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## The Federal Bureau of Investigation: Just the Facts

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has more than 36,000 employees and describes itself as an “intelligence-driven, threat-focused national security organization.” It is a part of the Department of Justice and the Director of the FBI reports to the U.S. Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence. Broad changes to FBI operations and structure since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States (9/11) have underscored its dual law enforcement and intelligence missions, among which counterterrorism is the first priority.

### Budget

A sizeable increase in the FBI’s budget has accompanied the reprioritization and reorganization of the FBI since 9/11. Much of this expansion has gone to bolstering FBI counterterrorism and intelligence capacities. From FY2001 through FY2017, nominal appropriations for the FBI have increased 170%, from \$3.3 billion to \$9.0 billion. In inflation-adjusted terms, appropriations for the FBI increased 93%. (Inflation-adjusted amounts are in FY2017 dollars. Appropriations were adjusted for inflation using the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Chained Price Index.)

### Mission and Priorities

The FBI’s mission is to protect the American people and uphold the Constitution. The FBI has authority to investigate all federal crime not assigned exclusively to another federal agency (28 U.S.C. §533). It also provides criminal justice services to federal, state, municipal, tribal, and territorial law enforcement agencies and partners.

The FBI’s priorities are

- protecting the United States from terrorist attack,
- protecting the United States against foreign intelligence operations and espionage;
- protecting the United States against cyber-based attacks and high-technology crimes,
- combating public corruption at all levels,
- protecting civil rights,
- combating transnational/national criminal organizations and enterprises,
- combating major white-collar crime, and
- combating significant violent crime.

The order of these top eight priorities has not changed since 2002, when the FBI announced them as a response to 9/11.

### Investigative and Intelligence Work

The FBI’s 56 field offices in the United States and its legal attachés abroad do much of the FBI’s investigative and intelligence work, while three branches in the FBI Headquarters coordinate these efforts. Two—the FBI’s National Security Branch and its Intelligence Branch—reflect the focus of the FBI on counterterrorism and intelligence since 9/11. The third—the Criminal, Cyber, Response, and Services Branch—includes cyber crime as well as investigative programs that can be seen as more traditional aspects of the FBI’s mission.

### The National Security Branch

The National Security Branch broadly manages FBI attempts to thwart terrorists and spies (the FBI’s first two priorities). Within the National Security Branch there are several divisions, directorates, and centers, including

- **Counterterrorism Division:** responsible for counterterrorism investigations conducted by Joint Terrorism Task Forces throughout the country. The FBI is the lead agency for federal terrorism investigations (28 C.F.R. 0.85(1)).
- **Weapons of Mass Destruction Directorate:** coordinates efforts designed to prevent and respond to the use of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear weapons.
- **Terrorist Screening Center:** maintains the consolidated watch list of known or suspected terrorists.
- **Counterintelligence Division:** works to investigate and prevent theft of sensitive information by hostile actors from the U.S. government and private industries. It can include acquisition of material or technology considered classified, sensitive, or proprietary. The division also seeks to prevent weapons of mass destruction from being obtained by criminals or terrorists.

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**Terrorism Investigations.** Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) led by the FBI play the chief role in coordinating federal counterterrorism investigations across the United States, bringing together federal, state, and local agencies in the process. JTTFs are multiagency teams of investigators, analysts, linguists, and other specialists who investigate terrorism and terrorism-related crimes. Among their many roles, the agents, task force officers, and intelligence professionals working on JTTFs gather leads, evidence, and information related to terrorism suspects. They analyze and share this information to help develop cases for prosecution, most often in federal court.

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### The FBI Intelligence Branch

The work of the Intelligence Branch is not restricted to any one of the FBI's eight priorities. Rather, intelligence collection, production, and dissemination can be found throughout the FBI's priority programs. According to the FBI, this branch oversees intelligence policy. It includes the Directorate of Intelligence, the FBI's dedicated national intelligence workforce. The directorate has responsibility for all FBI intelligence functions and includes intelligence elements and personnel that reside at FBI Headquarters, each of its field offices, and in some of the FBI's legal attaché offices abroad. Intelligence collection, analysis, exploitation, and dissemination are at the core of FBI efforts to stop national security threats.

### The Criminal, Cyber, Response, and Services Branch

Among its investigative responsibilities, the Criminal, Cyber, Response, and Services Branch manages FBI casework related to the FBI's other six priorities. The branch includes two divisions covering these issues:

- **The Criminal Investigative Division** oversees investigations in more traditional FBI priority areas:

*Public Corruption.* FBI investigations in this area focus on violations of federal law by public officials; fraud tied to federal government procurement, contracts, and federally funded programs; public corruption along the nation's borders and points of entry; environmental crime; and election fraud.

*Civil Rights.* The FBI is the primary federal agency responsible for investigating allegations regarding violations of federal civil rights statutes. The FBI's civil rights program consists of four subprograms: hate crimes, color of law violations (i.e., government officials, acting under their authority, depriving people of rights protected by U.S. law or the Constitution), human trafficking, and Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act violations (18 U.S.C. §248).

*Transnational/National Criminal Organizations.* The FBI seeks to eliminate transnational organized crime groups that pose a threat to the security of the United States. Such groups are involved in international drug trafficking, migrant smuggling, human trafficking, money laundering, firearms trafficking, illegal gambling, extortion, and counterfeiting goods.

*White-Collar Crime.* The FBI generally focuses on complex white collar crime investigations—often with a nexus to organized crime activities—that are international, national, or regional in scope and where

the FBI's expertise or capabilities can increase the likelihood of successful investigations. The FBI works with other federal investigative or regulatory agencies when conducting white collar crime investigations. The FBI's white collar crime program addresses public corruption (including government fraud and border corruption), corporate fraud, securities and commodities fraud, mortgage fraud and other financial institution fraud, health care fraud, other complex financial crimes, and intellectual property rights enforcement.

*Significant Violent Crime.* The FBI continues to play a role in preventing and responding to violent crime in communities across the country. The FBI places an investigative emphasis on violent crimes with a federal nexus, such as criminal street gangs, crimes against children, child prostitution, bank robberies and other violent robberies, carjackings, kidnappings, fugitives and missing persons, crimes in Indian Country, and assaults and threats of assault on the president and other federal officials.

- **The Cyber Division** focuses on high-level intrusions by state-sponsored hackers and global cyber syndicates as well as the most prolific botnets (networks of private computers unwittingly infected by malware, controlled by an attacker, and used to carry out malicious activity). The division addresses other cyber crimes as well. The FBI leads the multiagency National Cyber Investigative Joint Task Force, which coordinates cyber threat investigations. Most of the FBI's investigative work in this area occurs at more than 90 Computer Crimes Task Forces operating in field offices across the country.

### Criminal Justice Services

The FBI also provides a wide range of services to federal, state, local, tribal, foreign, and private sector partners as well as the general public. For example, the Criminal Justice Information Services Division (CJIS) provides the public with crime statistics through the Uniform Crime Reporting Program. CJIS maintains the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, which is used by federally licensed gun retailers to help determine whether a prospective purchaser is eligible to buy firearms. Finally, CJIS operates the National Crime Information Center, which it describes as “a clearinghouse of crime data that can be tapped by virtually every criminal justice agency nationwide.”

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