

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)

Talking Points:

- We remain concerned about the heightened level of homegrown violent extremism (HVE) activity in the United States, as well as the potential for conflict areas such as Syria to continue to inspire and mobilize individuals to participate in or support acts of violence.
- The threat posed by violent extremism is neither limited by international borders nor to any single ideology. Groups and individuals inspired by a range of religious, political, or other ideological beliefs have promoted and used violence in the United States or against U.S. interests to try and force political, economic, or social change. Increasingly sophisticated use of the internet and social media by violent extremists provide an additional layer of complexity.
- Violent extremist plots in the Homeland tend to involve individuals or small groups who participate in self-initiated acts of ideologically motivated violence, often without warning or easily-identifiable indicators. The varied set of grievances and factors that can motivate these subjects provides further challenges, as violent acts are often predicated on a combination of personally held opinions and perceptions of marginalization that are highly individualized and may not be observable to law enforcement or other officials.
- Our approach to countering violent extremism emphasizes the strength of local communities. Well-informed and well-equipped families, communities, and local institutions represent the best defense against violent extremists. While our primary purpose is to prevent a terrorist or violent extremist attack by an individual or group recruited by a violent extremist organization—or inspired by a violent extremist ideology—we also support strong and resilient communities as important ends themselves.

DHS CVE Coordination

The Department's CVE efforts have continued to adapt as the threat has evolved. Efforts have been undertaken to catalogue, coordinate, and institutionalize CVE efforts and resources across DHS. In furtherance of this, a CVE Working Group (reflecting the missions of components and equities across DHS) led by a CVE Coordinator has been formalized to oversee and coordinate all CVE activities. The Department's CVE efforts are comprehensive and can be categorized into four function areas:

- Policy Formation and Coordination Activities
- Strategic CVE Activities (those explicitly conducted for the purpose of CVE)
- CVE Support Activities (those that aid the department and its partners in conducting their CVE missions)
- CVE-Relevant Activities (the regular activities of DHS components shaped to improve CVE or lessen the negative impact on CVE).

DHS successfully deployed a regionally based full-time CVE subject matter expert in October 2011 to work with Southern California federal, state, local, and municipal officials and communities to facilitate the development of local countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts—this model is expanding to the Boston area this Spring.

Interagency Coordination on CVE

- As opposed to designating a “lead agency,” we have identified the need for a multi-disciplinary whole-of-government approach to best support federal and local efforts to counter violent extremism, where each agency has a shared responsibility for the overall CVE mission.
- Our comprehensive approach is embodied in the strong and coordinated efforts of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Justice (DOJ), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). This partnership has proved effective and provides the flexibility to support local efforts. We will continue to seek improvement in our coordination with other departments and agencies.

DHS Recent Efforts:

- The White House hosted a CVE Summit on February 18, 2015; it focused on both domestic and international CVE efforts. Prior to the Summit, DHS hosted a roundtable discussion with Vice President Biden and domestic stakeholders on February 17th at the White House.
- The Summit included the rolling out of piloted prevention and intervention programs in Boston, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis-St. Paul; DHS plans to assess these efforts and facilitate expansion to other municipalities.
- DHS and the interagency encouraged local partners to develop mechanisms for engaging the resources and expertise available from a range of new partners, including the private sector as well as social service providers including education administrators, mental health professionals, and religious leaders.
- As next steps, DHS is working with the interagency to further support prevention and intervention efforts in Boston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis-St. Paul and efforts elsewhere around the country while seeking to expand support efforts to other cities.
- Over the course of 2014, Secretary Johnson has participated in community engagement events in Chicago, Columbus, Minneapolis, Los Angeles and Boston, meeting with community leaders to discuss their struggles and their partnership with DHS.
- Community Resilience Exercises (CREX) have been conducted by DHS and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) in Washington, DC, Northern Virginia, Chicago, Raleigh, Seattle, Houston, and New York (to date) to develop trust between communities and law enforcement in order to prevent violent extremism.
- Community Awareness Briefings (CAB), informing communities about ISIL recruitment narratives and tactics have been successfully conducted in 15 U.S. cities thus far.
- On November 20, 2014, DHS participated in a US-UK Bilateral Strategic Discussion with the UK Home Office; as a result, both sides agreed to establish a program of cooperation on CVE research.
- DHS is leveraging its public/private partnership model to engage the private sector, especially high-tech and social media executives, in innovative solutions to address the terrorist use of social media issue.
- FEMA is currently sponsoring CVE training focused on community oriented policing practices and community partnerships with law enforcement.
- DHS has published classified and unclassified assessments—related to U.S.-based homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) and U.S. persons who have fought in Syria. DHS analysis on foreign terrorist fighters has examined these individuals’ motivations, role of the internet in their radicalization to violence, and the threat to the United States upon their

return. Many of these papers have been shared with our trusted state and local partners to improve their awareness of their threat.

Countering Violent Extremism Q&A

DHS was formed as a result of the attacks on 9/11. Therefore, why isn't your strategy to counter violent extremism solely focused on Al-Qa'ida inspired terrorism, since that is clearly the preeminent threat?

- The Department's efforts to counter U.S.-based violent extremism are largely, but not exclusively, based on threat assessments that indicate that foreign terrorist groups affiliated with Al-Qa'ida or ISIL, as well as these groups' online supporters are actively seeking to recruit or inspire Westerners to carry out attacks against Western and U.S. targets.
- However, the Department's efforts also illuminate the risk posed by violent extremist groups and individuals within the Homeland inspired by various other religious, political, or other ideological beliefs.
- Accordingly, although DHS has and will continue to prioritize CVE efforts to address the threat from violent extremists inspired by ISIL, Al-Qa'ida, and their affiliates, DHS has designed a CVE approach that applies to all forms of violent extremism, regardless of ideology, and focuses not on radical thought or speech but instead on preventing violent attacks.
- In addition, as countering violent extremism begins with local communities, who are the front lines of defense and response, DHS does not limit its CVE approach to any one society, culture, religion, or ideology.

What is DHS doing to ensure training for state and local partners on CVE is consistent with the USG approach to CVE?

- CRCL and NCTC created an interagency working group on CVE training, to ensure the interagency stays connected on developing and implementing the most current and consistent training on CVE.
- DHS created CVE grant guidance and coordinated with the interagency to expand grant guidance to include funding for training and local CVE efforts, including participating in CVE training workshops, developing CVE training curricula, and incorporating CVE training resources into existing training programs.
- In addition, DHS works closely with law enforcement partners, such as the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), to emphasize that efforts to provide information and training regarding countering violent extremism should focus on the strength of local communities, as outlined by the USG and DHS strategies.
- Finally, CRCL, in conjunction with other DHS components, informs federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel nationwide on the evolving threat of violent extremism, and methods to engage with communities to raise awareness of violent extremism and build partnerships with communities such as best practices in community oriented policing.

What does the Department do different in CVE that FBI & NCTC don't do?

- A key mission for the Department is to build capacity for State and Local authorities to counter violent extremism within their communities. This is done through a variety of mechanisms, including working with State and Local authorities and local communities and Non-Government Organization to bolster pre-existing local partnerships; supporting State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Law Enforcement and communities by providing training, community policing best practices, and grants; and leveraging the Department's analytic, research, and information capabilities.
- In addition, DHS works closely to coordinate and collaborate on these efforts with NCTC, DOJ, FBI, and other interagency and community partners. The CVE work of the Department focuses on all forms of violent extremism ranging from individuals inspired by international terrorists to violent extremists inspired by domestic ideologies such as sovereign citizen extremists and militia extremists.
- This differs from NCTC because statutorily NCTC can only focus on violent extremists with an international nexus such as Al-Qa'ida, its adherents and its affiliates. Regarding the FBI, DHS has additional authorities to conduct CVE work such as grant support.

How much money is spent by DHS on CVE?

- In regards to DHS resources that are directly supporting CVE efforts, the Secretary recently established the DHS CVE Coordinator position (who was appointed in August 2014), funded by the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL). Further, three dedicated full-time and one part-time CVE Coordinator support staff are funded by the Office for State and Local Law Enforcement (OSLLE), the Office for Intelligence and Analysis (I&A), and Office of Policy (PLCY).
- One full-time CVE field staff position in Los Angeles and a pending field staff position in Boston are funded by the National Protection Programs Directorate (NPPD).
- DHS components and offices such as CRCL, I&A, NPPD, PLCY, the DHS Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) currently leverage existing allocated funding to support CVE related efforts such as engagement efforts, research and analysis development, training and workshop development, and grant funding opportunities.
- The FEMA Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) is also an important source of funding for CVE state, local, territorial, and tribal partners and law enforcement. FEMA National Training and Education Directorate's (NTED) Continuing Training Grant (CTG) Program has also been successful in awarding the International Association of Chiefs of Police \$700K in FY13 to develop online CVE training for frontline law enforcement and the University of Maryland Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) Center of Excellence \$800K in FY14 also develop CVE training. NTED is in the process of reviewing applications for another CVE CTG to a state and local grantee for FY15.
- Further, DHS has allocated approximately \$1.6 million in FY13 and \$1.1 million in FY14 for CVE related research. Also, DHS provides funding to START—\$3.5 million in both FY13-14. DHS is working to bolster these vehicles and is currently exploring how they can be expanded to better support community efforts.

What metrics exist to measure success?

- DHS is working closely with its centers of excellence such as the Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses of Terrorism at the University of Maryland, other academic institutions and research institutes, interagency partners such as the DOJ National Institute of Justice, and international partners and bodies such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum to assess CVE efforts and initiatives to determine areas of impact—DHS in partnership with DOJ, NCTC, and FBI are currently assessing the recently developed prevention and intervention strategies in Boston, Los Angeles, and Minneapolis-St. Paul.