



# WHAT ARE EFFECTIVE BUSINESS PRACTICES TO UTILIZE YOUR ATF CGIC?

## *Overview for Local Law Enforcement*

The Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC) is an innovative approach to combat gun violence by utilizing cutting-edge technology developed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and a dedicated multiagency investigative team to identify, disrupt, and prosecute violent offenders.

The primary objective of a CGIC is to quickly identify armed violent offenders for investigation and prosecution using crime gun evidence, such as cartridge casings, in real time. The concept targets serial shooters—those select individuals committing the disproportionate amount of gun crime in a community.

CGICs rely on the swift processing of data from ATF's National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN), which allows law enforcement to link ballistic evidence to multiple incidents in which the same firearm was used, and **eTrace**, which allows for the tracing of recovered firearms back to their original manufacturer. NIBIN analyzes and compares cartridge casings recovered from crime scenes and test fires. NIBIN correlates ballistic evidence submitted nationwide within 72 hours of entry and provides investigators with a report of linked crime scenes and shootings linked by the same ballistic evidence.

Other crime gun evidence like tracing, DNA, and fingerprints are also used to determine the origin and history of the firearm.

## Essential CGIC Program Elements

To build an effective and sustainable CGIC, the adoption of supportive business practices and policies across all levels of participating organizations is required from the patrol officers and laboratory technicians, to the detectives and agents, to prosecutors and agency leadership. When fully implemented, a CGIC more effectively deploys resources for investigations, improves communication about issues directly affecting officers and public safety and increases the number of prosecutions for crimes involving gun violence. The following seven step process model has been identified as supporting CGIC development.



**NATIONAL RESOURCE & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER  
FOR IMPROVING LAW ENFORCEMENT INVESTIGATIONS**

# WHAT DOES AN EFFECTIVE PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

- 1. Comprehensive Collection of Cartridge Casings and Crime Guns** CGICs are both the most functional and effective when law enforcement personnel (e.g. patrol officers, crime scene technicians, investigators) are called to the scene of all gun crimes and collect cartridge casings and crime guns left at the scene. Response and evidence collection policies and procedures must be developed and implemented by law enforcement leadership and communicated to the responding personnel. It is also important for CGIC leadership to meet regularly to evaluate strategic priorities and operational policies to review performance.
- 2. NIBIN Entry/Correlation and Crime Gun Tracing** Within 24 hours of recovery, crime guns are processed for forensic evidence; test fired cartridge casings and recovered crime scene cartridge casings are entered into NIBIN; and NIBIN correlations to associated crimes are identified. All crime gun trace requests are submitted through eTrace to the ATF National Tracing Center within 24 hours of recovery.
- 3. Crime Gun Intelligence Analysis** NIBIN leads and eTrace results are received by the ATF CGIC for analysis. The ATF, with support from local law enforcement, conducts a comprehensive analysis of all crime gun data collected from eTrace and NIBIN. This data is rapidly disseminated to investigators to ensure appropriate linkage of crimes, unlawfully used firearms, and suspects. Examples of dissemination include NIBIN Lead Referral Sheets and CGIC Bulletins that provide valuable information to law enforcement officers.
- 4. NIBIN Lead/Hit Assignment and Analysis** NIBIN leads/hits are triaged and immediately assigned to investigators. All crime gun data generated by NIBIN and eTrace are uniformly examined and investigated by CGIC partners to ensure that information is shared with all CGIC stakeholders. ATF, local law enforcement, the local crime lab, state and federal prosecutors, and parole and probation should be included as CGIC partners to leverage investigative capabilities. Parole and probation intelligence, including GPS monitoring data in the proximity of firearm related crimes, should be utilized to identifying violent offenders, and the unlawfully used firearms in violent crimes.
- 5. Law Enforcement and Prosecution Collaboration and Offender Arrest** All actionable crime gun intelligence generated by the CGIC is rapidly disseminated to all partners and pursued using all available resources in conjunction with state and federal prosecutors. Local and Federal prosecutors assist investigators by taking an active role in developing investigative strategies and providing investigators with resources needed to develop probable cause for offender arrest.
- 6. State or Federal Prosecution** A strong partnership and close collaboration between the local prosecuting attorney and the United States Attorney's Office (USAO) is critical to the effectiveness of CGIC operations. A local and federal prosecutor should be dedicated to work exclusively with the CGIC to consistently support investigators and determine the venue of crime gun prosecutions.
- 7. CGIC Feedback to Process Participants** All CGIC-related activities, such as NIBIN lead development, offender arrest and prosecution, should be tracked to measure CGIC outcomes and the impact on violent crime in the community. Feedback to all process participants, including the responding officers who initially collected ballistic evidence, must be timely and consistent in order to maintain the sustainability of CGIC processes.



Where  
Can I Get  
Assistance?

ATF  
atf.gov

BJA  
bja.gov

Police Foundation  
crimegunintelcenters.org  
centerforimprovinginvestigations.org

  
POLICE  
FOUNDATION