

Final Report

# FY2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Grant Evaluations



Developed for:



Science and  
Technology

Developed by RTI International



This work is supported by funding from the United States Department of Homeland Security, Science and Technology Directorate under contract #140D0418C0012/P00005.

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# Acknowledgments

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Renata Zablocka

The research team would also like to thank all members of the below FY20 grantees, as they granted the team their time and efforts in support of these evaluations:

Arizona State University's McCain Institute  
Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative  
Counter Extremism Project  
Life After Hate Inc.  
National Governors Association's Center for Best Practices  
University of Denver Graduate School of Professional Psychology

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# Executive Summary

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This report presents the findings of RTI International's evaluation of six fiscal year 2020 (FY20) grants awarded by the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS's) Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) as part of its Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) Grant Program. Through these evaluations, the research team identified three cross-cutting takeaways (grantee successes, multidisciplinary collaboration, and improved data collection), six recommendations for how DHS can strengthen the TVTP Grant Program, and twenty recommendations for how prevention practitioners<sup>1</sup> can improve project design and implementation.

RTI conducted process evaluations of all six grantees' projects, in addition to outcome evaluations of the Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) and Life After Hate projects. These evaluations are included in this report under the Site Profiles section. In addition to these individual evaluations, this report compiles the cross-cutting accomplishments that grantees achieved and challenges they faced. Finally, this report provides actionable recommendations for DHS and future TVTP grantees in response to these evaluation findings. This report seeks to both synthesize key activities, accomplishments, and experiences of these grantees to build the prevention evidence base, and to support funders and practitioners to apply this information to improve future prevention programming.

In FY20, DHS CP3 received \$10 million for the TVTP Grant Program, which aims to provide grants to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, nonprofits, and institutions of higher education to establish or enhance capabilities to prevent targeted violence and terrorism in the United States. DHS's Science & Technology Directorate (S&T) supports this work through investments in the advancement of operationally relevant, end user-focused, applied social and behavioral science research and evidence-based initiatives such as funding this project, which evaluated a subset of TVTP grantees. S&T contracted RTI International to evaluate six selected grant recipients from CP3's FY20 TVTP program. The objective of these evaluations was to analyze grantees' effectiveness to identify under what conditions TVTP grantees are successful, and the degree to which other jurisdictions can learn from these programs. S&T and CP3 seek to apply these findings to inform changes to the grant program when needed and contribute to building the body of evidence-based research on promising practices for locally based prevention efforts.

Six out of the 29 FY20 grantees were selected by DHS for evaluation: Arizona State University's McCain Institute (hereafter McCain Institute), Bay Area UASI, the Counter Extremism Project (CEP), Life After Hate Inc., the National Governors Association's (NGA's) Center for Best Practices, and the University of Denver Graduate School of Professional Psychology (hereafter CRC).

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the term "prevention" throughout this report (e.g., "prevention programming," "prevention practitioners") refers broadly to the field of targeted violence and terrorism prevention, and is not specifically referencing DHS's TVTP Grant Program. In contrast, usages of terms like "TVTP grantees" or "TVTP cohort" will refer specifically to grantees within DHS's TVTP Grant Program.

## Key Takeaways

This report details all of the grant accomplishments achieved and challenges encountered by the six evaluated grantees. Across these findings, three key takeaways emerged:

- 1. Grantee Successes.** While the six grantees achieved many outputs, including training more than 2,500 individuals and triaging or managing 257 cases of concern collectively, a few grantee accomplishments were particularly noteworthy in their potential to influence the prevention field at the national level. Through NGA, three states developed State Prevention Strategies and received approval from their respective governors to implement these strategies. The McCain Institute established a national Prevention Practitioners Network (PPN), which included 910 members as of the end of the grant period and hosts a network directory with 22 licensed clinicians and 109 resources that members can access. Lastly, Life After Hate, amid an extensive reorganization and redesign of its ExitUSA program, provided direct services to 156 clients (both individuals exiting from violent white supremacist groups and their friends and family members) over a total of 2,151 sessions. During its grant period, Life After Hate increased the average number of sessions that clients attended and the length of time that they participated in the program.
- 2. Multidisciplinary Collaboration.** Grantees engaged in multidisciplinary collaboration and partnerships throughout their grant design and implementation. The six grantees engaged with 30 partners that included a mix of community, nonprofit, and governmental agencies. In addition to partners, grantees engaged many individuals and organizations who participated in their grant activities (e.g., training attendees). These relationships were established both by grantees themselves and by DHS, who connected relevant stakeholders to grantees as appropriate. Grantees and their partners noted that high-quality and frequent communication was a critical factor in enabling them to successfully implement grants. FY20 grantees demonstrated an increase in the use of written documents to codify their relationships—of the six grantees evaluated, five had mission statements, five had memoranda of understanding, three had data-use agreements, and two had charters. These documents help to detail roles and responsibilities and shared objectives, and to facilitate information sharing between organizations.
- 3. Improved Data Collection.** Selected grantees showed a marked increase in data collection efforts and evaluability between the FY16 Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Grant Program and the FY20 TVTP Grant Program. They collected and reported data more systematically throughout their projects, which facilitated a more in-depth evaluation than previous grant funding cohorts. While challenges to the evaluability of grantees remain at the outcome level, these data improvements led to dramatically more information at the output level. A major contributing factor to this change was DHS's adoption of Implementation and Measurement Plans as a requirement for all grantees, which ensured that project goals, objectives, activities, performance measures, and data collection plans were documented.

In addition to these three takeaways, this evaluation found multiple improvements at the grant-program level between the FY16 CVE cohort and the FY20 TVTP cohort. These included the codification of partnerships with written documents; the diversification of grants' ideological focus; and the growth of one grantee's capacity, which enabled them to receive additional external funds to continue TVTP activities.

## Recommendations

These accomplishments demonstrate important progress from the FY2016 CVE grants to the FY2020 TVTP grants. However, there are several steps that DHS and TVTP grantees must still take to further advance prevention programming and knowledge. As such, this report provides recommendations at the TVTP Grant Program level, both for DHS to consider as it funds future iterations of the program, and for TVTP grantees to consider as they design and implement projects. While these recommendations are addressed to DHS and prospective TVTP grantees, they are relevant for broader prevention practitioners and offer suggestions for how these practitioners might build upon the accomplishments of FY20 grantees and anticipate the challenges they experienced.

### Recommendations for DHS

- **Continue to Foster Connections Between Grantees.** Facilitating opportunities for engagement and networking among grantees will enhance collaboration and information sharing surrounding lessons learned, challenges, and mitigation strategies. This will help to maximize grant effectiveness as grantees refine iterations of their project using these learnings.
- **Fund Training and Technical Assistance (TTA).** TTA would enable researchers with expertise in project design, evaluation, and best practices to support grantees. In turn, this would strengthen project design, implementation, and data collection and reporting, while building the capacity of grantees to implement these skills in their future programming.
- **Enhance Data Sharing With Researchers.** Increased sharing of grantee data (i.e., outputs, outcomes) will enable improved performance measurement and will contribute to the prevention evidence base.
- **Translate DHS Resources Into Other Languages.** In addition to reducing grantee time to produce Community Awareness Briefing (CAB)–related materials in these languages, an official translation by DHS into frequently spoken languages in the United States (e.g., Spanish) would ensure that the curriculum is being consistently presented to all audiences. Because of the complex and sensitive nature of the information being provided as part of a CAB, it is important that precise and culturally appropriate language is used.
- **Provide Prospective Grantees Information on Expected Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Compliance Assurance Program Office (CAPO) Review Processes.** This will help grantees build these review timelines into their project design.
- **Consider Extending the Length of Program Funding.** Longer grant periods (e.g., 3 to 5 years) for some projects would enable the provision of longer-term services and the measurement of longer-term outcomes. They would also reflect the amount of time some grantees need for start-up activities (e.g., IRB and CAPO approvals).

### Recommendations for TVTP Grantees

- **Incorporate Time and Resources for Privacy Processes and Tasks Into Project Design.** Prospective grantees must account for the time and resources necessary to undergo privacy reviews to ensure their project budgets and implementation timelines are realistic.
- **Invest in Local Research and Relationships up Front and Throughout Project Implementation.** Prospective grantees should consider their existing knowledge of communities' and stakeholders' resources, needs, and priorities, in addition to their existing relationships with those communities and stakeholders. Both of these aspects are critical to being responsive to the local context and developing trust and buy-in from communities. If needed, grantees should adjust activities and consider including time to build this knowledge (e.g., conduct a contextual analysis, needs assessment) and relationships.

- **Draw Upon Networks.** Grantees should proactively engage other prevention practitioners and organizations with relevant networks, experience, knowledge, or skills to maximize the effectiveness of their project.
- **Develop Continuity Plans to Facilitate Staff Transitions.** Continuity plans, including standard operating procedures, will help to mitigate disruptions caused by staff turnover.
- **Design SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound), Clear Measures and Data Collection Plans.** Doing so will assist in clarifying the project design and enabling the measurement of project results, in turn strengthening the prevention evidence base; it will also enable continuity of work in the event of staff turnover. Grantees should think about how to measure the success of their grant early on while they are designing the project and account for this time in their grant proposal.
- **Improve Longitudinal Data Collection.** Prospective grantees should incorporate data collection methods and timelines to allow for capturing longitudinal data, to the extent possible given grant timelines. For prospective grantees planning to implement training projects, this includes the use of follow-up tests, which can measure the longer-term outcomes of knowledge retention and knowledge application.
- **Provide Clear Expectations of Participants.** Providing a roadmap of milestones and expectations at completion and continued reiteration of final products will help ensure that everyone has the same understanding of project goals and scope and that activities are including participants who meet the target audience criteria.
- **Build Partnerships with Criminal Legal System (CLS) Stakeholders and Institutions.** Building relationships in the CLS by connecting with local and state leaders and attending professional association conferences, for example, can mitigate challenges in gaining buy-in.
- **Communicate the Costs and Benefits of Programming to CLS Institutions.** Articulating costs and benefits can encourage participation in programming and reduce hesitance to implement novel programming.

## Recommendations for TVTP Grantees Implementing Training Programs

- **Create Trainings Based on the Target Audience.** Tailoring trainings (e.g., tailoring curriculum to trainees' sectors) can ensure that the curriculum is most relevant for the target audience.
- **Follow Adult- or Youth-Learning Best Practices.** This often means breaking up the length of trainings to maximize comprehension of information, including experiential learning opportunities, and emphasizing relevance to the trainees' job or life.
- **Initiate Outreach and Recruitment Early.** Evaluated grantees found that outreach took more time than they had accounted for in their implementation timelines. As such, grantees should begin outreach and recruitment early, even if the curriculum is not yet complete.
- **Provide Incentives to Facilitate Recruitment.** Incentives, such as stipends, help recruit participants faster and more effectively and can improve the sustainability of the project.
- **Create Forums for Trainees to Connect and Access Resources.** These forums, such as discussion groups and training material libraries, support the sustainability of training interventions by encouraging and supporting trainees when applying the curriculum in their daily lives or passing on training to others.

- **Create Forums for Trainees to Connect and Access Resources.** Trainees could benefit from a forum through which they can access materials, view relevant case studies or news, talk to other trainees to assist in problem solving, and share promising practices with each other. Such forums could take the form of an online discussion group, website, or regular calls and meetings. These resources would support the sustainability of training interventions by encouraging and supporting trainees when applying the curriculum on their own. This is even more important for grant projects that are implementing train-the-trainer (TTT) courses, as these forums will support participants in hosting trainings of their own.
- **Use Quantitative and Qualitative Data to Share Successes.** Using pre- and posttests enables training projects to measure their outcomes, and qualitative data can provide other important insights on training quality and reception. Using a mixed-methods approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the project results and processes.

## Recommendations for TVTP Grantees Implementing Direct Services Programs<sup>2</sup>

- **Develop Quality Assurance Mechanisms.** Grantees should adopt periodic internal assessments to monitor service delivery practices as well as staffing levels and composition in relation to demand for services.
- **Train New and Existing Staff.** Onboarding and continuous trainings ensure that staff have the tools they need and are providing services per institutional procedures and best practices.
- **Use a Comprehensive Data Management System.** The use of comprehensive data management systems is critical to sufficiently capture direct services and enable evaluation. In addition to software, a comprehensive data management system includes the definition of performance metrics, the training of staff on collecting data, the recording of data, and the conduct of periodic quality checks.
- **Consider Focusing Programming on Alternative Populations.** Shifting the target audience from incarcerated individuals to either CLS personnel or community supervision populations can mitigate access challenges and be more sustainable.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this report, “direct services programs” are those that manage individual client cases and provide services such as mental health services.

# Introduction

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## Purpose

This report presents the findings of RTI International's evaluation of six fiscal year 2020 (FY20) grants awarded by the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS's) Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) as part of the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) Grant Program. Through this program, CP3 provided \$10 million in funding to state, local, and Tribal governments, nonprofits, and institutions of higher education to establish or enhance capabilities to prevent targeted violence and terrorism in the United States. While the prevention field<sup>3</sup> is nascent, there is still a limited evidence base to understand effective prevention programming. Evaluating prevention programs presents several challenges related to data quality, control groups, and definition of outcomes of interest. DHS's Science & Technology Directorate (S&T) invests in the advancement of operationally relevant, end user-focused, applied social and behavioral science research and evidence-based initiatives. In support of these objectives, S&T funded these evaluations to support evidence-based perspectives in terrorism prevention. DHS contracted RTI International to conduct evaluations of six FY20 TVTP grantees. The current report contributes to the evidence base by capturing grant accomplishments and synthesizing activities, processes, outputs and outcomes, and challenges. S&T and CP3 seek to apply these findings to inform changes and refine the grant program when needed, and to contribute to building the body of evidence-based research on promising practices for locally based prevention efforts.

Grantees were selected for evaluation collectively by CP3 and S&T, and represent a range of objectives, activities, and target audiences (these variations are discussed in greater detail under the *FY20 TVTP Grants Selected for Evaluation* section). Once the six grantees selected for evaluation were finalized, the research team began evaluability assessments to assess grants' preparedness for outcome studies. The research team then began its evaluations of the six grants; the team sought to both identify measurable outputs and outcomes of

these projects, and to document the processes that grantees followed to implement their projects, the challenges they faced, and solutions they identified to overcome obstacles. In doing so, these evaluations contribute to the prevention evidence base and provide useful information for future prevention implementers. DHS previously contracted RTI to conduct evaluations of five of its FY16 Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) grantees;<sup>4</sup> this report builds upon that work and examines what advancements have been made in the grant program between these funding years. Appendix A details the recommendations drawn from the FY16 CVE Grant Program evaluation and observed instances of the selected FY20 TVTP grantees applying these recommendations.

## Terrorism and Targeted Violence Programming

DHS began implementing the precursor to this grant program in FY16, under the CVE Grant Program; since then, DHS has continued funding prevention efforts nationwide via the TVTP Grant Program for FY20, FY21 (under evaluation), FY22 (under evaluation), and FY23 (beginning October 1, 2023). The grant program seeks to help fulfill DHS's mandate to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States by developing nationwide capabilities to prevent targeted violence and all forms of terrorism. The FY20 TVTP Grant Program specifically sought to implement the goals identified in the September 2019 DHS Strategic Framework (DHS, 2019) by pursuing the following objectives: strengthen societal resistance against the drivers of violent extremism and ensure broad awareness of the threat of terrorism and targeted violence; counter terrorists and violent extremists' influence online; develop prevention frameworks with state, local, tribal, and territorial government partners to enhance their ability to identify and respond to individuals at risk of mobilizing to violence; and develop and implement recidivism reduction programming to address individuals convicted of crimes related to terrorism and targeted violence.

<sup>3</sup> The use of the term "prevention" throughout this report (e.g., "prevention programming," "prevention practitioners") refers broadly to the field of targeted violence and terrorism prevention, and is not specifically referencing DHS's TVTP Grant Program. In contrast, usages of terms like "TVTP grantees" or "TVTP cohort" will refer specifically to grantees within DHS's TVTP Grant Program.

<sup>4</sup> The individual FY16 evaluations and Final Report are available here: <https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/publication/fy16-violence-prevention-grant-evaluations-october-2021>

The FY20 grant program separated grant projects into three tracks: Local Prevention Framework, Replication, and Innovation. The Local Prevention Framework track included projects that sought to take a comprehensive approach to identifying, assessing, and addressing radicalization and mobilization to terrorism and targeted violence in the grantee's area. They were expected to already have relevant capabilities and resources in place and to therefore use grant funding to fill programmatic gaps. Grants in the Replication track were expected to replicate one of the following existing models of prevention projects: training and awareness raising, civic engagement, youth resilience programs, media literacy/online critical thinking, threat assessment and management teams, bystander trainings, hotlines, and recidivism reduction and reintegration. Lastly, the Innovation track was included for grantees seeking to implement projects that can enhance prevention capabilities and other TVTP goals and that show promise but have not yet been evaluated for program effectiveness. Specifically, DHS sought innovative grants focused on preventing domestic terrorism, preventing targeted violence, multi-sector engagement, and online to offline interventions.

In FY20, DHS funded 29 TVTP grants, totaling \$10 million across 15 states and the District of Columbia. A subset of these grants, described in the following section, were subsequently selected for evaluation.

## FY20 TVTP Grants Selected for Evaluation

The six grantees selected by DHS for evaluation are listed in Table 1 below. Table 1 also lists where each grantee-specific site profile can be found.

**Table 1. Selected Grantees and Site Profile Locations**

Grantee	Report Location
1 Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI)	Appendix B
2 Counter Extremism Project (CEP)	Appendix C
3 University of Denver Graduate School of Professional Psychology Colorado Resilience Collaborative (hereafter CRC) <sup>5</sup>	Appendix D
4 Life After Hate, Inc.	Appendix E
5 McCain Institute at Arizona State University (hereafter McCain Institute)	Appendix F
6 National Governors Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices	Appendix G

Although the selected grantees are not a representative sample of the FY20 TVTP grantees, they do illustrate the range of organizations, foci, networks, and resources that the TVTP Grant Program encompasses. These grantees worked with a range of partners, with 30 partners in total engaged through the six selected grants. Grant partners came from a variety of organizations, including academic or research institutions, behavioral health agencies, community-based organizations, government agencies, law enforcement agencies, and other nongovernmental organizations. All six grantees provided their staff with a variety of trainings on relevant topics, such as violence prevention, threat/risk assessment, and bystander intervention training. Grantees received funding from a variety of sources beyond grants, including contracts, donations, and commercial support.

The key characteristics of these grantees and their FY20 grant projects are summarized in Table 2 below.

<sup>5</sup> The grant was run out of the Colorado Resilience Collaborative (CRC), which was a component of the University of Denver Graduate School of Professional Psychology at the time of this grant.

**Table 2. Key Characteristics of Selected FY20 Grant Projects**

Grantee	Organization Type	Track	Activity Type(s)	Geographic Focus	Target Audience(s)	Number of Partners
<b>Bay Area UASI</b>	Local government agency	Local prevention framework	Training; data infrastructure	Local (Bay Area, California)	School personnel, students, houses of worship, county offices of education	9
<b>CEP</b>	Nonprofit	Replication	Interventions; information sharing	National	Extremism-related offenders	2
<b>CRC</b>	Academic institution	Local prevention framework	Client services; training; information sharing	State (Colorado)	Professionals in the education, behavioral health, and law enforcement sectors; community members; organizations working with communities at risk for targeted violence	4
<b>Life After Hate</b>	Nonprofit	Innovation	Client services; training	National	Individuals and friends/family of individuals interested in disengaging from violent white supremacist <sup>6</sup> hate groups; mental health and law enforcement professionals	6
<b>McCain Institute</b>	Academic institution	Innovation	Training; information sharing; networking	National	Prevention practitioners, with particular focus on mental and behavioral health practitioners, educators, and government	7
<b>NGA</b>	Nonprofit	Replication	Technical assistance	National	State governments/governors	2

## Report Layout

This report begins with a discussion of the study methods for the six evaluations. It then analyzes the results of surveys administered to the six grantees and their project partners. This section will consider overarching factors that grantees and their partners felt contributed to their success, common challenges, and their own suggestions for how future prevention programming can be strengthened.

Next, the report will consider the cross-cutting challenges and recommendations identified through the variety of data sources collected throughout these evaluations.

All six of the grantee site profiles can be found in the appendices. These site profiles provide greater detail surrounding each grantee’s project design, activities, processes, challenges, and accomplishments, alongside the research team’s process and outcome evaluation findings and recommendations for future prevention programming based on these grantee-specific findings.

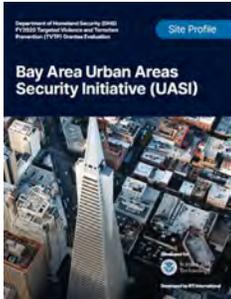
The report is structured so that it can be read in its entirety from start to finish, or readers may move to different sections. The report is intended to be a user-friendly document that allows readers to learn about real-world implementation as it is practiced by local communities throughout the United States. It is our intention that the findings in this report be used to inform the work of practitioners, policy makers, and researchers alike.

<sup>6</sup> Life After Hate’s site profile uses the term “violent far-right extremism” to refer to the ideology of its ExitUSA target audience, as this was the term used in Life After Hate’s grant documents. However, since the end of its grant, Life After Hate has updated its terminology to specify its focus on “violent white supremacy.” As such, this term is used when referencing Life After Hate’s work.

# Site Profiles

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The site profiles are written as standalone reports to allow readers the ability to learn about each site independently. The programs, local contexts, and resources varied across the sites, and as such, they netted very different results. The six profiles are linked below for easy access.



[Appendix B.  
Bay Area UASI Site  
Profile](#)



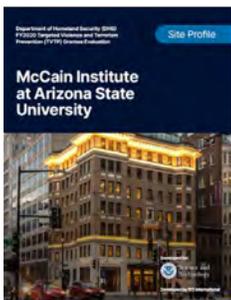
[Appendix C.  
Counter Extremism  
Project Site Profile](#)



[Appendix D.  
University of Denver  
Colorado Resilience  
Collaborative Site  
Profile](#)



[Appendix E.  
Life After Hate Site  
Profile](#)



[Appendix F.  
McCain Institute  
at Arizona State  
University Site Profile](#)



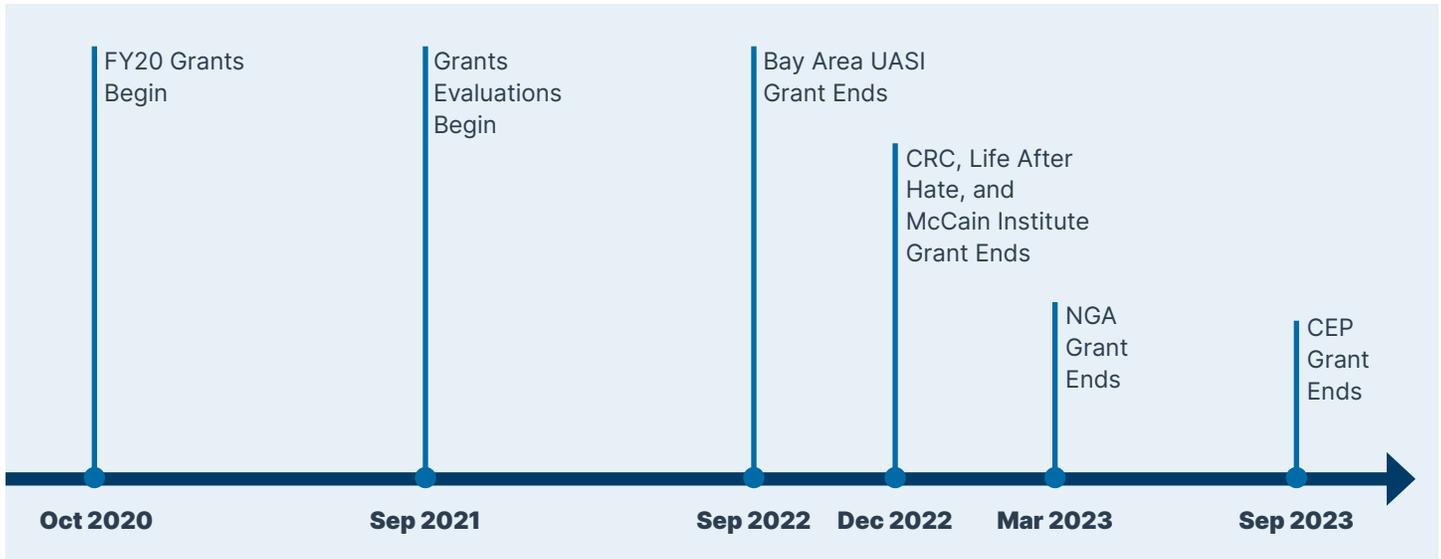
[Appendix G.  
National Governors  
Association Site Profile](#)

# Study Methods

## Evaluation Timeline

All FY20 TVTP grants began on October 1, 2020, with a 24-month period of performance. This meant that grantees began their work in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and contended with changing guidelines and safety requirements throughout their grant period (these challenges and each grantee’s responses to them are detailed in the *Site Profiles* section). RTI’s evaluation began in September 2021, approximately 1 year into grant implementation, and continued until each grant’s closure to capture as much data as possible. The length of each grant’s period of performance, and therefore its evaluation period, varied: all but one grantee received at least one no-cost extension (NCE). (The factors that contributed to grantees’ requests for NCEs can also be found in the *Site Profiles* section.) The final grant periods are shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. FY20 Grant & Evaluation Timeline**



## Evaluation Challenges and Approach

The prevention programming evidence base remains underdeveloped in large part because of the challenges in evaluating prevention efforts. There is a need to understand whether prevention programs are effective, but there is also a lack of clear development of prevention program goals, desired outcomes and impacts, and performance measurements. Many commentators suggest that methodological challenges preclude evaluators from investigating and assessing prevention programs. Some of these challenges (Mastroe & Szmania, 2016) include:

- Imprecise Definitions.** As evidenced by the variety of grants awarded through the TVTP Grant Program, prevention efforts can take many forms. However, there is no consistent definition for what qualifies a project as “prevention programming.” Further, there are no common definitions for key terms that are widely used in the field, such as “prevention,” “radicalization,” or “disengagement.” This can lead to contradictions in the field and inhibit evaluation.
- Lack of Project Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes.** Many prevention projects lack realistic goals, objectives, and performance measures, which results in evaluators’ inability to determine whether, and to what extent, a project was successful. This also means that metrics and thresholds for success vary substantially across projects.

- **Difficulty Creating Counterfactual Design.** As evidenced by the use of the word “prevention” to describe projects, most projects’ ultimate goals are to prevent acts of terrorism and targeted violence from happening. It is, of course, not possible to measure such counterfactuals, and projects must therefore focus on identifying other measurable variables that are still effective in capturing project results.
- **Little Knowledge About the Mechanisms Connecting Inputs and Outcomes.** Evaluations in the prevention field struggle to establish both causality and that the results observed came as a result of the prevention project, due to the need to implement research methods such as treatment-control comparison studies or experimental designs that incorporate randomization.

These challenges are not unique to the prevention field; indeed, they are common among new areas of programming. In these areas, practitioners and funders often prioritize setting up and implementing projects over data collection, performance metric development, and evaluation. This is particularly relevant in the case of prevention programming, as this work is complex on its own even without considering measurement and evaluation. While evaluations typically focus on whether a project works or not—and this is critical to strengthening the prevention evidence base—complex and nascent programming areas like prevention programming benefit from a more nuanced approach. Such an approach enables evaluators, funders, and grantees to work together to identify and discuss challenges and catch unintended negative consequences stemming from programs, in addition to project effectiveness. This facilitates the adoption of these learnings, where practitioners can iterate accordingly to improve programming until projects are prepared to collect empirical, outcome-level data.

Although these and other challenges create serious methodological barriers, they are not insurmountable to designing and conducting meaningful evaluations of DHS’s TVTP grantees. With this in mind, the research team selected a utilization-focused evaluation (UFE) approach (Patton, 2012). This approach was also selected in response to the fact that the six TVTP grant projects ranged in their goals and key characteristics, necessitating a flexible evaluation approach that could adapt to the needs of each intervention strategy.

The UFE approach is a methodological advancement that incorporates traditional evaluation techniques with the realities of contemporary program development and implementation. The purpose of a UFE approach is to understand what was done, how it was done, and to what effect it was done with the distinct goals of learning for further program development. This framework is appropriate because it provides the flexibility needed for the research team to be responsive to what is learned during the research process (e.g., the information learned during the initial process could inform the evaluation strategy). A UFE is an ideal approach for this project because it provides a framework to evaluate the grantees in order to assess implementation and outcomes with the added goal of learning from grantees, rather than solely to assess merit and worth of a program. UFE is an evaluation framework appropriate for emerging fields in the process of developing an evidence base, identifying performance metrics, and developing tools for DHS.

## Evaluation Process

### Evaluability Assessment

With the UFE approach in mind, researchers began the evaluation process by conducting an evaluability assessment. While researchers planned to conduct a process evaluation of all aspects of the six grant projects, they conducted an evaluability assessment to assess whether they could additionally conduct an outcome evaluation of any project components (see Table 3 for an explanation of process and outcome evaluations).<sup>7</sup> As discussed above, both process- and outcome-level findings are important for program development and learning.

<sup>7</sup> Available here: [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/22\\_0615\\_st\\_TargetedViolenceTerrorismPreventionGranteeEvaluation\\_FY2020EvaluabilityAssessment.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/22_0615_st_TargetedViolenceTerrorismPreventionGranteeEvaluation_FY2020EvaluabilityAssessment.pdf)

The evaluability assessment constituted a systematic study of grantee activities and capacity to determine whether a project is ready and capable of undergoing an outcome evaluation. Building on the literature from the international development community (Davies, 2013; Dunn, 2008; International Labour Organization, 2020; Sniukaite, 2009; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2017), the evaluability assessment sought to answer three questions. First, is the project (or project component) designed in such a way that the evaluator can expect to witness measurable outcomes? Second, are these outcomes verifiable based on the planned data collection systems? Third, based on the organizational contexts (e.g., leadership, partnerships, resources, staffing), is it useful to assess or measure outcomes?

**Table 3. Process vs. Outcome Evaluation**

	Process	Outcome
<b>Focus</b>	Describing a project’s activities and procedures	Assessing empirical evidence to measure project results
<b>Central Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What activities were completed and how were they implemented?</li> <li>• Was there adequate support for the project?</li> <li>• What challenges emerged and how were they overcome?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the program achieve its intended results?</li> <li>• Did the project make a difference?</li> </ul>
<b>Value</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies opportunities to adjust implementation to increase effectiveness</li> <li>• Identifies challenges and solutions that can be anticipated in future work</li> <li>• Provides a record for replicability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthens the evidence base on what works and why</li> </ul>

By answering these three questions, the research team determined (1) whether the project (or project component) was set up in a way that allowed for an outcome evaluation, and (2) whether there were opportunities to adjust data collection activities or instruments to enable researchers to measure outcomes (or to measure outcomes more effectively). In the case that there were opportunities to improve data collection to facilitate outcomes, researchers worked with grantees throughout grant implementation to adapt their methods and instruments. As such, the evaluability assessment provided researchers with an initial picture of what would be possible within each grantee’s evaluation, but did not inhibit continuous adjustment to maximize the value of the evaluation. If a grantee’s project was not appropriate for an outcome evaluation, researchers conducted a process evaluation.

Ultimately, RTI conducted a process evaluation of all six grants and conducted outcome evaluations of two grant components: (1) BA UASI’s CAB, Behavioral Analysis, and Prevention Strategies trainings; and (2) Life After Hate’s Mental Health Professional Co-Responder Development and Alliance for Co-Responder Development trainings.

Documenting both the processes and the outcomes allows the prevention field to build an evidence-informed foundation of knowledge. As emphasized by the UFE approach, all of these various data contribute to incrementally increasing prevention knowledge and enabling the iterative development, improvement, and scaling of projects.

## Data Collection

The research team collected and reviewed data from a variety of sources, discussed below.

**Monthly Check-Ins.** Researchers held regular calls with grantees to stay up to date with project activities, challenges, data collection, and decision points as they happened.

**Project Materials.** Researchers reviewed grant proposal narratives and Implementation and Measurement Plans (IMPs) to understand the project design and assess how project goals aligned with objectives, indicators, and data collection methods. Researchers additionally reviewed other project materials, such as training curricula, recruitment materials, and literature reviews.

**Grantee-collected Data.** The research team reviewed data collected by grantees during project implementation. The types of data they collected varied depending on their project goals, objectives, and activities. For example, three grantees implemented pre- and posttests for their trainings to measure knowledge gain, and two of these additionally conducted follow-up tests to gauge knowledge retention. Researchers supported the design and implementation of these test instruments and reviewed these data as part of their evaluations. The research team also reviewed other data collected by grantees, including satisfaction surveys, facilitators' notes, limited case data, event participation and registration data, and website data and downloads.

**Site Visits and Interviews.** RTI conducted site visits for two grantees, which entailed attending events, observing activities, and conducting meetings and interviews with project and partner staff and project participants, as appropriate. In total, researchers observed 7 events, interviewed 29 project and partner staff, and interviewed 24 project participants. These activities, whether in-person or virtual, enabled the research team to gain a more nuanced and well-rounded understanding of grant activities.

**Surveys.** Researchers conducted three surveys throughout the evaluation period to gather information about project implementation, ongoing collaborations, partner involvement, lessons learned, and promising practices. Two of these surveys were distributed to primary grant recipients: one

at the beginning of the second year of the grant project (December 2021) and one at the end of each grant's period.

The first survey involved a range of questions designed to capture details about the structure of the grant (e.g., types of written documentation, differences between the IMP and current project, involvement of partners), approach to data collection (e.g., types of data collected), and training and technical assistance (TTA) needs.

The second survey involved questions relating to staff training, grant accomplishments, challenges to project implementation, and experience working with the DHS TVTP Grant Program.

The third survey was distributed to grant partners, who were working with prime grant recipients to implement the project. While the six grantees engaged a total of 30 partners, this survey was distributed to multiple individuals working in these partner organizations, when relevant. Therefore, a total of 41 individuals participated in the partner survey. "Partners" were defined as individuals or organizations who (1) had jointly developed and agreed upon a set of common goals and direction for the grant project, or (2) had worked with the grantee to achieve grant project goals using their expertise and resources. Identified partners were sent an email and asked to complete a survey at the beginning of the second year of the grant (December 2021). The survey asked questions relating to their involvement in the grant project (e.g., involvement in the proposal process, level of input in project implementation), their perceptions of the partnership (e.g., strength of partnership, quality of communication), their familiarity with the project itself, challenges to project implementation, and advice for future grantees.

# Accomplishments

As illustrated in the individual site profiles, the six grantees and the grant program overall made important achievements. Unfortunately, this evaluation was unable to assess the long-term impacts of these efforts due to the time constraints of the evaluation, but the accomplishments discussed in this section suggest that the TVTP Grant Program is making important changes to improve the professionalism of TVTP efforts, which in turn will likely strengthen the effectiveness and evaluability of these efforts in the future.

## Grant Project Outputs and Outcomes

Table 4 below summarizes the measurable outputs and outcomes of the six evaluated grant projects.

**Table 4. Summary of Grant Outputs and Outcomes**

<p><b>Bay Area UASI</b></p>	<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created the California Prevention Practitioners Network (PPN)<sup>8</sup></li> <li>• Delivered 10 CAB, Behavioral Analysis, and Prevention Strategies trainings</li> <li>• Delivered 8 train-the-trainer (TTT) sessions</li> <li>• 108 participants trained to replicate trainings</li> <li>• 5 middle schools completed the Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) Year 1 training program</li> <li>• 340 students trained in the SSA training program</li> <li>• 44 school staff trained in the SSA training program</li> <li>• 13 middle school faculty and staff completed the TTT course</li> <li>• 5 middle schools completed the SSA Year 2 training program</li> <li>• 5 middle schools implemented the SSA training program</li> <li>• Identified 1 existing data framework appropriate for expansion</li> <li>• Socialized the DataZone dashboard with 5 County Offices of Education</li> <li>• Expanded the dashboard to house increased information flow and provide more relevant information</li> </ul> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased the average participant knowledge score from 32% before to 67% immediately after CAB, Behavioral Analysis, and Prevention Strategies trainings</li> </ul>
<p><b>CEP</b></p>	<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed the Alternative Pathways (AP) theory of change<sup>9</sup></li> <li>• Developed the AP curriculum<sup>10</sup></li> <li>• Reached out to 165 terrorism-related offenders and engaged with 68 of these regarding participation in the written AP course</li> <li>• 10 terrorism-related offenders completed the written AP course</li> <li>• Supported 5 terrorism-related offenders post-course completion and post-release</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> The California PPN charter can be found here: [https://www.bayareauasi.org/sites/default/files/resources/Charter%20-%20CPPN\\_.pdf](https://www.bayareauasi.org/sites/default/files/resources/Charter%20-%20CPPN_.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> The AP theory of change can be found here: <https://4rnetwork.org/>

<sup>10</sup> The AP curriculum is available to 4R Network members here: <https://4rnetwork.org/prison-resources>

<p><b>CRC</b></p>	<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted 30 total trainings at the 101 and 201 levels</li> <li>• Trained 1,501 individuals from a range of professions</li> <li>• Increased self-reported confidence in knowledge of targeted violence among training participants</li> <li>• Developed 4 recorded training modules</li> <li>• Provided triage and consultation services for 101 cases</li> <li>• Referred 16 cases for clinical services</li> <li>• Developed a consultation toolkit with 7 case studies on how to apply the consultation process</li> <li>• Hosted 5 community prevention gatherings</li> <li>• 157 professionals and community representatives participated in community prevention gatherings</li> <li>• Developed and launched an online resource library with 36 resources</li> <li>• Received 2,158 views of the online resource library</li> </ul>
<p><b>Life After Hate</b></p>	<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 156 individual and family cases managed via a total of 2,151 individual client sessions</li> <li>• Screening tools updated</li> <li>• 85+ new referral partners added to an internal directory map</li> <li>• Community Forum channels created for exiting individuals and friends and families</li> <li>• Life After Hate and ExitUSA web pages updated and redesigned</li> <li>• Conducted a pilot campaign and a 5-month targeted online campaign</li> <li>• 6 counternarrative videos developed<sup>11</sup></li> <li>• Conducted 8 Mental Health Professional Co-Responder Development (MHPCD) training sessions for 157 mental health and other professionals</li> <li>• Adapted Alliance for Co-Responder Development (ACD) training to online modality</li> <li>• 67 professionals completed the ACD training</li> <li>• Developed Community Forum channels</li> </ul> <p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased the average participant's knowledge score from 77% to 89% immediately after MHPCD training, and to 87% 3 months after MHPCD training</li> <li>• Increased the average participant's knowledge score from 57% before to 89% immediately after ACD training, and to 88% 2 months after ACD training</li> </ul>
<p><b>McCain Institute</b></p>	<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created the PPN<sup>12</sup></li> <li>• Expanded the PPN to 910 participants</li> <li>• Hosted 9 workshops</li> <li>• Hosted 4 symposia with approximately 145 attendees</li> <li>• Published 9 sets of reading materials</li> <li>• Published 4 practice guides</li> <li>• Published a comprehensive framework for TVTP program design: <i>Preventing Targeted Violence and Terrorism: A Guide for Practitioners</i></li> <li>• Developed a network directory of prevention providers and resources</li> <li>• Added 22 licensed clinicians and 109 resources to the directory</li> <li>• Documented 20,985 views of recorded videos of workshops and symposia</li> <li>• Achieved 353 views of the reading materials, practice guides, and PPN Practitioners' Guide</li> </ul>

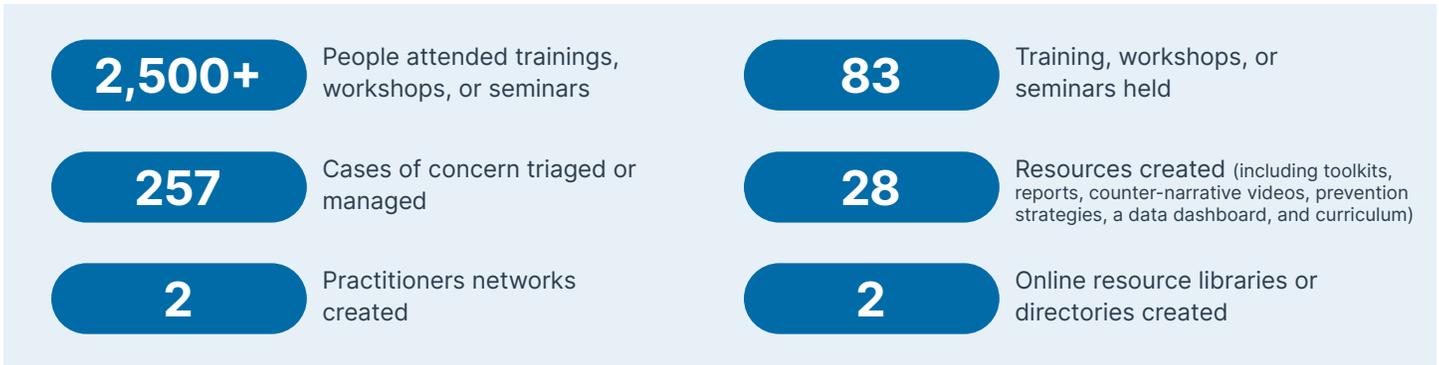
11 The counternarratives can be found at the following links:  
 • Sometimes the Best Way Out Comes From Those Who've Gotten Out Themselves: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0I9BQ5VWDhU>   
 • Enough is Enough: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJxhtOcVF-o>   
 • Belonging and Hope: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stb59XVFQjA>   
 • What Do My Beliefs Cost Me? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8q0YHVfpWg>   
 • Questions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q4lmI0PYrCs>   
 • This Is Exhausting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ehjy0jPFrE> 

12 See: <https://www.mccaininstitute.org/programs/preventing-targeted-violence/prevention-practitioners-network/> 

<b>NGA</b>	<p><b>Outputs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fostered the development of 3 State Prevention Strategies<sup>13</sup></li> <li>• Held monthly meetings with states</li> <li>• Held at least 1 workshop with each state individually</li> <li>• Conducted 7 webinars with a total attendance of 70 people</li> <li>• Held 2 all-state convenings for Policy Academy states</li> <li>• Developed a toolkit of key performance indicators for state strategies<sup>14</sup></li> <li>• Developed 2 communication toolkits</li> <li>• Updated the Governor’s Roadmap to Preventing Targeted Violence</li> <li>• Provided stipends to 2 states to support implementation of Prevention Strategies</li> </ul>
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Figure 2 shows the sum of all six grantees’ outputs.

**Figure 2. FY20 Evaluated Grantee Summary Outputs**



In addition to these outputs, RTI asked each grantee what their project’s greatest accomplishments were and what impact their project will have on the prevention field. Their responses illustrated the role these projects played in building an infrastructure for prevention work: three of the six grantees felt that their greatest successes related to building capacity and laying the groundwork to facilitate future prevention efforts. Three shared that their greatest successes related to their “lessons learned”—by pioneering prevention efforts, these grantees gained valuable experiences that could inform future efforts. Finally, two grantees shared that their greatest successes came from navigating the challenges of COVID and other obstacles. Broadly, all six grantees saw the impact of their projects as helping to provide infrastructure, information, and tools that could help build momentum and sustain related prevention efforts. Three grantees specifically shared that they hoped their project would provide evidence of the need for mental health components of prevention programs.

13 For the three Prevention Strategies, see:  
 • Hawaii: [https://dod.hawaii.gov/ohs/files/2022-HAWAII-TARGETED-VIOLENCE-PREVENTION-STRATEGY\\_FINAL.pdf](https://dod.hawaii.gov/ohs/files/2022-HAWAII-TARGETED-VIOLENCE-PREVENTION-STRATEGY_FINAL.pdf)  
 • Illinois: <https://iemaohs.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/iemaohs/hs/documents/Targeted-Violence-Prevention-Strategy.pdf>  
 • New York: <https://www.dhsses.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/04/2023-nys-tvp-strategy.pdf>  
 14 See: [State Targeted Violence Prevention: Programming & Key Performance Indicators](#)

## DHS Grant Program Successes

### Fostering of Multidisciplinary Collaboration and Partnerships.

One recommendation that emerged from RTI's evaluation of five FY16 CVE grant projects was to foster collaboration, communication, and compromise through partnerships that engage the whole of community. Researchers identified several clear signals that such relationships were being fostered.

After becoming a TVTP grantee, [Grantee Organization] has grown local and regional prevention programs and partnerships [with] new disciplines and partnership types as encouraged by [DHS CP3].

- FY20 TVTP Grant Recipient

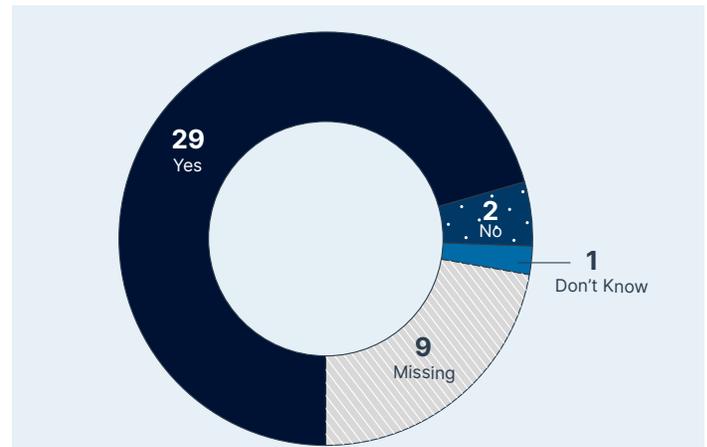
First, multiple grantees remarked that CP3 connected them to other TVTP stakeholders, including current and former grantees, to assist in fostering partnerships or providing support as needed. For example, during CEP's efforts to identify a prison or correctional institution to implement its training program, DHS CP3 connected it with numerous individuals in various state, federal, and nongovernmental organizations, as well as other grantee organizations such as Life After Hate. Bay Area UASI also noted that DHS CP3 introduced project staff to other relevant grantees, who assisted them in considering their recruitment and activity design. Additionally, DHS CP3 hosted its first TVTP Grantee Symposium in 2022, which provided grantees with opportunities to network, discuss key topics, and share their experiences.

Second, FY20 grantees engaged a range of partners, representing a wide variety of perspectives, in the implementation of their projects (see Appendices B-G for individual site profiles). In total, the six evaluated grantees engaged 30 partners in implementation, including individuals and organizations from academia and government as well as practitioners. In addition to these formal partners, grantees engaged other actors in a variety of ways, including consulting with grantees on project design, participating in project activities, and sharing relevant information. This multidisciplinary engagement extended beyond formal grant activities, with some actors in turn engaging in their own collaboration and partnerships as a result of their

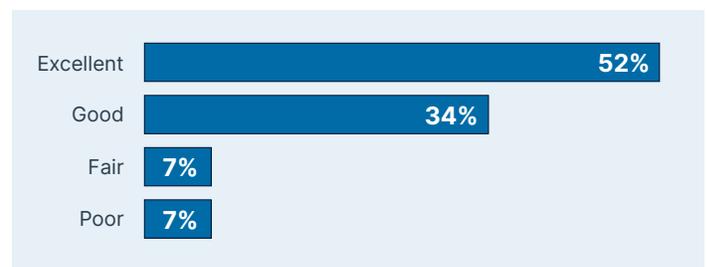
participation in the FY20 grant projects. For example, states that participated in NGA's Policy Academy formed multidisciplinary teams as they developed their targeted violence prevention plans.

The organizations that formally partnered with grantees had varying levels of involvement and roles in project implementation. Slightly less than half of the 41 individuals representing the 30 partner organizations (17 of 41, or 41.4%) contributed to the original proposal for the project. Nineteen out of 41 (46.3%) served on a steering committee or other organizing body for the project.<sup>15</sup> Regardless of their prior experience with the grantee or leadership role on the project, most partners (29 of 41) reported that they worked together with the grantee to achieve grant project goals (Figure 3). Most partners indicated that they had a strong relationship with the grantee: 25 of the 29 (86%) who responded indicated that the strength of their relationship was "good" or "excellent" (Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Would you say your organization and your partner are working together to achieve grant project goals utilizing your expertise and resources?**



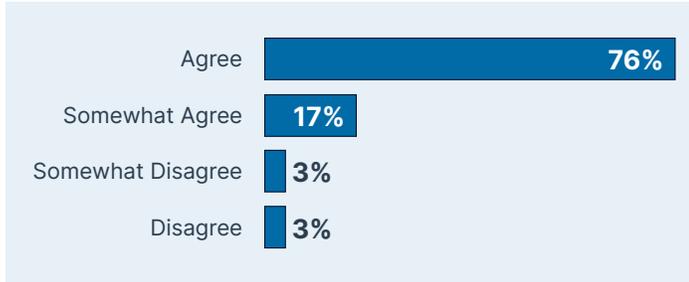
**Figure 4. How would you describe the strength of your organization's relationship with your partner?**



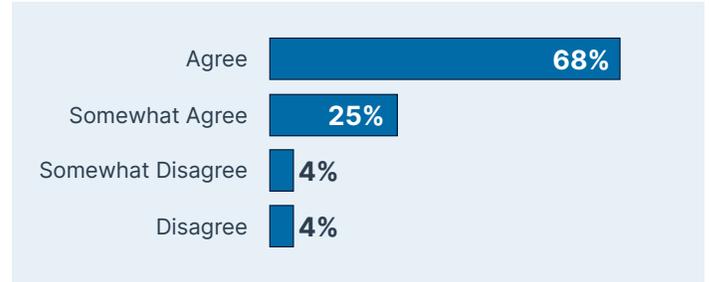
<sup>15</sup> While the six grantees engaged a total of 30 partners, this survey was distributed to multiple individuals working at these partners, when relevant. Therefore, a total number of 41 individuals participated in the partner survey.

These relationships are likely due, in part, to the transparent and consistent communication most partners reported having with the grantee organization they were partnered with. Grantees varied in how frequently they communicated with their partners, but a majority communicated either weekly (8 of 29) or monthly (13 of 29). Most partners (27 of 29) also indicated that communications with the grantee were transparent (Figure 4). Most partners felt that communication was consistent (Figure 5) and transparent (Figure 6), with 26 of 28 indicating that they “agreed” or “somewhat agreed” that communications were consistent and that they were transparent. The quality and frequency of communication between grantees and partners is important for successful project implementation: one partner shared that the frequency and clarity of communication with the grantee organization had been an important contributing factor in implementing the grant.

**Figure 5. Communications with your partner are transparent.**



**Figure 6. Communications with your partner are consistent.**



**Improvements in Evaluability.** The selected FY20 TVTP grantees demonstrated a marked increase from FY16 CVE grantees in their consistent planning, collection, and reporting of project data, which in turn improved the evaluability of their projects. One important difference between FY16 and FY20 that contributed to this change was DHS’s adoption of IMPs, which sites were required to submit and update to state their goals, objectives, activities, performance measures, and data collection plans. Although some FY20 sites struggled with drafting their IMPs in a clear and logical manner, as discussed in greater detail in the Challenges section, these plans enabled evaluators to assess whether projects met their stated objectives. Another improvement in the design phase was the greater emphasis that DHS placed on ensuring that grantees were adhering to Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols. These protocols ensured that data were being collected with the proper protections to allow their use for evaluation. DHS also encouraged grantees to collect more data than some had originally planned, including more quantitative data when possible. This meant that the research team was able to access more data that were collected more consistently. In turn, these data enabled researchers to conduct thorough process evaluations and to measure the outcomes of two grants. Lastly, DHS improved grantees’ ability to report these data by revising its quarterly report format for FY20 grants. DHS adapted the report template to make it more flexible in response to the variety among its grants and the data they were collecting.

**Codification of Partnerships with Written Documents.** Another recommendation that emerged from the FY16 CVE grant evaluations was the importance of codifying partnerships with written documents to delineate roles and responsibilities, activities, and budgets, among other aspects, to ensure agreement and facilitate sustainability. Of the six grantees evaluated in FY20, five had mission statements, five had memoranda of understanding, three had data-use agreements, and two had charters. This demonstrates that grantees have begun establishing and documenting common objectives, procedures, and expectations.

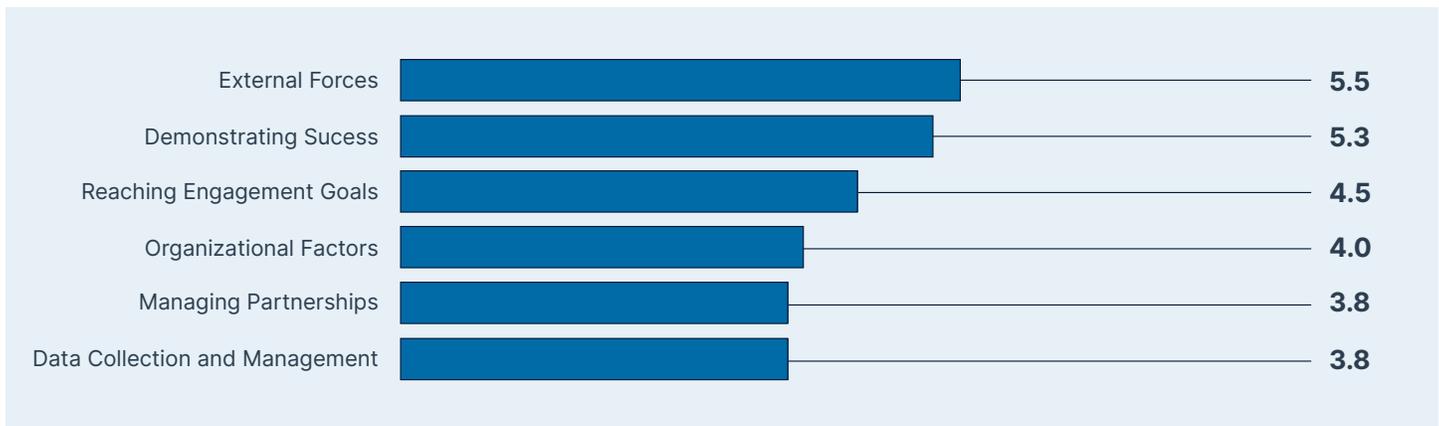
**Diversification of Ideological Focus.** The FY16 evaluations found that the grant program was disproportionately focused on Islamist violent extremism, which left critical gaps in efforts to prevent, intervene in, and research other forms of violent extremism and was not always reflective of community needs. As such, the evaluations recommended that the DHS TVTP grants should address extremism across all ideological spectrums. The six FY20 TVTP grants that were evaluated demonstrated a clear change in this regard, with four not specifying an ideological focus, one (CEP) focusing both on Islamist and violent far-right extremism, and one (Life After Hate) focusing on violent white supremacist extremism.

**Grant Funding Increased Capacity to Receive External Funding.** Bay Area UASI noted that the FY20 TVTP grant funding it received enabled it to receive additional funding through other sources to replicate and expand its work. Bay Area UASI was able to get approval from the State Administrative Agency/the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services to replicate and expand TVTP grant-funded projects using DHS Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) UASI grants. Additionally, after the state observed Bay Area UASI succeeding in the local and regional implementation of its TVTP grant-funded project, the state decided to roll out domestic violent extremism training webinars, which feature the same speakers from the Bay Area UASI California PPN meetings.

# Grant Challenges

Throughout the evaluation process, the research team gathered information on the challenges faced by grantees and the actions they took to mitigate them. In addition to process data, researchers gathered this information through surveys and interviews with site leads. All FY20 grantees were asked to consider a range of factors and indicate the extent to which those factors posed a challenge to the implementation of their grant project. Grantees used a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning “not a challenge” and 10 meaning an “insurmountable challenge.” The full list of categories and the extent to which grantees felt they were a challenge can be seen in Figure 7 below. The challenges identified across the process data and survey data are summarized in this section.

**Figure 7. The extent to which elements posed a challenge to project implementation (scale of 0-10)**



**COVID-19 Restrictions.** Given that all six grant projects began in October 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, each grantee had to adapt its activities to reflect quarantine regulations and public safety considerations. The primary way in which these six grantees did so was by converting in-person events or trainings to a virtual or hybrid format. When doing so, grantees tried to mitigate any negative effects of the virtual format, such as minimized interpersonal interactions. For example, the McCain Institute hosted its first two symposia virtually, but incorporated numerous breakout sessions to encourage active participation. Multiple grantees noted that networking opportunities and informal interaction was hampered by the virtual setting, but also noted that their virtual events were able to bring together participants who might not have otherwise been able to attend an in-person event.

**Delays, Unexpected Resource Needs, and Restrictions Due to Privacy Reviews.** Because of the breadth of organizations that are awarded TVTP grants and the recent beginning of the TVTP Grant Program, grantees had a range of prior experience in working with DHS and with privacy processes. Specifically, DHS required that all FY20 grant projects conducting research, and their implementation and data collection plans in particular, be approved by DHS’s Compliance Assurance Program Office (CAPO) and by an IRB. These reviews caused delays in grant implementation for two primary reasons. First, some grantees had not been aware of these requirements or regulations and did not have prior experience designing such protocols. This meant that these grantees spent significant staff time on these processes that they had not accounted for in their timelines or budgets and had to revise their materials, which took additional time. Second, multiple grantees experienced significant implementation delays and challenges because of the time it took to receive approval. CEP, for example, was unable to begin recruiting for and implementing its training until it received IRB approval 15 months after its grant began. Bay Area UASI’s timeline for its Safe School Ambassadors project was effectively cut in half because of unanticipated IRB delays. It should be noted that both of these projects were working with protected populations, which likely contributed to the lengthy review periods.

**Staff Turnover.** Multiple grantees faced staff turnover, which posed challenges for their implementation and data collection. Some grantees faced just one project staff member leaving, whereas one, Life After Hate, faced a total reorganization. Another grantee, NGA, had four different individuals leading their Policy Academy over the course of a year due to turnover. Regardless of the scope of staff turnover, this caused implementation delays for grantees as they had to identify new staff to take over their tasks. In some cases, the objectives and processes behind certain tasks were primarily known by the departing staff; as such, the remaining and new staff had to reconsider what was being done. In one grantee's case, CRC, they were not able to complete a portion of those tasks within the grant period. One grantee, the McCain Institute, also lost data collected from four of its nine workshops because the data was stored on the Zoom account of a staff member who ultimately left the organization. This challenge was also present for some grant participants; while NGA worked with state teams to develop Prevention Strategies, two of these teams experienced leadership changes that delayed and, in one case, halted completion of activities.

**Community and Stakeholder Buy-In and Engagement.**

As noted throughout this report, the FY20 TVTP grantees that were evaluated sought to engage a wide variety of communities and stakeholders through their grant projects. When surveyed, most grantees shared that reaching their engagement goals was the third greatest challenge of those presented to them (4.5 out of 10) (Figure 7). For many, this challenge was due in part to the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced them to hold some events virtually. Grantees also noted that the category of managing partnerships—finding partners/contractors and working with them—posed somewhat of a challenge (3.8 out of 10).

While grantees were largely successful in these engagement efforts, many of them had to expend extensive resources to gain this buy-in for a variety of reasons. Bay Area UASI's school-focused project had to contend with considerable limitations on school resources, which made both recruiting and maintaining school staff participation in the program a challenge. CEP spent much of its grant period engaging with a variety of prisons and correctional institutions to identify a location to implement its countering extremism curriculum. CEP was ultimately unable to gain the commitment of an institution during the period of performance, largely because of strains on prison resources and hesitance to implement

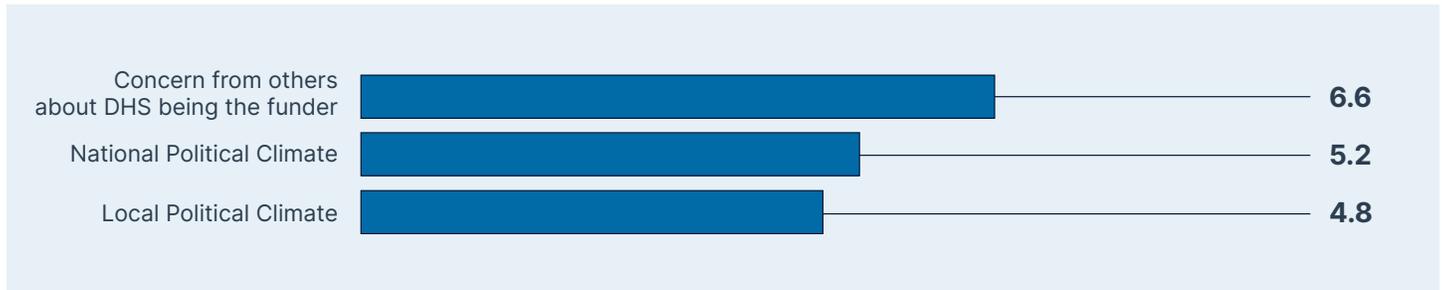
a training program that had not previously been tested. CEP also spent extensive time engaging with individuals incarcerated for extremism-related offenses to secure their voluntary participation in the written course, due to these individuals' mistrust of the program and to challenging prison mail requirements. The CRC's staff similarly noted spending significant time learning from various communities about their needs, interests, questions, and concerns to understand what was needed and gain those communities' buy-in. Additionally, the CRC faced some resistance from communities it sought to work with, such as those in rural areas, due to the grant's subject matter and a lack of existing rapport and relationships. Finally, the McCain Institute found that it was difficult to gain the buy-in of certain stakeholders, such as mental health providers, because they did not feel that they had a role in the prevention field. Thus, the McCain Institute had to expend extra effort to communicate the role that these stakeholders play and why they should engage in project activities.

**Collecting and Using Data to Measure Results.** As noted previously, the FY20 TVTP Grant Program engaged a range of organizations, with varying experience in designing and implementing data collection methods, to effectively measure their grant results. This is particularly a challenge in the prevention field, where projects are often not producing easily measurable outcomes and grantees would benefit from working with evaluators or other social scientists with expertise in how to best capture this information. Some grantees faced more practical data collection challenges. For example, Life After Hate faced a practical obstacle to data collection and project evaluation in the form of an inadequate case management system (CMS). The previous CMS reduced Life After Hate's ability to comprehensively document the services it was providing to clients and produce reliable reports on its work. Ultimately, Life After Hate changed to a different CMS to ensure that it is systematically collecting data moving forward; during much of the project period, however, use of the previous CMS limited Life After Hate's ability to speak to its project work until it could complete its transition to the new system.

On average, grantees felt that demonstrating project success through data was the second most challenging category (5.8 out of 10). Some grantees shared that they felt that quantitative reporting metrics and quarterly report templates were insufficient to capture the full results of their project, or that their project had expanded beyond the scope of their IMP and that these additional impacts were not captured in their reporting.

**DHS Funding Perception and Politicization.** Of the categories of challenges given to grantees in RTI's survey, external forces overall posed the greatest challenge to implementation. Specific challenges within this category included concern from others about DHS being the funder (6.6 out of 10), the national political climate (5.2 out of 10), and the local political climate (4.8 out of 10) (Figure 8). Several grantees noted that the politicization of violent extremism at the national and local levels made implementation more difficult, as it impacted both government officials' and practitioners' willingness to engage in the project.

**Figure 8. The extent to which various external forces posed a challenge to project implementation (scale of 0-10)**



Half of the surveyed partners shared that they found the national political climate to be “somewhat of a challenge” or a “substantial challenge,” and 42% shared that they found the local political climate to “somewhat of a challenge” or a “substantial challenge.” When asked to provide more detail, these partners shared that, among other factors, the shifting of political figures and priorities, along with the politicization of TVTP work, raised concerns about the future availability of funding and made it difficult to establish trust within the communities they were trying to serve.

**Grant Design Materials.** Within the organizational factors category, one of the specific items that grantees found the most challenging was developing their IMP (4.5 out of 10). One grantee noted that many organizations seeking DHS TVTP funding do not know how to write an IMP or logic model, and that this poses a high hurdle for these organizations to overcome. For example, the initial review of Life After Hate's IMP revealed a lack of clear organization across goals, objectives, inputs, outputs, and outcomes. This was further magnified when a new project lead was brought on and there was difficulty understanding what their predecessor meant or had intended in the IMP. Additionally, Life After Hate did not have some components of its IMP finalized until 10 months into the grant, which posed challenges as some components were already in the implementation phase without a plan to collect necessary performance measures.

# Recommendations

The evaluation of six FY20 grant projects has demonstrated the accomplishments that TVTP grantees have made, in addition to the challenges they face in implementing their work. Given the limited knowledge base in prevention programming, these findings can provide important lessons to improve future funding and implementation of programming by indicating what works, anticipating barriers, and providing solutions to barriers. For more information on recommendations based on individual grantee findings, see the relevant grantee site profiles in Appendices B-G.

The following recommendations are derived from both the grant-project level and cross-cutting findings of RTI's FY20 evaluations. Specific recommendations are provided for DHS to consider as it continues to fund the TVTP Grant Program and for prevention practitioners. Targeted recommendations are also given for practitioners implementing training-based or direct services programming.

## Recommendations for DHS

### ✓ Continue to Foster Connections Between Grantees.

The importance and value of collaboration and information sharing between TVTP grantees repeatedly came up throughout the research team's interviews and surveys of grantees and their partners. These connections were already being made under the FY20 grant program, as discussed above; however, grantees and their partners stressed that any additional opportunities for engagement that DHS can foster among its grantees, current and past, will in turn help them to maximize the results of their grants and learn from each other to avoid or mitigate challenges. Connections should be made both among like-minded organizations—to share experiences and lessons learned—and among organizations that may differ in location, sector, or focus, as this cross-pollination may provide grantees with multidisciplinary insights that can further supplement their existing partnerships and knowledge. To do so, it is recommended that DHS continue hosting grantee symposia on an annual basis. These symposia should be designed in a way that maximizes opportunities to network and share information, such as the use of breakout or "speed-networking" sessions. DHS should also consider inviting previous TVTP grantees and partners to attend and present on their own experiences. Beyond these symposia, DHS should continue to connect grantees

on an ad hoc basis with other relevant practitioners, stakeholders, and organizations.

### ✓ Fund Training and Technical Assistance.

Some grantees struggled to design clear and comprehensive IMPs that followed SMART criteria, thus making it more difficult to effectively measure their project results. Additionally, two grantees noted in the administered surveys that they struggled to demonstrate their project results through the quarterly reporting template. Given the range of organizations that seek out DHS TVTP grant funding, many do not have prior experience or in-house expertise in developing project design and reporting frameworks such as IMPs, logic models, data collection plans, or quarterly reports. As such, DHS should consider funding TTA for future grantees. This would enable researchers with expertise in project design, evaluation, and best practices to support grantees. In turn, this would strengthen project design, implementation, and data collection and reporting, all while building the capacity of grantees to implement these skills in their future programming. Ultimately, these efforts will facilitate the adherence to best practices in both implementing and evaluating TVTP projects and will facilitate stronger evaluations overall that will further build the field's knowledge of best practices.

✓ **Enhance Data Sharing With Researchers.**

Prevention programming is characterized by a limited evidence base, which contributes to a lack of agreement in the broader field regarding what constitutes effective programming. Limited data collection and data sharing posed a challenge for some of the evaluations of the six FY20 grantees, inhibiting the ability of researchers to document TVTP efforts and measure their outcomes. DHS's TVTP Grant Program could build a stronger foundation of data-driven practice by further enabling data sharing among grantees. One way that DHS could encourage greater data sharing is by ensuring that grantees are aware that IRB protocols can be amended to allow for data sharing with researchers. This would enable grantees to share detailed data and enable researchers to strengthen the evidence base. Grantees with privacy and confidentiality concerns should also be made aware that nondisclosure and data-use agreements can provide clear safeguards and protocols for handling these data.

✓ **Translate DHS Resources into Other Languages.**

Multiple grantees utilized DHS's Community Awareness Briefing (CAB) curriculum and materials for their own project activities. While the existence of this resource provided efficiencies for grantees, they noted that it would be even more useful if DHS translated the CAB into multiple languages, as grantees work with a range of communities. In addition to reducing grantee time to produce CAB-related materials in these languages, an official translation by DHS into languages frequently spoken in the United States, such as Spanish, would ensure that the curriculum is being consistently presented to all audiences. Because of the complex and sensitive nature of the information being provided as part of a CAB, it is important that precise and culturally appropriate language is used.

✓ **Provide Prospective Grantees Information on Expected IRB and CAPO Review Processes.**

In the future, DHS should make IRB- and CAPO-related processes, guidelines, and expectations clear to grantees applying for TVTP grants, particularly as many may not have prior experience with privacy processes. This guidance may, for example, take the form of a webinar explaining the primary considerations around what CAPO and IRBs do, how their guidelines and processes might apply to different TVTP grants, and timeline expectations. Such information could also be included in future Notice of Funding Opportunity materials. Any such webinar or similar resource should additionally make clear to prospective grantees that, as a part of TVTP grant requirements, DHS CP3 will review materials developed, which will require a set amount of time.

✓ **Consider Extending the Length of Program Funding.**

Prevention work often seeks to effect long-term change. This is particularly true for grant projects providing direct services to those who are currently or were previously a member of a violent extremist ideology or group, as the process of exiting is long-term and nonlinear. As such, the 2-year period of performance for DHS TVTP grants is not typically sufficient to witness or measure demonstrable change among clients or other project participants. DHS granted NCEs of varying lengths for all five grantees that requested them, but DHS should also consider extending the length of funding from the outset beyond 2 years for projects that provide direct services to target populations because of the nature of their work. Extending the period of performance to, for example, 3 to 5 years will enable projects to provide more consistent services, and it will also enable greater tracking and data collection to learn more about the short- and long-term results of such interventions—a critical gap in the TVTP field. Additionally, DHS should consider extending the length of funding from the outset for projects working with protected populations, such as minors or prisoners, to reflect the longer timelines required for IRB and related privacy reviews.

## Recommendations for TVTP Grantees

### ✓ Incorporate Time and Resources for Privacy Processes and Tasks into Program Design.

As noted in the Challenges section, multiple FY20 grantees had not anticipated the need to go through IRB, CAPO, and CP3 reviews. It sometimes took a significant amount of staff time to complete all the tasks associated with these review processes, especially when grantees did not have prior experience with them. Therefore, it is recommended that prospective grantees account for this staff time in their grant budgets. If they are not sure what level of review their project will be subject to, based on their target population, activities, and planned data collection, grant applicants should contact DHS to gain a greater understanding of these requirements. Multiple grantees also had to contend with lengthy IRB and CAPO review processes, in some cases requiring 6 months to receive their approvals to begin implementation. Again, grantees had not anticipated these review processes and had designed their project timeline without budgeting for them. Therefore, prospective grantees should also incorporate IRB, CAPO, and CP3 review timeframes into their project timelines so that their proposed activities can realistically fit within the grant period of performance.

### ✓ Invest in Local Research and Relationships Up Front and Throughout Project Implementation.

As discussed throughout this report, the nature of prevention programming is such that many practitioners seek to engage with a range of communities and stakeholders. In fact, many TVTP grantees' project objectives and activities relied on obtaining the buy-in and participation of certain community groups or stakeholders. Virtually all grantees sought to establish products, networks, or skill sets among their target audience that would continue beyond their grant—this sustainability is ultimately dependent upon the buy-in of these communities and stakeholder groups. However,

grantees acknowledged that gaining this buy-in was a challenge and required extensive effort on their part, whether due to groups' resource limitations, hesitation to pilot a novel project, hesitation due to the grant funding source, lack of existing relationships with the grantee, or because they did not believe they had a role to play in prevention programming. Given the critical role that community and stakeholder engagement plays in successful grant implementation and sustainability, prospective grantees should consider their existing knowledge of relevant communities' and stakeholders' resources, needs, and priorities, and their existing relationships with those communities and stakeholders. Based on this initial assessment, prospective grantees should incorporate the time and resources needed to deepen this knowledge and build relationships into their project design. For example, it might be appropriate for some grantees to devote an initial period to conducting community-participatory research or needs assessments. They might also use such a period to assess initial community buy-in and identify potential local champions for their work—or, if neither of these are present in the community, invest time in engaging deeply with the community and its leaders and building relationships to overcome these barriers. Although these practices may require shifting activity timelines backward or narrowing the scope of a project, they can have a critical impact on the success of that project over time. They can mitigate roadblocks to engagement, ensure that activities are responsive to the communities and stakeholders that grantees seek to engage, provide opportunities to implement activities more efficiently by leveraging existing resources, and improve sustainability.

### ✓ Draw Upon Networks.

This report has already discussed the value in DHS connecting TVTP grantees to other grantees and stakeholders. Grantees should also proactively work to connect with other grantees and partners, which they might do in a number of ways: TVTP

grantees should attend the TVTP grantee symposia, work with their CP3 Grant Manager, and look at prior and current grantee lists to identify individuals and organizations that might have useful networks, experience, knowledge, or skills. Grantees should also focus on fostering their relationships with their partners. When the research team surveyed the six grantees' partners, they recommended that future grantees take the time to learn about their partners and establish a close relationship, as that detailed knowledge of partners will in turn help grantees to better utilize them in their projects. Partners also stressed that clear, consistent, and proactive communication from grantees enabled them to contribute most effectively to grant projects.

✓ **Develop Continuity Plans to Facilitate Staff Transitions.**

While the question of how organizations can reduce staff turnover is outside the scope of this evaluation, there are steps that prospective grantees can take to mitigate the effect of this turnover on their grant project. Prospective grantees would benefit from creating continuity plans, detailing standard operating procedures for specific data processes (e.g., data collection and management) or roles (e.g., program manager), and updating them as new procedures or processes are implemented. Additionally, grantees should consider a data storage solution that ensures that data are saved in a secure location that all staff can access and that will not be lost if a staff member leaves the organization. Better documentation would facilitate smoother staff transitions and ensure that data are saved in a central secure location.

✓ **Design SMART, Clear Measures and Data Collection Plans.**

Poor IMP design can make it difficult for grantees and researchers to capture the progress made during a project, which inhibits both the grantee and other prevention practitioners from learning and leveraging that knowledge in future programming.

Grantees should use the SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) approach to develop goals and objectives so that their IMPs are understandable and clearly written. Doing so will assist in clarifying the project design, enabling the measurement of project results, and in turn strengthening the prevention programming evidence base; it will also enable continuity of work in the face of staff turnover. Once grantees have designed a measurable objective, it is important that they then design an accompanying data collection plan with data sources and indicators that can actually measure progress toward those objectives. When the research team asked grantees about their recommendations for future grantees, they reiterated this point, stating that grantees should think about how to measure the success of their grant early on while they are designing the project, as the TVTP grant requires the use of verifiable measures. They also noted that it takes time to design measures and data collection plans and then collect, manage, and report on those data. As such, grantees should account for this time in their grant proposal.

✓ **Improve Longitudinal Data Collection.**

Prospective grantees should incorporate data collection methods and timelines to allow for capturing longitudinal data to the extent possible given grant timelines. For prospective grantees planning to implement training projects, this includes the use of follow-up tests, typically 3 to 6 months after a training. Follow-up tests can provide deeper insight into what content resonated with trainees to the point of retention, and how that knowledge may be applied in their professional lives. Only two out of the six evaluated grantees ultimately implemented follow-up test data, as the others had not budgeted the time or resources to do so. These data are difficult to gather as they require recontacting trainees, and some attrition should be expected, but methods to improve response rates to these surveys can be applied to mitigate this challenge. In addition to repeated reminder emails, consider increasing awareness of the forthcoming

follow-up at the end of the training so participants will expect it. While still at the training, explain to trainees the importance of their participation and that they cannot be replaced within the sample, as only a finite number of people take that training at that time.

✓ **Provide Clear Expectations of Participants.**

In any kind of endeavor, it is ideal to lay out expectations, anticipated final products, and timelines at the outset. Providing a roadmap of milestones and expectations at completion will help ensure everyone is of the same understanding. This should be provided at the recruitment stage so all participants are both aware of what they are signing up for and capable of completing the intended tasks. This is particularly true when using a TTT model to ensure that activities include participants who meet the target audience criteria, or when participants develop resources or plans that they are expected to implement.

✓ **Build Partnerships with Criminal Legal System (CLS) Stakeholders and Institutions.**

Grantees that wish to implement programming in prisons or other CLS institutions should work to build relationships with relevant stakeholders ahead of time to mitigate the challenges in gaining buy-in. DHS should also consider building its own relationships to further support its grant program. Such relationships can be built by attending conferences and other events with correctional associations or other relevant professional networks, such as the American Correctional Association, American Jail Association, Association of State Corrections Administrators, and the National Network of Probation Officers. These relationships will help to build trust, thus increasing chances of gaining buy-in, and will help grantees learn about institutions across the United States that might be particularly interested in implementing programming. Prospective grantees would also benefit from

engaging partners that have prior experience in CLS implementation in the United States, such as individuals conducting research for the Department of Corrections, and embedding them into their projects. These individuals can provide important insight into CLS structures and administrative concerns when grantees are developing their curriculum and procedures to ensure they are responsive to CLS contexts.

✓ **Communicate the Costs and Benefits of Programming to CLS Institutions.**

Given the resource constraints facing many prisons and other CLS institutions across the United States, it is important that prospective grantees note the resources that will be needed to implement their project and consider how—or whether—they can reduce these needs. For example, prison programming typically requires access to a room and staff to accompany inmates for a certain number of hours and days. Projects that work with inmates affiliated with a violent extremist ideology or group may be assigned to restrictive housing, so their participation in programming may require additional prison resources. Grantees should consider whether they can mitigate resource needs by being flexible, such as by condensing programming to more hours across fewer days, as CEP offered to do. In addition to costs, grantees should emphasize the benefits that their project can provide. This includes the financial benefits of their project: a DHS-funded TVTP grant can provide programming free of charge to prisons that might otherwise have to pay for programming. Although engaging inmates in restrictive housing environments is resource-intensive, free programming within this environment is often a priority for prison administrations. Grantees could also consider offering a financial incentive for participating CLS institutions to mitigate resource needs. For grantees seeking to implement a pilot project, it may also be helpful to emphasize the importance of serving as a pilot site for a new project focused

on violent extremism. While some CLS institutions will be hesitant to implement a pilot project that has not yet been tested, grantees can provide a clear explanation of the science that their project is based upon to try to mitigate these concerns. Regardless of the exact costs and benefits offered by a particular project, grantees may benefit from recruiting prisons or other CLS institutions that do not typically receive attention or requests for programming (e.g., a prison in a rural area), as they may have greater needs or be more receptive.

## Recommendations for TVTP Grantees Implementing Training Programs

This evaluation also identified several recommendations that are specific to grantees implementing trainings. These recommendations are detailed below.

### ✓ **Create Trainings Based on the Target Audience.**

Tailoring training curricula might include, for example, changing the focus and terminology based on participants' sectors, discussing more explicitly how the training applies to each sector, or using examples that are specific or well known to a particular geographic location. However, prospective grantees should first consider the trade-offs of tailoring their trainings. Using the example of sector-specific trainings, separating trainings and training participants by sector would reduce participants' abilities to meet, learn from, and network with professionals in other sectors. Therefore, if the focus of the trainings is to facilitate cross-sector pollination, it may be more useful to use one overarching curriculum.

### ✓ **Follow Adult- or Youth-learning Best Practices.**

Prospective grantees should review and implement training best practices when designing trainings. For example, trainings tend to have greater impact in adult populations when they are broken up into

smaller sections and presented in a collaborative manner that emphasizes integrative learning and practical applications (Thoms, 2001). This can also include practices such as including experiential learning opportunities and emphasizing relevance to the trainees' job or life.

### ✓ **Initiate Outreach and Recruitment Early.**

Multiple grantees found that outreach and recruitment efforts took longer than expected and that certain populations (e.g., law enforcement, corrections professionals, probation/parole professionals, incarcerated individuals) were particularly difficult to recruit for trainings. These grantees had waited to begin outreach until their training curricula were complete; as such, they experienced delays in implementing the trainings between when they were complete and when they had recruited participants. Prospective grantees should therefore consider initiating the development and dissemination of their outreach and recruitment materials and other efforts earlier, before training curricula are complete, to prevent such delays. This is particularly important if the prospective grantee seeks to engage professionals working in law enforcement and criminal legal systems, as these individuals can take longer to recruit.

### ✓ **Provide Incentives to Facilitate Recruitment.**

Providing funded incentives, when appropriate, can help prospective grantees to recruit training participants faster and more effectively, particularly among populations with limited resources such as schools. For example, grantees might provide funding to compensate school staff for their time attending the trainings and provide other incentives (e.g., food) to encourage students to participate. Providing additional stipends or funding for participants may also improve the sustainability of project work to ensure that participants' skills or resources developed during the grant are applied beyond the grant period or scope. For example,

NGA provided stipends to two of its state teams to support them in implementing the Prevention Strategies that they developed during NGA's grant.

✓ **Create Forums for Trainees to Connect and Access Resources.**

Trainees could benefit from a forum through which they can access materials, view relevant case studies or news, talk to other trainees to assist in problem solving, and share promising practices with each other. Such forums could take the form of an online discussion group, website, or regular calls and meetings. These resources would support the sustainability of training interventions by encouraging and supporting trainees when applying the curriculum on their own. This is even more important for grant projects that are implementing TTT courses, as these forums will support participants in hosting trainings of their own.

✓ **Utilize Quantitative Data, Such as Pre- and Posttests, and Qualitative Data to Share Successes.**

The primary method to measure outcomes of trainings is to implement pre- and posttests, utilizing empirical test questions to assess the knowledge change regarding the training curriculum. Prospective grantees administering trainings should use pre- and posttests as a standard practice to capture quantitative results. While these tests require an additional ask of training participants, they are critical to both measure the success of the training and to gauge how well participants understood different parts of the curriculum. This helps projects adjust their trainings to be more effective and to demonstrate their outcomes. CP3 should not only require these data collection efforts at a minimum, but it should ensure that only pre-/posttests containing knowledge-based questions are approved. CP3 may use resources such as the *Designing TVTP Pre- and Posttests* brief (Cook, Noar, & Abel, 2023) to follow best practices.

However, pre- and posttests may not be appropriate for every training, and they only capture a specific type of results. Prospective grantees should therefore also consider qualitative approaches, such as incorporating interviews or open-ended survey questions. Grantees can use insights from these qualitative data to capture additional training results beyond knowledge change and can illustrate differences in training reception by different audiences.

## Recommendations for TVTP Grantees Implementing Direct Services Programs

Two of the six grantees evaluated provided direct services in the form of triage and consultation for cases of concern and case management for individuals affiliated with violent far-right extremism or violent white supremacist extremism. The recommendations drawn from these evaluations are described below.

✓ **Develop Quality Assurance Mechanisms.**

Prospective grantees seeking to provide direct services to clients should consider implementing periodic internal assessments to monitor service delivery practices, as well as staffing levels and composition in relation to demand for services. Because service delivery is often a challenging and draining job, internal assessments should also include mechanisms to gauge staff burnout and respond accordingly.

✓ **Train New and Existing Staff.**

Any staff involved in providing direct services should be assessed upon onboarding for existing skills and experience, and prospective grantees should train staff accordingly during onboarding prior to direct client engagement. Additionally, grantees should provide continuous refresher training for existing staff to ensure they are supported with the tools needed for their job.

✓ **Use a Comprehensive Data Management System.**

Prospective grantees should ensure that the CMS or other data software being used to record service delivery is reliable, comprehensive, and able to generate aggregate reports. In addition to software, a comprehensive data management system includes the definition of performance metrics, the training of staff on collecting data, the recording of data, and the conduct of periodic quality checks. As such, grantees should implement standardized protocols to conduct data audits of their system. This will ensure that they are sufficiently capturing all of their efforts and enable evaluation of their work.

✓ **Consider Focusing Programming on Alternative Populations.**

As CEP's grant project demonstrated, it is difficult for TVTP grantees to gain the buy-in of prisons and other criminal justice system (CLS) institutions to implement new programming among incarcerated individuals, particularly on a sensitive topic such as violent extremism. To mitigate this challenge, future grant projects should consider focusing their programming on alternative populations. First, grantees could consider working with community supervision populations (e.g., individuals under probation or parole), as they are often easier to access. Second, grantees might

focus on training personnel (e.g., correctional officers, probation officers) as opposed to individuals involved with the CLS—for example, through a TTT model. Using the prison context as an example, this would prevent grantees from working directly with and collecting data from incarcerated individuals but would increase the likelihood of gaining access to a prison. It would also likely present a more sustainable approach, as prison personnel would be given the knowledge and skills needed when working with individuals susceptible to or already part of a violent extremist ideology or group, rather than having an external group enter the prison for a finite number of interactions with incarcerated individuals. Similarly, training probation officers could support them in assessing and supervising probationers and developing comprehensive case management strategies that account for radicalization and disengagement processes. It is important to note, however, that grantees should still anticipate challenges in gaining the buy-in of these alternative populations. For example, when CEP offered to adapt the AP curriculum for prison personnel, it was told that personnel in maximum security sections, where many terrorism-related offenders are housed, could not participate in such a training as they needed to prioritize more urgent needs.

# Conclusion

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RTI's evaluation of six FY20 TVTP grant recipients sought to identify key grant activities, outputs, outcomes, and challenges, and to synthesize these findings into learnings for prevention programming. These evaluations revealed a number of challenges that will continue to act as barriers for future TVTP grantees, including difficulty in gaining stakeholder buy-in and engagement, politicization of the TVTP field and funder, delays due to privacy processes, and design and implementation of data collection plans that effectively measure project results. Current and future grantees, and all other relevant prevention practitioners, should consider these challenges and incorporate these learnings into their project design.

This report also discussed individual grant accomplishments and several cross-cutting improvements that have taken place since the FY16 CVE grant cohort. These included progress in project design, multidisciplinary collaboration, and data collection. It is likely that these improvements supported grantees in achieving project results. These evaluations showed, however, that there is still significant work to be done to strengthen prevention programming. One critical step in doing so will be to continue improving data collection and sharing, as grantees struggled to understand what data they should collect to measure project outcomes. The collection and analysis of these data is critical to advancing prevention programming, but many grantees, particularly at the community level, do not have sufficient prior experience in data collection. The lack of data collection and evaluation experience suggests that DHS should consider ways that it can facilitate this process through TTA. For instance, DHS can fund a TTA center or another forum to connect researchers with practitioners. This would enable researchers with expertise in evaluating prevention projects to support grantees in designing, implementing, and analyzing data collection, as well as to coauthor manuscripts to ensure that this analysis is seen by other practitioners in the field. Another way that DHS can strengthen the TVTP Grant Program is by better communicating to prospective grantees what they should expect, if awarded. This includes guidelines surrounding IRB and CAPO, timelines, and data collection expectations, so that prospective grantees can account for these expectations in their project design, thus facilitating grantees' ability to successfully complete their grant scope within the 2-year period. DHS should also encourage awarded grantees to develop continuity plans, as staff turnover was a consistent challenge across grantees, and one that cannot otherwise be avoided. Grantees should therefore focus on mitigating the disruptions caused by this turnover through the creation of standard operating procedures and other resources that will ensure that staff are able to transition smoothly without negatively impacting project implementation. These recommended changes, among others discussed in this report, are procedural in nature—but they are still critical to strengthening prevention programming as they will facilitate effective grant implementation and evaluation moving forward.

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# Appendix A. FY20 TVTP Grantee Application of FY16 CVE Grant Program Recommendations

*Table A. FY16 CVE Grant Program Recommendations and Observed Examples of their Application by Evaluated FY20 TVTP Grantees*

<b>Structural Recommendations</b>	<b>Examples of Application in FY20 Evaluated Grantees</b>
<b>Fostering Collaboration, Communication, and Compromise</b>	Bay Area UASI, CRC, Life After Hate, McCain, and NGA all either collaborated with or trained various community agency representatives.
<b>Good Partnerships Have Strong Leadership</b>	No data collected from FY20 evaluation grantees.
<b>Codify Partnerships with Written Documents</b>	Five grantees had mission statements, five had memoranda of understanding, three had data-use agreements, and two had charters.
<b>Develop Approaches Suited for Your Community</b>	Bay Area UASI and CRC both developed projects specifically designed for their community, but we did not observe any use of research or needs assessment prior to developing their grant programs.
<b>Strategic Recommendations</b>	<b>Examples of Application in FY20 Evaluated Grantees</b>
<b>Early Identification of Emotional Vulnerabilities and Warning Signs for Violent Extremism</b>	Not observed in FY20 evaluation grantees.
<b>Information Sharing Capacity</b>	Not observed in FY20 evaluation grantees.
<b>Expand Early Upstream Prevention</b>	Not observed in FY20 evaluation grantees.
<b>Understanding Online Radicalization</b>	Not observed in FY20 evaluation grantees.
<b>Off-Ramping Programs</b>	One off-ramping program was redesigned during the grant period and selected as one of the evaluated grantees.
<b>Rapid Response Teams</b>	Not observed in FY20 evaluation grantees.
<b>Focus on All Extremist Ideologies</b>	Four grantees did not specify any ideological focus, one (CEP) focused both on Islamist and violent far-right extremism, and one (Life After Hate) focused on violent white supremacist extremism.

# Appendix B.

## Bay Area UASI Site Profile

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Department of Homeland Security (DHS)  
FY2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism  
Prevention (TVTP) Grantee Evaluation

Site Profile

# Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI)



Developed for



Science and  
Technology

Developed by RTI International

B-2

# List of Abbreviations

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<b>CM</b>	Community Matters
<b>CAPO</b>	Compliance Assurance Program Office
<b>COE</b>	County Offices of Education
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Homeland Security
<b>IMP</b>	Implementation and Measurement Plan
<b>IRB</b>	Institutional Review Board
<b>SSA</b>	Safe School Ambassadors
<b>SCCOE</b>	Santa Clara County Office of Education
<b>TVTP</b>	Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention
<b>TTT</b>	Train-the-Trainer
<b>UASI</b>	Urban Areas Security Initiative

## Executive Summary

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The Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate funded RTI International to conduct research and evaluation of the Bay Area Fiscal Year 2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention grant to examine program accomplishments, challenges, and recommendations. A process evaluation was conducted for the three projects that made up the Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) grant, in addition to an outcome evaluation of its Community Awareness Briefing, Behavioral Analysis, and Prevention Strategies Train-the-Trainer (TTT) courses. To conduct this evaluation, the research team reviewed training curricula and other program materials, conducted an observation of a training, interviewed training participants, and analyzed pre-, post-, and follow-up test data. A brief summary of findings for each project can be viewed in Table ES-A.

Bay Area UASI was able to demonstrate completion of almost all of its objectives. Through data collected before and after the Community Trainings TTT course (Project 1 and 4)<sup>a</sup>, Bay Area UASI established that the trainings were effectively educating participants and expanding knowledge regarding community awareness briefings, behavioral analysis, and prevention strategies in the Bay Area. Two TTT participants already conducted trainings of their own demonstrating that their training has promise for sustainability and continued growth beyond the end of their period of performance. Safe School Protective Factors (Project 2)<sup>a</sup> engaged five schools in implementing the Safe School Ambassadors program, with four of them continuing implementation through a second year with trained teachers leading the effort. Through collaborations with local counties, a dashboard with student behavior data was developed and launched for Bay Area school districts and County Offices of Education in the Data Dashboard for Risk Assessment (Project 3)<sup>a</sup>. Throughout the grant, their TTT and dashboard implementation activities promoted sustainability beyond the grant-funded period of performance.

<sup>a</sup>Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative referred to these projects by their project numbers, but for the sake of clarity in this report more descriptive titles are provided.

This work is supported by funding by the United States Department of Homeland Security, Science and Technology Directorate under contract #140D0418C0012/P00005.

Table ES-A: Summary of Findings

 <p><b>Community Trainings (Projects 1 and 4)</b></p>	Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop community relationships with schools and houses of faith to administer Community Awareness Briefing, Behavioral Analysis, and Prevention Strategies trainings</li> </ul>
	Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created the California Prevention Practitioners Network</li> <li>Delivered 10 Community Awareness Briefing, Behavioral Analysis, and Prevention Strategies trainings</li> <li>Delivered eight TTT sessions</li> <li>108 participants trained to replicate trainings</li> <li>Increased the average participant knowledge score from 32% before to 67% immediately after trainings</li> </ul>
	Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pivoting delivery methods due to COVID-19 restrictions</li> </ul>
	Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt an asynchronous and shortened format for training delivery</li> <li>Tailor trainings based on the target audience</li> <li>Provide TTT participants with time, materials, and forums that facilitate training replication</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Safe School Protective Factors (Project 2)</b></p>	Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver the Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) training program in at least five Bay Area middle schools</li> <li>Equip those schools to sustain the program through a TTT component</li> </ul>
	Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Five middle schools completed the SSA Year 1 training program</li> <li>340 students trained in the SSA training program</li> <li>44 school staff trained in the SSA training program</li> <li>13 middle school faculty and staff completed the TTT course</li> <li>Five middle schools completed the SSA Year 2 training program</li> <li>Five middle schools implemented the SSA training program</li> </ul>
	Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unanticipated institutional review board (IRB) and Compliance Assurance Program Office (CAPO) delays shortened the implementation timeline</li> <li>Recruiting and maintaining participation from both teachers and students</li> </ul>
	Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide direct support to schools, including program materials and additional funding to incentivize participation in the program</li> <li>Coordinate regularly with school staff to ensure program fidelity, provide ad hoc support, and facilitate peer-to-peer discussion</li> <li>Break trainings into shorter sessions for a teenage audience</li> <li>Incorporate IRB and CAPO tasks into implementation timelines</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Data Dashboard for Risk Assessment (Project 3)</b></p>	Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and extend the DataZone dashboard to house relevant student behavior data for local schools, school districts, and County Offices of Education</li> <li>Onboard local stakeholders to include their data and utilize the dashboard</li> </ul>
	Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified an existing data framework appropriate for expansion</li> <li>Socialized the DataZone dashboard with five County Offices of Education</li> <li>Expanded the dashboard to house increased information flow and provide more relevant information</li> </ul>
	Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change in subcontractor during implementation</li> </ul>
	Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop relationships and lines of communication early on to facilitate more efficient implementation</li> </ul>

# Site Profile: Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative

The Bay Area Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) was awarded a two-year grant by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships in 2020 and was selected in 2021 to undergo an independent evaluation. This site profile reviews Bay Area UASI's grant design, implementation, accomplishments, challenges, and relevant recommendations for future programming in targeted violence and terrorism prevention. A process and an outcome evaluation of Bay Area UASI's Fiscal Year 2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) grant was conducted, both of which are detailed in this report. These evaluations provide a deeper understanding of the processes of Bay Area UASI's projects to learn what mechanisms may contribute to a project's effectiveness. Additionally, the process evaluation details project accomplishments at the output level. The outcome evaluation provides insights into the effectiveness of trainings as a tool for improving community awareness and connecting community leaders with necessary skills and resources.

## Bay Area UASI

UASIs were established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency to manage federal funding allocated to high-risk urban areas. UASIs use DHS grant funding to improve understanding of regional risk as well as grow local capacity to prevent and respond to both terrorist incidents and other catastrophic events. Bay Area UASI serves all jurisdictions within a 12-county metropolitan service area including Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma counties. Bay Area UASI serves public safety entities with disaster preparedness and terrorism prevention services and provides annual funding for the regional fusion center to enhance intelligence and information sharing capabilities.

## Bay Area UASI's Fiscal Year 2020 TVTP Grant Summary

Bay Area UASI's TVTP grant from DHS was divided into three separate projects with distinct goals, activities, and target audiences. As such, this report has three separate sections examining each of Bay Area UASI's projects in detail. An overall discussion of findings follows the project profiles, in addition to findings from the grantee partner survey. The three projects are as follows<sup>1</sup>:



### Community Trainings, Projects 1 and 4 (combined):

Bay Area UASI sought to deliver trainings on two of its projects. To be efficacious, they combined them into a single training on Community Awareness Briefing (Project 1), Behavioral Analysis (Project 4), and a newly added section on Prevention Strategies. Bay Area UASI aimed to conduct 10 training seminars and eight instructor-led Train-the-Trainer (TTT) seminars to promote sustainability.



### Safe School Protective Factors, Project 2:

Bay Area UASI sought to develop protective factors and reduce risk factors to violence in youth communities by implementing the Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) training program in five schools across the Bay Area.



### Data Dashboard for Risk Assessment, Project 3:

Bay Area UASI sought to reduce targeted school violence by establishing a Targeted School Violence database and cross-jurisdictional use of these data.

For Bay Area UASI's full Implementation and Measurement Plan (IMP), which outlines each project's goals, target audiences, objectives, activities, inputs, time frame, anticipated outputs, performance measures, and data collection plan, contact DHS.

<sup>1</sup> Bay Area UASI referred to these projects by their project numbers, but for the sake of clarity in this report more descriptive titles are provided.



# Community Trainings Project

## Bay Area UASI's Three-Part Trainings Lead to Local Partnerships and TTT Courses for Sustainability

Bay Area UASI delivered one pilot training and nine instructor-led standard trainings in addition to eight TTT sessions to promote sustainability of course content through training replication. The training content focused on Community Awareness Briefing, Behavioral Analysis, and Prevention Strategies. This project sought to engage with faculty and staff at Bay Area high schools and houses of faith. All 10 standard trainings were conducted virtually, and all eight TTT sessions were conducted in person.

Bay Area UASI contracted SenseMakers, an organization that provides disaster preparedness consultancy services. To design and deliver these trainings, SenseMakers attended the two-day DHS TVTP certification program and used that training as well as staff expertise to create the curriculum. This training was refined as SenseMakers learned throughout the project to include more information specific to Bay Area resources and context.

The TTT sessions differed from the regular trainings in that the trainer walked through the presentation for each of the three modules, summarizing and providing advice regarding how to deliver the content. The trainer used the remaining time to assign participants to a particular section that they in turn presented to the group, with the trainer providing feedback. Participants were given binders containing the curriculum and accompanying lesson plan. As part of the TTT session, participants completed a pre-and posttest to measure learning outcomes.

As part of this project, Bay Area UASI consulted with a variety of major local- and state-level organizations including religious organizations, school offices, and the State Threat Assessment Center. Through these contacts Bay Area UASI established the California Prevention Practitioners Network, which has a charter and holds quarterly meetings. The California Prevention Practitioners Network was initially created to help Bay Area UASI build partnerships with leaders and stakeholders and

establish a multidisciplinary team of practitioner working groups to support its work under Projects 1 and 4. This network was used to announce the Bay Area UASI training program and familiarize relevant target audiences with it. Since its establishment, the California Prevention Practitioners Network's activities have expanded beyond the scope of the grant.

## Design and Methods for Process and Outcome Evaluation

A process evaluation of the Community Trainings was conducted along with an outcome evaluation specifically looking at the TTT courses.

For the outcome evaluation, researchers collected attendance data, pre- and posttests, and follow-up tests. Pre- and posttests were given to TTT participants immediately before and after each training, and the follow-up tests were sent to participants four months after the training. The quantitative data that were produced from the pre- and posttests were analyzed to examine the confidence of TTT participants to conduct the training, their perceptions on leading causes of radicalization in their local area, and their knowledge of key elements of radicalization and extremism as taught in the training. Descriptive analyses were conducted to compare pre- and posttest performance to gauge whether participants on average were better able to answer each knowledge question correctly following the TTT training.

Additionally, for the process evaluation of the Community Trainings (both standard and TTT trainings), researchers conducted interviews with participants, reviewed the training curricula and attendance data from Bay Area UASI, and interviewed two staff members from the subcontractor, SenseMakers, who were directly involved in the development and delivery of all Community Trainings. These interviews described the more nuanced and less formalized processes associated with project implementation. The research team used thematic analysis to identify meaningful patterns in the data. Additionally, all material documentation was reviewed, including training curricula, to ascertain the relevance of the content.



## Process and Outcome Evaluation Findings

### Standard Trainings Provide a Wealth of Information

This section examines the process evaluation findings regarding the standard trainings, which correspond with Goal 1, Objective 1.1 in Bay Area UASI's IMP.

#### **OBJECTIVE 1.1:**

**Build partnerships with leaders and stakeholders representing 55 schools and 100 faith-based organizations, establish regional multidisciplinary team practitioner working groups, deliver 10 culturally competent Community Awareness Briefing trainings to 55 schools and 100 faith-based organizations by Q4 2021.**

Bay Area UASI conducted a total of 10 trainings from June 2021 to December 2021. Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, all standard trainings took place over Zoom. Audience knowledge polls were conducted throughout.

#### **A Variety of Sectors Attend Trainings**

Bay Area UASI began conducting introductory meetings with contacts at local religious and educational organizations to garner buy-in for the training project. These partnerships developed into a multidisciplinary team of practitioners working at the regional level called the California Prevention Practitioners Network. The California Prevention Practitioners Network established a Working Charter to guide its mission and began holding quarterly meetings. Over the course of the grant period, the California Prevention Practitioners Network conducted five meetings with a total of 400 people in attendance. During meetings, the California Prevention Practitioners Network facilitated cross-sectoral relationship building, hosted subject matter experts to present on prevention practices, and shared information relevant to implementing prevention programming in California.

Bay Area UASI tracked limited data regarding training attendees through the Eventbrite page that was used for registration and, while Bay Area UASI did not consistently record the number of attendees, registered participants ranged from 22 to 168

for each training. Per guidance provided by DHS's Compliance Assurance Program Office (CAPO), Bay Area UASI did not systematically track participant attendance because it would need to collect personally identifiable information to do so. Bay Area UASI disseminated information regarding the training in its newsletter to members of the California Practitioners Network and to personal contacts to recruit training participants. Bay Area UASI also worked with its local Fusion Center to extend its reach and identify new points of contact. Training participants varied widely. Bay Area UASI did not systematically document participants' sectors and geographic location, but the data that was gathered show that trainings garnered participation from law enforcement, education, houses of faith, nonprofit, emergency services, and private sectors across the Bay Area, as well as a few participants from outside the Bay Area. While it is unclear if Bay Area UASI met the exact quantitative targets in its IMP for the number of schools and houses of faith engaged in these trainings, it is clear that some stakeholders from these target audiences did participate.

#### **Participants' Reflections on Training Experience and Length**

Interviews with eight trainees were conducted to include their perspective in the evaluation. Overall, participants appreciated the training content, stating that it was useful, timely, and well organized. They noted that the trainer was energetic and effective both in presenting the curriculum and using experience to work through participant questions. Several individuals who attended the TTT course noted that the whole of community framing was a particularly impactful component of the training. In one training, a local school safety officer introduced the training by speaking from their personal experience. One participant mentioned that the school safety officer created a sense of purpose and encouraged the trainer to continue bringing in guest speakers. Some participants believed that the three-hour format was too long to keep the audience's attention in a virtual format and, because of the vast amount of material to cover during the three hours, that there was little time to absorb the content before moving on to the next piece. Interestingly, when interviewing participants, it was discovered that two participants had taken this training multiple times, with one participant attending six times in total. They noted that they needed to take the training multiple times to fully absorb the material. Because the trainings took place over Zoom, repeated participation by one individual did not reduce the amount of space for others to participate.



## TTT Course Increases Knowledge and Sustainability

This section examines the process and outcome evaluation findings regarding Bay Area UASI's TTT courses, which fall under Goal 1, Objective 1.2 in Bay Area UASI's IMP.

### **OBJECTIVE 1.2:**

**Build cadre of Targeted Violence Prevention trainers for 55 schools and 100 faith-based organizations, deliver 8 train-the-trainer courses to extend and sustain Community Awareness Briefings across the Bay Area, and evaluate the project by Q3 2022.**

### **Training Audience Varies in Prior Experience**

Each TTT course was a half-day, in-person event and had between 7 and 16 participants, with a total of 108 people completing the course. Bay Area UASI drew on the California Prevention Practitioners Network and previously identified community contacts to recruit TTT participants. Additionally, Bay Area UASI reached out to specific faith-based organizations to better reach that target audience.

Although this was a TTT course, which did not go through the curriculum itself in detail, completion of the standard training was not a prerequisite. Through interviews with TTT participants, RTI found that many had not taken the standard training or knew that their fellow participants had not taken it prior to attending the TTT course. However, without systematic registration data, RTI cannot confirm exactly how many TTT participants took the standard training beforehand. It is unclear how this may have impacted the TTT course, as some participants noted that the lack of familiarity with the curriculum seemed to hinder participation. Interviewees observed that individuals from the law enforcement sector seemed more familiar with the training material than those from other sectors, even without having taken the standard training previously. When asked why they took the TTT course without having taken the standard training, participants stated that they only found out about the trainings once Bay Area UASI had completed all the standard trainings, so they enrolled in the TTT course to gain access to the curriculum.

### **Participants' Reflections on Training and Networking Experience**

As part of data collection, nine TTT participants and the TTT trainer were interviewed to gain feedback on their experience with the training. Overall, participants appreciated the smaller class size and stated that the in-person format allowed the TTT course to be highly interactive and participatory. Interviewees found the materials to be well put together and to contain useful information. The use of personal narratives and experiences was particularly meaningful. However, some reported feeling rushed and not ready to provide training on their own due to the breadth of material covered in a short time.

Participants noted that a variety of professionals were in attendance, such as those working in emergency management, law enforcement, and educational sectors, and appreciated the opportunity to hear other perspectives while forming connections in these other sectors. In the interviews, a few participants mentioned that they hoped these connections would provide future resources to draw upon. Some noted they would like even more time to network with these other participants. However, others suggested that the training be tailored to address the needs of their sector to make it as relevant and clear as possible.

### **Attendees Intend to Adapt Training Information Across Multiple Sectors**

TTT participants were interviewed shortly after they had participated in the training, so none of them had hosted a training of their own yet. One participant mentioned having incorporated some of the TTT curriculum into a different training, and another stated having used the material in conversations with schools. Multiple participants talked about planning to adapt the training materials to their specific context. Researchers followed up seven months later and learned that two TTT participants began leading trainings of their own, demonstrating that the underlying goal of training replication to sustainably continue this work is beginning to take place. In addition to those two, 10 TTT participants later stated that they had plans to facilitate a training in the future.

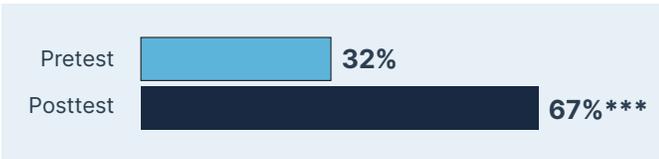


### Pre- and Posttest Indicate Significant Knowledge Gain

Knowledge was measured by questions about extremist threats, pre-incident indicators, radicalization factors, and the influence of social media.

In order to assess the impacts of the TTT training, participants were given a pretest to determine their existing radicalization knowledge and a posttest to measure their knowledge gained immediately following the training. Pre- and posttests contained questions on the nature of extremist threats, pre-incident indicators, radicalization factors, and the influence of social media. Researchers were unable to connect any individual's pre- and posttest performance because the tests were administered anonymously, so this report displays the overall performance of TTT participants. Overall, outcome data show that knowledge improved on average for the entire TTT cohort after training. On the pretest (light blue), the average score on the knowledge questions was 32%, increasing to 67% on the posttest (dark blue) out of 10 questions. This increase was statistically significant (Figure 1), suggesting that this increase was not due to chance.

Figure 1: Average Pre- and Posttest Scores for Quiz Questions



\*\*\*These differences were statistically significant using two-tailed t-tests ( $\alpha = 0.001$ ). This means that there was less than a 0.1% likelihood that a difference of this much or greater would occur due to chance.

The impact of the TTT trainings for individuals is evident when the data are presented as a set of ranges (Figure 2). While no participant got every question correct, the percentage of participants that got seven or more answers correct rose by 45% in the posttest. Also marking radicalization knowledge growth, the percentage of TTT trainees scoring two or fewer decreased by 37% in the posttest compared with the pretest. While individual pre- and posttest performance could not be connected, these cumulative findings indicate that gains in radicalization knowledge were achieved broadly across the TTT cohorts.

Figure 2: Number of Questions Answered Correctly in Pre- and Posttest



Pre-, post- and follow-up questions tested participants on:

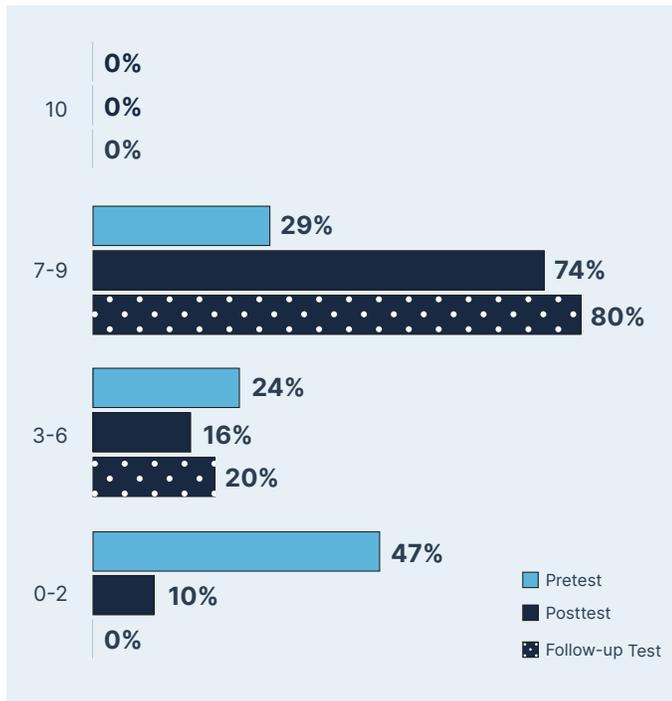
- Risk and protective factors
- Trends in domestic violent extremism
- Extremist use of the internet and social media
- Recruitment pathways and attack cycles
- Resources for those concerned about specific individuals
- Effect that the internet and social media have had on violent extremist threats
- Factors potentially leading someone to radicalize
- Behavioral analysis
- Pre-incident indicators
- Community actions to counter threats
- Student threat assessment goals



## Follow-Up Tests Suggest Knowledge Retention

To measure whether the knowledge gained from TTT sessions was retained, a follow-up test was administered to all trainees four months later. This follow-up test contained identical questions and answer options as in both the pre- and posttest. The average score for the follow-up test was 74%, which was higher than the average posttest score of 67%. This initial finding is promising; however, it should be noted that the majority of posttest participants did not complete the follow-up test, with only 15 posttests being completed. As those who did not score well on the previous tests may have been less likely to participate in the follow-up test, this finding should be interpreted with caution.<sup>2</sup> These follow-up test results do, however, indicate that TTT knowledge was retained at least four months after the training. As can be seen in Figure 3, a higher percentage of participants scored between 7 to 9 correct answers out of 10 on the follow-up test compared with both earlier phases of testing.

**Figure 3: Number of Questions Answered Correctly in Pre-, Post-, and Follow-up Test**



<sup>2</sup> Despite numerous attempts to engage all former participants, only 15 out of the 70 people who completed the posttest also completed the follow-up test (21.4% completion). As RTI was unable to exclude the impact of a range of potential response biases and due to the low number of responses, formal hypothesis tests could not be conducted. Consequently, all findings comparing the pre- and posttest data to the follow-up test data are not definitive and should instead be viewed as potentially indicative of the overall knowledge retention rate.

## Challenges

**COVID-19 Pandemic.** Bay Area UASI designed its program before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic but began implementation in the fall of 2020 when many parts of the Bay Area were subject to strict quarantine regulations. For this reason, Bay Area UASI had to adapt its standard Community Trainings to a virtual format, which fundamentally shifted the type of participation and level of engagement that was possible. The virtual format allowed Bay Area UASI to reach a wider and larger audience, but some believed audience engagement suffered, despite interactive polls interjected throughout the training. Furthermore, participants interviewed noted that they struggled to maintain focus through a three-hour long online course and admitted to multitasking at times.

## IMP Accomplishments

Bay Area UASI achieved the objectives described in its IMP by building partnerships with Bay Area organizations from relevant sectors (Objective 1.1), developing and delivering 10 trainings (Objective 1.1), and conducting eight TTT courses (Objective 1.2). However, as discussed, Bay Area UASI cannot establish whether it delivered the trainings to the 55 schools and 100 houses of faith that it specified as the target audience (Objective 1.1-1.2). Through data collected before and after TTT courses, Bay Area UASI did establish that the trainings were effectively educating participants and expanding knowledge regarding Community Awareness Briefing, Behavioral Analysis, and Prevention Strategies in the Bay Area. The fact that two TTT participants are already conducting trainings of their own demonstrates that the training has promise for sustainability and continued growth beyond the end of the period of performance.

From the participant information that Bay Area UASI did have, it appears that training participants reflected a wide breadth of sectors, including the targeted sectors of schools and houses of faith. Trainings included a much more diverse population than initially outlined in the IMP, which may have expanded the impact of programming. However, RTI is unable to assess whether the program is reaching the intended communities (or if the intended communities have changed) and whether the communities reached are the ones that should be targeted.



## Recommendations

Through the evaluation, RTI identified the following recommendations for future TVTP initiatives similar to Bay Area UASI's Community Trainings:

- ✓ Consider holding standard trainings in an asynchronous virtual format, followed by a longer in-person TTT workshop when a TTT component is desired. Trainings tend to have greater impact in adult populations when they are broken up into smaller sections and presented in a collaborative manner that emphasizes integrative learning and practical applications (Thoms, 2001).
  - Alternatively, if keeping standard trainings in a synchronous format, ensure that they are conducted in person and allow enough time for participants to absorb and discuss the material.
- ✓ Consider tailoring training curricula to participants' sectors or discuss more explicitly how the training applies to each sector. Sector-specific trainings would reduce participants' abilities to meet, learn from, and network with professionals in other sectors, so these tradeoffs should be considered.
- ✓ Make all standard trainings a prerequisite for attending a TTT session.
  - Ensure read-ahead materials for TTT courses are sent early enough for everyone to complete them.
- ✓ Consider including a section in TTT courses in which participants create their training plan to encourage and facilitate future training replication.
- ✓ If conducting a local training, include a discussion and/or forum in which TTT participants can discuss partnering or otherwise supporting each other to facilitate future training replication.
  - Another consideration for a local training is to invite local guest speakers to provide relevant context.
- ✓ Create a website or other forum where TTT participants can connect and share best practices, resources, examples, and relevant updates.



# Safe School Protective Factors Project

## Bay Area UASI's SSA Program Empowers Students and Schools to Reduce Bullying

The Safe School Protective Factors project sought to develop protective factors and reduce risk factors to violence in youth communities by implementing the SSA training program in five middle schools. To do so, Bay Area UASI partnered with Community Matters (CM), an organization based in Santa Rosa, California, that is dedicated to improving school climates throughout the nation by delivering SSA training to students. As shown in Figure 4, the full training program included three trainings per school: (a) an SSA training in Year 1 facilitated by a CM trainer, (b) a TTT course<sup>3</sup> with each school's program advisor and other relevant staff, and (c) a Year 2 training, in which TTT participants co-lead an SSA training alongside a CM trainer to prepare them to deliver trainings in the future by themselves.

**Figure 4: Progression of Safe School Ambassadors Program Implementation**



These trainings presented the SSA curriculum to school staff and students; schools were then expected to implement program activities that make up the SSA curriculum in between and alongside these trainings. Activities included meetings in which trained staff and students come together to discuss mistreatment in their school and how to respond when faced with these behaviors.

CM additionally managed the recruitment of schools to the program, targeting staff, administrators, and students from five schools located in the 12-county, three-city region and aimed to have training participants reflect these schools' demographic distributions.

<sup>3</sup> Bay Area UASI and CM refer to these trainings as Training of Trainers (TOT). However, for consistency, RTI will refer to it as Train-the-Trainer (TTT). These terms can be used interchangeably.



## RTI's Design and Methods for Process Evaluation

A process evaluation of the Safe School Protective Factors project was conducted which sought to develop protective factors and reduce risk factors to violence by implementing the SSA training program. The evaluation strategy was tailored to appropriately examine whether the Safe School Protective Factors project met its operational goals. Due to the order of events, grantee and evaluation timelines, and the fact that this project involved minors, observation and data collection abilities were slightly hindered, but enough information could be gathered from adult participants and the site point of contact to conduct the process evaluation. Researchers observed the SSA TTT course in March 2022 and conducted interviews with the SSA program advisor from each of the five schools participating in the Safe School Protective Factors project. Two additional interviews with relevant CM staff were conducted at the end of the grant. A thematic analysis was used to identify meaningful patterns in the data. In doing so, researchers strived to identify the most pertinent and representative comments that typified the range of responses. Importantly, these interviews described the more nuanced and less formalized processes associated with project implementation.

Numerous program documents and training materials were reviewed to supplement these data, including SSA advertising, recruitment, and selection materials; SSA training curriculum; SSA TTT curriculum; SSA TTT feedback forms; and Year-End Surveys administered to school staff at the end of the first semester. Researchers reviewed all material documentation received to ascertain the relevance of the content. These documents reflected the formalized expectations and agreements that served as the foundation of project implementation.

## Findings

### Year 1 Trainings Implemented in Midst of Challenging School Conditions

This section examines the process evaluation findings regarding the SSA Year 1 trainings, which correspond with Goal 1, Objective 1.1-1.2 in Bay Area UASI's Project 2 IMP.

#### OBJECTIVE 1.1-1.2:

**Five schools in the Bay Area will be selected and confirmed to implement the Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) Program by Q4 2021. Up to 40 students and five faculty per school (230 total) in five schools implementing and evaluating SSA training in Year 1.**

CM successfully completed all five Year 1 trainings, although schools faced challenges in recruiting adult and student participants.

#### CM Identifies and Recruits Local Middle Schools for Program

CM conducted outreach to middle schools from 12 counties in the Bay Area by emailing all the schools in its databases as well as reaching out to County Offices of Education (COEs) and districts. The emails provided preliminary information about the SSA program and invited them to attend public webinars to learn more about it. Following this period of outreach, schools submitted applications, which CM evaluated based on when they applied, the degree of administrative support they had, whether they could have maximum student participation, and whether other schools in the county already had participated in the program. By mid-November 2021, five schools were selected and began the onboarding process with CM. Through the onboarding process, a program advisor was identified at each school to serve as a point of contact for CM and lead programming throughout the semester. Program advisors served in this capacity in addition to their other professional role.

#### Schools Struggle to Recruit Socially Influential Students

Once the five schools were identified, SSA program advisors were asked to recruit socially influential students to participate in the program. Guidance provided to teachers for identifying these students emphasized those who guide opinions among their friends, have developed communication skills, and have a strong sense of justice when confronting interpersonal conflicts. These characteristics were to be determined based on staff observations. Staff at each school were asked to observe these traits and recommend a diverse group of students representing different social cliques on campus. However, each school implemented different recruitment strategies, with some schools asking for students to volunteer for the training while



others asked for teachers and other staff to nominate students. At least one school drew on a preexisting student group rather than recruiting a new cohort of students.

Four school staff interviewed noted several challenges in recruiting students to be ambassadors in the SSA program. First, staff members championing the SSA program did not have a detailed understanding of what the program focused on or entailed, which in turn meant that they struggled to communicate this to the broader school staff. Without this understanding, staff struggled to effectively nominate students. Second, staff struggled with recruitment to the program because many students were concerned about the perception that they would be seen as “snitches.” Staff then tried to use more effective messaging and spoke more generally about the training to avoid alienating possible student ambassadors, again reducing the effectiveness of nominations. Concerns of being labeled as a snitch also meant that some students who would have been ideal ambassadors did not want to take part in the program. CM staff corroborated this experience and reported that some schools struggled with program implementation due to poor student ambassador selection for the program. Consistent with that sentiment, multiple schools noted that they did not think they had recruited the appropriate students for the Year 1 trainings. Specifically, these schools noted that their student participants were not social leaders or were not representative of the variety of groups that exist at the school.

### **Strained Resources Limit Adult Staff Participation**

SSA program advisors also recruited other adult staff members, such as teachers and school counselors, at their schools to participate in trainings and other activities. Multiple schools found it difficult to recruit the adequate number of adults. Due to external factors resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, like teacher shortages and high substitute teacher turnover rates, many adult staff members lacked time or energy to properly contribute to the program. No SSA programs had the financial resources to compensate adult staff members for the additional time and energy they would spend working on the SSA program which occurred without a reduction in their usual duties. Finally, program advisors commented that they felt they could not adequately describe what kind of commitment to expect from the program, making adult recruitment more difficult.

### **Training Format and Audience Size**

The initial two-day Year 1 SSA trainings were completed in January 2022. Student attendance at the training varied between schools with a minimum of 28 students and a maximum of 38 accompanied by a minimum of two adults and a maximum of seven adults. Within the trainings, students were divided into “Family Groups” with each group including a variety of students accompanied by one or two adult supervisors. These Family Groups were intended to remain the same for an entire program year. The trainer led the entire group through ice breaker activities to build trust and comfort among participants. The rest of the activities alternated between the group working through content together, performing roleplaying exercises, and discussing materials.

### **Participants’ Reflections on Training Experience and Length**

Experiences varied widely across schools. Most program advisors noted that the content of the training was relevant to their students and school climates. They commented that the initial Year 1 trainings were highly interactive and students seemed engaged in and excited by the material. Critically, they stated that the training encouraged cross-group community building among students and relationship building between students and staff. One school noted that students had become noticeably more comfortable with one teacher in particular and began seeking advice from that teacher, creating new relationships. Some schools did note, however, that their students struggled with focusing for two full days.

During the TTT course (discussed below), teachers shared benefits of Year 1 trainings, including the following:

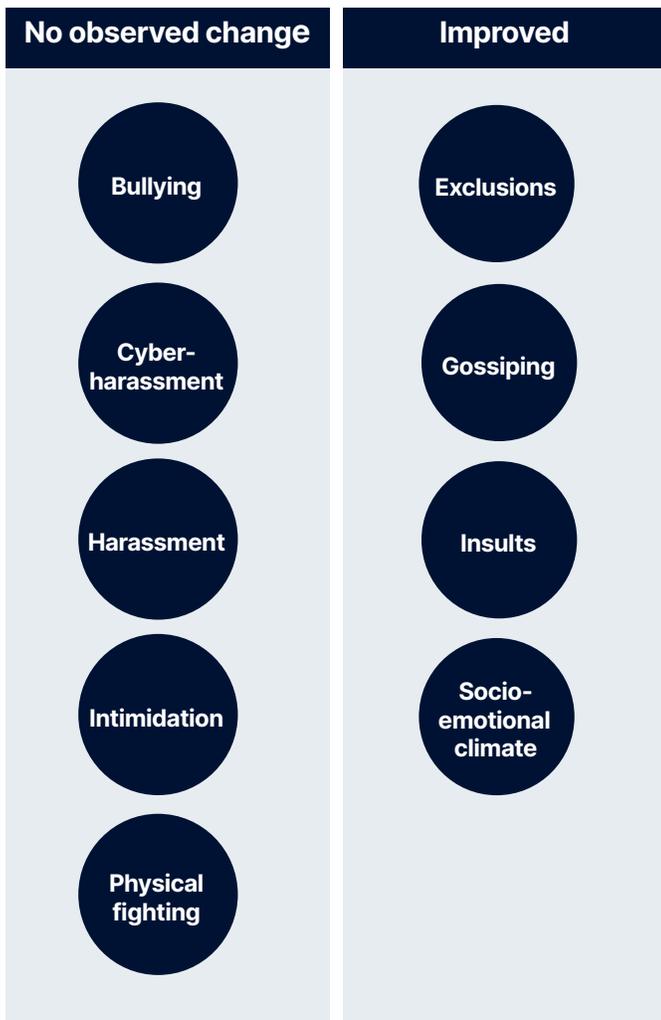
- Students were more conscious or aware of their behavior and were expected to be accountable for it
- The training fostered empowerment and independence in dealing with conflicts
- There was more teacher-student interaction
- The training provided an opportunity to reshape school culture and behavioral norms as students return to in-person learning from virtual learning (due to the COVID-19 pandemic)
- Students applied the curriculum to interactions with teachers (not just peers)



## Implementing SSA Curriculum Through School Semester

Once the initial trainings were completed, schools were asked to implement the SSA curriculum, which entails students applying the skills and knowledge that they gained in social interactions, in addition to school staff holding group meetings with students to continue discussing, absorbing, and applying the curriculum in practice.

**Figure 5: Observed Changes in Student Social Cohesion**



At the end of the first semester of curriculum application, school staff were asked about changes in school since the SSA training took place, with three of the five schools completing the survey. Figure 5 shows dynamics that respondents believed improved versus those that stayed the same. This may be due to the fact that the survey was administered after just one semester of implementation, so students improved in less weighty social interactions like gossiping but could not yet apply the curriculum to more serious conflicts like physical fights.

When asked how students had translated the content into action following the training, some schools remarked that students seemed engaged with the material and activities but did not necessarily implement the tools they had learned in the wider school environment. These schools noted that students believed they had not encountered “major” acts of bullying or mistreatment and therefore did not have opportunities to apply the curriculum.

Other schools struggled with student engagement in group meetings, which typically took place during lunchtime. Specifically, students did not show up consistently to group meetings at the scheduled times, meaning there were often not enough students to conduct the planned activities. These schools attempted to remedy this issue by having all program participants meet together instead of in their smaller groups. Additionally, schools varied the cadence of group meetings to adapt to student availability, ranging from meeting once a week to meeting once a month. In some schools, the content was informal and focused on issues or questions generated by students, while others stuck closely to the curriculum and planned exercises.

Though no one shared an overarching explanation as to why implementation varied widely, it is likely due to differences in internal school support and resources available to devote to the program. CM staff aided schools with less support by stepping in when there were not enough school staff in attendance.



## TTT Course Builds School Staff Training Capacity

This section examines the process evaluation findings regarding the SSA TTT course, which correspond with Goal 2, Objectives 2.1–2.4 in Bay Area UASI's Project 2 IMP.

### **OBJECTIVE 2.1–2.4:**

**2.1 Five individuals are identified and confirmed to participate in the Training-of-Trainers (TOT) by Q1 2022.**

**2.2 Five individuals attend two SSA training sessions by Q3 2022.**

**2.3 Five individuals complete the TOT sessions by Q3 2022.**

**2.4 Five individuals each lead one SSA training session at 5 schools by Q3 2022.**

### Training Format and Audience Size

The TTT course was two days long, held March 9–10, 2022, in Rohnert Park, California. The course was led by a CM lead trainer who delivered each of the Year 1 trainings. The TTT course was attended by 13 staff members from five schools. Participants were provided with a training binder that contained the curriculum for Year 2 training alongside other supplementary materials for additional activities during the school year. During the TTT course, the trainer walked participants through the logic and process of each activity, provided facilitation types, and assigned participants training activities to present to the group to practice delivering the content. Individuals received feedback and advice both from their peers and the trainer.

### Participants' Reflections on Training Experience and Length

Overall, multiple participants stated that the TTT course made them more confident in their knowledge of the curriculum and their ability to lead trainings in their schools. Participants found the trainer to be energetic and stated that the trainer provided meaningful feedback on how to best present the SSA curriculum. Most TTT participants found practicing their role as trainer for various activities to be very useful. However, some participants were overwhelmed by the quantity of material they were expected to present as trainers in the Year 2 trainings.

Several individuals commented that they appreciated that the TTT course brought fellow teachers from different schools together to discuss successes and challenges in implementing the program. CM intends to promote this unexpected benefit by creating a forum for ongoing contact among program implementers to provide support to each other and share resources.

Several staff appreciated that the TTT brought teachers from different schools together to discuss successes and challenges in implementing the program.

At the end of the TTT course, participants were asked to assess their confidence regarding a number of upcoming tasks. Participants were very confident in their ability to build and maintain buy-in for the program from school administrators, but confidence was low for their ability to recruit students and adults. This reflects the challenges mentioned previously. Additionally, teachers gave mixed responses regarding their readiness to collect data at their school.

## Year 2 Trainings Co-led by School Staff

This section examines the process evaluation findings regarding the SSA TTT course, which correspond with Goal 3, Objectives 3.1–3.4 in Bay Area UASI's Project 2 IMP.

### **OBJECTIVE 3.1–3.4:**

**3.1 Up to 40 new students and six new adults at five schools identified to participate in the SSA Program by Q4, 2022.**

**3.2 SSA training is completed for an additional 230 students and faculty by Q4, 2022.**

**3.3 Implementation, and sustainment provided to new SSA trainers and ambassadors through bi-annual meetings and family group facilitators in Q3 and Q4 2022**

### Training Format

At the beginning of the 2022–2023 school year, staff trained at the TTT course led the Year 2 training at their schools, alongside the CM trainer who provided them with facilitation support and coaching before, during, and immediately after the training.



Each school recruited a minimum of 19 students and two adults to participate in the SSA program for the year with the maximum number of students being 50 and adults being five. One CM staff member noted that schools with a higher number of adult participants seemed to be more prepared to lead trainings on their own. In addition to factors like administration buy-in and turnover, this difference in adult participation sometimes meant that these schools had thought “outside the box” regarding which staff might attend. For example, school staff might include administrative or maintenance staff, in addition to teachers. By the time of the Year 2 trainings, several schools involved had been able to ingrain the program more deeply into the school infrastructure by incorporating it as part of a Peer Advocacy class or making it part of their school safety plan. These practices garnered greater support for the initiative and will likely help sustain the program beyond the grant period of performance.

### Four Out of Five Schools Complete All Program Steps

Unfortunately, one school that originally participated in the Year 1 training and implementation and TTT course did not complete the Year 2 training and was replaced by another school for the remainder of the grant. The school that did not implement the SSA Year 2 training stopped participating because the program advisor, who was the program champion and sole staff person from that school to attend the TTT course, resigned. This illustrates the importance of buy-in among school administrators and staff to ensure enough participation to allow for continuity; however, this is a difficult task given the high levels of turnover schools currently face.

#### *Practices that encouraged successful implementation of the SSA curriculum:*



**Identifying a higher number of adults participants by including school staff beyond teachers (e.g., administrative or maintenance staff)**



**Incorporating programming into the school infrastructure (e.g., incorporate into an existing class or the school safety plan)**

## Challenges

**Implementation Delays.** Due to this project’s engagement with students who are minors, project staff found out after the grant award that they were required to receive Institutional Review Board (IRB) and CAPO approval. CM had already begun recruiting schools prior to learning that this was required and therefore had to halt recruitment while it awaited approval. The approval process resulted in program implementation delays, as it took a significant amount of time for CM to receive the necessary approvals. CM began recruiting schools prior to the knowledge that these approvals were required and had to halt recruitment. It took a significant amount of time for CM to receive the necessary approvals, and the delays meant CM had to start school recruitment anew. This delay in recruitment and, subsequently, in program implementation meant that the Safe School Protective Factors project began conducting trainings later than originally expected, with only nine months left in the grant period of performance. Schools had less time to absorb and apply the SSA curriculum. The research team was not able to establish any impact this might have had on the program’s effectiveness through its process evaluation.

**Staff and Student Recruitment.** Recruitment into the program presented an ongoing issue for implementation and had cascading impacts on activities. School program staff members noted in interviews that they struggled to communicate to the broader school staff a detailed description of the program, which impacted both student and staff recruitment for the program as well as administrative buy-in. The lack of clarity surrounding the program translated into distrust of the messaging and, at times, a perception that students were being taught to tell on each other. CM staff corroborated this experience and reported that some schools struggled due to poor student selection for the program. Furthermore, several schools reported concerns regarding teacher turnover and burnout and the corresponding prevalence of substitute teachers in schools, as these made it difficult to maintain continuity with the program.

Because many teachers were not compensated for the extra time and effort they contributed to the program, several program advisors could not guarantee ongoing adult staff support to sustain the program.



**COVID-19 Pandemic.** Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic presented an additional challenge to implementing the SSA program in schools. Due to school quarantine rules, in-person trainings had to be modified to keep students physically separated and/or required all participants to wear masks. This was a particular challenge because the SSA program places significant emphasis on social interaction to process and demonstrate the material. Additionally, participants noted that the Year 1 training took place immediately after their winter break, when many students and teachers were out of school due to COVID-19. In one school, not having the same adults consistently participate in the program contributed to challenges for building trust.

The aforementioned challenges with implementing anti-bullying programming in schools are well documented in the literature and can be mitigated through strong leadership, high public commitment to addressing bullying from a principal, and a trial period for the training programs. Furthermore, programs are more effective when the school administration perceives the program as consistent with school culture and priorities and preferable to the status quo (Pearce et al., 2011).

## IMP Accomplishments

Bay Area UASI met all its stated objectives by completing SSA Year 1 trainings, TTT courses, and Year 2 trainings at five schools in the Bay Area. The Safe School Protective Factors IMP did not provide minimum targets for participants. Instead, it provided maximum numbers, which the program did not reach. This was attributed to challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic and high teacher turnover rates resulting in low adult participation. Bay Area UASI and CM succeeded in recruiting five individuals, one from each school, to serve as program advisors (Objective 1.1). These program advisors attended both the SSA Year 1 trainings (Objective 1.2) in addition to the TTT course (Objectives 2.1–2.3). Four of the five program advisors went on to lead Year 2 SSA trainings at each of their schools in the fall semester of 2022, (Objective 2.4). Unfortunately, one program advisor left the school after the TTT course, meaning that one school was not able to complete the full SSA program, as it was not able to conduct a Year 2 training. As discussed above, this was due to high teacher turnover rates.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations for future TVTP initiatives similar to Bay Area UASI's Project 2 were identified.

- ✓ Ensure that programs working with minors incorporate elongated tasks relating to CAPO and IRB into their implementation timelines.
- ✓ Provide greater direct support to school staff that are championing programs to school administrators and other staff to improve buy-in and understanding. This may take the form of program brochures or staff speaking at meetings to present such materials and answer questions.
- ✓ Provide funding to schools to pay for (a) compensation for staff to account for time attending trainings and implementing curriculum and (b) incentives (e.g., food) to encourage students to participate in school-based program activities.
- ✓ Ensure trainings are broken up into shorter sessions across a greater number of days to improve student focus and engagement.
- ✓ Examine the fidelity of curriculum adherence among schools and clarify with school staff which parts of the curriculum should be closely adhered to and which parts might be tailored.
- ✓ Hold regular check-ins with newly trained school staff to assist in problem solving.
- ✓ Facilitate regular discussions between school staff to enable information sharing and peer support. Consider hosting meetings with teacher cohorts implementing the same program.



# Data Dashboard for Risk Assessment Project

## Bay Area UASI Expands Data Dashboard for COEs

Within the Data Dashboard for Risk Assessment, Bay Area UASI sought to reduce targeted school violence by establishing a Targeted School Violence database and encouraging cross-jurisdictional use of these data. The target audience for these activities was the 12 County Offices of Education located in proximity to the Bay Area. Bay Area UASI began by conducting regional outreach and socialization and published threat assessment resources and protocols to help guide the use of the database. During this process, Bay Area UASI found that the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) had worked with DataZone to develop a similar dashboard. In pursuit of their shared goals and to improve the efficiency of the project, Bay Area UASI therefore collaborated with SCCOE through a Memorandum of Understanding to expand SCCOE's existing database to include data from other counties under Bay Area UASI's purview and aggregate the data at the county level. The resulting dashboard tool included necessary metrics, including attendance, behavior, enrollment, and programs as well as county-level filtering capabilities. The dashboard was reviewed by staff at Bay Area UASI and SCCOE for feedback and quality assurance purposes.

## Design and Methods for Process Evaluation

A process evaluation of Bay Area UASI's Data Dashboard for Risk Assessment project was conducted. Researchers reviewed all the documents developed for Project 3: the Statement of Work, Letter of Commitment, and Memorandum of Understanding. The research team met with DataZone staff and received a detailed demonstration of the draft system, in addition to meeting with staff at SCCOE who had experience with the district-level dashboard implementation. Upon completion of the dashboard, materials regarding the data wireframe and screenshots of the interface once finalized

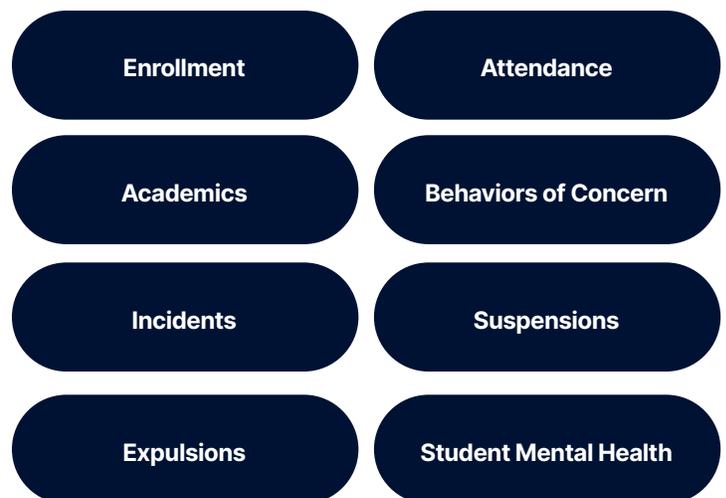
were reviewed to examine whether the data dashboard met its operational goals.

## Findings

Bay Area UASI received a Letter of Commitment from SCCOE and DataZone to leverage their prior data model and enhance capabilities to fulfill requirements for a county-level dashboard. DataZone and SCCOE created a county dashboard wireframe, and Bay Area UASI recruited San Mateo and Napa COEs to participate alongside SCCOE as the first three of the 12 counties it hoped to involve. Now that the dashboard has been completed as part of the TVTP grant, all three counties will contribute their county- and district-level data through a prescribed data integration process going forward. DataZone meets regularly with both the San Mateo and Napa COEs to ensure that their onboarding and usage procedures have gone smoothly. At the time of this report, county- and district-level data are available to COEs and school staff through the DataZone dashboard.

The dashboard provides data warehousing and analytics looking at a range of factors, including enrollment, attendance, academics, behaviors of concern, incidents, suspension, expulsions, and student mental health (Figure 6).

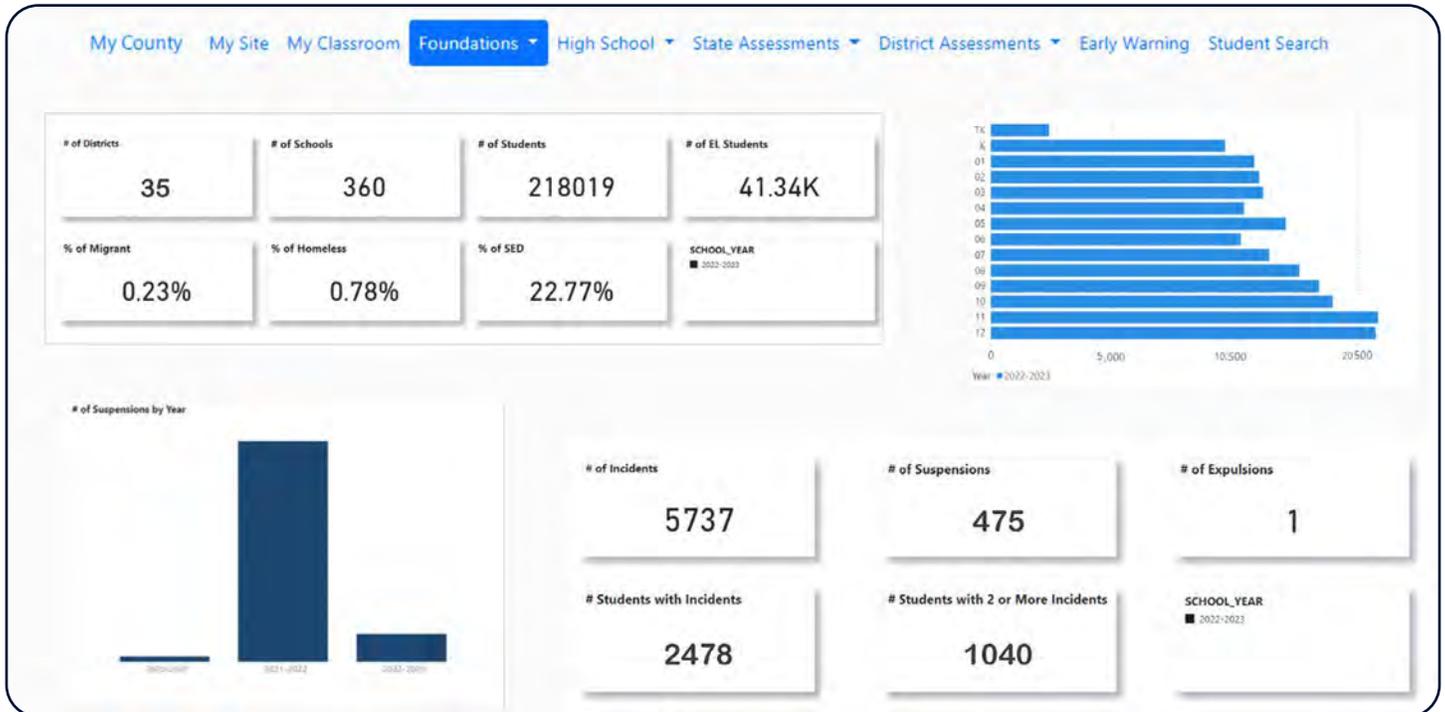
Figure 6: Dashboard Data Categories





For example, COEs and school staff can view data such as the number of students enrolled in special or alternative education, percentage of students experiencing homelessness, or number of incidents resulting in suspension by offense type. As shown in Figure 7, the information can be filtered at either district- or county-levels, and the dashboard uses this information to provide risk assessments.

Figure 7: Snapshot of Santa Clara County Office of Education DataZone Dashboard



Note: This is a fictional snapshot generated by the Santa Clara County Office of Education DataZone team. Discipline data are not listed in data sharing agreements with districts for public-facing dashboards.

## Challenges

**Change in Subcontractor.** Initially Bay Area UASI worked with a subcontractor, identified through SenseMakers, which developed many of Bay Area UASI’s operational documents, including school violence impact stories, architecture framework for data integration and management, Proof of Concept, and Concept of Operations framework, in preparation for the creation of the database. However, Bay Area UASI found these materials to be unsatisfactory and the subcontractor did not communicate in an effective and timely manner or include Bay Area UASI in the development process. Therefore, Bay Area UASI decided to terminate its agreement with the contractor a year into the grant. Fortunately, around that time, Bay Area UASI learned about the SCCOE DataZone dashboard and overcame that challenge by partnering with SCCOE.



## IMP Accomplishments

Bay Area UASI and DataZone fully completed all objectives outlined in their IMP by developing necessary regional partnerships (Objective 1.1), developing threat assessment materials and making them accessible through those partnerships (Objectives 1.2, 2.1), and expanding a data dashboard for three COEs to use for risk assessment purposes (Objectives 3.1–3.2, 4.1–4.4).

## Recommendations

Through the evaluation, the following recommendation for future TVTP initiatives similar to Bay Area UASI's Data Dashboard for Risk Assessment project were identified.

- ✓ If channels of communication are not already established throughout the targeted region, create those channels of communication first and foremost. Through its outreach campaign, Bay Area UASI learned that one of its 12 target counties was already doing something similar to Project 3. This discovery also facilitated the continuation of the project after having to terminate the initial dashboard development contract.

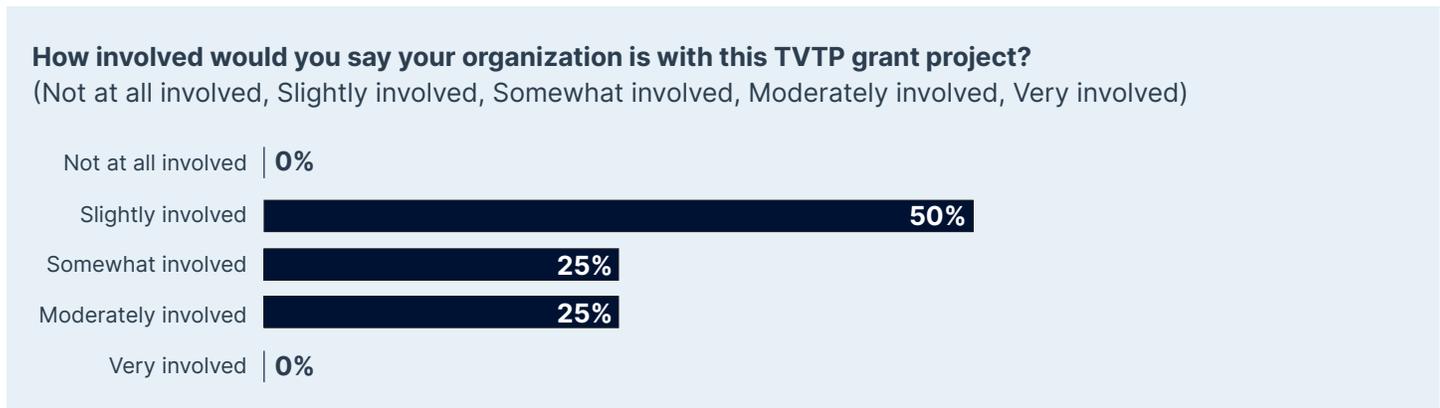
# Bay Area UASI Partner Survey Findings

Bay Area UASI engaged a range of partners to facilitate each of its three projects, all eight of which participated in an evaluation survey conducted by the research team. This section provides data stemming from that survey. It is also important to note that prior to working with Bay Area UASI, only 50% of these partners had previous experience working in the TVTP field.

## Nature of Partnerships

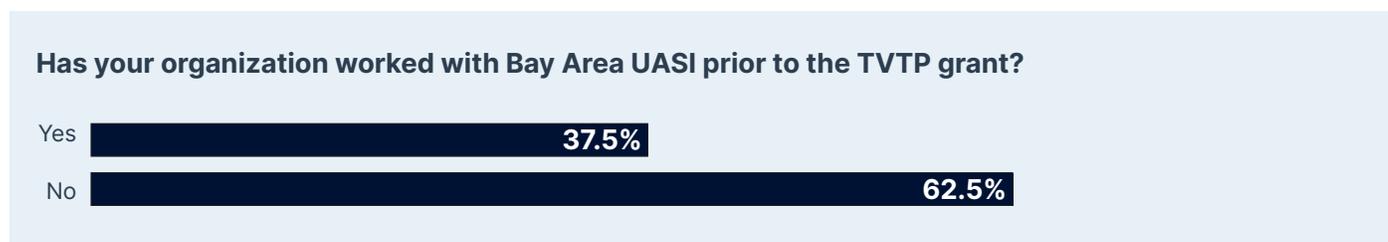
On grant projects such as these, having codified relationships with partners is critical to achieving project objectives. It is clear from their responses that Bay Area UASI's partners provided varying levels of project collaboration and were in different stages of their relationships working with Bay Area UASI. For example, half of Bay Area UASI's partners considered themselves only slightly involved in the project, while the other half believed they were either somewhat or moderately involved (Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Partner Organization Involvement**



When asked about collaboration history, roughly two-thirds of partners shared that their organization had worked with Bay Area UASI prior to the TVTP grant (Figure 9). Appropriately, half of partners (four out of eight) believed their organization had an established relationship with Bay Area UASI (Figure 10). When asked about the strength of the relationship, two out of those four partners indicated it was an excellent relationship; the two other partners with an established relationship reported that their relationship was good (Figure 11). The four other partners believed their organization had an excellent, good, or poor relationship with Bay Area UASI.

**Figure 9: Prior Partner Collaboration**



**Figure 10: Partner Organization Relationships**



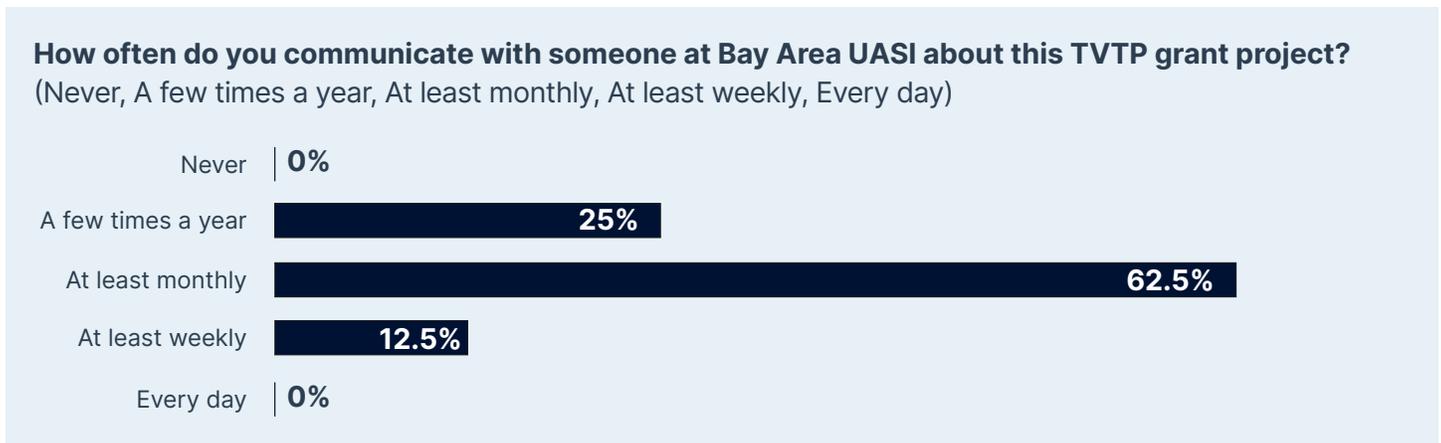
**Figure 11: Strength of Partnership**



## Communication

The vast majority of partners believed that communication with Bay Area UASI was both consistent and transparent. Most partners also stated that they engaged in communication at least monthly, with two respondents indicating that they communicated a few times a year (Figure 12).

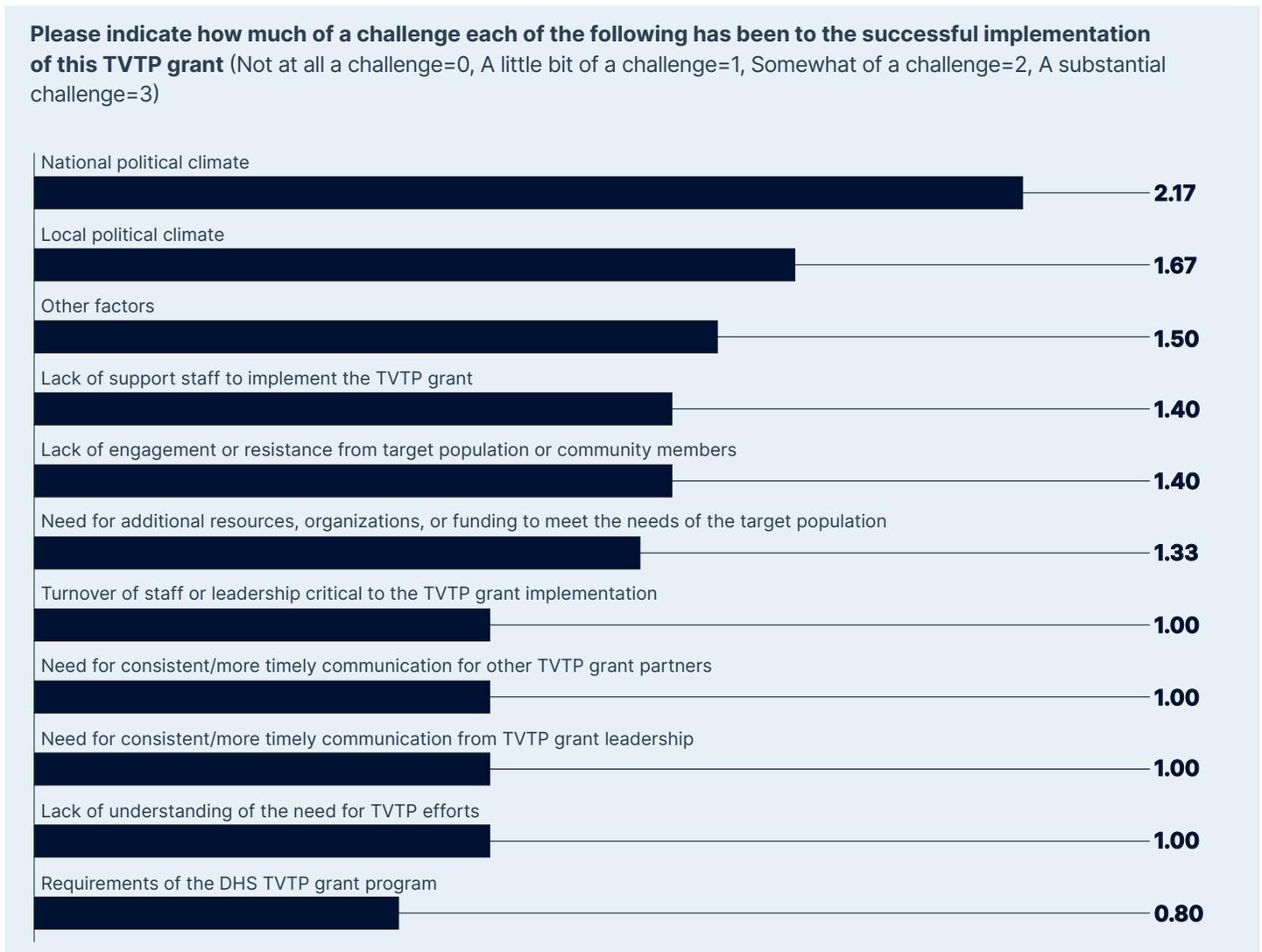
**Figure 12: Communication With Partner Organizations**



## Challenges

Partners of Bay Area UASI identified a range of important implementation challenges. Based on a four-point scale ranging from zero (“not a challenge at all”) to three (“a substantial challenge”), the national political climate was viewed as the biggest challenge out of those identified and was a bigger challenge than the local political climate (Figure 13). Out of the maximum average value of three, the national political climate was the only factor that averaged above two on this scale (2.17), with the local political climate being the second biggest challenge (1.67). This suggests that the political climate in general was seen by partners of Bay Area UASI as the greatest perceived challenge overall.

**Figure 13: Perceived Challenges to Successful Implementation of TVTP Grant**

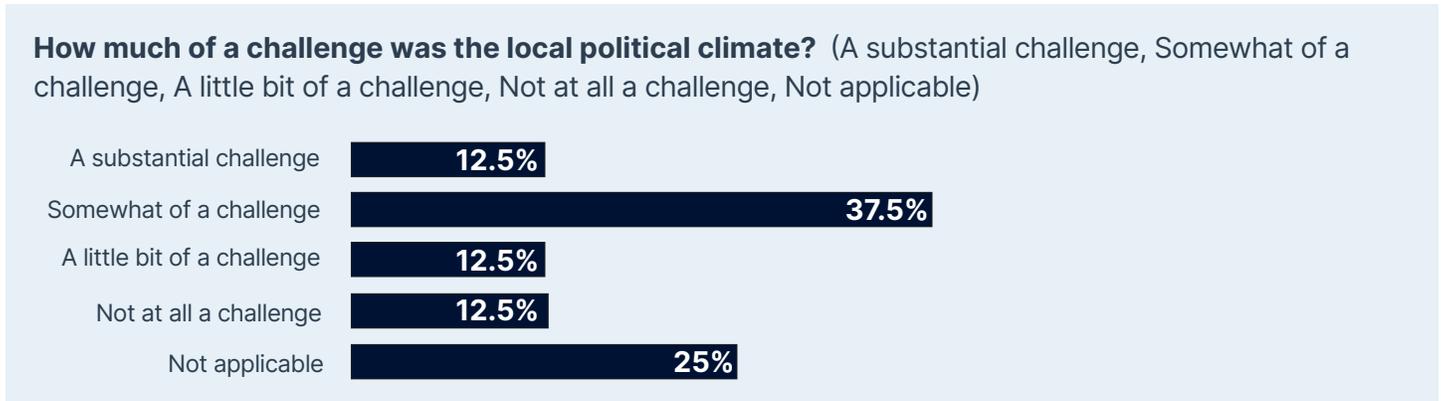


Note: Responses were coded as 0= Not at all a challenge, 1= A little bit of a challenge, 2= Somewhat of a challenge, 3= A substantial challenge. Not Applicable responses were excluded from this analysis.

In comparison, access to resources, target population resistance, and staffing were seen to be less impactful challenges. Besides political climate, no other identified factor averaged above 1.5 out of a maximum of three. The next highest rated challenges were the lack of support staff, lack of engagement from the target populations, and the need for additional resources. DHS grant requirements were rated as the least challenging factor and was the only factor that averaged lower than one on this scale. This indicates that while these issues were not seen to be major problems, additional assistance in these areas would be of benefit.

## Local and National Political Climate

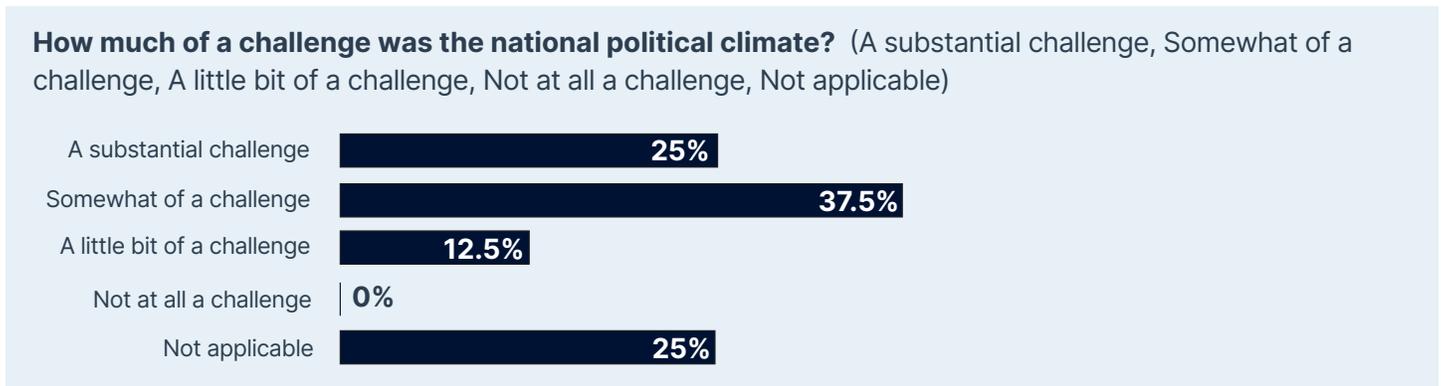
**Figure 14: Partner Perceptions of Local Political Climate**



When partners were asked about the nature of political challenges, they mentioned important differences in their source and impact (Figures 14 and 15 show the extent to which partners felt that local and national political climates posed a challenge to their work). They noted that the legacy of previous government actions in countering violent extremism and TVTP still carry a stigma that raised a number of implementation hurdles. One partner stated:

Misrepresentation of prior violence prevention programs has led to a modicum of distrust in the local community about the origin of TVTP funding and its connection to the larger entity of DHS. While DHS has made marked strides in improving relationships, conducting outreach, and clarifying the mission of its violence prevention efforts, the original fears about surveillance, targeting of ethnic and religious minorities, and first amendment challenges remain.

**Figure 15: Partner Perceptions of National Political Climate**



One partner highlighted that inaction in broader counterterrorism efforts also set a problematic precedent for its work. In this case, the lack of accountability following a domestic terror attack was presented as having negative cascading impacts for TVTP:

Locally and nationally, the failure to confront the violence of January 6 as domestic terrorism complicates efforts to combat the ideologies that inspired the violence of that day and the attempt to subvert the 2020 election. We cannot police thought, or what people post on social media, but we must call out the violence of January 6 as a threat to the rule of law, to our democracy, and by extension to all communities those laws protect. Treating the topic with kid gloves undermines TVTP efforts.

# Discussion

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Ultimately, Bay Area UASI achieved its objectives across all three projects and, upon examination of its process and outcomes, provides a wealth of information regarding methods to empower communities to better prevent and respond to the threat of violent extremism. Across all three projects, Bay Area UASI and its contractors emphasized the importance of building a strong network of connections within the community. Several partners noted that the flexibility and passion that Bay Area UASI brought to the projects was an energizing force throughout implementation, especially given the necessary adaptations to programming due to changing circumstances.

Under the Community Trainings project, Bay Area UASI and SenseMakers conducted extensive community outreach and engagement to increase knowledge surrounding TVTP. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, standard trainings were held in an online format, limiting active audience engagement. However, the content of the trainings themselves were relevant and meaningful to attendees. This feedback carried through to the TTT courses, in which the small, in-person format enabled participants to further discuss and practice presenting the material. Knowledge gain tests demonstrated that this resulted in an increase in participant knowledge regarding key elements of radicalization and responses to radicalization. These knowledge gains were evident for nearly all questions asked and were connected to increases in confidence in facilitating future trainings. It is not clear, however, how many individuals from each sector participated and if those who participated came from sectors that would maximize the utility and replication of these materials.

For the Safe School Protective Factors project, Bay Area UASI collaborated with CM to implement its SSA program in five schools to reduce bullying. It achieved each of its objectives in this regard, although timing concerns, COVID-19 pandemic limitations, and high school staff turnover presented significant challenges to the program and may limit the project's results. One school did not complete the full SSA program. Though no outcome data were available for this evaluation, anecdotal feedback from schools indicates that they have witnessed changes in student relationships and interactions with each other and with school staff. With an expanded timeline for data

collection, future research could investigate the measurable outcomes of the SSA programming.

Finally, Bay Area UASI completed its objectives under the Data Dashboard for Risk Assessment project by developing and expanding a targeting school violence database and receiving the buy-in and data to make it cross-jurisdictional. Bay Area UASI's experience pivoting from its initial subcontractor and identifying an existing database that could be built upon indicates that existing data products may provide an easier and cheaper route to developing tools that can be used for TVTP purposes.

## Sustainability

Bay Area UASI's projects incorporated sustainability efforts as a fundamental part of its implementation. Both the Community Trainings and the Data Dashboard for Risk Assessment projects included substantial outreach to the community regarding the threat of targeted violence and terrorism. Bay Area UASI used these relationships to establish the California Prevention Practitioners Network, which will maintain dialogue surrounding TVTP in the state through ongoing quarterly meetings. The creation of this forum will sustain the impact of Bay Area UASI's initial projects and build on its momentum.

Additionally, both the Community Trainings and the Safe School Protective Factors projects involved sustainability components by hosting TTT sessions. By the end of the performance period, Bay Area UASI was notified that two participants of the Community Training TTT sessions had implemented their own training. Furthermore, four of the five schools that attended the SSA TTT session implemented the Year 2 training in their own schools, with some also embedding the program within existing infrastructure, further indicating its sustainability. The TTT model empowers community members to sustain and extend the content of the training in future years.

Finally, the data dashboard for Project 3 was explicitly designed to account for further expansion in the future, as additional COEs may join and provide their data.

## Recommendations for the TVTP Grant Program

Three recommendations were identified that can be drawn from the implementation of Bay Area UASI's Fiscal Year 2020 TVTP grant to apply to future TVTP programming.

### ✓ Incorporate IRB-Related Timing and Data Considerations Into Program Design.

Prior to its Fiscal Year 2020 TVTP grant, Bay Area UASI and its partners had not been required to seek IRB oversight. IRB discussions and processes at the beginning of the grant period required significant time staff had not accounted for and presented challenges to implementation. Due to IRB and privacy restrictions, Bay Area UASI was not able to systematically track training participants for the Community Trainings, meaning that it was not able to fully assess their engagement with various sectors and could not ensure that it delivered TTT courses to the individuals that would most effectively use the training. Had Bay Area UASI been aware of these concerns prior to the beginning of the project and/or been informed of alternative methods of data collection, it may have been able to gather more data on training participants while maintaining privacy standards. Delays because of unanticipated IRB considerations meant that the timeline for the Safe School Protective Factors project was effectively cut in half, presenting challenges in recruiting and implementing the curriculum. In the future, DHS should make IRB-related processes and guidelines clear to grantees applying for TVTP grants, particularly as many grantees may not have prior experience working with IRB. This may take the form of a webinar, for example, explaining the primary considerations around what an IRB does, how it might apply to different TVTP grants, and the process DHS utilizes for grantees that do not have their own IRB. In turn, grantees should account for this in their program design, building in staff time to work on IRB protocols and to adjust implementation timelines accordingly.

### ✓ Maximize the Sustainability of Training Interventions by Creating Forums for Trainees to Connect and Access Resources.

Trainees from the Community Trainings and School Protective Factors projects stated that they would benefit from a forum through which they could access materials, view relevant case studies or news, talk to other trainees to assist in problem solving, and share promising practices with each other. Such forums could take the form of an online discussion group, website, or regular calls and meetings. These resources would support the sustainability of training interventions by encouraging and supporting trainees when applying the curriculum or hosting a training of their own.

### ✓ Have Local Grantees Adapt Existing Resources for TVTP Purposes, as Relevant.

Bay Area UASI's experience implementing the Data Dashboard for Risk Assessment project indicates that products may already exist that can be expanded or adapted for TVTP purposes. Grantees should therefore conduct research and outreach to relevant parties prior to developing a new product to identify potential opportunities to build from an existing resource or partner with a collaborator developing complementary resources. However, grantees should consider any potential sensitivities or unintended negative effects that might occur if existing resources are brought under the TVTP label. For example, while this was not a concern for the data dashboard, community members and partners in other contexts may be concerned about the use of student data specifically for initiatives that are labeled as seeking to prevent terrorism.

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# Appendix C.

## Counter Extremism Project Site Profile

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# Counter Extremism Project



Developed for:



Science and  
Technology

Developed by RTI International

# List of Abbreviations

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<b>4R</b>	Radicalization, Rehabilitation, Reintegration, and Recidivism
<b>AP</b>	Alternative Pathways
<b>CEP</b>	Counter Extremism Project
<b>CLS</b>	Criminal Legal System
<b>CP3</b>	Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Homeland Security
<b>IMP</b>	Implementation and Measurement Plan
<b>IRB</b>	Institutional Review Board
<b>TVTP</b>	Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention
<b>VFRE</b>	Violent Far Right Extremist

## Executive Summary

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The Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate contracted RTI International to conduct research and evaluation of the Counter Extremism Project's (CEP's) FY2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) grant implementation to examine accomplishments, challenges, and recommendations. The research team conducted a process evaluation of all components of CEP's grant project. The team reviewed training curricula and other materials provided by CEP and interviewed staff and project partners. A summary of findings is in Table ES-A.

CEP successfully developed a theory of change and curriculum for its Alternative Pathways (AP) program, which is designed to prevent individuals involved in the criminal legal system from radicalizing to violent extremism and to assist violent extremism-affiliated offenders in reintegrating while reducing recidivism in the long-term. Ultimately, CEP was unable to identify a prison or other correctional institution willing to pilot its in-person AP course, a primary element of its FY20 grant project. However, CEP engaged in extensive conversations throughout the grant period with various institutions and relevant stakeholders; these conversations indicated that some institutions may be interested in implementing the course after the grant period. CEP was able to successfully recruit violent extremism-affiliated offenders to voluntarily participate in the AP course through a written format, with 10 incarcerated individuals completing the course. CEP continued to provide ad hoc, informal, and voluntary support to five of these individuals upon their release from prison. CEP was limited in the data it could collect from participants in its AP written course, and researchers' ability to review these data was further limited due to Institutional Review Board (IRB) concerns. While CEP is not able to share the outcomes of its curriculum, it has shared the AP theory of change and curriculum with global practitioners through the Radicalization, Rehabilitation, Reintegration, and Recidivism (4R) Network, established under its separate FY2021 TVTP grant.

Table ES-A: Summary of Findings

 <p><b>Objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 10-week counter-extremism course appropriate for replication in institutions around the country is developed with national accessibility</li> <li>• Increase the awareness of at least 72 inmates of radicalization risk factors, underlying causes, and evidence-based counter-radicalization and self-care practices</li> <li>• At least 72 inmates are made aware of the AP program and other post-release support services</li> <li>• At least 300 terrorism-related offenders or those with known affiliation to violent extremism movements are made aware of the AP program</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Outputs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed the AP theory of change</li> <li>• Developed the AP curriculum</li> <li>• Reached out to 165 terrorism-related offenders and engaged with 68 of these regarding participation in the written AP course</li> <li>• Ten terrorism-related offenders completed the written AP course</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Challenges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty gaining buy-in from correctional institutions prevented CEP from implementing its in-person trainings</li> <li>• Mistrust from offenders made recruitment to the written correspondence course challenging</li> <li>• Inconsistent and strenuous prison mail requirements posed a logistical challenge for recruitment to the written correspondence course</li> <li>• Implementation was delayed due to a lengthy IRB review process</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Recommendations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider extending the length of program funding to accommodate prison timelines and the long-term nature of exiting a violent extremist ideology or group</li> <li>• Consider focusing programming on alternative populations that are often easier to access than prisoners, such as criminal legal system personnel or community supervision populations</li> <li>• Build partnerships with with criminal legal system stakeholders and institutions to assist in gaining buy-in</li> <li>• Communicate the costs and benefits of programming to encourage buy-in</li> </ul>

# Site Profile: Counter Extremism Project

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The Counter Extremism Project (CEP) was awarded a two-year grant by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) in 2020 and was selected in 2021 to undergo an independent evaluation by RTI International. This site profile reviews CEP's grant design, implementation, accomplishments, challenges, and relevant recommendations for future programming in Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP). After completing an evaluability assessment, a process evaluation was conducted on CEP's FY2020 TVTP grant, the findings of which are detailed in this report. The research team examined the processes CEP followed when implementing this grant to learn what mechanisms may contribute to a project's effectiveness and to detail project accomplishments at the output level.

For CEP's full Implementation and Measurement Plan (IMP), which outlines its goals, target audiences, objectives, activities, inputs, time frame, anticipated outputs, performance measures, and data collection plan, please contact DHS.

## Counter Extremism Project

CEP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan international policy organization operating in the United States and Germany. CEP was founded with the intention of combating the growing threat posed by extremist ideologies. To promote these goals, CEP undertakes a variety of activities including research, analysis, technical resource assistance, and policy advocacy.

## CEP's FY2020 Grant

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### Grant Summary

CEP's TVTP grant focused on the development and delivery of the Alternative Pathways (AP) curriculum. The grant had three primary components: the development of the curriculum, its delivery via in-person classes, and its delivery via written correspondence. The curriculum was designed to assist violent extremist-affiliated criminal offenders in their rehabilitation and reintegration, while reducing recidivism in the long-term, and to decrease the likelihood of in-prison radicalization for criminal offenders not affiliated with a violent extremist group or ideology. In this case, violent extremist-affiliated offenders might include individuals who were incarcerated for an extremism-related crime or who were incarcerated for a crime unrelated to extremism but who have known affiliations with an extremist group or ideology.

For the in-person training, CEP sought to implement the AP curriculum as a 10-week course among a target audience of 72 inmates. For the written format of the AP course, CEP reached out to violent extremism-related offenders in correctional institutions across the United States. Offenders who agreed to participate then completed the AP curriculum adapted to the written format. Post-release, CEP provided these individuals with ad hoc support, as appropriate.

In support of its grant, CEP worked with Parallel Networks, a nonprofit organization that works to combat polarization, hate, and extremism in the United States. Parallel Networks provided support to all three components of the grant project.

### Design and Methods for Process Evaluation

As part of the process evaluation of CEP's grant, researchers reviewed all documentation, such as the AP theory of change and training curriculum. Researchers also conducted interviews with staff and project partners. The process evaluation was conducted from September 2021 through July 2023; as such, this site profile details CEP's process, activities, and outputs as of July 31, 2023, two months before the grant ended.

The evaluation of CEP's grant is limited for two reasons. First, CEP was unable to collect much of its planned data because of challenges that it faced in implementing the AP in-person training, which will be discussed in greater detail below. Second, researchers were not authorized to collect or review data from prisoners in the written correspondence course due to a combination of RTI's Institutional Review Board (IRB) determination and DHS's adoption of the Common Rule.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, CEP's efforts toward administering its in-person training curriculum can contribute important insight into the challenges facing implementers of this work and possible solutions to these challenges.

## Findings

### AP Curriculum Development

This section examines process evaluation findings regarding CEP's AP in-person training component, which corresponds with Goal 1, Objective 1.1 in CEP's IMP.

**Objective 1.1: A 10-week counter-extremism course appropriate for replication in institutions around the country is developed with national accessibility.**

#### Curriculum for Addressing Radicalization and Facilitating Reintegration of Terrorism-Related Offenders and Individuals with Violent Extremist Affiliations

As a first step toward developing the AP curriculum, Parallel Networks and Dr. John Horgan conducted a systematic review of the relevant literature to develop a theory of change.<sup>2</sup> The theory of change specifically focused on AP's intended target population—violent extremism-related offenders and those with known violent extremist affiliations in the United States—and used a trauma-informed approach for the reintegration of these offenders. As illustrated in Figure 1, the central goal identified by the theory of change was “to facilitate the safe, healthy, and dignified rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist-affiliated criminal offenders in the United States while decreasing the likelihood of in-prison radicalization and increasing local resilience to violent extremism over the long term.” The theory of change document provides a clear explanation of the key variables associated with the overall goal (i.e., “safe, healthy, and dignified”) and the theory of change's general assumptions, objectives (shown in Figure 1), necessary preconditions, strategies, and proposed interventions.

1 Common Rule 45 CFR §46 restricts the federal government and its contractors from collecting data that “involves a category of subjects that is vulnerable to coercion or undue influence, such as children, prisoners, individuals with impaired decision-making capacity, or economically or educationally disadvantaged persons.”

2 Available at <https://4rnetwork.org/>. 

Figure 1. Visual representation of the Alternative Pathways theory of change



Parallel Networks then developed the curriculum “Alternative Pathways: A Toolkit for Addressing Radicalization & Facilitating Rehabilitation, Reentry, and Reconnection amongst Imprisoned Americans,” consisting of 10 lessons (Figure 2).<sup>3</sup> The curriculum draws upon the CTRL+ALT+DEL-HATE process, developed by Parallel Networks, as its underlying framework:

CTRL: controlling the space between stimulus and response, in order to;

ALT: alter course and move forward in a manner that commits to nonviolence and finds meaning, purpose, and community that can reorient our lives and personal stories, so that we can;

DEL-HATE: work to delete hate and toxicity in our own selves and, as a consequence, in those around us, so that we can contribute to building a better tomorrow for all.

Lessons are faith-neutral and each one includes lesson objectives, definitions of key concepts, discussion questions, and writing assignments to help participants to process the information covered in the lesson and how it applies to themselves.

3 The AP curriculum is available to 4R Network members here: <https://4rnetwork.org/prison-resources>.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 2. AP Lesson Topics

- 1 Jonah, the Belly of the Beast, and the Nexus between Narrative, Trauma, and Radicalization
- 2 What is Radicalization? How Does It Connect to Violence?
- 3 Neuroscience of Toxic Stress, Radicalization, and Violence Prevention
- 4 Critical Thinking, Cognitive Bias, and Controlling the Space between Stimulus and Response
- 5 The Power of Social Media: Resiliency to Online Radicalization and Recruitment
- 6 Black and White/Us-vs-Them: The Tribalism Trap
- 7 New World (Dis)Order: Fake-News Conspiracy Theories and Their Role in Radicalization
- 8 Toxic Masculinity, Radicalization, and Violence
- 9 Man’s Search for Meaning-Making, Narrative, Ideology, and Extremism
- 10 Alternative Pathways: Reorienting Radicalization for the Good

## AP In-Person Training

This section examines process evaluation findings regarding CEP's AP in-person training component, which corresponds with Goal 2, Objectives 2.1 and 2.2 in CEP's IMP.

### Objective 2.1-2.2:

**2.1: At least 72 inmates' awareness of radicalization risk factors, underlying causes, and evidence-based counter-radicalization and self-care practices increases.**

**2.2: At least 72 inmates made aware of Alternative Pathways program and other post-release supports.**

### In-Person Course Recruitment Efforts

The in-person AP course was originally designed as a 10-week course with one session per week, and was intended to be implemented in prisons in the United States. Specifically, as of the beginning of CEP's grant, it intended to deliver the training to a prison in California. CEP sought to administer the course to a total of 72 inmates, with approximately half of those inmates convicted for Salafi-jihadist offenses and the other half previously or currently affiliated with violent far right extremist (VFRE) movements or prison gangs.

Unfortunately, CEP was unable to identify a prison or other correctional institution that was willing to implement the AP training during the grant period. Although it was unsuccessful, CEP undertook extensive efforts in its search to identify and recruit correctional institutions and to adapt to those institutions' needs and contexts, including communicating with a wide range of stakeholders across the United States. In total, CEP spoke with seven prisons (five in California, one in New York, one in Washington, DC) and held conversations, sent information, or provided presentations to 21 other relevant stakeholders. These stakeholders included a state Department of Corrections, a magistrate judge, and individuals currently implementing other programs in prisons and jails, among others. CEP additionally presented the AP curriculum to the National Network of Probation Officers to encourage officers either to refer probationers to the program or to participate in the training themselves following a "train-the-trainer" model, in which probation officers would then deliver the curriculum directly to their probationers. This range of individuals demonstrates the variety of pathways that CEP took toward identifying a setting for training implementation.

As of the writing of this report, CEP is in conversation with some of these institutions about implementing the AP training on a broader, nationwide scale. Additionally, CEP received a request to train staff at a United States Probation

Office on the AP curriculum and received at least one referral to implement the curriculum with a probationer being supervised by this office. Although these decisions and any resulting implementation will occur after the conclusion of the grant, it is possible that CEP will still be able to pilot its in-person training. If this is the case, the research team recommends that CEP collect data, such as pre- and posttests, to measure change in participant awareness and knowledge of the AP curriculum. These data will demonstrate the effectiveness of the AP in-person training, which will be critical for strengthening the TVTP evidence base and future programming. Additionally, if the training is found to be effective, it will improve the chances that other correctional institutions are willing to implement the AP program moving forward. CEP should also document process-related data, such as recruitment procedures, selection criteria, the training structure and format, and facilitator's notes. While pre- and posttests can measure the training's effectiveness, these elements will help to understand what may have contributed to or detracted from the training's effectiveness. They will also document how the training was implemented, which is critical for future training replicability.

### Adaptations to Course Design

Throughout CEP's conversations with various prisons and correctional institutions, it discovered that some were interested in implementing the AP course but wanted it to be adapted to institution-specific needs and context. In response to these requests, CEP made a series of modifications to the course structure and content to make the curriculum agreeable while also maintaining the core of the curriculum. Though these modified courses were not used during the grant period, the requested alterations are detailed below.

**Target Population.** The curriculum was initially designed for a target population of violent extremism-related offenders

and those with known violent extremist affiliations. However, during discussions with one California prison regarding participant recruitment, CEP determined that it would allow any inmate to participate. CEP made this adaptation because it posited that the curriculum would still apply to individuals susceptible to radicalization and, due to the presence of extremist groups in prisons in the United States, any inmate could be susceptible. As such, it planned to conduct open recruitment of prisoners using marketing materials, as well as more targeted recruitment of prisoners by the prison chaplain or mental health providers.

**Cadence.** While the course was originally designed to take place over 10 weeks, with one session per week, CEP also discussed with various prisons the possibility of condensing the course timeline (e.g., holding two sessions per week for a total of five weeks).

**Structure.** One New York prison indicated that it had previously had success with courses that took a “train-the-trainer” or mentorship approach. Under this approach, the prison requested that the AP course be delivered to a smaller group of individuals (e.g., 10–15) who would serve as unofficial mentors to other inmates by passing on the information and skills covered during the in-person sessions. In response to this request, CEP adjusted the existing curriculum to incorporate this cascading approach.

**Extremism Focus.** The same New York prison noted that its inmates were primarily involved in gang violence as opposed to extremist groups. As such, the prison requested that CEP adapt the curriculum to include a focus on general violence prevention, which CEP did.

### Extensive Efforts to Recruit Correctional Institutions Illustrate Implementation Challenges

Although CEP was unable to identify a correctional institution that was willing to participate in the AP in-person course, the challenges CEP faced in this regard can still provide useful information for practitioners, funders, and other stakeholders in this space. These difficulties illustrate many of the challenges that any practitioner faces when attempting to implement programming within correctional settings in the United States.

#### *Challenges in Securing Buy-In of Correctional Institutions*

- 1 Hesitance to administer new, unproven interventions
- 2 Resource constraints amid extensive bureaucratic procedures
- 3 Inhibited communication resulting from decentralized prison system

First, multiple correctional institutions were wary of administering a new intervention that had never been implemented or tested elsewhere. This will continue to be a challenge for any practitioner attempting to implement a novel approach or program, which constitutes a critical obstacle to progress in the still-nascent TVTP space as the field continues to test what works and for whom.

Second, many correctional institutions are facing significant resource constraints and understaffing. Coupled with the extensive bureaucratic procedures in place across the United States for implementing in-prison programming, this meant that CEP had to wait substantial amounts of time to receive responses or approvals from prison staff before moving on to the next step in the approval process. For example, CEP worked with one prison in California for eight months (January to August 2022), going through various steps to gain approval to implement. At the end of those eight months, CEP still had tasks remaining to gain final approval, but the prison staff stopped responding altogether. In addition to resource constraints, CEP’s difficulty in recruiting a California prison may also have come as a result of recent prison closures in the state.<sup>4</sup>

Third, the decentralization of the prison system in the United States means that practitioners seeking to implement in-prison programming do not have a clear channel for contacting prisons that may be interested in participating. In CEP’s case, it sought to overcome this by drawing upon its own contacts to get in touch with various institutions and stakeholders, in addition to numerous contacts provided by DHS CP3.

<sup>4</sup> Prison closures were made because sentencing reforms and a surge of releases tied to COVID-19 significantly reduced the prison population in California.

## Alternative Pathways Written Correspondence Course

This section examines process evaluation findings regarding CEP's written version of the AP training, which correspond with Goal 3, Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 in CEP's IMP.

### Objectives 3.1-3.2:

**3.1: At least 300 terrorism-related offenders or those with known affiliation to violent extremism movements made aware of the Alternative Pathways program.**

**3.2: At least 20 at-risk offenders supported by AP program with anonymized data (case studies) to inform identification of best practices and research and training materials.**

### Written Correspondence Course Recruitment

The written version of CEP's course uses the same AP curriculum as the in-person version, which is split into 10 lessons. CEP intended to administer the course with a total of 20 offenders from across the United States. During implementation, CEP sent each lesson to offenders to read and complete on their own, in addition to holding parallel conversations with offenders to assist them in processing the information via mail, e-mail, or phone.

CEP began its recruitment process by selecting publicly available databases to assist in identifying potential participants including the New America Foundations' Terrorism in America After 9/11 database, George Washington University's ISIS in America and Capitol Hill Siege Cases databases, and two databases that have since become inactive. Additionally, CEP staff tracked convictions of individuals through open source documents, such as Department of Justice publications. As of July 2023, CEP identified 295 offenders through these databases and publications and contacted 165 of them through prison mail. CEP began its outreach in January 2022, after it received IRB approval to do so (15 months into the grant period). Because the IRB approval process took significantly longer than expected, CEP was unable to contact several individuals it had previously identified because they had completed their sentences, had been extradited to their countries of origin, were deceased, or were no longer traceable within the Bureau of Prisons system. This resulted in the difference between the number of individuals identified and those contacted. CEP continued to identify and contact additional offenders over the course of its grant as new individuals were added to these databases and new convictions were published. Outreach letters were tailored based on offenders' sentencing and prison release dates.

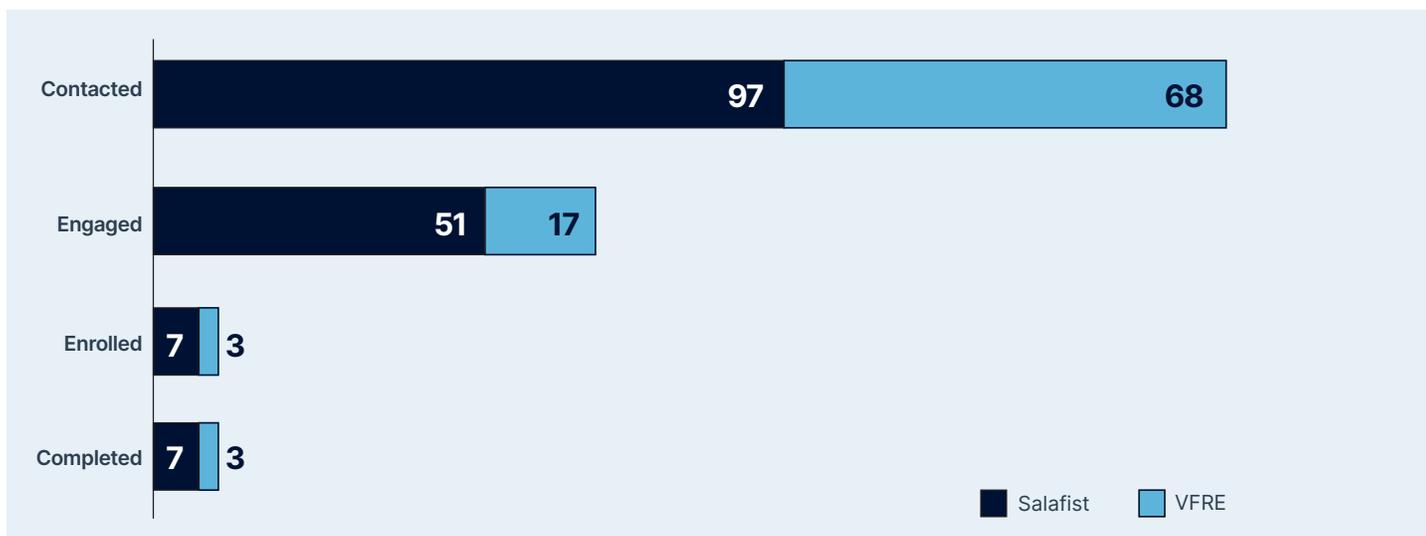
### Engaging with Offenders to Build Rapport and Voluntary Participation

Pre-course engagement was a critical and necessary step to building trust with offenders, which in turn was critical in securing their voluntary participation.

Of the 165 offenders that were contacted, 68 engaged in some way with CEP staff (41%) (Figure 3 shows all of CEP's recruitment statistics). Often, this entailed an ongoing dialogue over written mail, e-mail, or phone, through which a CEP staff person built rapport with the offender and answered their questions or concerns regarding the AP course. This pre-course engagement was a critical and necessary step to building trust with offenders, which in turn was critical in securing their voluntary participation in the course.

Ten offenders (15% of those engaged with, 6% of those contacted) ultimately agreed to enroll in the AP course, all of whom completed it. Of these 10, seven were affiliated with a Salafi-jihadist ideology or group, and three were affiliated with a VFRE ideology or group. The most common reasons that offenders gave for choosing not to enroll, when a reason was given, were: (1) they were disillusioned with programs that sought to assist them because of negative experiences with other such programs, and (2) they were distrustful of the CEP staff's intentions and believed they might be attempting to covertly gather intelligence. In anticipation of this mistrust, CEP received a waiver that allowed it to not include DHS branding in AP materials, as it expected that associating the programming with DHS would cause offenders to become more mistrustful and to feel that their data was being collected for the purposes of sharing it with DHS.

**Figure 3. Number of offenders contacted, engaged, enrolled, and completed for the course, by ideology**



CEP originally planned to administer pre- and post-course assessments but ultimately chose not to because of this mistrust among offenders. CEP felt that any feeling of being “tested” or “assessed” would push offenders away from participation. The CEP staff person who administered the course recorded notes on their conversations with offenders, which may be able to anecdotally demonstrate offenders’ progress and grasp of the course content; however, the research team was unable to access these data due to the IRB concerns mentioned previously.

### Post-Release Support

CEP does not have a formalized process for continued engagement with graduates of the AP course. However, the same CEP staff member who administered the course continued to engage with participants following their completion of the course, subject to each offender’s willingness to continue communication. The 10 offenders who completed the course were at varying stages in their sentences, with some released shortly after the course and some still incarcerated as of the end of the grant period. As those offenders neared release, CEP supported them in connecting with individuals in their local community, family members, and community resources. Following the offenders’ release, CEP continued to hold ad hoc, informal conversations with them to provide interpersonal support. Additionally, this CEP staff member offered to speak with released offenders’ probation officers to provide the officers with their insight into the offender based on their participation in the AP course. One released offender’s probation officer chose to work closely with the CEP

staff member to gain their input as the officer designed the post-release plan. Unfortunately, it is not possible to examine the long-term, post-release outcomes for written AP course participants, as the grant period does not allow for it.

### Information Sharing

CEP’s efforts to analyze its work and share this information with the practitioner community correspond with Goal 4, Objective 4.1 in CEP’s IMP.

**Objective 4.1: Knowledge of extremism and best practices in reentry and reintegration amongst those tasked with post-release supervision of inmates with known affiliations to violent extremism movements increases.**

Researchers did not conduct an evaluation of CEP’s information-sharing efforts under the FY2020 grant. As CEP was not able to implement its in-person training, it did not collect the data it originally intended to analyze under this objective. Additionally, much of CEP’s information-sharing efforts are being conducted under its FY2021 TVTP grant, through which it has established the Radicalization, Rehabilitation, Reintegration, and Recidivism (4R) Network with practitioners in the United States and abroad. CEP has used the 4R Network to share the AP curriculum and best practices in the field. CEP additionally plans to host an event in Washington, DC, with the Alliance for Peacebuilding to present on the grant project.

## Challenges

**Buy-In from Correctional Institutions.** As discussed throughout this report, gaining the buy-in from prisons or other correctional institutions was the greatest challenge that CEP faced and ultimately prevented CEP from implementing its in-person course during the grant period. This difficulty in gaining the commitment of a prison stemmed from a range of factors outside of CEP's control, including strains placed on prisons by the COVID-19 pandemic, limited prison resources and prison understaffing, and a lack of willingness to implement novel programming among a sensitive population.

### **Recruitment of Offenders in Correctional Settings.**

CEP faced both logistical and substantive challenges in recruiting extremism-related offenders in prison to participate in its written correspondence course. First, prison mailing requirements—which CEP relied entirely upon when offenders were not allowed access to phone or e-mail—were strenuous, opaque, and inconsistent across institutions. Second, offenders being contacted by CEP in prison were often mistrustful of CEP's underlying motives for contacting them.

**Implementation Delays due to Privacy Reviews.** CEP experienced initial delays in getting its project started due to the IRB process. CEP's third-party IRB did not ultimately approve the implementation of its curriculum and outreach until January 2022. While CEP's project sought to engage prisoners—who are a protected population and therefore require a full IRB review—this timeline was extensive and meant that CEP could not begin outreach and recruitment for its in-person training until 15 months into its initial 24-month grant period, which limited the number of individuals CEP was able to contact about enrolling in the written course.

## IMP Accomplishments

CEP achieved its first objective through the development of the AP theory of change and training curriculum (Objective 1.1). As discussed, it was unable to meet its objective of delivering the AP curriculum in an in-person format to 72 inmates (Objectives 2.1 and 2.2). However, this was a result of external factors and barriers to gaining buy-in from correctional institutions, rather than faults in the

project design or implementation. CEP's efforts to identify a correctional institution have still yielded new relationships between CEP and such institutions. This has, in turn, led to ongoing conversations about potential opportunities to pilot the training after the grant period.

CEP successfully delivered the written format of its AP training to incarcerated extremism-related offenders across the United States by identifying 295 offenders, contacting 165, engaging with 68, and enrolling 10 in the course. Because the evaluation of CEP's grant only includes activities through the month of July 2023, it is possible that some of these numbers will increase slightly by the end of CEP's grant in September 2023. CEP continues to identify and reach out to offenders regarding its written correspondence course, so it is likely that it will meet or exceed its IMP target of 300 offenders identified. However, it is unlikely that CEP will be able to contact 300 offenders by the end of its grant period (Objective 3.1). CEP's response rate (68 out of 165 offenders responded to CEP's letter, or 41%) exceeded its target of 25%. Unfortunately, the rate of offenders who responded to its outreach and subsequently enrolled in the course (10 out of 68 offenders enrolled, or 15%) was lower than CEP's stated target of 33%. This meant that CEP fell short of its target of 20 offenders completing the course (Objective 3.2).

CEP was unable to collect the planned data it intended to analyze and share under Objective 4.1 because it was unable to implement its in-person course and because it was limited in the data it could collect from the written correspondence course. Although CEP therefore did not fulfill Objective 4.1 in the way it originally planned to, it is still working to share its knowledge of extremism and best practices in reentry and reintegration through the establishment of the 4R Network, which is primarily taking place under its FY2021 TVTP grant, and a conference with the Alliance for Peacebuilding, which is expected to take place after the grant period. CEP additionally discussed or presented on the AP program to a total of seven prisons and 21 other relevant stakeholders across the country and across a range of sectors. These discussions were limited to the program design, however, and did not include data regarding best practices.

# CEP's Partner Survey Findings

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CEP engaged three partners to support its FY2020 grant. Researchers surveyed these partners to understand their collaboration with CEP and the challenges they faced. However, because only two partners completed the survey, researchers are unable to report these partner responses in the interest of privacy.

## Discussion

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CEP developed a comprehensive theory of change and curriculum to serve as the foundation of its AP course. Despite extensive efforts to identify and gain the buy-in of a correctional institution, and despite CEP's willingness to adapt the curriculum to specific needs or contexts, it was ultimately unable to implement the AP course in its in-person format. CEP's experience in this regard still provides important information regarding implementation of in-prison TVTP programming, as it demonstrates key operational challenges to gaining buy-in and the amount of time that must be devoted to gain access to prisons.

CEP was able to administer the AP curriculum through its written format, with 10 extremism-related offenders from across the United States enrolling in and completing the course. This required extensive engagement on the part of CEP staff to overcome process-level challenges and build rapport with offenders to gain their participation. As of the end of the evaluation period, CEP has additionally provided ad hoc support to five of these individuals post-release.

## Sustainability

CEP's AP theory of change and curriculum could be used by other TVTP implementers moving forward. While CEP has not made these resources publicly available, it has shared them with relevant practitioners and stakeholders through its 4R Network and will present on the AP program through a planned conference that is set to take place after the grant period.

Discussions between CEP and correctional institutions are still ongoing as of the end of the grant period, but it appears possible that CEP may be able to implement the AP training on a larger scale than originally anticipated in its FY2020 TVTP grant. Although these decisions have yet to be made, it is possible that CEP's curriculum will be funded through other sources beyond this grant project and integrated into longer-term programming.

CEP indicated that it plans to sustain its outreach and enrollment of extremism-related offenders in the written format of its AP course under alternate funding streams after its FY2020 TVTP grant.

## Recommendations for TVTP Grant Program

### ✓ Incorporate IRB-Related Timing and Data Considerations Into Program Design.

CEP did not receive IRB approval to begin outreach and implementation of its AP training until 15 months into the grant period. CEP had not anticipated the length of the IRB review in its implementation timeline. In the future, DHS should make IRB-related processes and guidelines clear to grantees applying for TVTP grants, particularly for grantees who intend to work with protected populations such as incarcerated individuals. This may take the form of a webinar, for example, explaining the primary considerations around what an IRB does, how it might apply to different TVTP grants, and the process DHS utilizes for grantees that do not have their own IRB. In turn, grantees should account for this in their program design, building in staff time to work on IRB protocols and to adjust implementation timelines accordingly.

### ✓ Consider Extending the Length of Program Funding.

DHS should consider extending the length of funding for grant projects that seek to implement programming in prisons to accommodate the challenges detailed throughout this report. DHS did mitigate timeline constraints by approving a one-year no-cost extension for CEP, but even more time is needed to accommodate the recruitment of interested prisons and to navigate extensive prison bureaucratic procedures. Longer periods of performance would also respond to the need for full IRB reviews when working with prisoners, a protected population. Additionally, longer grant periods would reflect the long-term and nonlinear nature of exiting from a violent extremist ideology or group. Although CEP continued to work with some of its written course participants post-release, its grant ended before it could witness or measure long-term, demonstrable outcomes among these participants. Extending the period of performance would enable greater data collection to learn more about the short- and long-term results of such interventions—a critical gap in the TVTP field.

### ✓ Consider Focusing Programming on Alternative Populations.

CEP's grant sought to implement its AP course directly with prisoners, but prisons can be risk-adverse and therefore hesitant to administer new programming, particularly on a sensitive topic such as violent extremism. To mitigate the challenges to gaining buy-in from prisons and other criminal legal system (CLS) institutions, future grant projects should consider focusing their programming on alternative populations. First, grantees could consider working with community supervision populations (e.g., individuals under probation or parole), as they are often easier to access. Second, grantees might focus on training CLS personnel (e.g., correctional officers, probation officers) as opposed to individuals involved with the CLS—for example, through a “train-the-trainer” model. While this would prevent grantees from directly working with and collecting data from prisoners, for example, it would increase the likelihood of gaining access to a prison. It would also likely present a more sustainable approach, as personnel would be given the knowledge and skills needed when working with individuals susceptible to or already part of a violent extremist ideology or group, rather than having an external group enter the prison for a finite number of interactions with prisoners. Similarly, training probation officers could support them in assessing and supervising probationers and developing comprehensive case management strategies that account for radicalization and disengagement processes. It is important to note, however, that grantees should still anticipate challenges in gaining the buy-in of these alternative populations. For example, when CEP offered to adapt the AP curriculum for prison personnel, it was told that personnel in maximum security sections, where many terrorism-related offenders are housed, could not participate in such a training as they needed to prioritize more urgent needs.

### ✓ **Build Partnerships with CLS Stakeholders and Institutions.**

Grantees that wish to implement programming in prisons or other CLS institutions should work to build relationships with relevant stakeholders ahead of time to mitigate the challenges in gaining buy-in. DHS should also consider building their own relationships to further support its grant program. Such relationships can be built by connecting with local and state leaders and attending conferences and other events with correctional associations or other relevant professional networks, such as the American Correctional Association, American Jail Association, Association of State Corrections Administrators, and the National Network of Probation Officers. These relationships will help to build trust, increasing chances of gaining buy-in, and help grantees learn about institutions across the United States that might be particularly interested in implementing programming. Prospective grantees would also benefit from engaging partners that have prior experience in CLS implementation in the United States, such as individuals conducting research for the Department of Corrections, and embedding them into their projects. These individuals can provide important insight into CLS institutional structures and administrative concerns when grantees are developing their curriculum and procedures to ensure they are responsive to CLS contexts.

### ✓ **Communicate the Costs and Benefits of Programming to CLS Institutions.**

Given the resource constraints facing many prisons and other CLS institutions across the United States, it is important that prospective grantees note what resources will be needed to implement their project and consider how, if it all, they can reduce these needs. For example, prison programming typically requires access to a room and staff to accompany inmates for a certain number of hours and days. Projects that work with inmates affiliated with a violent extremist ideology or group may be assigned to restrictive housing, so their participation in programming may require additional prison resources. Grantees should consider if they can mitigate resource needs by being flexible, such as by condensing programming to more hours across fewer days, as CEP offered to do. In addition to costs, grantees should emphasize the benefits that their project can provide. This includes the financial benefits of their project: a DHS-funded TVTP grant can provide programming free of charge to prisons that might otherwise have to pay for programming. While engaging inmates in restrictive housing environments is resource-intensive, free programming within this environment is often a priority for prison administrations. Grantees could also consider offering a financial incentive for participating CLS institutions to mitigate resource needs. For grantees seeking to implement a pilot project, it may also be helpful to emphasize the importance of serving as a pilot site for a new project focused on violent extremism. While some CLS institutions will be hesitant to implement a pilot project that has not yet been tested, grantees can provide a clear explanation of the science that their project is based upon to try to mitigate these concerns.

Regardless of the exact costs and benefits offered by a particular project, grantees may benefit from recruiting prisons or other CLS institutions that do not typically receive attention or requests for programming (e.g., a prison in a rural area), as they may have greater needs or be more receptive.

# **Appendix D.**

# **University of Denver Colorado Resilience Collaborative Site Profile**

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# University of Denver's Colorado Resilience Collaborative (CRC)



Developed for:



Science and  
Technology

Developed by RTI International

# List of Abbreviations

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<b>CAPO</b>	Compliance Assurance Program Office
<b>CP3</b>	Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships
<b>CRC</b>	Colorado Resilience Collaborative
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Homeland Security
<b>IMP</b>	Implementation and Measurement Plan
<b>TVTP</b>	Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention
<b>PTV</b>	Preventing Targeted Violence

## Executive Summary

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The Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate contracted RTI International to conduct research and evaluation of the University of Denver's Colorado Resilience Collaborative (CRC) FY2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) grant implementation to examine accomplishments, challenges, and recommendations. The research team conducted a process evaluation of all components of the grant project. The team reviewed training curricula and recorded training modules, a consultation toolkit, and other materials provided by the CRC and interviewed staff and project partners. A summary of findings is in Table ES-A.

First, the CRC surpassed its preset grant targets for the number of training participants and resources provided, based on data it reported. The research team was unable to establish whether the CRC's trainings and prevention gatherings were effective in increasing participants' knowledge of targeted violence and how to address it, although survey data that the CRC gathered and reported indicated an increase in participants' confidence in their knowledge. Second, the CRC surpassed its preset grant targets for number of targeted violence cases for which it triaged and performed consultation, based on data it reported, providing individuals with resources and referrals as appropriate. The CRC also codified its resources developed through trainings and consultations into a range of online materials, including four recorded training modules and a consultation toolkit. Lastly, the CRC reportedly created an online resource library to share its learnings and approach with professionals beyond the end of the grant period. Researchers' ability to review, evaluate, and verify the CRC's work across these four components was limited by a lack of access to data, as is discussed throughout the report.

This work is supported by funding by the United States Department of Homeland Security, Science and Technology Directorate under contract #140D0418C0012/P00005.

Table ES-A. Summary of Findings

 <p><b>Objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build community capacity to prevent and address targeted violence through training and educational materials</li> <li>• Implement Colorado Consultation Model for triage of targeted violence cases and delivery of in-depth consultation and disseminate learnings</li> <li>• Encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing for professionals engaged in targeted violence prevention and intervention</li> <li>• Develop and launch an online resource library to share training and technical assistance materials with practitioners</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Outputs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted 30 total trainings at the 101 and 201 levels</li> <li>• Trained 1,501 individuals from a range of professions</li> <li>• Increased self-reported confidence in knowledge of targeted violence among training participants</li> <li>• Developed four recorded training modules</li> <li>• Provided triage and consultation services for 101 cases</li> <li>• Referred 16 cases for clinical services</li> <li>• Developed a consultation toolkit with seven case studies on how to apply the consultation process</li> <li>• Hosted five community prevention gatherings</li> <li>• 157 professionals and community representatives participated in community prevention gatherings</li> <li>• Developed and launched an online resource library with 36 resources*</li> <li>• 2,158 views of the online resource library*</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Challenges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unanticipated delays due to Department of Homeland Security Compliance Assurance Program Office (CAPO) and Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) reviews shortened the implementation timeline</li> <li>• Launch and maintenance of the online resource library were impeded by staff turnover</li> <li>• Technical issues restricted the online resource library and caused further delays</li> <li>• Unanticipated staff time was needed to gain target audience buy-in</li> <li>• Other actors were skeptical of a mental health Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention approach</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Recommendations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure online resources are easily accessible</li> <li>• Incorporate time and resources for community-based research into the program design</li> <li>• Incorporate timing considerations for CAPO and CP3 reviews into the program design</li> <li>• Enhance data sharing</li> </ul>

\*The Colorado Resilience Collaborative reportedly launched its online resource library in June 2022; however, researchers did not view it before it was taken down.

# Site Profile: Colorado Resilience Collaborative

The University of Denver's Colorado Resilience Collaborative (CRC) was awarded a two-year grant by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) in 2020 and was selected in 2021 to undergo an independent evaluation by RTI International. This site profile reviews the CRC's grant design, implementation, accomplishments, challenges, and relevant recommendations for future programming in Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP). After completing an evaluability assessment, a process evaluation was conducted on the CRC's FY2020 TVTP grant, the findings of which are detailed in this report. The research team examined the processes the CRC followed when implementing this grant to learn what mechanisms may contribute to a project's effectiveness and detail project accomplishments at the output level.

This report is separated into three sections. The first section examines process-level findings regarding the CRC's grant implementation. The second section details the findings of a survey that researchers conducted of the CRC's project partners. The final section includes an overall discussion of evaluation findings, a discussion of the sustainability of the CRC's grant activities, and recommendations for the TVTP grant program.

For the CRC's full Implementation and Measurement Plan (IMP), which outlines its goals, target audiences, objectives, activities, inputs, time frame, anticipated outputs, performance measures, and data collection plan, contact DHS.

## Colorado Resilience Collaborative

The CRC is housed within the University of Denver's International Disaster Psychology: Trauma and Global Mental Health Graduate Program. The CRC provides training, professional mental health consultation, and educational resources to expand awareness and skills for identifying and responding to concerning behaviors related to targeted violence and hate. The CRC serves the entire state of

Colorado but focuses on the Denver metropolitan area. The FY2020 grant was the CRC's first under the DHS TVTP grant program.

## CRC's Fiscal Year 2020 TVTP Grant Summary

The CRC's FY2020 TVTP grant consisted of four closely related components to build awareness and strengthen local networks for the prevention of and intervention in targeted violence: 101 and 201 trainings, triage and consultations, community prevention gatherings, and an online resource library. These four components are detailed below, followed by Figure 1, which illustrates how they are interrelated.



**101 and 201 Trainings.** The CRC developed and delivered 30 trainings (15 trainings at the 101 level and 15 trainings at the 201 level) aimed at educating professionals in the law enforcement, government, health, behavioral health, social work, nonprofit, and education sectors, as well as nonprofessional community members, on targeted violence. The 101 trainings focused on raising community awareness of the threat of targeted violence and resources to intervene, and the 201 trainings focused on incorporating public and mental health perspectives into preventing targeted violence. Training content was customized to the needs and concerns of participating organizations. The CRC developed asynchronous recorded modules that captured this training content to make it accessible after the end of the grant period. To support its work under this component, the CRC partnered with Moonshot, a global technology company, which provided data and analytics to better understand online extremism dynamics across Colorado. The CRC incorporated these findings into its trainings and other resources made available for practitioners and service providers.



**Triage and Consultations.** The CRC provided triage and consultation services for a total of 101 cases over the grant period. During consultations,

the CRC provided subject matter expertise, licensed mental health expertise, technical and educational prevention resources, threat assessment and management, and referrals for organizations, responders, and community bystanders who were interacting with concerning cases on the pathway to violence. The CRC created a consultation toolkit that describes its professional mental health consultation approach and illustrates its interdisciplinary methods and impacts through seven sample scenarios, based on actual cases that the CRC consulted on. The CRC partnered with two organizations, which it referred cases to when clinical services were required. Specifically, the two organizations were Life After Hate, a nonprofit organization that provides services to individuals—or their friends and family members—who hold violent far-right extremist beliefs, and Nicoletti-Flater Associates, which specializes in providing police and public safety psychological services.

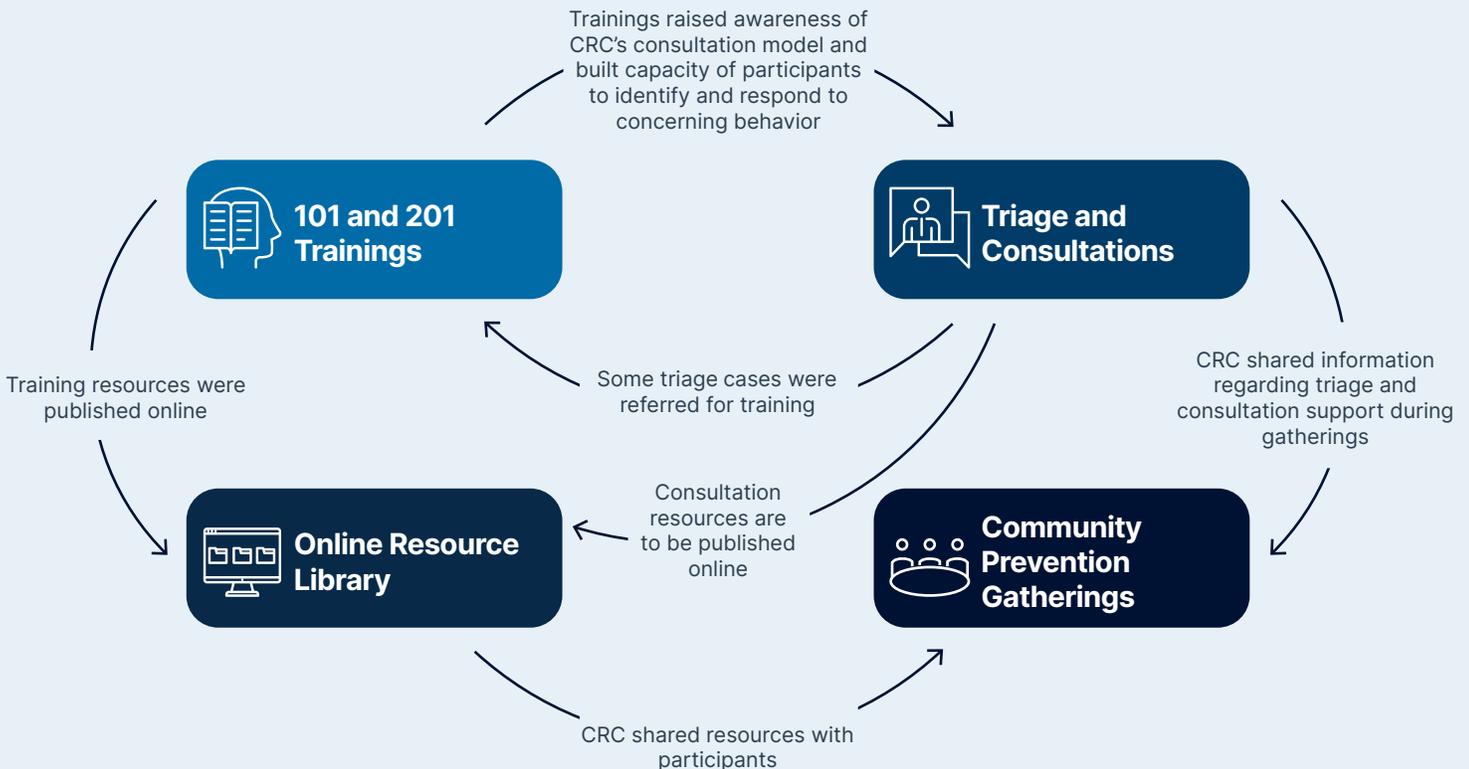


**Community Prevention Gatherings.** The CRC conducted five community prevention gatherings to engage with local communities dealing with targeted violence and hate. In total, 157 individuals participated in these gatherings, made up of members of—or representatives of organizations working with—LGBTQIA+, Spanish-speaking and Latin, New American, and military and veteran communities, in addition to substance use and rehabilitation programs. These gatherings encouraged information sharing and collaboration between community groups and enabled the CRC to provide these communities with relevant resources in response to their specific needs and concerns.



**Online Resource Library.** The CRC reportedly developed and launched an online resource library to serve as an accessible and sustainable hub of the CRC's resources for practitioners and community service providers. The CRC reported launching the online resource library in June 2022; however, it was subsequently taken down due to staff turnover. The CRC reported that the library garnered 2,158 views while it was active.

Figure 1. The Colorado Resilience Collaborative's (CRC) Interrelated Grant Components



## Design and Methods for Process Evaluation

As part of the process evaluation of the CRC's grant implementation, researchers reviewed all documentation, such as 101 and 201 training curricula, pre- and post-event survey questions, and the consultation toolkit. Researchers reviewed the recorded training modules to understand their format and content and conducted interviews with five program and partner staff members. Interviews underwent a thematic analysis to identify meaningful patterns in the data.

The evaluation of the CRC's grant implementation is limited, as the research team was not able to observe any 101 or 201 trainings or community prevention gatherings. The CRC and its partners did not believe it was appropriate for researchers to observe these events, whether in person, virtually, or as a recording, because of clinical and privacy concerns and sensitivities of the audiences. The research team discussed the possibility of signing a nondisclosure agreement with CRC to mitigate these concerns, but the CRC maintained that it would be inappropriate for researchers to observe the events, as the communities that the CRC worked with had low levels of trust of federal agencies and law enforcement. Confidentiality was very important to the CRC, and it believed having an outsider present at such events could weaken the trust that it built with these communities. Similarly, the research team could not access data regarding the CRC's triage and consultation work, as it contained sensitive information about specific cases. The research team was able to review four of the reported eight asynchronous training videos that were recorded and to observe two trainings that Moonshot led for the CRC's network.

Lastly, researchers only received aggregate data from the CRC. Therefore, this evaluation will discuss only self-reported, overall outputs. The CRC declined to share disaggregated data because there were no data use agreements established during the grant period and it was believed that sharing these data would not be compliant with its approved institutional review board protocols and Compliance Assurance Program Office (CAPO) materials.





# Process Evaluation Findings

## 101 and 201 Trainings

This section examines process evaluation findings regarding the CRC's trainings, which correspond with Goal 1, Objectives 1.1 and 1.2 in the CRC's IMP.

### OBJECTIVES 1.1-1.2:

**1.1 Facilitate access to targeted violence prevention training and resources to build the capacity of communities to prevent and address targeted violence.**

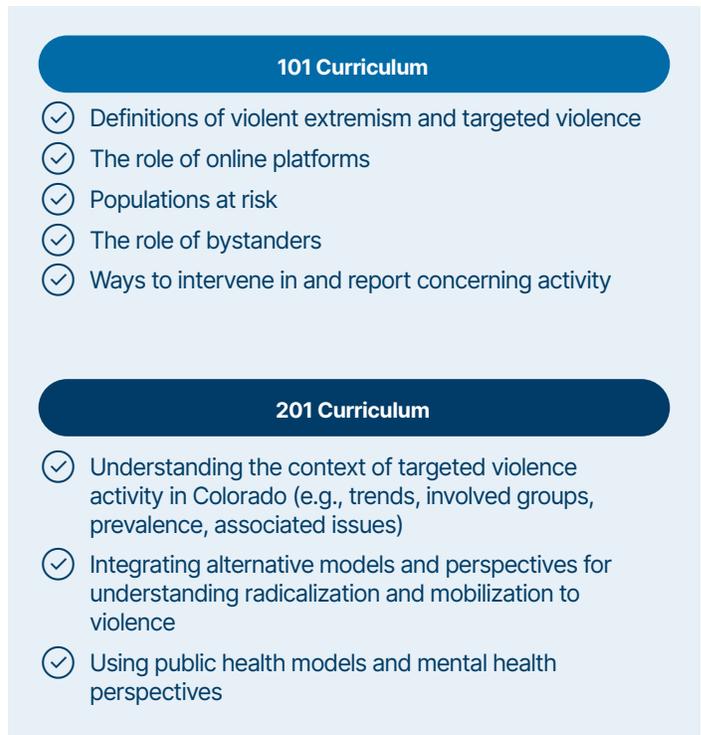
**1.2 Provide in-depth educational materials about the nature of targeted violence and ways to use behavioral indicators to assess threats and manage cases.**

### Trainings Customized to Different Audiences

The CRC offered two types of trainings which they referred to as their 101 and 201 trainings. The differences between these two trainings are described in Figure 2. The CRC developed and updated its training curricula to reflect DHS Community Awareness Briefings.

The CRC held trainings when requested by organizations or as a result of its outreach to particular organizations, in which it discussed the subject matter and importance of the trainings and how they might relate to that particular organization's needs. The CRC adapted each training to meet the needs and interests of the specific group participating. Examples of these adaptations were the CRC shortening trainings in response to time limitations, excluding information that the group was already familiar with, or spending more time on topics of particular concern. Thus, no two trainings covered the exact same content. The training format (in person or virtual) was customized to respond to groups' preferences and to changing COVID-19 pandemic conditions throughout the grant period. The CRC conducted 30 trainings in total during the grant period, split equally between 101 and 201 trainings.

**Figure 2. 101 and 201 Training Curricula**





## Varied Audience

In total, 1,501 individuals participated in a 101 or 201 training during the grant period, which exceeded the CRC's target of 1,000 individuals. The CRC stated in its IMP that it planned to include 50 different organizations in the trainings. The research team was unable to confirm whether this target was achieved, as the CRC declined to share information on participants' organizations. The CRC did confirm, at the aggregate level, that the 1,501 individuals who completed trainings included mental health professionals and administrators, health providers, social workers and case managers, educators and school administrators, community-based nonprofit workers, elected officials, and activists, in addition to government employees working in public safety, health and human services, public health, labor and employment, or resettlement and integration.

The CRC initially set out to collect post-training survey data to capture self-reported confidence in knowledge across 10 questions. It then began to also use pre-training surveys in March 2022, where it asked the same 10 questions to compare confidence in knowledge before and after each training. The pre- and posttest questions asked participants to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed (or neither) with statements such as "I understand how targeted violence and violent extremism are defined" and "I understand the reasons why community bystanders may not report concerning behaviors." As these questions asked for self-reported confidence in understanding and were not empirical test questions, the research team was unable to verify whether CRC's trainings increased knowledge among participants.

Although researchers could not empirically assess knowledge gain from these trainings, the aggregated survey results did demonstrate an increase in participants' self-reported confidence in their knowledge. For example, as seen in Figure 3, self-reported confidence in knowledge from the trainings that took place from April to June 2022 increased from 66% to 94%.\* Although these data indicate a positive trend in participants feeling more knowledgeable, they have three important limitations. First, CRC shared these aggregated data points with the research team, along with an explanation of how they were calculated, but did not share the detailed data. Second, these data points are aggregated at the quarterly level, and each quarter included a different number of trainings,

different distributions of 101 and 201 trainings, and different types of trainees. Therefore, it is unknown how these results varied by training type and audience. Finally, it is important to note that whereas self-reporting of knowledge gain and self-reporting of confidence level can provide useful feedback to trainers, these should not be interpreted as demonstrating an equivalent increase in participants' knowledge.

### Participants in the CRC's trainings included the following:

- Mental health professionals and administrators
- Health providers
- Social workers and case managers
- Educators and school administrators
- Elected officials
- Activists
- Government employees

**Figure 3. Changes in Training Participants' Self-Reported Confidence in Knowledge, Aggregated by Quarter**



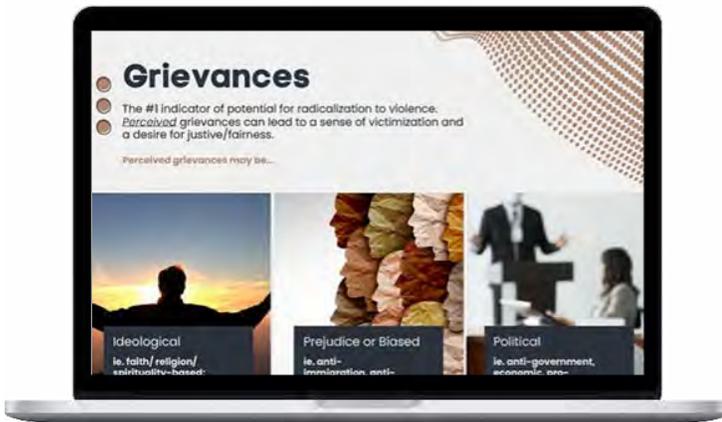
\*Note. These aggregate-level percentages were reported by the Colorado Resilience Collaborative and could not be verified by researchers.



## Asynchronous Training Modules Offer Sustainable Resources

Although asynchronous online training was not included in its IMP, the CRC produced a series of modules that captured some of the curricula delivered through 101 and 201 trainings. The recorded modules were not an exact translation of the trainings but touched on many of their key points. The CRC intends to publish eight recorded training modules in total, although only the overview and the first four modules were available online as of January 2023.

**Figure 4. Screenshot of the Colorado Resilience Collaborative Training Module 2 (Pathways to Violent Extremism)**



Note: Module 2 can be found at <https://ourcommunitybroadcasting.com/archived-programs/>

Modules were narrated, with accompanying visuals to support the content (Figure 4). They ranged from 10 to 54 minutes and were designed to stand on their own so that individuals could watch any module in any order. The focus of each of the currently available modules is listed in Figure 5.

**Figure 5. Online Training Module Topics**

**Module 1: The Problem**

- ✓ Why Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention is important (includes Colorado-specific data provided by Moonshot)
- ✓ Definition of terms
- ✓ Contexts for grievances
- ✓ Intro to the Preventing Targeted Violence (PTV) approach

**Module 2: Pathways to Violent Extremism**

- ✓ Pathways vs. profiling
- ✓ Pathways to violence
- ✓ Grievances
- ✓ Trauma and grievances
- ✓ Push and pull factors
- ✓ Potential signs of radicalization to violence
- ✓ Push and pull factors for disengagement
- ✓ Steps to disengagement
- ✓ Risk factors and protective factors
- ✓ Posttraumatic growth

**Module 3: Mental Health, Complex Trauma, and Culture: Risk and Protective Factors in Context**

- ✓ Public health approach to PTV
- ✓ Social determinants of health and how they can be associated with grievances
- ✓ Multilevel programming
- ✓ Advocacy and involvement

**Module 4: Adverse Childhood Experiences**

- ✓ Background on adverse childhood experiences
- ✓ Collective trauma
- ✓ Risk and protective factors
- ✓ Push and pull factors
- ✓ Push and pull factors for disengagement



## Promote Resources to Prevent Targeted Violence

The CRC's Objective 1.2 was to promote its resources by providing educational materials to at least 50 organizations and 500 professionals in health services, public safety and emergency services, and education who may be in roles to identify, prevent, and respond to threats or incidents of targeted violence. Also included were governmental and nongovernmental agencies that provide health and social services, public safety, education, and resources that support the safety and well-being of communities and society. By the end of the grant period, the CRC reported reaching a total of 1,342 professionals with educational, technical assistance, and outreach materials that offered information and/or recommendations related to the effects of trauma, adversity, and pathways to violence. Materials also discussed how to identify, prevent, and respond to risks, threats, or incidents of targeted violence. The CRC did not share data with the research team about efforts under this objective.

### Partner-Led Trainings Supplement the CRC's Program Staff Knowledge

The CRC supplemented its own 101 and 201 trainings by engaging one of its partners, Moonshot, to design and administer two sets of trainings designed specifically for the CRC's context and needs. Moonshot delivered, virtually, the first two trainings directly to the CRC's staff in 2021, discussing (1) online prevention work in violent extremism and (2) ideology and prevention methods. Moonshot then implemented two related two-hour trainings in October 2022 for the CRC's broader network of practitioners. The first training focused on countering online harms and Moonshot's specific approaches to doing so. The second training examined online involuntary celibate (incel) behavior. Moonshot further supported the CRC's staff knowledge by producing two data-informed reports, one focused on violent extremism trends in Colorado and one on online trends among individuals showing susceptibility to violent extremism. Another CRC partner, Life After Hate, additionally hosted a training for the CRC's staff in November 2021 that examined far-right extremism and detailed services provided through the ExitUSA program. This assisted the CRC's staff in conducting triage and consultations, discussed below, by clarifying when and how to best refer cases to Life After Hate.

## Triage and Consultations

This section examines process evaluation findings regarding the CRC's triage and consultation efforts, which correspond with Goal 2, Objectives 2.1 and 2.2 in the CRC's IMP.

### OBJECTIVES 2.1-2.2:

**2.1 Implement Colorado Consultation Model for triage of TV cases and delivery of in-depth consultation.**

**2.2 Disseminate learnings from applying the CRC consultation approach in practice.**

### The CRC's Consultation Approach

In addition to training support, the CRC provided triage and consultation services for cases of concern using its consultation model (Figure 6). The triage and consultation process began with an individual or organization reaching out to the CRC with a concern or question. The CRC's Program Coordinator spoke with these individuals to gather more information about their case and, if appropriate, referred them to one of the CRC's three Clinical Leads, who focused on specific areas. One Clinical Lead responded to individuals looking for general resources or education or who had concerns surrounding the mental health of affected communities, gang-related violence, gender-based violence, race- and culture-based violence, and broad interpersonal threats. A second Clinical Lead focused on cases involving individuals who had an affinity for extremist groups or ideologies without having taken action or who were demonstrating preparatory or precriminal behaviors. The last Clinical Lead was referred cases that dealt with rapid escalation of ideology, targeted threats of violence, and threat assessment and management. Clinical Leads used the National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment Tool to assess the level of the threat and determine how to proceed accordingly.

If the CRC determined that it was appropriate to provide additional support, the relevant Clinical Lead held a one-to-two-hour consultation with individuals. During this call the lead offered support but did not make any recommendations and did not provide any clinical services. After the call, the lead discussed the case with the rest of the team, as needed, and followed up with resources and recommendations (which at

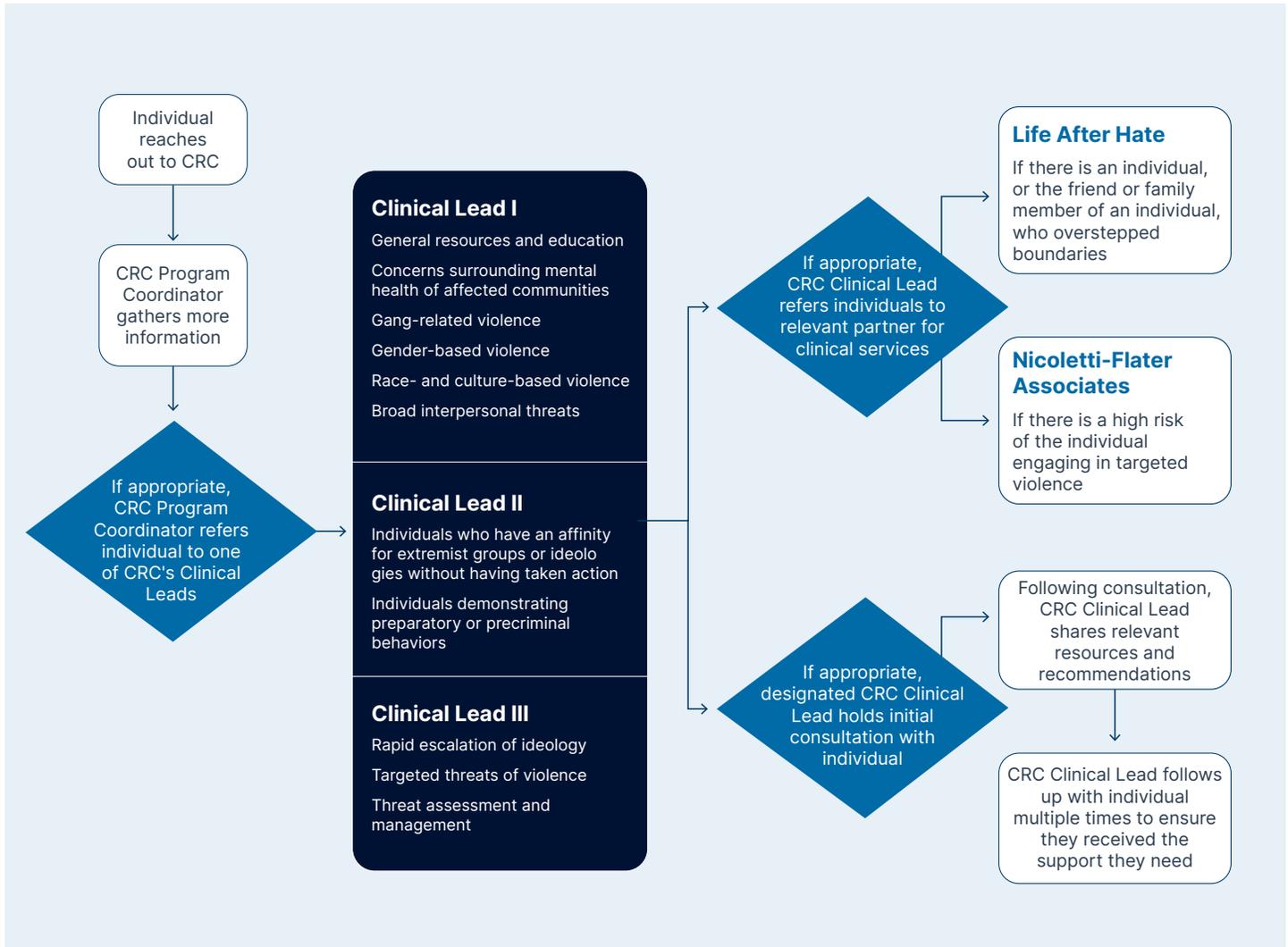


times included a recommendation to participate in one of the CRC's 101 or 201 trainings). Leads generally followed up with individuals multiple times to ensure they received the support they needed.

Cases that needed greater attention or more specific support beyond what the CRC could provide (such as rapid escalation into mobilization to violence or active criminal behavior with ideological intent) were referred to one of two partners, Life After Hate or Nicoletti-Flater Associates, to provide more in-depth support. The CRC would typically refer cases to Life After Hate if the case was brought by a friend or family member of

an individual who may have begun to adhere to an extremist ideology or undertaken minor actions in support of an ideology, or the individual themselves. The CRC referred cases to Nicoletti-Flater Associates if there was a high risk of individuals engaging in targeted violence; Nicoletti-Flater Associates would in turn conduct threat assessment and management directly with cases and liaise with law enforcement and emergency services as appropriate. CRC maintained compliance with its own internal procedures and federal regulations concerning the threshold at which a report to law enforcement must be made.

Figure 6. The Colorado Resilience Collaborative's Consultation Model



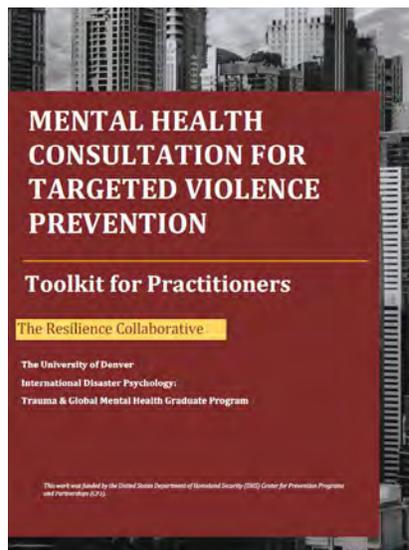


By the end of the grant period, the CRC reported providing triage and consultation services on 101 cases, exceeding their goal of 75 cases, and referred 16 cases to partners. These consultations ranged from one-time meetings, which generally consisted of providing resources, to ongoing consultations that involved the CRC helping with a recurring concern. The CRC received triage and consultation requests organically—that is, individuals contacted the CRC on their own; the CRC did not initiate contact with individuals. Therefore, the types of cases or levels of threats of the cases that the CRC triaged depended on the individuals who came to them requesting support. For each triage and consultation, the CRC documented the number of participants who attended consultations and their organizations, the type of concern, and the consultation service and resources provided.

### Consultation Toolkit Disseminates Learnings

To further codify and disseminate its consultation approach, the CRC developed a consultation toolkit for other professionals, organizations, and community practitioners engaged in targeted violence work (Figure 7). The 50-page toolkit, available in English and Spanish, begins by describing the CRC's mission and objectives; the public health framework for targeted violence prevention; background on pathways to violence; accounting for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in consultations; and methods and principles of conducting mental health consultations. The toolkit then discusses seven case studies that demonstrate in practical terms how the CRC applied the consultation process and the results of their consultation in these cases. It then ends with recommendations for practitioners. The appendices also include useful links and a suggested list of further reading and resources. The CRC aimed to reach at least 500 professionals, 50 organizations, and 20 community agencies with this toolkit. However, because of delays caused by staff turnover, the toolkit has not been publicly posted yet. Once it is made widely available, this toolkit will provide a new, detailed resource to the TVTP field, particularly as the field continues to look increasingly towards multidisciplinary consultations as part of a public health approach. With few resources currently available that explain how to conduct such consultations, the CRC's toolkit delineates the specific mechanisms, methods, and challenges that other practitioners should consider, based on the CRC's experience.

**Figure 7. The Colorado Resilience Collaborative's Consultation Toolkit**



## Community Prevention Gatherings

This section examines process evaluation findings regarding the CRC's community prevention gatherings, which correspond with Goal 2, Objective 2.3 in the CRC's IMP.

### **OBJECTIVE 2.3:**

**Host virtual events for collaboration and knowledge sharing for professionals engaged in targeted violence prevention and intervention.**

### Community Prevention Gathering Format and Participants

As part of the CRC's second program goal, which was to strengthen local networks and collaboration for the prevention and intervention of targeted violence, the CRC hosted five community prevention gatherings (referred to in the IMP as collaboration and knowledge-sharing events). Gatherings typically lasted for two hours and were held either in a hybrid format or in person depending on participant preferences and COVID-19 pandemic conditions. According to the CRC, gatherings began with participating organizations sharing their needs and concerns, followed by the CRC sharing resources on psychological first aid and mental health service referrals, then discussing relevant consultation scenarios, and concluding with answering questions.



Each of the five sessions brought together organizations and service providers focused on particular communities: LGBTQIA+, Spanish-speaking and Latin, New American, and military and veteran communities, in addition to substance abuse and rehabilitation programs. The CRC reported that a total of 157 individuals participated, ranging from 20 to 45 people per event. The data provided by the CRC regarding these gatherings can be seen in Figure 8.

**Figure 8. Community Prevention Gathering Participants**



## Online Resource Library

This section examines process evaluation findings regarding the CRC's online resource library, which corresponds with Goal 3, Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 in the CRC's IMP.

### OBJECTIVE 3.1-3.2:

**3.1 Develop and launch an online PTV resource library.**

**3.2 Expand training and technical assistance through online PTV resource library.**

The final piece of the CRC's grant was to create an online resource library of training and technical assistance materials regarding the prevention of and intervention in targeted violence. This library was designed to facilitate access to these resources after the grant's end. According to the CRC, the resource library

was launched in June 2022 but was subsequently taken down because the CRC did not have the resources to maintain it due to staff turnover and has not been relaunched as of April 2023. The CRC reported to researchers that the library received a total of 2,158 views in the past year, which includes unique views of the main page and the subpages combined, and contained a total of 36 resources including training presentations and briefing materials. The research team was not informed that the online resource library had been taken down and did not see the library when it was active.

## Challenges

**Staff Turnover.** The CRC faced challenges in retaining staff who played critical roles in the grant work. For example, the Director of Communications resigned in May 2022, which caused delays in development timelines for the CRC's training recordings and online resource library. Additionally, the CRC initially intended to create a form to be completed by individuals downloading resources from the online resource library, which would enable the CRC to collect data on individuals accessing resources and how they planned to use them. Because of staff turnover and the associated delays, the CRC was unable to create this form and was therefore not able to track and analyze data on individuals using the resources. Additionally, this staff turnover meant that the CRC ultimately had to take down its online resource library.

**Technical Issues.** The CRC experienced technical issues with the creation and launch of the online resource library. The CRC initially sought to host the library on a third-party website to avoid restrictions from the University of Denver website that would require viewers to create a profile. However, the CRC ultimately determined that it was not possible to use a third-party website because the library would not be structured as needed. Therefore, the CRC decided to host the library on the University of Denver website.

**Community Hesitancy.** A significant portion of the CRC's grant revolved around engagement with various communities affected by targeted violence. However, staff noted that some community members expressed hesitation about engaging, which required staff to invest significant time into discussing communities' concerns and questions and explaining the importance of engagement on this topic. One staff member indicated that, although concerns varied by community, some hesitations came from either a reluctance to discuss targeted

violence or a concern regarding confidentiality due to the funding source. Additionally, the CRC’s grant sought to include rural areas across Colorado, but due to the effects of the COVID pandemic as well as social, political, cultural and geographic factors within rural communities across Colorado, there was less engagement in training and consultation activities than in the more urban Front Range corridor including Boulder, Denver and Colorado Springs. Navigating the complex dynamics present in these areas was therefore a challenge and required that the CRC spend time to build these ties.

**Implementation Delays.** Researchers were told at the end of the grant period that the CRC had faced implementation delays because of various DHS approval processes. This included a delay of approximately six months as the CRC awaited review and approval from CAPO, which reduced the time the CRC had to implement its activities. Additionally, the CRC experienced delays due to challenges with DHS administrative and review processes.

**Disagreement From Other TVTP Actors.** The research team was told that the CRC experienced friction with other TVTP actors who were not familiar with a mental health approach to TVTP, as was the focus of the CRC’s grant. Although researchers were not aware of specific examples, some actors in the prevention space may be unfamiliar, and therefore not agree, with a mental health approach.

## IMP Accomplishments

The CRC achieved its objective of providing targeted violence prevention training (Objective 1.1) by training more than 1,500 individuals in its 101 and 201 curricula, surpassing its original target of 800 individuals trained (Figure 9). Without detailed data, researchers were unable to ascertain whether the CRC achieved its goal of providing training to at least 50 organizations or to assess whether the CRC met its goal of 75% of trainees reporting increased knowledge of targeted violence and how to apply these learnings. The survey results that the CRC reported to the research team did indicate an increase in trainees’ confidence in their knowledge, but the surveys administered did not constitute empirical tests of knowledge. The CRC supplemented trainings by providing additional resources regarding the nature of targeted violence and ways to use behavioral indicators to assess threats and manage cases (Objective 1.2) to 1,342 individuals, far surpassing the goal of 500.

The CRC met its objective in the implementation of its consultation model (Objective 2.1) by providing consultation services for a total of 101 cases and referring 16 cases to relevant partners, surpassing its target of providing consultation services for 75 individuals. Additionally, the CRC codified its methods and relevant learnings (Objective 2.1) in the form of a consultation toolkit for practitioners to use beyond the grant’s period of performance. However, the toolkit was not publicly posted and disseminated as of the end of the grant period, so the CRC was not able to meet its distribution targets.

Objective 2.3 shared the same goal of strengthening local networks and collaboration as the CRC’s triage and consultation work and sought to do so by holding collaboration and knowledge-sharing events. The CRC hosted a total of five gatherings with 157 community representatives. Without detailed data, researchers were unable to confirm what professions and counties these individuals represented, whether the CRC achieved its stated target of 75% of participants reporting satisfaction with the events, and whether these events resulted in stronger local networks and collaboration among these communities.

The CRC’s final goal was to create sustainable approaches for the prevention of and intervention in domestic targeted violence by launching its online resource library (Objectives 3.1 and 3.2). The CRC launched the library, containing relevant targeted violence resources, in June 2022. The CRC reportedly surpassed its goal of reaching 1,000 individuals with the library, with 2,158 views while the library was active, although it is not clear how many individuals this figure translates to.

**Figure 9. The Colorado Resilience Collaborative FY2020 Grant Outputs**



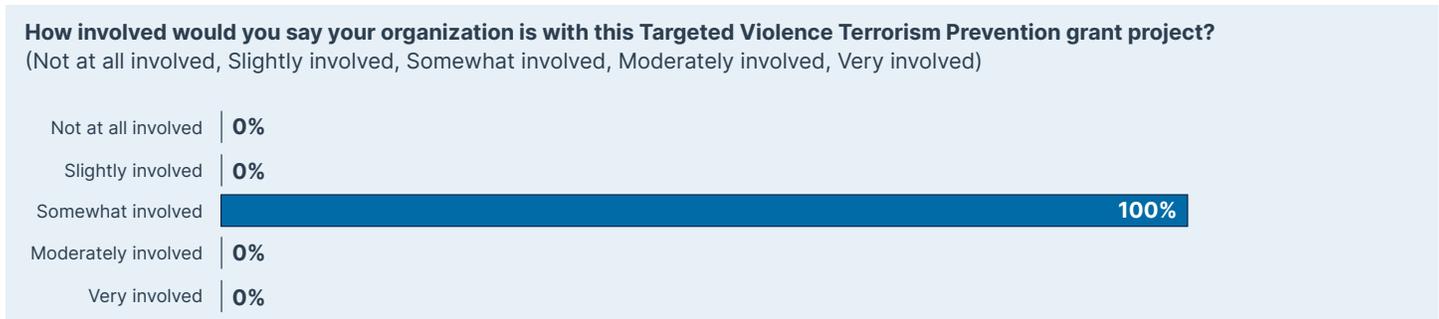
# CRC's Partner Survey Findings

The CRC engaged four partners to support its FY2020 grant. Researchers surveyed these partners to understand their collaboration with the CRC and the challenges they faced. This section discusses findings from the survey.

## Nature of Partnerships

The survey revealed that levels of collaboration between the CRC and its partners were consistent, even though different partners had varying levels of involvement in the CRC's work. All four partners stated that they were somewhat involved in the grant (Figure 10).

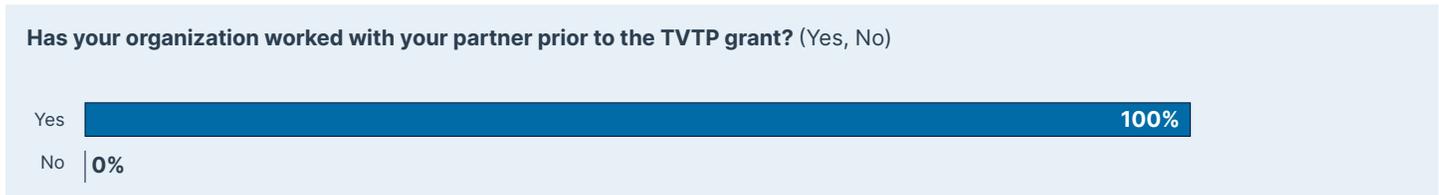
**Figure 10. Partner Organization Involvement**



Similarly, the four partners stated that they had worked with the CRC prior to the TVTP grant (Figure 11). However, all partners stated that their relationship with the CRC was still developing (Figure 12). When asked about the quality of the relationship with the CRC, one partner stated that the relationship was fair and the other three noted that it was good (Figure 13). Overall, these survey results indicate that the CRC used its existing relationships to support its work under the FY2020 grant in a consistent manner but that no partners were heavily involved in the project and all of them considered their relationship with the CRC as still developing. When asked about positive outcomes of the grant, one partner shared,

“Great professional collaboration and building of relationships that I foresee will be sustained outside of the terms of this grant.”

**Figure 11. Prior Partner Collaboration**



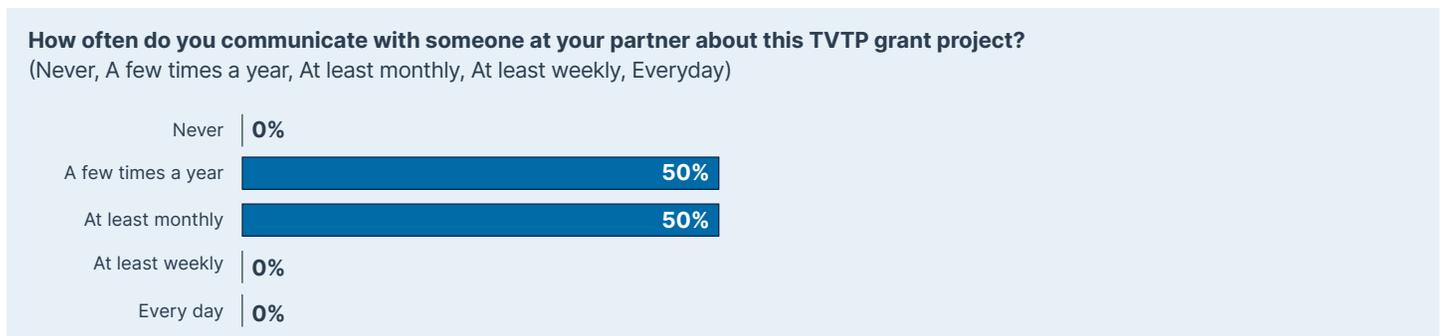
**Figure 12. Partner Organization Relationships**



**Figure 13. Strength of Partnership**

## Communication

Half of partners stated that they communicated with the CRC a few times a year, whereas the other half communicated at least monthly (Figure 14). Given that the CRC did much of the work itself for this grant, these responses are not surprising and seem reasonable.

**Figure 14. Communication With Partner Organizations**

## Challenges

In the interest of privacy, researchers were unable to report partner responses on implementation challenges because some participants left these questions blank, resulting in only two responses. However, one partner provided an illustration of the local political climate challenges facing organizations working on TVTP in Colorado:

“There have been quite a few significant cases against local political leaders and law enforcement agencies in Colorado over the past year and a half, which has led to an increase in tension between leaders and community members. This has broken trust and caused the community to be less trusting in general, which makes it difficult to implement programming that requires trust from the community.”

# Discussion

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The CRC's grant enabled it to implement an approach to TVTP that focused on public and mental health perspectives. Throughout the grant, the CRC placed an emphasis on engaging with a variety of communities across Colorado that are vulnerable to TVT, both to learn what those communities are experiencing and to share information and resources with them. The CRC's 101 and 201 trainings engaged a wide range of professionals in Colorado, including mental health professionals and administrators, health providers, social workers and case managers, educators and school administrators, community-based nonprofit workers, elected officials, and activists, in addition to government employees working in public safety, health and human services, public health, labor and employment, or resettlement and integration. Because of this large variety of professions, the CRC tailored its trainings to each audience to ensure that materials were responsive to their specific context. This responsiveness was important to contend with community hesitancy and gain buy-in. The research team could not verify an increase in knowledge from these trainings, although the CRC-reported data indicate that participants' confidence in their knowledge increased.

The CRC implemented its model for triage and consultation of TVTP-related cases, providing resources and consultation services to many and referring others, when appropriate, to their partners, Life After Hate and Nicoletti-Flater Associates. However, the research team was unable to assess the effectiveness of the CRC's approach because of lack of access to data. The five community prevention gatherings provided additional opportunities to collaborate with vulnerable communities to bring them into the broader TVTP conversation, learn more about their needs, and give them support, including follow-up trainings and consultations.

The CRC captured its approach and learnings through resources, including a consultation toolkit, and disseminated recorded training modules that enable practitioners from outside of Colorado to continue to access and learn from their training. The CRC additionally established an online resource library, although it was subsequently taken down.

Ultimately, the CRC's decision not to allow researchers to observe trainings and community gatherings limits what can be said about those events.

## Sustainability

The primary opportunity for sustainability that arose from the CRC's grant lies in the development and dissemination of its resources. The CRC published and shared with researchers four recorded training modules, which discuss the targeted violence problem, pathways to violent extremism, mental health and trauma, and adverse childhood experiences. These videos will continue to be available to practitioners and others working to prevent targeted violence, both inside Colorado and beyond, after the grant's end. The CRC additionally intended to promote the sustainability of its work through the online resource library and a consultation toolkit, detailing the CRC's public health approach and providing case scenarios for practitioners. However, the resource library is not available online as of the time of writing this report. The consultation toolkit provides a detailed explanation of how to conduct multidisciplinary consultations for targeted violence prevention that can assist other practitioners in applying the CRC's practices in their own contexts. However, while the toolkit was produced and translated into Spanish, it is not currently available online. The sustainability of the CRC's work beyond the end of the grant period of performance will therefore be limited until these resources are made publicly available.

It was unclear as of the end of the grant how the CRC's triage and consultation services would continue. Staff indicated that the CRC would continue to provide these services under alternate funding streams, but that the exact focus of these efforts may shift.

## Recommendations for the TVTP Grant Program

### ✓ **Ensure Online Resources Are Easily Accessible.**

As discussed above, the CRC's efforts towards sustainability were limited by inhibited access to the resources that they produced. This limits the reach and impact of these resources. To maximize the viewership and application of these resources, grantees should ensure that online materials are easily accessible through web searches and on relevant web pages.

### ✓ **Incorporate Time and Resources for Community-Based Research Into Program Design.**

The CRC's staff noted spending significant time learning from various communities about their needs, interests, questions, and concerns. One staff member noted that the grant would have benefited from an initial period devoted to community participatory research before implementation began to better understand these dynamics and more effectively design materials and activities. Additionally, the CRC faced some resistance from communities it sought to work with due to the grant's subject matter and a lack of existing rapport and relationships. Grantees working directly with communities should therefore be encouraged to consider their existing knowledge of community needs and priorities and to incorporate the time and resources needed to deepen this knowledge, if necessary, in their grant design. They should also be encouraged to assess community buy-in and identify potential local champions for their work, as these factors can play a critical role in the success of projects that focus clearly on community engagement. If existing buy-in is weak and local champions cannot be identified, grantees should additionally budget time to overcome these barriers by engaging deeply with communities and key leaders. Grantees should also assess their existing relationships with the communities they seek to engage and, as necessary, budget time and resources for building or strengthening them. Although these practices may require shifting activity timelines backward, they can prevent roadblocks to community engagement, enable

grantees to develop an effective communications strategy, and ensure that activities are responsive to the communities that grantees seek to engage.

### ✓ **Incorporate Timing Considerations for CAPO and DHS Reviews Into Program Design.**

The CRC was unable to begin grant implementation until six months after its originally planned start date as it awaited CAPO review and approval. This delay significantly reduced the amount of time that the CRC had to implement its activities and achieve its targets. The CRC faced additional delays throughout the project due to challenges with DHS administrative and review processes. The CRC had not accounted for these significant periods of review in its program design, further delaying its implementation timeline. For future grants, DHS should make CAPO processes and guidelines and expectations surrounding CP3 reviews of materials clear to those applying for TVTP grants. This could take the form of a webinar, for example, explaining primary considerations for CAPO, its possible effect on different TVTP grants, and timeline expectations. Any such webinar or similar resource should additionally make clear to prospective grantees that, as a part of TVTP grant requirements, DHS CP3 will review materials developed, which will require a certain amount of time. In turn, prospective grantees should account for these requirements in their program design, adjusting implementation timelines accordingly.

### ✓ **Enhance Data Sharing.**

The TVTP field is characterized by a limited evidence base, which contributes to a lack of agreement in the broader field regarding what constitutes effective programming. As discussed throughout this report, data limitations significantly inhibit the ability of researchers to document TVTP efforts and assess their outcomes. DHS's TVTP program could build a stronger foundation of data-driven practice by further enabling data sharing among grantees. One way that DHS could encourage greater data sharing is by making sure that grantees are aware that institutional review board protocols can

be amended to allow for data sharing with researchers. This would enable grantees to share detailed data and enable researchers to strengthen the TVTP evidence base. Grantees with privacy and confidentiality concerns should also be made aware that nondisclosure and data use agreements can provide clear safeguards and protocols for handling these data.

# Appendix E.

## Life After Hate Site Profile

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# Life After Hate



Developed for:



Science and  
Technology

Developed by RTI International

# List of Abbreviations

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<b>ACD</b>	Alliance for Co-Responder Development
<b>CMS</b>	Case Management System
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Homeland Security
<b>IMP</b>	Implementation & Measurement Plan
<b>MHPCD</b>	Mental Health Professional Co-Responder Development
<b>MI</b>	Motivational Interviewing
<b>TVTP</b>	Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention
<b>VFRE</b>	Violent Far-Right Extremism
<b>WSE</b>	White Supremacist Extremism

## Executive Summary

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The Science and Technology Directorate at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security funded RTI International to research and evaluate a Fiscal Year 2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention grant to Life After Hate to examine program accomplishments, challenges, and recommendations. The evaluation team completed a process evaluation of two of Life After Hate's three grant components: its ExitUSA services to support exiting white supremacy extremists and its outreach to build awareness of exit process and ExitUSA services. Researchers additionally conducted an outcome evaluation of Life After Hate's third grant component: the development and implementation of training for mental health and law enforcement professionals. The research team reviewed materials developed for the ExitUSA program, training curricula, and other program materials; observed selected training sessions; interviewed relevant staff and partners; and analyzed pre-, post-, and follow-up test data. Table ES-A summarizes these findings.

Despite organizational challenges that developed during the grant period of performance, including a change in leadership, Life After Hate completed all of its objectives. It succeeded in providing ExitUSA services to support exiting white supremacy extremists and in providing aftercare services through a modified design of the ExitUSA mentorship work. The ExitUSA program provided services to over 150 unique clients, revamped its screening and assessment tools, and added more than 85 referral partners to its interactive resource map. In the first year of the grant, Life After Hate created Community Forums and resources for exiting individuals, family, and friends; however, the forums were mostly inactive by the end of this evaluation. Life After Hate produced six counternarrative videos, conducted a targeted online campaign, and redesigned the Life After Hate and ExitUSA web pages. Life After Hate developed and implemented two training curricula for mental health and law enforcement professionals. First, it conducted 8 Mental Health Professional Co-Responder Development training sessions that convened 157 mental health professionals in total. Second, it developed an Alliance for Co-Responder Development asynchronous online training with 67 community law enforcement professionals—working in law enforcement, corrections, and probation/parole—completing the training modules, surpassing their preset target of 50.

This work is supported by funding by the United States Department of Homeland Security, Science and Technology Directorate under contract #140D0418C0012/P00005.

Table ES-A: Summary of Findings

 <p><b>ExitUSA Services</b></p>	Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide ExitUSA services to facilitate exit from violent white supremacist extremism</li> <li>• Provide ExitUSA's aftercare services to build individual resilience</li> </ul>
	Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 156 individual and family cases managed<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Screening tools updated</li> <li>• 85+ new referral partners added to an internal directory map</li> <li>• Community Forum channels created for exiting individuals and friends and families</li> </ul>
	Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff shortages delayed intervention implementation</li> <li>• Inadequate case management system (CMS) caused difficulties in comprehensively documenting services and producing reliable reports</li> <li>• Unclear IMP led to speculations about activities and outputs</li> </ul>
	Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement trainings for new and existing staff</li> <li>• Conduct regular internal assessments to monitor service delivery practices, as well as staffing levels and composition in relation to demand for services</li> <li>• Ensure that CMS is in place allowing for reliable recording of client interactions and generating aggregate reports</li> <li>• Implement standardized protocols for CMS data audits</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Exiting Process Awareness Outreach</b></p>	Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance outreach to build awareness of the violent white supremacist extremism exit process and ExitUSA intervention services</li> </ul>
	Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life After Hate and ExitUSA web pages updated and redesigned</li> <li>• One pilot campaign and one five-month targeted online campaign conducted</li> <li>• Six counternarrative videos developed</li> </ul>
	Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff turnover and shortage delayed development of videos and stalled website redesign</li> </ul>
	Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop standard operating procedure and process documentation to help with staff transitions and prevent loss of institutional knowledge</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Mental Health and Law Enforcement Professionals Trainings</b></p>	Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build local capacity to enhance the ability to identify and respond to individuals at risk of mobilizing to violence</li> </ul>
	Outputs and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted eight MHPCD training sessions for</li> <li>• 157 mental health and other professionals</li> <li>• Increased the average participants' knowledge score from 77% to 89% immediately after MHPCD training and to 87% three months after MHPCD training</li> <li>• Adapted ACD training to online modality</li> <li>• 67 local prevention network professionals completed the ACD training</li> <li>• Increased the average participants knowledge score from 57% before to 89% immediately after ACD training and to 88% two months after ACD training</li> <li>• Developed Community Forum channels</li> </ul>
	Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change in the organization leadership led to continued revisions of the MHPCD curriculum</li> <li>• Recruitment for the ACD training met with red tape when communicating directly with law enforcement organizations</li> </ul>
	Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiate development of outreach and training recruitment materials earlier to prevent delays after the curriculum is finalized</li> <li>• When developing new training, review and implement training best practices and connect with others in the field for training review and feedback</li> <li>• Develop a plan for training graduates to use the Community Forum for continuous education and resource sharing</li> </ul>

Note: Outputs listed in the IMP did not line up with their relevant components. They were realigned in this report for the sake of clarity. Only selected outputs were listed because of an extensive number of outputs.

<sup>1</sup>Output in the original IMP called for 360–450 individual and family cases managed. The number was revised to 150 in Quarter 6 of the project.

# Site Profile: Life After Hate

Life After Hate was awarded a two-year grant by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships in 2020 and was selected in 2021 to undergo an independent evaluation. This site profile reviews Life After Hate's grant design, implementation, accomplishments, challenges, and relevant recommendations for future programming in targeted violence and terrorism prevention (TVTP). Life After Hate's grant underwent an evaluability assessment and a process and outcome evaluation. The research team completed a process evaluation of the ExitUSA services to support exiting white supremacy extremists and the outreach to build awareness of exit process and ExitUSA services. Researchers also conducted an outcome evaluation of the trainings provided for mental health and law enforcement professionals.

This report is separated into three sections. The first section examines process- and outcome-level findings related to Life After Hate's grant implementation. The second section details the findings of a survey that researchers conducted of Life After Hate's project partners. The final section includes an overall discussion of evaluation findings, a discussion of the sustainability of Life After Hate's grant activities, and recommendations for the TVTP grant program.

For Life After Hate's full Implementation & Measurement Plan (IMP), which outlines its goals, target audiences, objectives, activities, inputs, time frame, anticipated outputs, performance measures, and data collection plan, contact DHS.

## Life After Hate

Life After Hate is the first nonprofit organization in the United States dedicated to helping individuals disengage from violent far-right hate groups and hateful online spaces. Since its founding in 2011, Life After Hate has expanded its services to include friends and family members of individuals who are involved with the violent far right or are disengaging.

Founded by former extremists (known as "formers"), Life After Hate is committed to combating violent extremism to establish a safer, more resilient nation. A central part of the organization's mission is the innovative approach to interventions. The multidisciplinary team model combines formers and mental health practitioners to help individuals identify what they need to leave hate and violence and be able to set and manage their goals to restore their lives. Services are provided online, allowing Life After Hate to provide support to individuals across the country.



# Life After Hate's FY2020 Grant Summary

Life After Hate's FY2020 TVTP grant program was divided into three goals, each centered around a different project component. Due to the distinctive nature of each of these components, this report addresses each of them separately.



### ExitUSA Services to Support Exiting Far-Right Extremists.

Life After Hate sought to provide direct support to individuals who may be questioning their belonging to violent far-right extremism (VFRE), with a goal of facilitating their disengagement, exit, and reintegration, along with supporting families and friends who were concerned about their loved one's engagement with the ideology. Services were provided via ExitUSA, Life After Hate's flagship intervention program.



### Outreach to Build Awareness of Exit Process and ExitUSA Services.

Life After Hate sought to increase awareness of the VFRE exit process and ExitUSA intervention services by updating Life After Hate's and ExitUSA-specific website content, conducting an online messaging campaign in collaboration with Life After Hate's subcontractor (Moonshot), and developing VFRE counternarrative videos targeting their client base and the general community.



### Development and Implementation of Training for Professionals.

Life After Hate sought to enhance the ability of local prevention networks to identify and work with individuals at risk of mobilizing to violence through a series of trainings and

the creation of an online Community Forum to provide training graduates with continuous support and network-building opportunities. Two trainings were developed and implemented: the Mental Health Professional Co-Responder Development (MHPCD) training and the Alliance for Co-Responder Development (ACD) training.

## Life After Hate Experienced Considerable Organizational Changes

Life After Hate went through a leadership change in the middle of the grant (beginning in October 2021) when the Executive Director and several other staff left the organization (Figure 1). These organizational changes are discussed throughout this report and are described here to provide important context to the grant and its implementation.

One existing board member took on the role of acting Executive Director in collaboration with the ExitUSA Program Director. The new leaders were tasked with reorganizing service delivery and other activities included in the original project narrative and IMP. Life After Hate experienced additional key staff turnover until the new Executive Director began work in July 2022.

These leadership changes directly affected grant implementation by delaying service delivery and material development, and by creating a lack of clarity around the initial intentions of the FY2020 grant project.

Figure 1. Life After Hate Organizational Change





# ExitUSA Services

## ExitUSA Services Support Individuals Exiting Far-Right Extremist Groups

ExitUSA, Life After Hate's intervention program, provides direct help to individuals and friends or family of individuals interested in disengaging from violent far-right hate groups. ExitUSA staff do so by exploring with clients their reasons for leaving while addressing the barriers that exiting individuals typically face. When it is a concerned friend or family member reaching out to ExitUSA, they are provided resources as needed depending on the situation. When a client reaches out to ExitUSA they are provided a social worker who is responsible for their case management and rescue coordination. Because exiting clients approach ExitUSA in varying stages of disengagement, it is important that the program designs a tailored plan and resources, including mental health referrals, practical skills-building, and peer-to-peer interventions. ExitUSA also provides exit specialists as part of the program - former VFRE members who have exited and now serve as peers to those currently in the exit process.

## Design and Methods for Process Evaluation

For the process evaluation of ExitUSA services, researchers engaged in systematic information gathering through monthly calls with Life After Hate to document overall progress. The research team requested systematic data transfers of the program data collected in the ExitUSA case management system (CMS), but those data could not be produced because of inconsistent electronic tracking and missing data. However, ExitUSA staff conducted a cross-sectional manual chart review that allowed researchers insight into symptoms experienced by the clients at the program intake. In addition, researchers reviewed grant materials including the theory of change, client flowchart, and various needs and risk assessment forms. Furthermore, the evaluation team interviewed five ExitUSA staff to collect information on implementation, services, and lessons learned.

## Findings

This section examines the process evaluation findings regarding ExitUSA's direct services, which correspond with Goal 1, Objectives 1.1 and 1.2 in Life After Hate's IMP.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1: Provide ExitUSA services to facilitate exit from violent WSE**

**OBJECTIVE 1.2: Provide ExitUSA aftercare services to build individual resilience**

## ExitUSA Program Reorganization & Redesign Resulted in Improvements

“The FY20 TVTP grant gave Life After Hate the opportunity to hire multiple professional staff to audit and restructure the organization to meet established legal, ethical, and practice standards.”

**LAH Staff Member**

Outside of the TVTP grant, Life After Hate conducted an internal audit in the summer of 2021 and found the ExitUSA program to be significantly understaffed, considering the demand for direct services. The program lacked a clearly defined structure, so program staff were pulled in many directions without enough time to adequately support clients and keep up with administrative needs. For example, existing screening tools were administered to clients, but staff lacked the time needed to document these data correctly and consistently in the CMS. The audit also found that the program was significantly understaffed in terms of competencies, which meant that all services being provided at the time were akin to paraprofessional peer mentoring by peer mentors with minimal training and oversight, rather than the social work case management that LAH now provides to clients post-reorganization. Program staff described working conditions as “unhealthy” before October 2021. One staff member explained, “Our staff believed they had to do everything all the time for everyone or someone would die from a hate-related accident.” This undue pressure resulted in staff burnout.



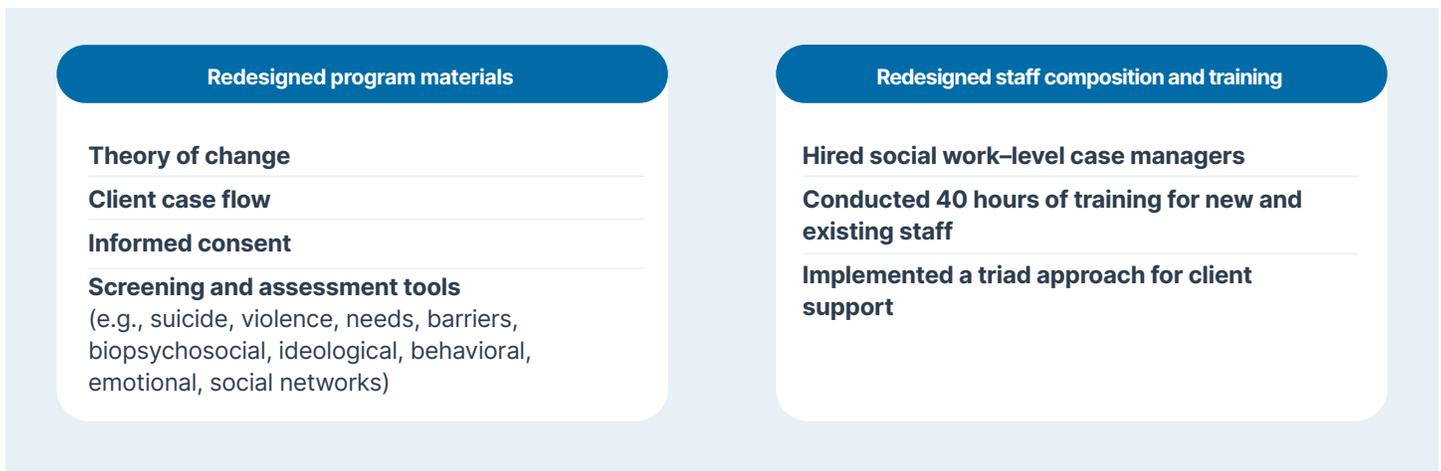
After the leadership change, however, the organizational culture shifted to a greater focus on structure, professionalism, open communication, and wellness of employees and contractors. One staff member noted, “Ever since the [reorganization], I am a lot happier working here and I imagine others would agree. Our clients get better services.” Life After Hate’s experience highlights the importance of proper selection, training, licensure, and support of staff taking part in such interventions, as well as the risks of not doing so.

The reorganization and redesign of ExitUSA also led to measurable changes in client contact. During the first year of the grant, prior to the redesign, the majority of clients were seen only once, according to LAH’s records (and are therefore classified as being enrolled for less than 1 month). After staffing changes were made to emphasize social work case management provided by full time social workers as the primary service providers, the majority of clients were seen more than six times (an enrollment of six months). According to LAH, approximately 25% of exiting individuals stayed in services for 9-18 months.

## Redesigning the ExitUSA Program

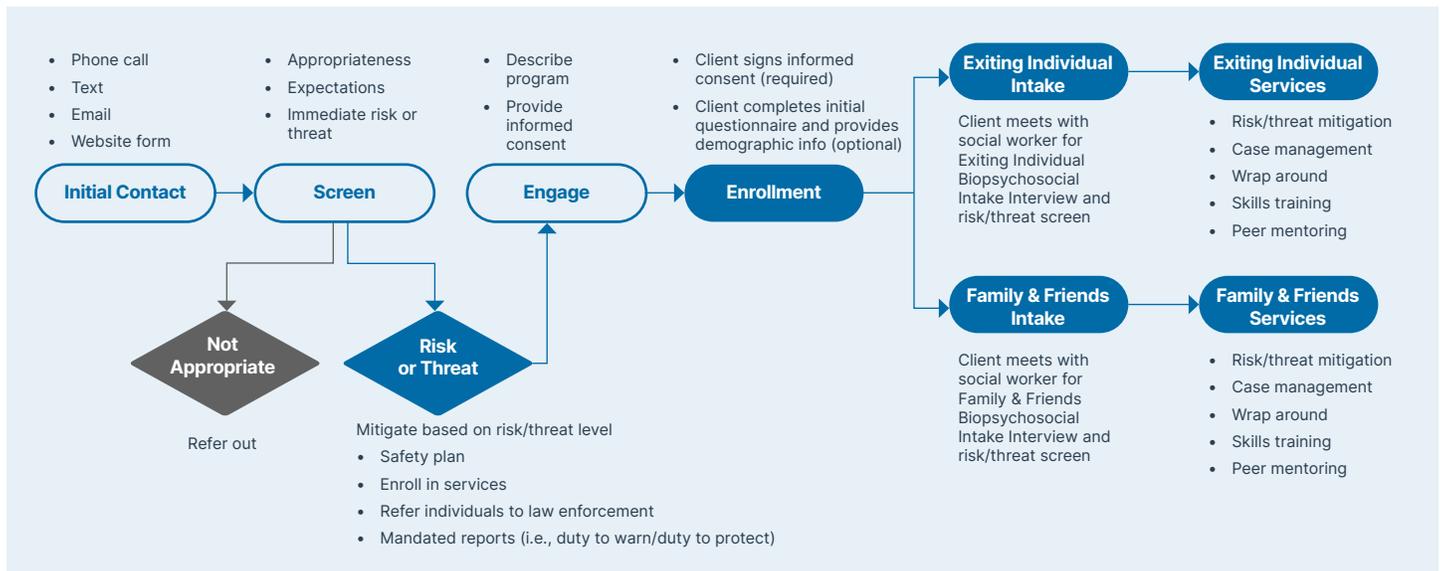
As a result of the internal audit findings, the ExitUSA program was restructured beginning in September 2021. Life After Hate updated a suite of program materials, revised their client case flow, changed staff composition and training, expanded the number of referral partners, and redesigned aftercare services (Figure 2).

Figure 2. ExitUSA Program Redesign



**Program Case Flow.** Life After Hate revised several program materials, including its client case flow. As pictured in Figure 3, exiting individuals and friends and family clients follow the same path to the program under this revised case flow system. After a potential client makes initial contact with ExitUSA, staff screen them and provide information about the ExitUSA program. The eligible clients sign a consent form, begin enrollment, and meet with the ExitUSA case manager, who is a trained social worker, to complete a comprehensive battery of intake assessments—biopsychosocial, risk, and threat screenings—along with a goals and needs assessment. The case manager also administers the VFRE assessment, which is repeated every three to six months.

Exiting individuals receive case management services that are focused on addressing factors that individuals identify as contributing to their ability to leave VFRE, including referrals to community resources and support, and an internal referral to peer support provided by exit specialists. Exit specialists work with individuals on involvement in VFRE ideology, behavior, and social networks. Friends and family clients typically receive case management services focused primarily on relevant safety issues. They can opt to join a twice-monthly psychoeducational support group that features a structured resource or intervention (e.g., healthy boundary setting, self-care, positive interactions with a loved one in the movement) and an unstructured peer support opportunity.

**Figure 3. Redesigned ExitUSA Client Screening and Intake Workflow**

**Staff Composition and Training.** During the ExitUSA redesign, LAH hired new staff to supervise the program, who brought high levels of education and training in their fields and license to practice independently. Additionally, at the conclusion of this evaluation, ExitUSA employed three full-time social work-level case managers and four part-time exit specialists, representing an expansion in staffing and service delivery capacity from no social work case managers and two part-time exit specialists employed at the initiation of the program redesign. These new staff also represent an increase in competencies, as the three case managers have extensive experience providing case management in a variety of contexts that further contribute to their competencies with LAH's clients (e.g., incarcerated youth and adults, substance abuse, domestic violence, child welfare). Current and new staff received an estimated 40 hours of training that included risk assessment; suicide and domestic violence risk; and overall training in documentation standards, ethics, and compliance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). These trainings were rolled out as a part of onboarding for new staff and ongoing training for existing staff. ExitUSA began implementing a triad approach in which an exit specialist, a case manager, and a client would meet to ensure comprehensive client support. Only some clients are referred

to peer mentors and all clients working with a peer mentor are required to meet with a social worker at least once per month, if not more, to ensure adequate professional oversight of clients. Staff noted their appreciation for the opportunity to work alongside formers, indicating that doing so helped individuals understand “that people are complex and that good people are capable of bad things and bad people are capable of amazing things.”

**Expanding the Number of Referral Partners.** ExitUSA staff worked to expand a list of trusted referral partners and update the internal referral directory for various services, including tattoo removal and housing. As a result, more than 85 new referral partners were added to their interactive resource map.

**Redesign Aftercare Services.** Life After Hate's original plan, as described in the grant proposal and IMP, indicated that it would establish a formal ExitUSA mentor program to provide aftercare services. This plan was modified by the new ExitUSA Program Director and discussed with DHS. After the redesign, Life After Hate reportedly formalized the approach and onboarded exit specialists to provide these mentorship services, although they are not formally considered mentors.

# Providing Direct Services to Contend with Complex, Individual, and Nonlinear Exit Pathways

In its closeout report, Life After Hate described the stories of three clients who have received ExitUSA services.

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**Client A** identified as a “Neo-Nazi,” holding violent, antisemitic beliefs for over 30 years, he reached out to Life After Hate in the summer of 2021 stating, “I don’t know what I want, but (my beliefs) are becoming a problem.” He has worked closely with a peer mentor who has helped him to challenge his long-held antisemitic and racist beliefs. Client A began disposing of his Nazi paraphernalia, including flags and clothing emblazoned with swastikas, and “WWII memorabilia” (his terminology for Nazi artifacts). He now states “violence isn’t right,” has tentatively begun engaging with anti-racism information and independently challenges the rhetoric that promotes Jewish conspiracy theories. He has begun developing and nurturing friendships with prosocial people outside of VFRE. Most recently, the peer mentor has convinced him to work more actively with the social worker assigned to his case to find and access mental health services to address the effects of childhood trauma, abuse, and neglect.

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**Client B** identifies as a “patriot” with anti-government, anti-immigrant, and anti-Muslim beliefs steeped in white supremacist and antisemitic justifications. He reached out to Life After Hate saying his involvement in VFRE is straining his family relationships. He is a high school dropout, unemployed, and socially isolated beyond the VFRE group. Client B has worked with the social worker to identify the steps necessary to obtain his GED and figure out how to re-establish friendships with peers he had lost contact with after joining the VFRE group. With the social worker’s encouragement, Client B found a church to attend regularly, a community institution in which he found comfort and support as a child. The peer mentor has worked with Client B to problem solve the safest way to slowly disengage from the VFRE group and has helped him to challenge some of the VFRE ideology, making progress in reducing violent anti-government beliefs. This client is in the early stages of a long path to exit VFRE.

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**Client C** was part of a white supremacist gang and engaged in illegally transporting drugs and weapons. He reported to Life After Hate that he suffered from anger management issues, anxiety, and depression, and had a history of substance abuse

from which he had been sober for some time. He was largely ambivalent about exiting but told Life After Hate that he was estranged from his family and saw exiting as a means of potentially reconnecting with them. After establishing a working relationship with a social worker and peer mentor he admitted he had participated in militia-style “training exercises” with a violent extremist group. He confided that he had been binge-watching videos of acts of mass violence based on white supremacist beliefs and fantasizing about committing a similar mass violence attack. He stated that he had relapsed into substance abuse, was barely sleeping, and experienced racing thoughts. He told his Peer Mentor that he was reaching his breaking point, wanted to change, and needed help.

Within less than 24 hours Client C had met with the social worker who conducted a comprehensive assessment of the needs and targets for intervention, assessed risk and threat, and developed a plan to address the complex set of needs. The wrap-around plan included identifying substance abuse treatment facilities and helping Client C access substance abuse and mental health treatment. Client C also felt he could not sustain change while still in the company of the violent far-right group. The case manager helped him to identify a new place to live with a prosocial/nonviolent acquaintance, aided in problem solving, and supported the steps he needed to take to geographically relocate to get away from his violent extremist peers. As soon as he relocated, the case manager helped Client C access substance abuse and mental health treatment, navigating what can be a challenging and frustrating health system. During these initial weeks, the case manager and peer mentor met with Client C via phone, video meeting, or text check-in at least daily to provide emotional support, reinforce his positive choices and changes, and address any barriers to continued progress.

Client C continued to meet with the peer mentor and case manager throughout substance abuse and mental health treatment, has taken steps to have his hate symbols tattoos covered up, reports he no longer fantasizes about committing acts of violence, and is challenging the violence-justifying, racist beliefs he has held for so long. He has re-established contact with his family, established a nonviolent and prosocial social network and is looking for ways he can give back to his community. When he was at his lowest point, he trusted his Life After Hate peer mentor and social worker enough to be honest, ask for help, and is now meaningfully reintegrating into society.



## Community Forums Inactive Likely Because Prioritization Pivoted to Direct Client Contact

Life After Hate established an online Community Forum, where, through joining relevant channels, exiting individuals and their families and friends could receive continuous support. The forum was designed as a bank of resources with articles on wellness and discussion chats. Engagement in the forum has declined since its inception, possibly as a result of the restructure of ExitUSA services and prioritization of staff time for meetings with clients as opposed to interactions with forum members. In addition, one staff member shared that the security measures in place for the discussion rooms made it difficult to access them and prevented the program from reaching more people. Life After Hate then decided to stop reporting traffic metrics for the Community Forum since it was primarily inactive.

## New CMS Allows for Consistent Client Tracking

The original CMS used by ExitUSA, Simple Practice, posed a significant challenge due to its many shortcomings. The CMS was unable to reliably document client interactions and generate aggregate reports on ExitUSA services provided to clients, resulting in some staff attempting to supplement the CMS with an Excel tracker. As part of the ExitUSA redesign, a new CMS (CaseBuddy) was selected; collaboration on its development and implementation started in February 2022. Full implementation was planned to take up to six months, including design and implementation of data items and evaluation measures, followed by configuration and testing. Because of delays at different phases of implementation, the system was not fully deployed until December 2022.

## Subset of ExitUSA Client Data Shows Varying Stages of Exiting VFRE

In August 2022, the ExitUSA Program Director completed a manual Simple Practice chart review and delivered limited information to the research team. This included data from September to July 2022 from the initial contact and the intake documentation, if recorded. The data set, while limited, included 71 exiting individuals and 47 family members.

Analysis conducted by RTI indicated that both exiting individuals and friends and family commonly experienced a wide array of symptoms of negative affect (e.g., depressed mood, angry outbursts, panic attacks). Many exiting individuals also reported negative outcomes, including having used illicit drugs, having committed violent and nonviolent crime in the previous six months, and having had suicidal thoughts. These data showed that more friends and family members than exiting individuals reported experiencing panic attacks during this period. Furthermore, 15% of friends and family reported having had suicidal thoughts in the previous six months.<sup>1</sup>

## Challenges

**Leadership Change, Staff Shortage, and Turnover.** Life After Hate and ExitUSA experienced organizational changes related to the leadership transition that significantly affected ExitUSA service provision. Design choices made in the first year of the project resulted in lack of systematic services and data collection. An internal audit revealed that the ExitUSA program was severely understaffed and unable to manage the increasing need for its services, which also led to staff burnout. This issue was resolved through program restructure and hiring new case managers and exit specialists.

**Case Management System.** ExitUSA's original CMS was insufficient for its needs and resulted in a loss of important data. Life After Hate was able to correct this issue by acquiring a new CMS; however, because of delays with development, installation, and testing, the program was unable to collect any reliable data with the new CMS before the grant period was over.

**Unclear IMP.** Life After Hate's IMP lacked clear organization and description across its goals, objectives, inputs, outputs, and outcomes. As a result, the new Life After Hate leadership had to infer the intentions of those who originally developed the IMP.

1 For more information on this topic, view data analysis conducted by Life After Hate: <https://www.lifeafterhate.org/blog/2022/10/18/white-paper-confronting-the-mental-health-realities-of-successful-exit-from-vfre/>



## IMP Accomplishments

Life After Hate achieved its objective of providing ExitUSA services to support exiting far-right extremists (Objective 1.1). While Life After Hate was able to provide data regarding the number of clients served and the number of sessions per client, the organization was unable to provide more comprehensive data regarding their ExitUSA client services administered during the grant period due to challenges with its CMS. Per information received from Life After Hate, 156 clients were served by the ExitUSA program during the grant period (surpassing the goal of 150), who participated in a total of 2,151 individual client sessions. Although this averages to approximately 14 sessions per client, the actual number of sessions per client ranged widely, from as little as one session to as many as 78. This range is due, in part, to the reorganization and redesign of ExitUSA, which resulted in an increase in the number of client interactions. While the majority of clients prior to the reorganization engaged only

once, most clients (both exiting individuals and family clients) in the second year of the grant participated in services for at least 6 months. Another 25% of clients stayed in services for 9-18 months.

All screening and assessment tools were revamped as part of the ExitUSA program redesign, and more than 85 referral partners were added to the interactive resource map (surpassing the goal of 50 new referral partners). Community Forum channels for exiting individuals and family and friends were created and a set of static resources were developed in the first year of the project; however, the channels were mostly inactive in the second year of the grant. Life After Hate also reportedly succeeded in providing ExitUSA aftercare services to build individual resilience (Objective 1.2) through a modified design of the mentorship provided through exit specialists' work rather than a separate peer mentorship program. However, Life After Hate did not share any data related to the progress toward this objective.

## Recommendations

- ✓ Grantees that provide direct services to clients as part of their projects should ensure that new staff receive relevant onboarding training before engaging with clients and that existing staff continue to receive refresher trainings to maintain high-quality service provision.
- ✓ Grantees should consider implementing regular internal staff assessments to ensure that their staff provide services that adhere to standardized procedures. Assessments should also seek to evaluate whether staffing levels and composition are sufficient to meet the demand for services and that the staff-client ratio is acceptable and manageable.
- ✓ Grantees that provide direct services to clients should examine their CMSs to confirm that they allow reliable documentation of all aspects of direct service provision and that they can generate aggregate reports.
- ✓ Grantees that provide direct services to clients should consider performing regular CMS data audits to identify and address potential issues related to incomplete data or shortcomings of the CMS. A standardized process of frequently reviewing CMS data for completeness and correctness would prevent issues with missing data and allow for more accurate tracking and reporting of outputs.



# Exiting Process Awareness Outreach

## Building the Public's Awareness of the Exit Process and ExitUSA Through Messaging

Life After Hate strives to increase awareness of the exit process and available support services within the ExitUSA clients as well as the wider audience. With this goal in mind, Life After Hate planned to update Life After Hate and ExitUSA-specific website content, conduct an online messaging campaign, and develop VFRE counternarrative videos targeting their client base and the general community.

## Design and Methods for Process Evaluation

For the process evaluation, researchers documented progress made to update the Life After Hate and ExitUSA website content and developing counternarrative videos. The research team reviewed the final report of the five-month targeted online campaign facilitated by Moonshot. The research team interviewed Life After Hate and Moonshot staff responsible for relevant tasks related to outreach activities, and reviewed limited data on website views and interactions.

## Findings

This section examines the process evaluation findings regarding Life After Hate's communication and outreach efforts, which correspond with Goal 1, Objective 1.3 and Goal 2, Objective 2.1 in its IMP.

**OBJECTIVE 1.3: Enhance outreach to build awareness of the violent WSE exit process and ExitUSA intervention services (targeting ExitUSA clients)**

**OBJECTIVE 2.1: Enhance outreach to build awareness of the violent WSE exit process and ExitUSA intervention services (targeting overall community)**

## Online Campaign Designed to Redirect at-Risk Individuals

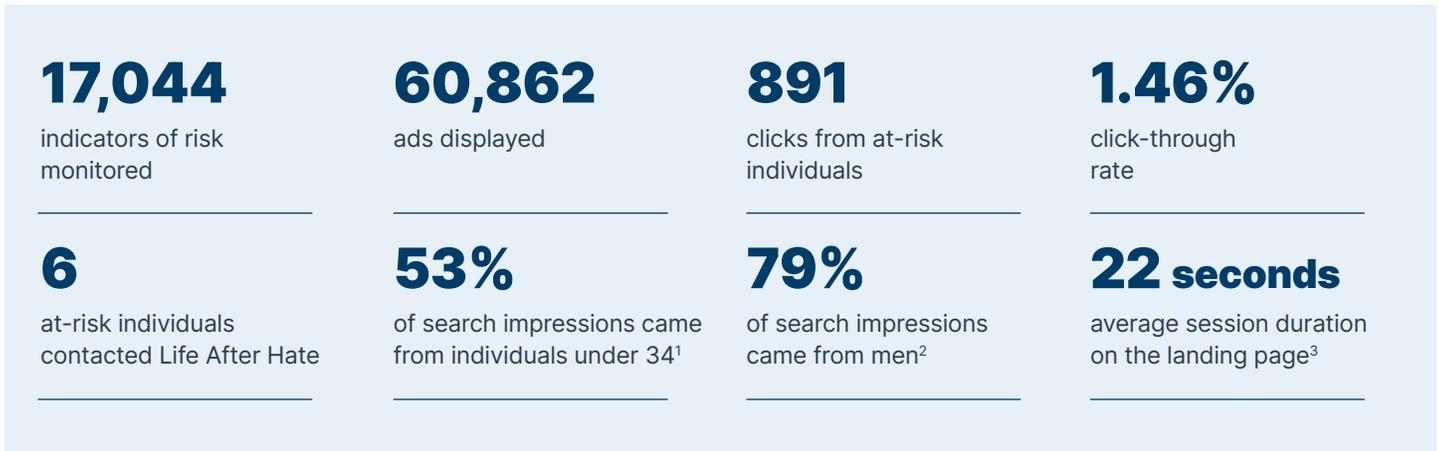
Life After Hate contracted Moonshot to pilot and deliver an online redirect intervention connecting at-risk individuals with the ExitUSA program. A social enterprise that was originally established to understand and counter violent extremism, Moonshot's work varies from software development and capacity building to leading global counter-messaging and intervention campaigns.

Moonshot's five-month campaign was directed to over 17,000 individuals searching Google for keywords related to violent white supremacist and anti-government extremism. The campaign's primary goals were to raise awareness of Life After Hate's services among at-risk individuals and to provide a path for disengagement from far-right extremism groups. The campaign launched on August 19, 2021 and continued through January 6, 2022.

A campaign report produced by Moonshot (Figure 4) described the campaign's key outputs, including redirecting almost 900 at-risk individuals to Life After Hate's website and creating an outline for future interventions to reach and engage at-risk users online. An unintended outcome of the campaign was that it provided important experience in setting up effective Google advertisement campaigns to reach potential clients and supporters. The campaign development and implementation generally progressed according to the plan, although it was paused twice, at the request of Life After Hate, to ensure that case management capacity remained at a safe and manageable level.



Figure 4. Social Media Campaign Highlights from the Moonshot Report



<sup>1</sup> Based on available demographic data. Google collects these anonymized and aggregated demographic data from signed-in users based on self-reported characteristics, ad settings, and their behavior on its advertising network. For users whose age and gender cannot be attributed, Google records the demographic as "unknown." Most search impressions were generated by people 34 years old or younger (18- to 24-year-olds, 27.4%, and 25- to 34-year-olds, 25.5%).

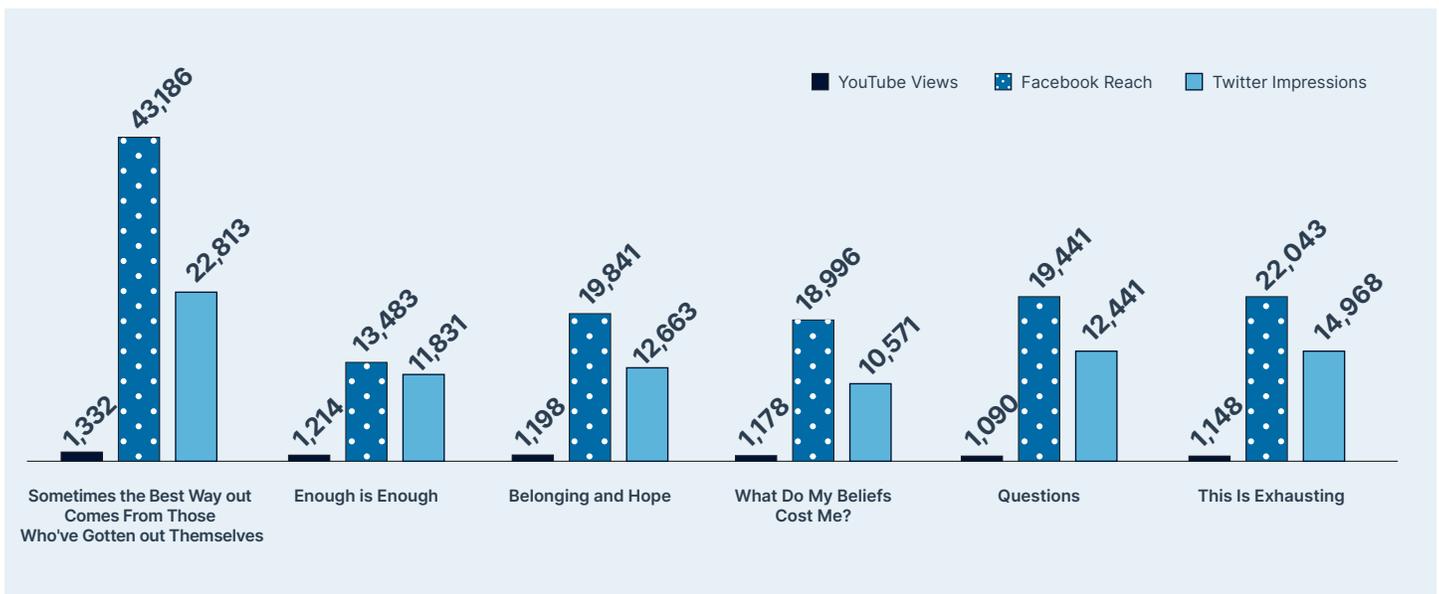
<sup>2</sup> Based on available demographic data, women produced 21% of search impressions for which a gender was attributable.

<sup>3</sup> This metric includes users who returned to the page at a later date.

## Counternarrative Videos Developed

Life After Hate planned to develop and launch five counternarrative videos for the ExitUSA client base as well as the general population. Ultimately, Life After Hate produced six videos between February 2022 and December 2022 and posted them on its YouTube channel, Facebook, and Twitter pages. Life After Hate tracked views and engagement (e.g., likes, comments, shares) for each video. As shown in Figure 5, Life After Hate's videos had the widest reach on Facebook, followed by Twitter. The most successful video in terms of engagement was the first, titled "Sometimes the Best Way out Comes From Those Who've Gotten out Themselves." However, this video was posted on social media longer than the others, meaning it had more time to gain views. The final four videos were also shown at conferences.

Figure 5. Video YouTube Views, Facebook Reach, and Twitter Impressions as of December 28, 2022



Note: Facebook Reach is the number of individuals who saw the video. Twitter Impressions are the number of times a video appeared on someone's Twitter feed.



## Website Redesign to Optimize Access and Draw Users

Life After Hate sought to update the Life After Hate and ExitUSA websites. In July 2022, the new permanent Executive Director took over the process, making changes to optimize the loading speed of web pages, improve the website organization to better direct those seeking services, attract potential funders, and extend the time visitors spent on the website. The revised website launched in December 2022.

## Challenges

**Staff Shortage and Turnover.** The Director of Communication's departure in April 2022 affected progress on several aspects of the outreach component, as the director had previously led video development and website redesign. This effort was therefore placed on hold until the new Executive Director started, causing a gap between videos and requiring a no-cost extension to complete production and dissemination of both the counternarrative videos and the ExitUSA website redesign. In addition, the ExitUSA case management staff shortage triggered two pauses in the social media campaign.

## IMP Accomplishments

Life After Hate met its objective of enhancing outreach to build awareness of the VFRE exit process and ExitUSA intervention (Objectives 1.3 and 2.1) by producing and releasing six counternarrative videos (exceeding the target of five videos), conducting a targeted online campaign, and redesigning and optimizing Life After Hate and ExitUSA web pages.

## Recommendations

- ✓ Develop standard operating procedures with general guidelines for project functioning, staff responsibilities, and succession planning. Strong progress documentation preserves institutional knowledge in cases of staff turnover, could prevent delays if a task lead resigns, and allows for a less-challenging transition for new staff.



# Development and Implementation of Training for Professionals

## Enhancing Local Prevention Networks' Ability to Identify and Support Individuals At Risk of Mobilizing to Violence

Life After Hate developed and implemented training modules for two populations: mental health professionals (MHPCD training) and law enforcement professionals (working in law enforcement, corrections, and probation/parole; ACD training). They also planned to direct trainees to the Community Forum, but as previously discussed, the outreach strategy shifted, and training-related channels within the forum were not utilized.

## Design and Methods for Process and Outcome Evaluation

Researchers collected attendance and pre-, post-, and follow-up test data. For the MHPCD training, pre- and posttests were administered for all training sessions between February 2022 and June 2022. The follow-up tests were emailed to participants three months after the training. For the ACD training, pre- and posttests were programmed and administered for all trainees but, due to its asynchronous format, the time between pre- and posttest completion varied. The follow-up test was sent two months after the training module closed and only to participants who completed the training. For both the MHPCD and ACD trainings, the follow-up tests asked the same questions as the pre- and posttests and also included items related to utility of knowledge gained during the training.

The research team analyzed the quantitative data produced from the pre-, post-, and follow-up tests to examine the change in knowledge of VFRE and retention of knowledge over time. In addition, the evaluation team reviewed training curricula, observed two MHPCD training sessions, reviewed training recruitment materials, and received regular updates on implementation progress and milestones.

## Findings

This section examines the process and outcome evaluation findings regarding Life After Hate's trainings for professionals, which correspond with Goal 3, Objective 3.1 in its IMP.

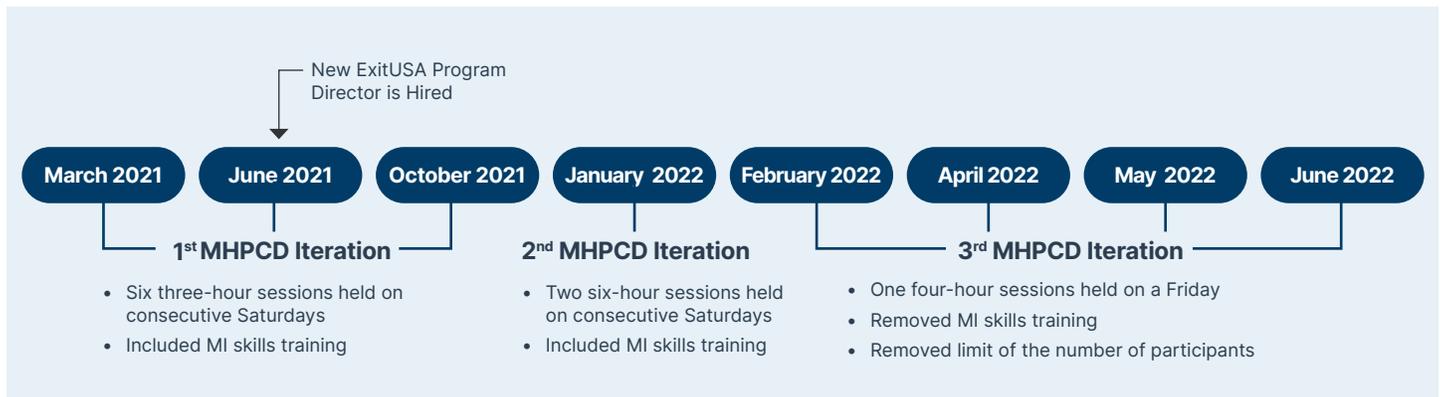
**OBJECTIVE 3.1: Enhance outreach to build awareness of the violent WSE exit process and ExitUSA intervention services (targeting ExitUSA clients)**

## MHPCD Training

The MHPCD virtual training was developed to increase mental health professionals' knowledge about the needs of clients who are disengaging from VFRE. As pictured in Figure 6, Life After Hate developed three iterations of that training and facilitated eight training sessions. Recruitment methods for these trainings varied in each iteration but ultimately included posts on Twitter, emails to Life After Hate and DHS Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) electronic mailing lists, posts on LinkedIn, and the landing page of the Life After Hate website.



Figure 6. MHPCD Training Timeline



**First and Second Iterations.** Life After Hate originally structured the training as six three-hour sessions on consecutive Saturdays. Three training cohorts were organized in 2021, and a total of 19 participants completed the training. Eleven participants completed satisfaction surveys, indicating that they liked the training but found its timing and frequency to be difficult. The new ExitUSA Program Director responded to the survey feedback by condensing the training into a 12-hour session held over two consecutive Saturdays. The only training session using this structure took place in January 2022.

**Third Iteration.** The final version of the curriculum was further condensed into one four-hour session focused on VFRE, with Motivational Interviewing (MI) and trauma-informed care themes throughout. The originally included interactive MI skills practice was removed from the curriculum to open it to a wider audience, participant criteria were expanded to include individuals other than licensed mental health practitioners, and the attendance cap was removed. Supplementary strategies were used to increase pre-/posttest data collection response rates, including allowing time at the beginning and toward the end of the training for pre-/posttest completion and asking trainees to indicate completion by raising their virtual hands. It was also recommended that the posttest be administered before the final question-and-answer period which was then implemented. A total of 132 people completed this third iteration of the training.

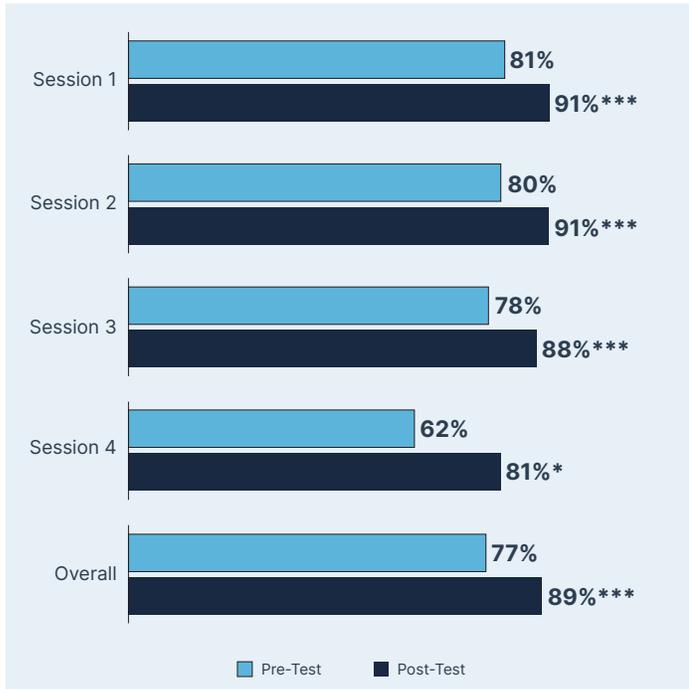
## Pre- and Posttests Indicate Statistically Significant Knowledge Gains

Pre- and posttests consisted of 20 identical questions regarding risk and protective factors for radicalization. Life After Hate staff added two additional questions to the posttest related to satisfaction and topics of interest for future trainings. Of the 132 individuals who participated in one of trainings, 88 completed the pretest, 72 completed the posttest administered immediately following the training, and 38 completed the follow-up test sent three months after completion of the training.

The 72 individuals who completed both the pre- and posttests received an average score of 77% on the pretest. The average pretest score was relatively high but that is not unexpected as the MHPCD course was advertised largely to mental health providers and it was not mandatory. Despite the pre-test scores being high, the average score on the posttest was higher at 89%, demonstrating a 12% increase (Figure 7). The largest individual training session increase between pre- and posttests was Session 4 with a jump of 19%. Even though this session had the lowest average posttest score, they seemed to benefit more from the training than those in the other sessions.



**Figure 7. MHPCD Training Participants' Average Pre- and Posttest Scores**

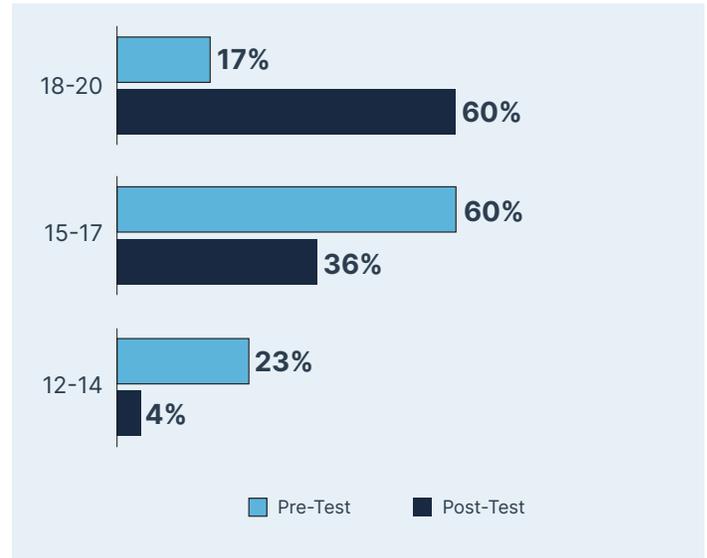


\*\*\* p < 0.001

\* p < 0.05

These improved test scores are reflected when looking at individual results. The lowest individual score on the pre-test was 12 out of 20 questions, whereas the lowest individual score on the posttest was 14 out of 20 questions. As shown in Figure 8, the percentage of participants who got 18 or more questions correct increased from 17% in the pre-test to 60% in the posttest. On average, the 72 participants who completed the posttest answered 3.2 more questions correctly in the posttest than in the pre-test. Questions with the largest increase between pre- and posttests were found in topics about VFRE in general (identification of VFRE groups, ideologies within the VFRE movement) and characteristics of exiting individuals (commonality of Adverse Childhood Experiences, emotions shown by exiting individuals).

**Figure 8. Number of Questions Answered Correctly in Pre- and Posttest (Out of 20)**



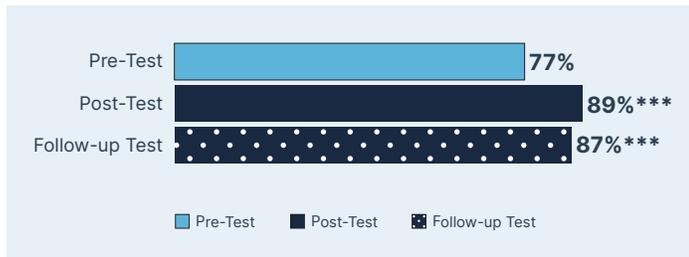
## Follow-Up Tests Indicate Knowledge Retained

Three months after each of the four training sessions, all participants were invited to participate in a follow-up test to examine whether the knowledge gains that were seen in the posttest were retained over time. Participants were sent multiple reminders in an effort to reduce expected attrition. In the end, of the 72 people who completed the posttest, 38 completed the follow-up test (53%).

Some amount of knowledge loss between posttest and follow-up tests, as demonstrated by decreased test scores, is typically expected. The average score among the 38 individuals who completed the follow-up test was 87%, which is a slight, albeit expected, decrease from the average posttest score of 89%. Overall, this demonstrates that participants' average scores after taking the MHPCD training rose a significant, yet small, amount and remained significantly higher than the pretest three months later.



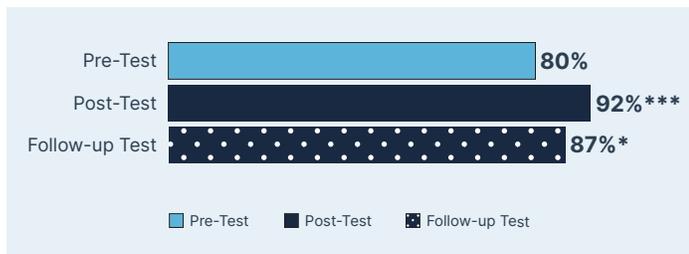
**Figure 9. MHPCD Overall Training Participant Performance on Pretest, Posttest, and Follow-Up Test**



\*\*\* p < 0.001

When looking only at the data of the 38 individuals who completed the follow-up test, this group scored slightly higher than average on both the pre-test (80%) and the posttest (92%) (Figure 10), though the differences were small and collectively all participants still scored relatively high. The minor discrepancy in scores does indicate that self-selection to complete the follow-up test was not based on those individuals being more knowledgeable in the topic. When looking only at the average scores of these 38 individuals a marginally larger decrease between their posttest and follow-up test scores (from 92% to 87%) is shown, but both of these scores are still significantly higher than their initial pretest score of 80%.

**Figure 10. Average Test Performance for Those who Completed the Follow-Up Test**



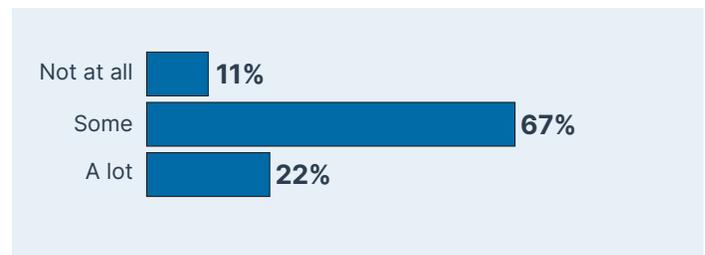
\* p < = 0.05)

\*\*\* p < 0.001

## Participants' Reflections on Training

As part of the follow-up survey, Life After Hate also asked participants to answer questions regarding their reflection on the training they received. Of the 27 participants who answered these questions, all of them indicated the training was at least slightly relevant to their current work. As shown in Figure 11, most respondents (n=24) noted they used what they learned from the course in their professional work to at least some extent in the months since their training. The 11% of individuals who stated that they had not used their training provided explanations such as being on medical leave, still undergoing professional training, or had not had the opportunity with their specific clients. These data are promising on the utility of the training for mental health practitioners and other community stakeholders.

**Figure 11. Extent to Which Participants Used What They Learned in the Course in Their Work**



## Alliance for Co-Responder Development Training

The Alliance for Co-Responder Development (ACD) training was developed for the law enforcement community, encompassing law enforcement, corrections, and probation/parole professionals, and was designed as a two-hour asynchronous online training, programmed using a learning management system called Thinkific. The training content, delivered through a combination of slides and videos and adapted from the MHPCD training, was developed by a former on the Life After Hate staff and designed for users to go at their own pace. Curriculum was finalized and loaded into Thinkific in late May 2022, after which selected individuals were invited to test the system and provide feedback. The training went live in late August 2022, but recruitment proved to be more challenging than anticipated. The original recruitment plan was twofold: (1) an "individualized approach" in which information was sent directly to individuals via email, as well as posted on the Life After Hate website and announced on its social media

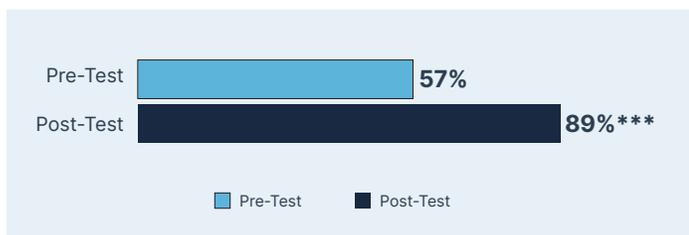


pages, and (2) a “wholesale approach” described as outreach directed toward establishments such as law enforcement membership organizations, law enforcement media outlets, and police departments, to get them to share the training within their organizations. Due to unanticipated recruitment challenges, the first training registrations did not take place until September 2022 and the first training was completed in October 2022. Because of these challenges and the grant timeline, Life After Hate decided to focus on its individualized approach but plans to pursue the wholesale approach in the future as a long-term goal for sustainability. By the end of the grant, 67 individuals had completed the ACD training.

### Pre-, Post- and Follow-Up Tests Indicate Significant Knowledge Gain

All training participants (n=67) completed the pre-test and 60 (90%) participants completed the posttest. These tests consisted of 12 questions regarding risk and protective factors for radicalization as well as general information on extremism in the United States. As shown in Figure 12, pre-test scores were relatively low, with participants correctly answering 57% of the questions and only 11 out of 60 (18%) answering between 10 to 12 questions correctly. The posttest demonstrated a marked improvement, with the number of participants answering 10 to 12 questions correctly increasing to 57 participants (95%). The average score increased by 32% (p < 0.001), which means that participants got nearly 4 additional questions correct on the posttest compared to the pre-test after going through the ACD training. Questions with the largest increase between pre- and posttests were found in topics about VFRE in general (distinguishing between violent extremism and domestic terrorism) and characteristics of exiting individuals (commonality of Adverse Childhood Experiences, paths into VFRE, reasons for joining a VFRE group).

Figure 12. ACD Training Participants’ Average Pre- and Posttest Scores

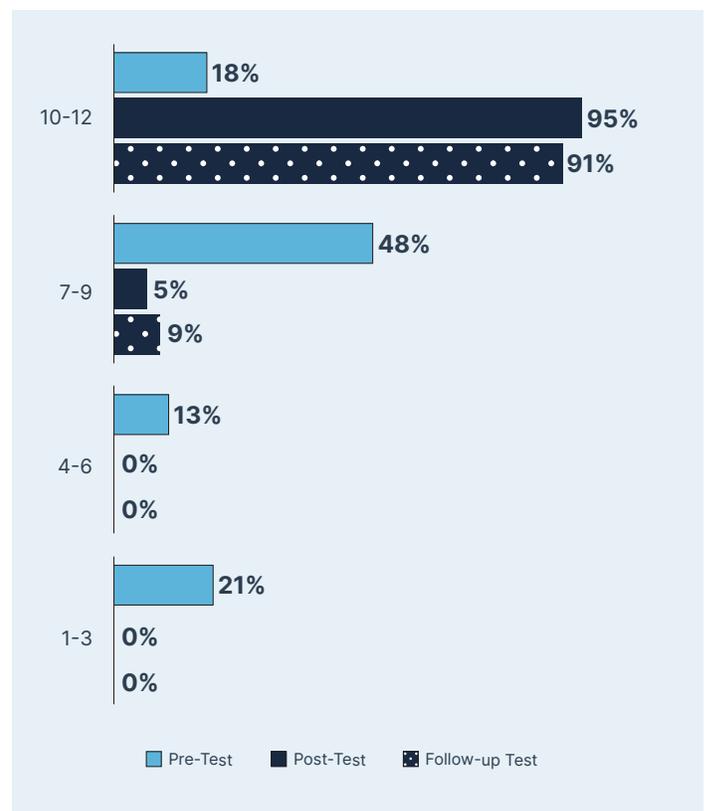


\*\*\* p < 0.001

### Follow-Up Tests Indicate Knowledge Retained

Two months after the training window ended, all participants were invited to participate in a follow-up test. Of 67 total participants who completed the training, 45 completed the follow-up tests (67.2%). The follow-up tests showed that the evident increase in knowledge demonstrated by the posttest was largely retained with 41 out of 45 people (91%) scoring between 10-12 a few months after the training.

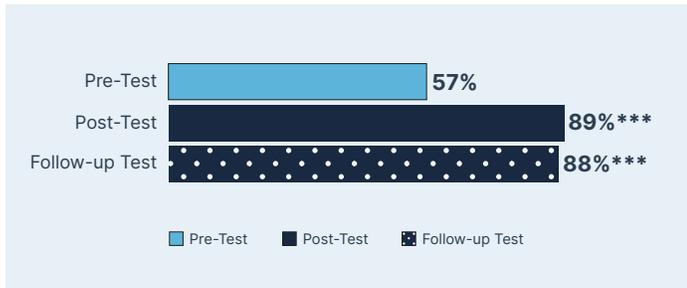
Figure 13. Number of Questions Answered Correctly in Pre-, Post-, and Follow-Up Tests (Out of 12)



There was a nominal decline (1%) in the average test scores between the post-test and the follow-up-test, which demonstrates that scores stayed significantly higher, even two months after training, than scores prior to the training (Figure 14). As previously mentioned, some decline is expected between posttests and follow-up surveys.



**Figure 14. ACD Training Participants' Average in= Pre-, Post-, and Follow-Up-test scores**



\*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

## Challenges

**Training Redesign.** Life After Hate went through two extensive revisions of its MHPCD training over the course of the grant in response to low participation rates and feedback from participants on timing and frequency. The final iteration of the training did have a positive outcome on participant knowledge, although it is not possible to examine whether and to what extent the first two iterations had any effect on the knowledge of those cohorts.

**ACD Recruitment.** Even though the training curriculum was finalized and tested in the system in June 2022, the registration site was not ready until August 2022 and, because

of recruitment challenges, the first training was not completed until October 2022. Once Life After Hate staff initiated recruitment for training participants, they encountered unanticipated challenges when communicating with law enforcement organizations and had to rely on an individualized outreach approach. These challenges included (1) officers do not have time while on duty to complete the course; (2) departments cannot require this training, as they would have to pay for the time it took to complete the training; and (3) police departments are unionized and have specific rules about what officers can and cannot do on and off shift.

## IMP Accomplishments

Life After Hate's final goal was to enhance the ability of local prevention networks to identify and work with individuals at risk of mobilization to violence (Objective 3.1). Life After Hate met the objective of facilitating eight MHPCD training sessions and exceeded the objective of training 40 to 80 mental health and other professionals (157 professionals attended the training across three iterations of the curriculum). The ACD training was developed and adapted to an online modality and 67 law enforcement professionals completed the training modules. Training-specific Community Forum channels were created for continued education and engagement but were not made available to training graduates.

## Recommendations

- ✓ Grantees conducting trainings should consider developing an outreach and training recruitment plan early in the process. Doing so could prevent delays in recruitment and allow for outreach to take place immediately after the curriculum is finalized and tested.

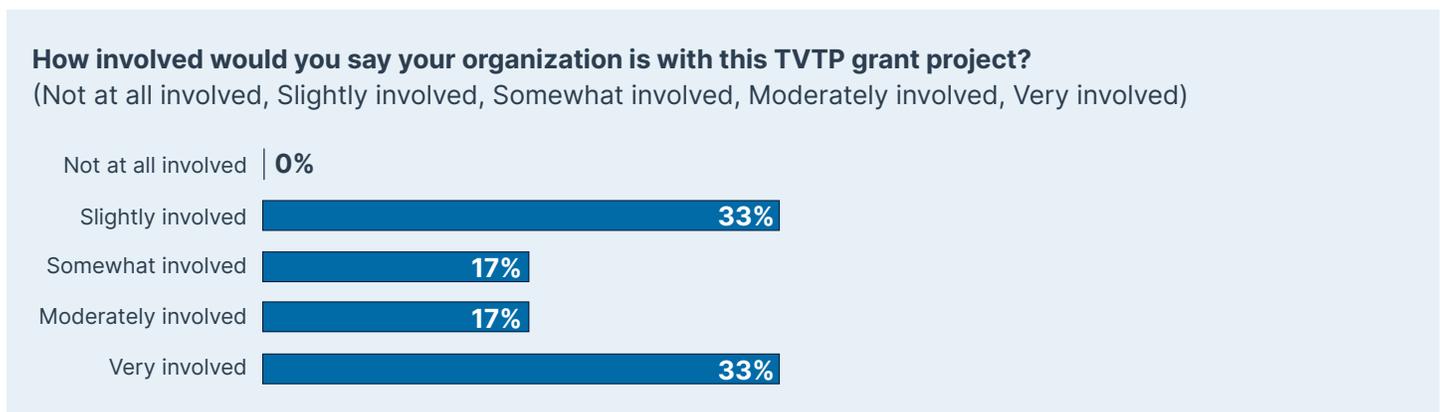
# Life After Hate Partner Survey Findings

Life After Hate engaged six partners to support its FY2020 grant. These partners came from academic fields, behavioral and mental health practitioners, and audio-visual and technology backgrounds. They also had a former Life After Hate Director as part of their team conducting portions of the MHPCD training. They used their past and present networks to put together a community of experts to support this grant project. Engaging partners as they did provided a more well-rounded program and new perspectives for fresh ideas to help support the exiting and practitioner community. RTI International surveyed these partners to better understand Life After Hate's collaboration with partners and the challenges they faced. This section discusses the findings from that survey.

## Nature of Partnerships

The survey revealed that levels of collaboration between Life After Hate and its partners varied quite a bit (Figure 15). This is understandable given that Life After Hate's partners were involved in different aspects of the grant and organization.

**Figure 15. Partner Organization Involvement**

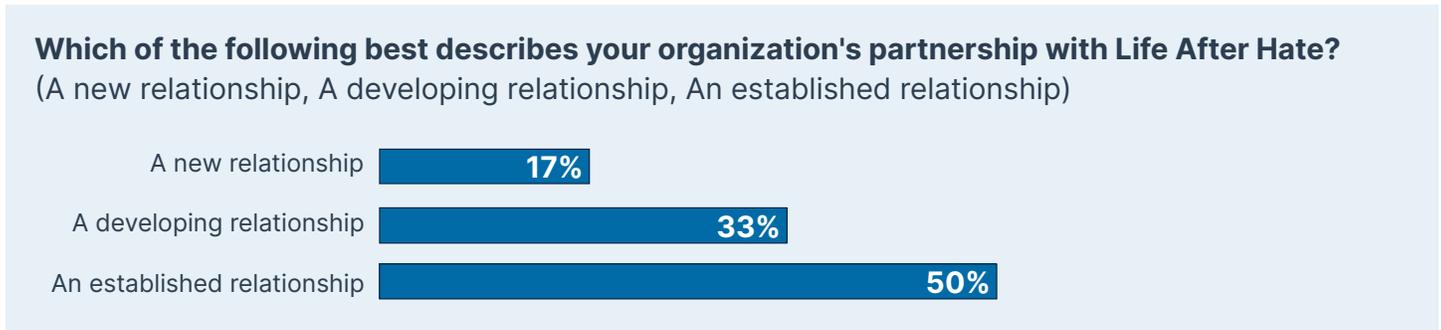


Most of the partners had worked with Life After Hate before this grant (Figure 16). Among those who had worked with the organization previously, there was a mix of relationships, with some categorizing their relationship with Life After Hate as established and others categorizing it as developing (Figure 17). Overall, the partners noted positive relationships with Life After Hate, with the majority indicating they had an excellent relationship and the rest stating that their relationship was good (Figure 18).

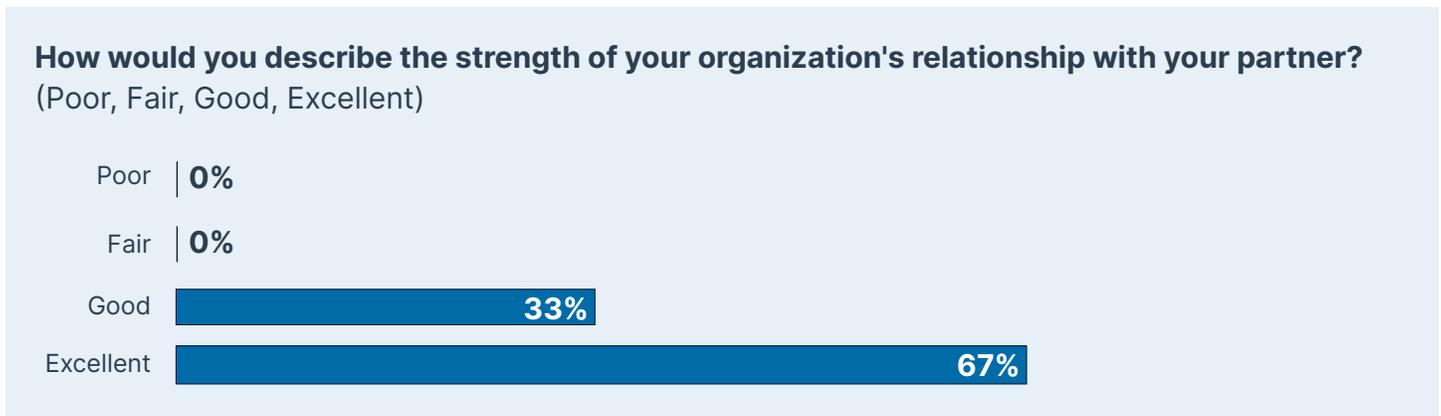
**Figure 16. Prior Partner Collaboration**



**Figure 17. Partner Organization Relationships**



**Figure 18. Strength of Partnership**



## Communication

The partners were equally split regarding how often they communicated with Life After Hate. A third each indicated they communicated with Life After Hate a few times a year, at least monthly, or at least weekly (Figure 19). There is no expected frequency of communication for these partners but given the variable nature of the roles they had on this project, this breakdown of responses is somewhat expected. Not all partners had roles that required monthly or weekly communication, whereas others would have certainly benefited from having more contact with Life After Hate.

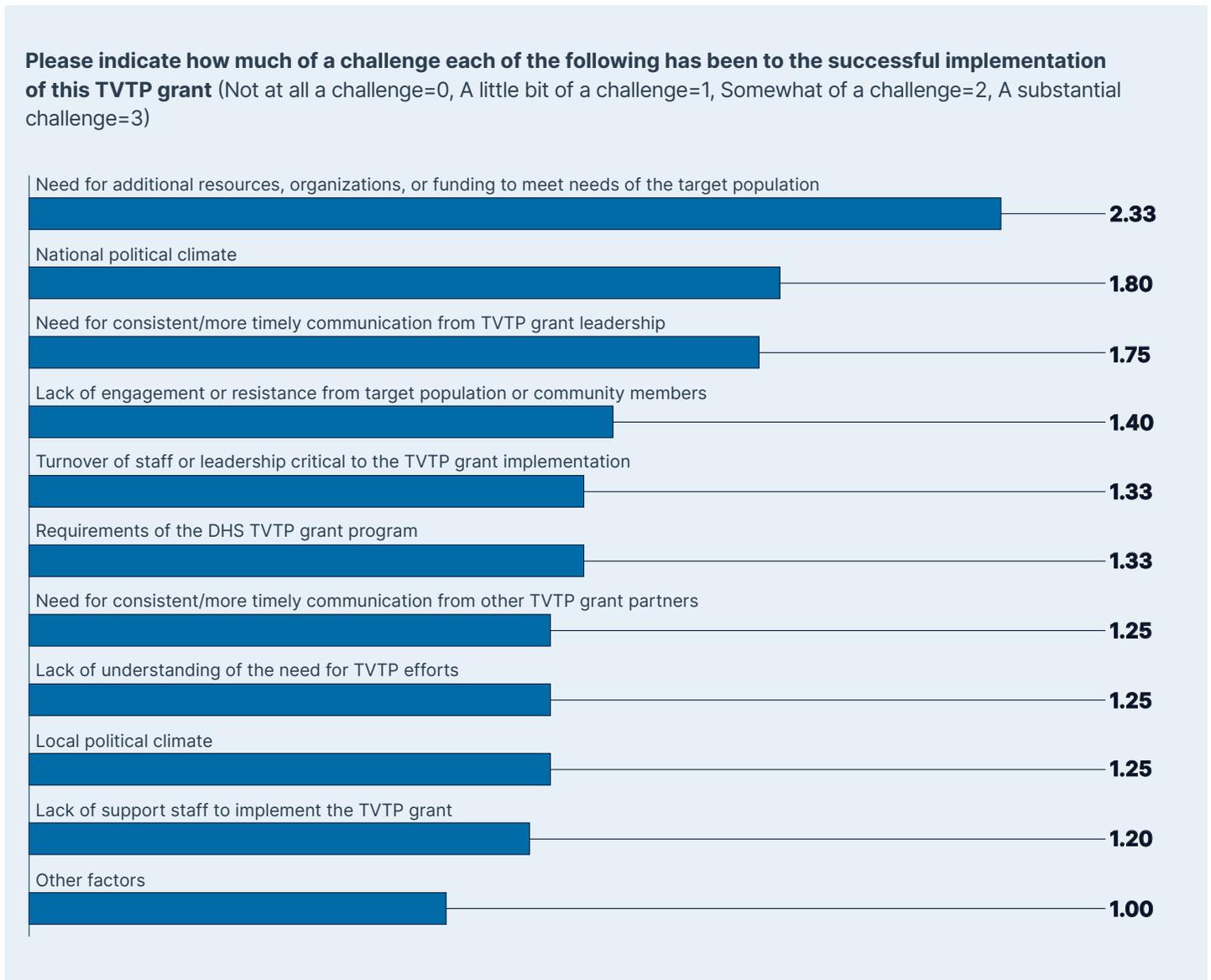
**Figure 19. Communication With Partner Organizations**



## Challenges

Partners identified several important implementation challenges. Participants were asked to rate certain challenges on a scale ranging from “not a challenge at all” to “a substantial challenge”. The “not a challenge at all” responses were coded as 0 to indicate the absence of a challenge. The need for additional resources, organizations, or funding to meet the needs of the target population was viewed as the biggest challenge of those provided. The need for additional resources or funding was the only factor that averaged above two on this scale (2.33), with the national political climate being the second biggest challenge (1.80) and the need for more consistent or timely communication from TVTP grant leadership the third (1.75) (Figure 20). Besides these challenges, no other factor averaged above a 1.5 out of 3.

**Figure 20. Perceived Challenges to Successful Implementation of TVTP Grant**



# Discussion

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Despite significant challenges, Life After Hate achieved its grant objectives of (1) providing ExitUSA services to support exiting VFRE movement, (2) enhancing outreach to build awareness of the violent extremism exit process and ExitUSA interventions, and (3) enhancing the ability of local prevention networks to identify and work with individuals at risk of mobilization to violence. Even when Life After Hate faced challenges in implementing some of its activities as planned, staff members noted that the implementation process provided them with important experience and that they learned lessons that they will apply in the future. Additionally, these lessons can serve to illustrate the challenges and opportunities of conducting such activities to inform future TVTP efforts in this area. This evaluation is one of the early studies focused on helping individuals exiting VFRE and supporting practitioners in responding to this demographic. The TVTP field would benefit from more and greater in depth studies of programs like these and similar practitioner trainings.

The ExitUSA restructure improved the function of the program. Life After Hate hired and trained new and existing staff, more clearly defined roles, developed and applied updated screening and assessment tools, and implemented a new CMS that will better enable ExitUSA to systematically track its services and cases. Although Life After Hate, along with the ExitUSA program, underwent significant reorganization during the grant period, the research team anticipates that these changes have prepared it to operate as a well-functioning program that is able to focus all its resources on providing direct services to its target population. It is also better structured to anticipate and mitigate risks associated with this work, such as staff burnout or unqualified staff participating in interventions.

Life After Hate is in a good position to continue increasing awareness of the VFRE exit process and the ExitUSA program using redesigned and optimized web pages. Counternarrative videos produced as part of this grant will continue to be used to engage and educate the general population. The targeted online campaign conducted in collaboration with Moonshot was successful in redirecting at-risk individuals to Life After

Hate's website and allowed staff to learn how to create effective Google ad campaigns to reach potential clients and supporters.

Finally, the two training curricula developed and implemented as part of the grant have proven successful in educating local prevention stakeholders. Knowledge tests were administered at three points in time (pre-, post- and follow-up) for the MHPCD training and the ACD training. Analysis of these survey data collected from the MHPCD and the ACD training participants demonstrated a significant increase in participant knowledge regarding risk and protective factors for radicalization between the pre- and posttests and between the pre- and follow-up tests. In addition, the MHPCD follow-up survey respondents indicated that the training was relevant to their current work and that they had used the knowledge in their professional work in the past three months.

## Sustainability

This TVTP grant had a significant impact on Life After Hate's capacity to implement similar programming in the future. It allowed for the design and implementation of processes that can ensure proper functioning of the ExitUSA program and funded development of products (e.g., videos, training curricula) that can continue to be used to carry out its mission. ExitUSA will continue to provide direct services to exiting individuals and other clients, and changes implemented during this grant period will likely have an important positive impact on the program function. Life After Hate has taken active steps to secure sustainable programming, including expanding collaboration with partners as well as diversifying its funding sources. The organization was awarded a FY2021 DHS TVTP grant, and Life After Hate staff also indicated potential collaborations with Meta/Facebook and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

The four most recently published counternarrative videos were well received at the events where they premiered, and they generated multiple requests from nonprofits

and documentary filmmakers who want to connect to formers. In addition, Life After Hate received invitations to visit college campuses, which will enable staff to continue to use these videos to educate and engage additional viewers. Life After Hate staff shared that there is a plan to cut existing videos into shorter pieces to better share them on Instagram and TikTok. They also plan to continue developing new videos.

Life After Hate is planning to revamp the training for mental health professionals and continue boosting knowledge of VFRE in the field. Similarly, because of high interest in the ACD training, efforts will be made to redesign that training for continued use in training of law enforcement professionals, with the long-term goal of incorporating the training into the onboarding processes of various agencies.

## Recommendations for the TVTP Grant Program

### ✓ Ensure IMPs Are Written with SMART Goals to Aide Continuity.

The initial review of Life After Hate's IMP revealed a lack of clear organization across goals, objectives, inputs, outputs, and outcomes. This was further magnified when a new project lead was brought on and there was difficulty understanding what their predecessor meant or had intended in the IMP. Grantees should use the SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) approach to develop goals and objectives so that their IMPs are understandable and clearly written. Doing so will assist in clarifying the program design and enabling the measurement of program results, in turn strengthening the TVTP evidence base, and it will also enable continuity of work in the face of staff turnover. Additionally, Life After Hate did not have components of its IMP finalized until 10 months into the grant, which posed challenges as some components were already in the implementation phase without a plan to collect necessary performance measures. This grant experience showed that it is crucial that all TVTP grantees have an IMP (with measurement, data collection, and analysis plans) in place before implementation begins.

### ✓ Develop Quality Assurance Mechanisms to Assess Performance and Provide Professional Development.

Grantees providing direct services to clients should consider implementing periodic staff evaluations to confirm that staffing levels and organizational support are sufficient to meet the organization's needs and demand for services. Special consideration should be given to training staff during onboarding prior to direct client engagement. Grant programs such as these should also provide refresher training for existing staff to ensure they are supported with the tools needed for their job.

### ✓ Improve Follow-Up Data Collection Methods.

Conducting follow-up tests a number of months after a training can provide deeper insight into how much content resonated with trainees to the point of remembering and how that knowledge may be used in their professional lives. These important data are difficult to gather as they require recontacting trainees, and some attrition is expected, but methods to improve response rates to these surveys should be considered. In addition to repeated reminder emails, consider increasing awareness of the forthcoming follow-up at the end of the training so they will be expecting it. While still at the training, explain to trainees the importance of their participation and that they cannot be replaced within the sample as only a finite number of people take that training at that time.

### ✓ **Embrace a Multidisciplinary Team Approach.**

Respondents shared that, when Life After Hate was created, the importance of having licensed mental health professionals in this work was not recognized. Government sponsors and TVTP researchers should conduct research on the function and utility of multidisciplinary approaches in which mental health professionals, law enforcement, formers, and local partners work together. Based on Life After Hate's experience, staff felt that this approach allows teams to draw from a larger pool of talent, promote a clear understanding of roles, and create a supportive environment for the client with the same message from all about a path to a new life free of violence.

### ✓ **Consider Extending the Length of Program Funding.**

Because of the often long-term and nonlinear nature of exiting a violent extremist ideology or group, it was difficult for Life After Hate to witness or measure demonstrable change among its clients within the TVTP grant program's two-year period of performance. Life After Hate additionally faced significant structural challenges that further reduced its time for implementation. While the organization did receive a no-cost extension of three months, DHS should consider extending the length of funding from the outset beyond two years for programs that provide direct services to target populations because of the nature of their work. Extending the period of performance will enable programs to provide more consistent services, and it will also enable greater tracking and data collection to learn more about the short- and long-term results of such interventions—a critical gap in the TVTP field.

# **Appendix F. McCain Institute at Arizona State University Site Profile**

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Department of Homeland Security (DHS)  
FY2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism  
Prevention (TVTP) Grantee Evaluation

Site Profile

# McCain Institute at Arizona State University



Developed for:



Science and  
Technology

Developed by RTI International

# List of Abbreviations

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<b>DEEP</b>	Disruption and Early Engagement Project
<b>DHS</b>	Department of Homeland Security
<b>IMP</b>	Implementation and Measurement Plan
<b>PPN</b>	Prevention Practitioners Network
<b>TVTP</b>	Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention

## Executive Summary

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The Science and Technology Directorate at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security funded RTI International to research and evaluate a Fiscal Year 2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) grant to the McCain Institute at Arizona State University to examine program accomplishments, challenges, and recommendations. The research team conducted a process evaluation of the McCain Institute's grant, which comprised four main components. Researchers reviewed read-ahead materials and available recordings of workshops and symposia, reviewed survey data collected by the McCain Institute, observed the Fall 2022 Symposium, interviewed symposium participants and grant partners, and reviewed website metric data. Table ES-A summarizes findings from this evaluation.

The McCain Institute successfully created a network of practitioners in the TVTP field called the Prevention Practitioners Network (PPN) and surpassed its target goal for PPN participants. The McCain Institute used this network to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration among PPN participants through a series of workshops and symposia. The extent of knowledge gain from these events could not be assessed because of inconsistencies in data collection; however, participants at the Fall 2022 Symposium said that they referred to reading materials developed for these events in their work and used the symposium to network with other professionals in the field. The McCain Institute developed reading materials and practice guides related to the TVTP concepts and program design elements discussed at workshops and symposia and made them available on the PPN website (<https://www.mccaininstitute.org/programs/preventing-targeted-violence/prevention-practitioners-network/>). These materials were later compiled into a comprehensive framework for TVTP program design, titled Preventing Targeted Violence and Terrorism: A Guide for Practitioners. Last, the McCain Institute created a national network directory to help practitioners, organizations, and community members locate resources and local providers willing to accept targeted violence and terrorism referrals. The McCain Institute took steps throughout the grant period to bolster the sustainability of this program and was already planning future events when the grant period ended.

This work is supported by funding by the United States Department of Homeland Security, Science and Technology Directorate under contract #140D0418C0012/P00005.

Table ES-A. Summary of Findings

 <p><b>Objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention and intervention practitioners participate in practitioners network (i.e., the PPN)</li> <li>• Increase knowledge sharing and collaboration among network members</li> <li>• Framework simplifies design stages for new prevention and intervention initiatives</li> <li>• Increase number of mental and behavioral health professionals able and willing to receive referrals</li> <li>• Government officials locate relevant programs in their regions for referrals</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Outputs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanded the PPN to 910 participants</li> <li>• Hosted nine workshops</li> <li>• Hosted four symposia</li> <li>• Published nine sets of reading materials</li> <li>• Published four practice guides</li> <li>• Published a comprehensive framework for TVTP program design: <i>Preventing Targeted Violence and Terrorism: A Guide for Practitioners</i></li> <li>• Developed a network directory of TVTP providers and resources</li> <li>• Added 22 licensed clinicians and 109 resources to the directory</li> <li>• Documented 20,985 views of recorded videos of workshops and symposia</li> <li>• Achieved 353 views of the reading materials, practice guides, and PPN Practitioners' Guide</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Challenges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pivoting delivery methods because of COVID-19 restrictions</li> <li>• Inconsistent data collection due to staff turnover</li> <li>• Difficulty quantifying success among various practitioners</li> <li>• Lack of planning time between symposia</li> <li>• Practitioner hesitation to self-identify as working in the TVTP space</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Recommendations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop standard operating procedures to facilitate staff transitions</li> <li>• Incorporate timing considerations for the pacing of events</li> <li>• Use qualitative data to share project successes</li> <li>• Design Implementation and Measurement Plans around measurable objectives</li> </ul>

# Site Profile: Arizona State University— The McCain Institute

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The McCain Institute for International Leadership at Arizona State University was awarded a two-year grant by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships in 2020 and was selected in 2021 to undergo an independent evaluation. This site profile reviews the McCain Institute's grant design, project implementation, accomplishments, and challenges in targeted violence and terrorism prevention (TVTP). It concludes with relevant recommendations for future programming. The research team conducted an evaluability assessment of the McCain Institute's Fiscal Year 2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention grant and, on the basis of project readiness, determined that a process evaluation was most appropriate. Such an evaluation provides a deeper understanding of the processes of a project to learn what mechanisms may contribute to its effectiveness and it details project accomplishments at the output level.

## The McCain Institute

The McCain Institute is a Washington, D.C.–based think tank that works in cooperation with Arizona State University. The McCain Institute used grant funding to establish a network for prevention and intervention practitioners to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration among TVTP practitioners. In addition to TVTP, the McCain Institute seeks to provide policymakers and practitioners across the country with actionable solutions to issues related to human trafficking, governance, and national security.



# The McCain Institute's Fiscal Year 2020 TVTP Grant Summary

The McCain Institute's FY2020 TVTP grant program was governed by three goals working in tandem to facilitate learning and networking events, from which a Prevention Practitioners Network (PPN) could be developed. Building on these events and the PPN, the McCain Institute partnered with the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) and One World Strong to develop a comprehensive framework outlining TVTP program design considerations for practitioners and to create a national directory of providers and resources. Each of these components—the PPN, workshops and symposia, a framework for TVTP practitioners, and the national directory—was driven by project objectives supporting these goals. This report presents the findings from the process evaluation of these components, as well as an overall discussion of evaluation findings, including a look at the grant project's sustainability and recommendations for the TVTP grant program. The four components of the grant program are described here and pictured in Figure 1.



**Prevention Practitioners Network:** The McCain Institute established the PPN to create a network for practitioners in the TVTP field to synthesize

the latest research, share promising practices, and facilitate networking and collaboration among practitioners. The PPN grew through the workshops and symposia hosted by the McCain Institute: everyone who attended events was considered a PPN participant and all PPN participants received invitations to upcoming events. By the end of the grant, the PPN included 910 participants.



**Workshops and symposia:** The McCain Institute hosted a series of nine workshops on topics related to program design challenges or relevant

TVTP information. Staff promoted the workshops to all PPN participants and CP3 grantees, as well as numerous professional associations. The McCain Institute also conducted four symposia to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration among TVTP practitioners. It partnered with ISD, a United Kingdom-based research organization, to produce practice guides and other read-ahead material related to prevention and intervention programs for the workshops and symposia. The read-ahead materials provided a background to the workshop topics, outlined key concepts, and listed resources for further reading. The McCain Institute and ISD produced 9 sets of read-ahead materials, four practice guides, and one comprehensive framework for these events, which are available for download on the PPN website.



**Comprehensive framework for TVTP practitioners:**

The McCain Institute and ISD worked together to create a comprehensive framework outlining program design considerations for TVTP and behavioral interventions. This framework, titled *Preventing Targeted Violence and Terrorism: A Guide for Practitioners* (hereinafter referred to as PPN Practitioners' Guide), compiled the four practice guides and read-ahead materials developed for the workshops and symposia.

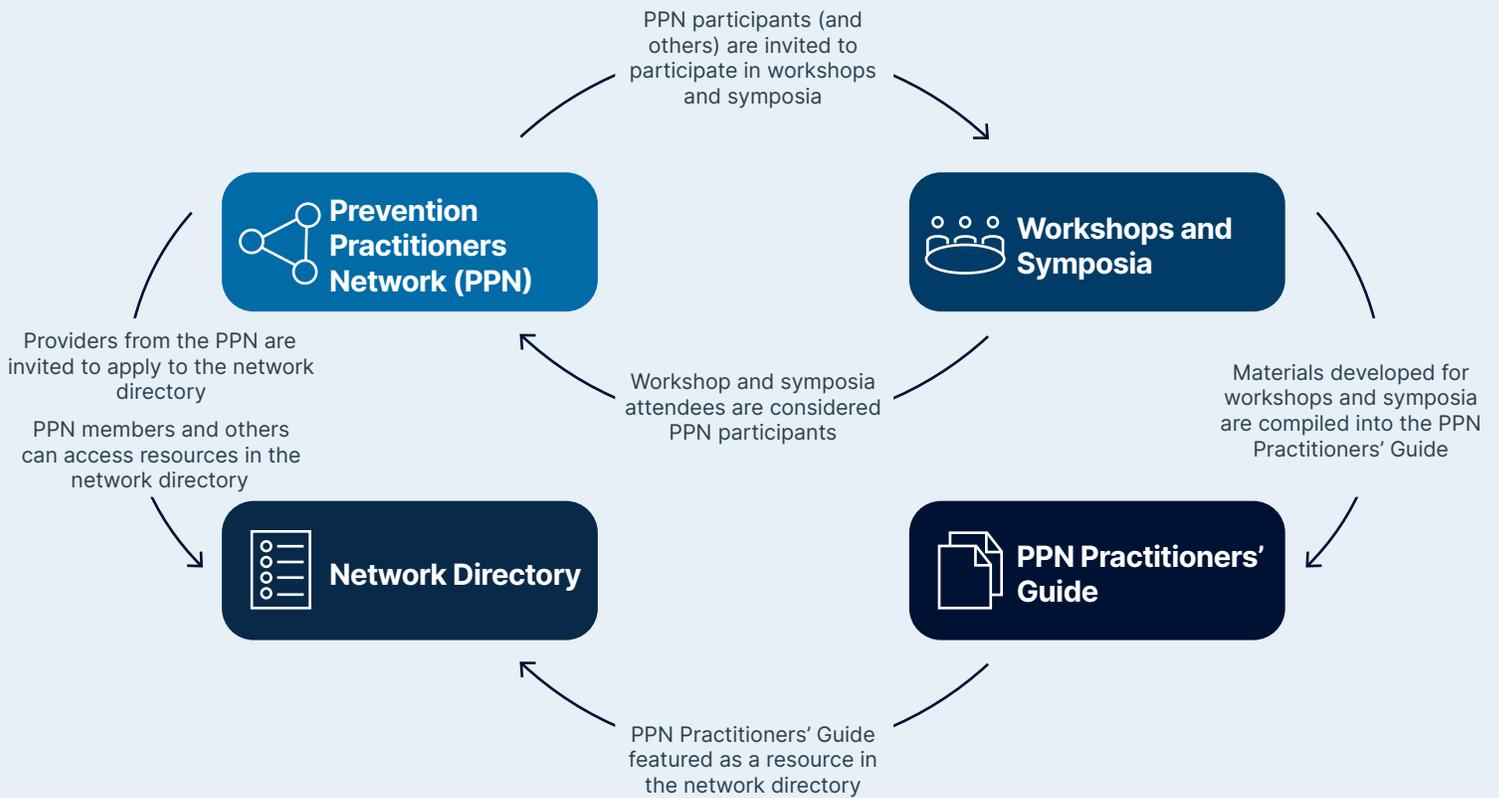


**National network directory of TVTP providers and resources:**

The McCain Institute created a network directory to help practitioners access resources and find mental health professionals willing to accept referrals. Members of the PPN were invited to apply to be part of the directory. The McCain Institute partnered with One World Strong to create a mobile phone app for the directory. Two other organizations—Parents for Peace and the Citizen Crime Commission Disruption and Early Engagement Project (DEEP)—helped design and test the app. By the end of the grant period, the app was functional and the network directory included 22 licensed clinicians and 109 resources.

For the McCain Institute's full Implementation & Measurement Plan (IMP), which outlines its goals, target audiences, objectives, activities, inputs, time frame, anticipated outputs, performance measures, and data collection plan, contact DHS.

**Figure 1. The McCain Institute's Interrelated Grant Components**



## Design and Methods for Process Evaluation

The research team conducted a process evaluation of the McCain Institute's grant program, focusing on the four main components identified above: the creation of the PPN, workshops and symposia, a comprehensive framework for TVTP program design, and the network directory. This process evaluation will discuss how program activities were carried out to understand development decisions and describe how the program functions. This type of evaluation allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of how and why a project works the way it does and can offer useful information on challenges and implementation considerations for future projects. Not all of the McCain Institute's objectives were measurable with the data collected. In these cases, the evaluation team identified successes that could be measured with the data provided.

The research team observed the Summer and Fall 2022 Symposia and conducted interviews with a convenience sample of Fall 2022 Symposium participants, as well as with McCain Institute staff and some of their grant partners to gain a better understanding of the challenges, considerations, and processes that shaped project implementation. In addition, researchers analyzed a variety of program documents and project metrics, including PPN membership data, website metrics, and workshop and symposia materials. These documents and metrics were carefully reviewed alongside the observation and interview data to investigate the grant program's implementation process and identify the challenges, successes, and unanticipated outcomes associated with implementation.



## Process Evaluation Findings

### PPN Creates a TVTP Community of Practice

This section will examine the process evaluation findings regarding the PPN, which corresponds with Goal 1, Objective 1.1 in the McCain Institute's IMP.

#### **OBJECTIVE 1.1:**

**Prevention and intervention practitioners participate in practitioners network.**

#### **The McCain Institute Creates a Steering Committee to Guide PPN Creation**

The McCain Institute's first step toward creating the PPN was to establish a steering committee of interdisciplinary experts to draft a charter and code of ethics, as well as to establish membership criteria. The steering committee consisted of 13 experts recruited by the project director, surpassing the original goal of five to nine members. Once the initial materials were complete, the steering committee transformed into the Advisory Board and continued to serve in a leadership role.

The Advisory Board established five committees to guide the PPN: membership, ethics, development, programs, and public relations. Committee members were recruited beginning in the third quarter of the project through an invitation from the McCain Institute. Many Advisory Board members joined committees in addition to the Board; other committee members said that they had a pre-existing relationship with the project director, which may have facilitated their willingness to participate in the project. Although the committees were largely staffed at this point, McCain had one last push for committee recruitment during the project's first networking symposium in December 2021. The five committees met for the first time in January 2022. Since then, these committees have created or updated PPN documents, such as the code of ethics, PPN policy and procedures, an ethics complaint form, and a one-page, overall description of the PPN.

#### **Inclusive PPN Membership Criteria Allows the Network to Grow Rapidly**

Although the project originally planned to be selective about PPN membership, the Advisory Board and membership committee ultimately decided not to restrict membership and changed the language from "PPN member" to "PPN participant." Anyone who registered for a PPN workshop or symposium, or joined the PPN electronic mailing list, would be considered a PPN participant. The McCain Institute also expanded the scope of practitioners that it recruited to the PPN to include threat assessment professionals, schools, association bodies, and probation and parole officers in addition to the mental and behavioral health professionals it originally sought. As a result of these decisions, the McCain Institute surpassed its original goal of recruiting 75 PPN members. By the end of the period of performance, 910 people had been added to the PPN mailing list.

#### **Advisory Board Meets Monthly to Discuss PPN Development**

From January 2022 until the end of the grant period, the Advisory Board and PPN committees met monthly to review content developed for the workshops and symposia, find presenters for symposia, and discuss other issues. These roughly two-hour meetings were preceded by the circulation of reading materials and an agenda to guide discussion.

When interviewed, Advisory Board members said that the Advisory Board and committee meetings were well organized and that members were respectful of each other and open to disagreements. All interviewed participants expressed an intention to continue serving on the Board; however, some worried that the time investment required to participate on the numerous committees was burdensome and could become unsustainable. As mentioned above, many Advisory Board members also served on one or more committees, which would require them to attend numerous meetings. One member suggested that better planning by the McCain Institute to organize committee meetings around specific topics and inform committee members about the topics in advance could allow people to be more strategic in selecting which meetings they attend.



## Workshops and Symposia Facilitate Networking and Collaboration Among PPN Members

This section will examine the process evaluation findings regarding the workshops and symposia, which correspond with Goal 1, Objective 1.2 in the McCain Institute’s IMP.

### OBJECTIVE 1.2:

**Increase knowledge sharing and collaboration among network members.**

The McCain Institute successfully hosted nine workshops and four symposia. Each featured presentations by PPN practitioners and researchers. Interviews conducted by the evaluation team revealed anecdotal evidence that these events facilitated networking and collaboration among members.

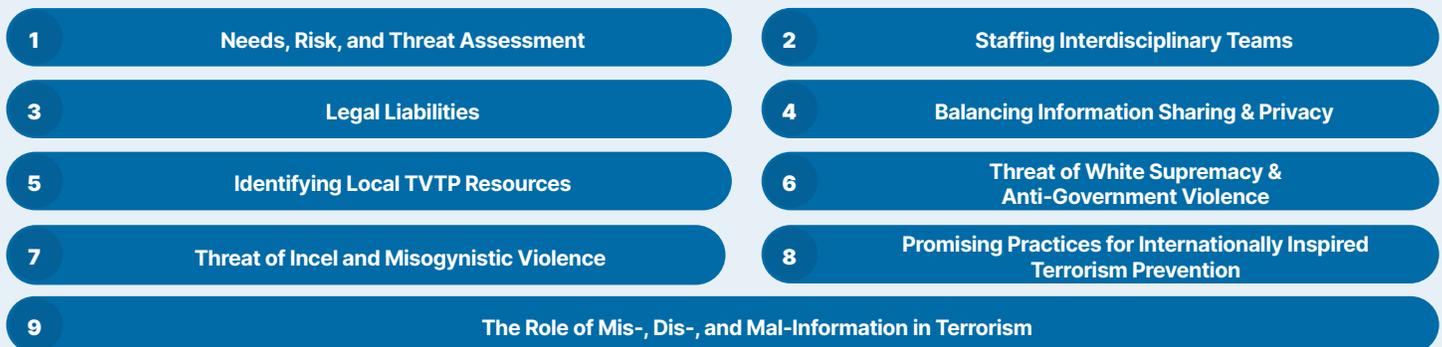
### Workshops Facilitate Knowledge Sharing Across the PPN

The McCain Institute hosted nine virtual workshops over the period of performance. The workshops, which typically lasted two hours and featured experienced practitioners and researchers, spanned 10 months, from January through October 2021. The McCain Institute partnered with ISD to develop read-ahead materials for each workshop. ISD was brought in to help with this development because of its experience supporting practitioners and governments through initiatives like the Strong Cities Network, which helps local governments create tailored strategies to counter hate and

extremism in their communities. The read-ahead materials featured research relevant to the workshop topic, program models, and potential TVTP program design considerations. For the early workshop topics, the project director surveyed TVTP practitioners she knew to see what topics they thought the McCain Institute should cover. The Advisory Board also helped come up with the first few workshop topic ideas; later workshop ideas were suggested by earlier workshop participants. Figure 2 details the topics of the nine workshops.

From the outset, workshop attendance was higher than anticipated. The McCain Institute had estimated that 30 people would attend the first workshop; however, 130 people registered and 97 attended. Initial workshop participants were recruited using the McCain Institute’s existing connections with governments, community organizations, and law enforcement and public safety officials. Once the PPN was established, the McCain Institute promoted upcoming events using the PPN electronic mailing list; however, outreach to professional networks and associations like the National Association for Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment and the National Organization of Forensic Social Work continued to be an important tool to spread awareness of PPN events. McCain Institute staff reported that they continued to see higher participation rates in workshops 2-9 than originally anticipated, although inconsistent data tracking prevented researchers from verifying this. Acknowledging these inconsistencies, estimates suggest that an average of 58 people attended each of those 8 workshops. Except for Workshops 4 and 5, which contained sensitive topics and discussions that the McCain Institute did not feel comfortable publishing, each workshop was recorded. The videos of these recorded workshops were uploaded to YouTube and the PPN website to increase the accessibility of the information for those who were unable to join in real time.

Figure 2. PPN Workshop Topics



Note: “Incel” is short for “involuntary celibacy.”



## Symposia Create Opportunities for Practitioners to Network

The McCain Institute originally planned for three in-person symposia to facilitate networking and collaboration among practitioners in the TVTP field. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the first two symposia were held virtually. The McCain Institute saw value in having in-person networking opportunities so, once pandemic restrictions were relaxed and the third symposium was held in person, staff applied for a three-month no-cost extension and added a fourth symposium so they could host two in-person events. Symposium invitations were sent to the entire PPN participant list, garnering participation from professionals from a variety of fields, including mental and behavioral health professionals, educators, law enforcement officials, and government employees. The topics for the symposia and their corresponding sessions are listed in Figure 3.

The first two symposia (Winter 2021 and Spring 2022), which took place virtually, spanned two days and included both plenary and breakout sessions on various topics related to the symposium theme. Though the need to host the first two

symposia virtually may have limited participants' ability to network, the remote setting did allow some practitioners to attend who would have otherwise been unable to travel.

The third symposium (Summer 2022) was held in person for one day in Washington, D.C., without a virtual option, although the sessions were recorded and posted online. The fourth symposium (Fall 2022) used a hybrid meeting approach with both in-person (Washington, D.C.) and virtual attendance options for the one-day meeting. The McCain Institute set up a Zoom room and sent out the Zoom link the day before, encouraging those who could not attend in person to join virtually. Only those attending via Zoom were able to chat with each other, though McCain Institute staff did monitor the Zoom chat for any relevant session questions. When asked how the hybrid symposium experience went, one participant attending virtually noted that online attendees found opportunities to network using the chat function during sessions. The Spring, Summer, and Fall 2022 Symposia were recorded, and videos were uploaded to the PPN website. Only the first day of the virtual Winter 2021 Symposium was recorded and uploaded to YouTube. Neither the full recording nor a link to YouTube were uploaded to McCain's website. This appears to have been an oversight during a staff transition.

Figure 3. Symposia Topics and Sessions

### Winter 2021 Symposium: Current State of Threat and Progression of Prevention (Virtual)

- Bridging Traditional Practices With the Virtual Space: How to Support Online/Offline Interventions
- Moving Forward: How Has COVID-19 Shifted the Prevention Landscape?
- Measuring Effectiveness
- The Needs of Practitioners
- Information Sharing in the Prevention Space
- Youth-Focused Programs and Educational Interventions

### Spring 2022 Symposium: Integrating Threat Assessment and Behavior Management (Virtual)

- Clarifying Roles & Competencies
- Reconciling Language across Assessments
- Integrative Assessment & Management in Schools
- When and How to Involve Law Enforcement

### Summer 2022 Symposium: Prevention Through Education (In-Person)

- Early Childhood and Intergenerational Trauma
- Responding to Concerning Behavior
- Protective Factors
- Resources for Educators and Adults
- What's Working in Schools

### Fall 2022 Symposium: Tertiary Prevention (In-Person)

- Diversion and Alternative Sentencing
- State, Local, and Federal Re-entry and Parole
- Psychological-Behavioral Approaches to Prevent Terrorism and Facilitate Reintegration
- Regional Efforts for Tertiary Providers
- Community-Based Tertiary Programming
- TVT Assessment and Management in Community-Based Mental Health Services
- Assessing Disengagement



## Observations of and Participant Reflections on the Fall 2022 Symposium

The research team observed the McCain Institute's Fall 2022 Symposium on tertiary prevention. The symposium began with a brief welcome and introduction from the project director and committee updates. This was followed by sequential hour-long sessions featuring a single speaker, panel discussion, or presentation of an organization's work, with question-and-answer periods. To facilitate discussion, McCain Institute staff put discussion topics on approximately half of the lunch tables and encouraged people interested in discussing that topic to sit together. The McCain Institute also hosted two happy hour events—the day before and the day of the symposium—to facilitate networking. The primary opportunities for networking during the event were the morning breakfast hour, 10- to 15-minute breaks between sessions, the “working lunch” break, and happy hour events.

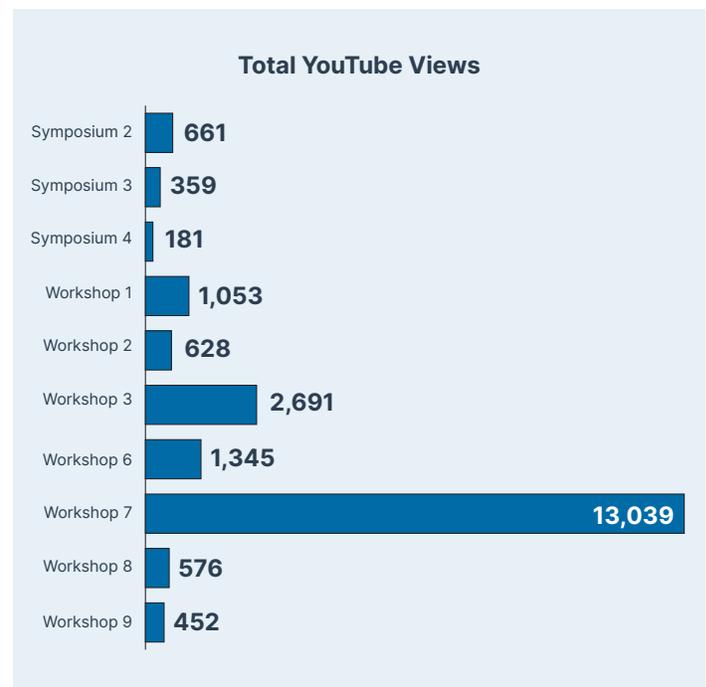
Researchers conducted post-event interviews with eight attendees—seven who attended in person and one who attended virtually—discussing the Fall 2022 Symposium and any other PPN events they had attended. Results from these interviews suggest that the symposium did facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration among network members (Objective 1.2). Participants stated that they appreciated learning about what others are doing in the field and being able to compare experiences, as well as the small group discussions. Almost all interviewees said they were able to exchange contact information with practitioners they had not met before; however, many expressed a desire for more time to network, noting that the lunch break was not sufficient. Several interviewees said that they likely would not have been able to attend had it not been for the DHS Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) conference that took place the following day. These attendees were able to extend their DHS CP3 conference trip and arrive a day early to attend the Fall 2022 Symposium.

## PPN Events Create Opportunities for Knowledge Sharing and Networking Among Practitioners

All nine workshops occurred before the evaluation began, so researchers were unable to implement empirical pre- and posttests and are therefore unable to state whether workshops resulted in knowledge gain by participants. The McCain Institute developed and administered brief three-question surveys before and after each workshop to measure participants' self-reported confidence in their knowledge. Self-reported confidence levels can provide useful feedback to trainers, but they cannot be used to demonstrate an equivalent increase in participants' knowledge. Additionally, a portion of these data were lost as a result of staff turnover, so researchers were unable to analyze them.

In April 2022, the McCain Institute began tracking the number of YouTube views of each workshop and symposium, except for Workshops 4 and 5 and Symposium 1, for which videos were not available. Figure 4 shows the total number of views of each event from April 15 through December 31, 2022. Note that Workshop 7 (“Threat of Incel and Misogynistic Violence”)<sup>1</sup> received substantially more views than the other events. There is no clear evidence to explain this difference; however, the McCain Institute suspects the incel community may have found the video and shared it among themselves.

**Figure 4. YouTube Views of Workshops and Symposia**



<sup>1</sup> “Incel” is short for “involuntary celibacy.”



To measure increased collaboration, the McCain Institute collected post-event surveys to assess collaboration and networking during and after events. However, the cadence of data collection varied within and across workshops and symposia and many recurring questions about networking and collaboration did not distinguish between the various events. The limitations associated with inconsistent data collection (discussed further in the Challenges section below) led the research team to focus its analysis on the Fall 2022 Symposium.

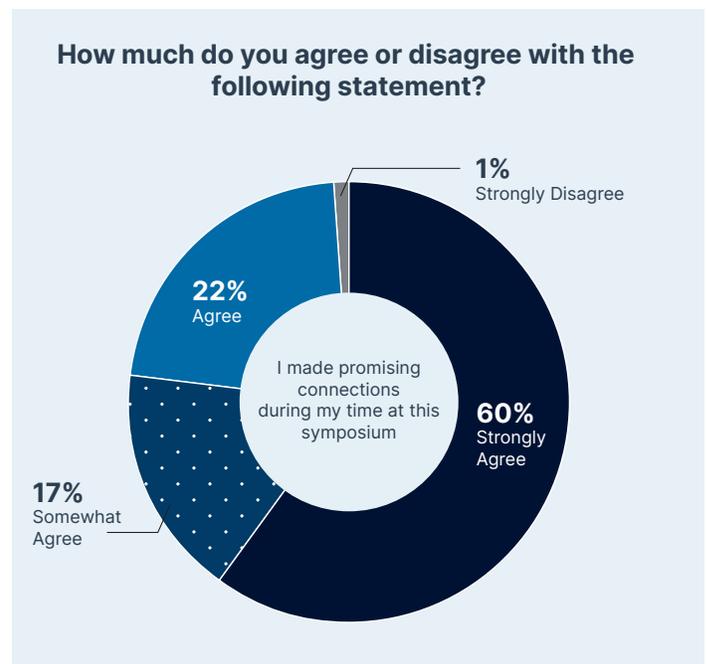
The Fall 2022 Symposium had 191 registrants and a total of 135 people attended (115 in person, 20 virtually). Of these 135 attendees, six responded to the pre-event survey provided by the McCain Institute and 77 completed the post-event survey. McCain Institute staff said that they made time for the pre-event survey on the day of the Fall 2022 Symposium; however, the evaluation team observed that many attendees were not aware of the request or opportunity to complete the survey. In contrast, the post-event survey was clearly announced and the McCain Institute provided participants with QR codes to easily access the survey. Approximately 40 completed the survey the day of the event; the McCain Institute then sent two follow-up emails with links to the survey in the two weeks following the event. These emails effectively increased the response rate: after the second email, 57% of participants (77 of 135) had responded.

The pre-event survey included one question asking respondents to rate their knowledge on seven topics related to tertiary prevention on a scale of “Poor” to “Excellent.” These topics were diversion and alternative sentencing; state, local, and federal re-entry and parole; psychological-behavioral approaches to prevent terrorism and facilitate reintegration; regional efforts for tertiary providers; community-based tertiary programming; programming and key performance indicators for state-level targeted violence prevention; and assessing disengagement. No respondents rated their knowledge as “Excellent” or “Very good” on these topics; half described their knowledge of diversion and alternative sentencing and of state, local, and federal re-entry and parole as “Poor.”

The post-event survey included questions asking participants to share how they learned about the event and why they decided to attend, what their level of confidence in their knowledge was after the event, how the event may have facilitated networking, and how satisfied they were with the

event. Survey results suggest that the Fall 2022 Symposium was effective in promoting knowledge sharing and facilitating networking. Participants said that they valued the presentation of research and practical advice by symposium presenters. Despite some feedback from participants that they had wished for more time to network, the majority of respondents indicated that they had made “promising connections” at the symposium (Figure 5). Almost all (71 of 77, or 93%) respondents reported that they had exchanged contact information with at least one person; 15 (19%) said that they had exchanged contact information with 10 or more people.

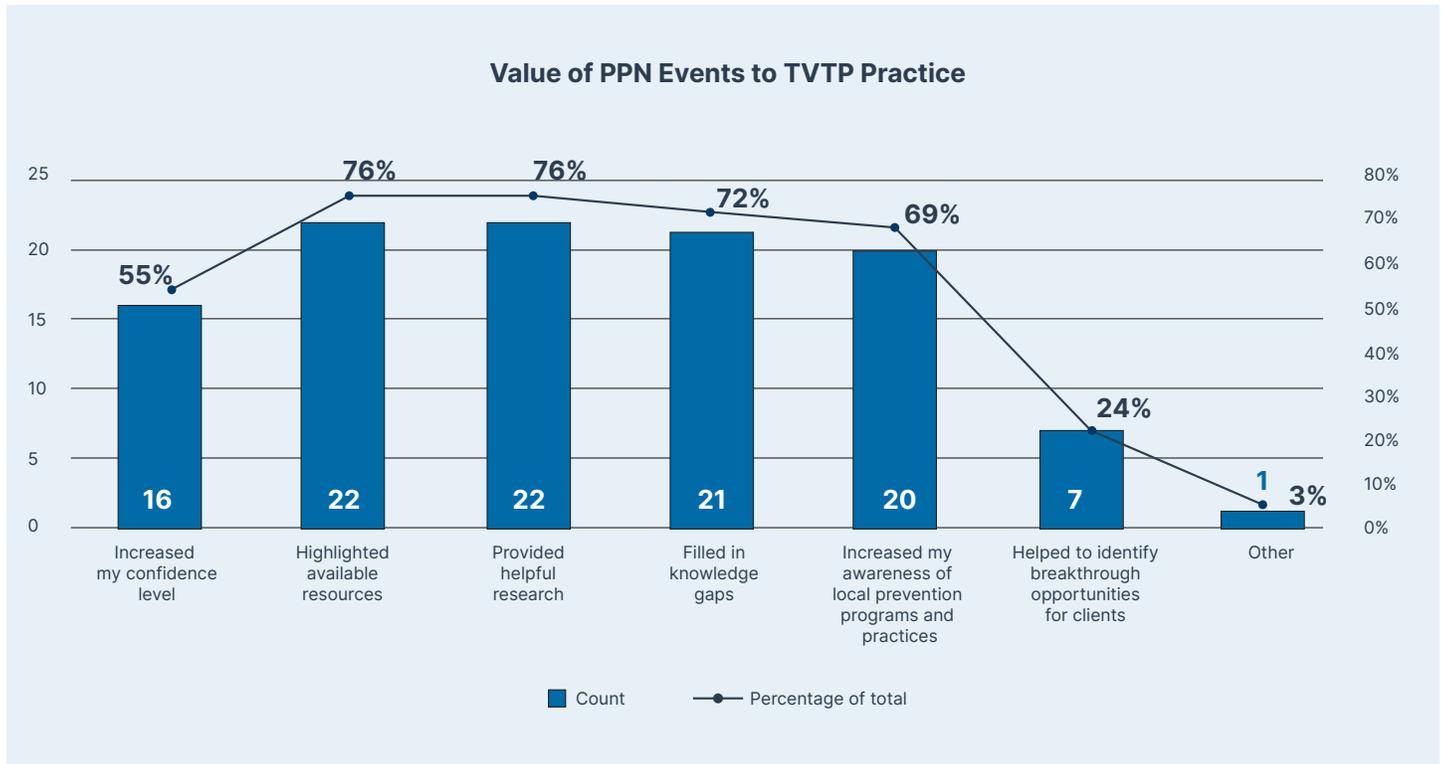
**Figure 5. Share of Participants Who Made “Promising Connections” at the Fall 2022 Symposium**



The post-event survey also included questions about participation in prior PPN workshops and symposia. Of the 77 respondents, 29 had attended a prior event. Respondent feedback about these events bolsters anecdotal evidence that the McCain Institute workshops and symposia facilitated knowledge sharing and collaboration among TVTP practitioners. All 29 respondents who had attended a prior event agreed that the workshops, symposia, or both were helpful in their practice. The vast majority said that these events were constructive because they provided helpful research or filled in knowledge gaps (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Impact of PPN Events on Respondents' TVTP Practice



Most respondents who had participated in a previous event reported that they had made new connections at these events (24 of 29, or 83%). Of these, 70% (17 of 24) said that they had since reached out to a connection made at a PPN event to collaborate on a future project.



## PPN Practitioners' Guide Offers a Guide for Behavioral Intervention Programs

This section examines the process evaluation's findings regarding the development of the PPN Practitioners' Guide, which corresponds with Goal 2, Objective 2.1 in the McCain Institute's IMP.

### **OBJECTIVE 2.1:**

**Framework simplifies design stages for new prevention and intervention initiatives.**

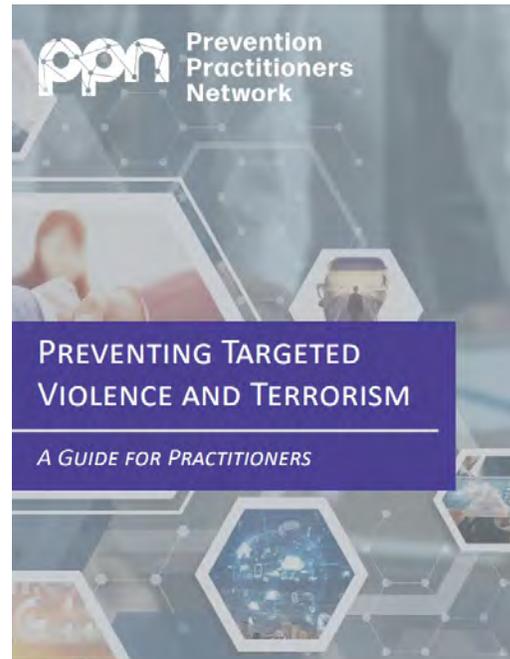
### **PPN Guide for Practitioners Outlined Prevention and Intervention Program Design Considerations**

The McCain Institute partnered with ISD to develop an overall framework document outlining the basics of TVTP program design, which it promoted throughout the United States with the help of Strong Cities Network. This document was a compilation of practice guides developed from workshop read-ahead materials and lessons learned from practitioners, researchers, and subject matter experts. Before the end of the grant in December 2022, the McCain Institute and ISD had produced nine read-ahead materials and four practice guides. ISD synthesized these materials to create a streamlined, comprehensive framework, completed a draft in October 2022, and passed it to the Advisory Board for review. The final version, titled *Preventing Targeted Violence and Terrorism: A Guide for Practitioners* (i.e., PPN Practitioners' Guide; Figure 7), was completed at the beginning of November 2022.

The PPN Practitioners' Guide begins with an overview of the current violent extremist threat landscape and proceeds with an overview of multidisciplinary teams. The chapter provides guidance on how to structure a multidisciplinary team, establish standard operating procedures, and conduct program evaluations. The next chapters outline primary prevention and behavioral intervention programs. The chapter on primary prevention provides a useful introduction to early intervention and offers some program design considerations. The McCain Institute discussed creating a fifth practice guide, focusing on early prevention and education, after the grant ended. This addition would offer a useful supplement to the information

already included in the framework. The behavioral interventions section provides a thorough discussion of the relevant considerations and program design elements required for behavioral intervention programs, including some of the legal considerations in working with this population.

**Figure 7. PPN Practitioners' Guide**



### **Workshop Read-Ahead Materials, Practice Guides, and PPN Practitioners' Guide Are Widely Shared**

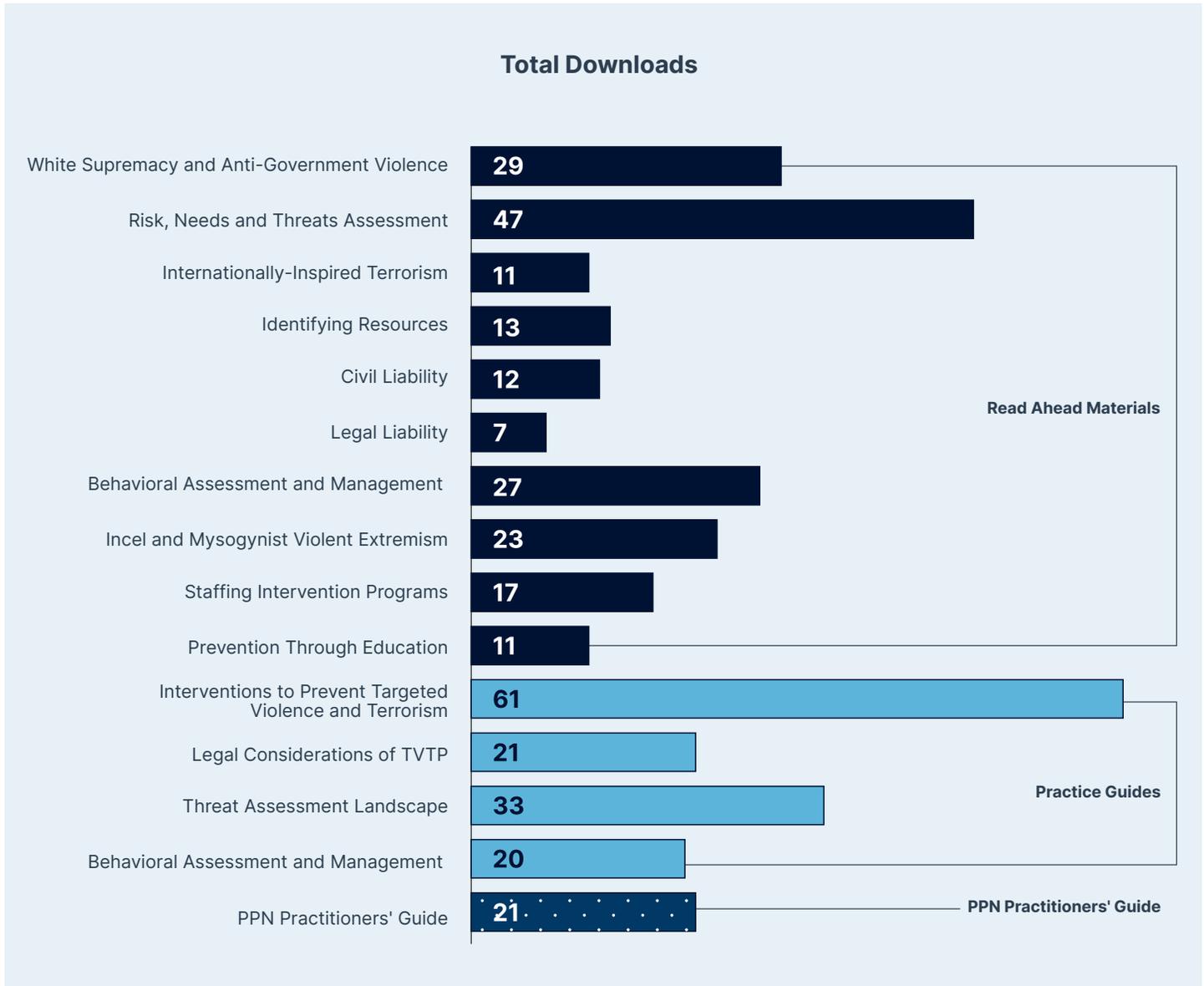
The McCain Institute first shared the PPN Practitioners' Guide with the PPN after the Fall 2022 Symposium. The McCain Institute promoted the framework at the Strong Cities Network gathering in Denver, Colorado in December 2022 to city-, county-, and state-level leaders. It also promoted the framework to states such as Arizona and Virginia; counties; and cities such as Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Aurora, Denver, North Glen, Las Vegas, Tuscaloosa, San Diego, Los Angeles, Boston, Seattle, and Washington, D.C.

From January 21 through December 31, 2022, the workshop read-ahead materials, practice guides, and PPN Practitioners' Guide were downloaded a total of 343 times. The McCain Institute also disseminated 150 printed copies of the PPN Practitioners' Guide at the Eradicate Hate Summit in September 2022. Figure 8 illustrates the breakdown of downloaded materials. Anecdotal evidence suggests that practitioners have



used the resources developed by the McCain Institute and ISD to support program implementation: in an interview with the research team, one participant working in the TVTP field said that their organization has started to use the resources developed by the McCain Institute to educate new hires.

Figure 8. Total Downloads of Workshop Read-Ahead Materials, Practice Guides, and PPN Practitioners' Guide in 2022



### Data Are Needed to Understand Practitioner Use of the PPN Practitioners' Guide

It is unclear how practitioners have used the practice guides or PPN Practitioners' Guide. The McCain Institute originally stated that it would be gathering data on use of the framework from practitioners during technical assistance calls with organizations or individuals reaching out to McCain for support. From February through October 2022, the McCain Institute conducted 34 of these calls. However, data were not collected on the content of these calls, so researchers cannot determine how practitioners used the framework and whether it actually simplifies design stages.



## Network Directory Increases Access to Local Providers and Resources

This section will examine the process evaluation findings regarding the network directory, which corresponds with Goal 3, Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 in the McCain Institute's IMP.

### OBJECTIVES 3.1-3.2:

**3.1 Increase number of mental and behavioral health professionals able and willing to receive referrals.**

**3.2 Government officials locate relevant programs in their regions for referrals.**

The McCain Institute sought to develop a national network directory that would include relevant resources and a list of mental and behavioral health professionals in the PPN who could be accessed for local referrals. This directory is housed on the McCain Institute's website, and the project staff also collaborated with a nonprofit organization, One World Strong Foundation, to create an app to host it. The One World Strong Foundation was founded to connect victims of terrorist attacks, hate crimes, and traumatic events with resources and support through the Resilience Network, an app it developed to share terrorism prevention and mental health resources. The foundation also worked with Parents for Peace and DEEP in New York to help design the directory function on the Resilience Network app and test it to ensure usability.

The Advisory Board decided that the criteria for including mental and behavioral health professionals in the directory would be **two years' experience** and **a clinical license**.

The McCain Institute began recruiting for the directory via the PPN survey administered during the Spring 2022 Symposium. The Advisory Board decided that the criteria for including mental and behavioral health professionals in the directory would be two years' experience and a clinical license. The Advisory Board adopted these criteria to strike a balance between competing concerns: the Board wanted to be sure directory members were qualified to accept TVTP referrals; however, the Board was also concerned that adopting stricter criteria could expose Board members to greater liability by implying that the McCain Institute endorsed certain providers.

A looser set of criteria would create less of an impression that the McCain Institute supports or recommends the clinicians included in the directory. The McCain Institute has faced some challenges in convincing mental health professionals to join the directory, as many were hesitant to work on TVTP cases for liability reasons.

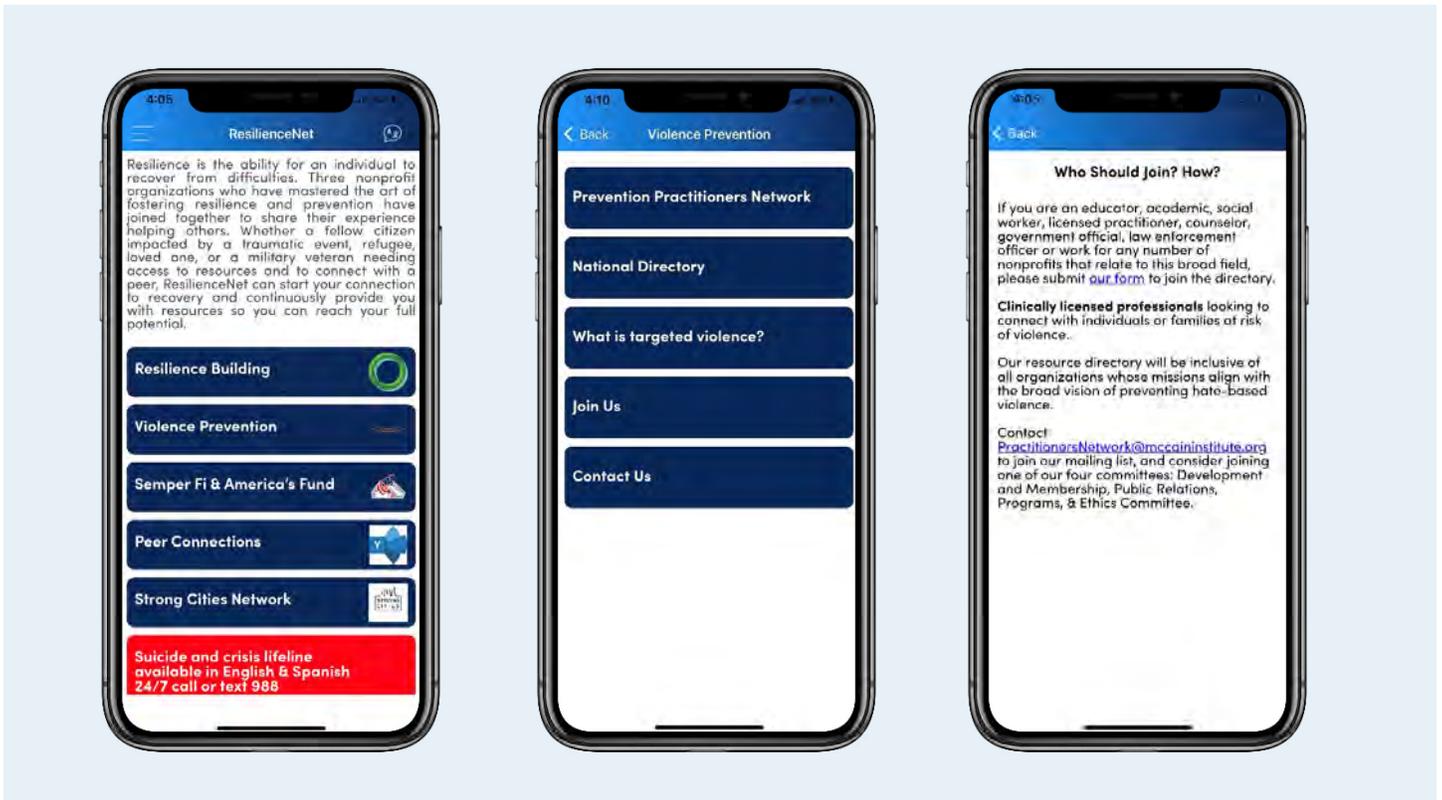
The McCain Institute advertised the network directory and app at the Eradicate Hate Global Summit in August 2022. The app version of the network directory went live the next month, hosted on One World Strong's ResilienceNet app. Information about the PPN can be found under "Violence Prevention". Users can then access the providers and resources on the National Directory by selecting "National Directory"; or join the PPN by selecting "Join Us". Screenshots of these pages are displayed in Figure 9. The directory is programmed so that providers can update their own information. Users of the app can view providers' location, licensure, and specialty. One World Strong plans to continue improving the app as user experience data accumulate.

The McCain Institute has continued to recruit new members to the directory since the completion of the app, conducting outreach to local and state government offices; religious, cultural, and democracy nonprofits; university centers; and the California Prevention Practitioners' Network. The McCain Institute has also conducted outreach to national organizations directly and through LinkedIn. At the end of the period of performance, the network directory included 22 licensed clinicians and 109 resources.

Because Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 were framed around provider activity and directory use, as opposed to outcomes generated by the McCain Institute, the research team could not conclude whether these objectives were met using the data available. Without a baseline number of professionals, it is unclear whether the creation of the network directory or other grant activities increased the number of mental and behavioral health professionals who were able or willing to receive referrals. Similarly, there are no data to indicate whether local officials have used the directory. Despite these data challenges, the creation of the directory constitutes a crucial first step toward building a national resource for local TVTP providers. Future efforts to assess providers' willingness to accept TVTP referrals or government officials' use of the national directory could include data collection such as surveys or interviews with providers and government officials, respectively, on those topics to more precisely measure results.



Figure 9. ResilienceNet's PPN and Network Directory Pages



## Challenges

The process evaluation revealed five challenges to project implementation.

**COVID-19 Pandemic.** The COVID-19 pandemic and related public health emergency forced the McCain Institute to revise its plan to host all the symposia in person; the first two symposia were hosted virtually. While these events were successful, the opportunities for networking at these events were diminished compared with those at the hybrid symposia.

**Inconsistent Data Collection.** Pre-/post-surveys were administered during the workshops via Zoom polls; however, these data are not available for four of the nine workshops. When the staff member in charge of administering the Zoom polls left the organization, their Zoom account was shut down and all associated poll data were lost. The McCain Institute made every effort to recover the lost data, including reaching out to Zoom, but ultimately the data could not be saved. Before the second symposium in March 2022, the McCain Institute created a survey to collect information about collaboration and networking during and after the events. Follow-up surveys

were administered at the subsequent symposia; however, the surveys were not consistent in their method of collecting information. The first survey was administered around the time of the second symposium and was intended to be a three-month follow-up to the Fall 2021 Symposium. A staff transition resulted in a miscommunication about the purpose of these surveys; therefore, the second survey asked about the Summer 2022 Symposium, rather than the Spring 2022 Symposium. Thus, data on the Spring 2022 Symposium were omitted and data on the Summer 2022 Symposium were collected three months earlier than data for the Fall 2021 Symposium.

**Demonstrating Project Success.** Staff at the McCain Institute said that they did not believe that the data they had collected throughout the project adequately represented the full dimensions of the success of their grant project or the contribution the PPN had made to the field. They found it difficult to design pre- and posttests for the workshops given the range of attendees' expertise and knowledge bases.



**Pacing of Events.** One of the challenges the McCain Institute faced during the grant period was following the event schedule it had established in its IMP. The McCain Institute had planned to host an event (i.e., workshop or symposium) every three months. When it began implementing, it found that this pace was too rapid to give enough thought to topic selection and that it was difficult to create the content and materials in time.

**Self-identification by Practitioners.** The McCain Institute found that a major challenge to recruiting to the PPN and directory was getting buy-in from practitioners who did not see themselves as working in the TVTP field, such as school psychologists. Practitioners hesitated to self-identify as being in TVTP for several reasons; most often, they either did not believe that they could help or did not understand the scope of prevention efforts. McCain Institute staff also related that some practitioners in the mental health space were hesitant to self-identify as TVTP practitioners for liability reasons.

## IMP Accomplishments

Through the PPN, the McCain Institute achieved its goal of recruiting prevention and intervention practitioners to participate in a practitioners' network (Objective 1.1). The McCain Institute's original goal was to recruit 75 members to the PPN. During the grant period, the Advisory Board made the decision to remove criteria for membership and shift from recruiting "members" to including everyone who had participated in a PPN event as a "participant." Due in part to this shift, the McCain Institute far surpassed its original goal: by the end of the grant period, the PPN included 910 participants.

The McCain Institute successfully hosted nine workshops and four symposia through the PPN, therefore achieving its second objective (Objective 1.2). Data are not available to assess knowledge gain from these events; however, interview data gathered from the Fall 2022 Symposium suggest that participants used these events to create connections with others in this field for the purpose of future collaboration. Though there were some inconsistencies in how attendance was tracked, it appears an average of 62 people attended each workshop and an average of 106 people participated in each symposium. Recordings of the workshops and symposia were also viewed hundreds of times, suggesting that these events led to knowledge sharing.

The McCain Institute partnered with ISD to create the PPN Practitioners' Guide, which outlines the basics of primary prevention and offers a thorough discussion of the design considerations for intervention initiatives. It remains unclear whether practitioners believe this framework has simplified program design stages; thus, we are unable to confirm whether the McCain Institute met Objective 2.1.

The fourth component of the McCain Institute's program was the creation of a network directory to allow practitioners to locate providers and resources across the country. By the end of the grant, the directory included 22 licensed clinicians and 109 resources. Data were not available to determine whether the McCain Institute achieved the two objectives related to this component (Objective 3.1: Increase number of mental and behavioral health professionals able and willing to receive referrals; Objective 3.2: Government officials locate relevant programs in their regions for referrals).

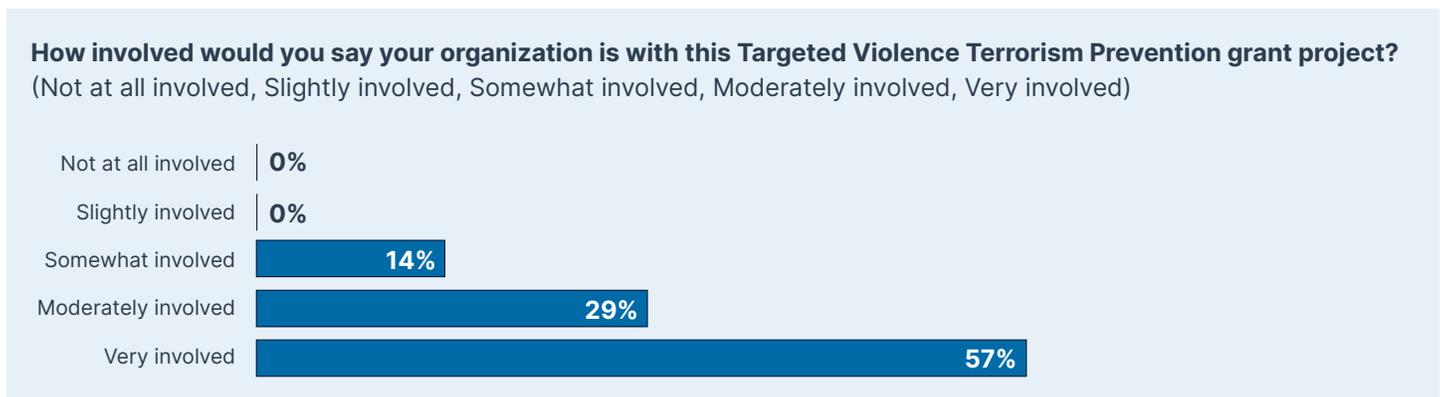
# The McCain Institute Partner Survey Findings

The McCain Institute engaged a variety of partners to support its FY2020 grant. Two organizations—ISD and One World Strong—were closely involved in program implementation, as they led the development of key products. In addition, the McCain Institute solicited support and feedback from several other subject matter experts in the fields of TVTP and disengagement through its Advisory Board. In total, seven partners participated in a survey administered by the research team to better understand their collaboration with the McCain Institute and the challenges the grant program faced. This section discusses the findings from that survey.

## Nature of Partnerships

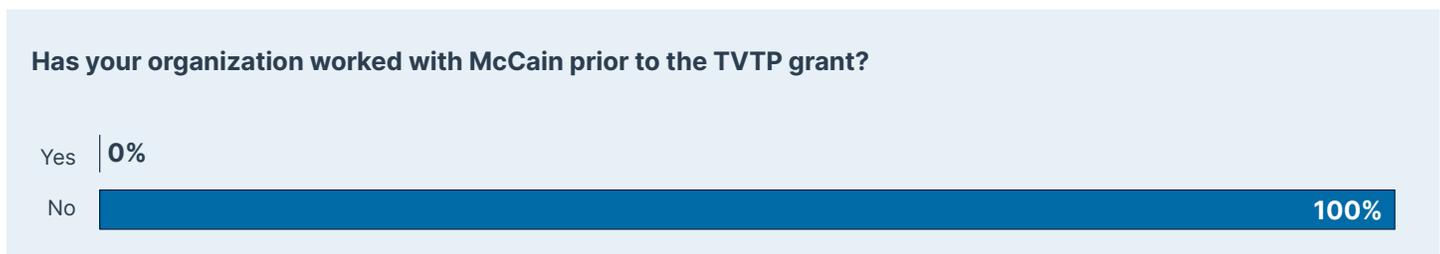
The survey revealed that collaboration between the McCain Institute and its partners was consistent across each partner, although they had varying levels of involvement in the grant. All seven partners stated that they were at least somewhat involved in the grant; a majority said they were “very involved” (Figure 10).

**Figure 10. Partner Organization Involvement**



None of the seven partners had worked with the McCain Institute before their partnership on the TVTP grant (Figure 11).

**Figure 11. Prior Partner Collaboration**



Although two of the seven respondents described their relationship as “new,” the majority of partners described their relationship as “developing” or “established” (Figure 12). When asked about the strength of their relationship with the McCain Institute, two described their relationship as “good,” the rest described it as “excellent” (Figure 13). Given that none of the partners we interviewed had worked with the McCain Institute before the TVTP grant, the relative strength of these relationships is notable. Through surveys and interviews, partners conveyed a strong support for the grant project’s mission, which likely contributed to their buy-in to the project. Staff at the McCain Institute built on this support to cultivate strong partnerships through frequent and clear communication.

Overall, these survey results indicate that the McCain Institute was able to establish new relationships during its grant program and build them up through consistent involvement in program implementation, such as including partners in monthly Advisory Board and committee meetings. One partner highlighted the emphasis that the McCain Institute placed on building relationships and the effort it has made to do so: “[The McCain Institute] has been extraordinary in conducting consultations, listening to advice, and remaining highly focused on developing a meaningful product, not just checking the boxes.”

**Figure 12. Partner Organization Relationships**



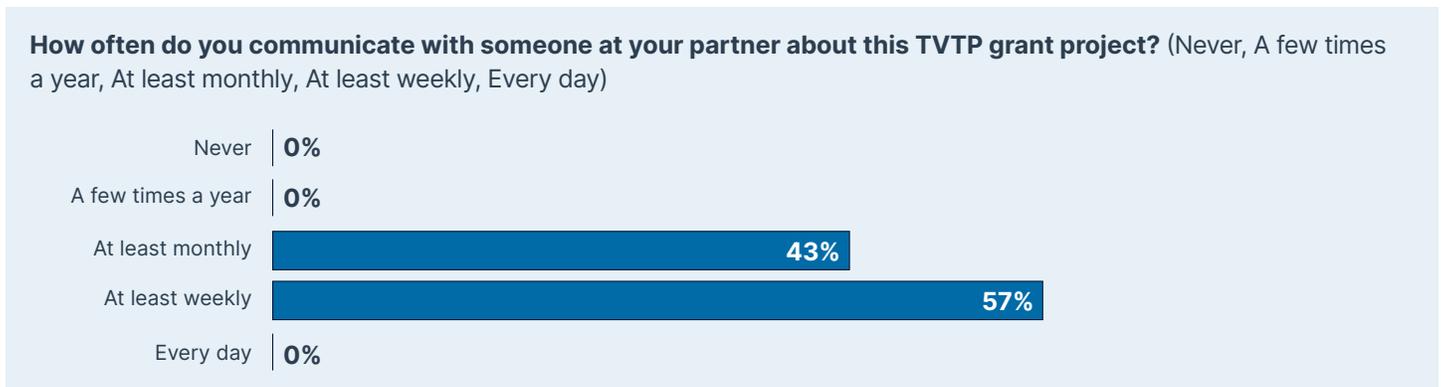
**Figure 13. Strength of Partnership**



## Communication

The McCain Institute communicated with its partners frequently. Four of the seven partners indicated that they communicated with McCain at least weekly; the rest communicated at least monthly (Figure 14). Significantly, most partners said that this communication was consistent and all partners agreed that communication with the McCain Institute was transparent (7 of 7, or 100%).

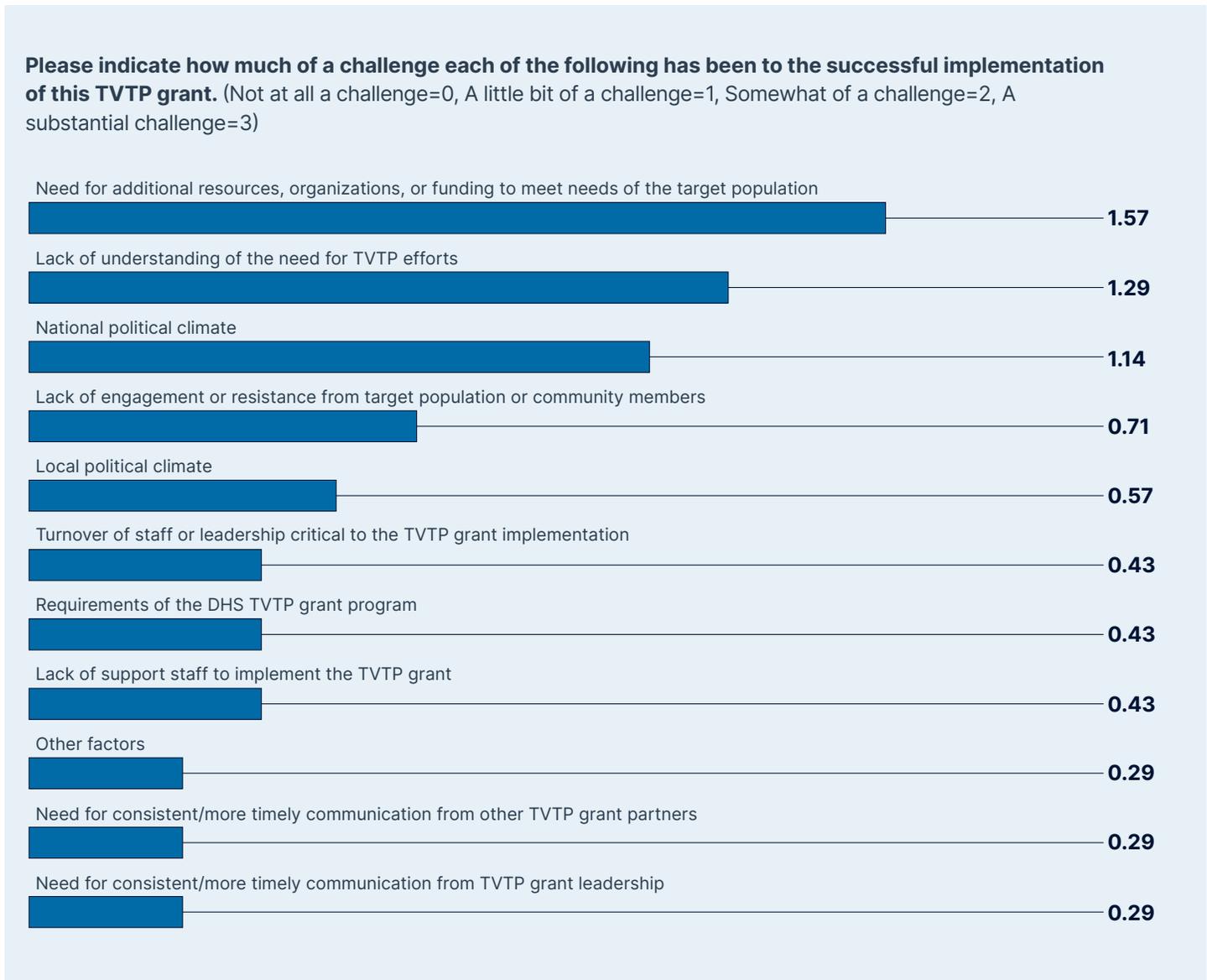
**Figure 14. Communication With Partner Organizations: Frequency**



## Challenges

The McCain Institute's partners were asked to consider various factors that could present challenges to implementation, based on a four-point scale ranging from zero ("not a challenge at all") to three ("a substantial challenge"). The partners identified the need for additional resources, organizations, or funding as the biggest challenge (1.57), followed by the lack of understanding of the need for TVTP efforts (1.29) and the national political climate (1.14). Figure 15 illustrates the partners' perceptions of challenges to grant implementation.

**Figure 15. Perceived Challenges to Successful Implementation of TVTP Grant**

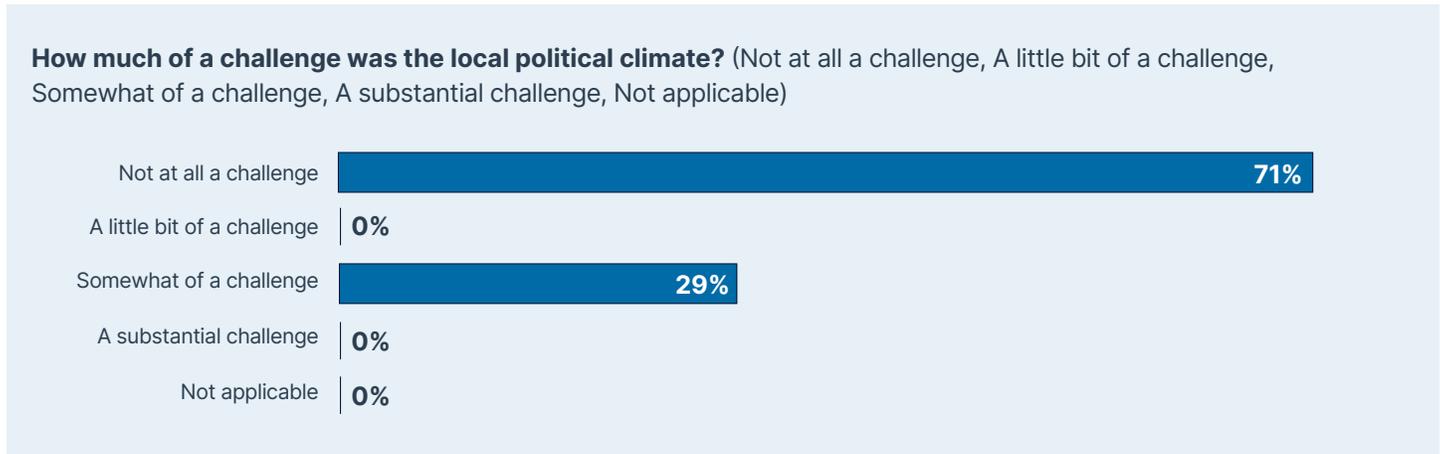


Notably, on the three-point scale, none of these challenges surpassed two ("somewhat of a challenge"). Rather, most challenges averaged below one—between "not at all a challenge" and "a little bit of a challenge." These lesser challenges included the local political climate and a lack of engagement or resistance from the target population. Most organizational factors, such as staff turnover, lack of support staff, and communication all averaged below one; the exception was the need for additional resources. This result suggests that, although staff turnover affected data collection, the McCain Institute was able to maintain consistent communication with partners and programming during these transitions.

## Local and National Political Climate

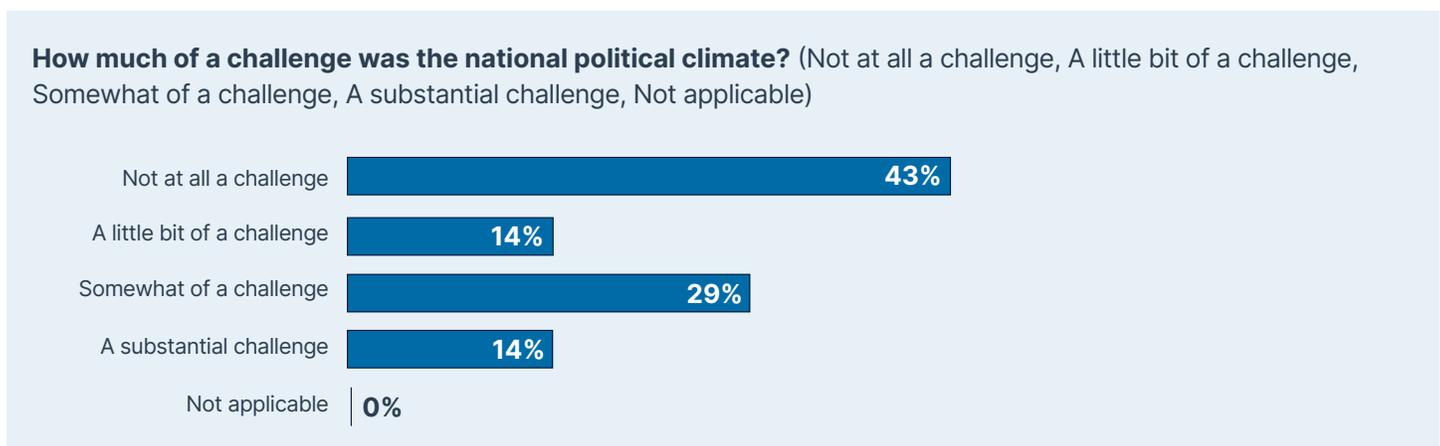
Although two partners (29%) indicated the local political climate to be “somewhat of a challenge,” most partners said that they did not believe the local political climate to be a challenge (71%; Figure 16). This outcome is not surprising, as the McCain Institute provides programs at the national level.

**Figure 16. Local Political Climate**



The McCain Institute's partners were more divided in their perceptions of the challenges posed by the national political climate (Figure 17). Three of the seven (43%) did not find the national political climate to be a challenge; the rest indicated it was at least “a little bit of a challenge.” When asked for detail, two of these four partners said that the challenge from the national political climate was due to polarization and the potential for a change in leadership to affect sustained federal support in the future. The other partners pointed to a lack of understanding between the federal government and local communities, saying that the federal government does not understand local issues, and community actors are suspicious of federal TVTP efforts.

**Figure 17. National Political Climate**



# Discussion

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The McCain Institute made substantial progress toward achieving its overarching goal of building a national network that both increases the efficacy of locally based prevention frameworks and programs and expands referrals to qualified programs throughout the country. One of the most lasting accomplishments of the McCain Institute's TVTP grant program was the creation of a national community of practice. When asked about the outcomes associated with the McCain Institute's grant program, one partner shared,

[The McCain Institute] has developed a strong collaborative process that has brought, under one roof, diverse professionals [who] work in this space. This, in and of itself, has engendered not just a sense of community in a diverse group, but also substantial learning and [resource] availability. This was not anticipated. Additionally, the public-facing educational work that has been done in a very short time is very beneficial.

The PPN brought providers and practitioners together from a wide array of disciplines and facilitated knowledge sharing and collaboration. By the end of the grant period, the total number of PPN participants reached 910, far above the original goal. Participants included individuals from across the United States and Canada working in a variety of fields.

The workshops and symposia hosted by the McCain Institute created opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaboration. Asking PPN members to serve as presenters and discussants at these events showcased the expertise available within the network. The COVID-19 pandemic meant that all the workshops and the first two symposia had to be virtual, which may have limited opportunities for participants to network. Still, several participants in the Fall 2022 Symposium said that they had created new connections that they believed could lead to future collaboration. Data were not available to evaluate the extent to which these events led to knowledge gain. Analysis of pre- and posttests could provide a greater understanding of event outcomes in the future.

The McCain Institute worked with ISD to develop read-ahead materials and practice guides and compile these resources into the PPN Practitioners' Guide, which offers an accessible source of information on the current violent extremist threat landscape as well as design considerations for primary prevention and behavioral intervention programs. The McCain Institute has stated that it plans to continue adding to this framework in the future. Adding more information on prevention programs would address the current imbalance between the framework's treatment of prevention and intervention programs.

Since March 2022, the McCain Institute has worked to recruit providers and resources to its network directory. It is unclear whether project activities have resulted in an increase in the number of providers able or willing to accept referrals or whether government officials have used the directory to locate referrals. However, the creation of the directory offers policymakers a new and valuable resource. The McCain Institute continues to conduct outreach to expand the network directory and increase the number of referrals available throughout the country. Hesitation by providers to list themselves in the directory posed a challenge for the McCain Institute throughout the grant period.

## Sustainability

The McCain Institute has taken active steps to ensure the sustainability of this project, including diversifying its funding sources to include private foundations and philanthropic organizations as well as government agencies. The PPN Advisory Board and committees continue to meet monthly to set future goals for the network and design programming for future PPN events. Interviews with these partners revealed a high level of support for the network; most said that they were interested in continuing to serve on their committees into the future, an important aspect of sustainability. The PPN will continue to exist for as long the McCain Institute continues to host workshops, symposia, or other TVTP-related events. At the end of the grant period, the McCain Institute was already planning its next symposium, to be held in April 2023 (i.e., the Spring 2023 Symposium on "Reporting Process and Referral

Channels”). The McCain Institute additionally established the resource directory, published nine reading materials, four practice guides, and the PPN Practitioners’ Guide. It posted seven of its nine workshop recordings on YouTube, as well as recordings of the sessions from the Spring, Summer, and Winter 2022 Symposia. These materials will be available to practitioners and others working in the TVTP field after the grant’s end.

## Recommendations for the TVTP Grant Program

### ✓ **Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to Facilitate Staff Transitions.**

As mentioned above, there was a significant amount of data loss and inconsistencies in the data collection processes due to staff turnover and lack of communication between staff taking over vacated positions. Future grantees would benefit from creating SOPs for specific data processes (e.g., data collection and management) or roles (e.g., program manager) and updating them as new procedures or processes are implemented. Additionally, grantees should consider a data storage solution that ensures that data are saved in a secure location that all staff can access and that will not be lost if a staff member leaves the organization. Better documentation would facilitate smoother staff transitions and ensure that data are saved in a central secure location.

### ✓ **Incorporate Timing Considerations for the Pacing of Events.**

McCain Institute staff noted that they struggled with the pacing of the workshops and symposia. They felt that they did not have enough time between events to crowdsource topics for the next event or give themselves enough of a planning period. Future TVTP grantees that are also seeking to host symposia or similar large events build time into implementation timelines for this planning and preparation. This consideration is particularly important if event planning involves grant partners who may have limited time available between events. Based on the experience of the McCain Institute, grantees should consider hosting large events at least four months apart to allow time to gather information on what topics practitioners would like to cover next and develop materials.

### ✓ **Use Qualitative Data to Share Successes.**

The McCain Institute staff felt that it was difficult to measure and quantify their success using pre-/ posttest questions about knowledge gain because of the wide variety of expertise and experience of PPN participants. Future TVTP grantees that seek to host events with a wide range in participant experience can mitigate this challenge by using more qualitative approaches to demonstrate the impact of their work, such as incorporating interviews or open-ended survey questions. Grantees can also use insights from these qualitative data to demonstrate the importance of having a wide variety of professionals participate. Sharing positive impact stories from these varying professionals could help gain buy-in from others in professional fields that may be hesitant to get into TVTP work.

### ✓ **Design IMPs Around Measurable Objectives.**

The research team was unable to assess three of the McCain Institute’s objectives because of the way these objectives were framed. The McCain Institute achieved several successes through its FY2020 grant program, as documented in the process evaluation. These successes could have been better captured by the McCain Institute’s IMP if the objectives had been measurable with the data collected. For example, Objective 3.1 (Increase number of mental and behavioral health professionals able and willing to receive referrals) is impossible to measure without wide-scale data collection from providers. Reframing this objective to focus on the creation of the national directory or the number of providers listed in it would have allowed the McCain Institute to track its progress toward the objective. We recommend that future grantees design their IMPs to include objectives that can be measured using available data sources to facilitate evaluation.

# **Appendix G. National Governors Association Site Profile**

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# The National Governors Association



Developed for:



Science and  
Technology

Developed by RTI International

# List of Abbreviations

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<b>DHS</b>	Department of Homeland Security
<b>IMP</b>	Implementation and Measurement Plan
<b>NGA</b>	National Governors Association
<b>SME</b>	Subject Matter Expert
<b>TAM</b>	Threat Assessment and Management
<b>TVP</b>	Targeted Violence Prevention
<b>TVTP</b>	Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention

## Executive Summary

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The Science and Technology Directorate at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security funded RTI International to research and evaluate a Fiscal Year 2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) grant provided to the National Governors Association (NGA) to bolster state governments' responses to targeted violence through a Policy Academy.

The research team conducted a process evaluation of NGA's grant, which comprised three main components. Researchers reviewed state-developed documents, vendor-developed toolkits, and survey data collected by NGA; observed the April 2022 virtual convening and the in-person January 2023 convening; and interviewed state representatives and grant partners. Table ES-A summarizes findings from this evaluation.

NGA successfully executed a Policy Academy with three of the four participating states completing a State Prevention Strategy with emphasis on communication and Threat Assessment Management (TAM) Teams for each state. Each state developed a core team of stakeholders which opened lines of communication across state governments. NGA also connected states to federal stakeholders such as DHS, the Secret Service, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, creating new relationships that states will benefit from throughout the implementation of their strategies and beyond. In support of the State Prevention Strategies development, NGA conducted multiple webinars and a multi-state learning

lab to discuss salient topics and presentations from subject matter experts (SMEs). The association also hosted two "all-state convenings" for all four participating states: one virtually and one in person. These convenings allowed states to share their strategies with each other including their successes and challenges, receive presentations on the use of the Programming and Key Performance Indicators library created for this project, learn about communication guides created for this project, and discuss challenges related to implementation. These events facilitated peer-to-peer learning and included peers outside of the Policy Academy from states who have statewide strategies already in place. NGA disseminated lessons learned from the Policy Academy by updating its "Governor's Roadmap to Preventing Targeted Violence."

Toward the end of the grant, NGA used remaining funds to provide technical assistance to three other states working outside of the Policy Academy to prevent targeted violence. The association also provided stipends to Hawai'i and Illinois to assist with implementation of their strategies after the grant had ended. Hawai'i and Illinois plan to use that money to develop buy-in and participation from key stakeholders around each state. Finally, the states that completed their State Prevention Strategies all provided evidence of intentions to implement and sustain their state strategies. Some states have either enacted or are working on legislation to solidify this commitment.

This work is supported by funding by the United States Department of Homeland Security, Science and Technology Directorate under contract #140D0418C0012/P00005.

Table ES-A. Summary of Findings

 <p><b>Objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four selected states establish and implement policy and program changes through prevention strategies and frameworks, leverage threat assessments and management services, and establish a platform to communicate best practices and peer-to-peer learning and improve messaging to the general public.</li> <li>• Increase the ability of the four state participants to develop and implement targeted, evidence-based programming to govern prevention activities</li> <li>• Enhance the four state participants’ ability to use data to inform policymakers’ decision-making across all levels of government.</li> <li>• Four state participants strengthen relationships between government, private, and nonprofit partners.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Outputs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fostered the development of three State Prevention Strategies</li> <li>• Held monthly meetings with states</li> <li>• Held at least one workshop with each state individually</li> <li>• Conducted seven webinars with a total attendance of 70 people</li> <li>• Held two all-state convenings</li> <li>• Developed a toolkit of key performance indicators for state strategies</li> <li>• Developed two communication toolkits</li> <li>• Updated the Governor’s Roadmap to Preventing Targeted Violence</li> <li>• Provided stipends to two states to support implementation of Prevention Strategies</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Challenges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pivoting delivery methods because of COVID-19 restrictions</li> <li>• Changes in NGA leadership throughout the final year brought disruptions to states</li> <li>• Need clearer messaging on expectations of states from the onset</li> <li>• Changes within state leadership caused delays and changing priorities</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Recommendations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enact a co-lead model for teams for continuity</li> <li>• Provide clear expectations from the beginning</li> <li>• Budget stipends to facilitate strategy implementation</li> </ul>

# Site Profile: The National Governors Association

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The National Governors Association (NGA) was awarded a 2-year grant by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships in 2020 and was selected in 2021 to undergo an independent evaluation. This site profile reviews NGA's grant design, implementation, accomplishments, and challenges in targeted violence prevention (TVP). It concludes with relevant recommendations for future programming. The research team conducted an evaluability assessment of NGA's Fiscal Year 2020 (FY2020) Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) grant and, on the basis of the project goals and objectives, determined that a process evaluation was most appropriate. Such an evaluation provides a deeper understanding of the processes of a project to learn what mechanisms may contribute to its

effectiveness, and it details project accomplishments at the output level.

## The National Governors Association (NGA)

NGA works nationally in collaboration with governors' offices and state governments to improve citizens' lives through better policy and implementation practices. NGA works on a variety of issue areas, providing both supportive management and technical assistance to states. Furthermore, NGA endeavors to share best practices for state governance and facilitate partnerships that encourage ongoing collaboration among state governments.

## NGA's FY2020 Grant Program

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### Grant Summary

For its FY2020 TVTP grant, NGA sought to bolster state governments' TVP efforts by providing technical assistance to build a comprehensive approach and implementation resources for turning this approach into action. To facilitate these efforts, the association developed a Policy Academy on Preventing Targeted Violence (hereafter Policy Academy) that ultimately assisted three states in developing State Prevention Strategies to address and reduce targeted violence by adopting comprehensive, data-driven approaches. The project was guided by three goals in NGA's Implementation and Measurement Plan (IMP), all of which centered around the Policy Academy.

The Policy Academy involved NGA facilitating in-person and online workshops for the state teams. NGA also held an online final convening (April 2022) as well as an in-person final convening (January 2023) for the state teams to come together and discuss their work. Additionally, NGA provided a

live webinar series for state teams to attend, which convened various researchers and practitioners to speak on TVP topics. To ensure that the states had the necessary tools at their disposal, NGA contracted Kivvit to develop messaging materials and guidelines, as well as RAND Corporation for a Programming and Key Performance Indicators library. Once each state had developed its State Prevention Strategy, the ultimate goal of the Policy Academy was that each state would present it to their governor's office for implementation. Toward the end of the grant, NGA additionally repurposed some of its remaining funds to provide technical assistance on TVP strategies to states outside of the Policy Academy and dispersed stipends to two of the Policy Academy states.

NGA went through multiple staff changes during the grant period of performance, which caused there to be four different project leads in the last year of the grant. The sections below describe the overall project as well as each state's experience going through the Policy Academy with NGA.

For NGA's full IMP—which outlines its goals, target audiences, objectives, activities, inputs, time frame, anticipated outputs, performance measures, and data collection plan, please contact DHS.

## Process Evaluation Design and Methods

RTI conducted a process evaluation of NGA's grant project. In this process evaluation, researchers delved deeply into understanding the structure of the Policy Academy and how it provided resources and technical assistance to organize government bodies developing State Prevention Strategies. Not all of NGA's objectives were measurable with the data collected. In these cases, the team identified successes that could be measured through the various elements of the evaluation.

The research team observed the April 2022 virtual all-state convening and attended the January 2023 in-person all-state convening. After the in-person convening, the team

conducted interviews with representatives from each of the states in attendance. It should be noted that Wisconsin did not attend the in-person convening and did not respond to requests for an interview. Researchers also interviewed representatives from RAND Corporation and Kivvit. In addition, researchers reviewed and analyzed a variety of program documents, including strategic action plans, toolkits developed by RAND Corporation and Kivvit, State Prevention Strategies, and findings from the end-of-project survey each state was asked to complete. Webinar attendance data, workshops, and all-state convening attendance were also obtained. These documents and metrics were carefully reviewed alongside the observation and interview data to investigate the grant program's implementation process and identify the challenges, successes, and unanticipated outcomes associated with implementation. Using these methods, researchers were able to discover successes that could not be measured in numbers, such as the forging of new relationships and the unexpected influence of a high-profile mass shooting.

## Findings

### Three Out of Four States Complete State Prevention Strategies

First, this section will examine the process evaluation findings regarding the focal point of the project, the development of the Policy Academy and State Prevention Strategies, which corresponds with Goal 1, Objectives 1.1 and 1.2 in the NGA IMP.

**Objective 1.1:** Objective 1.1: Four selected states establish and implement program changes through prevention strategies and frameworks that enable unity of effort between all layers of government and community partners.  
**Objective 1.2:** Four selected states leverage threat assessments and management services to improve prevention frameworks.

### NGA Selected Four States for the Policy Academy

Using its networks, NGA sent a Request for Applications to all 55 U.S. states and territories and held an open call prior to the application due date. The association received applications from five states, all of which were scored independently by a small team of project staff. Ultimately, it was decided based on the strength of their applications that the following four states should participate in the Policy Academy: Illinois, Hawai'i, Wisconsin, and New York. Each participating state was required to have a multidisciplinary core team of stakeholders and officials, guided by a team lead.



### States Develop Strategic Action Plans to Facilitate State Prevention Strategy Development

The first deliverable for participating states was a Strategic Action Plan, which focused on the states’ specific policy issues. To aid states in creating their action plans, which were due in March 2022, NGA held a Multi-State Learning Lab in August 2021. Between the Multi-State Learning Lab and the due date for the Strategic Action Plans, NGA held a workshop with each state, either in-person or virtually, and led the state teams through exercises including a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis.

Figure 1 Strategic Action Plan Template

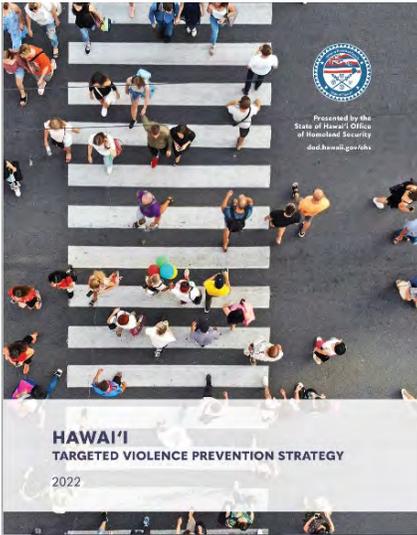
Action Plan Framework			
Priority/Objective	Action Steps	Responsible Party	Timeline
Objective 1:	Action 1:		
Key Results:	Additional Actions:		
Objective 2:	Action 1:		
Key Results:	Additional Actions:		

State teams were provided with a template to follow as they developed their Strategic Action Plans, as shown in Figure 1. The Strategic Action Plans consisted of a matrix where state teams identified objectives and key results, action steps needed, and a responsible party and a timeline for each action step. All states provided a variety of objectives and actions in their plans. Some examples of the objectives were implementing standard operation procedures, collaborating with Threat Assessment Management (TAM) Teams, engaging members of the community, and educating stakeholders. Action steps often involved identifying and reaching out to other groups as well as identifying gaps. Message development and communication were also listed as actions. All four states completed Strategic Action Plans and submitted them to NGA.

### Three States Publish and Adopt Their Prevention Strategies

The State Prevention Strategies were due to NGA in August of 2022. Of the four states that completed the Strategic Action Plans, three out of four of —Hawai’i, Illinois, and New York—were able to develop a State Prevention Strategy. Each state contended with its own challenges and situational contexts that impacted its strategy. Below describes each state’s journey through the Policy Academy and discusses its State Prevention Strategy.

## Hawai'i



NGA held its first in-person workshop in Hawai'i in October of 2021. During the initial meeting, NGA guided the state team through activities to identify their goals, establish planned steps for implementation, and distribute responsibilities. When Hawai'i entered the NGA Policy Academy, their state government had already implemented significant programming around TVP and had built substantial professional networks in the practice area. As NGA began engaging on a monthly basis with the Hawai'i state team, the association noted the broad, ongoing political support that the team received and how that contributed to their ability to make consistent progress toward their Strategic Action Plan and State Prevention Strategy. Members of the Hawai'i team attended both the virtual All-State convening in April of 2022 as well as the in-person All State convening in January of 2023.

### Hawai'i's State Prevention Strategy

Hawai'i published its State Prevention Strategy<sup>1</sup> in October of 2022. Hawai'i framed its strategy through a public health and “whole of community” approach, paying special attention to specific contextual factors in Hawai'i such as the state's racial and ethnic makeup, status as a cultural melting pot, and various geographic challenges. The State Prevention Strategy heavily emphasized the importance of collaboration, communication, TAM Teams, and resourcing as pillars of Hawai'i's approach to TVP. The Collaboration and Communication pillar targeted communicating with the community on risk factors and prevention as well as collaboration between Behavior Intervention (BI) TAM Teams across the states and communicating awareness of these teams to communities. The pillar Behavioral TAM Teams focused entirely on institutional- and county-level team development, training, and ensuring all counties had coverage. The pillar Resourcing and Governance Teams identified implementation partners anticipated for implementation of the strategy. They noted that this pillar was the “less-visible structural elements that will underpin the strategy's two other pillars.”

In Hawai'i's State Prevention Strategy, the description of each pillar was followed by goals and objectives. Some notable objectives were to develop action plans for community resilience in the aftermath of a targeted violence event, support disengagement and reentry programs for incarcerated individuals at risk for or previously engaged in targeted violence, ensure each county has a BI/TAM Team, and facilitate monitoring and evaluation efforts for this strategy. The strategy also acknowledged the need for a civil rights and civil liberties policy to balance the collection of information with citizens' right to privacy.

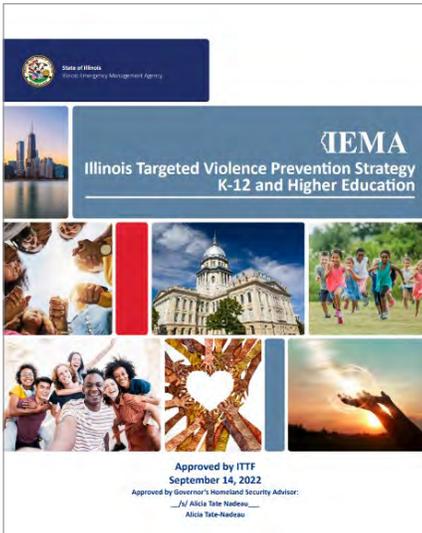
### Implementation and Sustainability Efforts for Hawai'i's State Prevention Strategy

The strategy laid out a legislative framework noting that two legislative proposals were currently in development: “One encompasses formal establishment of the HSFC [Hawaii State Fusion Center]. The second mirrors the vision and scope of this [NGA Policy Academy] strategy.” The transfer of steps from Hawai'i's State Prevention Strategy to legislative proposal indicates an intention of commitment to implement and sustain the state's TVP strategy.

Hawai'i also provided an Implementation Plan to support implementation of elements of its State Prevention Strategy when NGA announced the opportunity for states to receive stipends. Hawai'i described the need for stakeholder buy-in and the difficulties counties outside of O'ahu face in participating in O'ahu-centric activities. The state proposed using funds to have the Hawai'i Office of Homeland Security travel to neighboring islands to educate less active stakeholders about the strategy and cultivate involvement and buy-in. This is a group of stakeholders that are not already involved in the State Prevention Strategy but whose involvement is nonetheless important to successful implementation. NGA approved Hawai'i's proposed plan which they have not yet implemented as of the publication of this report, but plan to do so in the future.

1 [https://dod.hawaii.gov/ohs/files/2022-HAWAII-TARGETED-VIOLENCE-PREVENTION-STRATEGY\\_FINAL.pdf](https://dod.hawaii.gov/ohs/files/2022-HAWAII-TARGETED-VIOLENCE-PREVENTION-STRATEGY_FINAL.pdf)

## Illinois



Illinois had a delayed start compared with other states because of staffing changes and scheduling challenges, and began engagement with NGA in November 2021. At the outset of the project, the Illinois workshop was meant to be held as an in-person event in Springfield, Illinois, but the workshop was postponed after there was staff turnover at NGA. Before NGA began planning the postponed Illinois event, the leader of the Illinois team changed positions and could no longer participate in the Policy Academy. NGA also went through another staffing change at that time so, ultimately, NGA decided to hold the workshop virtually in January 2022.

The online workshop aimed to build on a framework the state team had created in August of 2021 and guide the state team in drafting their Strategic Action Plan. However, because the Illinois team experienced a change in leadership, they primarily used the online meeting to renegotiate their previously established goals and objectives. Because of the time constraints of the meeting, the Illinois team agreed to schedule another call to follow up on writing their Strategic Action Plan. In between the

two online workshop sessions, NGA met with several smaller groups within the Illinois state team to hone the language of Illinois' goals and objectives. In February of 2022, the Illinois state team convened again and developed concrete actionable steps to work toward their objectives. The second meeting also allowed the team to discuss their organizational structure, including identifying a new team lead, and to establish a timeline for creating their Strategic Action Plan, which they decided would focus on K-12 and higher education specifically.

NGA continued to meet with the Illinois state team throughout the Spring of 2022 on a monthly basis. These meetings served to hold the Illinois state team accountable to their own timeline for developing the Strategic Action Plan and their State Prevention Strategy. Illinois attended the virtual all-state convening in April 2022 and the in-person all-state convening in January 2023 and engaged in fruitful conversation about next steps for the state.

### Illinois's State Prevention Strategy

Illinois published its State Prevention Strategy<sup>2</sup> in October 2022. Its strategy centered on supporting communities' endeavors for primary, secondary, and tertiary TVP in education settings. Guided by its mission, which acknowledged the need to respect civil liberties and civil rights, Illinois identified in its strategy the current efforts already in place related to TVP. The strategy laid out a three-phase approach (see Figure 2) to move forward by strengthening those efforts through training, resource provision, and culturally tailored information for communities.

As evidenced by the phases, the strategy emphasizes a community approach, which was consistent with the Illinois Homeland Security Strategy: Vision 2025<sup>3</sup> (IHSS 2025 Vision) and remained particularly focused on students and educators. Illinois identified two goals for its strategy: (1) strengthening community-based TVP resources; and (2) strengthening higher education and K-12 Behavioral TAM Teams and creating and maintaining regional Behavioral TAM Teams. These goals were followed by a table listing objectives for each goal, mapped to IHSS 2025 Vision objectives, as well as data sources and benchmarks. The benchmarks specified actions needed to meet the listed objectives. In some cases, the benchmark involved conducting surveys for various purposes such as feedback on programming, gaps, and effectiveness.

<sup>2</sup> <https://iemaohs.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/iemaohs/hs/documents/Targeted-Violence-Prevention-Strategy.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://iemaohs.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/iemaohs/hs/documents/vision2025.pdf>

**Figure 2. Phases of the Illinois State Prevention Strategy**



Some notable objectives are training frontline professionals in TVP, facilitating information-sharing between government and nongovernmental stakeholders, establishing a behavioral TAM resource center and providing ongoing training for education- and community-based Behavioral TAM Teams, and promoting coordination of behavioral TAMs and helplines such as 911 and 988.

**Implementation and Sustainability Efforts for Illinois’s State Prevention Strategy**

The document specified that the team intends to review and modify the strategy on an annual basis, logging changes on the final page for memorialization. The intent of annual review along with the Phase 3 directive of assessing sustainability indicate intentions of implementing and maintaining the activities described in the State Prevention Strategy.

Illinois also applied for a stipend from NGA to put toward implementation of its strategy. The state submitted an Implementation Plan stating that it would use the funds to form a community-based prevention working group, convene a Targeted Violence Training Summit in Fall 2023, and help initiate Behavioral TAM Teams in three counties. The state received money from NGA to support these efforts building communication between both government and nongovernment entities and providing TAM services where they were previously missing. As of the writing of this report, the Summit planning is underway and currently scheduled for October 2023.

## New York



New York first connected with NGA in October 2021 and determined that its state workshop would be held virtually because of COVID-19. Ultimately, New York completed its virtual Policy Academy workshop in November 2021. NGA noted that the primary purpose the association served for New York was coalescing the members of the state team. When the New York team came together, their project quickly gained momentum and was able to independently organize and work together. Early on in the drafting process, New York was highly motivated and expressed strong interest in the Programming and Key Performance Indicators library that RAND Corporation was developing. NGA continued to meet with New York and noted that it made consistent progress throughout the drafting of the Strategic Action Plan and the Statewide Prevention Strategy.

The State of New York experienced two instances of targeted violence during the period of the Policy Academy, which increased local interest in the project and topic area. These events, particularly the mass shooting in Buffalo in May 2022, spurred the creation of the Domestic Terrorism Unit in the Office of Counter Terrorism within NY State Division of Homeland Security and contributed to the creation of Behavioral TAM Teams. The drafting of the State Prevention Strategy within this environment involved substantial input and contributions from a variety of parties that were not originally participating in the Policy Academy. The final Statewide Prevention Strategy<sup>4</sup> was published with joint approval from the governor's office in April 2023.

### New York's State Prevention Strategy

The New York strategy began by providing background on targeted violence and sections describing risk factors, indicators, and protective factors. This was immediately followed by an acknowledgement of the importance of civil rights, civil liberties, and privacy. After providing background information on targeted violence in New York, the state's strategy focused on three goals: (1) educating stakeholders and sharing information, (2) using programs and initiatives to disrupt targeted violence, and (3) mitigating the impacts of targeted violence on communities. Beneath each goal were nonexhaustive lists of objectives with more information provided in appendices—specifically, there was a list of more than 40 programs and initiatives either developed or supported by New York State, categorized by which state agency each program belonged to. Some notable objectives included leveraging the state's intelligence offices for information sharing, supporting the development and training of TAM Teams, establishing a new Domestic Terrorism Prevention Unit within NY's Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, continuing to invest in targeted violence-related training for mental health professionals, and ensuring that active shooter plans are in place and that training is provided to first responders.

### Implementation and Sustainability Efforts for New York's State Prevention Strategy

New York already began implementing components of its strategy before it was officially made public. Its strategy included an appendix with Executive Order 18, issued by Governor Hochul in response to the Buffalo shooting in May 2022, requiring all New York counties and New York City to review current domestic terrorism strategies and provide plans by December 2022, all of which met that deadline. The Executive Order also established a TAM program (the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Unit) and a dedicated unit in the New York State Intelligence Center to track domestic extremism and increase social media monitoring. An update on progress as of April 2023 was also provided, which noted the following: almost all jurisdictions expressed interest in creating or continuing a TAM Team; the Domestic Terrorism Prevention Unit was established and currently includes 14 full-time employees; TAM creation guidance documents had been distributed; a TAM summit was convened in August 2022; and the state launched a Domestic Terrorism Prevention grant program that has already disbursed \$10 million to local jurisdictions.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.dhss.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/04/2023-nys-tvp-strategy.pdf>

## Wisconsin

### Wisconsin Initiatives Supported by or Intersecting with Participation in the Policy Academy

eLearning module Foundations for Targeted Violence Prevention (<https://media.dpi.wi.gov/foundations-of-targeted-violence-prevention-wi/story.html>) created in collaboration with the National Threat Evaluation and Reporting Program available to the public to raise awareness on threatening behaviors and where to report them either nationally or in Wisconsin. National Threat Assessment Center research was used in creating this training.

Updated content to the Office of School Safety Behavioral TAM course.

OSS provides services through “Speak Up, Speak Out” School Safety Resource Center. This includes 24/7 manned threat reporting, providing schools and law enforcement with behavioral TAM guidance and training, and training of Critical Incident Response Teams (CIRT) to help minimize the psychological impact of a school incident.

Wisconsin began its process with NGA later than expected because of ongoing delays and challenges with developing the state team. Ultimately, NGA hosted a virtual workshop for Wisconsin in February 2022 to formulate the state’s Strategic Action Plan. When NGA began working with Wisconsin, they discussed the state’s ongoing “Speak Up, Speak Now” awareness campaign in response to school violence. Through the NGA process, Wisconsin hoped to maintain the momentum of that project and create a training program to prevent mobilization to violence. Ten participants from Wisconsin attended the NGA Wisconsin workshop, all of whom were regularly meeting leading up to February to discuss their TVP work. During the workshop with NGA, the Wisconsin team spent substantial time reviewing which initiatives were already taking place in the state and were able to put together a Strategic Action Plan.

In April 2022, Wisconsin’s former team lead left their position in the Office of School Safety (OSS). The team wanted to continue to house the project within OSS, but it was not ultimately feasible. NGA engaged more closely with Wisconsin at this point and planned to propose an in-person event prior to the due date for the first draft of its Statewide Prevention Strategy. However, by June 2022, the Wisconsin team was still unable to find a state agency to house the project and was struggling to find leadership. NGA recognized that these extenuating factors would mean Wisconsin would not be able to complete the Statewide Prevention Strategy with the original project timeline and modified deadlines. Wisconsin continued to meet with NGA virtually to discuss its work, but by January 2023 the state determined that it did not want to have an in-person workshop with NGA and would be using its team to focus on expanding ongoing K–12 in-school initiatives. It became clear that Wisconsin did not have the capacity to work toward completing a Statewide Prevention Strategy, so NGA pivoted to connecting Wisconsin with other states that had similar K–12 initiatives and discussing options around other publications at the end of the Policy Academy. Ultimately, instead of a Statewide Prevention Strategy, Wisconsin provided a letter documenting its work with NGA and describing the efforts that were either supported by or intersected with the objectives of the project.

### Common Elements Identified Across State Prevention Strategies

There were many commonalities identified across either two or three of the strategies developed (Hawai’i, Illinois, and New York) during the Policy Academy. Figure 3 shows where some of these common elements were found across sites with some further explanations below.

**Figure 3 Common Elements Across State Prevention Strategies**

Common Element	Hawaii	Illinois	New York
Section on Civil Rights/Civil Liberties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Utilizes TAM Teams	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Implementation/sustainability efforts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Provision of resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Mentions evaluation/data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mentions communication plans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inclusion of goals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Inclusion of objectives	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Describes pathways to violence/risk factors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.** Both Hawai'i and New York had sections dedicated to acknowledging the need to protect civil rights and civil liberties. Though Illinois did not have a section dedicated to this topic, it was mentioned in the state's introduction and mission statement.

**TAM Teams.** All three of the states included use of TAM Teams, either training existing ones or implementing new ones where needed.

**Codification of Strategies.** Each strategy provided evidence of intentionality toward implementing and sustaining the changes described in the strategies through either legislation or documented expectations of reviewing the strategy annually. Two of the states even received stipends to help with implementation.

**Additional Resources.** All of the states included references or supporting documentation where readers could obtain more information. These resources included federal, state, and local resources.

## Resources Revised and New Resources Developed for Evidence-Based Research

This section will examine the process evaluation findings regarding the updating of "A Governor's Roadmap to Preventing Targeted Violence" and the creation of the Programming and Key Performance Indicators library, which corresponds with Goal 2, Objectives 2.1 and 2.2 in the NGA IMP.

**Objective 2.1:** Increase the ability of the four state participants to develop and implement targeted, evidence-based programming to govern prevention activities.

**Objective 2.2:** Enhance the four state participants' ability to use data to inform policymakers' decision-making across all levels of government.

Figure 4. Screenshot from the State Targeted Violence Prevention: Programming and Key Performance Indicators library

Measures/Indicators of Performance	Scales/Scoring/Method
Implementation partners pursue the identified streams of funding	1. Number of grant applications _____ 2. Types of grant applications _____
Implementation partners receive funding from the identified sources	1. Number of awards _____ 2. Sources of awards _____ 3. Award amount _____
Implementation partners are able to have their work evaluated	1. Sources of funding for evaluation _____ 2. Evaluation award amount _____

As part of its grant, NGA took materials and lessons learned from the Policy Academy and updated its “Governor’s Roadmap to Preventing Targeted Violence.”<sup>5</sup> This Governor’s Roadmap provides a seven-step framework for preventing targeted violence and was developed from research conducted under NGA’s FY 2016 DHS Countering Violent Extremism grant. Though updates were not called out in the guide specifically, it is evident from the inclusion of the Programming and Key Performance Indicators library in Step 3: Developing Evaluation Metrics that updates were made. Updates were also made to incorporate best practices learned in the Policy Academy as well as broader edits to ensure alignment with current guidance. Updating the guide maximizes and sustains the progress made and information learned by sharing it outside of those participating states.

The Programming and Key Performance Indicators library<sup>6</sup> was developed by RAND Corporation to assist states in evaluating their strategies before and after implementation. Using data to evaluate the policy and process changes described in their strategies can help guide states on what is working well and what should be revised. To construct the library, RAND Corporation began by interviewing state governments about their interests and needs and reviewing any state TVP materials they could share. After learning about state TVP programs and how states were currently evaluating their efforts, RAND Corporation considered indicators of performance and outcome successes. They also interviewed other RAND Corporation staff with knowledge in evaluation and TVP.

The Programming and Key Performance Indicators library first provides a list of all the topics and goals in the library, with each goal having its own objectives, tasks, outputs, and outcomes. For example, one goal provided under the topic of “Preparation” is to “Secure a conducive environment for strategy implementation.” The key performance indicators are then presented in tables under each objective to identify outputs or outcomes, an example of which is seen in Figure 4.

These tables are followed by a section on impact measures and then launch into appendices with definitions, example partners, risk factors, references, methodology, and relevant scales that are alluded to throughout the text. The 140-page library includes more than 230 measures to help states assess their strategies once put in place. However, many of these are survey or interview questions to be asked of certain populations such as implementation partners, policymakers in relevant offices, or the general public. As such, states would need to consider their resource needs when selecting specific questions. In order to analyze the data or obtain a large enough sample, states should employ the skills of a statistician.

5 <https://www.nga.org/preventing-targeted-violence/>

6 [https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/State\\_Targeted\\_Violence\\_Prevention\\_Programming\\_KPis\\_April2022.pdf](https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/State_Targeted_Violence_Prevention_Programming_KPis_April2022.pdf)

The State Prevention Strategies did not specifically mention the library or use it as a reference even though there were some elements of data collection or evaluation present in the strategies. State teams were asked during interviews by the research team whether they had used it in their strategy. In response, interviewees indicated either that the library would be used in the future during implementation, that it helped inform evaluation elements included in their strategy, or that they compared it against what was included in their strategy later after the library was released. One state pointed out that the library was under construction at the same time the states were working on their prevention strategies, so the state would have used the library to inform its strategy if it had been available earlier.

## Efforts Made to Improve Communication Between Government and the Public

This section will examine the process evaluation findings from the Prevention Messaging Toolkit, which corresponds with Goal 3, Objective 3.2 in the NGA IMP.

### **Objective 3.2: Improve messaging to the general public about prevention programming within each of the four selected states.**

As part of the grant, NGA hired Kivvit, a public relations firm, to assist states in communicating with their constituents about the topic of targeted violence. After conducting focus groups with Policy Academy members to determine communication needs, Kivvit developed two toolkits: a proactive communications toolkit for general messaging and a critical incident communication toolkit for communicating to the public in the event of a targeted violence incident.

The proactive communications toolkit provided general information about the purposes of communication, the target audience, and messaging. The document also covers topics such as engaging with key stakeholders and tips for communicating with the media and developing materials.

The critical incident communication toolkit provides steps for municipalities to take to effectively communicate in the event of a mass casualty incident. Tips include creating a response team

and assigning a spokesperson, then creating a holding statement and core message including specific pertinent information about the event. In addition to providing prompts on the types of communication to consider during a critical incident, the toolkit also suggests having a debrief after the situation has ended to determine what worked well and what did not.

Though each of the states mentions communication in some capacity in its strategy (e.g., communicating bystander awareness reporting, communicating during and after a critical incident), the Kivvit toolkits are not mentioned specifically. However, Illinois and New York named Kivvit in their acknowledgements and Illinois included an objective in its strategy to develop a communications plan which could be reflective of the toolkit. Though the communication toolkits are not called out specifically in the strategies, these resources may still be utilized by these states as they implement their strategies.

## NGA Facilitates Peer-to-Peer Learning Through Webinars and All-State Convenings

This section will examine the process evaluation findings regarding the peer-to-peer connections made and learning opportunities present during the Policy Academy, which correspond with Goal 1, Objective 1.3 and Goal 3, Objective 3.1 in the NGA IMP.

**Objective 1.3:** Establish a platform to communicate and share best practices and enhance peer-to-peer learning between states.

**Objective 3.1:** Strengthen relationships between government, private, and nonprofit partners within each of the four selected states.

### Highly Rated Webinars Assist States in Plan Development

NGA hosted seven webinars for the states in the Policy Academy to discuss and provide presentations on advancing strategies for TVP. NGA informed the research team that there were at least 70 attendees across the seven webinars, with high levels (98%) of positive feedback for the webinar series, collected via post-surveys. NGA also held a Multi-State Learning Lab in August 2021 to assist states with their action plans and strategy development. The Learning Lab included representatives from all four of the Policy Academy states and input from NGA's partners, RAND Corporation and Kivvit.

### Peer-to-Peer Learning, Strategizing, and Connections are Created at All-State Convenings

Originally, only one in-person all-state convening was planned, but because of COVID-19 restrictions, two separate convenings took place—one in April 2022, which was virtual, and one in January 2023, which was in person in Chicago, Illinois. The virtual convening began with a presentation by RAND Corporation on the Programming and Key Performance Indicators library and by NGA (on behalf of Kivvit) on the communications toolkits, both of which were created for this project. Subsequently, each site discussed the direction its work was taking toward developing a strategic action plan, followed by time for discussion.

The in-person convening was 1.5 days and included a briefing from DHS CP3, a round table by RAND Corporation on program sustainment and performance metrics, and other

sessions curated to the states' needs for implementation of their strategies. For example, there was a discussion on K-12 TVP programs as some states were focusing their strategies on that demographic. Another session focused on identifying risk factors in individuals during which the states discussed how their strategies worked to identify and educate others in identifying risk behaviors. Two separate sessions focused on protecting their populations' rights, looking at (1) privacy and legal considerations and (2) civil rights and civil liberties. The DHS Privacy Office participated in the discussion on privacy and legal considerations, communicating the need for training and only collecting and keeping necessary data. A representative from the McCain Institute also spoke about these challenges and provided a guide on legal considerations developed for the Prevention Practitioners Network. Another DHS staff member discussed civil rights and civil liberties and emphasized the need to work closely with local agencies.

All of the sessions were very interactive, and questions and discussions were encouraged. NGA also brought in representatives from Colorado and Florida, who are further along in the process of implementing state strategies, to provide peer feedback and assistance. The representative from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement presented on the statewide TVP approach they are implementing, which easily transitioned into the next topic on managing cases and sharing information. Upon closing, it was evident that all in attendance had benefited from the conversations and presentations. Without being prompted, attendees asked when a convening like this could occur again and the desire to do so appeared unanimous.

## State Participants Provide Feedback on the Policy Academy

State participants had the opportunity to provide feedback through a survey NGA conducted at the end of the Policy Academy. The research team also conducted interviews with three of the four participating states.

The NGA survey consisted of open-ended questions asking sites to report what was useful to them as they developed their strategies, what their challenges were, recommendations for other states, and what they found to be the important outcomes of their participation in the Policy Academy. Some states reported that executive-level buy-in was key to their success as that helped them get cooperation from other agencies and organizations they likely would not have been able to obtain without senior leadership's involvement. One state identified that subject matter experts (SMEs) provided by NGA and toolkits developed for this project were helpful, and that continued updates over time would be well received. One of the reoccurring themes in the challenges identified was needing more staff or more staff bandwidth. One state reported that some key people needed for strategy development were also a part of the COVID-19 pandemic response. In at least one state, implementation has focused on hiring new staff dedicated to TVP efforts. One state reported that one of the major outcomes of its participation was that the project better positioned the state to justify the need for additional resources and it now has a unit dedicated to this work. Another important outcome reported by states was the development of this network of SMEs and knowledge of what other states are doing.

### WHAT STATES FOUND USEFUL:

- Executive-level buy-in
- Subject matter experts and toolkits

### WHAT STATES FOUND CHALLENGING:

- Staffing levels and bandwidth

### OUTCOMES IDENTIFIED BY STATES:

- Positioned them to justify need for additional resources, leading to establishment of a dedicated state TVTP unit
- Development of SME network and knowledge of other states' approaches

"I didn't intend to develop these relationships with other states. We're in contact with other states now that need our help after working on this; we're making sure our plans are working together because it's pointless if we're just helping our state."

- Policy Academy Participant

When the research team interviewed Policy Academy participants, similar comments as those from the NGA survey were shared. However, the interviews provided some additional information and context, particularly regarding relationships. Researchers learned that states credited the Policy Academy with facilitating new relationships between them and agencies and organizations such as DHS CP3, National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC), Secret Service, FBI, and the McCain Institute. Peer-to-peer relationships with other states were also mentioned, including states that have already developed strategies and states that are just beginning to develop strategies. Interactions between the states in the Policy Academy seemed to happen naturally and the participating states started reaching out to each other on their own.

## Outreach Expanded to States Outside of Policy Academy

This section will examine the process evaluation findings from the extended outreach to non–Policy Academy states, which corresponds with Goal 3, Objective 3.3 in the NGA IMP.

### **Objective 3.3: Provide technical assistance for 3-5 additional states outside the Policy Academy to develop strategies for and/or implement targeted violence prevention programs.**

Toward the end of the grant, NGA realized it had remaining funds it could utilize to assist additional states outside of those formally participating in the Policy Academy. NGA sent out a call using its extensive network letting states know the association was available to provide technical assistance for anyone working on a statewide TVP strategy. Ultimately, NGA assisted three other states in various capacities. For example, one state asked for a memo on state laws regarding targeted violence and behavioral threat assessment programs, which NGA delivered. NGA assisted another state that had already completed a previous Policy Academy with implementation of its strategy. The association also hosted a panel on TVP at a meeting of the Governors Homeland Security Advisors.

## Challenges

The process evaluation revealed four challenges to project implementation.

**COVID-19 Pandemic.** The COVID-19 pandemic and related public health emergency forced NGA to revise its plan to conduct in-person convenings. State workshops were originally intended to all be held in person, as was the initial convening in April 2022. The in-person convening in January 2023 was later added to the project once travel began resuming and NGA found that there was room in its budget.

**Multiple Changes in NGA Leadership.** As previously mentioned, four different individuals led the Policy Academy at NGA over the course of the final year of the grant because of staff turnover. This amount of turnover was disruptive to the tempo of the states' strategy development. During evaluation interviews, each of the states brought this up as something that was a challenge encountered during the Policy Academy.

**Lack of Clear Messaging on Expectations.** States felt that the expectations for the Policy Academy were not clearly stated at the beginning of the project. One state shared that it expected NGA to have answers on what the state needed to do or a template for their State Prevention Strategy, but realized once its participation began that NGA would only

facilitate states' development of their own templates and identification of their own answers. Another state revealed that it was not aware of the expectation to submit a State Prevention Strategy at the end of the Policy Academy. It was not until the state was asked about its progress on this document, months after it had started in the Policy Academy, that it felt it was informed of this expectation. Though this information was included in the request for applications and later on in a timeline, it seems that reminders of this final objective would have been helpful throughout the Policy Academy.

**Changes Within State Leadership.** One of the biggest challenges for Illinois was a change in leadership when the state's team lead left their position. This caused a shift in the whole project, as the team lead was the main champion for this effort. Upon their departure, questions arose as to where the project would sit within the state government, which caused delays. This change occurred at the same time NGA experienced a change in leadership, so it took a little while for both NGA and Illinois to get up to speed and back on track. Wisconsin also experienced a change in leadership with its core team chair leaving the agency that was championing the project. Many discussions were had on what agency would host the project after that, but the state never came to a resolution, and that is when its participation in the Policy Academy discontinued.

## IMP Accomplishments

Each of the objectives in the NGA IMP dictate that four states would complete NGA's activities; however, in many cases, only three states got far enough to be eligible to meet those objectives. As previously mentioned, Wisconsin did not develop a State Prevention Strategy because its leadership departed during the Policy Academy. However, the state did benefit from participating in the Policy Academy as demonstrated by the achievements outlined in its closeout memo. The state also benefited from various networking opportunities both within and outside of the state. It is also important to give credit where the objectives were met by the other three states, especially given the magnitude of impact those achievements could bring about in the forms of legislation and policy change. As such, this report refers to objectives being met if they were met by either three or four states in the Policy Academy, though variations from the IMP will be noted.

The central component of the project was the development and adoption of State Prevention Strategies, which was completed by three states, all of which utilized TAM Teams and services, satisfying Objectives 1.1 and 1.2. The development of these strategies was facilitated by NGA's Policy Academy staff hosting both multi-state and state-specific workshops and connecting state teams with SMEs and other states for peer learning. All four states were provided space to discuss and share with each other and learn from SMEs at the Multi-State Learning Lab and all-state convenings (Objective 1.3). Lessons learned from the Policy Academy were collected and used to update NGA's existing "Governor's Roadmap to Preventing Targeted Violence." During these events, NGA provided panels and discussion sessions on identifying and leveraging data to evaluate TVP practices to address Objective 2.1. Though it is plausible to believe the library would increase abilities on evidence-based programming, there are no baseline or post-Policy Academy data to confirm this.

One element of the gatherings hosted by NGA included the discussion of resources created for the Policy Academy by NGA partners Kivvit and RAND Corporation. Though these toolkits were designed to improve messaging to the general public, there is no data to assess whether Objective 3.2 was met. Kivvit developed two messaging toolkits: one for general communication with the public and one for communication during and after a targeted violence event. RAND Corporation developed a Programming and Key Performance Indicators library and attended both virtual and in-person all-state convenings even though its contract with NGA had finished by that time. This resource was designed to meet Objective 2.2, though this evaluation was unable to determine whether it enhanced states' abilities to use data to inform policymakers' decision-making.

Finally, Objective 3.1 sought to strengthen relationships between government, private, and nonprofit partners. NGA used webinars to discuss prevention activities with Policy Academy participants and to engage stakeholders. States were also encouraged to seek input on their strategies from multidisciplinary teams and involve these teams in their implementation. The available data were insufficient to be able to systematically determine the extent to which relationships were strengthened. However, as previously described on page 16, the participating states did report anecdotally that the Policy Academy strengthened their relationships both with one another as practitioners and with external organizations and entities such as DHS CP3, NTAC, Secret Service, FBI, and the McCain Institute.

# NGA's Partner Survey Findings

NGA engaged two partners to support its FY2020 grant. Researchers surveyed these partners to understand their collaboration with NGA and the challenges they faced. However, in the interest of privacy, researchers are unable to report these partner responses because only two partners completed the survey.

## Discussion

The Policy Academy was seen as an overall success, with three out of four states developing State Prevention Strategies that had already transitioned into various levels of implementation by the end of the grant. The work completed by the three states that developed State Prevention Strategies was significant. Each of the strategies reflects a “whole of community” approach, is designed to prevent targeted violence from multiple directions, and uses TAM Teams to provide continued collaboration and guidance. States identified and are utilizing preexisting resources and have already begun implementing pieces of their strategies. Beyond the written documents, the relationships forged within each state to develop these strategies will likely continue to benefit the community. States established new relationships facilitated by NGA not only within the states themselves, but also with federal agencies, which should break down barriers to future communication when assistance or guidance is needed. States also remarked upon the peer-to-peer relationships they had made with other states. They plan to continue these relationships and requested opportunities to convene again in the future to continue learning from one another. Many expressed gratitude to NGA for facilitating relationships, providing resources when needed, and keeping them moving forward when they faced challenges within their state. Although Wisconsin did not complete a State Prevention Strategy, it too experienced these benefits throughout its participation.

During the course of the Policy Academy, one of the most high-profile cases of mass violence occurred in Buffalo, New York, where an individual specifically targeted a grocery store with a high African American population for a mass shooting. As expected, after the incident people started asking questions about what New York was doing to prevent these crimes from happening. This event had a direct impact on the rest of the New York team's experience in the Policy Academy. When their government wanted to enact interventions and new policies quickly, they already had many of these in development and were positioned with a team in place to employ them. As a result of this incident, their State Prevention Strategy acceptance and implementation was fast tracked. Had New York not been involved in the Policy Academy and already thinking about prevention needs across the state, they would not have been able to respond as quickly as they did in their prevention efforts.



This grant project created an initial step in building states' data gathering capacity. In particular, the development of the Programming and Key Performance Indicators library, as well as multiple events where the RAND Corporation spoke about the importance of data, likely increased states' abilities to use data and identify and develop evidence-based programming. Optimistically, through the use of this resource and conversations with RAND Corporation, states will be able to collect their own data necessary to measure the outcomes of their State Prevention Strategy objectives.

"We wouldn't have been able to do it without NGA. We didn't have the bandwidth. We didn't have the capacity to take this on."

**- Policy Academy Participant**

When Policy Academy attendees were asked, the Kivvit Communication toolkits were seen as good and helpful, though it is yet to be determined whether they will be used to improve messaging to the public as stated in Objective 3.2. When asked about implementation, none of the states reported using the guides to date, and the guides were not mentioned outside of the acknowledgements in any state strategies. Both Illinois and Hawai'i plan to develop communication plans as part of their strategies so the toolkits may be more useful at that point.

## Sustainability

Each of the states showed evidence of intended sustainability in its State Prevention Strategy. Not only had some states either passed or were working on legislation by the end of the grant period, but one state built in a revision record at the end of its strategy with the expectation that the strategy would be updated annually. The emphasis on creating, training, and supporting TAM Teams also bodes well for sustainability, as those efforts require collaboration and buy-in from various entities, which demonstrates commitment. NGA's stipends to two Policy Academy states – Illinois and Hawaii – to support the implementation of their strategies will also facilitate sustainability. Both states are using some or all of those funds to facilitate in-person interactions and garner buy-in from various stakeholders for continued support and participation in their State Prevention Strategy activities.

Updating the "Governor's Roadmap to Preventing Targeted Violence" with lessons learned from the Policy Academy also supports sustainability as that resource is publicly available. The creation of the Programming and Key Performance Indicators resource is also publicly available on NGA's website and linked within the Governor's Roadmap as part of the update. These are resources that can be used globally and well into the future.

## Recommendations for TVTP Grant Program

The following recommendations were identified that can be applied to future TVTP programming doing similar work.

### ✓ **Enact a Co-lead Model for Teams.**

As mentioned above, two of the states in the Policy Academy experienced a change in leadership during their participation in the project. In Wisconsin's case, the loss of this leader resulted in the state not creating a State Prevention Strategy as the grant program intended. In Illinois, once the leader left, the team had to reimagine what their strategy would look like. Using co-leads as opposed to a single individual when multidisciplinary teams are involved will provide continuity should one person leave their role. This model would also ensure that there are at least two people championing the project so there is less reliance on any one person.

### ✓ **Provide Clear Expectations of Participants Throughout the Project Period.**

In any kind of endeavor, it is ideal to lay out expectations, anticipated final products, and timelines. Though it was included in the request for applications, some Policy Academy participants were unaware of the expectation to have a final State Prevention Strategy ready to present to their governor until they were well into the Policy Academy. Providing a roadmap of milestones and expectations at completion and continued reiteration of final products will help ensure everyone is of the same understanding. This is especially useful when there is staff turnover at the state level and new staff join the team.

### ✓ **Budget Stipends for Plan Implementation.**

NGA provided stipends to two states who submitted Implementation Plans, but only because the association had remaining funds in its grant near the conclusion of the project period. States appreciated the assistance from NGA, but it required another level of effort to obtain funds for implementation. Some amount of money to help teams implement newly created plans, or at the very least to support them in obtaining implementation funds, should be included from the beginning for future similar initiatives. This will improve the ability of participants to sustainably implement the plans and resources developed beyond the grant period. Having a dollar amount attached to participation may also help teams gain buy-in from leadership and encourage participation in and completion of all tasks.

**Developed for:**

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)  
Science and Technology Directorate (S&T)



Science and  
Technology

**Developed by RTI International**