

GAO@100 Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-21-216](#), a report to congressional requesters

Why GAO Did This Study

From 2010 through 2019, data collected through the Extremist Crime Database show that 205 deaths resulted from 59 violent extremist attacks in the United States. DHS received funding in 2016 to establish a new CVE Grant Program to support efforts by state and local governments and nongovernmental organizations to reduce risk factors associated with violent extremism. GAO was asked to review management of the CVE Grant Program.

This report examines, among other things, the extent to which DHS (1) announced, reviewed, and awarded CVE grants in accordance with OMB guidance and (2) evaluated the performance of CVE grantees and the overall program. GAO reviewed documentation of DHS's actions in announcing, reviewing and awarding CVE grants; and documentation on steps taken to assess the performance of grantees and the overall program; as compared to requirements in key documents, including the CVE grant announcement, elements of internal control, and a DHS 2017 report to Congress.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that DHS, for future CVE-related grant programs: (1) develop policy to document the rationale for award decisions, and (2) take steps to ensure that grantees collect and submit data on project performance that enable evaluation of individual grants and the overall grant program toward intended outcomes. DHS concurred with both recommendations.

View [GAO-21-216](#). For more information, contact Triana McNeil at (202) 512-8777 or mcnelt@gao.gov.

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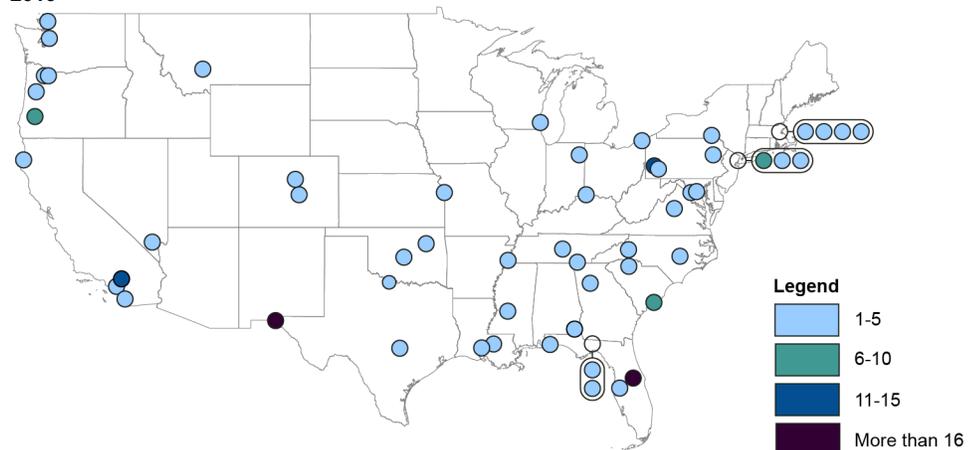
COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

DHS Needs to Improve Grants Management and Data Collection

What GAO Found

While the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) followed the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance for announcing the 2016 Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Grant Program and reviewing applications, DHS did not document the basis for its final award decisions. In June 2017, DHS awarded a total of \$10 million in CVE grants to 26 grantees for a 2-year performance period (2017 to 2019). Consistent with OMB guidance, DHS included program priorities and eligibility requirements in its grant announcement and described the process for reviewing and selecting grant applications for award. However, after DHS announced its selection of 31 applications for awards, it ran a new process resulting in revised selections, which was based on additional selection criteria not expressly listed in the grant announcement. While DHS officials explained to GAO how these additional criteria aligned with the grant announcement, these explanations do not appear in DHS's award documentation. Without such documentation, DHS cannot clearly demonstrate that its award decisions were based on the process described in the grant announcement.

Figure: Location and Number of Deaths Associated with Domestic Extremist Attacks, 2010-2019



Source: GAO analysis of Extremist Crime Database information. | GAO-21-216

DHS did not obtain the necessary data from grantees to evaluate the overall CVE grant program. DHS required grant organizations to develop, collect, and submit their own output and outcome-related information to help enable the department to evaluate individual grantees and the overall grant program. However, a DHS review of four grant projects concluded that the grantees did not collect the type of performance information DHS needed to determine the grants' effectiveness, such as data at various time intervals to assess change in attitudinal behavior. Taking steps to ensure grantees collect and submit appropriate performance data would enable DHS to evaluate the extent that individual grant projects and the overall grant program are achieving results. Such information would help DHS manage the program and make adjustments as warranted.