**

- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**: This resource addresses a wide range of common questions and answers related to the collection, triage, and dissemination of TL-TTL information. The FAQ resource serves as a stand-alone document for practitioners interested in the basic FAQs while also serving as a primer for practitioners seeking a more comprehensive understanding of the complex issues related to the TL and TTL processes. The FAQ resource also includes materials and links related to P/CRCL issues, as well as links to policy templates, research, and other tools and resources developed by FSLTT partners.

- **Promising Practices and Stories Demonstrating the Importance of Threat-to-Life Reporting**: This resource was developed for FSLTT law enforcement agencies, school officials, and tip line operators to promote promising practices related to handling tips, leads, and TTL and to share success stories demonstrating the importance of tips, leads, and TTL reporting. The objective is to support the efficient, timely, and appropriate sharing of TL and TTL information originating from tip lines and social media platforms. These resources highlight the importance of coordination, collaboration, and streamlined information sharing among FSLTT law enforcement entities and offer guidance and promising practices related to the proper handling of TL and TTLs.

- **Statewide School Safety Tip Lines Information Chart:**  This resource identifies the statewide school safety tip lines and includes relevant contact information.  The chart is available as a static chart and as part of an interactive dashboard.

- **Framework for Regional Criminal Intelligence Sharing Nodes:**  The proposed distributive model framework complements and leverages existing capabilities and resources.  It ensures that TTLs identified by social media companies are appropriately collected, triaged, analyzed, and disseminated to the proper local law enforcement agencies and that feedback is provided as appropriate.

- **Standard Operating Procedures for the Regional Criminal Intelligence Sharing Node Framework:**  This document was created to outline the TTL reporting process to provide a consistent reporting and feedback mechanism for threat-related information by which appropriate law enforcement personnel can quickly vet and mitigate threats.