

# 5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TARGETING CRIMINAL NETWORKS THROUGH CRIME GUN INTELLIGENCE

Utilizing crime gun intelligence can be integral to identifying and dismantling criminal networks. Emphasis should be placed on timely investigative follow-up to ensure active gun offenders, or “trigger pullers,” are identified and removed from the community as quickly as possible. A NIBIN lead may not provide enough information to facilitate an arrest; however, it can provide enough information to identify and disrupt a suspected shooter who should be classified as a high priority target offender before they commit additional shootings. The shooter may be part of a larger criminal network, and both future shootings by that offender and any associated retaliation may be prevented.

Identifying the most prolific shooters through NIBIN hits and gun recoveries can aid in the strategic targeting of larger criminal networks. Traditional methods of targeting based upon prior criminal history and gang affiliations may be useful; but ultimately, the number and frequency of shootings associated with the offender through NIBIN allows law enforcement to focus on those offenders whose crimes have the biggest impact on the community. Associated information and intelligence developed during an investigation, particularly trace data from recovered crime guns known to have been used in shootings, is critical to a successful prosecution. Establishing partnerships at the local, state, and federal level is key to holding all investigative parties accountable.

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## GEOGRAPHICALLY IDENTIFY AREAS OF HIGH VIOLENCE

In addition to the areas with high numbers of homicides and non-fatal shootings, it is critical to look at concentrations of shots fired calls-for-service, gunshot detection system alerts where there are no associated calls for service, armed robberies, and aggravated assaults with a weapon. Strategic and targeted enforcement will aid in the identification of the most prolific shooters.

2

## COLLECT AND ANALYZE DATA AT EACH STAGE OF THE INVESTIGATION

Comprehensive data collection surrounding the NIBIN lead is essential to improving large-scale investigations. Collecting information regarding a suspect’s criminal history and associates, as well as trace information regarding recovered firearms will bolster intelligence surrounding the criminal network.

3

## EXAMINE ALL NIBIN LEADS ASSOCIATED WITH GANGS OR CRIMINAL NETWORKS

Examining numerous NIBIN leads associated with one or more criminal networks will assist in identifying the extent of the criminal network’s operation. By displaying the data through **link analysis charts**, large-scale networks can become evident.

4

## FOCUS ON TIME TO CRIME AND FIREARMS TRAFFICKING

It becomes evident that a crime gun with multiple NIBIN leads in a short time frame may be associated with a criminal network or retaliatory violence. NIBIN provides a more accurate measure of time to crime (traditionally defined as the date of the first retail sale from a licensed dealer to the date of law enforcement recovery), by identifying the date of the first actual crime in which the firearm was known to have been used. The shorter the time between the purchase and the first known offense, the more likely the purchaser is to have valuable information. Targeting the trafficking of the firearm through **tracing** will ultimately bolster the investigation of the criminal network, potentially identifying additional witnesses, co-conspirators, and additional offenses.

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## ESTABLISH A ROUTINE ACCOUNTABILITY MEETING

Convening partners and specialized units on a routine basis will hold all parties accountable throughout the investigation. Similarly, discussing why some NIBIN leads are not pursued for prosecution will allow partners to understand what elements are needed for effective investigation.

The National Crime Gun Intelligence Center Initiative ([crimegunintelcenters.org](http://crimegunintelcenters.org)), funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, supports local multidisciplinary teams in their efforts to prevent and reduce violent crime by identifying perpetrators, linking criminal activities, and identifying sources of crime guns for immediate disruption, investigation, and prosecution. These efforts and others are all components of CGICs, an innovative and collaborative concept developed by the **Denver Police Department** and the **ATF**. To request technical assistance, training, or other resources through this initiative, agency POCs should fill out a request form [here](#).