



JBS International

Countering Violent Extremism: Law Enforcement Perspectives

on Training and Information Needs



Foreword by the Department of Homeland Security

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) within the United States is one of the top priorities for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Over the past two years, the Department has worked closely with its Federal, State, Local, Territorial and Tribal Law Enforcement partners to address this issue through a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary approach that emphasizes support to local community-based partnerships focused on preventing violent behavior, including that which may be ideologically motivated. DHS CVE efforts are based on the understanding that this issue requires a whole of government, multi-pronged approach, where efforts are tailored to specifically address the needs and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved.

Understanding the scope of this threat has been crucial in understanding how to effectively counter it. The Department's efforts to counter U.S.-based violent extremism are based on, but not limited to, threat assessments that acknowledge foreign terrorist groups affiliated with al-Qa'ida and individual violent extremists are actively seeking to recruit or inspire Westerners to carry out attacks against Western and U.S. targets. Indicative of the threat are the recent successful terrorist attacks in Boston, Massachusetts and in Nairobi, Kenya, as well as the continued recruitment of U.S. and Western persons to foreign conflict zones. The Department's efforts also illuminate the risk posed by other 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 al-Qa'ida and its affiliates, DHS has designed a CVE approach that applies to all forms of violent extremism, regardless of ideology and that focuses not on radical thought or speech but instead on preventing violent attacks. DHS has worked with its partners, notably FBI and NCTC, to conduct significant analysis and research on multiple types of threats, in order to equip law enforcement with the capacity to detect and mitigate all forms of violent extremism.

Developing informational products, training materials and other resources on CVE for Federal, State, Local, Territorial, and Tribal Law Enforcement has been at the forefront of the Department's efforts to address this issue. Recognizing the need to have these stakeholders engaged and involved in this process, the Department contracted with JBS International to conduct focus groups and interviews with Law Enforcement and fusion center personnel on their CVE training and information needs. The results of the study have been extremely valuable and have allowed the Department to both reflect on its efforts and craft a way forward.

The Department has made significant strides in the time since the study was conducted. Specifically, in September 2012, based on feedback received through San Diego's train-the-trainer workshop (along with other workshops), a joint DHS-FBI CVE Training Resources Webportal for Law Enforcement training practitioners in the United States and Canada was enacted. This webportal was developed following a comprehensive collaborative effort involving Federal, State, Local, Territorial and Tribal Law Enforcement training practitioners who provided guidance and input, and was built within the

Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) architecture. After initial review and based on further feedback from Federal, State, Local, Territorial and Tribal Law Enforcement training practitioners, DHS and FBI have launched an updated version under the new HSIN 3.0 operating platform in order to streamline dissemination of CVE guidance, training, tools and materials. Today, over 500 State, Local, Federal, Territorial and Tribal Law Enforcement professionals from across the Nation are using the resources available through the portal to inform entry level training and advanced/continuing education for Law Enforcement personnel.

The feedback received from the study has validated the importance of the CVE webportal, which is now well-placed to serve as the necessary conduit to disseminate CVE training and information to Law Enforcement stakeholders. Within the study, some of the most significant feedback concerned the need for a cost-effective CVE training program that would, according to the participants:

- Offer “a menu of courses, be tailored, and be available to all;”
- Serve as an “online one-stop resource [that] would enable everyone to access information on demand, and would concentrate resources on one site;”
- Include mandatory training to include “short videos during roll call that cover topics such as ‘10 Things to Know’ about particular cultures or indicators of violent extremism;”
- Offer materials including “in depth case studies, PowerPoint handouts, lists of ‘dos and don’ts,’ lists of indicators or ‘what to look for,’ reference guides, and translation guides;”
- Include briefings such as “short case studies that provide a summary of what an officer did to counter violent extremism;” and
- Offer training to “fire and emergency management communities.”

The CVE webportal is now able to serve as the needed mechanism to streamline and define CVE training and information, and provide the cost-free and accessible “one-stop” online resource that Law Enforcement and fusion center personnel have requested. The webportal contains over 600 CVE training resources, including case studies on multiple types of violent extremism, reports on terrorism trends, community oriented policing best practices, information on cultural and religious practices, training frameworks, and other tools that trainers can incorporate into their training development efforts. Ultimately, the Department envisions that this webportal will serve as the primary venue for Federal, State, Local, Territorial and Tribal Law Enforcement , as well as fusion center personnel, to get the CVE training and information they need.

In addition, the Department has partnered with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) to work with their CVE Advisory Group (which comprises State and Local Law Enforcement leadership from across the country) as well as their State and Provincial Police Academy Directors (SPPADS). These groups have continued to advise DHS on CVE training and training development, CVE Law Enforcement needs, CVE resource development, best practices in community engagement, and most recently, on law enforcement awareness of online radicalization to violence. The Department is also engaged in discussions with Cook County, IL, which has partnered with the IACP to design training curricula and develop best practices for Law Enforcement agencies within their jurisdiction. These new

projects will result in the development of grass-roots-level training curricula and best practices that could be easily shared on the portal and ultimately emulated by other Law Enforcement entities.

The Department will also continue its efforts to resolve the broader issues discussed in the study that are not specific to CVE and include the effective dissemination of information to and within fusion centers, the availability of resources for State and Local Law Enforcement and the fusion centers, and the timeliness and relevance of the intelligence products disseminated to Law Enforcement and fusion center personnel.

While the threat continues to evolve, the Department constantly strives to improve its support to State and Local CVE efforts and continues to move forward on developing CVE resources and capabilities for its critical State and Local partners. The study provided necessary feedback from key stakeholders, and as demonstrated above, the Department remains committed to both incorporating the feedback received and furthering its ongoing efforts to provide the most effective CVE training, information and support to Federal, State, Local, Territorial and Tribal Law Enforcement personnel nationwide.

Countering Violent Extremism: Law Enforcement Perspectives on Information and Training Needs

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Introduction

In August 2011, the White House released the national strategy for *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*.¹ This guiding document, and the subsequent December 2011 *Strategic Implementation Plan*, focuses on three core areas of activity: (1) enhancing engagement with and support to local communities that may be targeted by violent extremists; (2) building government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism; and (3) countering violent extremist propaganda while promoting U.S. ideals. It also emphasizes the importance of community-based problem solving, local partnerships, and community-oriented policing in building resilience to violent extremism in the United States. This study aimed to support federal government efforts focused on the second objective outlined in the strategy by examining the perspectives of fusion center personnel and local law enforcement on the 1) training and 2) information they receive and need related to countering violent extremism (CVE).

In 2011, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate contracted JBS International to gather data from fusion center personnel and local law enforcement across the country to gain a better understanding of their experiences and views. While the team sought feedback on current federal efforts that provide CVE training and information, the study was neither an evaluation nor an assessment of these efforts. Because the goal of this study was to learn more about the perspectives of the participants, these perspectives are represented even when their conceptualizations of CVE differ from that of the federal government.²

JBS conducted interviews and focus groups in 17 locations around the country, generally with staff at a fusion center and with law enforcement in surrounding communities. Participants were asked about their experiences with and needs for training and information with respect to CVE and their thoughts on how to improve the training and information they currently receive. Additional areas of inquiry focused on what participants viewed as the primary threats in their communities and their general impressions of current efforts to counter violent extremism.

Methodology

JBS International used qualitative methods of data collection in this study. These methods included focus group discussions and in-depth interviews to explore the experiences and needs of the participants. In-depth interviews were primarily conducted with senior law enforcement personnel and fusion center leadership. The decision to interview leadership individually was based on standard focus group practices, which seek to bring together groups that are homogeneous in nature. The inclusion of participants who are in hierarchical relationships—supervisor and subordinate—in focus groups is not optimal due to concerns that the presence of supervisors may lead participants to censor their comments to align with what they believe are their supervisors' opinions.

¹ The national strategy for *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* can be found at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/empowering_local_partners.pdf, and the *Strategic Implementation Plan* can be found at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/sip-final.pdf>.

² For example, several participants discussed the need for more training on source development as a CVE-related training need. The federal government does not view this type of training as CVE-related, but because it was mentioned by participants, it is included in this report.

JBS worked closely with members of the DHS CVE Working Group in choosing the sites included in the study and developing the focus group and interview guide. Sites were chosen based on where CVE-related training had been previously offered, recommendations by key stakeholders, geographic diversity, and population size. Ultimately, the team selected 17 sites for inclusion in the study. Site visits began in July 2012 and were completed in February 2013. The outreach strategy to these sites primarily involved coordinating with the DHS intelligence officers at fusion centers. The recruitment plan sought to recruit fusion center personnel and local law enforcement who had participated in CVE training. Where little or no CVE training had been provided, JBS requested participants who had taken other CVE-related training or who served in CVE-related capacities. To try to provide uniformity across very different sites, the recruitment plan included participants by functional area, rather than job title, to account for the diversity among fusion centers, different levels of staffing, varying levels of operational complexity, and different areas of focus.

In general, interviews lasted 35 minutes, and focus groups lasted one hour and 15 minutes. Participants were asked 12 questions focused on the types of threats their communities face, the training and information that they have received and need regarding CVE, and what information they would like to convey to those leading government CVE efforts (or what they would do if they led government CVE efforts).

The methodology was structured to facilitate the collection of honest and unfiltered perspectives and included a guarantee that the participants' responses would be reported anonymously. In keeping with this mode of data collection, moderators did not evaluate or challenge participants' responses.

Overall, the team conducted 54 in-depth interviews with law enforcement and 61 in-depth interviews with fusion center personnel (typically those in leadership positions or unique roles that did not have a well-defined peer group). The team also conducted 19 focus groups with a total of 120 law enforcement participants and 17 focus groups with a total of 106 fusion center staff members. Among the 174 law enforcement personnel who participated in the study, 29 were executives, 47 were investigators, 88 were frontline officers, and 10 had other, varied roles. Among the 167 fusion center staff who participated, 36 were senior staff, 41 were liaisons, 75 were analysts, and 15 had other, varied roles.

Fieldwork for this study presented a few challenges. The sensitivity of the topic, the wide range of locations, and the diversity of the participants led to challenges related to recruitment. Additionally, planning for the study

Quotes about this Study

"I'm very curious to see what this final report looks like. It's building toward the 'right' training. If you need three days [of training], you need three days. The steps taken now are very encouraging. This and NCTC [the National Counterterrorism Center]. To have a group of folks who say, here's CVE and here's how you do it ... I support going out to see what works in different places so that more accurate training can be built. I'm seeing now what the foundation of the house looks like. And it looks solid, not fluff."

"I want to know if this report gets utilized, and I will be looking for that. I want to see what DHS pushes out based on this report. I want a menu of training capability. I don't want it lost in DHS. I want an email for all executives."

"I'm very excited to see what comes out of this study."

"I'm concerned that this report will be altered once politics get involved."

began in late 2011 when the phrase “countering violent extremism” was only beginning to enter into the national security lexicon. With little training available that was specifically labeled “CVE training” and participants’ varying levels of knowledge concerning what efforts to counter violent extremism might entail, the study team allowed the participants to describe the trainings and information that they viewed as CVE-focused.

Data Analysis

The team used an inductive or “bottom-up” approach in analyzing the data collected. Transcripts and notes from interviews and focus groups were grouped by site and were generally coded by the team members who visited the sites. Personally identifiable information was removed from transcripts prior to them being uploaded to the qualitative data analysis software, ATLAS.ti.

The qualitative software was used to organize the data, including filtering responses by theme and by functional area. Working by theme within a functional area, the team provided a description for each quotation or set of quotations and subsequently grouped similar quotations. Within these groupings, quotations were further described and disaggregated as necessary. Additional analysis then took place to determine the number of participants who noted similar issues and the number of sites at which similar issues were discussed.

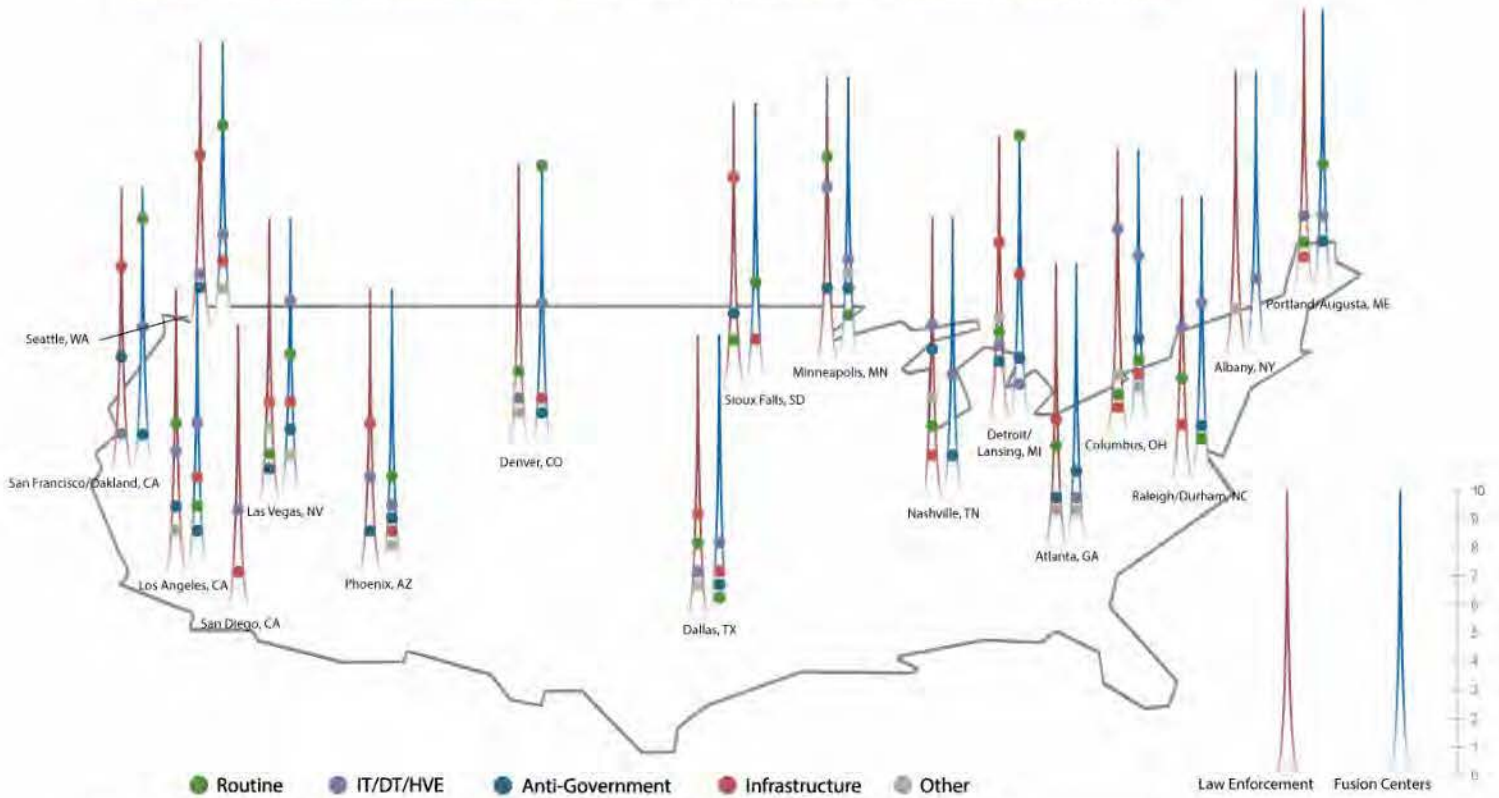
The team conducted the analysis and drafted the findings for law enforcement and fusion centers separately before comparing and contrasting these findings. While common themes emerged from the data, there were variations both within and across locations. As a result, broad generalizations were often not possible, and the results reflect these limitations. In addition, while methods such as those used in this study permit a deeper level of understanding of participants’ experiences, the findings from focus groups and in-depth interviews are typically limited to the individuals who participated. The findings presented in this report should not be construed as applying to all fusion center personnel or all local law enforcement.

Local Concerns and Understanding about Violent Extremism

Both law enforcement officers and fusion center personnel identified “routine crime,” drugs and drug trafficking organizations, gangs, and threats to critical infrastructure as concerns in their areas of responsibility. International terrorism (IT), domestic terrorism (DT), and violent extremism were also concerns for both law enforcement and fusion center personnel. However, whereas fusion center personnel expressed that they were most concerned about DT, violent extremism, and IT, law enforcement communities indicated that they were most concerned about those criminal activities that are most frequent in their jurisdictions and for which they may be called to account by elected officials and the public. These included gang crimes, drug trafficking, threats to the public and officers’ safety, threats to critical infrastructure, financial crimes, property crimes, homegrown violent extremism (HVE), terrorism, human trafficking, and sex crimes.

The map below illustrates the different concerns within and across locations, and between fusion center personnel and law enforcement. The different types of concerns are grouped by “routine crime,” IT/DT/HVE, anti-government concerns (for example, Sovereign Citizens, militias, anarchists, and “anti-government” groups in general), infrastructure, and other concerns such as issues related to the economy and lone offenders.

Map of Primary Concerns of Fusion Center Personnel and Law Enforcement (for illustrative purposes only)



This map compares the primary concerns cited by law enforcement (red spindles) and fusion center personnel (blue spindles). Most notable are the relative similarities and differences between the two groups regarding the threats of greatest concern. The scale reflects how often participants noted different types of threats.

Participants were asked to share their thoughts about the extent to which countering violent extremism is similar to or different from countering other types of crime. The majority of fusion center personnel who responded believed that CVE is different from countering other types of crime because the motivations are different (and to counter violent extremism appropriately, one has to understand those motivations); much of the pre-operational activity is not criminal; and responses to routine crimes are generally predicated on perpetrators making decisions based on material gain, which may not be the case with those driven by ideology.

On the whole, law enforcement responded similarly. The vast majority of respondents differentiated between routine criminal behavior and violent extremism, with the latter being driven by a particular ideology, religious belief, or political goal. A few respondents focused primarily on political agendas, while others focused on religious motivations. Among both groups, a sizeable number of respondents thought CVE was similar to countering other types of crime because the police work, both in proactive and response stages, is similar to that for other crimes.

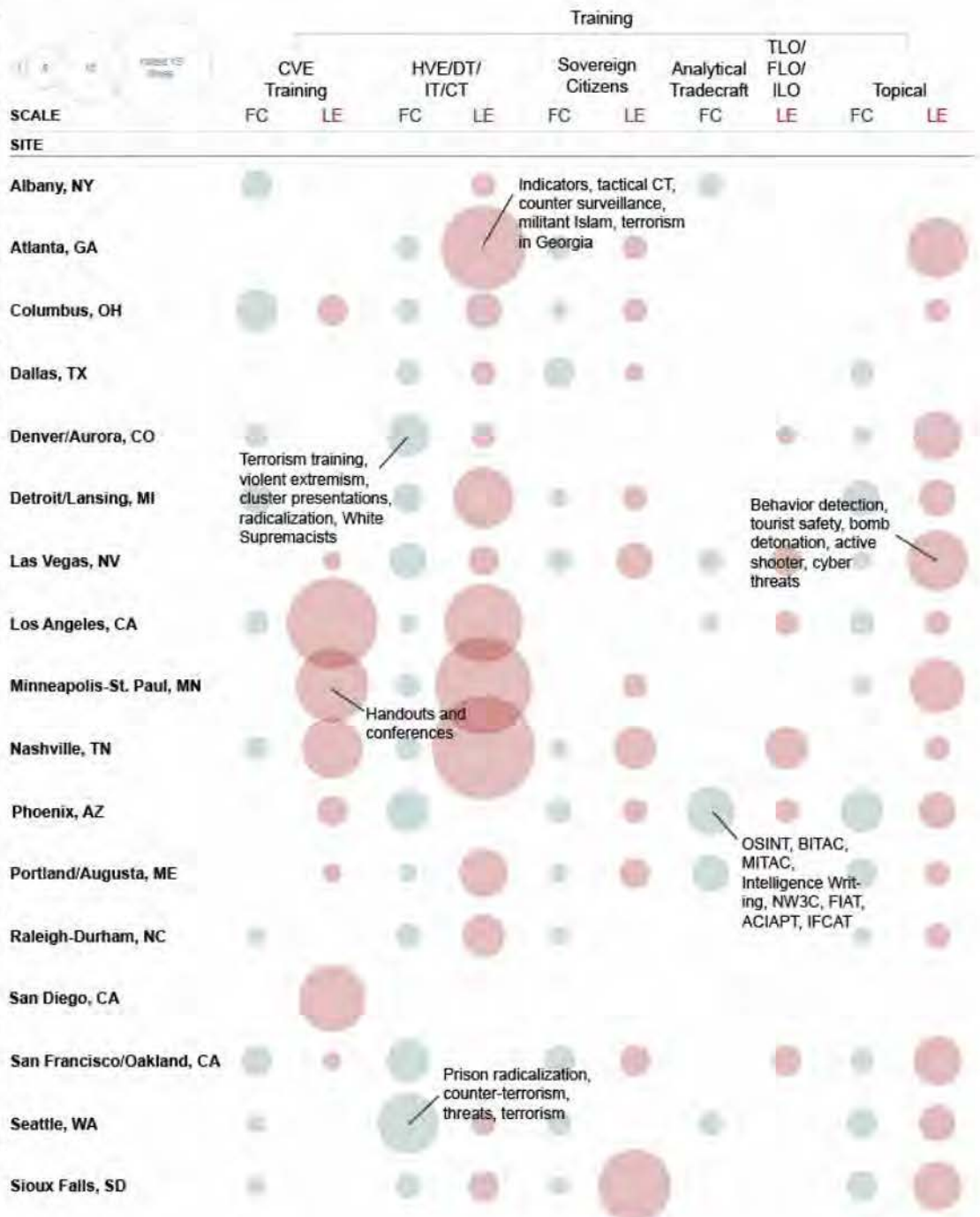
Training on Countering Violent Extremism

At over half of the sites visited (10 sites for fusion centers, 9 sites for law enforcement), participants noted receiving training on CVE. With a few exceptions, fusion center and law enforcement participants expressed confusion about what constituted CVE training or offered examples of what they thought it was. One of the

reasons for the confusion, as articulated by one law enforcement executive, is the lack of an agreed-upon CVE curriculum or lesson plan. Others mentioned that CVE training has not caught up to the need or is not seen as a priority in departments or locations. The graphic below presents the types of CVE-related training participants mentioned receiving. Empty spaces or fewer notations should not necessarily be construed as locations as a whole not receiving CVE-related training.

CVE-related Training Mentioned by Participants (for illustrative purposes only)

This figure juxtaposes the training opportunities reported by fusion center and law enforcement personnel. Fusion center training is represented in blue while law enforcement training is represented in red. The columns represent the training that respondents discussed, and the size of the bubble represents the number of references to each. CVE training relates specifically to training on how to counter violent extremism. The next category, HVE/DT/IT/CT, encompasses training on radicalization, terrorism, and counterterrorism and other training related to violent extremism but not specifically countering it. Because it was such a prominent issue, Sovereign Citizen training has its own column. The remaining columns include analytical tradecraft for fusion center analysts; terrorism liaison officer (TLO), fusion liaison officer (FLO), and intelligence liaison officer (ILO) training for law enforcement; and other trainings that were viewed as relevant to violent extremism but did not fit into the other categories.



Much of the CVE training noted by participants was concentrated in five locations, four of which had developed or served as the host for CVE pilot training. Feedback from participants who attended these pilot trainings is provided below.

CVE Conference, Columbus. Participants felt that the conference was productive, good, and educational, though directed to the wrong audience. Because of this, one participant explained that only a portion of the conference was helpful to him.

Pilot CVE Training, San Diego and Southern California. The pilot trainings in San Diego and Southern California were positively received by almost all attendees who participated in the study. Officers cited appreciation for the community involvement, the group breakout sessions, and the opportunities to develop solutions with diverse input. However, a few others were concerned that the purpose of the pilot training was not clear to officers, and it did not adequately address the range of diverse issues they may face.

CVE Pilot Workshop, Minneapolis-St. Paul. The pilot training in Minneapolis-St. Paul received mostly critical reviews from participants. Criticisms focused on what were described as lengthy and irrelevant presentations by speakers and the misalignment between the content, providers, and audience. The opportunities for practical, hands-on exercises and the inclusion of scenarios received more positive feedback, as did the overall awareness of the need to have more officers conducting community outreach.

CVE Conference, San Diego. Participants provided generally positive reviews of the San Diego conference with a few exceptions. Those who viewed it positively noted that it addressed the need for law enforcement to interact with other agencies and be out among the community. Participants also noted that in addition to focusing on outreach, the conference focused on how to build outreach efforts. A few others cited frustrations in two areas: overuse of the same case study and what they perceived to be a lack of transparency or willingness to address issues that are not considered politically correct. For example, one participant felt conference leaders side-stepped a question about the challenges of integrating large immigrant populations.

Training Needs

Fusion center personnel and law enforcement officers often spoke of similar training needs. Both asked for training delivered by subject

CVE Portal

Participants who had experience working with the CVE portal provided feedback:

“The CVE portal is good. It gives uniform training and awareness. No difference of opinions, definitions, guidance ...”

“The CVE portal on HSIN [Homeland Security Information Network]—it’s not primetime yet. It’s a good start. As long as there is a good strategy and they keep updating it, it has a good chance of becoming a one-stop shop.”

“The new CVE portal has lots of information and case studies, but it’s completely overwhelming. You can find anything related to CVE but you have to sift through a lot of stuff.”

“The portal is a one-stop shop ...”

“You must first know the portal is out there on HSIN, but then it’s not clear what to do to get on. We have to pick up the phone to call the Help Desk to start the access process. Now the Help Desk nominates you to the managers of the requested Communities of Interest and if they approve it takes 24 to 48 hours to be finalized. But if nothing happens for a week you have to call the Help Desk again. One of ours is still not approved [a month later].”

matter experts and experienced trainers. Both cited a need for training on indicators of violent extremism and the radicalization process. Virtually all participants requested training that had local relevance. For fusion center analysts, ideal training on this topic would use in-depth case studies; law enforcement requested case studies as well. Additionally, law enforcement emphasized that CVE training should have practical applications and teach officers how to shift their thinking from the paradigm of traditional criminal behavior to that of violent extremism.

Participants also noted a need for training on interacting with different communities. For some fusion center participants, such training would include best practices and bring the community, community leaders, and other actors together; explain the relationship between fusion centers and social services agencies, including data sharing and its limitations; and assist with developing partnerships with local social service agencies using Memorandums of Understanding. A few fusion center participants sought training on how to develop relationships—built on trust—with communities affected by ties to IT, as well as training on the importance of developing such relationships. Fusion center staff also thought training is needed for the private sector, emergency management, and tribal law enforcement.

Law enforcement officers cited a need for training on how to conduct outreach to community members of all types, including those in more closed ethnic and religious communities. More senior officers noted a need to teach newer law enforcement officers conversation and interviewing skills.

At fusion centers and law enforcement agencies, participants cited a need for a CVE training program that would be planned, offer a menu of courses, be tailored, and be available to all—not just, in the case of law enforcement, community outreach officers or executives. Both requested that training be delivered through a variety of formats. For some fusion center personnel, such training should provide the skills to navigate the nuance and gray areas of CVE. For law enforcement, a variety of delivery methods would provide the flexibility needed for departments facing staffing and funding shortages and allow for more officers to be trained. Of particular importance to law enforcement was the fact that such training should be free or fundable by Federal Emergency Management Agency grants.

Both groups requested training on practical skills related to their roles. For fusion center personnel, this included managing a fusion center, writing analytical reports, writing for a law enforcement audience, conducting background research, and managing intelligence collection. Law enforcement cited a need for scenario-based incident response training and intelligence training. In some cases, participants at both fusion centers and in local law enforcement asked for training on source development.

Training Challenges

Approximately half of fusion center personnel discussed having issues incorporating the training they had received into their jobs. They most often cited the lack of relevance or applicability of what they learned to their duties and the inability to use training immediately. Others noted institutional issues with the acceptance of new training initiatives, whether from their administration or their peers. Other issues mentioned included a lack of post-training support and the complexity of guidelines within the Code of Federal Regulations that pertain to privacy and civil liberties protections for information that is collected, stored, and shared on federally funded criminal intelligence systems.

Law enforcement officers also noted significant challenges in incorporating new skills into their jobs, often due to their workloads and the lack of consistent opportunities to apply new skills. They discussed challenges related to receiving CVE training, including:

- Organizational leadership, or the community, focusing on other priorities;
- The need to take other training more directly relevant to their career goals;
- The lack of availability of training; and
- The lack of time and budget.

Sources of Information on Countering Violent Extremism

Fusion center personnel and law enforcement cited similar sources as their best sources of information about violent extremism and countering it. These included community sources; federal government agencies such as DHS, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC); websites and databases; personal and professional networks; and fusion centers. The following table presents specific products and sources of information described by participants as best sources of information.

Best Sources of Information

Source	Fusion Center	Law Enforcement
Local Community	Law enforcement, business owners, community members, Terrorism Liaison Officers (TLOs), and confidential sources or informants	Informants, confidential sources, social and religious organizations, public officials, kids, reformed (and burned) group members, and those with whom officers have built trusted relationships
DHS	Reports and products, DHS Intelligence Officers (IOs), Joint Intelligence Bulletins (JIBs)	DHS IO, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, bulletins, daily reports, press releases, classified information products
FBI/Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF)	Regular updates, products, JIBs	Bulletins, classified information, Special Agents, meetings, JTTF, joint FBI and JTTF bulletins
Other Federal Sources	NCTC, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Justice, DHS National Operations Center, Intelligence Information Reports, Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group (ITACG), State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training (SLATT)	NCTC, ITACG, U.S. Coast Guard, National Warning System, Nationwide SAR Initiative, National Institute of Justice
Online Sites, Databases	Informational websites, the media and social media, databases, Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN), DHS.gov, LEO.gov, FBI.net, Homeland Security State and Local Intelligence Community, Regional Information Sharing System (RISS), CargoNET, CIAWire, SLATT, COPLINK	HSIN, COPLINK, RISS (including Communities of Interest and Regional Organized Crime Information Center), LEO.gov, Police One, state and national databases, online research, InfraGard, Officer.com, SLATT, media and social media, Google

Source	Fusion Center	Law Enforcement
Personal and Professional Networks	Personal connections	Law enforcement networks, meetings, Major Cities Chief Intel Commanders group, briefings and case coordination meetings, other law enforcement
Fusion Centers	Other fusion centers, fusion center products	Weekly and other fusion center bulletins, case-specific information from fusion centers, coordinated information from other states

Problems Getting Good Information

While some participants reported no problems getting information, many fusion center personnel and local law enforcement identified a number of common challenges related to getting good information, including issues around information sharing, information overload, and the quality of information received. Participants generally used the broad descriptor of “information sharing” to signify issues related to getting access to locally relevant, classified information—requested or not—and receiving feedback on information that had been vertically shared. Fusion center personnel cited frequent issues receiving information from the FBI; occasional issues receiving information from DHS, its component agencies, and local law enforcement agencies; and less frequent issues receiving information from other fusion centers. They also noted issues with access to classified systems. Law enforcement officers overwhelmingly reported problems receiving feedback from federal agencies and, on occasion, fusion centers, after sharing tips or case information with them.

Although some participants felt they were not receiving the “right” information, other participants described being inundated with information, and still others said that both are issues. Fusion center personnel and law enforcement officers often used the phrase “information overload” to describe the amount of information they receive, through emails, bulletins, or other means. Perhaps the major consequence of information overload is missing relevant information, due to the inability of fusion center personnel and local law enforcement to process it all. Participants explained that the constant dissemination of bulletins, reports, and other official intelligence to fusion centers and local law enforcement can lead recipients to develop their own management strategies for dealing with information, including deleting emails, leaving distribution lists, not checking relevant secure sites, and relying on individuals to share important information. As a result of these and other issues, participants noted that frontline officers sometimes do not receive information at all.

Fusion center personnel and law enforcement officers both expressed concerns with the quality, relevance, and timeliness of information that is disseminated. Participants described information as repetitive, too general and not targeted, and lacking in quality. Those with advanced subject matter knowledge did not see a high level of complexity in information products, and others noted a lack of complete reporting, comparing information they receive to that which is available on the news. Law enforcement officers noted issues with the format of reports and bulletins, often describing them as too long, difficult to read, or written for intelligence audiences. The timeliness of information was closely tied with access to classified information. Participants, law enforcement in particular, were frustrated that they seem to receive information at the same time as the public. According to some fusion center personnel, when they receive information late or need clearance to disseminate information to their local partners, they can find themselves justifying their existence as a result.

Problems Getting Good Information

Fusion Centers	Law Enforcement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequate information sharing at all levels• Difficulty accessing secure and classified systems• Information overload• Lack of quality, timeliness, and relevance of information• Privacy concerns• Lack of clarity on the nature of the threat• Issues related to regulations• Lack of resources• Need to rely on personal contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequate information sharing• Lack of access to classified information• One-sided sharing• Information overload• Lack of quality information• Issues with delivery and format of information• Need to use multiple Web-based resources and databases (no one-stop shop)• Lack of internal dissemination• Issues related to laws governing information sharing• Need to rely on personal contacts

Participants also cited unique concerns with getting good information. For fusion centers, these include the need to protect privacy and the lack of clear policy and definition guidelines. Law enforcement officers cited specific issues with the proliferation of secure websites and databases and lack of dissemination within departments. At some locations, law enforcement working at fusion centers and in the community noted legal limitations on information sharing particular to their locations, including requirements that information be made public if it is shared with federal or other agencies, and the need for a court order or a subpoena to share information across state lines.

Conclusion

Fusion center personnel and local law enforcement made final recommendations on how to improve efforts to counter violent extremism. A summary of these recommendations follows:

Training

Fusion center participants recommended that lead agencies involved in CVE provide access to good, quality training that defines CVE, offers an interactive model, and is locally relevant. They recommended that a comprehensive directory of available CVE training be provided with some indication of how well that training has been received by past participants and the level of difficulty of the training (beginner, intermediate, or advanced).

They also recommended that a train-the-trainer type of program be developed to further decentralize training services. This would improve the subject matter expertise of the centers' staff and create an expanded role for fusion centers beyond their training for TLOs and the other targeted training they provide.

Law enforcement participants recommended that training on CVE be provided and be offered to all law enforcement officers. They recommended that this training focus on identifying behaviors, be specific to particular areas of the country, and be run by experts and former law enforcement officers.

Information

Fusion center participants recommended that agencies leading CVE efforts improve information sharing and communication at all levels. They recommended that national and local databases on violent extremists be compiled and provided.

Law enforcement participants recommended that more information, particularly more quality information, on CVE be available and that federal partners facilitate better and more timely information and intelligence sharing. They recommended that federal partners provide greater clarity about the type of information they are looking for from local law enforcement and how that information should be reported. They also asked that feedback be provided after information is vertically shared. In addition, participants recommended developing a single system or platform that integrates federal, state, and local databases.

Participants also recommended that the federal government engage in more truthful, transparent, and less politically correct communications about CVE. For example, some law enforcement and fusion center personnel cited issues with what they perceived as incomplete reporting due to concerns about offending cultural or religious groups, the perceived political motivations behind the adoption of terminology such as “violent extremism,” and the perceived reluctance by the federal government to portray incidents such as the attack at Fort Hood as terrorism.

CVE Policy and Implementation

Fusion center participants requested greater clarity about CVE policy and its implementation. A few also sought clarification on the roles and responsibilities of fusion centers in CVE. They recommended that reforms be made in how federal, state, and local agencies coordinate and interact, as well as for security clearance protocols.

Law enforcement participants also asked that clear leadership for CVE be established and that CVE policy include a prominent role for local law enforcement. Participants recommended that greater weight be given to the changing role of law enforcement in CVE, and to reflect this shift, there be recognition of the need for a cultural shift in how police departments are run.

Law enforcement participants recommended that better cooperation and collaboration occur among all partners involved in CVE efforts and that focus be kept on those partnerships. They recommended ending federal in-fighting and duplication of efforts and developing federal guidelines that would improve cooperation and information sharing, including in locations that have strict information sharing laws. Participants recommended that those leading CVE efforts provide greater support to local law enforcement institutions and help to bring state and local governments on board in efforts to counter violent extremism. They suggested finding ways to increase the cooperation and outreach between law enforcement and the communities they serve and to improve coordination between locations with similar refugee and immigrant communities.

Resources, Funding, and Staffing

Fusion center participants recommended that more resources be provided to fusion centers so that they can more effectively counter violent extremism. Resources, such as funding, are needed to sustain the current

staffing levels in order to maintain operations, increase the number of personnel to expand operations, and provide greater educational and training opportunities for staff.

Law enforcement participants recommended providing resources, consistent funding, and staffing to facilitate efforts to counter violent extremism. Participants also recommended developing a grant that would allow departments to develop CVE-related positions and providing a clearer grant application process for funding CVE-related training.

Other Recommendations

Based on analysis of the data collected for this study and experiences in the field, JBS developed the following recommendations:

- **CVE Training:** JBS recommends that future CVE training be tailored to functional areas and levels of experience and be built on and use current law enforcement protocols and language. This approach to training would enable officers to build on experiences and frameworks they already have, allowing for training and CVE initiatives to be better incorporated into their jobs. Due to the importance of this initiative, such training should be mandatory and offered by experienced professionals.
- **CVE Training Program:** JBS recommends that a CVE training program be developed that includes a certificate option. This training program should offer a menu of courses at different levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced). Training on skills related to CVE should be offered as well.
- **CVE Information:** JBS recommends that CVE communications be presented in ways that are appropriate for the target audience and that efforts continue to provide documents with higher tear-lines to law enforcement and others. JBS also recommends that CVE communications be streamlined and that a mechanism be developed to allow law enforcement and fusion center personnel to search multiple databases and secure websites simultaneously.