

Guideline 17

Establish and maintain the center based on funding availability and sustainability.

Funding

Justification

Funding is critical to establishing fusion centers, directly impacting a center's longevity and ability to effectively and efficiently operate. Often, new initiatives receive start-up funds through government programs and/or grants. This seed money is an excellent means of beginning new projects or programs. Unfortunately, some efforts end because initial funding has been spent and no additional funding was identified or obtained to continue the project. For the long term, it is essential that centers take responsibility for funding to ensure sustainability. Fusion centers that have been surveyed regarding their ongoing needs repeatedly cite funding as a priority in the development and sustainment of the center.⁶⁰ It is recommended that management identify the needs of the center and identify available funding sources from local, state, federal, and nongovernmental sources.

Fusion center leadership should seek to link the performance of the center to funding. As seed money ends, performance measures may be an effective tool for fusion centers to use in securing funding. Performance measures that cover notifications and intelligence services and products demonstrate the success and return on investment of a fusion center.

Issues for Consideration

When reviewing funding needs and sources, consider:

- Basing funding on center priorities.
- Leveraging existing resources/funding from participating entities.
- Ensuring resource commitment of participating entities is addressed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
- Identifying supplemental funding sources (i.e., seized assets/forfeitures, local and state government appropriations, state and federal grants, and private sources).
- Establishing an operational budget.

⁶⁰ NGA, Center for Best Practices, "State Intelligence Fusion Centers: Recent State Actions," 2005.

- Adhering to reporting requirements (i.e., annual report).
- Ensuring fusion center sustainability.
- Identifying return on investment for fusion center partners (e.g., defining what partners will receive as a result of participation).

Center Expenses

To effectively operate a fusion center, a number of cost elements must be identified and addressed in a budget. Some of these expenses can be shared among participating agencies. The following is a sample list of budgetary expenses that will require funding:

- Salary
- Vehicles
- Equipment
- Supplies/commodities
- Facility
- Furnishings
- Information technology support
- Communication equipment
- Training
- Travel
- Contractual (copier, delivery)
- Printing
- Physical security (personnel, sensors, special rooms for federally classified information, and related systems)
- Communications (high-bandwidth, federally classified information)

Available Resources on Fusion Center CD

- Summary of Funding Resources
- The U.S. Government's Official Web Portal, www.firstgov.gov