

NATIONWIDE SAR INITIATIVE ACTIVITY SUMMARY



June 2009

Program Overview

State, local, tribal, and federal partners, along with several national law enforcement organizations, have collaborated to develop the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Initiative (NSI). Although the initiative began as an operational study project, it is currently an evaluation environment involving multiple pilot projects throughout the United States. The effort will be evolving into a national program to share terrorism-related SAR data at all levels of government. The NSI incorporates agencies' individual SAR processes (the gathering, documenting, processing, analyzing, and sharing of suspicious information) into a nationwide capability to share terrorism-related SAR data on a national level. The SAR process focuses on what law enforcement has been doing for years—gathering information regarding behaviors and incidents associated with crime and establishing a process to share information to detect and prevent criminal activity, including crime associated with domestic and international terrorism. This document is a monthly summary that illustrates the accomplishments and upcoming activities and events associated with the NSI. This sixth edition provides a summary of the NSI activities over the course of June 2009.

Accomplishments

ISE-SAR Training

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Hosts SAR Analyst Training

On Tuesday, June 16, 2009, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) hosted SAR Analysts Training on behalf of the NSI. Personnel from 11 DHS components attended the training, which was held at the Freedom Center in Herndon, Virginia. The 35 attendees were welcomed by Mr. Bart Johnson, the Acting Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis at DHS. The Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) generously sponsored the training and will soon be the first DHS component to begin sharing SAR data in the Information Sharing Environment (ISE)-SAR Shared Spaces. DHS has committed to participating in the NSI as an equal partner and is developing its technological and business process foundations that will sustain its continuing support to partners at all levels of jurisdiction. For more information regarding the DHS SAR efforts, contact Stu Frome at stu.frome@dhs.gov or saradmin@dhs.gov.



Accomplishments (continued)

Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Conducts SAR Analyst Training

During the month of June, FDLE sponsored and utilized the Bureau of Justice Assistance SAR Analyst/ Investigator Training within the state of Florida. The training was conducted in three locations—Tallahassee, Tampa, and Orlando—and had 103 individuals in attendance, representing 36 state, local, county, and federal agencies.

IACP Line Officer Training

The SAR training for line officers was piloted in Richmond, Virginia, on June 9, 2009. Approximately 20 representatives from state and local law enforcement agencies participated in the pilot training. Solid feedback was provided regarding potential modifications and those suggested changes will be incorporated. The reintroduced and refined curriculum will be piloted in Florida and New York in the coming months. The line officer training is designed to introduce key concepts/practices related to SAR and reinforce the vital role played by line officers.

MCCA SARs Briefing and Evaluation Summary

Under the direction of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the NSI began administering the Chief Executive Officer Briefings (CEOBs), the first being held in Washington, DC, in December 2008. A total of nine SAR CEOBs have been held in Washington, DC; Boston; Miami; Los Angeles; Las Vegas; Chicago; Houston; Seattle; and Phoenix and included staff members from DOJ; the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA); and FirstPic, Inc. Attendance at these CEOBs included 316 participants from 179 law enforcement agencies. The goals of the CEOBs include:

- 1) Establish an understanding of the NSI.
- 2) Provide policy guidance to the attending executives on the core components essential to the implementation of a SAR program.
- 3) Determine the level of commitment to implement or participate in a SAR program.
- 4) Determine the level of technical assistance needed from agencies attending the CEOB.

- 5) Provide an understanding for the follow-up SAR Implementation Workshop for the region.
- 6) Gain executive commitment for implementation or participation in the NSI.

Of the responding attendees, 95 percent reported that a complete understanding of the NSI was achieved and that the briefing provided new and useful information. In addition, 94 percent of responding attendees stated their intent to utilize this new information in their local policing efforts as well as provide an **immediate impact** in their strategic planning, and 62 percent of respondents noted their intent to request technical assistance for additional SAR training at a later date. Additional comments will be addressed in the SAR Implementation Workshop Training—anticipated delivery: fall 2009.

Notable Quotes Cited by Chief Policymakers in Select Cities:

- Chief Cathy Lanier, DC Metro, *“The hope is that everyone across the country will start doing this. The value of this program lies in the number of people that buy in and participate.”*
- Commissioner Ed Davis, Boston Police Department, *“History shows that the reason programs fail is due to the lack of implementation....This is our chance to put the pieces of the puzzle together....SAR is probably the most important thing we can do to protect the homeland....Parochialism, not playing well with others, is something from the past and can only hurt us as an organization....In everyday activities, the information we have and collect as an organization has to be shared....”*
- Chief William Bratton, LAPD, *“We have learned from the past that there are early warning signs. Terrorism and behaviors are linked. How do I maximize our efforts and multiply our force? Analysis is critical to differentiate criminal from terrorist activity....We all need to assess our vulnerability. Similarly with SAR—we need a united front and leadership support so that every agency in the area is contributing. If we don’t have a seamless Web and some agencies are not cooperating, we are in trouble. The effort today is*

Accomplishments (continued)

not only to educate but to enlist your support and make sure you understand the importance to this effort. We want to move in a big and aggressive way to move this issue forward. We hope those of you here 'get it.' This is not a departure from what we normally do—there are some enhancements—we want you to take it to your people. Embrace the concept and appreciate the enhancements.”

- Sheriff Gillespie, Las Vegas Metro Police Department, *“The strength [of the NSI] is in partnering and the common mission. Today, we face unique challenges in law enforcement not only from the traditional aspect. We cannot allow the human trust aspects to interfere with the actions we must take. This is a VERY worthwhile approach to information sharing, and I look forward to utilizing it in southern Nevada.”*
- Chief Harold Hurtt, Houston Police Department, *“If you’re not committed to it [the NSI] at the top of your organization, it’s not going to happen. The officers may be introduced to it, but if there’s not interest from the chief or the person at the top of the organization, it won’t be done properly and won’t be processed and will really be wasting a lot of government funding. Hopefully, we look at this as a program for the Houston region. We talk about homeland security, but this is also about hometown security...and it would behoove all of us to protect our communities...What we do every day is important, and we’re going to step up to the plate—it’s as simple as that. We need to be able to count on each other.”*
- Deputy Chief Clark Kimerer, Seattle Police Department, *“The next terrorist attack will be solved by a private citizen, a utility worker, or an observant person that gets to the authorities, that will prevent the loss of life, the crippling of our country. That is why it’s so critical that executive leadership make it [the NSI] come about. If I look at the world prior to 9/11 and approaching this threat, we have made incredible strides. We need to recognize that SAR is one of the critical components of this process. People are fatigued with talking about, thinking about, preparing for terrorism. The fact that our interest in 9/11 attenuates—it gets*

more and more uninteresting as we get farther from 9/11—we do not want to ‘nod’ at the switch. That’s exactly what our enemies want us to do.”

Future Activities:

The MCCA is exploring with other NSI partners the possibility of developing additional training and resources regarding implementing a Suspicious Activity Reporting Program. Tom Frazier, Executive Director of MCCA and the MCCA SARs project director, will be providing additional details in the near future.

Additional Participant Added to the ISE-SAR Evaluation Environment

The Arizona Counter Terrorism Information Center (AcTIC) has agreed to participate in the ISE-SAR Evaluation Environment (EE). During the month of June, AcTIC received the SAR Chief Executive Officer Briefing, and the SAR Analyst/Investigator training has been scheduled for July 23, 2009. Efforts are also under way to begin technology and policy implementations within the center.

ISE-SAR Shared Spaces System Deployment

During the month of June, computer hardware and software systems were installed at the Los Angeles Police Department and the eGuardian data center in Northern Virginia. With the inclusion of LAPD, ten state or Urban Areas Security Initiative fusion centers have received ISE-SAR Shared Spaces hardware, network, and software applications. Five of the centers have been approved to begin sharing ISE-SARs via the ncirc.gov portal. The other five centers are “technically ready” to participate in the EE once their privacy policies are completed and submitted for review. Deployment at the Washington State Fusion Center is scheduled for mid-July, with AcTIC expected soon after.

Federal ISE-SAR Shared Spaces

eGuardian—The FBI’s eGuardian system continues to expand in membership, usage, and technical capabilities. As of June 1, 2009, there were more than 1,200 individual system users and more than 350 registered agencies within eGuardian. It is anticipated that these numbers will continue to increase even more during the 2009 summer months, as the eGuardian

Accomplishments (continued)

team continues to be proactive in creating liaisons and providing training/outreach across the United States.

More than 770 incidents have been entered into eGuardian and subsequently referred to local JTTFs since the system began its limited release in January 2009. This facilitation of information sharing has led to both preliminary and full investigations being opened by the FBI, as well as many ongoing threat assessments and several newly identified patterns and trends.

Feedback from the field has been very positive for the eGuardian system, and the technical team is constantly working to make system improvements based on users' suggestions. There have been two eGuardian updates since the system's limited release. These releases contained enhancements such as improved searching capabilities, navigating options, and incident disposition feedback. Planned future releases will contain such improvements as enhanced incident mapping features and full integration with the ISE Shared Space.

Most important, consistent with the NSI partnership, eGuardian software engineers are working actively with the BJA team to complete software applications in order to fully test the eGuardian/ISE-SAR Shared Spaces interface. The testing will include both the ability of a fusion center to "push" ISE-SARs to eGuardian as well as the posting of ISE-SARs received by the FBI via the eGuardian system to the eGuardian shared space server. It is expected that the ISE-SAR Shared Spaces/eGuardian interface will be fully operational in early August.

DHS—FAMS is working closely with the BJA team to establish the FAMS Shared Space environment and load an initial set of ISE-SAR based on archived SAR reports. It is anticipated that the DHS ISE-SAR Shared Space will be operational in July.

Enhancements to the SAR Vetting Tool (SVT)

Based upon feedback from the Chicago Police Department, the Boston Police Department, and the Miami-Dade Police Department, a number of enhancements to version 1.0 of the SVT were identified. As stated in earlier editions of this report, the SVT was designed to provide agencies with an ability to augment existing automated and manual SAR vetting processes

and better align those systems with the ISE-SAR Functional Standard and best practices that have been identified on the project. SVT version 2.0 is now undergoing internal testing at the IJIS Institute and should be available for release in mid-July. A comprehensive summary describing the enhancements and the SVT upgrade process will be distributed in early July.

ISE-SAR Evaluation Environment Meeting

A meeting was conducted on June 2–3, 2009, in Bethesda, Maryland, to bring together the ISE-SAR EE sites. On June 2, sites were briefed on the current status and the next steps of the EE and the NSI. Participants engaged in a roundtable discussion on lessons learned and provided valuable feedback on their SAR processes and the ISE-SAR Shared Spaces. In addition, sites reviewed the "2004 Barot Casing Report" and the "Mumbai attack" to better understand the tactics used, the areas of focus, and the suspicious activity conducted before the events. Participants discussed lessons learned from the events and how to better disseminate information and changes that could be made to the process and training. Using real-world examples, the review displayed how suspicious activity can be directly linked to terrorism and the planning of terrorist events.

On June 3, the sites received Pilot Risk Assessment Training and received overviews on jurisdictional, threat, hazard, and vulnerability assessments. In addition, the sites were also instructed on the consequences process and Information Needs Reports.



Upcoming Planned Activities/ Events (continued)

ISE-SAR Shared Spaces Rollout Schedule

The remaining fusion centers tentatively scheduled for installation in the summer of 2009 are:

- Washington Joint Analytical Center
- Arizona Counter Terrorism Information Center

Expansion of the ISE-SAR Evaluation Environment

Several other fusion centers not included in the initial ISE-SAR EE have expressed interest in joining the initiative. Currently, an NSI team is conducting interview assessments of the agencies and technology to determine whether they can be included in the evaluation environment.

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