



# **Safeguarding Communities: ATF's Key Accomplishments and Impact**

January 2021 to January 2025

## [Message from the Director](#)

I have had the deep honor to lead the brave and dedicated professionals of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) as their Director since July 2022. But even before that, during my two decades as a prosecutor, I knew that ATF was more than a law enforcement agency—it is the cornerstone in the fight to protect the public from violent crime. As Director, I now know that even ATF’s closest partners only see a fraction of ATF’s impactful work. This report aims to provide a comprehensive, yet digestible, overview of the extraordinary work that the men and women have done over the last four years to fight violent crime—what I call “One ATF.”

What does it mean to be One ATF? Understanding ATF means not just understanding its individual components, but how all its efforts work in combination to address violent crime.

ATF is the nation’s premier federal law enforcement agency focused on violent crime. It is also a regulatory body, a forensic powerhouse, and home to the world’s leading experts in arson, explosives, and firearms. ATF provides critical support to state, local, Tribal, territorial, and international law enforcement agencies. All these diverse roles support one north star: fighting violent crime. That unified purpose is what we mean here when we talk about One ATF. That fight preceded my arrival at ATF, and it will continue long after I leave. The people of ATF are unsung heroes who deserve our deepest thanks.

During the last four years ATF has achieved a dizzying amount of progress and work on behalf of the American people. Confronted with a historic spike in violent crime, including firearms violence, ATF mobilized its full strength even in the wake of budget cuts in FY 2024 to tackle this crisis. The results speak for themselves: violent crime, firearms offenses, and homicides have fallen dramatically for two—and now three--consecutive years, with double-digit decreases in many communities.



This progress did not happen by chance—it reflects the bravery, hard work, and innovation of a lot of people, including thousands of ATF men and women and our incredible partners. That progress is not because of any one measure. It is because of ATF’s “all-of-the-above, all-hands-on-deck” approach, as exemplified by the contents of this report. However, progress like this is fragile. If we as a Nation do not continue an aggressive and comprehensive approach to fighting violent crime, these hard-won gains can quickly be lost.

This report offers just a glimpse into the transformative work at ATF over the last four years. Highlighting every program, initiative, and case would require volumes. Yet even with all that has been done, the work is far from over. Too many lives are still shattered by violent crime. Here at ATF, our hearts go out to the victims and survivors of violent crime. And, here at ATF, given the proper support and funding, I know that the brave, dedicated, and talented folks will continue risking everything to keep the American people safe. Let this report not only celebrate their achievements but also remind us of what’s at stake—and inspire a continued commitment to protecting our communities from violence.



Steven M. Dettelbach  
Director ATF



## Combating Violent Crime

ATF's core mission is to protect the American people from violent crime. While violent crime surged in 2020, the Nation has since experienced one of the most significant declines in violent crime in history due to the efforts of ATF and its partners. Despite these gains, firearms-related violence remains a persistent threat, requiring us to double down on strategies that work.

### Fast Facts:

- ***Historic Crime Reduction and Enforcement Gains:*** Violent crime hit a 50-year low, including a 17.5% drop in murder and 7.8% decline in robbery, due in part to ATF's data-driven enforcement, which resulted in a 115% increase in seized crime guns and 8.5% more convictions from 2022 to 2023. [Preliminary data for 2024](#) shows that violent crime has continued to decline considerably.
- ***Cracking Down on Organized Crime:*** ATF has zeroed in on investigations of violent criminal organizations, such as sentencing 16 Hells Angels members for racketeering and 3 Vice Lord Nation members to 70 years for murder and narcotics trafficking, principally responsible for wreaking havoc in their communities. Over the past four years, in fact, ATF has demonstrated its commitment to combating organized crime by referring over 1250 individuals for prosecution under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act and more than 600 individuals for Violent Crimes in Aid of Racketeering violations.
- ***Dismantling Firearms Trafficking Networks:*** Since 2021, ATF's new Cross-Jurisdictional Strike Forces, National Trafficking Center, and Operation Southbound have intercepted gun pipelines supplying illicit firearms both domestically and internationally, resulting in thousands of convictions for firearms trafficking, such as a 10-year sentence for an Indiana man trafficking ghost guns and 13 years for a trafficker supplying firearms to Mexican cartels.
- ***Combating Emerging Threats:*** ATF has established a new Emerging Threats Center to combat alarming trends in violent crime, including increasing



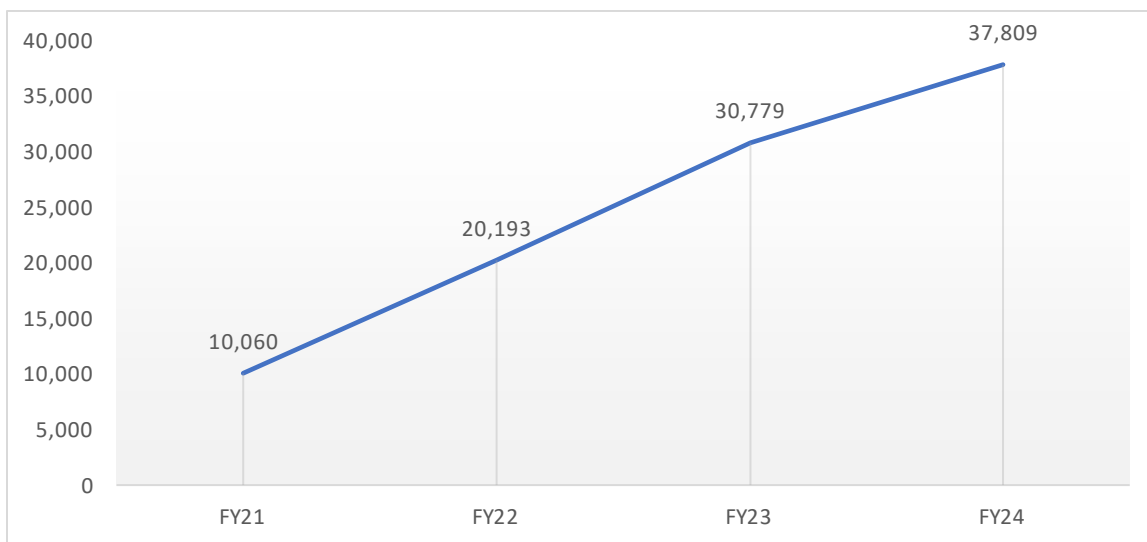
recoveries by law enforcement of privately made firearms and machinegun conversion devices at crime scenes.

## Crime Down & ATF Results Up

After peaking during the pandemic, violent crime began to [trend significantly downwards in 2023](#), including double-digit drops in homicide rates across many major cities. 2023 had one of the lowest violent crime rates in the past half-century and [preliminary data for 2024](#) shows that violent crime has continued to decline considerably, including a 17.5% decline in murder, 3.6% decrease in aggravated assault, and 7.8% decline in robbery over the first three quarters of the year.

During this same time frame, over the past four years, ATF has also increased its use of Crime Gun Intelligence to better target criminals responsible for violent crime in our communities. Between 2022 and 2023, for example, ATF criminal enforcement efforts were up—with over 4.5% more defendants indicted and 8.5% more defendants convicted. In addition, total crime guns taken into ATF custody have surged by more than 115%.

### Crime Guns Taken into ATF Custody



## Gangs, Transnational Criminal Organizations, & Racketeering

These cases are not just statistics, they have a direct impact on public safety. ATF is the only federal law enforcement agency whose sole focus is to work with police and other partners to protect Americans from violent crime—whether it's by indicting [45 Minneapolis gang members](#) involved in murder and drug trafficking or [7 Sinaloa Cartel Members](#) for fentanyl and firearms trafficking, our enforcement efforts are having a very real effect on violent crime. That is because the defendants who ATF recommends for prosecution have, on average, *over seven* prior arrests and two prior convictions.

ATF has been a law enforcement leader in bringing large scale Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) and Violent Crimes in Aid of Racketeering cases targeting violent organizations whose members drive violent crime, and we have conducted scores of trainings for our partners all over the nation on the use of these tools. Just a few recent examples of such cases include:

- In [December 2024](#), three members of the Almighty Vice Lord Nation were sentenced to between 60 years and 70 years for their role in a vast criminal RICO enterprise, whose members committed racketeering acts such as murder, narcotics trafficking, witness intimidation, and weapons offenses.
- In [October 2024](#), 16 Hells Angels & Red Devils members were charged for conspiracy to use violence, threats, and intimidation to carry out the gang's perceived mission and rules, including murder in aid of racketeering of a rival gang member.
- In [December 2022](#), an Aryan Circle Gang leader and a member were sentenced to life in prison and 30 years in prison, respectively, for



their involvement in a racketeering enterprise, which attempted to murder a member of a rival gang.

## Cross-Jurisdictional Firearms Trafficking Strike Forces

Far too often, firearms violence is fueled by the alarming ease with which criminals can access weapons through illegal means—such as unlicensed dealers, firearms trafficking, and straw purchasers. Shockingly, between 2017 and 2021, [60% of trafficked firearms](#) ended up in the hands of convicted felons. [Thousands of these illegal firearms](#) were then used to commit heinous crimes, including murder, aggravated assault, and home invasions.

In response, ATF intensified its focus on dismantling the illegal firearms trafficking pipelines that span the nation. These routes funnel weapons from source cities, through communities, and into major metropolitan areas, driving violent crime rates. Recognizing that reducing gun violence requires cutting off the supply of illegal firearms at its roots, ATF has implemented a comprehensive strategy to disrupt this deadly flow.

The Department of Justice’s Cross-Jurisdictional Strike Forces, established in [2021](#) and staffed by ATF, embody this approach by deploying evidence-based tactics to intercept traffickers and dismantle gun trafficking networks. These coordinated operations have led to significant, impactful arrests and firearm seizures, demonstrating that when federal, state, and local agencies unite, real progress is made in making our communities safer:

- In [July 2024](#), an Indiana man was sentenced to 10 years in prison for trafficking firearms from Indianapolis to Chicago, including semiautomatic rifles and ghost guns, some of which the defendant sold to undercover law enforcement officers in three separate transactions.



- In [April 2024](#), a Chicago-area man was sentenced to nearly six years in prison for unlawfully dealing firearms, including more than 25 machinegun conversion devices, also known as “switches,” to an undercover law enforcement officer.
- In [March 2024](#), four men pleaded guilty for their roles in illegally trafficking more than 50 firearms from Virginia to New York, including a firearm used to shoot into a large crowd at a family day celebration in Bedford-Stuyvesant in 2021.
- In [September 2023](#), an Indiana man was sentenced for his role in a conspiracy to straw purchase and traffic firearms from Indiana to Chicago, including one firearm that was used just 48 days later to shoot and kill a 6-year-old girl at a fast food restaurant.
- In [March 2023](#), a California man was sentenced to more than three years in prison for unlawfully dealing and manufacturing firearms, including selling firearms kits on Snapchat.
- In [April 2022](#), a Massachusetts man was sentenced to five years in prison for illegally trafficking dozens of firearms into Massachusetts from Georgia, including one firearm used by a gang member to shoot at a rival gang, which tragically struck an innocent 15-year-old girl twice.

By targeting illegal supply chains at every stage, ATF reaffirms its unwavering commitment and investment in making more complex and impactful cases to curb gun violence—no matter where illegal firearms originate or where they are destined.





## Operation Southbound

ATF has focused on identifying, disrupting, and dismantling domestic and international firearms trafficking networks that transport firearms illegally from the United States to Mexico, many of which are used to arm vicious and dangerous drug cartels. Cross-border firearms trafficking does not occur only at the border, or only include dozens of firearms being illegally transported at once. Rather, the problem is diffuse, with firearms trafficking often involving the smuggling of a few weapons at a time, from sources that extend well beyond the border. Accordingly, ATF uses every tool available to address international and domestic firearms trafficking.

Operation Southbound, an ATF-led initiative, is the Department of Justice's flagship effort to combat international firearms trafficking to Mexico and has set a new standard for law enforcement effectiveness along the Southwest Border. This initiative further builds on past successes, and employs a whole-of-government approach to identify, target, and dismantle networks illegally transporting firearms from the United States to Mexico—leading to increased arrests and firearm seizures.

This operation consists of [nine ATF-led interagency Firearms Trafficking Task Forces](#) deployed in eight cities along the Southwest Border with the sole focus on stemming the trafficking of firearms from the United States to Mexico. Since its inception in 2020, Operation Southbound has [propelled a](#) 40% surge in firearms trafficking investigations in Mexico, and driven an 11% rise in related firearm seizures. In addition to ATF personnel, these teams include participants from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and state and local law enforcement agencies, as well as prosecutors. Their courage and hard work have made a demonstrable impact.

Operation Southbound has generated a 34% increase in ATF-led criminal cases involving firearms trafficking to Mexico, and the seizure of 86% more



firearms being trafficked to Mexico in FY 2023 compared to the prior year. These efforts have already resulted in the successful prosecution of networks engaged in the trafficking of firearms to transitional organized criminal organizations in Mexico, such as:

- In [September 2024](#), a Jalisco New Generation Cartel member was sentenced to 25 years in prison for his involvement in an organization that smuggled hundreds of firearms into Mexico and methamphetamine into the United States.
- In [April 2024](#), an Idaho man was sentenced to 7 years in prison for selling machinegun conversion devices, which transform legal semi-automatic firearms into illegal machineguns, including to cartel drug dealers in Mexico.
- In [January 2024](#), two men were sentenced to 21 and 20 years in prison, respectively, for their roles in running an affiliate of Mexican cartels that smuggled substantial quantities of firearms to Mexico to trade them for hundreds of kilograms of drugs.
- In [October 2023](#), two brothers pleaded guilty to conspiring to traffic over 30 firearms—including privately made firearms, silencers, and machineguns—to Mexico for use by individuals they believed were international drug traffickers.

ATF also continues to increase its efforts to work with Mexican authorities to address firearms trafficking. [The number of crime gun trace submissions from Mexico has increased by more than 22%](#)—from 20,868 in 2021 to 26,061 in 2023. In addition, we have assisted in training the first ever vetted Mexican trafficking unit, to further support cross border investigations.



In 2023, ATF also established the ATF Southwest Border Initiative to surge Special Agents and Intelligence Research Specialists to the border to assist with the reduction of violent crime and to enhance law enforcement capabilities in the region. Special Agents and Intelligence Research Specialists were deployed to the cities of Laredo, McAllen, Del Rio, and El Paso, Texas in support of U.S. Government efforts.

In addition to its vast enforcement efforts, ATF has taken steps to improve the intelligence available to stop unlawful trafficking to the cartels. Specifically, [ATF added to its Southwest border Demand Letter 3 multiple sales reporting program](#), holders of federal firearms import and manufacture license holders. The data showed, among other things, that many holders of these licenses were making such retail sales using the 07 and 08 license series, and therefore should be held to the same Demand Letter 3 reporting requirements as apply to licensed retail dealers in the same geographic area. This includes improvement to level the field amongst holders of these various license types and also, critically will help law enforcement to better identify sources of cartel preferred firearms being unlawfully trafficked to cartels from the United States.

### Focus on Emerging Threats

In January 2023, ATF created the Emerging Threats Center (ETC) to address the increasing misuse of technology to violate U.S. firearms and related laws. The Center has initially focused on the proliferation of privately made firearms, machinegun conversion devices (MCDs), silencers, and other firearms related technology posing a substantial risk to public safety and the law enforcement community. Since that time, the ETC has initiated or referred approximately eighty cases to the field mainly involving MCDs and National Firearms Act (NFA) weapons. In addition, in [2023](#), the ETC helped support the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York in successfully bringing the first ever civil



injunctive action under 18 U.S.C. § 1345 dealing with unlawful marketing and distribution of automatic weapons by a company and its principals.

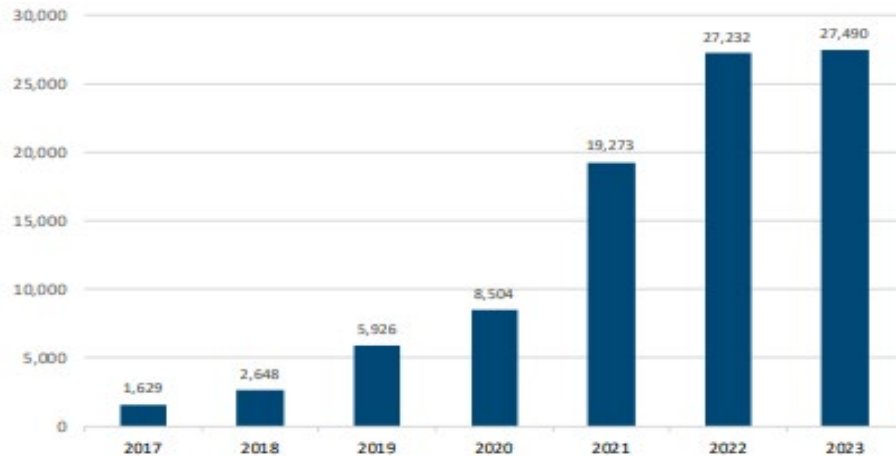
***Privately Made Firearms (PMFs).***

Between 2017 and 2023, 92,702 suspected PMFs—untraceable “ghost guns,” which are often sold and obtained without background checks and do not contain serial numbers—were recovered and reported. The number of PMFs recovered in crimes surged nearly 1,600% (from 1,629 to 27,490) with nearly 1,700 connected homicides and over 4,000 linked to other violent crimes.

To disrupt this alarming and dangerous trend, ATF took action to equip federal, state, Tribal, and territorial law enforcement and prosecutors with the tools and expertise needed to prevent PMFs from being used to commit crimes via [a National Ghost Gun Initiative](#). ATF, as part of that effort, has designated PMF coordinators in every ATF field division to serve as a resource to law enforcement and prosecutors on questions involving unmarked firearms used in crimes. ATF’s firearms technology experts also conducted [trainings](#) for tens of thousands of its partners across the country enabling law enforcement and prosecutors to raise awareness about the serious dangers posed by PMFs.

Between 2000 and 2022, annual miscellaneous firearms, which are predominantly firearm frames and receivers manufactured and sold before being assembled into an operational firearm, increased nearly 6,600%, with the bulk of this growth taking place in the last 10 years. Strikingly, such firearm manufacturing has [decreased by 36%](#) between 2022 and 2023, as ATF responded. In 2023, law enforcement recovered more than 27,00 privately made firearms—less than a 1% increase from 2022, representing [the smallest year-over-year increase on record](#):





### ***Machinegun Conversion Devices (MCDs).***

With a single engagement of the trigger, MCDs can unleash up to 1,200 rounds per minute—a staggering rate of fire that causes devastation throughout our communities. Alarming, the recovery of these deadly, illegal devices has surged 784% between 2019 and 2023, endangering law enforcement, communities, and families alike. MCDs themselves, whether attached to a firearm or not, constitute machineguns under federal law, meaning they are illegal to make, sell, transport, or possess, except under very limited circumstances.

[In September 2024](#), the Deputy Attorney General, supported by ATF, issued a directive to all Department of Justice law enforcement components and prosecutors establishing Department priorities on combatting the proliferation of MCDs, including making such cases prosecution priorities. ATF along with members of the additive manufacturing (3D-printed) industry, academia (including scholars from Dartmouth College and Wichita State University), Oak Ridge National Lab, and law enforcement also joined the Deputy Attorney General in announcing the establishment of the Justice Department’s Action Network to Terminate Illegal Machinegun Conversion Devices (ANTI-MCD) Committee.

The ANTI-MCD Committee is co-chaired by ATF and is focused on developing recommendations and best practices for dealing with MCDs to ensure seamless coordination, to spot trends, and gather intelligence. The ANTI-MCD



Committee is working with law enforcement to update the tracking of MCD seizures and prosecutions in real time, and includes a national MCD Training Initiative, spearheaded by ATF and designed to equip law enforcement and prosecutors with the tools they need to investigate, prosecute, and deter MCD manufacturing, possession, and use. Finally, the ANTI-MCD Committee has [published](#) model legislation offering a framework for states to consider as they combat the rise in MCDs in communities across the nation.

\* \* \*

ATF's efforts have already resulted in successful investigations and prosecutions concerning these emerging public safety threats, including, for example:

- In [January 2025](#), three Florida men, including a federal firearms licensee, pleaded guilty to trafficking in firearms for conspiring to smuggle more than 100 firearms, MCDs, and grenades out of the country.
- In [December 2024](#), the Western District of Oklahoma announced that 44 defendants had been charged in the first year of "Project Switch Off" as part of a crackdown on illegal MCDs. As part of this initiative, ATF and other law enforcement seized 185 MCDs, 298 illegally possessed firearms, two 3-D printers used to manufacture MCDs, and over 100,000 rounds of ammunition.
- In [November 2024](#), a Massachusetts man was sentenced to over three years in prison for distributing about 50 PMFs and 100 MCDs imported from China to individuals located in Kansas and Massachusetts.



- In [October 2024](#), a Florida man, who was part of an Anti-Government Militia, pleaded guilty to unlawful possession of MCDs and a silencer that he made for the militia.
- In [October 2024](#), an Evansville man was sentenced to seven years in prison for possessing and 3-D printing at least 60 PMFs and dozens of MCDs.
- In [June 2023](#), a Rhode Island man was sentenced to three years in prison for making and stockpiling PMFs, including four fully functioning PMFs and two in various stage of assembly; three silencers; approximately 1,500 rounds of ammunition; and various parts and kits used to assemble PMFs.
- In [February 2023](#), a former National Guard member who made antisemitic and violent statements online was sentenced to nearly six years in prison for making and selling 3-D printed PMFs, including MCDs designed to convert semiautomatic AR-rifles into fully automatic machineguns.

## National Firearms Trafficking Center

On April 2, 2024, ATF announced the establishment of the National Firearms Trafficking Center (NFTC). The NFTC was established by ATF's Office of Field Operations in partnership with the Office of Intelligence Operations to enhance efforts in combating illegal firearms trafficking and supporting law enforcement partners nationwide. The NFTC integrates ATF's intelligence, operations, and partnerships in a centralized, whole-of-government center. Its goals include: reducing firearms transitioning from legal to illegal markets by better supporting the most impactful cases, targeting complex, multi-jurisdictional trafficking networks, and enhancing ATF's ability to provide



actionable intelligence, operational support, and case coordination for such investigations.

The NFTC focuses on identifying and dismantling trafficking networks fueling gun violence and criminal organizations using firearms. It prioritizes regions linked to firearms trafficking, including cartel-related operations targeting Mexico. Using advanced Crime Gun Intelligence tools and expert analysis, the NFTC generates and coordinates actionable intelligence to support ATF and partner agencies. It leads federal efforts in firearm-related intelligence, interdictions, and investigations with a comprehensive and coordinated strategy.

## Indian Country

ATF strives to seek justice for all the people in the Nation, including historically vulnerable populations. ATF is an investigative partner in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) Project. We support MMIP investigations and prosecutions involving the use of fire as a weapon, firearms violence or the recovery of firearms, ammunition or ballistic evidence. In 2024, [ATF dedicated a Special Agent](#) Certified Fire Investigator to assist federal and Tribal law enforcement in the review and investigations of MMIP cases for two years. The assigned Special Agent has worked extensively with law enforcement partners to address cases throughout Tribal communities, assisting in 25 cases so far. ATF has also significantly increased its coordination with state, local, and Tribal law enforcement in Oklahoma, including arson and fire investigators there, in the wake of the Supreme Court's *McGirt* decision.

## Special Response Teams

ATF's Special Response Teams (SRTs) are elite tactical groups that rapidly respond to high-risk law enforcement operations and conduct criminal investigations that lead to the arrests of the most violent criminals in the United States. Their work includes search and arrest warrants, high-risk criminal





investigations, undercover operations, surveillance operations, and protective service operations.

Between 2021 and 2024, ATF's SRT operations have skyrocketed by over 27%, resulting in the arrest of more than 660 suspects. This growth reflects both the impactful cases and dangerous individuals with whom ATF deals every day. It also reflects ATF's commitment to best-in-class tactical preparation and execution. In that vein, ATF criminal enforcement operations have had access to [SRT's canines](#) in more than 850 operations during that period, as well.

### Emergency Support Function #13 Deployments

ATF leads Emergency Support Function (ESF) #13, which provides a mechanism for coordinating and providing federal-to-federal support; federal support to state, tribal, and local authorities; or support to other Emergency Support Functions, consisting of law enforcement, public safety, and security capabilities and resources during potential or actual incidents requiring a coordinated federal response. It integrates safety and security capabilities and resources to support the full range of incident management activities during a deployment.

Since 2021, ATF, leading the Department of Justice's ESF #13, has played a pivotal role in coordinating federal public safety and security assistance during various national emergencies. Examples of notable accomplishments include:

- ***Hurricanes Helene and Milton:*** In October 2024, ESF #13 was activated, back-to-back, to provide federal public safety and security assistance in the aftermath of [Hurricanes Helene and Milton](#). ATF assembled federal law enforcement teams to support response efforts, including force protection for Urban Search and Rescue teams and Disaster Medical Assistance Teams.



- **Maui Wildfires:** In [August 2023](#), ESF #13 provided federal public safety and security assistance to support Maui's first responders during the wildfire disaster. This included force protection for Urban Search and Rescue teams and Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams, as well as augmentation to the Maui Police Department for patrol duties and securing disaster areas.

## Investigating Fires and Criminal Bombings

The ATF's [National Response Teams](#) (NRT) consists of highly trained and experienced special agents, certified fire investigators, certified explosive specialists, explosives enforcement officers, electrical engineers, and other experts who work in conjunction with ATF's partners to support major arson and explosives investigations in the United States and internationally. Responding anywhere in the United States within 24 hours, the NRT works in conjunction with other federal, state and local investigators to reconstruct the scene, identify the seat of the blast or origin of the fire, and determine the cause of the event. In the case of bombings and arsons, NRT members gather evidence to support criminal prosecutions.

As of March 2023, there have been 900 total National Response Team and 41 International Response Team activations. Since 2021, the number of NRT activations has increased from 12 in 2021, to 16 in 2022 to 20 in 2023 (plus two international deployments). This reflects the increasing demand for ATF's expert assistance in the world's most important and sensitive fire and explosives events. High profile activations since 2021 include:

- In [January 2025](#), NRT was deployed to investigate the Pacific Palisades fire, one of the devastating wildfires that have ravaged and continue to threaten homes and businesses throughout the Los Angeles region. Their mission will be to conduct an origin and cause examination of the Pacific Palisades fire.



- In [January 2025](#), NRT was activated to investigate a fire at a short-term rental property that the Bourbon Street terrorist lit shortly before he killed 14 people at a New Year's Day celebration in New Orleans. NRT's investigation revealed that the fire was set intentionally in an attempt to destroy evidence of his crimes, and that explosive devices failed to detonate due the crude nature of the devices and the individual's lack of experience.
- In [October 2024](#), NRT released an independent summary and findings in a report of the Maui wildfire that killed over 100 people in August 2023. Based on NRT's comprehensive investigation, the fires were determined to be accidental.
- In [May 2023](#), NRT responded to investigate a Guyana school dormitory fire which killed 20, [mostly indigenous Patamona students](#).



## Crime Gun Intelligence

ATF's cutting-edge crime gun intelligence (CGI) tools—eTrace, the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN), and TouchDNA—empower federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial law enforcement to remove shooters from their streets and cut off the supply of illicit firearms to those shooters. These tools allow ATF's law enforcement partners, at no cost to them, to squeeze every last piece of evidence out of a gun used in crime.

### Fast Facts:

- ***Revolutionizing Gun Crime Investigations:*** ATF's eTrace and NIBIN systems have transformed crime-solving by generating over 1.1 million investigative leads from ballistic evidence and linking suspects to major crimes within hours—helping to charge dozens of defendants in cities like Cleveland, Memphis, and New Orleans.
- ***Cutting-Edge Forensic Capabilities:*** ATF's advancements in Touch DNA technology have increased DNA match rates from cartridge casings to nearly 60%, helping law enforcement solve high-profile cases such as the Tulare County execution-style murders and the shooting of an off-duty officer in Chicago.
- ***Strengthening Local Crime Prevention Strategies:*** ATF's Crime Gun Intelligence Centers have expanded to over 60 locations since 2021, using data-driven strategies and cross-agency collaboration to address gun violence at its source—leading to crime reduction strategies tailored to individual communities, such as Cleveland and Chicago.

### eTrace

ATF's [National Tracing Center](#) (NTC) is the nation's sole crime gun tracing facility—a vital resource that empowers federal, state, local, and international law enforcement to solve gun crimes, disrupt firearm trafficking, and trace the movement of illegal firearms across cities, states, and even borders.



Firearm tracing provides critical information to assist domestic and international law enforcement agencies in investigating and solving firearms crimes; detecting firearms trafficking; and tracking the intrastate, interstate and international movement of crime guns. All firearms traced must have been used, or suspected to have been used, in a crime.

In FY 2024, the NTC processed over 639,000 crime gun trace requests—a 75% percent increase over the past ten years and the third consecutive year of over 600,000 traces. The NTC managed 84.4 million out-of-business paper records and 1.2 million digital out-of-business records in FY 2024 alone, shouldering an ever-growing workload with less personnel.

ATF's NTC has been instrumental in solving high-profile crimes, for example:

- In [July 2024](#), within a half-hour, firearm trace information, including out-of-business records, helped law enforcement identify the would-be assassin of President Trump after a shooting at a campaign event in Butler, Pennsylvania.
- In [April 2024](#), firearm trace information linked a Kansas man to the theft of 40 firearms from a Missouri firearms dealer in a trafficking conspiracy involving Mexico.
- In [July 2022](#), after the Highland Park tragedy, firearm trace information helped identify the shooter responsible for killing seven and injuring 38 at a July 4th parade within 8 hours.
- In [April 2022](#), following a Brooklyn subway attack that wounded 10 people, firearm trace information helped identify the shooter in twelve hours, leading to his swift arrest.

## NIBIN

ATF's [National Integrated Ballistics Information Network](#) (NIBIN) is the only automatic ballistics imaging network in the Nation, enabling law enforcement to link multiple crime scenes to a single firearm in as little as 24 to 48 hours.



NIBIN turns bullet casings into actionable leads, connecting crimes and criminals faster than ever. Because of its power in catching criminals, the NIBIN participation rate by ATF's law enforcement agency partners has *doubled* in the last four years, from near 33% to approximately 66%. So too have the number of leads ATF sent back based on these submissions skyrocketed. Between FY 2017 and 2023, NIBIN acquisition sites, total acquisitions, and leads increased 89%, 134%, and 433%, respectively. In FY 2023 alone, ATF provided over 221,000 investigative leads to help law enforcement clear shooting investigations—representing a 17% increase from the prior year.

By November 2024, NIBIN held 7,199,600 entries of criminal investigation generated ballistic evidence, producing over 1,111,285 investigative leads for domestic and international law enforcement. Here are just a few examples of how NIBIN data brings criminals to justice:

- In [December 2024](#), a defendant received a prison sentence of more than 14 years after NIBIN linked a loaded handgun to a shooting in New Haven and a shots-fired incident in Wolcott, Connecticut.
- In [September 2024](#), a Black Guerilla Family gang member was sentenced to 38 years in prison for racketeering after NIBIN investigative leads unraveled his violent activities.
- In [October 2023](#), in Operation Big Easy, 41 defendants were charged, and 70 crime guns were seized in New Orleans, after NIBIN linked firearms to homicides and assaults.
- In [October 2023](#), law enforcement in Memphis, aided by over 5,000 NIBIN data points, charged 21 defendants and seized over 100 firearms in a crackdown on firearm-related violence.
- In [September 2023](#), in Cleveland, 59 defendants were charged and 240 firearms were seized after NIBIN connected guns to violent crimes across the city and its suburbs.



## TouchDNA

ATF labs have developed unsurpassed, peer reviewed expertise in the specialized area of touch DNA analysis, in which low levels of DNA can be recovered from firearms, bombs, and other tools of violent criminals. ATF's capabilities in latent print examination and tool mark analysis provides links between the evidence recovered from violent crimes and the perpetrators of the acts.

TouchDNA, which is a technique that recovers DNA from fired cartridge casings (FCCs), enables ATF to provide investigative leads such as names of potential suspects found in the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS, which contains profiles from convicted offenders) and link crimes to the same individual even when different guns are used.

Between [2022](#) and [2023](#), due to advances in technology made in our laboratories, ATF yielded 173% more DNA results from fired cartridge cases. Additionally, ATF's ability to provide positive DNA hits on FCCs has increased from single digits in 2019 to nearly 60% today.

Through our touch DNA technology, we are now able to identify suspects who might have gone undetected just a few years ago, for example:

- In [May 2024](#), the Chicago Police Department charged the shooter of an off-duty Police Officer after extracting the shooter's DNA from recovered ballistics evidence.
- In [February 2023](#), the Tulare County Sheriff was able to use DNA evidence to connect known Norteños gang members to the execution-style killings of a family of six—including a teenage girl and her 10-month-old baby, in a farming community in Goshen, California.
- In [June 2021](#), the Prince William County Police Department connected two men to a shooting at a restaurant that left a delivery driver dead.



## Crime Gun Intelligence Centers

ATF's [Crime Gun Intelligence Centers](#), or CGICs, serve as hubs where local, state, and federal law enforcement come together to address the specific drivers of gun violence within the communities they serve. CGICs enable law enforcement to address emerging violent crime trends by using technology and intelligence to identify the limited number of individuals at highest risk of perpetrating community violence. CGICs disrupt the shooting cycle by using forensic science and data analysis to identify, investigate, and prosecute shooters and their sources of crime guns.

Since 2021, ATF has opened more than 60 new CGICs or enhanced existing facilities, contributing to the decline in violent crime in these cities. Among other initiatives, ATF opened new CGIC facilities in [Cleveland](#) and [Chicago](#), and the [National Crime Gun Intelligence Center of Excellence at Wichita State University](#).

Currently there are 26 ATF CGIC Locations; 10 ATF and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area CGICs, 12 Joint ATF and Law Enforcement Partner CGICs, and 32 additional Consortium CGICs jointly run by ATF and multiple other partners. As of November 2024, there were 7,199,600 entries of ballistic evidence in NIBIN, which generated over 1,111,285 investigative leads provided to ATF's federal, state, local, Tribal, territorial, and international law enforcement partners.

### ATF's Crime Gun Intelligence Center of Excellence

In [May 2023](#), ATF celebrated the grand opening of the National Crime Gun Intelligence Center of Excellence at Wichita State University's Innovation Campus—a game-changing hub designed to set the national standard for crime gun investigations. This center is a beacon of progress, equipping federal, state, local, and Tribal law enforcement with the most advanced tools and techniques to combat gun violence.





The Center of Excellence houses a second National Correlation and Training Center for the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network. NIBIN is the only national network that allows for the 3D imaging and comparison of ballistic evidence recovered from crime scenes. The existing NIBIN National Correlation and Training Center, located in Huntsville, Alabama, conducts approximately 1,700 correlations per day for law enforcement agencies nationwide.

Bringing the second correlation center fully online at the Center of Excellence, if properly funded, will allow ATF to expand its correlation services, creating the capacity to provide NIBIN correlations to additional law enforcement agencies, resulting in more crime gun intelligence leads for our law enforcement partners nationwide. ATF's correlation services are provided at no cost to our law enforcement partners. This center will also allow ATF to expand their technical training to ATF's law enforcement partners in acquisition and correlation training.





# NATIONAL CRIME GUN INTELLIGENCE CENTER OF EXCELLENCE



## RESEARCH PROGRAM



## ACADEMY & TRAINING PROGRAM



## NATIONAL CRIME GUN INTELLIGENCE GOVERNING BOARD

The National Crime Gun Intelligence Center of Excellence (CGICex) is dedicated to:

- The development, implementation and evaluation of evidence-based Crime Gun Intelligence research
- Training programs designed for every part of the Crime Gun Intelligence Community; Chiefs/Sheriffs, Command Staff, Investigators, Analyst, and Patrol Officers
- Research Collaboration with Law Enforcement, Academia and Research Institutions
- Home of the National Crime Gun Intelligence Governing Board



[CGICex@atf.gov](mailto:CGICex@atf.gov)



[CGICexTraining@atf.gov](mailto:CGICexTraining@atf.gov)

## Implementation of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act

In June 2022, Congress supplemented ATF's firearms enforcement responsibilities with the enactment of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) in the wake of the tragic mass shootings—including at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas; Topps Grocery Store in Buffalo, New York; and a house of worship in Laguna Woods, California—that, together with the gun violence experienced in our communities every day, reverberates through our families, communities, and entire nation. As the first significant gun safety legislation in decades, the BSCA provided powerful new tools to prosecute firearms traffickers and address gun violence.

### Fast Facts:

- ***Crackdown on Illegal Firearms Trafficking:*** Since the passage of the BSCA, the Department has charged over 1,000 defendants for illegal firearms trafficking and straw purchasing, leading to lengthy prison sentences. Most of these cases were led by ATF, including a 13-year sentence for a person trafficking 90 firearms to Mexican cartels and a 10-year sentence for manufacturing and selling untraceable ghost guns.
- ***Narrowing the “Boyfriend Loophole”:*** BSCA provisions expanded protections by prohibiting firearm purchases by those convicted of domestic violence in dating relationships, resulting in over 10,000 purchase denials since 2023. ATF has led nationwide training initiatives, educating nearly 1,000 prosecutors and agents on enforcing this critical safeguard and creating a reference card with the Department of Justice for easy access for police handling such matters.
- ***Enhanced Public Education and Compliance:*** ATF updated Form 4473 to align with BSCA regulations, expanded the “Don’t Lie for the Other Guy” anti-straw purchase campaign to six major cities, and attended events involving gun owners and sellers to provide oral or written education to ensure more individuals understand when they need a federal firearms license under the law.



## Illegal Trafficking & Straw Purchasing

The BSCA offered ATF important new tools to address violent crime and to address the trauma of gun violence affecting so many communities. Using existing appropriations, ATF, together with federal prosecutors, has been working diligently to investigate and prosecute those engaged in such illegal conduct.

ATF began by completing intensive training for ATF and other Department of Justice employees on the provisions of the BSCA, including the new criminal offenses (straw purchasing, firearms trafficking, and the “dating relationship” prohibition and definition), as well as on the enhanced penalty provisions and forfeiture, electronic surveillance, and money laundering tools the BSCA provides. For example, in 2022 alone, ATF provided training on the BSCA to over 300 Assistant United States Attorneys across the country.

ATF’s educational efforts have resulted in hundreds of successful investigations and prosecutions. For example, by 2025, ATF and the Department had charged over 1,000 defendants using the BSCA’s new illegal firearms trafficking and straw purchasing statutes, including:

- In [October 2024](#), a Canadian man was sentenced to seven years in prison for agreeing to traffic 50 firearms from Georgia to Ontario, Canada.
- In [July 2024](#), a North Carolina man was sentenced to over ten years in prison for illegally selling 20 firearms, including AR-15s.
- In [May 2024](#), a Pennsylvania man was sentenced to 10 years in prison for the unlawful possession, manufacturing, and trafficking of privately made firearms.
- In [April 2024](#), an Albuquerque man was sentenced to three years in prison for the illegal sale of firearms, including machineguns, including to a high school student.
- In [April 2024](#), a Cleveland man was sentenced to over 13 years in



prison for conspiring to traffic over 90 firearms to drug cartel members in Mexico.

- In [March 2024](#), five defendants were arrested in south Texas for trafficking more than 100 firearms, including military grade weapons, to a drug cartel in Mexico.

## Narrowing the Boyfriend Loophole

BSCA narrowed the “boyfriend loophole” by prohibiting those convicted of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence (MCDVs) from possessing firearms when those crimes occurred in the context of a dating relationship. Nearly 3,000 firearm purchases in 2024 and over 10,000 since 2023 have been denied because of an MCDV conviction (including but not limited to crimes that took place in a dating relationship).

ATF, together with the Department of Justice’s Domestic Violence Community of Interest, was involved in substantial efforts to educate state and local law enforcement and prosecutors on this new prohibition. For example, ATF issued a [reference card](#) including guidance on the dating-relationship prohibition of the BSCA, and participated in a training hosted by the Department of Justice attended by nearly 1,000 prosecutors and agents.

## Firearm Transaction Form Updated

In [December 2022](#), ATF revised the Firearms Transaction Record, ATF Form 4473, which all federal firearms licensees must use when a firearm is transferred to an unlicensed person over the counter, to make the form compliant with the BSCA. These revisions include asking potential purchasers additional questions to prevent straw purchases from occurring, implementing the dating-relationship prohibition of the BSCA, and changing the definition of “engaged in the business” to reflect the BSCA’s amendment.



## “Don’t Lie for the Other Guy” Expanded

For many decades, ATF has educated federal firearms licensees on detecting and preventing the straw purchase of firearms. ATF routinely hosts firearms seminars to discuss the obligations of FFLs under the law and to respond to FFL questions and concerns. ATF also partners with the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) on the [“Don’t Lie for the Other Guy” program](#), and expanded these efforts in the wake of the BSCA’s passage. To better educate America’s firearm retailers and the public on the dangers of straw purchasing, ATF has expanded this multiple-media campaign with new events in St. Louis, Missouri; Atlanta, Georgia; Las Vegas, Nevada; Fort Worth, Texas; Jackson, Mississippi; and Chantilly, Virginia.

## Outreach On When A License Is Necessary

Beginning in [September 2023](#), ATF began a campaign to reach out directly to the firearms community to help them to understand when a federal firearms license is required under federal law as a result of the BSCA’s expanded definition of “engaged in the business.” ATF takes calls but has also attended events like the annual Shooting, Hunting, and Outdoor Trade, or SHOT, Show or various regional gun shows to provide such education orally or in written form, to help individuals further understand who needs a license to deal in firearms.



## National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment

Between April 2021 and December 2024, ATF assembled and led a comprehensive study of firearms trafficking, conducted by leading experts in law enforcement and academia. This critical research culminated in the publication of four landmark reports that represent the most thorough research, analysis, and examination *ever* of firearms commerce and how firearms enter the illegal markets and fall into the wrong hands.

### Fast Facts:

- ***Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Trends:*** ATF’s NFCTA reports reveal a 187% increase in domestically manufactured firearms from 2000 to 2020, and a 1,000% rise in privately made firearms (PMFs) recovered at crime scenes between 2016 and 2021, highlighting the significant growth of untraceable weapons in the illegal market.
- ***Crime Gun Intelligence and Investigations:*** ATF’s analysis shows that nearly 25% of crime guns traced between 2017 and 2021 had a “time-to-crime” of less than one year, signaling illegal trafficking activity and reinforcing the importance of ATF’s NIBIN and eTrace systems in disrupting gun crime networks.
- ***Strengthening Enforcement and Recommendations:*** The final NFCTA volume underscores the need for expanded background checks and increased funding for ATF intelligence tools, with recommendations to enhance cross-border interdiction and ensure greater adoption of eTrace and NIBIN, which currently reach only 55% and 67% of law enforcement agencies, respectively.

### Volume I: Firearms in Commerce

In [May 2022](#), ATF published Volume I of the NFCTA, [Firearms in Commerce](#), which presents and analyzes data collected by ATF and other federal





agencies related to the manufacture, exportation, and importation of firearms. Volume I's key highlights include:

***Analysis of Manufacture, Exportation, and Importation of Firearms.***

Between 2000 and 2020, the number of Gun Control Act (GCA) firearms and National Firearms Act (NFA) weapons that were domestically manufactured, exported by U.S. manufacturers, or imported into the U.S. increased by 187%, 240% and 350% respectively. The report highlights trends in firearm commerce, noting that – for example – over the last decade, the pistol has become the dominant firearm type manufactured and imported into the U.S., and the number of short-barreled rifles manufactured annually has increased 24,080% between 2000 and 2020.

***Significant Technological Advances Affecting Firearms Commerce.*** One of the most significant developments in this period has been the proliferation of privately made firearms (PMFs). Since the early 2000s, advances in firearm manufacturing and design, combined with the ready online availability of the parts and information necessary to assemble PMFs, have made it easier for unlicensed persons to make a firearm at home without any records or a background check. These PMFs lack identifying markings, and often have no associated record-keeping, making it difficult for law enforcement to know how many are made and distributed into commerce. The data available, however, makes it clear that criminals are actively making, using, and distributing PMFs both domestically and internationally. The number of suspected PMFs recovered by law enforcement and subsequently traced by ATF increased 1,000% between 2016 and 2021.

## Volume II: Crime Gun Intelligence and Analysis

In [February 2023](#), ATF published Volume II of the NFCTA, [Crime Gun Intelligence and Analysis](#), which presents and analyzes data on crime guns





(firearms used in crime) recovered between 2017 and 2021. The analysis reinforces the critical importance of ATF's unique crime gun tracing authority and highlights the value of data from ATF's NIBIN program. Volume II's key highlights include:

***Data on shorter "Time to Crime."*** This refers to the time from the last known retail sale of a firearm to when it is recovered in a crime. Shorter time-to-crime periods are indicators of illegal trafficking and provide crucial intelligence to investigators. Between 2017 and 2021, nearly 25% of traced crime guns – more than 366,000 guns – had a time-to-crime of less than one-year, and 46% had a time-to-crime of three years or less.

***Intelligence from Trace Data.*** Analysis in Volume II confirms that although most—72% nationally—traced crime guns are recovered in the same state in which they were acquired from a federal firearms licensee, certain states and cities are targets for firearm traffickers. The cross-jurisdictional nature of this issue—guns purchased in one state and trafficked to another where they're used in crime—is what led the Attorney General and ATF to launch five firearms trafficking strike forces in July 2021.

***State, City, and Territorial Data.*** In addition to national data, Volume II provides aggregate crime gun trace data for all states, over 70 cities, and six territories—including data concerning time-to-crime, thefts, age of possessor, source cities, recovery locations, suspected PMF recoveries, and NIBIN leads.

***Thefts of Firearms Increased.*** A significant way firearms are diverted is through theft. The report shows that from 2017 to 2021, there were 1,023,538 firearms stolen from private citizens. These private thefts make up 96% of all firearms reported stolen during that time period.



## Volume III: Firearms Trafficking Investigations

In [April 2024](#), ATF published Volume III of the NFCTA, [Firearm Trafficking Investigations](#), which examines 9,708 closed ATF firearm trafficking investigations initiated between CY 2017 and 2021. Volume III's key highlights include:

***Increased use of Intelligence to Initiate Trafficking Investigations.*** The use of Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC) referrals increased nearly 20% from 2017 to 2021, while the use of Confidential Informants to initiate cases dropped nine percent during that time. This data underscores the value of CGICs, which are law enforcement hubs that focus exclusively on investigating and preventing gun violence in local communities. They bring together, under one roof, the expertise of state and federal investigators, firearms evidence examiners, and intelligence analysts to rapidly collect, analyze, and share information and leads about guns used in violent crimes and to take action to disrupt and dismantle firearm trafficking.

***Shift in Supply Chains.*** The most frequent channels of firearms trafficking are currently the illegal, unlicensed firearm dealing by private persons and straw purchasing, which is when an individual buys a gun for someone else, often one who is prohibited. The number of investigations involving corrupt federal firearms licensees decreased over the study period.

***Source-to-market type trends.*** 56% of the cases examined involved intrastate trafficking, while 32% involved interstate trafficking. Intrastate trafficking was most prevalent in all regions except the northeast, where interstate trafficking was most prevalent. This reinforces the findings from Volume II, which confirmed that although most — 72% nationally — traced crime guns are recovered in the same state in which they were acquired from an FFL, certain states and cities are targets for firearm traffickers. The cross-jurisdictional nature of this issue — guns purchased in one state and trafficked to another



where they're used in crime — is what led the Attorney General to launch five [firearms trafficking strike forces](#) in July 2021.

## Volume IV: Protecting America & Policy Recommendations

In [January 2025](#), ATF published the final Volume of the NFCTA, [Protecting America from Trafficked Firearms: NFCTA Updates, New Analysis, and Policy Recommendations](#), which delivers updated findings and trends that highlight how firearms reach criminal actors. Volume IV's key highlights include:

***ATF's Crime Gun Intelligence Tools Help Police to Save Lives and their Use Should be Expanded and Fully Funded.*** ATF's advanced intelligence tools—including ballistics evidence processing to link disparate shootings using the NIBIN and eTrace—are pivotal in helping law enforcement nationwide solve gun crimes and take shooters off the streets before they kill again.

***Firearms Trafficking Across the Southern Border and Supporting ATF's Efforts to Fight It.*** This volume also highlights firearms trafficking trends from the United States to Mexico, showing a 63% increase in the tracing of crime guns recovered in Mexico between 2017 and 2023. Between 2017 and 2021, ATF initiated 1,011 investigations of firearms trafficking from the United States to Mexico in which 1,082 crime guns were recovered and traced to a purchaser. Nearly 92% of these crime guns were recovered in the United States, prior to diversion to Mexico. In 2023, ATF Southbound interdictions rose 86% from the prior year. As this report makes clear, increased resources could help ATF expand its operational efforts along the border.

***Firearms Manufacturing and Sales:*** This volume highlights that between 2000 and 2023, the number of firearms manufactured per 100,000 people increased by 113%, while the United States population grew by only 19%. Moreover, based on estimated minimum sales volume, between 2017 and 2023, federal firearms licensees transferred at least 106,763,004 firearms to the



public—meaning over 15 million firearms are transferred, by licensed dealers alone, each year.

***Recommendations for Action.*** Volume IV underscores the urgent need for action to curb firearms trafficking trends, including by:

- Expand Background Checks: Expanded background checks would save lives. Data clearly shows that such checks limit the opportunities dangerous, prohibited persons have to acquire firearms. There are several means by which this could be accomplished, including increasing ATF’s funding to investigate illegal trafficking accomplished by those not completing currently required background checks, prosecuting and securing appropriate sentences for unlicensed dealers who violate current laws, or examining federal and state-level background check laws to assess their effectiveness and the need for their expansion.

- Strengthen and Expand ATF’s Crime Gun Intelligence: As of 2024, eTrace and NIBIN were used by about 55% and 67% of law enforcement agencies nationwide, respectively. While this represents significant expansion of these tools, it is not enough. Funding expanded and *comprehensive* and *timely* use of ATF’s eTrace and NIBIN tools by ATF and its partner law enforcement agencies will provide more investigative leads on violent gun crimes, enhanced strategic intelligence on violent gangs and other criminally active groups, and improve the apprehension and prosecution of violent gun criminals. Increased funding would improve these results by allowing ATF to provide law enforcement a single, automated platform with these tools.



## Regulatory Oversight

ATF's regulatory and enforcement strategies are interwoven to provide a comprehensive approach to the Bureau's mission of decreasing violent crime. ATF works closely with its regulated industries to promote regulatory compliance and best practices that help prevent violence and safeguard the public. In administering federal regulations of the firearms and explosives industries, ATF strives to maximize public safety while minimizing any unnecessary regulatory burden on lawful commerce.

### Fast Facts:

- **Targeted Risk-Based Inspects for Maximum Impact:** Since 2021, ATF has implemented data-driven strategies, using Crime Gun Intelligence Analytics and the Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Initiative, to prioritize inspections of high-risk federal firearms licensees, resulting in a higher percentage of revocations for willful violations that threaten public safety.
- **Strengthened Regulations to Address Public Safety Threats:** ATF issued critical rules clarifying when individuals are engaged in business of dealing in firearms and need to run background checks to sell firearms, and clarifying that weapons parts kits are firearms subject to recordkeeping requirements.
- **Faster NFA Application Processing:** ATF's investments in staffing and technology, including the eForms system, reduced wait times for firearm registration applications by over 96%, cutting the average Form 1 processing time to just 21 days by January 2025.

## Inspections

ATF's core mission is to protect the public from violent crime, with a primary focus on preventing crimes involving firearms. Federal firearms licensees (FFLs) play a critical role as the first line of defense in this effort, helping law enforcement identify illegal activity and disrupting gun trafficking schemes.



However, when FFLs willfully violate federal laws, they compromise the very system designed to prevent firearms-related crime and put public safety at risk.

***Crime Gun Intelligence Analytics.*** Starting in 2021, ATF has implemented and improved a risk-based inspection approach, better leveraging Crime Gun Intelligence Analytics (CGIA) to prioritize inspections of FFLs that may pose the greatest risk for non-compliance or involvement in criminal diversion schemes. Rather than conducting a rigid analysis focused solely on the number of revocations, ATF began employing this data-driven, intelligence-led strategy aimed at maximizing compliance and reducing gun crime. This approach ensures that our enforcement actions are targeted, fair, and effective, while also prioritizing education and collaboration with FFLs to achieve voluntary compliance. Using CGIA, ATF uses data, such as gun trace-to-disposition ratios relative to time-to-crime and time-to-first shooting, to better identify and inspect higher-risk licensees.

***Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement.*** In [June 2021](#), as part of the Attorney General's [Gun Crime Prevention Strategy](#), ATF also implement the [Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Policy](#) aimed at preventing the diversion of firearms from lawful commerce by ensuring a consistent enforcement response to certain willful violations of federal firearm regulations and laws. This Policy, which did not change the statutory requirements for inspections or revocations, directed ATF to focus on willful violations by FFLs that directly threaten public safety, such as transfers of firearms to prohibited persons, refusing to allow ATF to conduct an inspection, or failing to conduct a background check before transferring a firearm. These violations, when willful, are not mere “paperwork” violations. They put the American people at risk by allowing firearms to enter the illicit market.

To ensure transparency for the public, ATF published [the results of inspections covered under this Policy](#), including the report and revocation documents for FFLs who ultimately had their license revoked. According to that data, which demonstrate the due process being provided to FFL's, 98.6% of the



FFL's inspected did *not* have their licenses revoked, and many had few or no violations found. Between July 2021 and January 2024, ATF inspections identified one or more violations specified in the Policy at 1,087 FFLs, resulting in 397 FFLs being revoked, 415 FFLs *not* being revoked after a hearing (almost the same number as those who were revoked), and 247 FFLs voluntarily ceasing operations after the inspection revealed violations. FFL's also have the right to appeal a revocation to a federal court, which will conduct a *de novo* review under the law. Since 2021, federal courts have reversed fewer than five such revocations nationally.

In short, these efforts (and data) show that it is possible to *both* protect the public and hold accountable the very small minority of FFL's who commit willful violations of the type that can impact public safety and, at the same time, be fair to and preserve due process rights that protect the many law-abiding FFLs.

### Rule-making

ATF regulations provide a roadmap for law enforcement, industry, and gun owners to follow in adhering to federal firearms laws. Since 2021, ATF issued three rules to address emerging public safety risks: one rule to address the 1,600% increase of PMFs recovered at crime scenes, and the second related to unlawful dealing in firearms without a license, which is now the most frequent type of firearms trafficking—accounting for the source of firearms in over 40% of all trafficking cases.

***Engaged in the Business.*** After key statutory provisions were amended by the BSCA, and ATF promulgated regulations clarifying the amended language, as well as other related statutory language in the GCA. On [April 10, 2024](#), the Attorney General signed ATF's Final Rule, [Definition of "Engaged in the Business" as a Dealer in Firearms](#), implementing the provisions of the BSCA, which broadened the definition of when a person is considered "engaged in the business" as a dealer in firearms. The Final Rule clarifies when an individual is



presumed to be engaged in the business of selling firearms with the intent to “predominantly earn a profit” absent reliable evidence to the contrary.

**Frame and Receiver.** In addition, to address the public safety issues posed by the proliferation of PMFs, ATF promulgated a GCA regulation, [ATF Final Rule 2021R-05F](#). It became effective on [August 24, 2022](#). Among other provisions, the Final Rule updated the regulatory definitions of firearm frame and receiver, reiterated that weapon parts kits are firearms and clarified when a partially complete frame or receiver is considered a firearm, making clear that certain products manufactured and sold as unregulated kits or parts are in fact firearms subject to regulation under the GCA. Additionally, the Final Rule set forth marking and record-keeping requirements for PMFs acquired and disposed of by FFLs.

**Stabilizing Brace.** In [January 2023](#), ATF also issued the Final Rule, [“Factoring Criteria for Firearms with Attached ‘Stabilizing Braces,’”](#) which sought to clarify the phrase “designed, redesigned, made or remade, and intended to be fired from the shoulder” in the statutory definition of rifle. In subsequent litigation, the Final Rule was stayed in its entirety by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas, an appeal to the Fifth Circuit is pending, but in compliance with the district court’s order this rule is *not* being implemented at this time.

## NFA Processing Times

ATF has experienced escalating demand for processing of NFA applications from both industry and individuals, the vast majority of which relate to silencers. In the last three years, ATF has made striking progress in decreasing wait times for these applications to be processed, even in light of the growing volume.

In the last decade alone, these applications have increased by more than 400 percent. To address this surge in NFA applications, ATF has extensively invested in technology-based solutions, such as eForms. ATF also significantly expanded staffing at the NFA Division by adding 20 new full-time employees in FY 2023, as well as surged processing NFA applications to seven days a week. This





staff expansion is focused on enhancing efficiency and thereby reducing processing times for both Form 1 and Form 4 applications. The NFA Division continually evaluates application workflow to identify additional avenues to reduce processing times.

These investments have allowed ATF to significantly reduce NFA application backlogs and processing times. For example, as of [January 2025](#), the average processing times for a Form 1 application to make and register a firearm was down to 21 days for eForms—representing an over 96 percent decrease in wait times in just [three years](#).



## ATF Modernization

Over the last four years, ATF has undertaken a wide array of modernization projects, significantly enhancing the Bureau's efficiency, bolstering its capacity to support state and local law enforcement, and strengthening its overall operational resilience. These advancements mark critical progress, but continued funding is essential to sustain and expand these gains, including, among other projects (many of which are discussed elsewhere in this report):

- ATF has designed and implemented a [new case management system](#) for its criminal investigations and continues to implement additional improvements in that system to better support field operations.
- ATF has worked to create a path towards further modernizing its NIBIN system to [more efficiently compare spent cartridge casings](#) against its database.
- ATF has designed and implemented the [eTrace Direct](#) Application Program Interface (API) to allow police to more efficiently and comprehensively trace crime guns.
- ATF has further deployed the capabilities of its proprietary [NIBIN Enforcement Support System](#), or NESS, to better harness the strength of its crime gun intelligence to obtain actionable leads.
- ATF has [broken ground on a new forensic laboratory facility](#) in Wichita, Kansas, which will have the ability with proper staffing and support to process 12,000 ballistic DNA comparisons a year, using the improved and peer tested ATF lab procedures discussed above.
- ATF has created [electronic versions of numerous firearms forms](#) (including NFA related applications) to improve user interface, tracking, and efficiency.



## A Stand Against Gun Violence: ATF's Commitment to Partnership, Survivors & Prevention

Every single day in the United States, more than 100 people lose their lives through firearms violence. And many more are injured, often very seriously. At ATF, we work every single day to seek justice for the victims and survivors of gun crime. ATF knows firsthand that this violence is not about statistics—it is about human beings. And it requires communication, respect and partnership. Since 2021, ATF has taken steps to expand our commitment to law enforcement partnership and also support for victims and survivors, to honor and memorialize those who have been tragically impacted by gun violence.

### Fast Facts:

- **Law Enforcement Partnerships:** ATF has hosted three Police Executive Forums, annually hosting 40 to 50 Chiefs, Sheriffs and other law enforcement leaders from across the nation to address emerging issues in crime gun intelligence and violent crime. It has also created a new ATF position focused solely on its relationships with its law enforcement partners.
- **Victims' Summit:** ATF hosted the inaugural Gun Violence Survivors' Summit, uniting over 200 survivors, law enforcement, and advocates to share experiences of victims and survivors and therefore strengthen efforts to better address the impact of gun violence.
- **Faces of Gun Violence Exhibit:** ATF unveiled the "Faces of Gun Violence" exhibit, a physical and online memorial dedicated to sharing the names and stories of people who have been lost to gun violence.
- **Domestic Violence Coordinators:** ATF established Domestic Violence Coordinators in all 25 Field Divisions and supported 78 communities under the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization, enhancing federal assistance for addressing firearms-related domestic violence.



## Enhanced Law Enforcement Partnerships

ATF has always prioritized its partnerships with state, local, Tribal and territorial law enforcement all over the nation. Its 25 Special Agents in Charge are among the best in all law enforcement at leading such efforts all over the nation. And ATF is striving to be even more of a law enforcement innovator in that regard. That is why, starting in 2022, ATF has hosted an annual [Police Executive Crime Gun Intelligence Forum](#) at its D.C. headquarters. The Forum brought together dozens of Special Agents in Charge, Police Chiefs, Sheriffs, State-level law enforcement executives, and other law enforcement leaders from across the country to discuss the shared goal of using evidence-based tactics to investigate and prevent gun violence in local communities.

In 2023, ATF also created its first ever national position wholly devoted to enhancing ATF's partnerships with its law enforcement partners, with this position reporting to the Director. ATF has proudly led the way in what it hopes will become new best practices in federal law enforcement partnership.

## The Inaugural Gun Violence Survivor's Summit

On [April 23, 2024](#), ATF hosted the Inaugural Gun Violence Survivors' Summit, which brought together more than 200 survivors of gun violence, members of law enforcement, U.S. Attorneys, health care professionals, and victim advocates. The Summit included remarks by Director Dettelbach, Attorney General Garland, Deputy Attorney General Monaco and San Diego District Attorney and National District Attorneys Association President Summer Stephan, as well as panel discussions focusing on experiences of survivors of gun, firearms, and domestic violence, law enforcement as survivors, and the effects of secondary trauma.

By fostering dialogue and transparency, the Summit highlighted the toll of gun violence and reinforced ATF's mission to combat violent crime and support



survivors. The Second Annual Gun Violence Survivors' Summit is already scheduled for Spring 2025, a testament to ATF's dedication to elevating survivor voices.

## ATF Unveils the “Faces of Gun Violence” Exhibit

At the conclusion of ATF's Inaugural Gun Violence Survivor's Summit, Attorney General Merrick B. Garland and ATF Director Steven M. Dettelbach dedicated a new [“Faces of Gun Violence” exhibit](#), located in the atrium of ATF's Headquarters building. The exhibit honors and memorializes those whose lives have been lost to gun violence. “The ‘Faces of Gun Violence’ exhibit is a permanent reminder of what ATF comes to work to do every day — a reminder of why agents risk their lives and why everyone at ATF dedicates their careers to this mission: to honor the fallen and protect the living,” said ATF Director Dettelbach. “This exhibit both honors and tells the stories of the victims of firearms violence. And it reminds us to keep front and center the lives, the stories, and the courage of those who have been impacted by firearms violence.”

The “Faces of Gun Violence” exhibit consists of a wall and digital kiosk. The wall consists of 118 photos of people who have been killed by gun violence in, among other incidents, mass casualty events, such as school shootings; community shootings; domestic violence shootings; and by suicide. The photographs on the wall will stay up for one year, until another 118 photographs take their place at the ATF's Second Annual Gun Violence Survivors' Summit. Next to the wall is the digital kiosk, which contains the same photographs with accompanying short biographies for each person. The kiosk will remain in ATF's atrium, and new photos and bios will be added after each year's dedication.

In [September 2024](#), ATF launched a [webpage](#) devoted to The Faces of Gun Violence exhibit. This website both informs the public about the exhibit and provides a means for families to submit photographs of their loved ones lost to gun



violence. In November 2024, ATF began posting photographs from the exhibit on [Instagram](#).

## ATF's Commitment to Combating Domestic Violence

In 2023, Director Dettelbach established Domestic Violence Coordinators in all 25 ATF Field Divisions to lead investigations and serve as key resources for victims and survivors of firearm-related domestic violence.

In [September 2024](#), during a 30th Anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act event, the Attorney General recognized ATF's pivotal role in preventing intimate partner firearm violence. As part of this commemoration:

- 78 communities across 47 states and U.S. territories were designated under Section 1103 of the VAWA Reauthorization Act of 2022 to receive enhanced federal support.
- The Department of Justice released updated resources to bolster community responses to domestic violence, including updated guidance for healthcare providers, law enforcement, and victim advocates to address the immediate and long-term needs of survivors.

## A Commitment to Action

Through impactful events, permanent tributes, and a dedicated focus on domestic violence prevention, ATF continues to honor those affected by gun violence while championing meaningful action to prevent further tragedy. By elevating survivor stories and strengthening coordinated responses, ATF is creating a future where justice, healing, and prevention are at the forefront. By doubling and tripling down on its partnerships with other law enforcement leaders, utilizing emerging technology and focusing on intelligence-based investigations and inspections, ATF is pursuing the best strategy to realize continued results in reducing violent crime from the American people. All these



efforts, and others, share one key theme at our One ATF. We are all in this fight to protect people together.

