



# BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF TRUST

## FACT SHEET

### ABOUT BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF TRUST

- The Building Communities of Trust (BCOT) initiative focuses on developing trust among law enforcement, fusion centers, and the communities they serve to address the challenges of crime and terrorism prevention.
- Since initial implementation,<sup>1</sup> the BCOT initiative has been administered primarily by the [Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting \(SAR\) Initiative \(NSI\)](#), a program that provides law enforcement with a capacity for gathering, documenting, processing, analyzing, and sharing suspicious activity reports about behaviors that have a potential nexus to terrorism.
- The NSI recognizes that each community has an important role in preventing crime and terrorism and uses the concept of community policing to build trust and cooperation to share information with state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) law enforcement officers.
- To help ensure that appropriate SAR reporting takes place, it is essential that law enforcement and community members have strong, trusting relationships. As these relationships are developed and maintained, members of the community are more likely to [report crime and suspicious activities](#), which is why the NSI has worked with partners at the federal, state, and local levels—including U.S. Attorneys’ Offices, privacy advocacy groups, faith leaders, and a diverse group of local community members—to implement the BCOT initiative.

<sup>1</sup> This initiative was initially developed in partnership with the Office of the Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment; the U.S. Department of Homeland Security; the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services; and the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance.

### OUTREACH EFFORTS

- The BCOT initiative has been implemented in over 15 urban areas across the country, with roundtables hosted by police chiefs, sheriffs’ departments, and [fusion centers](#) through the support of U.S. Attorneys, Federal Bureau of Investigation field office executives, fusion center directors, and U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) field representatives.
- Community leaders and local law enforcement share responsibility for addressing the prevention of crime and terrorism in their neighborhoods. BCOT roundtables provide a forum for community leaders and law enforcement officials to have a candid conversation on how to work together to keep communities safe from terrorism, crime, violence, and other locally based problems that would be better solved together.
- As per the guidance in the White House’s *Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*, the efforts of the BCOT initiative have continued through a partnership between the U.S. Department of Justice and DHS and in coordination with state and local law enforcement as well as law enforcement associations.<sup>2</sup>

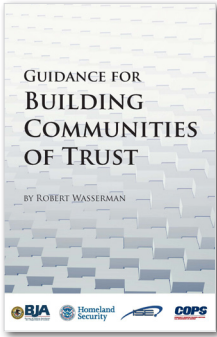


The “If You See Something, Say Something™” campaign to raise public awareness of indicators of terrorism and terrorism-related crime can be viewed at: <http://www.dhs.gov/if-you-see-something-say-something-campaign>.

<sup>2</sup> The BCOT initiative has worked closely with the International Association of Chiefs of Police to develop *Building Communities of Trust: A Guidance for Community Leaders* and with the National Network of Fusion Centers.

## BCOT-RELATED RESOURCES

- **[Guidance for Building Communities of Trust](#)**—This BCOT guidance document provides advice and recommendations on how to initiate and sustain trusting relationships that support meaningful sharing of information, responsiveness to community concerns and priorities, and the reporting of suspicious activities that appropriately distinguish between innocent cultural behaviors and behavior that may legitimately reflect criminal enterprise or terrorism precursor activities. The guidance was developed in partnership with select sites that participated in the pilot process of the NSI.



- **[Building Communities of Trust: A Guidance for Community Leaders](#)**—This document is a complementary piece to the *Guidance for Building Communities of Trust* and was developed to assist community leaders working with law enforcement agencies to facilitate dialogue and discuss ways to work together to prevent crime and terrorism.

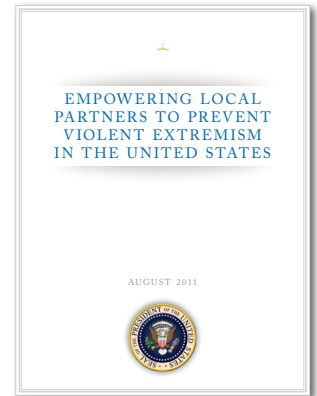


“The United States has rich experience in supporting locally based initiatives that connect communities and government to address community challenges through collaboration and the development of stakeholder networks. While recognizing that different challenges require the involvement of different stakeholders, we view community-based problem solving as an effective model of organizing communities and government to counter violent extremism in the homeland.”

—*Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*, 2011

The documents listed below showcase the BCOT initiative as one of several programs that effectively advance the countering violent extremism (CVE) strategy:

- **[National Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States](#)**—This document outlines a community-based approach and the federal government’s role in empowering local stakeholders to build resilience against violent extremism.



- **[Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States](#)**—This strategic implementation plan provides direct guidance to the field on how to leverage existing partnerships and related activities that were not created for national security purposes but nonetheless have an indirect impact on CVE. This document also includes activities that are designed specifically to counter violent extremism. It is important that both types of activities be appropriately supported and coordinated at the local level.

