



The Role of Fusion Centers in Countering Violent Extremism

Overview

Role of Fusion Centers

To counter violent extremism, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is working with a broad range of partners, including state and major urban area fusion centers. Fusion centers play an important role in countering violent extremism and protecting local communities from violent crime through their daily operations, including gathering, analyzing, and sharing threat information. As analytic hubs, fusion centers are uniquely situated to empower frontline personnel to understand the local implications of national intelligence by tailoring national threat information into a local context and helping frontline personnel understand terrorist and criminal threats they could encounter in the field, while also protecting the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of individuals in their communities. Fusion centers also inform the federal government of the threats and issues they encounter in their communities, which in turn helps the federal government to better support local efforts. DHS will continue to support fusion centers as they share information to prevent crime and enhance their local efforts to counter violent extremism, including:

- Building grassroots intelligence and analytic capabilities within the state and local environment so state and local partners can understand the local implications of national intelligence by tailoring national threat information into a local context.
- Providing state and local partners with timely, relevant, and accurate threat analysis, including:
 - Trends or patterns in criminal and terrorist activities.
 - Identified vulnerabilities within a jurisdiction.
 - Indicators and warnings of terrorism or violent crime.
 - How to report suspicious activities to the proper law enforcement authorities.
 - Recommendations for protective measures, preventive actions, or other threat mitigation activities.
- Sharing information with state and local decision makers to assist in the prioritization of resources to mitigate known threats.
- Sharing information with local partners to help inform frontline personnel in their community engagement efforts, to include raising awareness of potential threats in their communities.
- Incorporating local law enforcement information in their analytic efforts, in order to create better-informed, relevant, and actionable products.
- Educating and informing state and local partners on behaviors and indicators of potential threats, while ensuring the protection of the privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties of individuals and constitutionally protected activities.
- Leveraging Fusion Liaison Officer (FLO) programs to facilitate the exchange of information between fusion centers and their stakeholders, as FLO programs represent a valuable approach to building partnerships between fusion centers and local community-policing efforts.
- Encouraging local law enforcement and homeland security partners to ensure that any CVE-related training that is offered or advertised is in accordance with DHS's *Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Training Guidance and Best Practices*.

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Background on Countering Violent Extremism

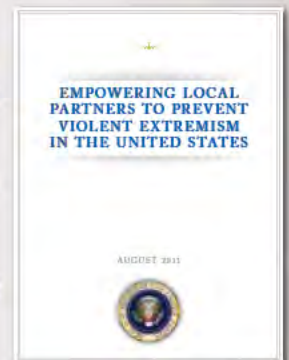
DHS's efforts to counter violent extremism are threefold:

- **Better understand the phenomenon of violent extremism**, and assess the threat it poses to the nation as a whole and within specific communities.
- **Bolster efforts to address the dynamics of violent extremism**, and strengthen relationships with communities as they play a vital role in countering violent extremism.
- **Expand support for information-driven, community-oriented policing efforts** that have proved effective in preventing violent crime across the nation.

Support for Locally Based Approaches

In accordance with the [Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States](#), the U.S. government has increased its support for locally focused, community-based approaches to countering violent extremism across three broad areas:

- **Enhancing Engagement With and Support to Local Communities:** Our aims in engaging with communities to discuss violent extremism are to (1) share accurate, appropriate, meaningful, and timely information about the threat of radicalization to violence with a wide range of groups and organizations; (2) respond to concerns about government policies and actions; and (3) better understand how we can effectively support community-based solutions.
- **Building Government and Law Enforcement Expertise:** We must be vigilant in identifying, predicting, and preempting new threats of violent extremism. This necessitates ongoing research and analysis, as well as exchanges with individuals, communities, and government officials who work on the front lines to counter the threats we face. We are also building robust programs to train frontline personnel on the identification of behaviors that are potentially indicative of terrorist or other criminal activity, raise public awareness of indicators of terrorism and violent crime, and emphasize the importance of reporting suspicious activity to the proper law enforcement authorities. Furthermore, we must ensure that communities, the government, and law enforcement receive accurate, intelligence-based information about the dynamics of violent extremism. Misinformation about threats, coupled with poor training, can harm our security by providing our stakeholders with inaccurate information and creating tensions within communities.
- **Countering Violent Extremist Propaganda While Promoting Our Ideals:** We will aggressively counter violent extremist ideologies—including on the Internet—by educating and empowering communities and promoting our ideals.



For More Information

For more information on fusion centers, please visit <http://www.dhs.gov/fusioncenters>, and for more information on DHS's approach to countering violent extremism, please visit <http://www.dhs.gov/cve>.