

Nlets Strategic Partner Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1) What is the Nlets Strategic Partner Program?

The Nlets Strategic Partner Program provides a structured framework for evaluating, approving, and overseeing organizations that support the mission of Nlets and deliver value-added services to the law enforcement and justice communities.

The program is designed to ensure that all partners operate within a framework of security, accountability, and governance while protecting member-owned data and maintaining public trust.

2) Why does Nlets have a Strategic Partner Program?

Strategic Partners allow Nlets to expand services and capabilities available to its members while maintaining the highest standards of security and operational integrity. Partnerships are intended to enhance services provided to the law enforcement and justice communities without compromising the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of information.

3) Does becoming a Strategic Partner automatically grant access to the Nlets network?

No.

Access to the Nlets network is never automatic. Prospective partners must successfully complete a comprehensive review process, satisfy applicable security requirements, and receive approval before operational access is granted.

4) How are prospective partners evaluated?

Nlets employs a multi-layered vetting process that includes:

- Business and operational reviews.
- Technical architecture evaluations.
- Security and compliance assessments.
- Financial and organizational reviews.
- Executive leadership review.
- Board of Directors approval.

These evaluations help ensure that only organizations capable of meeting Nlets' standards are approved.

5) Who approves Strategic Partners?

All Strategic Partners are subject to approval by the Nlets Board of Directors. For new concepts or technologies, additional review may be conducted by the Technical Operations Committee to ensure proposed solutions align with Nlets operational, technical, and security standards.

6) Does Nlets evaluate the financial stability of prospective partners?

Yes.

Nlets reviews financial information, organizational maturity, references, reputation, and overall business stability. These reviews help ensure that partners possess the operational and financial strength necessary to support secure and reliable services over the long term.

7) How does Nlets ensure that data is protected?

Protection of Criminal Justice Information (CJI), personally identifiable information (PII), and member-owned data is central to the Strategic Partner Program.

Security reviews evaluate:

- Security architecture and network segmentation.
- Access controls and least-privilege methodologies.
- Encryption and secure transmission requirements.
- Personnel security measures.
- Incident response capabilities.
- Audit readiness and supporting documentation.
- Technical infrastructure and system controls.

No partner receives operational access until all applicable requirements have been satisfied.

8) Is compliance with FBI CJIS Security Policy required?

Yes.

Strategic Partners are expected to operate in accordance with applicable FBI Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Security Policy requirements and other applicable security standards. Nlets works closely with prospective partners to ensure that required controls are understood and implemented.

9) Does Nlets conduct security audits?

Yes.

Security oversight is a continuous component of the Nlets Strategic Partner Program. Before connectivity is established, prospective Strategic Partners undergo a comprehensive security assessment conducted by the Nlets Risk and Compliance team. Any identified findings must be remediated before operational access is granted.

Following approval and implementation, Strategic Partners remain subject to ongoing compliance oversight, including:

- **Annual Transaction History Audits** to verify that access and transactions are being conducted in accordance with authorized use, partnership agreements, and Nlets policies.
- **Triennial Security Audits** to validate continued compliance with applicable security requirements, controls, and operational safeguards.
- Additional reviews or assessments as warranted to address changes in technology, operations, or risk.

These recurring audits help ensure that Strategic Partners continue to maintain the security, accountability, and operational standards required to protect Criminal Justice Information (CJI), personally identifiable information (PII), and member-owned data.

10) Are Strategic Partner transactions monitored and auditable?

Yes.

Nlets maintains controls designed to ensure accountability and traceability of partner activity. Strategic Partner transactions are subject to validation, logging, and audit review to verify compliance with authorized use and established policies.

Annual Transaction History Audits provide a mechanism for confirming that partner activity is consistent with approved purposes, partnership agreements, and Nlets policies. These controls provide transparency into partner activity and support Nlets' commitment to protecting member-owned data and maintaining the integrity of the network.

11) Are Strategic Partners allowed unrestricted access to Nlets data?

No.

Access is limited to authorized functions and approved use cases. Strategic Partners are expected to use information solely for authorized purposes and in accordance with applicable agreements and policies.

Nlets employs technical, operational, and audit controls designed to ensure that information is accessed appropriately and only in support of authorized activities.

12) How does Nlets verify that a Strategic Partner is acting on behalf of an authorized agency?

Strategic Partners operate only under properly authorized relationships.

Nlets maintains documentation supporting those relationships and employs controls that provide accountability and traceability for transactions processed on behalf of authorized agencies.

These controls help ensure that access remains limited to approved purposes and provide an auditable record of activity.

13) What happens if deficiencies are identified?

Nlets works collaboratively with partners to address findings and strengthen controls. Partners are expected to remediate issues identified through audits, assessments, or reviews in a timely manner.

Operational access is not granted until applicable requirements have been met, and continued participation in the Strategic Partner Program requires ongoing compliance with established security and operational requirements.

14) What responsibilities do Strategic Partners have?

Strategic Partners are expected to:

- Use information only for authorized purposes.
- Protect Criminal Justice Information (CJI), personally identifiable information (PII), and member-owned data.
- Maintain secure operational practices.
- Cooperate with audits and reviews.
- Promptly address identified issues and vulnerabilities.

- Support the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information entrusted to them.

15) How does Nlets protect the interests of its members?

The Strategic Partner Program incorporates multiple layers of review involving business, technical, financial, executive, and security stakeholders. These checks and balances help ensure that partnerships strengthen services available to members while minimizing risk and protecting member-owned data.

Through disciplined oversight, rigorous security standards, continuous auditing, and ongoing accountability, Nlets ensures that Strategic Partners operate within a trusted framework designed to preserve the integrity of the Nlets network.

16) Who owns the data?

The data exchanged through the Nlets network remains the property of the originating agencies and jurisdictions. Strategic Partners are custodians of information only to the extent authorized and are expected to respect the ownership, stewardship, and authorized use requirements established by Nlets members and applicable laws and policies.

17) What is the ultimate goal of the Strategic Partner Program?

The goal of the Strategic Partner Program is to foster trusted partnerships that enhance services to the law enforcement and justice communities while preserving the security, integrity, and reliability of the Nlets network.

Through rigorous oversight, continuous accountability, and a mature governance process, Nlets enables innovation without compromising the trust placed in Nlets by its members.

To see a full list of Nlets Strategic Partners, please visit the Nlets Website at www.nlets.org > Communities > [Strategic Partners](#).

Want to know more about the Nlets Strategic Partner Program? Contact the Nlets Business Services Department at bizservices@nlets.org.