NCITE Project Summary
Supporting Efficient and Effective Suspicious Activity Reporting

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The project examines how Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) move from intake to outcome in U.S. Fusion Centers and what factors lead to action or closure. The team will analyze a de-identified dataset of approximately 75–100 SARs collected across multiple Fusion Centers to produce the most comprehensive evaluation of the SAR process to date. Using standard statistical models and a conjunctive analysis approach, the study will identify which attributes (e.g., SAR type, where and by whom observed, use of behavioral threat assessment) predict outcomes and how combinations of attributes form common "SAR profiles." Expected takeaways include clear predictors of outcomes and practical profiles that help operators triage tips consistently. The work will inform DHS and partners on how to process SARs more accurately, quickly, and consistently to enhance prevention and response.

Impact Statement

By identifying which SAR characteristics and workflows most reliably lead to actionable outcomes, DHS (especially the National Threat Evaluation and Reporting Office and Fusion Centers) can standardize triage, sharpen referrals, and better align behavioral threat assessment and management (BTAM) and investigative resources to prevent violence and terrorism.

Policy Impact

- Executive Order 14159, "Protecting the American People Against Invasion" (Jan. 20, 2025): Emphasizes interagency task forces and information sharing; this research strengthens guidance on evidence-based triage and reporting practices that such task forces rely on.

- Executive Order 14287, "Protecting American Communities From Criminal Aliens" (Apr. 28, 2025): Directs Department of Justice—DHS coordination with state and local agencies; this project supports consistent, defensible reporting standards across jurisdictions for SAR analytics.

- Executive Order 14288, "Strengthening and Unleashing America's Law Enforcement To Pursue Criminals and Protect Innocent Citizens" (Apr. 28, 2025): Calls for uniform crime data and enhanced support to state/local law enforcement; this project's findings will provide data-driven guidance to improve uniformity in SAR processing.

- Office of the Director of National Intelligence, "2025 Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community" (Mar. 25, 2025): Evolving threats requires innovative and up-to-date guidance, and this project will offer practical Fusion Center-level triage improvements that operationalize threat assessment insights.

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End User Offices with Direct Operational Impact

DHS National Threat Evaluation and Reporting Program Office	Fusion Centers

Expected Findings and Outputs

- Will illuminate specific attributes (e.g., SAR type, who observed, BTAM availability/employment, subject identification) that are expected to significantly predict whether reports are unfounded, forwarded, or elevated.

- Identifying profiles that matter with conjunctive analysis. These will identify common configurations of attributes (dominant profiles) linked to outcomes, clarifying how factors interact rather than act in isolation.

- Factors associated with outcomes likely differ by SAR type (criminal vs. intelligence), entity/target type, and whether BTAM is used, informing tailored workflows across Fusion Centers.

- Operator-focused outputs (snapshots, data visualizations) will distill best practices and common pitfalls for immediate use by Fusion Centers and NTER.

NCITE Strategic Priority

Targets — Improves protection of potential targets by refining how Fusion Centers convert pre-incident observations into timely, appropriate action.

NCITE Operational Area of Excellence

Research and Development Translation and Transition — Delivers actionable briefs, visuals, and guidance co-developed with NTER and Fusion Center partners for rapid operational uptake.

Methodology

The team will analyze a de-identified dataset of ˜75–100 SARs from multiple Fusion Centers, using bivariate and multivariate models to predict outcomes and subgroup analyses by SAR type, target type, and BTAM use. Conjunctive analysis will map configurations ("SAR profiles") and estimate outcome probabilities for dominant profiles (n≥10), omitting sparse/missing configurations. Analyses will draw on a codebook-guided dataset prepared in prior year and refined in 2025–2026.

Please visit the NCITE website for more information on the project at ncite.unomaha.edu

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