



So you want to be a criminal intelligence specialist?

Criminal intelligence specialists are intelligence professionals providing dedicated support to a law enforcement agency or activity. About one-quarter of all law enforcement agencies in the United States have some sort of dedicated intelligence capability, and with the growing trend toward intelligence-led policing, this capability within law enforcement agencies will almost certainly increase. Criminal intelligence specialists may be either sworn police officers who have received additional training in intelligence or non-sworn intelligence professionals assigned to a law enforcement agency. When an agency can afford it, a cadre of civilian intelligence professionals is preferred. In cases where budgets do not allow for a dedicated intelligence staff, sworn officers may be assigned to intelligence du-

ties. When a dedicated intelligence staff is hired by a law enforcement agency, certain minimum standards for these personnel must be applied. The U.S. Department of Justice (2004) lists seven standards for criminal intelligence personnel:

1. A four-year college degree, or five years intelligence-related experience and a two-year degree, or 10 years of intelligence-related experience with less than a two-year degree.
2. Completion of a minimum of 40 hours of specialized intelligence training.
3. Completion of a minimum of eight hours continuing education per year.
4. Active involvement in an ongoing professional development program.
5. Certification through government agencies, professional associations, or academic bodies.
6. Membership and participation in intelligence-related organizations and associations.
7. Attributes and skills, which include:
 - Subject-matter expertise
 - Analytic methodologies
 - Customer-service ethics
 - Information handling and processing skills
 - Communication skills
 - Critical-thinking skills
 - Computer literacy
 - Objectivity and intellectual honesty
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Academic Studies

A college degree is important for criminal intelligence personnel in order to develop a broad foundational knowledge in their field. Dr. Colleen McCue (2007) calls this knowledge “domain expertise”: under-

standing where information comes from, how developed intelligence may be used, and what value it will have in the real world. Criminal intelligence specialists should seek degrees that require significant course work in intelligence, analysis, research, geographic information systems and mapping, and other related subjects.

Specialized Intelligence Training

Specialized training in intelligence is available from a number of reputable organizations. One such course is the Foundations of Intelligence Analysis Training (FIAT) course offered by the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C) (<http://www.nw3c.org/>).

The Alpha Group Center (<http://www.alphagroupcenter.com/>) offers a series of courses in crime, intelligence, and investigative analysis. The Alpha Group Center courses form the foundation for certification as a Certified Crime and Intelligence Analyst (CCIA) through the California State Universities and the California Department of Justice. Anacapa Sciences, Inc. (<http://www.anacapatraining.com>) offers an excellent two-week course in intelligence analysis, along with a free 8-hour online introduction course.

Free Online Training

In addition to the online training offered by Anacapa Sciences, there are several other free, online, computer-based training programs providing criminal intelligence training.

- Criminal Intelligence Systems Operating Policies (28 CFR Part 23) Online Training Program (<https://www.ncirc.gov/>)
- Information Sharing Environment Core Awareness Training (<http://www.ise.gov/pages/awareness-training.aspx>)
- The Multijurisdictional Counterdrug Task Force Training (MCTFT) (<http://www.mctft.com/>) offers a variety of courses, including Analytical Investigative Tools (CD ROM), and the Police Intelligence Course (16 hours online) which is of particular value to criminal intelligence personnel.
- Finally, the National HIDTA

Assistance Center (<http://www.nhac.org/>) offers two CD ROM courses for intelligence personnel supporting a HIDTA mission: "Introduction to HIDTA Analytical Techniques" and "So What's Next? Analysis & Critical Thinking."

These online courses, and others like them, can be used to build a foundation in criminal intelligence, or as part of a continuing education program to review and maintain basic intelligence and analytical skills.

Professional Memberships

The Department of Defense (2007) warns:

By its nature intelligence is imperfect (i.e., everything cannot be known, analysis is vulnerable to deception, and information is open to alternative interpretations). The best way to avoid these obstacles and achieve a higher degree of fidelity is to consult with, and solicit the opinions of, other analysts and experts, particularly in external organizations.

For the criminal intelligence specialist, these other analysts and experts can be found in the International Association of Crime Analysts (IACA, www.iacanet.org/) and the International Association of Law Enforcement Intelligence Analysts (IALEIA, www.ialeia.org/). Criminal intelligence personnel should join one of these organizations and preferably both.

Certification

- The American Board for Certification in Homeland Security, ABCHS offers professional credentials for the Intelligence Analyst Certified (IAC) (<http://www.abchs.com/programs/iac/>).
- Both IACA and IALEIA offer professional certification programs. IACA offers the Certified Law Enforcement Analyst (CLEA) (<http://www.iacanet.org/Certification.asp>), and IALEIA offers the Criminal Intelligence Certified Analyst (CICA) (<http://www.ialeia.org/scca>).
- Certified Crime and Intelligence Analyst (CCIA) certification is available through Alpha Group Center (<http://www.alphagroupcenter.com/Certification/>).

Certification programs show that the intelligence professional who has earned a certification has demonstrated a certain level of knowledge, skill, experience, and professionalism, as well as a dedication to the craft of intelligence.

The Craft of Criminal Intelligence

The craft of criminal intelligence requires a specialized set of attributes and skills that must be continually refined to meet the needs of the constantly evolving world of law enforcement. The criminal intelligence specialist must be able to see patterns in an ever-changing array of data and develop new knowledge from existing information. This new knowledge must then be presented in a form that is understandable and applicable to the needs of both decision makers in command and officers in the field. This in turn produces new data and develops new information to be turned into new knowledge to be used in the war on crime.

References

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