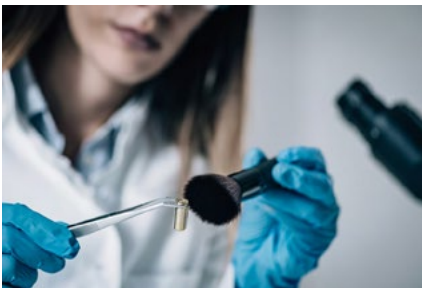# National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN)

FACT SHEET

Fast Facts

The National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) is the only national network that allows for the capture and comparison of ballistic evidence to aid in solving and preventing violent crimes involving firearms.

NIBIN and eTrace are two key tools that ATF's Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGIC) use to identify violent shooters and their sources of crime guns

NIBIN technology compares images of submitted ballistic evidence

In 1997, ATF established the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) to provide local, state, tribal and federal law enforcement partners with an automated ballistic imaging network. This technology is vital to any violent crime reduction strategy because it enables investigators to match ballistics evidence with other cases across the nation. This process also helps reveal previously hidden connections between violent crimes in different states and jurisdictions.

NIBIN is only used for criminal investigations and does not capture or store ballistic information acquired at the point of manufacture, importation, or sale.

HOW NIBIN WORKS

NIBIN technology compares images of submitted ballistic evidence from shooting scenes and recovered firearms and produces a list of possible similar results. Trained NIBIN technicians then conduct a correlation review of these results, identifying NIBIN leads or potential links or associations from the same firearm. A NIBIN lead is an unconfirmed, potential association between two or more pieces of firearm ballistic evidence and is based on a correlation review of the digital images in the NIBIN database.

When needed for court or other purposes, a firearms examiner will conduct a microscopic examination of the actual physical evidence to confirm a NIBIN lead as a hit. A NIBIN hit occurs when two or more firearms ballistic evidence acquisitions are identified as a confirmed match by a firearms examiner. The data is then compiled into intelligence reports that are used for investigations and court cases.

THE NUMBERS

5.7 million pieces of **ballistic evidence** along with over **45 million images** are stored **in NIBIN.**

640,000 NIBIN leads and **145,000 NIBIN hits** were **identified** during its **25-year history.**

104,206 investigative leads were **generated by 278 NIBIN locations** in fiscal year **2022.**

PARTNERING WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT

NIBIN relies on the close coordination of its partner law enforcement agencies at the local, state, federal, tribal and territorial levels to compile their data and share intelligence about violent crimes. NIBIN's success depends on four critical steps:

1. Comprehensive Collection and Entry: Partner agencies must collect and submit all evidence suitable for entry into NIBIN, regardless of the crime. Evidence includes cartridge cases recovered from crime scenes, as well as test fires from recovered crime guns.

2. Timely Turnaround: Violent crime investigations can rapidly go cold, so the goal is to enter the evidence into the network as quickly as possible to identify potential NIBIN leads for investigators.

3. Investigative Follow-Up and Prosecution: Linking otherwise unassociated crimes gives investigators a better chance to identify and arrest shooters before they reoffend.

4. Feedback Loop: Without feedback, NIBIN partners cannot know how their efforts are making the community safer, which is necessary for sustained success.

COMBATING VIOLENT CRIME

Before NIBIN was created, law enforcement agencies did not have access to technology that allowed them to research, identify and cross-reference firearms ballistic data in one online system.

Since its launch, the technology behind NIBIN has provided participating law enforcement agencies with an automated method to share, research, identify and cross-reference firearms ballistic data across a nationwide network. ATF maintains and operates NIBIN's infrastructure at no charge to law enforcement partners.

Along with eTrace, NIBIN is a critical part of ATF's Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC) operations. CGICs are multiagency law enforcement collaborations focused on stopping gun crimes by collecting, analyzing, and distributing intelligence reports about crime guns, mass shootings, and major incidents across jurisdictions.