

# U. S. Department of Justice



## Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)



## Fiscal Year 2025 Performance Budget Congressional Submission

Salaries and Expenses  
February 2024

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## **I. Overview for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives**

### **A. Introduction**

Established as an independent Bureau in 1972, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) is dedicated to the reduction of violent crime, prevention of terrorism, and the protection of the Nation. The ATF enforces and administers Federal laws and regulations involving firearms and explosives and enforces Federal criminal statutes relating to arson. The ATF protects the public by vigorously investigating crimes in these areas; regulates lawful commerce in firearms and explosives; and provides global support to law enforcement, public safety, and industry partners. The ATF regulates the firearms and explosives industries from the point of manufacture or importation through retail sale.

The ATF carefully assesses and calibrates its exercise of enforcement and regulatory authorities to maximize public safety, particularly with respect to the reduction of violent firearm crime. With respect to firearms, the ATF enforces the Gun Control Act (GCA) and the National Firearms Act (NFA), the two primary laws enacted by Congress to address firearms violence. In June 2022, Congress expanded ATF's firearm enforcement responsibilities with the enactment of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA). The BSCA amended the GCA by adding new criminal offenses and revising the definition of those required to obtain a Federal firearms license. The new criminal offenses include provisions that directly criminalize straw purchasing and firearms trafficking. The Act also revised the definition of "dating relationship" to close the so-called "boyfriend loophole" and extend the GCA's prohibition on those convicted of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence from possessing firearms to a broader range of offenders.

The ATF also enforces the import provisions of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) applicable to arms, ammunition, and implements of war. With respect to explosives and arson, the ATF enforces the provisions of Title XI of the Organized Crime Control Act of 1970, including the Safe Explosives Act of 2002 (SEA), and certain provisions of the Anti-Arson Act of 1982. The SEA expanded the scope of explosives regulations administered by the ATF by establishing controls on the intrastate movement of explosives, and by mandating that all persons who receive explosives undergo a background check and obtain a Federal license or permit.

The ATF's regulatory and enforcement strategies are interwoven to provide a comprehensive approach to the Bureau's mission. The ATF maintains partnerships with law enforcement at all levels (Federal, State Tribal, Territorial, local, and international), providing training and forensic expertise to maximize the prevention of violent crimes involving firearms, explosives, and arson. The ATF also 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, the ATF strives to maximize public safety while minimizing any unnecessary regulatory burden on lawful commerce. The ATF's public safety mission is broad, and its role in combatting firearm violence is critical to the national priority of reducing violent crime. With recent spikes in firearm-related violent crime, there has been a corresponding increase in demand for the ATF's expertise and resources, including direct investigative response, enhanced regulatory oversight of firearm licensees, and support to law

enforcement partners. This budget proposal is intended to provide the resources necessary for the ATF to meet expanding mission requirements and the expectations of the Administration, the Department of Justice (Department), and the American public.

Electronic copies of the Department's Congressional Budget Justifications and Capital Asset Plan and Business Case exhibits can be viewed or downloaded from <https://www.justice.gov/doj/budget-and-performance>.

### **Frontline Business Model**

The ATF business model, Frontline, maximizes resources and provides optimal return on investment to the American taxpayers by applying risk analysis and intelligence assessments to allocate and prioritize resources, always with an emphasis on public safety. Frontline emphasizes standardized business practices both internally and externally through strong leadership, transparency, accountability at all levels, and streamlined measurements of effectiveness and accomplishments.

Domain assessments conducted by each ATF field division are the foundation of Frontline. Domain assessments are comprehensive annual assessments that identify and analyze significant violent crime problems within each field division's area of responsibility and include evaluation of regulatory compliance among firearm and explosives licensees. Domain assessments are driven by actionable intelligence and crime information, identified by first-line supervisors through Special Agents in Charge (SACs). They propose a plan of action within the limits of available resources to mitigate or eliminate violent crime threats. This approach is flexible and allows for the redeployment of investigative resources when and where needed.

This process often requires the ATF to balance immediate operational demands with longer-term investment in essential information technology, human capital development, and forensic science infrastructure. The flexibility of Frontline has been essential to the ATF fulfilling its crucial role in the Department's Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Violent Crime (CSRVC). The CSRVC involves a multidisciplinary approach to violence reduction, combining criminal enforcement, enhanced regulatory oversight, grant funding to local law enforcement, community intervention, and reentry programs. Recognizing that gun violence is often the core driver of violence in our communities, the CSRVC integrates the full range of the ATF's firearms authorities and expertise—investigative, regulatory, technical, and forensic analysis. Frontline has allowed the ATF to allocate existing resources to best support the CSRVC and will continue to guide resource allocation in the future.

### **Investigative and Regulatory Efforts**

#### *Law Enforcement Operations*

The Law Enforcement Operations decision unit involves resources and activities that are directly related to criminal investigations and industry operations. Industry operations consist of the regulatory inspections that the ATF Industry Operations Investigators (IOIs) conduct on Federal firearms licensees (FFLs), Federal explosives licensees (FELs), and Federal explosives permittees (FEPs). Core criminal enforcement activities include investigations involving illegal

firearms trafficking, criminal use and possession of firearms, criminal organizations, arson and explosives crimes, and tobacco tax diversion. The ATF's criminal investigative efforts focus on reducing firearm-related violent crime by targeting domestic and international firearms traffickers, violent criminal organizations, armed violent offenders, and career criminals.

The ATF's investigations focus on both individual violent offenders and the criminal organizations that pose the greatest threat to public safety. Criminal organizations, including gangs, use guns to terrorize communities, enforce territorial boundaries, retaliate against rivals and witnesses, and facilitate the growth of their criminal enterprises. The ATF has wide-ranging experience investigating, infiltrating, and dismantling criminal organizations, ranging from international gangs like MS-13, to national gangs like the Crips, Bloods, and Aryan Brotherhood, to smaller neighborhood "street crews."

The ATF uses Crime Gun Intelligence (CGI) in virtually all firearm-related investigations. CGI combines all available information on crime guns, shooting incidents, human intelligence, social media, telephone analysis, and technology to disrupt the cycle of firearm violence by providing otherwise unavailable information to investigators, who use the CGI data to identify offenders illegally purchasing or transferring firearms and the offenders who use firearms to commit violent crimes.

The ATF applies these CGI principles in executing the Department's CSRVC and in supporting U.S. Attorney Offices in their Districts' Project Safe Neighborhoods initiatives. Current ATF initiatives, described in Section IV, include expansion of the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN), expansion of the NIBIN National Correlation and Training Center (NNCTC), enhancement of Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGICs), and Crime Gun Enforcement Teams (CGETs) in cities experiencing extreme spikes in firearm violence.

In FY 2023, the ATF initiated approximately 31,190 criminal firearms investigations; to date, these investigations have resulted in the referral of Federal and State charges against approximately 15,600 defendants.

These investigations focused on armed violent offenders—the "trigger-pullers" who terrorize communities—and the firearms traffickers who supply guns to criminals and criminal organizations. With ATF support, State and local law enforcement agencies have also enhanced effectiveness in firearms investigations, as reflected by the substantial increase and record number of firearms trace requests submitted to the ATF National Tracing Center (NTC). The volume of tracing has continued to grow in recent years. In FY 2022, the NTC received 623,654 trace requests followed by 645,771 trace requests in FY 2023, an increase of about 3.5 percent. In FY 2023, the NTC received an average of 53,814 trace requests per month. (In the first five months of FY 2023, the incoming trace count has averaged approximately 50,000 per month). The NTC is currently in excess of 680,000 trace requests in FY 2024, which will represent a 5.4% annual increase.

The ATF has sole Federal authority to regulate FFLs licensed to engage in the business of manufacturing, importing, or selling firearms in the United States. The ATF conducts licensing qualification investigations on those who seek to engage in the business of firearms importing, manufacturing, and dealing; issues FFLs to qualified applicants; administers regulations

applicable to FFLs (including recordkeeping requirements for the acquisition and disposition of each firearm); and conducts FFL inspections. ATF inspections of FFLs are focused not only on ensuring regulatory compliance, but also on integrating and analyzing risk factors to detect diversion from lawful commerce and identifying “straw purchasers” who illegally purchase firearms to supply guns to criminals. The ATF keeps the firearms industry updated on regulatory and statutory changes and on issues affecting the industry. In addition, the ATF conducts educational seminars for licensees and publishes semiannual newsletters with industry specific information.

FFL burglaries, thefts, and robberies are a significant source of illegally trafficked firearms, directly fueling violent crimes involving guns. In 2018, the ATF implemented a policy of responding to all FFL burglaries and robberies with teams consisting of both Special Agents (SAs) and IOIs and expediting the processing of evidence from these incidents in its forensic laboratories. During the same time frame, the ATF developed an automated system that sends urgent alerts about FFL burglaries and robberies to other FFLs in the geographic area where the incident occurred, allowing them to take additional precautionary measures. These additional measures helped curb a surge in FFL burglaries in 2020 and burglary incidents in 2021 decreased 44 percent and robbery incidents decreased by five percent from 2020. Having strategically redirected resources to confront crimes against FFLs, the ATF enhanced its ability to identify, arrest, and prosecute criminals and recover stolen firearms, thus mitigating the substantial threat they pose to public safety.

In addition to proactive enforcement measures for FFLs, the ATF has collaborated with the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) to promote Operation Secure Store, a comprehensive joint initiative to promote FFL safety and security measures to deter robberies, the taking of anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and burglaries, the unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or theft. The ATF analyzed the last five years of data on FFL burglaries and identified that in calendar year 2022, robberies and burglaries were lower than prior years, with the peak of both robberies and burglaries occurring in 2020.

While much of the public’s focus is on the unacceptable rate of firearm-related violent crime, arson is also a violent crime. The ATF has primary Federal jurisdiction over the investigation of arsons and is uniquely equipped for this mission with specialized capabilities, expertise, and experience. The ATF’s highly trained Certified Fire Investigators (CFI) investigate arson-for-profit schemes, respond to fires of Federal interest, and provide technical expertise to State and local counterparts. In many cases, the ATF’s unique knowledge, technical resources, forensic capabilities, and jurisdictional authority are essential in solving arson related crimes. CFIs conduct fire scene examinations, render origin and cause determinations, provide expert testimony, and provide training to Federal, State and local fire investigators. The ATF’s CFIs are recognized as experts in the field of fire investigations and are often acclaimed for their contributions.

The ATF Fire Research Laboratory (FRL) is a unique fire testing facility with the capacity to replicate a wide spectrum of fire scenarios in laboratory testing conditions. As a result of the advanced scientific and technical methods applied by the scientists, engineers, and CFIs at the



FRL, the ATF is acknowledged as the Nation's definitive source of science-based fire investigation and training.

As the primary Federal law enforcement agency that regulates the explosives industry, the ATF enforces the SEA and licenses businesses and individuals that engage in manufacturing, importing, or dealing in explosives, and those receiving or transporting explosives materials. The SEA expanded the scope of explosives regulations administered by the ATF by establishing controls on the intrastate movement of explosives, and by mandating that all persons who receive explosives undergo a background check and obtain a Federal permit.

The ATF is recognized for its expertise in investigations involving bombings and explosives, particularly with respect to the reconstruction of explosives incidents. The ATF SA Certified Explosives Specialists (CESs), SA Bomb Technicians, Explosives Enforcement Officers (EEOs), and forensic personnel are highly trained and experienced in investigating post-blast scenes. As such, the ATF's CESs provide training to Federal, State local, Tribal, Territorial, and international law enforcement agencies. Investigating criminal bombings and the illegal use of explosives is an integral part of the ATF's overall violent crime reduction strategy.

The ATF's National Response Team (NRT) consists of highly trained and experienced SAs, CFIs, CESs, EEOs, 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. High profile activations in recent years include the 2018 serial bombings in Austin, Texas; the 2019 *Conception* dive boat fire, which claimed 34 lives; the Christmas Day 2020 bombing in Nashville, Tennessee; and the 2023 Guyana school dormitory fire which killed 20 persons.

The ATF's criminal and regulatory programs are a key means by which the U.S. government enforces Federal explosives laws and prevents criminals and terrorists from obtaining explosives for use in bombings. Federal law requires that any manufacturer, importer, or dealer of explosives must have a Federal explosives license. Individuals who acquire, possess or transport explosives must hold a Federal explosives permit. The ATF enforces the regulatory standards for the storage of explosives materials to which licensees and permittees must adhere. IOIs conduct compliance inspections to prevent diversion and ensure the safe and secure storage of explosives. IOIs also detect and assist in explosives diversion investigations. When a significant safety hazard or loss of explosives is discovered, IOIs directly address these incidents to ensure the threat is mitigated.

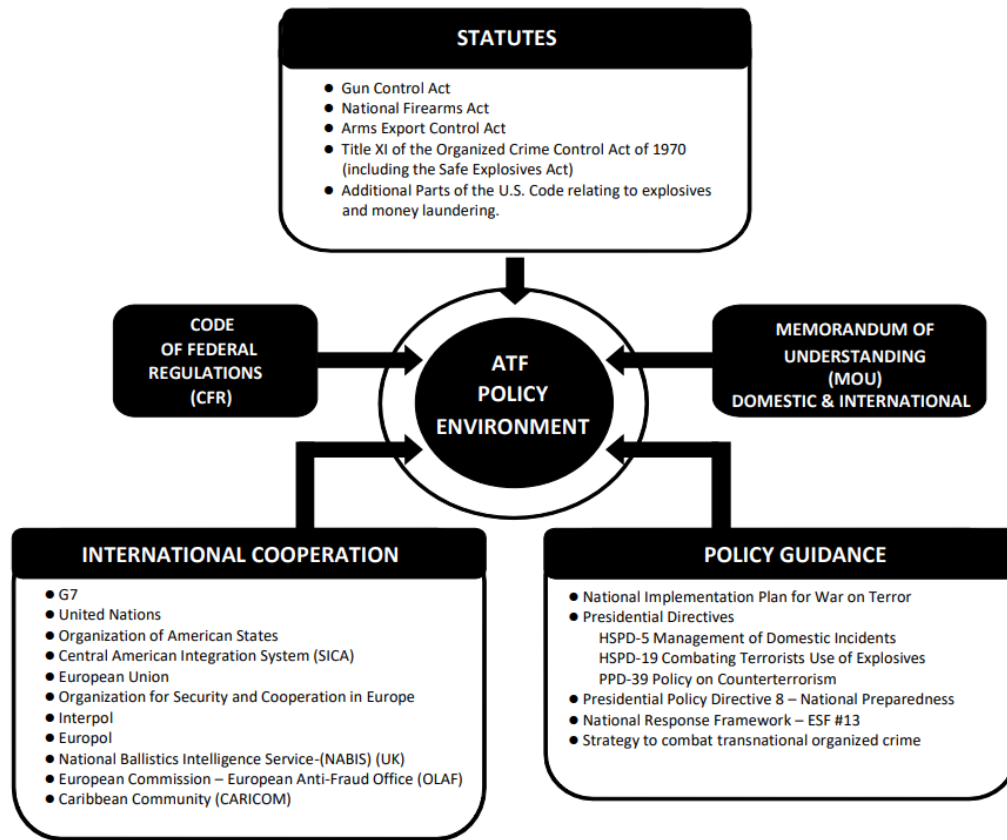
Finally, the ATF has primary jurisdiction for enforcing the Contraband Cigarette Trafficking Act (CCTA), which makes it unlawful for any person to ship, transport, receive, possess, sell, distribute, or purchase more than 10,000 cigarettes which bear no evidence of State tax payment in the State in which cigarettes are found if such State requires a stamp to evidence payment of taxes. The CCTA also makes it illegal to possess more than 500 packages of smokeless tobacco (*i.e.*, snuff, chewing tobacco) without complying with State tax and recordkeeping laws. ATF also administers the Prevent All Cigarette Trafficking (PACT) Act amendments to the Jenkins Act, which similarly bars the shipment of untaxed tobacco in violation of State law.

### *Investigative Support Services*

Resources and activities that support the ATF's law enforcement operations comprise the Investigative Support Services decision unit. Core activities include: firearms and explosives licensing and other firearms industry services, firearms tracing, National Center for Explosives Training and Research (NCETR), U.S. Bomb Data Center (USBDC), Terrorist Explosives Device Analytical Center (TEDAC), Internet Investigations Center (IIC), the ATF laboratories, financial investigations, collaboration and partnerships, and Emergency Support Function-13 (ESF-13).

The ATF continues to build, leverage, and rely on a full spectrum of interagency partnerships to reduce and prevent firearm-related violent crime and terrorism. These partnerships include collaboration with Federal, State local, Tribal, and international law enforcement agencies; other public safety agencies; local communities; and industry. The ATF partners with these entities to safeguard the public through investigations, information and intelligence sharing, training, research, and the use of technology. Finally, when major disasters or emergencies occur, the ATF is the Department's agency responsible for the coordination and deployment of ESF-13, the Public Safety and Security function of the National Response Framework.

**Chart 1. ATF Mission and Budget Strategy  
Policy and Legislative Environment**



**FY 2022–2026  
Agency Strategic Goals and Performance Goal Measures**

**Mission Activities**

**Strategic Goal 1: Uphold the Rule of Law**

Objective 1.2 Promote Good Government

**Strategic Goal 2: Keep Our Country Safe**

Objective 2.2 Counter Foreign and Domestic Terrorism

Objective 2.3 Combat Violent Crime and Gun Violence

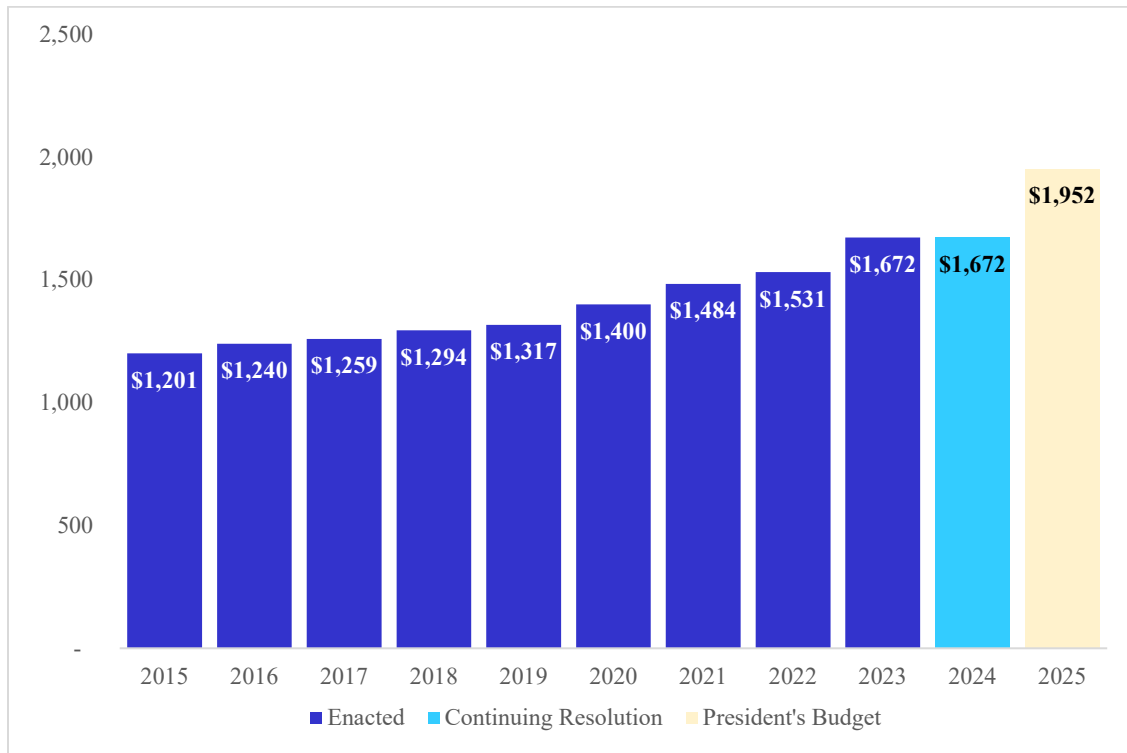
**Strategic Goal 3: Protect Civil Rights**

Objective 3.3 Reform and Strengthen the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems

**B. FY 2025 Budget Request**

The ATF’s FY 2025 budget request totals \$1.952 billion for Salaries and Expenses (S&E), with 5,963 total positions and 5,253 full-time equivalents (FTE). Included within this amount is \$71.9 million for technical and base adjustments to maintain core resources and the current services level of SAs, IOIs, and support professionals. This request also includes \$208.1 million in program enhancements to support the Bureau’s mission objectives.

**Chart 2. ATF Appropriated Funding, by Fiscal Year  
(\$ in millions)**



**Maintaining Current Services**

The FY 2025 request includes \$44.8 million in base adjustments to maintain current services. Within this amount, \$42.9 million funds pay and benefits adjustments to continue support of SAs, IOIs, and other personnel; and \$1.9 million supports domestic rent and guard services adjustments.

**Technical Adjustments**

The FY 2025 budget request contains one technical adjustment for S&E totaling \$27.1 million required to sustain pay and benefits and personnel, including funds needed to sustain the 5.2 percent pay raise effective January 2024.

## **Program Enhancements**

The FY 2025 budget request contains six program enhancements for S&E totaling \$208.1 million, described below.

### *S&E Program Enhancements:*

#### *Combating Gun Violence*

The first S&E program increase requests \$21.0 million and 97 positions (one attorney, 50 agents) for regional violent crime and trafficking initiatives, specifically to address persistent firearms violence.. These initiatives include the firearm trafficking Strike Forces initially established by the Department and ATF in 2021 and Operation Southbound, which is the Department’s primary initiative addressing Cartel-driven firearms trafficking to Mexico.

#### *Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA)/Industry Operations Investigator (IOI) Operations*

The second S&E program increase requests \$73.4 million and 349 positions (100 agents) to implement and enforce the regulatory and criminal provisions of the BSCA, including by expanding ATF’s cadre of IOIs. The BSCA amended the Gun Control Act (GCA) with a focus on reducing the illegal diversion of firearms to violent offenders; the Congress did so by providing new statutory tools for the ATF to investigate both unlicensed firearms dealing (trafficking) and the unlawful diversion of firearms sold by FFLs to criminals through “straw purchasing,”<sup>1</sup> by expanding the applicability of the GCA’s domestic violence provisions, and by increasing the background check requirements for individuals between the ages of 16 and 20 years seeking to purchase a firearm. The BSCA represents the most substantial change to the Federal firearms laws in a generation. Unfortunately, while the BSCA expanded ATF’s regulatory and criminal enforcement responsibilities, the Act did not include additional funds for ATF to implement the new authorities and responsibilities. Expanding the IOI cadre also supports the dual Administration and Department priorities of improving oversight of FFLs, including achieving and sustaining a three year inspection cycle, and increasing the number of firearm purchases subject to background checks by ensuring that those engaged in the business of selling firearms obtain a Federal firearms license.

This program increase is designed to provide ATF with the resources to fully and effectively implement the BSCA, thereby achieving its purpose of reducing the unlawful diversion of firearms to criminals and others who commit violent acts.

#### *Enhancing National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) and Crime Gun Intelligence (CGI)*

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<sup>1</sup> The BSCA amended the GCA to directly define and prohibit the straw purchasing of firearms (Title 18, U.S.C., Section 932) and firearms trafficking (Section 933), and providing corresponding authority to forfeit proceeds of these crimes. The Act also revised the GCA’s definition of “engaged in the business” as applied to retail firearm dealers (Section 921(a)(21)(C)).

The third S&E program increase requests \$18.7 million and 18 positions (two agents) to fund expansions of the ATF's NIBIN and CGI programs. These programs are key elements of Administration and Department strategies to reduce firearm violence; these programs enable ATF and its local, State territorial, Tribal, and partners to focus investigative resources on the most violent firearm-related offenders in communities. The request includes four initiatives that will enhance the application of evidence-based intelligence and advanced analytics which assist in the investigative and enforcement operations targeting prolific shooters and the most violent offenders in communities. The initiatives are the NIBIN National Correlation and Training Center II, CGI and NIBIN Enforcement Support System (NESS), Firearms Operations Division NIBIN Program and Field Support, and the ATF Crime Gun Intelligence Center of Excellence (CGICex) at Wichita State University).

#### *National Services Center (NSC) Expansion*

The fourth S&E program increase requests \$43.9 million and 25 positions (zero agents) for the expansion of the ATF facility in Martinsburg, West Virginia, to address overcapacity, which poses significant risk to the ATF's ability to execute both its core public safety function, in supporting State and local law enforcement fighting gun crime and for its regulatory mission. This program enhancement will also support the accurate and efficient processing of all applications to register NFA weapons..

#### *Forensic Services Crime Gun Intelligence*

The fifth S&E program increase requests \$13.1 million and 30 positions (zero agents) for the initial staffing and development of a high-throughput, rapid-processing laboratory for analysis of DNA recovered from fired cartridge cases (FCCs), the processing of felon in possession crime guns, establishing a second firearms examiners academy, and funding for the temporary coverage of the DNA expansion initiative. The requested funds would support the first phase of a multi-year plan for personnel staffing and laboratory instrumentation at the ATF's new laboratory in Wichita, Kansas. This laboratory would have the initial capacity to handle submissions of approximately 12,000 FCCs annually and coverage for DNA analysis of felon in possession cases.

#### *Body Worn Cameras (BWC)*

The sixth S&E program enhancement requests \$37.8 million and 70 positions (11 agents) for the Body Worn Cameras (BWC) program. This funding will help the ATF implement the Department's BWC policies and adhere to Executive Order 14074, Advance Effective, Accountable Policing and Criminal Justice Practices to Enhance Public Trust and Public Safety. This program enhancement will allow the ATF to support digital case management software and video cloud storage of BWC video for both Federal task force officers whose parent agency mandates the use of BWCs during enforcement operations, as well as ATF special agents under the BWC requirements set forth in the recent Department Body-Worn Camera Policy. The funding will allow the ATF to build the Digital Evidence Management (DEM) Branch to support the BWC program through training, hardware management, data management (integrity and security), policy guidance, technical support, and numerous other support functions.

## C. Challenges

The ATF faces substantial external and internal challenges affecting its ability to meet mission critical goals and objectives. These include, but are not limited to:

- Responding to the significant rise in use and recoveries of unclassified weapons, such as “ghost guns” and conversion devices that transform a semiautomatic firearm into a fully automatic weapon;
- Keeping pace with an ever-increasing volume of NFA weapon applications;
- Keeping pace with an increase in crime gun trace requests;
- Establishing and funding a technology refresh strategy to modernize and better integrate ATF’s information and forensic technology assets, infrastructure, and services , such as case management, firearms tracing, NFA, and NIBIN;
- Maintaining access to technology that enables the recovery and examination of digital evidence as criminals increasingly use ever-changing forms of electronic media;
- Improving productivity and customer service in the face of significant increases in workload requirements in both the law enforcement and services elements; and
- Meeting the ongoing hiring, training, and knowledge transfer demands posed by the retirement and attrition of SAs and other experienced staff.

### **Decision Units**

Each fiscal year, the ATF develops its annual spending plan based on historical decision unit (DU) spending trends, current services funding requirements, and program changes. The ATF continues to assess options for better management of DU allocations. This includes addressing short-term solutions, processes, and IT systems that can more effectively allocate resources by DU, monitor DU budget execution, and achieve DU targets within reprogramming thresholds. ATF currently maintains two DUs as outlined below:

#### *Law Enforcement Operations*

The Law Enforcement Operations decision unit involves resources and activities that are directly related to criminal investigations and industry operations. Industry operations consist of the regulatory inspections that ATF Industry Operations Investigators (IOIs) conduct on Federal Firearms Licensees (FFL), Federal explosives licensees (FELs), and Federal explosives permittees (FEPs). Core criminal enforcement activities include investigations involving illegal firearms trafficking, firearms criminal use and possession, criminal organizations, arson and explosives crimes, and tobacco tax diversion. ATF criminal investigative efforts focus on reducing violent crime by targeting domestic and international firearms traffickers, violent criminal organizations, armed violent offenders, and career criminals.

#### *Investigative Support Services*

Resources and activities that support ATF law enforcement operations comprise the Investigative Support Services decision unit. Core activities include but are not limited to firearms and explosives licensing and other firearms industry services; firearms tracing; National Center for Explosives Training and Research (NCETR); United States Bomb Data Center (USBDC); Terrorist Explosives Device Analytical Center (TEDAC); the ATF laboratories; financial investigations; collaboration and partnerships; and Emergency Support Function-13 (ESF-13).

### **Addressing ATF Challenges**

The FY 2025 request will provide the funding necessary for the ATF to focus efforts on the communities most affected by violent firearm crime, continue addressing the external and internal challenges outlined above, and leverage and sustain gains from prior years. The ATF seeks to maintain the effective investments made in areas that remain critical to securing the safety and security of the country and to strengthen and build upon them incrementally.

This request will serve to enhance the Administration's efforts to reduce gun violence across the United States by sustaining the smart incremental investments in proven programs supported over the past several years. This investment will increase the ATF's ability to collaborate with Federal, State local, territorial, and Tribal partners who are critical to the abatement of violent crime in America's cities and neighborhoods.

The ATF will also focus its comprehensive risk-based approach mitigating infrastructure challenges in personnel, oversight, management, operational capacity, and fixed operational costs.



## II. Summary of FY 2025 Program Changes

Item Name	Description				Page
	Purpose	Pos.	FTE	Dollars (\$000)	
<b>Combating Gun Violence</b>	This initiative supports regional violent crime and trafficking initiatives in compliance with the President’s Executive Order on Reducing Gun Violence and Making Our Communities Safer (March 14, 2023).	97	48	21,043	38
<b>Bipartisan Safer Communities Act/IOI Operations</b>	This initiative is to both expand ATF’s inspection resources to enhance oversight of Federal firearms licensees and to strengthen ATF’s implementation and enforcement of the BSCA.	349	175	73,438	48
<b>Enhancing NIBIN and Crime Gun Intelligence</b>	This initiative is to support additional NIBIN and CGI resources, which are key components of the Department and Administration’s firearm violence reduction strategy. The request will also enhance the application of evidence-based intelligence and advanced analytics which assist in investigative and enforcement operations targeting the most violent firearm offenders in our communities.	18	9	18,707	49
<b>National Services Center (NSC) Expansion</b>	This initiative would expand the National Services Center in Martinsburg, West Virginia, as well as improve the ability of the NFA Division to accurately and efficiently process applications.	25	12	43,948	56
<b>Forensic Services Crime Gun Intelligence</b>	This initiative is for the development of high-throughput, rapid-processing at ATF’s Wichita, Kansas laboratory in order to support analysis of DNA from fired cartridge casings, the processing of felon in possession crime guns, establishing a second firearms examiners academy, and funding for the temporary coverage of the DNA expansion initiative.	30	15	13,117	64
<b>Body Worn Cameras (BWC)</b>	This initiative supports digital cloud storage of BWC video for both ATF SAs and TFOs whose parent agency mandates the use of BWCs during enforcement operations while serving on Federal task forces.	70	35	37,847	70

### **III. Appropriations Language and Analysis of Appropriations Language**

#### **Salaries and Expenses**

*For necessary expenses of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, for training of State and local law enforcement agencies with or without reimbursement, including training in connection with the training and acquisition of canines for explosives and fire accelerants detection; and for provision of laboratory assistance to State and local enforcement agencies, with or without reimbursement, \$1,952,000,000 of which not to exceed \$36,000 shall be for official reception and representation expenses, not to exceed \$1,000,000 shall be available for the payment of attorneys' fees as provided by section 942(d)(2) of title 18, United States Code, and not to exceed \$25,000,000 shall remain available until expended: Provided, That none of the funds appropriated herein shall be available to investigate or act upon applications for relief from Federal firearms disabilities under section 925(c) of title 18, United States Code: Provided further, That such funds shall be available to investigate and act upon applications filed by corporations for relief from Federal firearms disabilities under section 925(c) of title 18, United States Code: Provided further, That no funds made available by this or any other Act may be used to transfer the functions, missions, or activities for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to other agencies or Departments.*

#### **Analysis of Appropriations Language**

No substantive changes are proposed.

#### IV. Program Activity Justification

The table(s) below displays the Department’s FY 2023 enacted and FY 2024 Annualized Continuing Resolution (ACR), the basis for building this President’s Budget. All references to an FY 2024 Continuing Resolution in any Department materials are to this ACR.

##### A. Law Enforcement Operations

<b>LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS</b>	<b>Permanent Positions</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Amount (\$000)</b>
2023 Enacted	4,179	3,815	1,263,121
2024 Continuing Resolution <sup>1</sup>	3,978	3,695	1,263,196
Adjustments to Base and Technical Adjustments	65	32	54,320
2025 Current Services	4,043	3,727	1,317,516
2025 Program Increases	509	255	148,690
2025 Program Decreases	0	0	0
2025 Request	4,552	3,982	1,466,206
<b>Total Change 2024–2025</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>148,690</b>

1. All references in this document and tables to an FY 2024 Continuing Resolution are to an FY 2024 Annualized Continuing Resolution

#### **Investigating and Preventing Violent Crime**

Protecting Americans against violent crime is a top Administration and Department priority. The ATF’s mission centers on this priority: the ATF enforces criminal laws involving firearms, explosives, arson, and the diversion of alcohol and tobacco products; regulates lawful commerce in firearms and explosives; and provides global support to law enforcement, public safety, and industry partners. In all these areas, the ATF focuses its resources on the effective investigation and prevention of violent crime.

##### *Investigative and Inspection Accountability*

The ATF establishes and reinforces accountability at all levels by giving Special Agents in Charge (SACs) at each of the ATF’s 25 field divisions the necessary tools to prioritize and address the specific violent crime threats in his or her area. SAs, IOIs, and supervisors conduct continuous reviews throughout the life of investigations and inspections to evaluate anticipated outcomes and impacts when weighed against risk and resource utilization.

##### *Measurement*

The ATF’s Performance Review process evaluates actual performance against the Bureau’s performance goals as outlined in the ATF’s Strategic Management Performance Index.

Throughout the course of investigations and inspections, supervisors monitor progress and performance to ensure effective and efficient resource allocation. Additionally, staff at all levels engage in periodic Performance Review sessions with their supervisors, Assistant Special Agents in Charge (ASACs) and SACs, who then collaborate to evaluate field-wide performance and provide feedback to the field. At the end of the fiscal year, the SAC also meets with their respective Deputy Assistant Director and the Assistant Director of Field Operations to review year-end performance. Through these meetings, both parties identify accomplishments, deficiencies, and resource needs for the next year.

### *Core Activities*

The core activities in Law Enforcement Operations that constitute the ATF mission include, but are not limited to, investigations and inspections that address:

1. Deterrence of Illegal Firearms Trafficking and Violent Gun Crime
2. Firearms Criminal Possession and Use
3. National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN)
4. Firearms Industry Operations
5. Combatting Criminal Organizations
6. Deterrence of Misuse of Explosives, Bombs and Bombings
7. Explosives Industry Operations
8. Research Fire and Investigative Arson

In FY 2023, these core law enforcement operations activities resulted in the following significant accomplishments, including approximately:

- 10,357 investigations and 15,603 defendants referred for prosecution;
- 7,940 convictions;
- 8,689 firearms compliance inspections; and
- 3,092 explosives compliance inspections

### **1. Deter Illegal Firearms Trafficking and Violent Gun Crime**

The ATF's firearms trafficking enforcement efforts seek to reduce violent crime by stemming the flow of firearms to violent criminals. Illegally trafficked firearms are "tools of the trade," which drug traffickers, gang members, and other violent criminals use to commit crimes, negatively affecting interstate and international commerce. The ATF identifies, investigates, and arrests individuals and members of organizations who illegally supply firearms to violent or prohibited individuals. The ATF deters the diversion of firearms from lawful commerce into the illegal market through robust regulatory and criminal enforcement strategies.

The ATF identifies, investigates, and arrests individuals and dismantles organizations that illegally supply firearms to prohibited individuals. To accomplish this goal, the ATF utilizes

intelligence-based enforcement strategies, regulatory measures, and new technology. These include, but are not limited to, the creation, analysis, and use of CGI through the NIBIN Enforcement Support System (NESS), crime gun trace data, multiple sales reports, FFL compliance inspections, exploitation of social media and other sources of information that all lead to the dissemination of accurate, timely, relevant, and actionable leads to identify firearms trafficking.

Internationally, the ATF works with other agencies to prevent firearms from reaching the hands of drug traffickers, participants in organized crime, and terrorist organizations. The ATF enforces provisions of the Arms Export Control Act, has primary jurisdiction over firearms and ammunition imports, and has shared jurisdiction over firearms exports with the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State's Office of Munitions Control.

The ATF's strategy to combat firearms trafficking is comprehensive and intelligence-driven: Drawing on information that FFLs are required to maintain, the ATF's National Tracing Center (NTC) determines the original source market from which a recovered crime gun originated. The ATF agents and analysts then use collective trace data and investigative evidence to identify trafficking corridors and trends. The ATF SAs and IOIs work together with Federal prosecutors in source areas to reduce the flow of diverted firearms into trafficking channels, reducing the availability of crime guns for violent criminals and organizations in market areas—areas that can be thousands of miles away from the original source market. In market areas, ATF agents and law enforcement partners work closely to disrupt the transfer of trafficked firearms to criminal organizations and “trigger-pullers” identified through NIBIN analysis and other CGI.

As internet commerce flourishes, firearms-related commerce grows with it. While many of these firearms-related transactions are lawful, the internet also provides a forum for individuals intent on evading the law—as either a buyer or a seller—to conduct unlawful transfers with a degree of anonymity. To combat illegal firearms trafficking facilitated by the internet, the ATF established the Internet Investigations Center (IIC), supported by legal counsel and staffed with SAs, IOIs, and IRSs. Using cutting-edge technology, this team identifies illegal firearms trafficking occurring online, and provides actionable intelligence to the relevant ATF field division for follow-up investigation. When an investigation is national in scope or affects multiple ATF field divisions, the IIC coordinates intelligence and operations to ensure any resulting criminal investigation and prosecution has the widest impact. As part of this coordination process, the ATF works closely with the Department's Criminal Division to determine the best venue for prosecution.

Using this same approach, ATF personnel are constantly scanning for internet-based threats of violence, particularly those involving “soft” targets like schools and houses of worship. With great sense of urgency, IIC personnel use all available resources and tools to identify those making the threat, locate the individual(s) as best as possible, and immediately refer to law enforcement where the individual(s) are located. The ATF typically has no Federal jurisdiction related to these threats, so the local field office coordinates and works closely with appropriate law enforcement agencies.

The IIC also provides comprehensive investigative and intelligence support to the ATF's field divisions on matters relating to internet-based criminal activity within the ATF's jurisdiction. Support includes technical online investigative tasks, legal support for internet-related warrants, and subpoenas. The IIC also serves as the single de-confliction point for online investigations both within the ATF and between other agencies. The IIC subject matter experts also provide training on law enforcement methods and techniques for internet investigations. These include social media tools. IIC members are instructed on these matters at the ATF's National Academy, different field divisions, the Department's National Advocacy Center (NAC), and training hosted by Europol for member nations.

The IIC has identified a number of significant firearms traffickers who used the internet to facilitate their crimes. Ongoing firearms trafficking investigations involve individuals and organizations using the surface web as well as the anonymous dark web. The ATF also investigated international firearms trafficking rings where U.S.-sourced firearms were destined for delivery to criminal organizations or prohibited persons outside of the United States and vice versa. Other investigations involved prohibited persons soliciting innocent people selling their firearms on the internet.

## **2. Firearms Criminal Possession and Use**

The law enforcement community has long recognized the clear link between the availability of criminally possessed firearms and violent crime. Firearm violence associated with drug trafficking and violent crime threatens citizens' safety and livelihoods while eroding the quality of life in American cities. The ATF employs a threat matrix to identify patterns of firearm violence and deploys its resources to efficiently disrupt and prevent gun violence.

In July 2021, the Department established five ATF-led cross-jurisdictional Crime Gun Strike Forces to help reduce gun violence by disrupting illegal firearms trafficking in key regions across the country. Leveraging existing resources, the regional strike forces are tasked with focusing coordination across multiple jurisdictions to help stem the supply of illegally trafficked firearms from source cities and into eight key market regions: New York; Chicago; Los Angeles; San Francisco Bay Area/Sacramento; Washington, DC; Newark; Boston; and Baltimore. Each strike force is a collaboration between the ATF, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and State and local partners within their jurisdiction in both source and market areas. Through the strike forces, the ATF is targeting the firearms traffickers, "trigger-pullers," and violent criminal offenders who use these weapons to terrorize their communities. The ATF is utilizing every available resource, including NIBIN, and crime gun tracing, and other forms of CGI to identify, investigate and prosecute violent offenders.

## **3. NIBIN**

The mission of the ATF's NIBIN program is to reduce firearms violence through aggressive evidence-based targeting, investigation, and prosecution of shooters and their sources of crime guns. NIBIN continues to aid the ATF and its law enforcement partners in identifying "trigger-pullers" and removing violent offenders from America's streets, before they can re-offend. The ATF administers NIBIN for Federal, State, local, and Tribal law enforcement agencies to solve

crimes by establishing investigative leads through links between crime guns and criminals. NIBIN is the only interstate automated ballistic imaging network in operation in the United States and is available to every major population center in the United States to support local violent crime reduction strategies.

The NIBIN system is a collection of digital ballistic images of ammunition components recovered from crime scenes and recovered crime gun test fires. As with fingerprints, every firearm has unique identifying characteristics. The barrel of a weapon leaves distinct markings on a bullet or projectile, and the breech and firing pin mechanisms leave distinct markings on the cartridge case. Using these markings, firearm technicians and examiners can examine bullets and cartridge casings to determine if they were expelled from the same firearm.

Through the NIBIN program, the ATF strategically deploys Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS) equipment to Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies for their use in imaging and comparing these unique markings on crime gun evidence. The ATF has worked to place the program in strategic locations across the country with the goal of giving investigators an edge in the fight against firearms-related violence.

The ATF's NIBIN program uses an integrated investigative approach which works in concert with other Federal, State, local, and Tribal law enforcement agencies in combating firearms-related violence using technology to compare images of ballistic evidence obtained from crime scenes and recovered firearms. NIBIN is a proven investigative and intelligence tool that can identify leads that were not previously available, link firearms evidence from multiple crime scenes that were committed with the same firearm, and link firearms evidence from a crime scene to a recovered firearm.

The ATF's NIBIN network may be searched locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally in an automated environment to identify investigative leads. Law enforcement resources realize the true potential of NIBIN by following up on the investigative leads to solve crimes associated with these shooting incidents. In FY 2023, NIBIN sites confirmed more than 4,700 hits and issued approximately 221,300 investigative leads using this technology.

NIBIN partner sites began issuing leads in FY 2014 as the program changed its paradigm from a forensic tool to an investigative tool. NIBIN "leads" are potential ballistic links that either have been made by a firearms examiner or trained technician upon comparison of the ballistic images. NIBIN "hits" on the other hand, are ballistic links that have been confirmed by a firearms examiner under a comparison microscope. NIBIN hits require additional time and the ability to compare two physical pieces of ballistic evidence. With the emphasis on NIBIN as an investigative tool, as a "leads generator," sites have shifted focus and efforts to providing timely NIBIN leads to investigators in lieu of the microscopic comparison. In FY 2014, NIBIN sites issued more than approximately 800 leads, which has grown to more than approximately 221,300 leads provided to investigators in FY 2023. This has been impactful for law enforcement to focus their efforts to take active trigger-pullers off the streets before they re-offend. Leads are issued more quickly than a confirmed hit, which means the information is fresh for investigators to pursue these armed criminals.

The ATF has conducted an evaluation of this program and as a result, has dedicated infrastructure resources to ensure effective program oversight. As part of this evaluation, the ATF has changed how this program is supported to increase the number of trigger-pullers recommended for prosecution. Past funding has supported the replacement of outdated equipment and software upgrades to imaging that enables firearms technicians and examiners to discern distinct markings more easily on the cartridge casings and link evidence for separate cases. Recent funding provided for software upgrades to the NIBIN network that has increased the efficiency of reviews by NIBIN users.

The ATF will continue to emphasize the program's focus on providing useful ballistic information in a timely manner for investigative action thus resulting in more referrals for prosecutions and impact on violent crime. The ATF is utilizing NIBIN along with other investigative tools and assets as part of an overall crime gun intelligence solution to effectively identify and target criminal shooters and their source of crime guns that are plaguing communities.

As part of the NIBIN program, the ATF established the NIBIN National Correlation and Training Center (NNCTC), a centralized facility capable of performing correlation reviews of ballistic images submitted by NIBIN sites anywhere in the United States. Correlation reviews are a critical function of the NIBIN process and are how ballistic leads are determined for investigative use. The NNCTC accomplishes this on behalf of a NIBIN site to relieve that local facility of the labor and machinery costs associated with NIBIN.

The NNCTC performs timely ballistics analysis and correlation services as well as expert level training in ballistic image acquisitions and correlations reviews to Federal, State, and local law enforcement partners. By providing this invaluable service, the NNCTC frees up local sites to perform other important aspects of the NIBIN process, thereby increasing their ability to provide critical violent gun crime leads to investigators in a timely fashion. As of December 2023, the NNCTC has conducted approximately 1,417,863 correlation reviews resulting in approximately 444,235 leads to more than 2,500 partner agencies while maintaining a 99.6 percent lead confirmation. Moreover, the expertise and capability of the NNCTC's Correlation Review Specialists and Firearms and Tool Mark Examiners allows lead generation turnaround time to be decreased to 24-48 hours where it might otherwise be more than a month left to the local site. This consistent and timely turnaround of NIBIN leads provides investigators relevant and valuable information to identify and apprehend violent offenders more quickly. In addition to providing correlation review services, the NNCTC provides NIBIN training to the ATF's law enforcement partners.

As the continuing demand for NNCTC services expands throughout the United States, the ATF established a second location in Wichita, Kansas, on the campus of Wichita State University. The creation of the ATF's Crime Gun Intelligence Center of Excellence and the co-located NNCTC-II continues to expand the correlation capacity ensuring this essential function to all nationwide NIBIN sites, inclusive of sites currently on the NNCTC waitlist, as well as all new sites.



By creating a secondary correlation review site for the ATF's NIBIN program, the ATF is following Continuity of Operations protocols, which alleviates a single point of failure, should one site experience a catastrophic event. It is also consistent with the ATF's efforts to draw from the synergy and talent provided by our partnership with academia.

To enhance law enforcement use of NIBIN investigative leads, the ATF created a web-based application known as the NIBIN Enforcement Support System (NESS) to collect, analyze, refer, track, and support NIBIN and other crime gun data. NESS facilitates information sharing between the ATF and its State and local law enforcement partners by providing intelligence to agents, investigators, and intelligence specialists in the field. NESS can assist investigators identify the most active firearms being used in their areas. NIBIN leads target the most violent offenders regardless of gender, race, or geographical location.

Additionally, the ATF has established several CGETs dedicated to intelligence-driven targeting of violent offenders and the timely follow-up of crime gun intelligence leads through proven protocols. These protocols closely align with the emphasis to reduce violent firearm crime by ensuring offenders are promptly identified, investigated, and held accountable. Several of the ATF CGETs have State and local homicide investigators embedded to enhance coordination and effectiveness in the investigation of homicides involving firearms and related violent crimes.

#### **4. Firearms Industry Operations**

The ATF regulates the firearms industry from the point of manufacture or importation through retail sale to ensure FFL compliance with all applicable laws and regulations. In addition, the ATF regularly conducts training for FFLs with the intent to educate and encourage voluntary controls and foster cooperation with law enforcement officials.

As part of its regulatory role, the ATF determines which FFL applicants are eligible to engage in a firearms business. Upon determination, the ATF educates licensees on their legal responsibilities. FFLs must maintain acquisition and disposition records of their inventory of firearms. Additionally, FFLs are required to maintain detailed records of each disposition of firearms, positively identifying the purchaser and ensuring that they are not prohibited from possessing firearms. The ATF has the authority to request information from these records to assist with criminal investigations.

Proper and timely recordkeeping by FFLs is critical for successful crime gun tracing and is required for all firearms transactions by licensees. Failing to account for firearms in inventory is a serious public safety concern since unaccounted firearms cannot be fully traced to the retail purchaser. The ATF's FFL inspection program uses information related to recovered firearms to detect indicators of illegal firearms trafficking.

Through this regulatory framework, the ATF tracks each firearm recovered in a crime from its point of manufacture or importation through the chain of distribution to the point of first retail sale, a process known as "tracing." By tracing all crime gun recoveries submitted to the ATF, investigators can discern patterns of firearms purchases, locations of purchase, and weapon types. These patterns provide invaluable leads in identifying persons who divert firearms into

illegal commerce. By targeting these persons, the ATF stems the flow of illegal guns for convicted felons, drug traffickers, or gang members who commit violent crimes. Moreover, after connecting a firearm to an illegal gun trafficker, the ATF makes every effort to interdict and prosecute these individuals to prevent gun violence.

In FY 2023, the ATF completed approximately 8,678 FFL compliance inspections. During FY 2023, there were approximately 132,383 active FFLs in the United States. In FY 2023, the ATF issued approximately new FFLs to qualified applicants (including renewals).

Additionally, the ATF regulates the importation of firearms into the United States and registers importers of firearms, ammunition, firearms parts, and other defense articles pursuant to the import provisions of the AECA. The ATF also provides technical advice to the public regarding import requirements applicable to firearms or ammunition. The public and the firearms industry routinely submit products to the ATF for evaluation of whether an item is a firearm and how it is regulated.

## **5. Combat Criminal Organizations**

Criminal organizations threaten all communities across the United States. Gangs remain key distributors of narcotics and are often sophisticated and flagrant in their use of firearms for violence and intimidation. To combat the criminal organizations that threaten communities across the United States, the ATF focuses its extensive and distinct investigative resources on areas experiencing the most violent crime. The ATF's strategy targets the most serious offenses, prosecuting the most dangerous criminals, directing assistance to crime 'hot spots,' and pursuing new ways to promote public safety, deterrence, efficiency, and fairness. The ATF developed strategies to address violent crime spikes and to execute operations intended to weaken and dismantle armed violent criminal organizations.

Each of the ATF's 25 field divisions works collaboratively with their Federal, State, and local partners, as well as the U.S. Attorney's Office. Partnership plays a vital role in combating violent gun crime. It allows law enforcement agencies to operate together with unity of effort to stem the flow of crime guns, investigate, and prosecute the offenders affiliated with criminal organizations and gangs who use them to commit violent crimes. Through partnerships, law enforcement leaders coordinate missions, strategies, tactics, and intelligence to effectively prioritize and maximize impact on violent crime.

The ATF CGETS partner with Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies to collect crime gun intelligence in cities identified by their high rates of violent gun crime. Crime gun tracing, along with NIBIN results and local agency police reports, are funneled to the ATF Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGICs) to analyze and produce actionable intelligence. Once received, agents and officers form enforcement strategies to target, arrest, and prosecute the "trigger-pullers" and the illegal firearms traffickers who provide them with firearms.

## **6. Deter Misuse of Explosives, Bombs, and Bombings**

Criminal bombings and the illegal use of explosives are violent acts that threaten communities and national security. The ATF strives to reduce violent crime involving the misuse of explosives, assist State or local officers, advance public safety, and security, deny the acquisition of explosive materials by statutorily prohibited persons, remove hazards to the public caused by improper storage or use of explosive materials, and assist agencies in combatting terrorism and violent crime.

The ATF has aligned its mission, resources, and expertise with the National Strategy to Counter Improvised Explosives Devices (IEDs). The ATF manages the USBDC, which in turn is responsible for maintaining, and enhancing the outward facing Bomb Arson Tracking System, the statutorily mandated and Attorney General designated National arson and explosives incident repository and case management system. Currently, the USBDC has more than 2,500 interagency partners and 12,000 users of the Bomb Arson Tracking System (BATS) who contribute arson and explosives intelligence and information for critical regional and national situational awareness.

The ATF has the responsibility and authority to inspect the storage of explosives by Federal explosives licensees and permittees to track thefts, losses, and recoveries of explosives. The ATF's mission extends to ensuring only qualified and legitimate applicants enter the explosives industry and that licensees keep proper records and use sound business practices to help prevent theft, explosives incidents, or the diversion of explosives to criminal or terrorist purposes.

The ATF's criminal enforcement mission, combined with the ATF's regulatory responsibility, gives the ATF a comprehensive perspective on activity involving explosives in this country. This perspective allows the ATF to impact public safety through the identification and correction of explosives storage violations that, unchecked, could pose significant risk to the public.

## **7. Explosives Industry Operations**

Explosive materials diverted from legal commerce into the hands of criminal organizations and gangs, or terrorist organizations constitute a tangible threat to public safety and legal commerce. The ATF's criminal and regulatory programs enforce Federal explosives law and prevent criminals and terrorists from obtaining explosives for use in bombings.

On a 3-year cycle, as required by the Safe Explosives Act, the ATF's IOIs conduct compliance inspections of approximately 9,400 explosives licensees and permittees nationwide to detect, investigate, and prevent diversion, and promote the safe and secure storage of explosives. As of FY 2023, there are 9,248 active explosives licensees and permittees. The Federal Explosives Licensing Center screens license and permit applicants, in conjunction with the FBI, to ensure applicant eligibility to lawfully receive and use explosives. It further screens employees of such licensees and permittees to ensure prohibited persons do not have access to explosives.

## **8. Research Fire and Investigate Arson**

Loss of lives and property due to arson remains a significant threat to communities, businesses, and the American people. Under title 18 of the United States Code (U.S.C.), the ATF is designated as the Federal agency primarily responsible for enforcing criminal provisions of the

Federal laws related to fire investigations, conducting research to help investigators reconstruct fire and explosives incidents, and conducting financial investigations to identify illegal arson-for-profit schemes.

The ATF SAs investigate potential acts of arson motivated by profit, ideology, or other criminal intent. Some of the more recent significant events the ATF has been called upon for its expertise include investigating fires that occurred during the civil unrest in the cities of Minneapolis, St. Paul, Chicago, and Kenosha. The ATF was also instrumental in investigating the fire that occurred on the USS Bonhomme Richard and the Conception dive boat fire that killed more than thirty (30) people. The ATF also trains Federal, State local, and international law enforcement agencies on how to investigate and solve such crimes.

The ATF has primary Federal jurisdiction over the investigation of arson crimes and is uniquely equipped for this mission with specialized capabilities, expertise, and experience. Most fires are investigated at the local level. The ATF responds to fires of Federal interest and to provide its specialized skills when needed by State and local authorities. In many cases, the unique knowledge, technical resources, forensic capabilities, and jurisdictional authority of the Federal government are essential in solving arson related crimes and removing arsonists from a community. The ATF's combination of CFIs, accelerant detection canines, NRT, forensic laboratories, forensic auditors, fire prevention, electrical, and mechanical engineers, and the FRL provide comprehensive technical expertise for investigating arson crimes that is unmatched in the United States. Additionally, the USBDC and BATS provide critical intelligence and information to the ATF and the interagency community related to occurrence of arson incidents both regionally and nationally.

## B. Investigative Support Services

<b>INVESTIGATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES</b>	<b>Perm. Pos.</b>	<b>FTE</b>	<b>Amount (\$000)</b>
2023 Enacted	1,284	1,235	408,879
2024 Continuing Resolution	1,310	1,218	408,804
Adjustments to Base and Technical Adjustments	21	11	17,580
2025 Current Services	1,331	1,229	426,384
2025 Program Increases	80	39	59,410
2025 Program Decreases	0	0	0
2025 Request	1,411	1,268	485,794
<b>Total Change 2024-2025</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>59,410</b>

### **Delivery of the ATF's Forensic Expertise, Assets, and Intelligence Services to Improve Public Safety**

The ATF continues to leverage, build, and rely on its partnerships with all law enforcement entities – Federal, State, local, Tribal, and international law enforcement, public safety agencies, communities, and industries – to prevent terrorism and abate violent crime. The ATF partners with these entities to safeguard the public through information and intelligence sharing, training, research, the use of technology, and by its lead role in the coordination of ESF-13 law enforcement response functions.

Resources and activities that support the ATF's law enforcement operations comprise the Investigative Support Services (ISS) decision unit. Core activities include, but are not limited to:

1. Firearms and Explosives Licensing and Other Firearms Industry Services
2. Firearms Tracing
3. National Center for Explosives Training Center (NCETR)
4. United States Bomb Data Center (USBDC)
5. Terrorist Explosive Device Analytical Center (TEDAC)
6. ATF Laboratories
7. Financial Investigations
8. Collaboration and Partnerships
9. Emergency Support Function – 13 (ESF-13)
10. Internet Investigations Center (ICC)

## **1. Firearms and Explosives Licensing and Other Industry Services**

The ATF issues licenses to qualified firearms and explosives manufacturers, importers, and dealers. Under current regulations, the ATF is required to act upon firearms license applications within 60 days and explosives license application within 90 days of receiving a perfected application. During FY 2023, the ATF conducted approximately 9,328 firearms application inspections and 823 explosives application inspections.

In addition, the National Firearms Act (NFA) mandates registration and tax payment for making or transferring machine guns, silencers, short-barreled rifles, short-barreled shotguns, destructive devices, and certain concealable weapons classified as “any other weapons.” The NFA requires individuals, firearms manufacturers, and importers to register the NFA firearms that they make, manufacture, or import, and that all NFA firearms transfers are approved by the ATF prior to being transferred.

Market demand for NFA services continues to set annual records, which has resulted in an increased workload over the past several years. In FY 2023, the ATF received approximately 1,061,068 NFA registration applications and processed approximately 1,069,787 NFA registration and transfer applications. In FY 2022, the ATF’s NFA Division received the highest volume of taxpaid applications surpassing the previous record high year of 2022. NFA Division total revenue collections for FY 2023 was over \$106.1 million. All tax revenue collected by the NFA as part of the Form 1 and Form 4 fees as well as that collected as part of the Special Occupational Tax (SOT), including penalties and interest, is deposited into the General Treasury Fund. The ATF receives no direct benefit from the tax revenue collected. The increase in overall firearms commerce continues to significantly increase the ATF’s workload and has a significant impact on the ATF’s ability to meet internal and external performance targets.

The ATF regulates the importation of firearms, ammunition, and other defense articles by issuing import permits. The ATF also regulates the importation and possession of firearms and ammunition by non-immigrant aliens. The ATF maintains close liaison with the Department of State, Department of Defense, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection to ensure that the permits issued do not conflict with the foreign policy and national security interests of the United States. During FY 2023, the ATF processed approximately 11,667 permanent import permit applications. The Attorney General has delegated to the ATF the authority to administer the permanent importation provisions of the AECA. Under the AECA, the ATF regulates the permanent importation of firearms, ammunition, and other defense articles into the United States. The ATF processes applications to import items from domestic businesses, members of the U.S. military returning from abroad with personal firearms, non-immigrant aliens temporarily hunting or attending legal sporting activities in the United States, and U.S. citizens re-establishing residency after living abroad. Through industry outreach and regulation, the ATF provides technical advice to the public regarding import requirements applicable to firearms, ammunition, and implements of war.

## **2. Firearms Tracing**

The ATF's National Tracing Center (NTC) traces firearms used or suspected to have been used in crimes for law enforcement to provide investigative leads. The NTC traces firearms annually for more than 7,500 Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies. Firearms tracing is an exclusive function of the ATF and is critical to law enforcement in their efforts to link suspects to firearms in criminal investigations and to detect illegal firearms traffickers. In FY 2023, the NTC processed 645,771 firearms trace requests. The demand for timely and accurate trace data has continually grown, providing law enforcement agencies the ability to more quickly identify and apprehend the most violent firearms offenders. The NTC also operates a series of programs that relate to and support firearms tracing to include the ATF eTrace program, Multiple Sales for Handguns Program, FFL Theft Program, Interstate Theft Program, Out-of-Business Records Program, and Demand Letter Program.

The trace information allows the ATF to accomplish many goals, such as providing the requesting Federal, State local, and Tribal law enforcement agencies leads designed to help link suspects to firearms in criminal investigations; identifying illegal firearms traffickers through recurring patterns and trends indicative of illegal firearms trafficking; and analyzing aggregate trace data, to help communities develop focused strategies and programs that address specific factors that contribute to gun-related crime.

Trace information and analysis is vital to solving violent crime and identifying illegal firearms trafficking trends. The work performed at the NTC is a key element of CGI and is central to the Administration's priorities with regards to combatting gun violence. The tracing capabilities conducted at the NTC has resulted in valuable leads in such recent high-profile cases as the New York City Subway attack in April 2022 and the July 4, 2022, Highland Park, Illinois shooting. Equally important, the NTC provides support to the ATF's law enforcement partners in countless cases across the United States every day.

## **3. NCETR**

Preventing the criminal use of explosives and investigating potential cases of arson are two of the core missions of the ATF NCETR serves as the Bureau's primary source for research, training, and intelligence in these specialty areas. The ATF is the primary agency responsible for administering and enforcing the regulatory and criminal provisions of the Federal laws pertaining to destructive devices, explosives, and bombs; and it is the only Federal agency with the authority to investigate criminal arson cases. The ATF has extensive expertise in the investigation and forensic analysis of explosives incidents arising from criminal use of explosives or terrorist acts.

NCETR provides basic and advanced explosives training and research that leverages lessons learned and best practices to safeguard the public and reduce deaths and injuries from explosives crimes and accidents and aligns this support with the national counter-IED effort. At NCETR, the ATF provides specialized training, techniques, and uses advanced technology and procedures to support forensic investigations and explosives enforcement. Additionally, the ATF contributes greatly to the global Counter-IED (C-IED) efforts through a focus on the interoperability

between public safety bomb technicians and explosives specialists with their military Explosives Ordnance Disposal (EOD) colleagues. This is accomplished through a well-established training program focusing on the identification, processing, and disposal of homemade explosives (HME), in partnership with the Department of the Army. EOD personnel from all branches of the armed forces attend the NCETR HME course prior to mobilization.

Also located at NCETR is the ATF's Fire Investigation and Arson Enforcement Division (FIAED), which oversees the National Response Team (NRT) Program, Certified Fire Investigator Program, Fire and Arson Investigation Training Programs, and the Arson and Explosives Criminal Investigative Analysis (Profiler) Program. These programs further support the ATF's efforts to identify, target, and dismantle criminal enterprises and other offenders that use fire or explosives in furtherance of violent criminal activity and investigate violators who use fire or explosives to damage or destroy property which affects interstate or foreign commerce. The ATF's NRT is the only group of crime scene investigators in the world accredited by ISO and ANSI Standard 17020, allowing the NRT to render an opinion as to the origin and cause of a fire or explosion. NCETR is in the process of also accrediting both its CES and CFI programs to both ISO and ANSI standards.

NCETR also has oversight of the ATF's National Canine Division (NCD) located in Front Royal, Virginia. The ATF's canine program is the only canine program in the United States supported by a laboratory and the first Federally accredited explosive detection canine program. The ATF National Forensic Science Laboratories support the ATF NCD in the research and development of explosive and accelerant compounds and compositions for canine training, third party testing, instruction into the properties and chemical breakdown of accelerant and explosives, and support in all forensic related issues. The ATF NCD conducts evaluation and analysis of new and emerging facets within the explosives and accelerant detection canine arena and shares this vital information with its partners in a concerted effort to provide the best tools possible for safety and security in the fight against violent crime and terrorism. The ATF remains at the forefront of combating violent crime through such innovative programs as training explosives detection canines in the recognition of peroxide explosives and the standardized National Odor Recognition Testing.

In partnership with the Department of the Army, NCETR also leads and coordinates the annual "Raven's Challenge," an interoperability exercise for public safety bomb squads and military EOD personnel at four locations across the country that involves realistic IED incident scenarios and live fire training.

The Explosives Research and Development Division (ERDD) at NCETR is an investment in scientific knowledge generation and technology development that allows the ATF to adapt and respond to changes to the ongoing threat posed by the criminal misuse of explosives. Meeting the challenges and embracing the opportunities of a dynamic future are not only indicative of high-quality research and development but are responsive to the needs of the Nation's C-IED efforts. Current research partners include the National Counterterrorism Center, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the University of Alabama-Huntsville. In short, NCETR ERDD provides value by improving the safe storage and disposal of explosives and enhancing the prosecution of explosives cases to serve the ATF and the larger law enforcement community.



#### **4. USBDC**

In 2004, the Attorney General, acting under the statutory authority of 18 U.S.C. § 846 (b), designated the ATF's BATS as the consolidated national repository for information related to arson and the suspected criminal misuse of explosives. The USBDC was then established and given the responsibility for management of BATS.

BATS is a web-based case management system that allows investigators across the country to capture details of bomb and arson cases, including the area of origin or device placement, casualties, financial loss, fire descriptors, collateral crimes, device components, and descriptions and photographs of how the device was constructed and delivered. BATS also allows investigators to build cases in the BATS application while maintaining critical operational security of their information. Images of arson and explosive scenes can be shared through the BATS secure web connection.

The USBDC Arson & Explosive Intelligence Division collects, analyzes, and disseminates timely information and relevant tactical and strategic intelligence within the ATF, and to external Federal, State local, Tribal, military, and international partners. The USBDC provides statistical analysis of current trends and patterns to aid in the detection, deterrence and prevention and prosecutorial support related to arson and the criminal misuse of explosives. The USBDC is available to assist other Federal, State and local law enforcement and fire service investigators with arson and explosives investigations. The USBDC is staffed with ATF SAs, IRSs, an IOI, and support personnel who are all experienced in arson and explosives related investigations.

The USBDC also provides explosives tracing services to duly authorized law enforcement agencies across the United States and in many foreign countries. Tracing is the systematic tracking of explosives from manufacturer to purchaser (or possessor) for the purpose of aiding law enforcement officials in identifying suspects involved in criminal violations, establishing stolen status, and proving ownership. The creation of the National Repository has achieved for these industries, as well as law enforcement, the most proficient and productive method for researching the movement of an explosive. Explosives manufacturers, importers, wholesalers, and retail dealers in the United States and foreign countries cooperate in the tracing endeavor by providing, on request, specific information from their records of manufacture, importation, or sale. Because of its licensing authority, the ATF is the only Federal agency with authorized access to these records.

#### **5. TEDAC**

Jointly, the ATF and the FBI coordinate and manage TEDAC. The mission of TEDAC is to contribute directly to the eradication of the IED threat, through a whole-of-government effort that includes international partners. TEDAC informs its partners who, in turn, attempt to disrupt those individuals and networks responsible for the design, development, purchase, assembly, and deployment of IEDs. This is accomplished through scientific and forensic exploitation of IEDs; developing actionable intelligence; forecasting IED threats; and maintaining a repository of IED material obtained from incidents around the world. The TEDAC combines law enforcement, military, and intelligence assets to classify the operation, bomb components, and deployment of

IEDs. These efforts help prevent IED attacks, protect U.S. armed forces, and identify those who manufacture and deploy these devices.

TEDAC's forensic exploitation at the intersection of law enforcement, science and technology, border forces, intelligence, and the military, provides a key perspective from which to research the science and technology of IEDs. The TEDAC research and testing program supports IED detection, countermeasures, and post-blast analysis. TEDAC continues to build depth and breadth within its device collection and develop technical, forensic, and intelligence methods to anticipate new devices and techniques envisioned by adversaries and to better collaborate with its partners.

## **6. ATF Laboratories**

The ATF laboratory system comprises two traditional forensic science laboratories (FSLs) and a fire research laboratory (FRL) that provide direct support to the ATF SAs and other Federal and State law enforcement agencies in the investigation of violent crimes and other potential threats to public safety. The ATF's scientists and engineers play an integral role supporting violent crime investigations, often providing the critical links between the crimes and the suspects or providing a lead to a previously unknown suspect.

All of the ATF's laboratories are accredited by the ANSI National Accreditation Board to the ISO 17025 (2017) standard. In addition, the Forensic Science Laboratory-Washington meets the requirements of the FBI Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories. The ATF laboratories support investigations through the scientific analysis of evidence; providing technical support at fire, explosion and shooting scenes; providing training to the ATF's SAs, prosecutors, and State and local law enforcement and forensic scientists in these areas; supporting the prosecution of violent criminals by providing expert testimony; and conducting scientific research to enhance forensic capabilities. FSL and FRL experts support the ATF's National and International Response Teams (NRT and IRT) and provide training and support to the ATF's explosives and accelerant detection canine programs, HME) courses, the National Firearms Examiners Academy, fire debris analysis courses, as well as other specialized areas of instruction.

The FSLs maintain a unique expertise in areas supporting criminal investigations involving firearms, explosives, and suspected arson. The laboratories' Forensic Chemists provide chemical and physical analyses of bombs, improvised device components, fire debris, and trace evidence. The ATF laboratories have developed unsurpassed 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. The ATF's capabilities in latent print examination and tool mark analysis focus on providing links between the evidence recovered from violent crimes and the perpetrators of the acts. The ATF's laboratories are global leaders in the application of forensic science to the types of evidence encountered in violent crimes investigated by the ATF.

The Fire Research Laboratory is staffed with fire protection engineers, mechanical engineers, electrical engineers, and technicians, and is the only laboratory of its kind in the world dedicated to the specific needs of the criminal fire investigation community. It provides the necessary

facilities, equipment, and staff to support complex criminal fire investigation issues. Forensic examinations include fire scene reconstructions, flashover determination, validation of fire pattern indicators, impacts of accelerants on fire growth and spread, ignition studies and electrical fire cause analysis.

In FY 2023, the ATF's laboratories accomplished approximately the following:

- Received 1,660 requests for analysis and testing.
- Completed analysis on 1,438 forensic cases (FSL).
- Performed 118 laboratory case testing experiments (FRL).
- Performed 462 laboratory research testing experiments (FRL).
- Provided 49 days of expert testimony in the courts.
- Worked 381 days at crime scenes.
- Provided 365 days of training for Federal, State and local investigators and examiners.

Some figures may be lower compared to prior fiscal years due to the COVID pandemic.

## **7. Financial Investigations**

The Financial Investigative Services Division (FISD) supports approximately 450 criminal financial investigations annually. The ATF's forensic auditors are experts in the field of forensic accounting and financial investigations. They conduct comprehensive and complex financial investigations for SAs in support of criminal investigations and document appropriate financial criminal charges to further the prosecution in these cases.

In addition to identifying financial charges, the ATF's forensic auditors assist in developing additional investigative leads, identifying and co-conspirators through the financial records, and quantifying and they quantify purchases, sales, losses, and profits for criminal investigations. These cases include arson-for-profit, firearms and firearms associated narcotics trafficking cases, contraband cigarette trafficking, the use of explosives and bombings in the furtherance of financial frauds, counterterrorism, threats to public safety, investigations into gang and other organized criminal enterprises, and complex investigations involving both domestic and international money laundering.

The ATF's forensic auditors directly support complex investigations involving criminal organizations, multiple subjects, businesses, money laundering schemes, asset identification, forfeiture, and restitution. PACT Act inspections are also supported by the ATF's forensic auditors who perform detailed reviews of voluminous sales, purchases, and transactions that support potential tax liabilities for various tobacco and vape product sales entities. Additionally, the ATF's forensic auditors assist other directorates and offices within the Bureau with office reviews, special projects, regulatory inspections, and other requests for assistance.

## **8. Collaboration and Partnerships**

The ATF is engaged in many cooperative agreements, collaborations, and partnerships with other Federal agencies, private industry, and in the international arena. For example, the ATF is fully engaged with and provides support to government anti-terrorism efforts, especially the FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs). The ATF participates in JTTFs and assigns one ATF special agent to the National JTTF at the National Counterterrorism Center. In working with the JTTF, the ATF plays an important part in terrorism cases that involve firearms, bombs, illegal explosive possession.

The ATF furthers fulfillment of its mission by participating in other multiagency efforts such as High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas, High Intensity Financial Crime Areas, and Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces. Through these partnerships, the ATF plays a major role in the prevention and investigation of violent firearms crimes involving criminal organizations and gangs, and provides direct investigative expertise to criminal explosives, arson incidents, and threats. These collaborative efforts also make the ATF a key component in combating organized crime that threatens U.S. national and economic security.

At the request of the Department of State the ATF serves as an advocate for U.S. firearm policy in international fora such as the United Nations (U.N.) and the Organization of American States (OAS). The ATF ensures that international firearms agreements in which the United States participates are consistent with U.S. laws, regulations, policies, and practices. The U.N. Program of Action, the OAS Convention on Firearms, and the International Tracing Instrument are just a few of the agreements through which the ATF protects the policies of the United States in international settings.

The ATF's International Affairs Division (IAD) is at the forefront in the ATF's mission of combating violent crime and other threats to public safety. The IAD's primary mission is to protect the public against crimes of violence by conducting and coordinating investigations involving transnational criminal organizations. The IAD's international offices are strategically positioned to extend the ATF's reach beyond U.S. borders and enable the ATF to combat violent crime before it reaches the United States. The IAD serves to further the ATF's mission and protect U.S. policies and interests by focusing personnel and resources primarily in the Western Hemisphere. The ATF currently has offices in Mexico, El Salvador, Canada, Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Colombia, and Jamaica. The ATF has notified Congress for a planned opening of the Calgary office in Canada in FY 2024, approved as part of the FY 2023 DOJ Spend Plan. Additionally, the ATF has representation at Europol in the Netherlands.

Through partnerships with such agencies as the Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the International Criminal Investigative Training Assistance Program, and the Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development (OPDAT), the ATF's IAD can provide capacity building, specialized training, and facilitate information sharing with foreign partners. The ATF's IAD also partners with the Department's International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) to provide expert and specialized training to participating countries throughout the world. The IAD's participation in the ILEA program allows the ATF to train foreign law enforcement in many of the ATF's areas of responsibility such as post-blast

investigations, arson investigations and fire science, firearms and explosives identification techniques, and international firearms trafficking investigation techniques. This specialized training helps better facilitate information sharing and assists foreign law enforcement in developing sound investigative skills and programs.

## **9. Emergency Support Function-13**

Ensuring the safety and protection of the public is a critical service needed in the aftermath of any disaster. The ATF is the Department's lead agency for management of ESF-13, one of 15 emergency support functions established by the National Response Framework. The close relationships the ATF has developed and maintains across the law enforcement and first responder communities are crucial to provide fast, effective, and appropriate resources when needed an emergency or major disaster.

Through ESF-13, Federal law enforcement assets are directed to assist Federal, State, territorial, local, and Tribal authorities with public safety and security-related missions ranging from serious but purely local incidents to large-scale terrorist attacks or catastrophic disasters. All ESF-13 responses are a collaborative effort among partner law enforcement agencies, but the ATF is ultimately responsible for maintaining a robust national capability to perform the functions outlined in the ESF-13 Annex to the National Response Framework. The ATF is required to do the following:

- Conduct ESF-13 law enforcement planning for the 50 states, District of Columbia, five territories, and Federally recognized tribes.
- Maintain liaison and build relationships with Federal, State, territorial, local, and Tribal law enforcement agencies, FEMA, emergency operations centers, and other first responders in all 10 FEMA regions.
- Conduct national and regional interagency training.
- Assess shortfalls in State and local capabilities.
- Participate in annual national emergency exercises.
- Participate in planning activities and other regional meetings.
- Activate and respond, when necessary, to support the Federal government response to emergencies, major disasters, or acts of terrorism.
- Provide personal protection equipment and officer safety equipment to all responding Federal law enforcement officers in support of ESF-13.
- Maintain a robust logistical capability to move personnel and equipment in support of the Federal government response to emergencies, major disasters, or acts of terrorism.
- Maintain robust situational awareness to ensure all personnel are properly informed of ESF-13 status and the condition of public safety and security in the disaster area.

The ATF supports operational travel of ESF-13 headquarters and regional staff for mandated activities throughout the year. Since 2014, ESF-13 has participated in 58 national activations,

deployed over 7,400 personnel, and provided over \$146 million in mission assignment funding. ESF-13 has participated in approximately 754 Federal and State exercises and approximately 1,522 Federal and State trainings. In the 10 FEMA regions, ESF-13 has participated in approximately 240 Regional Interagency Steering Committee meetings. ESF-13 personnel have been involved in 4,726 Federal planning and liaison meetings and approximately 2,664 State planning liaison meetings.

## **10. Internet Investigations Center (IIC)**

The IIC is staffed with Federal agents, legal counsel, and investigators. It conducts and coordinates multi-jurisdictional operations and provides investigative direction to disrupt and dismantle online criminal activity within the ATF's enforcement and regulatory jurisdiction. The IIC uses investigative and analytic techniques to identify domestic and international offenders and the associations among them.

The ATF established the IIC to track illegal online firearms trafficking and to provide actionable intelligence to agents in the field related to FFL burglaries, arson, firearms trafficking and violent crime. The IIC has identified several significant traffickers operating over the internet; its work has led to prosecutions against individuals and groups using the dark web to traffic guns to criminals or attempting to buy firearms illegally online. The IIC also investigates buyers and sellers who use the internet to facilitate illegal firearms transactions, both the surface web and the dark web.

Research on internet-facilitated firearm transactions indicate:

- The relative anonymity of the internet makes it an ideal means for prohibited individuals to obtain illegal firearms.
- The more anonymity employed by a firearms purchaser, the greater the likelihood that the transaction violates Federal law.
- Firearm transactions that occur on the dark web is more likely to be completed in person, by mail, or by common carrier, rather than through an FFL.

The IIC also provides comprehensive investigative and intelligence support to the ATF's field divisions on matters relating to internet-based criminal activity within ATF's jurisdiction. Support includes technical online investigative tasks and legal support for internet-related warrants and subpoenas. The IIC also serves as the single deconfliction point for online investigations both internally within the ATF and externally with other agencies.

### C. Performance Tables\*

PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES TABLE													
<b>Decision Unit: Law Enforcement Operations</b>													
DOJ Strategic Goals & Objectives: Goal 2: Keep Our Country Safe Objective 2.2: Counter Foreign and Domestic Terrorism Objective 2.3: Combat Violent Crime and Gun Violence Goal 3: Protect Civil Rights Objective 3.3: Reform and Strengthen the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems to Ensure Fair and Just Treatment													
PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES TABLE													
<b>Decision Unit: Law Enforcement Operations/Investigative Support Services</b>													
WORKLOAD/RESOURCES		Target		Actual		Projected		Actual		Changes		Requested (Total)	
		FY 2023		FY 2023		FY 2024		FY 2024		Current Services Adjustments and FY 2025 Program Change		FY 2025 Request	
Total Costs and FTE		FTE	\$,000	FTE	\$,000	FTE	\$,000	FTE	\$,000	FTE	\$,000	FTE	\$,000
Law Enforcement Operations Strategic Objective 2.2		889	290,518	877	290,361	850	290,535	TBD	TBD	66	46,692	916	337,227
Law Enforcement Operations Strategic Objective 2.3		2,973	966,333	2,935	965,809	2,842	966,391	TBD	TBD	186	118,471	3,028	1,084,862
Law Enforcement Operations Strategic Objective 3.3		3	6,270	3	6,270	3	6,270	TBD	TBD	35	37,847	38	44,117
<b>Total Costs</b>		<b>3,865</b>	<b>1,263,121</b>	<b>3,815</b>	<b>1,262,440</b>	<b>3,695</b>	<b>1,263,196</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>203,010</b>	<b>3,982</b>	<b>1,466,206</b>
Performance Goal Measure	Fully integrate intelligence and investigative work to meet the needs of current and future violent crime trends.	N/A		N/A		TBD		TBD		TBD		TBD	
Performance Goal Measure	Develop a high-performing inclusive culture that is future-focused, works as a team, finds the most effective solutions, and meets the needs of the communities and stakeholders we serve.	N/A		N/A		TBD		TBD		TBD		TBD	
Performance Goal Measure	Improve internal and external stakeholder communication through a user-centered design to drive mission awareness and share resources, capabilities, and initiatives.	N/A		N/A		TBD		TBD		TBD		TBD	
Performance Goal Measure	Adopt innovative technologies, tools, and procedures to optimize, modernize, and digitally transform the business environment to improve how ATF operates.	N/A		N/A		TBD		TBD		TBD		TBD	

PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES TABLE													
<b>Decision Unit: Investigative Support Services</b>													
DOJ Strategic Goals & Objectives: Goal 2: Keep Our Country Safe Objective 2.2: Counter Foreign and Domestic Terrorism Objective 2.3: Combat Violent Crime and Gun Violence Goal 3: Protect Civil Rights Objective 3.3: Reform and Strengthen the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems to Ensure Fair and Just Treatment													
PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES TABLE													
<b>Decision Unit: Investigative Support Services</b>													
WORKLOAD/RESOURCES		Target		Actual		Projected		Actual		Changes		Requested (Total)	
		FY 2023		FY 2023		FY 2024		FY 2024		Adjustments and FY 2025 Program Change		FY 2025 Request	
Total Costs and FTE		FTE	\$,000	FTE	\$,000	FTE	\$,000	FTE	\$,000	FTE	\$,000	FTE	\$,000
Investigative Support Strategic Objective 2.2		281	94,042	284	93,969	280	94,025	TBD	TBD	12	17,708	292	111,733
Investigative Support Strategic Objective 2.3		942	314,837	951	314,590	938	314,779	TBD	TBD	38	59,282	976	374,062
Investigative Support Strategic Objective 3.3		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Costs</b>		<b>1,223</b>	<b>408,879</b>	<b>1,235</b>	<b>408,559</b>	<b>1,218</b>	<b>408,804</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>76,990</b>	<b>1,268</b>	<b>485,795</b>
Performance Goal Measure	Fully integrate intelligence and investigative work to meet the needs of current and future violent crime trends.	N/A		N/A		TBD		TBD		TBD		TBD	
Performance Goal Measure	Develop a high-performing inclusive culture that is future-focused, works as a team, finds the most effective solutions, and meets the needs of the communities and stakeholders we serve.	N/A		N/A		TBD		TBD		TBD		TBD	
Performance Goal Measure	Improve internal and external stakeholder communication through a user-centered design to drive mission awareness and share resources, capabilities, and initiatives.	N/A		N/A		TBD		TBD		TBD		TBD	
Performance Goal Measure	Adopt innovative technologies, tools, and procedures to optimize, modernize, and digitally transform the business environment to improve how ATF operates.	N/A		N/A		TBD		TBD		TBD		TBD	

*\*ATF Strategic Plan FY 2017-2023 cycle has ended. The new ATF FY2024-2028 Strategic Plan has been approved; performance indicator targets still under review by the ATF Executive Staff and noted as "TBD" until finalization.*

DOJ Priority Measures			FY 2021 Baseline	FY 2022 Target	FY 2023 Target	FY23 Final
Objective 2.3	Priority Measure	Increasing the percentage of urgent firearm trace requests completed within 48 hours to 95% from a 2021 baseline of 83.4%	83.40%	95.00%	95.00%	92.92%
Objective 2.3	Priority Measure	Increasing the percentage of firearms cases that target traffickers or other large-scale enterprises to 39% from a 2021 baseline of 29%	29.00%	29.20%	39.00%	32.38%
Objective 2.3	Priority Measure	Increasing the number of inspections of federal firearms licensees to 7,410 from a 2021 baseline of 6,721.	6,721	7,061	7,410	8,524
Objective 3.3	Priority Measure and Agency Priority Goal	Increasing the percentage of federal law enforcement officers who receive Use of Force Sustained Training within a 3-year period to 95%	100.00%	95.00%	95.00%	100%
Objective 3.3	Priority Measure and Agency Priority Goal	Increasing the percentage of federal law enforcement officers, equipped with Body Worn Cameras (BWCs), and associated training to 38% from a 2021 baseline of 1%	5.50%	38.00%	38.00%	0%

DOJ Key Priority Measures			POC	Target	FY24 Q1
Objective 2.3.6	Priority Measure	The Department will increase the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) “hits/leads,” that is the linkage between two or more separate crime scene investigations from a baseline of 33%, to 35% of all correlations.	ATF	35%	33.40%
Objective 2.3.7	Priority Measure	APG: The Department will increase acquisitions by 5%, from a baseline of 661,681.	ATF	694,765	155,377
Objective 3.3.1	KPI	Percent of federal law enforcement officers who receive Use of Force Sustained Training within a three-year period	ATF	100%	100%
Objective 3.3.3	KPI	Percent of federal law enforcement officers equipped with body-worn cameras and associated training	ATF		26%
Objective 3.3.6	Priority Measure	APG: Percentage of pre-planned arrest attempts and executions of search or seizure warrants where BWC footage is recorded, in accordance with each component’s policy	ATF		12.37%

## D. Performance, Resources, and Strategies

### 1. Performance Plan and Report for Outcomes



The ATF Performance Index is a management tool that helps facilitate informed decision-making regarding ATF’s priorities, activities, and resources. The Performance Index aligns ATF’s budget decision units with the Bureau’s strategic goals, core functions, and performance goal measures to provide comprehensive tracking and measurement of performance across the Bureau by:

- Summarizing related facts (indicators) into a single outcome (performance goal measure) to show impact, effectiveness, and progress towards established goals (targets).
- Collecting trend analysis over time of the impact and effectiveness of performance goal measures (outcome) relative to the established base year.

ATF’s executive leadership has focused on the four mission driven core functions to report ATF’s outcome-based performance goal measures. The performance goal measures impact all core functions.

<i>Core Functions</i>	<i>Performance Goal Measures</i>
<b>Alcohol</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully integrate intelligence and investigative work to meet the needs of current and future violent crime trends.</li> <li>• Develop a high-performing inclusive culture that is future-focused, works as a team, finds the most effective solutions, and meets the needs of the communities and stakeholders we serve.</li> <li>• Improve internal and external stakeholder communication through a user-centered design to drive mission awareness and share resources, capabilities, and initiatives.</li> <li>• Adopt innovative technologies, tools, and procedures to optimize, modernize, and digitally transform the business environment to improve how ATF operates.</li> </ul>
<b>Tobacco</b>	
<b>Firearms</b>	
<b>Explosives/Arson</b>	

ATF’s performance measures support both the Law Enforcement Operations and the Investigative Support Services decision units working interdependently to demonstrate ATF’s actual performance. ATF’s performance data is compiled and calculated into actuals for each performance goal measure, which is measured against the established target in the budget to provide a statistical measure of achievements, assess how performance changes over time, and demonstrate how performance relates to resources. The Performance Index allows ATF to collect and analyze data in ways that give ATF leaders the ability to:

- Recognize performance trends;
- Push for organizational efficiencies;
- Have needed discussions and exchange ideas; and
- Implement corrective action plans, if needed

The performance indicators and assigned weights are based on executive leadership decisions that define each indicator’s impact on its respective performance goal measure.

## **2. Strategies to Accomplish Outcomes**

ATF continues to strive to increase and enhance crime gun intelligence and create a healthy infrastructure. In addition to the performance indicators, ATF's new strategic plan is comprised of projects that will further our mission and strategic outcomes. ATF continues to strategically investigate and address gun violence using the Frontline Business Model. ATF develops customized strategies within each of its 25 field divisions based on assessments of the most significant violent crime threats within their areas of responsibility. The assessments factor in emerging crime trends, significant criminal activity, issues faced by local industry members, the proximity, and priorities of Federal, State local and other external partners, available ATF resources, as well as, unique data and intelligence developed by ATF, and other intelligence and crime-related data available through Federal, State and local partners. All of this information is used to plan the best use of resources at the local and national level for the greatest impact to reduce violent crime and safeguard the public.

### **3. Agency Priority Goals (DOJ Priority Measures)**

By September 30, 2024, the Department will:

Strategic Goal 2: Keep Our Country Safe

Objective 2.3: Combat Violent Crime and Gun Violence

- 1) The Department will increase the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) "hits/leads," that is the linkage between two or more separate crime scene investigations from a baseline of 33 percent, to 35 percent of all correlations.
- 2) The Department will increase NIBIN acquisitions by five percent, from a baseline of 661,681.g

Strategic Goal 3: Protect Civil Rights

Objective 3.3: Reform and Strengthen the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems to Ensure Fair and Just Treatment

- 1) Percent of Federal law enforcement officers who receive Use of Force Sustained Training within a three-year period
- 2) Percent of Federal law enforcement officers equipped with body-worn cameras and associated training

## V. Program Increases by Item

<b>Item Name:</b>	<b>Combating Gun Violence</b>
Strategic Goal:	Keep Our Country Safe
Strategic Objective 2.2:	Counter Foreign and Domestic Terrorism
Strategic Objective 2.3:	Combat Violent Crime and Gun Violence
Budget Decision Unit(s):	Law Enforcement Operations Investigative Support Services
Organizational Program:	Firearms Criminal Possession and Use Illegal Firearms Trafficking
Program Increase:	Positions <u>97</u> Agt/Atty <u>50</u> FTE <u>48</u> Dollars <u>\$21,043,000</u>

### **Description of Item**

The ATF is requesting a total of \$21.0 million and 97 positions (one attorney and 50 agents) for regional violent crime and trafficking initiatives. These initiatives include the firearm trafficking Strike Forces initially established by the Department and the ATF in 2021 and Operation Southbound, which is the Department's primary initiative addressing Cartel-driven firearms trafficking to Mexico. As part of Operation Southbound, the ATF has established nine Firearms Trafficking Task Forces (FTTFs) in locations along the southwest border where traffickers frequently coordinate the smuggling of firearms to Mexico and conduct domestic trafficking activities. Two of the FTTFs are located in Houston, Texas. The other seven are located in Dallas, McAllen, Laredo, and San Antonio, Texas and Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona. Funding will support the following:

- 50 SAs to the Department's regional Strike Forces and the Southbound FTTFs to expand and enhance criminal enforcement operations that utilize the new BSCA trafficking provision to combat trafficking organizations;
- 7 IOIs to the ATF's Industry Operations groups located in Field Divisions with Strike Forces of FTTFs to increase firearms industry inspection capacity;
- 3 IO Intelligence Specialists to the Southbound FTTFs to increase firearms industry intelligence and investigative capabilities;
- 3 IRSs to the Southbound FTTFs to increase tactical intelligence and support capabilities;
- 3 Intelligence Analysts to the Southbound FTTFs to increase tactical support capabilities; and
- 1 Field Attorney to provide additional legal guidance and recommendations for the ATF's firearms trafficking investigations and industry operations inspections.
- 6 Firearms and Toolmark Examiners to support criminal investigations.
- 9 IBIS Technicians to support NIBIN and crime gun intelligence analytics.
- 10 Forensic Biologists to support field operations cases.
- 5 Physical Scientists to support criminal investigations through laboratory services.

## **Justification**

Firearm violence affects every community in the United States. The ATF's number one priority is to enhance public safety by reducing firearm violence. The ATF's criminal enforcement programs focus on disrupting the cycle of firearm violence by identifying and arresting the trigger-pullers who terrorize communities and by dismantling the firearm trafficking organizations that supply crime guns. This initiative is the cornerstone of the Department's efforts to address the epidemic of gun violence witnessed day after day in the United States.

The requested program increase for this initiative expands the best use of crime gun intelligence, particularly with respect to disrupting the flow of firearms from "source" areas to the communities with the highest rates of firearm violence. As part of this initiative, the ATF will enhance the reach, staffing, and support of the Strike Forces and Southbound, including through the further embedding of special agents with local police departments to pursue leads on the sources of crime guns used in homicides and other shootings. Firearm trafficking networks often involve transport of firearms across jurisdictional, State, and national boundaries making the ATF's Federal statutory authorities and expertise essential to effective investigation, disruption, and prosecution. Because these investigations are also highly resource-intensive, the ATF must expand its Special Agent cadre and professional support personnel to increase the volume and quality of its trafficking investigations. Expanding support to law enforcement partners in the investigation and prevention of violent firearm offenses also requires expanding the ATF resources.

The Department and the ATF have been overwhelmed with requests from Members of Congress, Governors, Mayors, police chiefs, and sheriffs to increase the ATF's resources in communities across the nation that have experienced firearm violence and associated firearms trafficking, including drug cartel-driven firearms trafficking. This program increase would enhance the ATF's capacity to investigate both the trafficking networks that fuel firearm violence in our communities, and the criminal organizations and individuals using firearms to commit violent offenses and intimidate communities. This expanded capacity will allow the ATF to partially address the broad range of requests for additional ATF resources. The ATF will prioritize allocation of the requested resources to those communities experiencing the highest rates of persistent firearm violence, and the regions in which firearms trafficking networks focus operations, including the drug cartel-linked networks that traffic firearms to Mexico.

During FY23, as part of Operation Southbound, the ATF initiated 945 investigations; 226 cases referred for prosecution; 558 defendants referred for prosecution; 2,542 firearms taken into custody; and 118,360 rounds of ammunition taken into custody. The positions and funding in this request will directly support the ATF's national and regional violent crime and trafficking initiatives. These initiatives leverage the ATF's Frontline Business Model, which is designed to allocate the ATF's investigative and regulatory resources to maximize support for the Administration's whole-of-government approach to firearms trafficking and violence.

These additional resources will further diminish Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs) and the violence they bring. Recent significant incidents and the increasing tactical proficiency demonstrated by Mexican cartel gunmen are so alarming, they have drawn the attention of both the Mexican and United States Governments.

**Expanding forensic technology to solve gun crimes.** In recent years, the ATF and other law enforcement agencies have developed increasingly sophisticated technology to link dangerous suspects to the firearms they used in crimes. This cutting-edge technology—which often involves analysis of a firearm’s serial number and/or the bullet shell casings found at a crime scene—helps investigators determine where a firearm was initially purchased and whether it was used to commit more than one crime. Yet the demand for such technology is often greater than the supply, and as the budget expands the total number of DOJ’s violent crime investigators, the need will only increase. This enhancement expands the ATF’s forensic services expertise in the areas of firearms/tool mark examinations, IBIS support, forensic biology and forensic sciences.

### **Impact on Performance**

The ATF makes communities safer by identifying, targeting, disrupting, and dismantling criminal organizations that utilize firearms, arson, explosives, and alcohol or tobacco diversion in furtherance of violent criminal activity. The funding requested for “national and regional violent crime and trafficking initiatives” will expand the ATF’s capabilities to support law enforcement in communities experiencing the highest rates of persistent firearms violence in accordance with Administration priorities. Additional SAs, IOIs, IRSs, and other professional staff will enhance the ATF’s ability to better identify, disrupt, and dismantle firearms trafficking networks supplying firearms to TCOs.

## Funding

### 1. Base Funding

FY 2023 Enacted				FY 2024 Annualized Continuing Resolution				FY 2025 Current Services			
Pos	Agt/Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)	Pos	Agt/Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)	Pos	Agt/Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)
2,272	1,681	2,255	515,735	2,272	1,681	2,255	515,735	2,272	1,681	2,255	515,735

### 2. Personnel Increase Cost Summary

Type of Position/Series	FY 2025 Request (\$000)	Positions Requested	Full Year Modular Cost per Position (\$000)	Annualizations (\$000)			
				1st Year	2nd Year	FY 2026 (net change from 2025)	FY 2027 (net change from 2026)
Intelligence (0132)	827	9	161.4	91.9	90.9	818	618
Attorney (0905)	139	1	250.1	139.2	132.8	133	50
Firearms and Toolmark Examiner (1397)	551	6	161.4	91.9	90.9	545	412
IBIS Technician (0301)	827	9	161.4	91.9	90.9	818	618
Forensic Biologist	919	10	161.4	91.9	90.9	909	686
Forensic/Physical Science	460	5	161.4	91.9	90.9	455	343
General Investigative (1801)	949	7	208.8	135.6	100.5	704	653
Criminal Investigative (1811)	16,370	50	427.2	327.4	5.7	285	5,100
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>21,043</b>	<b>97</b>				<b>4,667</b>	<b>8,480</b>

**3. Non-Personnel Increase/Reduction Cost Summary**

Non-Personnel Item	FY 2025 Request (\$000)	Unit Cost (\$000)	Quantity	Annualizations (\$000)	
				FY 2026 (net change from 2025)	FY 2027 (net change from 2026)
N/A					
<b>Total Non-Personnel</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**4. Justification for Non-Personnel Annualizations**

N/A

**5. Total Request for this Item**

Category	Positions			Amount Requested (\$000)			Annualizations (\$000)	
	Count	Agt/ Atty	FTE	Personnel	Non-Personnel	Total	FY 2026 (net change from 2025)	FY 2027 (net change from 2026)
Current Services	2,272	1,681	2,255	335,228	180,507	515,735	0	0
Increases	97	50	48	21,043	0	21,043	4,667	8,480
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,369</b>	<b>1,731</b>	<b>2,303</b>	<b>356,271</b>	<b>180,507</b>	<b>536,778</b>	<b>4,667</b>	<b>8,490</b>

**6. Affected Crosscuts: National Security, Violent Crime, Gun Safety, Transnational Organized Crime & Mass Violence**

**Item Name:** **Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA)/IOI Operations**

Strategic Goal 2: Keep Our Country Safe  
Strategic Objective 2.2: Counter Foreign and Domestic Terrorism  
Strategic Objective 2.3: Combat Violent Crime and Gun Violence

Budget Decision Unit(s): Law Enforcement Operations (LEO)

Organizational Program: Diversion of Firearms from Legal Commerce  
Firearms Trafficking

Program Increase: Positions 349 Agt/Atty 100 FTE 175 Dollars \$ 73,438,000

**Description of Item**

The ATF is requesting a total of \$73.4 million and 349 positions to improve inspection and oversight of FFLs; enhance the ATF’s capacity to further implement and enforce all provisions of the BSCA; and bring to justice those unlawfully engaged in the business of selling firearms and curb the unlawful diversion of firearms from lawful commerce. The request includes:

*Bipartisan Safer Communities Act and Regulating the Firearms Industry*

- The ATF is requesting 249 positions to increase the number of IOIs who will conduct inspections, regulatory oversight, and outreach to Federal firearms licensees (FFLs) to ensure compliance with provisions of the Gun Control Act (GCA), as amended by the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA). The requested IOI positions (249) are part of a hiring plan to increase the number of IOIs to a level that would reasonably sustain the Department and the Administration’s priority of establishing and sustaining a three-year inspection cycle for FFLs.
- The ATF is also requesting 100 agents to receive and investigate the additional referrals generated from the additional IOIs requested in this Enhancement. Referrals take multiple forms, ranging from straw-purchasing, unlicensed business activity, firearms trafficking and other suspicious activity. Additional agents will be needed to properly review each referral and, if required, conduct a fulsome investigation.
- The ATF is requesting \$4.9 million for space requirements associated with 349 new positions under this enhancement. The ATF is also requesting \$1.0 million for additional mission/operational travel associated with the increase in inspection activity; \$ \$100,000 for the cost associated with administrative hearings; and \$971,000 to fund the additional operating costs associated with the anticipated increase in processing crime gun traces conducted via the National Tracing Center.

**Justification**



The BSCA, enacted on June 25, 2022, represents the most substantial change to the Federal firearm laws in a generation. Specifically, the BSCA provided law enforcement and prosecutors with powerful new tools to address straw purchasing, firearms trafficking, as well as expanded authorities to apply the wiretap, racketeering, and money laundering statutes to firearm offenses. The BSCA also amends current law to clarify who needs a Federal license to buy and sell firearms; imposes an enhanced background check review process, which includes reviewing juvenile mental health records for individuals 16 years or older seeking to purchase a firearm; and narrows the so-called “boyfriend loophole” by prohibiting someone convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence as part of a dating relationship from purchasing or possessing a firearm for at least five years. Unfortunately, the BSCA did not provide funding for the ATF to implement these provisions. Moreover, these new authorities and related investigations, while vital to fighting gun violence and disrupting illicit trafficking networks, are extremely resource intensive to implement. This program increase is necessary to enable the ATF to have the resources necessary fully implement the new and expanded provisions of the BSCA as mandated by Congress in FY 2025 and beyond.

The ATF must also bolster its workforce to continue inspection and regulation of a growing FFL population, as it is the sole Federal regulatory authority in firearms licensing. FFLs play a key role in safeguarding the public from the types of violent firearm crimes plaguing our communities that the BSCA is designed to prevent. The ATF often relies on FFLs as the first line of defense against gun violence. FFL records ensure the comprehensive traceability of firearms recovered at crime scenes. The ATF IOIs conduct inspections of FFLs to ensure compliance with applicable Federal, State and local laws and regulations, to educate licensees on their responsibilities, and to advise on best practices. IOIs also review the required records kept by FFLs to identify individuals potentially associated with trafficking firearms or involved in other criminal activity. The ATF modestly reversed a four-year decline in the number of field IOIs conducting inspections in FY 2023. However, the need for additional personnel and resources is evident and the trend of outpacing attrition of IOIs must continue in order for the agency to keep up with demand.

Since the implementation of the BSCA, under 18 USC 932, Straw Purchasing of Firearms, the ATF has recommended 193 charges; 190 defendants charged; 54 indictments/complaints filed; 21 cases declined; and 3 convictions. Under 18 USC 933, Firearms Trafficking, the ATF has recommended 270 charges; 255 defendants charged; 131 indictments/complaints filed; 5 cases declined; and 15 convictions.

The ATF’s National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (Volume 1) included a recommendation that Department support out-year budget requests for the ATF to add funding directly to the base budget for the hiring of additional IOIs. The assessment uses a baseline year prior to the Covid-19 pandemic that serves as an appropriate benchmark for IOI compliance inspection completions. Specifically, in FY 2019, 655 field IOIs completed approximately 12,789 compliance inspections, or nearly 20 compliance inspections per field IOI. To be able to conduct a compliance inspection of each FFL (excluding Type 03) once every three years, the ATF would need to be able to conduct approximately 29,434 compliance inspections annually. At a rate of approximately 20 compliance inspections annually per IOI, the ATF would need to have 1,509 total field IOIs to complete the requisite number of annual inspections. Currently, this

would require the addition of approximately 835 new field IOIs (based on 674 IOIs on staff or in the pipeline as of the end of FY 2023). While the ATF was only able to hire 32 IOIs in FY 2023 given appropriations levels, the ATF projects a need to hire at least 249 IOIs to maintain gradual and sustainable growth through FY 2033.

The ATF is requesting \$6.9 million in operational funding to support the BSCA enhancement in FY 2025. Specifically, \$4.9 million will fund space requirements to support 249 new IOIs and 100 new special agent positions. Specific locations of these new positions will be finalized once operational needs have been determined. Currently the ATF does not have vacant space for this level of hiring. \$1.0 million will support mission travel, which is required to address cross-division and multi-state investigations involving firearms trafficking investigations and those in violation of provisions of the new statutes, as well as an expected significant increase in inspection activity associated with BSCA. \$100,000 will enhance the ATF's capabilities to address administrative hearings and the cost of contract court reporters and subsequent transcription of various proceedings. Lastly, \$971,000 will support the increased costs associated with processing of gun traces at the NTC for enforcement of red flag laws.

### **Impact on Performance**

The ATF's ability to implement BSCA in the fulsome way that the American people demand depends on the appropriate level of funding. Absent additional resources to support expanded FFL inspections, the ATF will be unable to achieve this objective while also maintaining the statutorily mandated inspection cycle for FFLs. The requested additional resources are necessary for the ATF to achieve the Department's strategic enforcement priorities.

Consistently the top two violations IOIs have cited for FFLs during compliance inspections have been failure to maintain an accurate, complete, and timely acquisition and disposition record of firearms, and failure to obtain a completed ATF Form 4473, Firearm Transaction Form. These violations demonstrate that FFLs need to be held accountable with regular compliance inspections, which can only be achieved with additional IOIs to conduct the required inspections. Properly maintaining firearm records is critical for completing an urgent firearm trace in order to quickly identify an individual responsible for a violent crime and expeditiously apprehend him or her before any further risk to public safety can occur.

The request for an additional 249 IOI positions would provide the ATF with the necessary resources to work towards achieving the Administration and Department's goal of a 3-year inspection cycle of FFLs. These inspections would ensure that the traceability of crime guns is maintained and that firearms are kept out of the hands of prohibited individuals. The additional resources will ensure FFLs are regularly inspected to identify and discourage illegal firearm trafficking, thus working to reduce violent firearms crimes in communities. Furthermore, it will also ensure non-compliant FFLs are brought into compliance through administrative actions.

## Funding

### 1. Base Funding

FY 2023 Enacted				FY 2024 Continuing Resolution				FY 2025 Current Services			
Pos	Agt/Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)	Pos	Agt/Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)	Pos	Agt/Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)
77	45	39	22,000	77	45	39	22,000	77	45	39	22,000

### 2. Personnel Increase Cost Summary

Type of Position/Series	FY 2025 Request (\$000)	Positions Requested	Full Year Modular Cost per Position (\$000)	Annualizations (\$000)			
				1st Year	2nd Year	FY 2026 (net change from 2025)	FY 2027 (net change from 2026)
General Investigative (1800-1899) (IOIs)	32,773	249	208.8	135.6	101	25,149	0
Criminal Investigative (1811)	33,742	100	427	327	5.7	570	9,430
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>66,515</b>	<b>349</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25,719</b>	<b>33,357</b>

### 3. Non-Personnel Increase/Reduction Cost Summary

Non-Personnel Item	FY 2025 Request (\$000)	Unit Cost (\$000)	Quantity	Annualizations (\$000)	
				FY 2026 (net change from 2025)	FY 2027 (net change from 2026)
Space Buildout	4,852	4,852	1	(3,881)	0
Mission Travel	1,000	1,000	1	0	0
Administrative Hearings	100	100	1	0	0
Red Flag Laws	971	971	1	0	0
<b>Total Non-Personnel</b>	<b>6,923</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**4. Justification for Non-Personnel Annualizations**

N/A

**5. Total Request for this Item**

Category	Positions			Amount Requested (\$000)			Annualizations (\$000)	
	Count	Agt/Atty	FTE	Personnel	Non-Personnel	Total	FY 2026 (net change from 2025)	FY 2027 (net change from 2026)
Current Services	77	45	39	14,300	7,700	22,000	0	0
Increases	349	100	175	66,515	6,923	73,438	25,719	33,357
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>80,815</b>	<b>14,623</b>	<b>95,438</b>	<b>25,719</b>	<b>33,357</b>

**6. Affected Crosscuts:** National Security, Violent Crime, Gun Safety

**Item Name:** **Enhancing NIBIN and Crime Gun Intelligence**

**Strategic Goal:** Keep Our Country Safe

**Strategic Objective: 2.2** Counter Foreign and Domestic Terrorism  
**Strategic Objective: 2.3** Combat Violent Crime and Gun Violence

**Budget Decision Unit(s):** Law Enforcement Operations  
Investigative Support Services

**Organizational Program:** National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN)

**Program Increase:** Positions 18 Agt/Atty 2 FTE 9 Dollars \$18,707,000

**Description of Item**

The ATF is seeking an increase of \$18.7 million and 18 positions for NIBIN and CGI resources to expand the ATF’s capacity to reduce violent firearm crime. The ATF’s NIBIN and CGI programs are key elements of the Administration and Department’s strategy to reduce firearm violence; these programs enable both the ATF and its local, State territorial, Tribal, and Federal partners to focus investigative resources on the most violent firearm offenders in communities. The request includes four initiatives that will enhance the application of evidence-based intelligence and advanced analytics which assist in the investigative and enforcement operations targeting prolific shooters and the most violent offenders in communities:

- ***NIBIN National Correlation and Training Center II (Wichita, Kansas)*** – The ATF requests \$11.9 million and six positions (two Firearms and Toolmark Examiners, one Branch Chief, two IBIS Specialists, one Program Analyst) at the NNCTC II in Wichita, Kansas, and additional contractor support. The addition of a Branch Chief position will provide consistent supervisory oversight over the day-to-day operations. The two additional Firearms and Toolmark Examiners will allow the NNCTC II to maintain pace with the increase of correlations received daily allowing the timely processing and dissemination of NIBIN leads to investigators.
- ***CGI and NIBIN Enforcement Support System (NESS)*** – The ATF requests a total of \$3.6 million and five positions (two Program Managers, one IT Specialist and two Program Analysts) for development support, training, cybersecurity and enhanced analytics for the NESS Application and CGI.
- ***Firearms Operations Division NIBIN Program and Field Support*** – The ATF requests a total of \$0.464 million for NIBIN program infrastructure.
- ***ATF Crime Gun Intelligence Center of Excellence (CGICex) at Wichita State University*** – The ATF requests \$2.8 million and seven positions (one Branch Chief, two Program Analysts, two Data Analysts, one Instruction System/Curriculum Specialist and one Statistician) along with additional contractors to support the mission of the CGICex.

## **Justification**

The ATF employs a comprehensive violence reduction strategy in partnership with Federal, State, local, territorial, and Tribal law enforcement to disrupt the cycle of firearm violence through application of CGI. This strategy focuses on identifying, investigating, and prosecuting the firearms traffickers and the violent offenders who use guns to terrorize our communities. A central tool of the ATF's strategy is NIBIN, which is managed by the Bureau's Firearms Operations Division. NIBIN is the only interstate automated ballistic imaging network in operation in the United States. It enables an integrated investigative approach, providing a platform on which Federal, State local, territorial, and Tribal law enforcement agencies can gain access to technology which compares images of ballistic evidence obtained from crimes scenes and recovered firearms to combat firearm violence across jurisdictional boundaries. NIBIN is a proven investigative and intelligence tool that can identify leads that were not previously available, link firearms evidence from multiple crime scenes together that were committed with the same firearm, and link firearms evidence from a crime scene to a recovered firearm.

The foundation of these initiatives is rooted in NIBIN technology, each adding value by improving different stages of the process. The ATF's CGI strategy is a key element of the Administration's priorities; it is the foundation for the Department's multijurisdictional firearms trafficking strike forces, provides the evidentiary leads and analysis needed to stem the proliferation of "ghost guns" and firearms equipped with machinegun conversion devices, and provides the tools and resources needed to for law enforcement partners at all levels to tackle gun violence. Combined, these initiatives support the overall mission to reduce firearm violence through aggressive targeting, investigation, and prosecution of shooters and their sources of crime guns.

### *Initiative #1: NIBIN/NNCTC*

The NNCTC I & II provides consistent and timely turnaround of NIBIN leads within 24 to 48 hours to CGICs and the ATF's law enforcement partners. These NIBIN leads provide investigators relevant and valuable information to focus enforcement resources on investigations that will have the most significant impact on violent firearm crimes in communities. The NNCTC currently has the capacity to process more than 2,000 correlation reviews per day, servicing over 190 NIBIN sites and providing NIBIN lead referrals to over 2,500 police departments which contribute evidence to these sites. Additionally, over 50 additional NIBIN sites have requested acceptance into the NNCTC, which attests to its reputation among law enforcement partners. Overall, there are 301 NIBIN across the United States with more than 40 sites pending installation. In order to keep up with the increased need for timely investigative leads to support our Federal, State local, Tribal, and territorial partners continued investment in the NIBIN program infrastructure is critical.

To enhance national effectiveness of NIBIN in the reduction of firearm violence, the ATF has committed to providing correlation review service for all sites on the NIBIN network requesting the service. To ensure all NIBIN partners have access to the NNCTC services, in FY 2023, the ATF has opened a second site located in Wichita, Kansas. The location of the second site at Wichita State University provides a mutually beneficial academic setting in which knowledge

and skills related to forensic science and the ATF's CGI programs are passed on to students and faculty. The partnership also provides potential opportunities for the ATF to recruit talent to serve and support the Bureau and its important mission to fight violent crime. This would also allow the CGI to be used for consolidated instruction and criminal investigations.

At the end of FY 2023, the NNCTC had 297 contracted Correlation Review Specialists to provide correlation service for network sites. With the increasing number of NIBIN partner sites, the addition of contract personnel and equipment is needed to continue this valuable service in providing timely law enforcement intelligence to the ATF and its partners in combatting violent crime. An increase in positions is also requested to provide expertise and guidance to the contractors, as well as CGI trainees, for continued quality correlation reviews. The table below demonstrates the need for additional resources in FY 2025, as well as the success of the NIBIN Program and the NNCTC itself.

	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	% Increase FY 2017 to FY 2023
Number of Acquisition Sites/ <sup>1</sup>	167	183	211	237	250	275	315	89%
Acquisitions/ <sup>2</sup>	283,212	320,472	384,247	472,952	575,727	631,533	661,681	134%
Leads/ <sup>3</sup>	41,495	47,056	67,639	104,206	146,617	189,197	221,360	433%
Hits/ <sup>4</sup>	8,654	7,630	6,484	6,775	7,094	5,913	4,755	-45%

/1	The number of Partner Sites is exclusive to non-ATF NIBIN Acquisition Sites and does not include the three ATF NIBIN Labs, the ATF Transportable Units, or NIBIN Vehicles
/2	Acquisitions represent the digital imaging of various firearm-related markings present on cartridge casings entered into NIBIN.
/3	Leads represent an unconfirmed, potential association between two or more pieces of firearm ballistic evidence based on a correlation review of the digital images in the NIBIN database by either a firearms examiner or a trained NIBIN technician. They are intended to provide a lead for investigative purposes.
/4	Hits represent the result of two or more firearms ballistic evidence acquisitions that have been confirmed as a match by a firearms examiner. Hits are based on correlation review of digital images using MatchPoint Plus™ and microscopic confirmation by a firearms examiner. This information/intelligence can be used for investigative purposes and is suitable for court purposes.

*Initiative #2: CGI and NESS*

The requested funding includes optimizing the automated integration of investigative data from Federal, State, local, territorial, or Tribal law enforcement record management systems. Automating this data entry process will allow law enforcement personnel to analyze and investigate associated shooting events in a more efficient manner by focusing resources for the greatest impact on violent crime. As of January 2024, the NESS team has automated the ingest of shooting and gun recovery investigations from ten agencies. This funding would allow the ATF to expand NESS data integration to 100 of the top-volume law enforcement agencies in a multi-year effort.

As the ATF maintains critical and sensitive NIBIN and case data on shootings and gun recoveries, cybersecurity will remain a priority. Mitigating cyber threats in an ever-evolving technical landscape requires additional development and funding. This will, in turn, help the ATF provide law enforcement with streamlined access to both crucial CGI data systems - NESS and eTrace. This request also includes the onboarding of additional law enforcement agencies by providing NESS access and training to further expand cohesive collaboration.

Using NESS data in conjunction with advanced analytics will allow the ATF to identify connections between law enforcement investigations beyond the NIBIN hits or leads. This request includes funding infrastructure costs to support the agency's analysis goals. The effort includes leveraging the ATF's NIBIN and NESS data to ultimately assist field users in identifying patterns of violence. The request would also cover infrastructure costs associated with operating and maintenance, supporting changes in NIBIN data, and adding functionality enhancements as needed.

The initiative will provide the ATF and other law enforcement personnel with easily accessible data and insight into shooting events, firearms tracking, and patterns of firearm violence. This will help focus enforcement resources for optimal impact in combatting firearm related violent crime.

#### *Initiative #3: Firearms Operations Division NIBIN Program and Field Support*

Requested funding will enhance the ATF's overall Firearms Operations Division and NIBIN program infrastructure. The number of NIBIN Sites has grown from 167 sites in FY 2017 to 323 sites as of November 2023. In order keep up with the increased need for timely investigative leads to support our Federal, State, local, Tribal, and territorial partners continued investment in the NIBIN program infrastructure is critical. The requested funds would enable the ATF to increase the number of new sites to the NIBIN Network, as well as allow the ATF to ensure that all sites have the resources necessary to support of law enforcement partners.

#### *Initiative #4: ATF Crime Gun Intelligence Center of Excellence (CGICex)*

The CGICex will function as a research and training facility that provides up-to-date training, publications, and studies specific to CGI. The CGICex will also expand the ATF's capacity to conduct studies of ballistic analysis to further enhance the ATF's CGI mission by utilizing NIBIN data to identify trends and patterns. Integrating the practical application of CGI and NIBIN within an academic setting will allow broader sharing of the CGI model with future and current law enforcement practitioners. The increase is being requested at this level due to the incremental implementation of the CGICex. The FY 2025 request is designed to achieve economies of scale at the CGICex, providing the resources needed to develop curriculum for virtual and in-person training, and produce publications, research, and data analytics specific to NIBIN data, firearms trafficking, and PMFs.

The following is the approved branches and sections of the National Crime Gun Intelligence Center of Excellence which encompasses a portion of the Firearms Operations Division:





The National Crime Gun Intelligence Center of Excellence has developed the CGI Academy and Curriculum Section which will be responsible for designing new training for Federal, State local, territorial, and Tribal law enforcement partners. The CGI Academy will provide training for specific levels of personnel to include but not limited to Chiefs of Police Academy, mid-management CGI Academy, and Patrol Officer and Investigator Academies.

The CGI Governing Board and State / Local Coordinator will provide administrative support to coordinate bi-annual board meeting, trainings, and any assistance that the ATF’s law enforcement partners request as far as training or publications to help support each agency’s Crime Gun Intelligence programs.

The CGI Research Program was developed to utilize the data the ATF holds within all aspects of Crime Gun Intelligence and contributes to research and studies needed through the criminal justice and forensic science disciplines. Currently, this program has two Contractor Support Services as researchers and has designed internal and external vehicles to support and assist on future studies selected within academia.

The requested increase will cover the costs associated with the research team within the CGI Research Program as well as the academic team selected through the ATF’s NIJ interagency agreement to continue to produce an annual comprehensive report on firearms commerce and trafficking consistent with the Administration’s policy and requests from Congress included in appropriations report language. In addition, the academic team/consultants will continue to evaluate how well the ATF’s systems and processes are keeping pace with the evolving nature of criminal firearms trafficking in the United States. Furthermore, the annual comprehensive report will seek to illuminate the nature of illicit firearms trafficking in the United States and how it has changed from year to year. The ultimate objective of this annual report will be to provide

Federal, State and local policymakers with evidence-based data to better thwart the common channels of firearms trafficking. Moreover, evidence-based research and analysis should help law enforcement identify new firearms trafficking channels and trends while also providing an overview of the current firearms market, both legal and illegal, to policymakers and the general public.

The CGI Research Program is requesting funding to allow the annual research study as well as new research reviewed and awarded specifically addressing Crime Gun Intelligence issues through short term, longitudinal, qualitative, and quantitative concepts.

### **Impact on Performance**

In FY 2025, the ATF plans to utilize the requested budget increase to combat violent firearm crime consistent with the Administration's priorities and the ATF's strategic goals.

- The increased capacity for correlation reviews will allow the ATF to service additional sites new to the NIBIN program and maintain timely turnaround of NIBIN leads within 24 to 48 hours. These NIBIN leads enable law enforcement to effectively investigate shooting cases NIBIN has identified as related.
- With the increased resources, NESS will more effectively and efficiently assist NIBIN partners with the investigation of firearm-related violence. The onboarding of additional law enforcement agencies for input into and access to NESS will further facilitate collaboration between Federal, State local, territorial, and Tribal law enforcement efforts in combatting violent crime. NESS data and analytical insights will also assist with developing focused and strategic enforcement priorities nationwide.
- Integrating the practical application of CGI and NIBIN within an academic setting provided by the CGICex, will allow broader sharing of the CGI model with future and current law enforcement practitioners. The development of training and curriculum of academies will provide a solution to the void that is currently hampering law enforcement; that is, the implementation of CGI through the completion and prosecution of firearm related investigations.
- The CGICex will continue to provide high quality training in process of NIBIN, from understanding the value of timeliness and learning about the technicalities of NIBIN with acquisitions and correlations. The CGICex will emphasize the continuation of training to incorporate investigative methodology in utilizing NIBIN leads throughout an investigation and into prosecutorial closure. This impact will be significant to the volume of gun crime and the communities suffering by this violence.
- Incorporating community involvement through forums at the CGICex to provide an understanding of CGI and discuss solutions to gun violence from the voice of communities. This effort will be designed to pilot from communities within the Kansas region but, in future iterations, can be offered to other states and regions. A report will be published with key concepts after each iteration.

## Funding

### 1. Base Funding

FY 2023 Enacted				FY 2024 Continuing Resolution				FY 2025 Current Services			
Pos	Agt/ Atty	FTE	Amount( \$000)	Pos	Agt/ Atty	FTE	Amount( \$000)	Pos	Agt/ Atty	FTE	Amount( \$000)
63	17	46	82,948	63	17	63	82,948	63	17	63	82,948

### 2. Personnel Increase Cost Summary

Type of Position/Series	FY 2025 Request (\$000)	Positions Requested	Full Year Modular Cost per Position (\$000)	Annualizations (\$000)			
				1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	FY 2026 (net change from 2025)	FY 2027 (net change from 2026)
Clerical and Office Svcs (0300-0399)	1,011	11	161.4	91.9	90.9	1,000	516
Forensic/Physical Science (1300-1399)	275	3	161.4	91.9	90.9	273	141
General Investigative (1800-1899)	136	1	208.8	135.6	100.5	100	93
Criminal Investigative (1811)	655	2	427.2	327.4	5.7	11	204
Info Technology Mgmt (2210)	92	1	161.4	91.9	90.9	91	47
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>2,169</b>	<b>18</b>				<b>1,475</b>	<b>1,001</b>

**3. Non-Personnel Increase/Reduction Cost Summary**

Non-Personnel Item	FY 2025 Request (\$000)	Unit Cost (\$000)	Quantity	Annualizations (\$000)	
				FY 2026 (net change from 2025)	FY 2027 (net change from 2026)
<i>NNCTC II</i>	11,070	11,070	1	1,151	449
<i>CGI and NESS</i>	2,834	2,834	1	85	88
<i>Division NIBIN Program</i>	464	464	1	14	14
<i>CGICex</i>	2,170	2,170	1	84	86
<b>Total Non-Personnel</b>	<b>16,538</b>	<b>16,538</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1,334</b>	<b>637</b>

**1. Justification for Non-Personnel Annualizations**

Annualized out-year funding for this program is required to ensure full funding for contract support, infrastructure, and other services.

**2. Affected Crosscuts** National Security; Violent Crime; Gun Safety; Mass Violence & Southwest Border

**4. Total Request for this Item**

Category	Positions			Amount Requested (\$000)			Annualizations (\$000)	
	Count	Agt/ Atty	FTE	Personnel	Non-Personnel	Total	FY 2026 (net change from 2024)	FY 2027 (net change from 2025)
Current Services	63	17	63	10,710	72,238	82,948	0	0
Increases	18	2	9	2,169	16,538	18,707	2,809	1,638
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>14,860</b>	<b>125,606</b>	<b>140,466</b>	<b>2,809</b>	<b>1,638</b>

**Item Name:** **National Services Center (NSC) Expansion**

Strategic Goal 2: Keep Our Country Safe

Strategic Objective 2.2: Counter Foreign and Domestic Terrorism

Strategic Objective 2.3: Combat Violent Crime and Gun Violence

Budget Decision Unit(s): Investigative Support Services

Organizational Program: Enforcement Programs and Services (EPS)

Program Increase: Positions 25 Agt/Atty 0 FTE 12 Dollars \$43,948,000

### **Description of Items**

The ATF requests \$43.9 million to expand the ATF facility in Martinsburg, West Virginia, including:

- \$28,000,000 for specialized tenant improvement buildout, move costs, physical security improvements, and information technology enhancements (data/cabling/network/phone equipment);
- \$5,500,000 for the Campus Plan to improve program operations at the existing National Services Center building;
- \$4,500,000 for the lease of the former Internal Revenue Service (IRS)/Murall Drive building (annual recurring cost);
- \$3,650,000 for furniture, fixtures, and equipment; and
- The ATF also requests 25 new positions to aid the National Firearms Act (NFA) Division in accurately and efficiently processing of applications.

### **Justification**

#### *National Services Center Campus*

The National Services Center (NSC), located in Martinsburg, West Virginia, houses several ATF functions: (a) the National Tracing Center (NTC), which is the only firearm tracing facility in the nation and is mission critical in executing the Department's comprehensive firearms strategy; (b) the Out-of-Business Records Center (OBRC), which receives and processes records from FFLs that have gone out of business, to ensure that crime gun traces can be appropriately completed; (c) the Firearms and Ammunition Technology Division (FATD), which conducts firearm examinations and analyses essential to addressing emerging trends fueling firearm violence, such as "ghost guns" and 3-D printed machinegun conversion devices; and (d) the National Firearms Act (NFA) Division, which is responsible for processing all applications to make and register NFA weapons (including silencers).

The NSC programs at Martinsburg have far surpassed the maximum capacity of the existing building. As a result, the ATF has experienced major challenges and difficulties in managing physical work areas. Temporary measures implemented to alleviate the space issues are not sustainable over the long-term and impose significant risks associated with crime gun trace requests, managing massive amounts of paper records, evidence reviews, future maintenance of archived firearms records, and the processing of NFA applications. In addition, safety factors, required circulation space, Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility, and building code compliance pose substantial risks. For example, one temporary measure resulted in elimination of all conference room space to address current operational needs safely, with storage space converted to supervisory offices.

The physical infrastructure of the NSC is in dire need of repair and modernization. The ATF has attempted to address the growing deficiencies for more than a decade through budget requests to expand and repair the facility; none of these requests have been sufficiently funded. As a result of the growing demand for NSC services, infrastructure deficiencies have now reached a tipping point.

The OBRC illustrates the critical situation at the NSC, as it operates well beyond the maximum capacity to secure paper firearm records within the current building. Absent immediate, urgent action, the ATF will be unable to deliver timely and essential support to law enforcement, including time-sensitive crime gun tracing. Due to several factors, including a significant increase in NFA registration applications and firearm trace requests, the volume of out-of-business records sent to the ATF by licensees and the volume of firearms tracing far exceed current facility capacity. This deficiency is not a small issue; it includes thousands of boxes of crucial trace documents stacked throughout the NTC footprint and in overflow storage.

The interior of the NSC reached its maximum capacity to store paper firearm records several years ago. The General Services Administration (GSA) has advised that the floor is subject to collapse. Therefore, as a temporary solution, the NTC previously deployed the use of over 50 Conex shipping containers in the NSC parking lot to store tens of millions of out-of-business firearm records. These shipping containers were not climate- or humidity-controlled, putting original records at risk for deterioration and mold. Additionally, staff were required to pull needed records out of these containers to process the files and/or find records while executing crime gun trace research, which posed life safety hazards such as stacks of boxes falling, extreme heat or cold temperatures within the containers, and exposure to environmental detriments (rain and snow) during transportation to and from the containers to the NSC building.

GSA has advised the ATF that the parking lot at the NSC is at maximum capacity, after several expansion efforts. There is no room to place shipping containers in the parking lot areas, should they be needed again in the future. If containers are needed in the future, the ATF will be required to reinforce the parking lot at additional expense. In addition to the shortcomings that affect NTC operations, the current NSC facility also does not provide required building capacity for mission-critical areas such as the specialized vault and evidence storage of firearms. Therefore, this program enhancement is an urgent priority for the ATF; temporary measures implemented to continue operations are no longer sufficient to maintain mission requirements with the building's limited capacity, and those measures are not sustainable in the future. This

poses significant risk to the ATF's ability to execute its core public safety functions, both supporting the State and local law enforcement fight against gun crime, as well as performing the ATF's firearms regulatory mission.

Additional examples of other serious gaps which contribute to unacceptable risk levels at the NSC include:

- FATD is responsible for maintaining the ATF's National Firearms Reference Collection (NFC) which is an ever-growing vital asset to the ATF used for research and classification of weapons used for criminal purposes. Currently housing over 14,000 firearms, with annual additions of more than 600 items per year, these reference items are critical in the successful criminal prosecutions, as well in training other Federal agencies in proper firearms identification. The library requires room to expand as the need for 3D printers grows. FATD has exceeded maximum capacity of available storage space in the NFC.
- FATD is also the consolidated firearms receiving, inspection, certification, repair, and shipping facility for all Bureau-issued and official use firearms. FATD currently processes more than 1,500 such firearms per year. With pending firearm replacement acquisitions, this number of processed firearms will grow to exceed 7,000 annually. FATD has exceeded the maximum capacity to store Bureau-Issued firearms and NFC exemplar firearms, resulting in work areas that are not ADA compliant and accessible.
- FATD also currently lacks the processing and storage space needed for predetermined boxed shipments of firearms for criminal investigations which are in high demand for use in trafficking investigations.
- As the ATF expands its return-to-the workplace posture, there are not enough parking spaces to accommodate the NSC staff. Employees must now park on side streets, which pose a hazard as they walk down busy roads without shoulders or sidewalks to the building entrance. There are no mass transit stops within the area.

The ATF leadership reviewed several alternatives and options to address the significant space issues at the NSC. Each was evaluated based on timing, mission objectives, Congressional mandates, program office space requirements, cost, potential impacts to the organization, and risk mitigation. Based on this analysis, the ATF sought to utilize space in a nearby building formerly occupied by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The two-story building, located on Murall Drive near Martinsburg, contains approximately 148,250 rentable square feet previously secured to IRS specifications.

The Murall Drive building will immediately fulfill the space requirement for all NTC and OBRC personnel (both Federal employees and contractors), as well as adequate indoor storage for all OBRC firearms records – including those previously stored in the outdoor shipping containers at the NSC parking lot. The Murall Drive site includes an open area adjacent to the loading dock / processing area that will facilitate daily arrival and processing of out-of-business firearm records shipments. Upon arrival, the records will be documented and sent onward in an assembly line configuration for efficient processing.

As an interim emergency measure, with the intention of creating a permanent solution, the ATF secured a short-term lease at the Murall Drive facility and moved all the paper records formerly stored in Conex shipping containers at NSC to Murall Drive. While this has improved safety for the staff and the records, it has added additional logistical challenges in dealing with the records, as they all arrive at the NSC and must now be transported back and forth between the NSC and Murall for processing. Collocating NTC and OBRC operations at the Murall facility is necessary to achieve optimal logistical performance and tracing efficiency.

Upon NTC buildout completion, other ATF programs would be relocated to Murall Drive. The Martinsburg field offices for Criminal and Industry Operations (presently assigned under the Louisville Field Division), Continuity of Operations, National Destruction Branch, and the Eastern Regional Firearms Enforcement Officer (FEO) Hub would all be co-located with NTC.

The ATF is currently coordinating with the GSA regarding the proposed expansion space. The Murall Drive building owner has expressed interest in leasing to the ATF on a long-term basis and a willingness to consider infrastructure to the building, which is currently in good condition. Upgrades would include new roofing, HVAC, electrical capacity, and plumbing capacity. Tenant improvement capital is available for building-specific security implementation and buildout as needed.

To implement an initial short-term lease, the ATF's Lease Contracting Officer has the Senior Level Unlimited warrant which is necessary to negotiate and execute government leases. As an immediate emergency need, the ATF can utilize GSA standing delegation authority under FMR 102.73-155 (p) space to acquire space for short-term use. Project DWV10740 identified the emergency space needed for records holding and processing based on the urgent and compelling need for shipping container holding / storage / processing of records. The GSA has documented and approved this action in its tracking system of record.

GSA typically takes 24 to 36 months to procure a lease. The ATF has engaged GSA regarding special purpose delegation under FMR 102-73.205 (c), which allows the Department to lease space for review and custody of records and other evidentiary materials. Because NTC documents serve as records, potential evidence documentation, and data resources, the ATF can apply to GSA for review and approval of a lease term of up to five years for this type of space.

For a longer-term lease, GSA would evaluate the lease under its General-Purpose delegation. Under this authority, the ATF could enter into a lease of up to 20 years. These requests would save the ATF up to \$5.0 million in lease administration and project fees over a 10-year term.

### *NFA Program Improvements*

The ATF is requesting 25 positions for the NFA Division to accomplish the division's core functions, as well as anticipated new requirements during future fiscal years. Specifically, this immediate staffing need seeks to address the additional capacity required in base operations to complete the NFA application volume at its unprecedented rate. This request ensures all necessary and additional NFA Division positions are included in the ATF's appropriations, for full implementation of the ATF and the Department's strategic goals.



Recent regulatory changes have greatly impacted the ATF NFA Division. For example, the NFA Division estimates that three to seven million stabilizing braces have been sold to members of the public over the past ten years. Current owners had the option of accessing the ATF's eForms system by submitting an ATF Form 1 and registering the device tax free for a limited period. Individuals wishing to purchase/register such a device after the May 31, 2023, deadline are now required to submit a Form 1 application and pay the \$200 Making and Transfer Tax.

- *Current NFA Division Staffing:* The current staffing level of 41 Legal Instruments Examiners (LIEs) in the NFA Division does not provide sufficient capacity to address the increasing volume of NFA applications.
- *FTEs vs. Contractors:* According to Federal regulations, an “inherent governmental function” occurs when a function that is so intimately related to the public interest as to require performance by an FTE. Applying discretion in the utilization of Federal Government authority or the making of value judgments in decisions for the Federal Government, including judgments relating to monetary transactions and entitlements is further outlined as an “inherent governmental function.” NFA Examiners make determination/take final action on NFA applications and authorize the collection of the Special Occupation Tax. Therefore, contractors cannot be utilized to address the staffing requirements of the NFA division.
- *Volume:* Over the past six years, from FY 2018 to FY 2023, NFA applications have increased from 339,278 to 1,061,068—representing an over 200 percent increase. In an effort to keep pace with this increasing demand, the NFA Division has continued to rely heavily on the use of FTE Overtime (\$597,000 in FY 2023) and has also detailed numerous FTEs from field operations to support NFA application processing on a rotating basis. Despite these efforts, the incoming volume of NFA applications continues to exceed the current operational capacity of the NFA Division.

### **Impact on Performance**

Expansion of the NSC is critical as the facility has surpassed the maximum capacity of building space and the temporary measures allowing for continued operations are not sustainable in the future. This overcapacity situation poses significant risk to the ATF's ability to execute both its core public safety function, in supporting State and local law enforcement fighting gun crime and for the regulatory mission at the NSC. If this plan is not executed timely, routine traces of crime guns, such as those conducted after shootings that result in murder of U.S. citizens, will take even longer than the current 8-day response time. Delays in crime gun trace results increase the risk of investigative leads going cold and leave shooters on the streets longer, giving them the opportunity to commit more crimes.

Based on projected volume of NFA applications, without additional resources to support the processing demands and customer needs, NFA processing times for applications would further exceed Department performance targets significantly. The NFA Division currently has a backlog of nearly 213,000 pending applications and the average processing time for tax-paid applications is approximately seven months. In order, to support the increasing work volumes and bring the processing times down to a reasonable level, the NFA Division requires immediate authorization

to hire an additional 25 additional FTEs as outlined below. Failure to increase staffing levels in this area will result in a sustained and unacceptable backlog of NFA applications as well as significantly increased processing times.

## Funding

### 1. Base Funding

FY 2023 Enacted				FY 2024 Continuing Resolution				FY 2025 Current Services			
Pos	Agt/ Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)	Pos	Agt/ Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)	Pos	Agt/ Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### 2. Personnel Increase Cost Summary

Type of Position/Series	FY 2025 Request (\$000)	Positions Requested	Full Year Modular Cost per Position (\$000)	Annualizations (\$000)			
				1 <sup>st</sup> Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	FY 2026 (net change from 2025)	FY 2027 (net change from 2026)
Clerical and Office Svcs (0300-0399)	276	3	161.4	91.9	90.9	273	206
Legal Instrument Examiners (0900-0999)	1,654	18	161.4	91.9	90.9	1,636	1,235
General Investigative (1800-1899) (FEO)	276	3	161.4	91.9	90.9	273	206
General Investigative (1800-1899) (Writer Editor)	92	1	161.4	91.9	90.9	92	69
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>2,298</b>	<b>25</b>				<b>2,274</b>	<b>1,716</b>

### 3. Non-Personnel Increase/Reduction Cost Summary

Non-Personnel Item	FY 2025 Request (\$000)	Unit Cost (\$000)	Quantity	Annualizations (\$000)	
				FY 2026 (net change from 2025)	FY 2027 (net change from 2026)
Annual Lease <sup>1</sup>	4,500	4,500	1	250	250

TI, Moves, Physical Security, IT Infrastructure <sup>2</sup>	28,000	28,000	1	(22,000)	0
Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FF&E) <sup>2</sup>	3,650	3,650	1	(2,900)	0
NSC Campus Plan <sup>3</sup>	5,500	5,500	1	0	0
<b>Total Non-Personnel</b>	<b>41,650</b>	<b>41,650</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>(24,650)</b>	<b>250</b>

When performing the adjudication process there are complex set of detailed steps which Legal Instruments Examiners have to process the background investigative review process. This process requires contractual support assistance, overtime hours, specialized supplies and tools for processing and the continued reimbursable agreement costs.

- <sup>1</sup> Expected annual recurring rent costs during life of the lease.
- <sup>2</sup> Some of these costs will be one-time, non-recurring costs. However, based on a phased and incremental occupancy, as additional space is obtained, additional costs will be incurred for any specialized tenant improvements and FF&E required.
- <sup>3</sup> Campus Plan items include deferred maintenance and repair items, and life-cycle updates needed to maintain a facility in safe and functioning working condition. These costs will fluctuate over the economic life of the building.

**4. Justification for Non-Personnel Annualizations**

N/A

**5. Total Request for this Item**

Category	Positions			Amount Requested (\$000)			Annualizations (\$000)	
	Count	Agt/Atty	FTE	Personnel	Non-Personnel	Total	FY 2024 (net change from 2023)	FY 2025 (net change from 2024)
Current Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Increases	25	0	12	2,298	41,650	43,948	(21,572)	1,966
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2,298</b>	<b>41,650</b>	<b>43,948</b>	<b>(21,426)</b>	<b>1,966</b>

**6. Affected Crosscuts: National Security and Violent Crime**

**Item Name:** Forensics Services Crime Gun Intelligence

Strategic Goal 2: Keep Our Country Safe

Strategic Objective 2.2: Counter Foreign and Domestic Terrorism

Strategic Objective 2.3: Combat Violent Crime and Gun Violence

Budget Decision Unit(s): Investigative Support Services

Organizational Program: Forensic Services

Program Increase: Positions 30 Agt/Atty 0 FTE 15 Dollars \$13,117,429

### **Description of Item**

The ATF requests an increase of \$13.1 million and 30 positions for the initial development of a high-throughput, rapid-processing laboratory for analysis of DNA from fired cartridge casings (FCCs), the processing of felon in possession crime guns, establishing a second firearms examiners academy, and funding for the temporary coverage of the DNA expansion initiative. The requested funds support the first phase of a multi-year plan for personnel staffing and laboratory instrumentation for the ATF's new laboratory in Wichita. This novel laboratory will have the initial capacity to handle submissions of approximately 12,000 FCCs annually, and coverage for DNA analysis of felon in possession cases. This initiative includes the following components:

- \$2,756,000 for 30 positions (including a Laboratory Chief and Deputy Laboratory Chief, case manager(s), CODIS specialists, quality specialists, laboratory technicians, firearm and toolmark examiners, forensic biologists and supervisory personnel);
- \$2,949,429 for laboratory equipment dedicated to DNA analysis of FCCs and possession crimes;
- \$600,000 for FCC collection devices;
- \$4,612,000 for laboratory instruments for a firearms academy, firearms examiners and triage units;
- \$1,200,000 for annual operations and maintenance;
- \$1,000,000 annually for out-sourcing felon in possession cases while the ATF initiates a multi-year plan to expand DNA services; and
- Allows for future research in obtaining DNA sourcing from Privately Made Firearms (PMFs)

### **Justification**

By extracting even more key information from shell casings, the ATF's intent with this initiative is simply to transform law enforcement with new tools to more effectively investigate trigger-pullers which negatively impact the totality of public safety.

### *Fired Cartridge Cases*

FCCs are frequently the only evidence available following violent gun crimes. Due to past challenges in recovering usable latent prints or DNA from FCCs, the ATF's Special Agents and our State and local law enforcement partners have had limited forensic tools to connect suspects to violent gun crimes. The only tool for investigative purposes is NIBIN, which links crime scenes, but not necessarily suspects. By developing the technique to DNA from FCCs, it is possible to provide a potential name of a suspect with a CODIS hit and/or link gun crimes to the same individual even when different guns are used.

This initiative would allow criminal investigators to capitalize on the benefits of both NIBIN for linking multiple shooting scenes to one another and the forensic laboratory for linking evidence from a shooting scene to an individual. The forensic analysis of DNA from a FCC, in combination with the strength of the NIBIN database, will be a formidable tool in the fight against violent gun crime.

The process developed by the ATF for recovering DNA from FCCs has shown exceptional rates of success; however, it has been in limited use due to insufficient laboratory staffing. No other laboratory has specialized in the recovery of DNA from FCCs. Those that have attempted to implement FCC processing on smaller scales have been plagued by the inherent inefficiencies or poor success rates associated with prior methods. By fully funding this initiative, the laboratory can capitalize on the efficiencies associated with an assembly line style of processing, the use of robotics and economies of scale.

### *FCC collection devices*

Knowing that the successful analysis of DNA from cartridge cases begins at the crime scene, the ATF laboratory designed and patented a cartridge case collection device specifically targeted to this type of evidence. Traditionally, cartridge cases have been collected and stored together in paper envelopes or plastic bags resulting in loss of DNA or contamination. Distribution of the collection device for use by all levels of law enforcement will improve the preservation of the evidence and lead to greater recovery of DNA.

### *Felon in Possession Cases*

Given the current staffing and space constraints, the ATF laboratory conducts DNA analysis on only select felon in possession cases and is not able to expand this service to all felon in possession cases investigated by the ATF. DNA analysis on general felon in possession cases is still required to support the enforcement of these types of cases. Most State and local forensic laboratories do not have the capacity nor the inclination to conduct DNA analysis on numerous felons in possession cases. This lack of forensic support impacts the ability to bring suspects to trial. By funding this initiative, the ATF laboratory will be able to start staffing and equipping the laboratory to accept and process felon in possession cases submitted by the ATF.

## *Outsourcing*

As the ATF laboratory builds its capacity to accept and process felon in possession cases, the ATF's Special Agents still need forensic support on these types of cases. The recourse is for the ATF Special Agents to submit felon in possession evidence to private DNA laboratories, which cost several thousand dollars per case. Funding for outsourcing will allow ATF Special Agents to send their evidence for DNA analysis to private DNA laboratories.

## *Second Firearms Examiners Academy*

The NFEA provides training for entry-level firearms examiners from local, State and Federal law enforcement agencies. This innovative academy ensures that new toolmark examiners receive proper training to work in this field. The need for additional firearms and toolmark examiners throughout the country is so great the ATF cannot currently meet the overwhelming demands of the forensic community. By creating a second academy we will be able to double the capacity, providing many more competent examiners to help solve firearms crimes in various at-risk communities.

## **Impact on Performance**

Recovering DNA from FCCs found at violent gun crime scenes can provide timely forensic evidence for leads to in-progress investigations when the recovery results in a "hit" from the CODIS database.

- This initiative will enable rapid processing of evidence so leads can be provided to investigators while they are still "hot." In addition, the laboratory will have the capacity to provide follow-up comparisons to known DNA samples, providing evidence that can be used in criminal trials, in furtherance of this objective:
- This capability will contribute to swift apprehension of violent criminals and prevention of additional violent gun crimes, and directly aligns with the intent of the Administration's initiatives aimed at combatting violent crime in America.

Increasing capacity to process crime guns will decrease turn-around times, increase actionable forensic leads such as fingerprints, DNA samples and NIBIN correlations which the ATF and our law enforcement partners use to build cases and put more violent criminals behind bars.

Training more firearms and tool mark examiners will increase the capacity to examine firearm crimes, conduct NIBIN correlations, and assist our law enforcement partners investigate violent gun crimes in their communities.

- Decrease the backlogs and turnaround times in the examination of crime gun evidence and increase the number of collaborative partners;
- Expanded space for firearms examinations and ballistic testing, and space to provide training of State and local partners, including classroom and laboratory space for the expansion and enhancement of the ATF National Firearms Examiner Academy (NFEA).

## Funding

### 1. Base Funding

FY 2023 Enacted				FY 2024 Continuing Resolution				FY 2025 Current Services			
Pos	Agt/ Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)	Pos	Agt/ Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)	Pos	Agt/ Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

### 2. Personnel Increase Cost Summary

Type of Position/Series	FY 2025 Request (\$000)	Positions Requested	Full Year Modular Cost per Position (\$000)	Annualizations (\$000)			
				1st Year	2nd Year	FY 2026 (net change from 2025)	FY 2027 (net change from 2026)
Forensic/Physical Science	2,389	26	161.4	91.9	90.9	2,364	1,784
Firearms & Toolmark Examiners	367	4	161.4	91.9	90.9	364	274
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>2,756</b>	<b>30</b>				<b>2,728</b>	<b>2,058</b>



### 3. Non-Personnel Increase Cost Summary

Non-Personnel Item	FY 2025 Request (\$000)	Unit Cost (\$000)	Quantity	Annualizations (\$000)	
				FY 2026 (net change from 2025)	FY 2027 (net change from 2026)
Laboratory Equipment (FCC)	2,949	2,949	1	(2,359)	0
Laboratory collection devices	600	600	1	0	0
Maintenance for laboratory equipment and Supplies	1,200	1,200	1	0	0
Laboratory Equipment to support forensic exploitation of firearms	1,909	1,909	1	(1,527)	0
Laboratory Equipment - NFEA	2,703	2,703	1	(2,162)	0
DNA Outsourcing	1,000	1,000	1	0	0
<b>Total Non-Personnel</b>	<b>10,361</b>	<b>10,361</b>		<b>(6,048)</b>	<b>0</b>

### 4. Justification for Non-Personnel Annualizations

#### *Fired Cartridge Cases and Felon in Possession*

This initiative supports a set of specialized forensic instruments, equipment, and software and 26 staff members to conduct high-throughput DNA analysis on FCCs and possession cases and enter DNA profiles into CODIS. Robotics will be used to rapidly and efficiently process extract the biological material from forensic samples and transfer those samples into plates used by other instruments. Specialized software is used to analyze the samples, interpret the data, conduct statistical calculations, and assist with uploading DNA profiles to CODIS.

Annual service is required to maintain instruments at peak performance. Should a break down occur, the service agreement obligates the vendor to make repairs in an expedited manner to minimize instrument downtime.

Forensic DNA analysis is performed using commercially available kits, chemicals, and supplies from sample collection through final instrument processing. These supplies include consumables used on the robots and genetic analysis instruments, personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff and cleaning/decontamination supplies that are necessary when working with low levels of DNA.

#### *FCC collection devices*

This initiative supports the production of the ATF developed FCC collection devices to preserve DNA which may be present on cartridge cases recovered from shooting scenes. Knowing that the successful analysis of DNA from cartridge cases begins at the crime scene, the ATF laboratory designed and patented a cartridge case collection device specifically targeted to this type of evidence. Distribution of the collection devices for use by all levels of law enforcement will improve the preservation of the evidence and lead to greater recovery of DNA.

*Forensic exploitation of firearms*

This initiative supports forensic equipment needed to triage and process crime guns for forensic evidence such as fingerprints and DNA, the restoration of serial numbers, the microscopic analysis and comparison of cartridge cases and bullets and allow for NIBIN correlations to be forensically verified.

*NFEA*

This initiative allows for the acquisition of laboratory equipment to support the training needs of entry-level firearms examiners from local, State and Federal law enforcement agencies. The laboratory equipment will be used to enhance the technical skills and provide practical experience for examiners attending the academy so they may become firearm examiners at their home agencies.

*Outsourcing*

Multi-year funding will be required to pay for DNA analysis of felons-in-possession cases while the ATF Laboratory expands its staffing and facilities.

**5. Total Request for this Item**

Category	Positions			Amount Requested (\$000)			Annualizations (\$000)	
	Count	Agt/Atty	FTE	Personnel	Non-Personnel	Total	FY 2025 (net change from 2024)	FY 2026 (net change from 2025)
Current Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Increases	30	0	15	2,756	10,361	13,117	(3,320)	2,058
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2,756</b>	<b>10,361</b>	<b>13,117</b>	<b>(3,320)</b>	<b>2,058</b>

**6. Affected Crosscuts: National Security and Violent Crime.**

**Item Name:** **Body Worn Cameras**

Strategic Goal 2: Keep Our Country Safe  
 Strategic Goal 3: Protect Civil Rights

Strategic Objective 2.2: Counter Foreign and Domestic Terrorism  
 Strategic Objective 2.3: Combat Violent Crime and Gun Violence  
 Strategic Objective 3.3: Reform and Strengthen the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems to Ensure Fair and Just Treatment

Budget Decision Unit(s): Law Enforcement Operations

Organizational Program: Special Operations

Program Increase: Positions 70 Agt/Atty 11 FTE 35 Dollars \$37,847,000

**Description of Item**

The ATF requests \$37.8 million and 70 positions for the Body Worn Cameras (BWC) program. This funding will help the ATF implement the Department’s policies and adhere to Executive Order 14074, Advance Effective, Accountable Policing and Criminal Justice Practices To Enhance Public Trust and Public Safety. Funding will allow the ATF to support digital case management software and video cloud storage of BWC video for both TFOs whose parent agency mandates the use of BWCs during enforcement operations while they serve on Federal task forces, as well as the ATF’s SAs under the BWC requirements set forth in the recent DOJ Body-Worn Camera Policy.

The funding will allow the ATF to build the Digital Evidence Management (DEM) Branch to support the BWC program through training, hardware management, data management (integrity and security), policy guidance, technical support, and numerous other support functions, as detailed below.

**Justification**

On June 7, 2021, Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco issued a BWC policy directing all Department components to develop and implement a BWC program that requires SAs and TFOs to wear and activate BWC recording equipment for purposes of recording their actions during: (1) a pre-planned attempt to serve an arrest warrant or other pre-planned arrest, including the apprehension of fugitives sought on State and local warrants; or (2) the execution of a search or seizure warrant or order.

To ensure successful and efficient support of both the TFO and SA BWC policies, the requested funding will be utilized to create the DEM Branch that will manage all the digital inventory (including both TFO BWC and SA BWC data) and ensure data integrity and security as well as promulgate policy and best practices.

The proposed DEM Branch model will require the purchase of hardware and accessories for the ATF's SAs and TFOs<sup>2</sup>, travel for agency-wide and the ATF National Academy training, 70 positions for both program support in the field, the ATF headquarters, and the ATF National Academy. The field positions include the following:

- A BWC Branch Chief, who will oversee and identify all trends and recommend new methods if required. The Chief will design and oversee all policies and recommend appropriate actions for a studies and surveys, coordinate with various offices to ensure effective implementation of all program activities, oversee efficient working of all personnel within the BWC program.
- Three Regional Project Officers, who will provide essential support in their assigned region while maintaining communication with other project officers and program manager for uniformity.
- Five Project Officers responsible for ensuring DOJ's BWC Task Force Officer BWC requirement, this includes updating Task Force Officer BWC addendums as TFO's are onboarded and auditing field compliance that all TFO BWC recordings are maintained by the ATF as Federal Records per DOJ mandates. Other duties could include implementing new polices and procedures as directed by the branch chief.
- Three Regional Management Analysts who will provide administrative support to the regional project officers which includes, providing essential support in their assigned region, maintaining communication with other project officers and branch chief for uniformity, manage and facilitate flow of information from the BWC program to the field, and facilitate in the logistics of guiding, training, and tutoring new users on the BWC digital evidence management software.
- Division Administrators (46 positions) will be assigned to maintain the digital evidence, ensure records retention policies are met, and the integrity of the evidence is maintained. Each region will be assigned personnel to assist in handling all disclosure related issues to include public disclosure of information subject to Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) and the Privacy Act, to include redaction and dissemination of BWCs when required.

The headquarters support includes the following:

- A Contract Officer Representative to ensure the contractor(s) responsible for both the storage and digital evidence management system meets the commitment of the contract while also facilitating proper development of the requirements, to include timeliness and delivery of goods and services required by the contract.
- One headquarters position to research and disseminate all legal guidance to the regional legal counsel personnel to include pertinent case law and legal findings as it relates to BWC issues. In addition, this headquarters position will keep track of all FOIA and Privacy related to BWCs and ensure the timely release when required.
- One Audit liaison to manage and coordinate all audits and reviews by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and Government Accountability Office (GAO).
- One headquarters position to assist in the creation and implementation of a full BWC curriculum for the ATF National Academy for new agents and ensure compliance for all newly hired agents.

- Six Office of Science and Technology positions to plan and carry out any security measures for the cloud-based storage, analyze the effectiveness of current network capabilities and develop, and customize, if necessary, an infrastructure to support the current digital evidence management and storage. These individuals will also assist to support necessary bandwidth upgrades for approximately 300 ATF sites to support digital evidence migration and storage.
- Two positions to assist in focused intelligence through the collection and analysis of information obtained from data collected through the digital evidence collected.

In addition to personnel the DEMS Branch model will require a physical location for surplus hardware and accessories, IT upgrades for the successful upload or download of data in each office, and integration of the Taser data into the BWC cloud-based digital storage. Based on initial deployment, the ATF has realized the need for additional infrastructure to support the DEM Branch specifically for the redaction of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) when processing the BWC recordings for Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests as well as discovery.

The introduction of BWCs has created an immense amount of audio and video footage, all of which is public record. As the ATF expands the BWC program, the amount of footage will grow exponentially. As with any public record, BWC footage must be reviewed and redacted prior to release. PII must be redacted from both audio and video footage to safeguard the public and prevent an invasion of privacy. Redacting BWC footage for compliance is a more time-intensive task than redacting paper documents and represents a challenge for the ATF. Ensuring access to BWC footage cannot be cost-prohibitive for requesters if transparency is the goal. Extensive footage redaction often requires many labor hours and represents a cost that the ATF cannot absorb. Additionally, critical incidents are more highly scrutinized and the need to share BWC recordings publicly becomes more urgent. Law enforcement agencies are often criticized when there is any delay in the release of recordings following a critical incident. By identifying footage deemed as a critical incident and expediting its release, the ATF is taking steps to strengthen public records request processes.

The additional DEM Branch positions requested will assist the ATF in managing the comprehensive redaction of BWC recordings in a timely manner and allocate appropriate resources to meet the increased demand for these public records. With the additional positions in place, the ATF can meet these challenges head-on and create a more transparent environment.

The proposed positions for the Digital Evidence Management Branch to support BWCs for the ATF SAs are a Branch Chief, Regional Project Managers, Regional Management Analysts, and a Contract Specialist. Additional personnel necessary to support the workload presented by the use of BWCs include an Attorney, Information Specialists to conduct FOIA and Privacy redactions, and an Information Systems Security Analyst.

The ATF DEM Branch proposes a new evidence management solution, centralizing evidence into one hub for easy file access and sharing between SAs, prosecutors, and courtroom personnel, without the need for internal infrastructure or hardware. This digital cloud storage will maintain a chain of custody and ensure that an accurate audit log is always available. The

digital evidence cloud storage will allow the ATF task forces to successfully continue working with little to no negative impact on performance. A digital evidence management cloud storage system will allow each agency to reduce the time spent on making copies to a portable storage format and allow each agency to share, when necessary, the data collected and maintained per the DOJ policy. A third-party digital storage solution is estimated to generate net savings of approximately \$5.5 million per year compared to onsite storage.

The DEM Branch will securely manage digital evidence, including BWC footage, overt BWC footage, covert cameras footage, unmanned aviation systems, and seized media from a variety of sources. In addition, the DEM Branch will allow for evidence files to be shared electronically between users and non-users and provide search functionality to segment evidence by criteria.

Moreover, the DEM Branch will provide program oversight and management to facilitate the actions of the Branch which will be held to court mandated evidentiary standards. Due to this requirement, trained personnel will be required to ensure the integrity of the ATF's digital evidence warehouse. A physical location will also be required to allow for the secured, controlled storage of equipment of all DEM related hardware.

Overall, services provided by DEM will include, file indexing, e-storage and recall, critical victim and witness redacting, GIS services, video integration and cross referencing. These tools will eventually need to be integrated with the ATF's case management system and managed as critical data infrastructure.

The current DEMS model will allow for enterprise pricing for both first- and third-party storage, meaning both BWCs and other digital evidence mediums can be ingested into one DEMS solution. This solution also allows for redaction, transcription, and cloud-based case/evidence sharing of all types of digital evidence. This evidence can then be shared to the United States Attorneys' Offices (USAO), and State and local prosecutors. In addition, there are several approved mobile applications that allow agents in the field to document audio, video, photographs, etc., and ingest them into their case via same DEMS solution from the field. Finally, the DEM Branch will incorporate this cloud-based DEMS without the need for internal infrastructure or hardware. It will securely manage digital evidence, including body cam footage, overt body-worn cameras, covert cameras, unmanned aviation systems, and seized media from a variety of sources.

### **Impact on Performance**

In October 2020, the Department announced that it "will permit State, local, territorial, and Tribal task force officers to use body worn cameras on Federal task forces around the nation. The Department's policy will permit Federally deputized officers to activate a body worn camera while serving arrest warrants, or during other planned arrest operations, and during the execution of search warrants." The policy is the result of a pilot program launched by the Department in October 2019 and applies to the extent that a TFO's parent agency requires BWC use by its officers during Federal task force enforcement operations.

The requested funding will support the TFO and the TFO's parent agency by providing data and video storage software and capacity for some of the TFO's BWC video while the TFO is serving

on a Federal task force directed by the ATF. Since video storage is one of the costliest aspects of a BWC program, Federal support for these digital storage requirements will allow the ATF to maintain and increase partner agency participation in the Department's task forces.

The use of BWCs by the ATF's State and local partners will be a useful tool to improve community relations, lower the number of citizen complaints, defend officers against false accusations, increase accountability, and improve officer training and evaluation. As such, allowing partner agencies to act in accordance with their internal policy by BWCs pursuant to and with direction from the Department's policy, will allow those partner agencies that were previously prohibited from participating on an ATF Federal task force to reconsider.

As stated in the DOJ's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, it is anticipated the use of BWCs by Federal agents will promote trust between communities and law enforcement by making communities and policing safer and will strengthen connections between law enforcement and the community. The BWCs will allow protection against false accusations against agents while protecting individuals' civil rights.

## Funding

### 1. Base Funding

FY 2023 Enacted				FY 2024 Continuing Resolution				FY 2025 Current Services			
Pos	Agt/ Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)	Pos	Agt/ Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)	Pos	Agt/ Atty	FTE	Amount (\$000)
6	6	3	6,270	6	6	3	6,270	6	6	6	6,270

### 2. Personnel Increase Cost Summary

Type of Position/Series	Request (\$000)	Positions Requested	Full Year Modular Cost per Position (\$000)	Annualizations (\$000)			
				1st Year	2nd Year	FY 2025 (net change from 2024)	FY 2026 (net change from 2025)
Criminal Investigative (1811)	3,601	11	427	327.4	5.7	63	1,122
Management Analyst (343)	551	6	161	91.9	91	546	282
Cloud Engineer (2210)	551	6	161	91.9	91	546	282
FOIA Redaction/Auditors (1805)	4,227	46	161	91.9	91	546	282
Contract Specialist (1100-1199)	92	1	161	91.9	91	546	282
<b>Total Personnel</b>	<b>9,022</b>	<b>70</b>				<b>2,247</b>	<b>2,250</b>



**3. Non-Personnel Increase Cost Summary**

Non-Personnel Item	Request (\$000)	Unit Cost (\$000)	Quantity	Annualizations (\$000)	
				FY 2026 (net change from 2025)	FY 2027 (net change from 2026)
BWCs for 2,750 ATF Special Agents for Field AB3 BWC Hardware A	8,250	2,750	3	(6,600)0	0
500 BWCs for ATF Special Agents for Field Flex 3 BWC Hardware	1,450	1450	1	(1,160)	0
Unlimited Software Storage Services	3,400	3,400	1	0	0
BWC Contract Support	5,935	5,935	1	0	0
GOV	320	320	1	0	0
Travel/Training	2,100	2,100	1	0	0
IT Infrastructure	5,262	5,262	1	0	0
TFO Hardware/Software/Accessories	2,095	2,095		(1,675)	0
Taser Integration	13	13	1	0	0
<b>Total Non-Personnel</b>	<b>28,825</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**4. Justification for Non-Personnel Annualizations**

**5. Total Request for this Item**

Category	Positions			Amount Requested (\$000)			Annualizations (\$000)	
	Count	Agt/Atty	FTE	Personnel	Non-Personnel	Total	FY 2026 (net change from 2025)	FY 2027 (net change from 2026)
Current Services	6	5	3	4,075	2,195	6,270	0	0
Increases	70	11	35	9,022	28,825	37,847	2,247	2,250
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>13,097</b>	<b>31,020</b>	<b>44,117</b>	<b>2,247</b>	<b>2,250</b>

**6. Affected Crosscuts: National Security, Violent Crime, Civil Rights**