



STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION  
PLAN FOR EMPOWERING  
LOCAL PARTNERS TO PREVENT  
VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN  
THE UNITED STATES

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# Introduction

In 2011, the United States adopted the *Strategy for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States* (Strategy) and a corresponding Strategic Implementation Plan. Since publication, the mission to prevent violent extremism has progressed, and violent extremist threats have continued to evolve. The overall goal of the Strategy and United States Government efforts to implement it remains unchanged: to prevent violent extremists and their supporters from inspiring, radicalizing, financing, or recruiting individuals or groups in the United States to commit acts of violence. This updated Strategic Implementation Plan responds to the current dynamics of violent extremism and reflects experiences and knowledge acquired over the last five years. It replaces the 2011 *Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*.<sup>1</sup>

## The Current Environment

Violent extremism is a persistent and dangerous problem in the United States, and single instances can have far-reaching consequences. Violent extremists<sup>2</sup> have many motivations and are not limited to any single population, region, or ideology. Over time, different forms of violent extremism have come to the fore, and new forms will likely emerge in the future.

In many ways, the threat of violent extremism today is more challenging than ever before. Violent extremists have demonstrated an ability to entice people to travel great distances, to direct attacks, and to inspire others to act from afar. They have utilized the Internet and other technologies, specifically social media platforms, as a means to reach a greater number of people in more places, tailor messages to appeal to different audiences, and reach out to potential recruits individually.

There is no single cause of or pathway to violent extremism. This requires a comprehensive response that empowers stakeholders<sup>3</sup> at the local level. Local stakeholders are most likely to be able to address the drivers of violent extremism or interact with someone who needs support to avoid becoming radicalized to violence. This Plan aims to ensure that all stakeholders have the knowledge and tools they need to prevent individuals from supporting or committing an act of violence.

## Meeting the Challenge

As the Strategy states and this Plan reaffirms, strong and resilient local communities are the most effective means of safeguarding individuals in the United States against violent extremist recruitment and radicalization. Resilient communities are those where violent extremists routinely meet disinterest and

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1. The following departments and agencies will work to implement this Plan: Departments of Homeland Security (DHS), Justice (DOJ), State (DOS), Defense (DOD), Education, Health and Human Services, Labor, as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC).

2. The Strategy defines violent extremists as “individuals who support or commit ideologically-motivated violence to further political goals.”

3. Stakeholders are those who have an expressed or identified role in countering violent extremism and include, but are not limited to: Federal, state, tribal, territorial, and local governments and law enforcement; communities; non-governmental organizations; academia; educators; social services organizations; mental health providers; and the private sector.

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opposition and where recruitment attempts regularly fail. Such communities know what tools and support are available to assist individuals that may be on a path towards violence.

At the outset, it is important to clarify the scope of this effort. The term “countering violent extremism,” or CVE, refers to proactive actions to counter efforts by extremists to recruit, radicalize, and mobilize followers to violence.<sup>4</sup> Fundamentally, CVE actions intend to address the conditions and reduce the factors that most likely contribute to recruitment and radicalization by violent extremists. Where possible, CVE should be incorporated into existing programs related to public safety, resilience, inclusion, and violence prevention. This Plan addresses all forms of violent extremism and will be carried out in partnership with non-government stakeholders. CVE efforts do not include gathering intelligence or performing investigations for the purpose of criminal prosecution.

In 2015, the United States Government performed a review to ensure that it is optimally organized to carry out the CVE mission. Representatives from ten departments and agencies identified four necessary components: infrastructure to coordinate and prioritize CVE activities across the Federal Government and with stakeholders; clear responsibility, accountability, and communication internally and with the public; broad participation of departments and agencies outside national security lanes; and a process to assess, prioritize, and allocate resources to maximize impact. In response, the interagency CVE Task Force was established to: (1) synchronize and integrate whole-of-government CVE programs and activities; (2) conduct ongoing strategic planning; and (3) assess and evaluate CVE efforts.

The CVE Task Force brings together experts from DHS, DOJ, FBI, NCTC, and a variety of other Federal departments and agencies. Its work is organized into four lines of effort: Research and Analysis; Engagement and Technical Assistance; Interventions; and Communications and Digital Strategy. The lines of effort align with the Strategy’s three priority action areas: (1) enhancing engagement with and support to local communities; (2) building government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism; and (3) countering violent extremist propaganda while promoting our ideals. (See Table 1.) These tenets guide the work of departments, agencies, and the CVE Task Force in carrying out this Plan. Implementation will begin under current funding levels, though future dedicated funding will be required to fully realize the goals of the Strategy.

**Table 1. Alignment of Priority Action Areas and Lines of Effort**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Enhancing engagement with and support to local communities</b>                         | <b>Engagement and Technical Assistance</b> |
|   | <b>Interventions</b>                       |
| <b>Building government and law enforcement expertise for preventing violent extremism</b> | <b>Research and Analysis</b>               |
|   | <b>Engagement and Technical Assistance</b> |
| <b>Countering violent extremist propaganda while promoting our ideals</b>                 | <b>Communications and Digital Strategy</b> |
|   | <b>Engagement and Technical Assistance</b> |

4. The three primary, interrelated disciplines of the U.S. approach to CVE efforts are: (1) empowering communities and civil society; (2) messaging and counter-messaging; and (3) addressing causes and driving factors. Cutting across all of these disciplines, CVE efforts fundamentally depend on developing a comprehensive understanding of the drivers of violent extremism, how violent extremism gains traction in a particular area, and what interventions are most effective.

## **A Multi-Tiered Framework**

United States Government domestic CVE efforts require a multi-tiered approach, with activities at the national, local, and individual levels. At the national level, Federal departments and agencies, in coordination with the CVE Task Force, will focus on advancing initiatives that enable CVE programming. This includes funding research, disseminating best practices, issuing grants, and building partnerships with non-government stakeholders. The Federal Government will be a convener, facilitator, and conduit for relevant information.

At the local level, Federal CVE efforts will focus on empowering well-informed and equipped families, communities, and institutions. CVE efforts are most effective when they are integrated into existing programs or overall public safety strategies through active collaboration and partnership among state and local authorities, U.S. Attorneys' offices, and other Federal agencies. Local youth engagement, Internet safety education, community service, and other community-led local initiatives are at the forefront of building more resilient local communities.

At the individual level, there may be times when those closest to someone are concerned about whether the individual is at risk of being drawn into violent extremism. At that critical point, those concerned may search for resources on their own or turn to respected members of their community for guidance. Sometimes these cases come to the attention of law enforcement personnel, who are also in need of response options in the event that a person is reasonably believed not to pose a threat or be immediately capable of committing a crime. The Federal Government will work with local communities and experts to develop models and resources for assisting these individuals.

## **Promoting American Ideals**

Successful efforts to counter violent extremism are, in large part, predicated on trust. Trust among members of a family or peer group; trust within a community; and trust among government, law enforcement, and the communities they serve. In the past, some have expressed fear of stigmatization and general distrust regarding CVE efforts, specifically citing community engagement as being carried out for purposes of law enforcement investigations or intelligence collection. This is not the goal of CVE efforts. Government and law enforcement officials for decades have understood the critical importance of building relationships with their communities. As officials carry out the specific actions in support of this Plan, it will be with the intention to build and strengthen trust at all levels.

As the Strategy makes clear, protecting civil rights and civil liberties is paramount in itself and helps to counter violent extremism by safeguarding equal and fair treatment, ensuring nonviolent means to address grievances, and making it more difficult for violent extremists to divide communities. Protection of individual privacy and freedom of expression is essential to this work and will be woven into all efforts. When developing policies and programs specific to CVE, Federal departments and agencies will continue to analyze potential privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties considerations with their legal counsel and their Senior Agency Official for Privacy or Officer for Civil Rights/Civil Liberties, as appropriate. Additionally, upon request, the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security may provide advice and consultation about potential privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties issues to state, local, tribal, and territorial authorities regarding their proposed CVE programs and activities.

## Organization

As indicated earlier, the four lines of effort for domestic CVE work align with the Strategy's areas of priority action. The following is a detailed description of the tasks that will be pursued under each line of effort.





# Research and Analysis

CVE efforts will be informed by a rigorous, evidence-based approach to research and analysis that addresses all forms of violent extremism. Partners in this effort include academic researchers, analysts, and program implementers, inside and outside government. To date, departments and agencies have pursued a robust research and analysis agenda to build expertise on topics such as recruitment narratives and tactics, radicalization to violence, the role of the Internet in the radicalization process, youth radicalization and recruitment, behaviors commonly undertaken during mobilization to violence, and what motivates individuals to travel to conflict zones and join violent extremist groups. Improved development and coordination of analytic materials have enhanced government and non-governmental capabilities to prepare for observing indications of violence, including behaviors or precursor activities. Research has also improved understanding of community and individual resilience, benchmarks for successful local program models, and disengagement from violent extremist groups.

In the future, open-source datasets will encourage better and broader understanding of the behaviors, operations, locations, networks, and activities of violent extremists domestically and abroad. Research into protective factors and warning signs will be integral to enabling intervention efforts. Improved coordination efforts across the government will ensure research and analysis are more accessible and projects meet the needs of CVE program implementers and stakeholders.

## **Task 1.1 – Map existing CVE-relevant research and analysis, identify gaps, and coordinate future projects.**

The breadth of Federally-sponsored research requires efforts to be synchronized across the United States Government to ensure efficient use of resources and responsiveness to the needs identified by program implementers, public safety officials, local communities, and other stakeholders. To this end, DHS will catalogue all existing Federally-sponsored research meant to guide CVE efforts. Going forward, the CVE Task Force will regularly convene departments and agencies to discuss ongoing work and coordinate future projects with a common understanding of needs and priorities. When more than one department or agency has identified similar projects, the CVE Task Force will facilitate coordination to produce either one joint product or separate projects that reach non-duplicative goals. Additionally, the CVE Task Force and Department of State will amplify and support efforts to coordinate, share, and jointly conduct CVE research with foreign partners, such as through bilateral research and development agreements, the Researching Solutions to Violent Extremism (RESOLVE) Network, and other international fora. (*Lead: DHS, DOJ, CVE Task Force, DOS; Partner: FBI, NCTC, DOD, USAID*)

## **Task 1.2 – Increase stakeholder access to research and feedback mechanisms.**

Drawing on CVE research and analysis developed inside and outside government, DHS and DOJ will broadly disseminate findings to stakeholders and create feedback mechanisms to enhance the utility and quality of future research and analysis.

**A. Synthesize and share research findings with stakeholders.** DHS and DOJ will develop a library of summaries tailored to particular stakeholder groups including state and local government and law

enforcement, public health professionals, educators, parents, and community leaders. DOJ and DHS, in coordination with the CVE Task Force, will widely distribute these summaries—and full research and analysis products when appropriate—to ensure they inform the development and implementation of CVE programs and are incorporated into practice. *(Lead: DHS, DOJ; Partner: CVE Task Force)*

**B. Increase the applicability of CVE research and analysis.** DHS and DOJ will develop feedback mechanisms to gather input from program implementers and incorporate it into specific projects as well as the overall research agenda. This will encourage partnership between researchers and stakeholders to ensure research and analysis can be used to inform program development. *(Lead: DHS, DOJ)*

**C. Ensure research and analysis informs CVE-related training.** The research catalogue and summaries library will create easily accessible resources to support the development of training materials. The CVE Task Force will establish a process for coordinating and evaluating CVE training curricula to ensure they are based on the latest research and analysis. *(Lead: CVE Task Force; Partner: DHS, DOJ, FBI, NCTC, DOD)*

### **Task 1.3 – Establish evaluation methods for CVE programs.**

Evaluation is key to accountability, progress, and ensuring CVE efforts enhance our Nation’s ability to prevent and counter violent extremism. It will improve understanding of what is effective at the international, national, and local levels. Benchmarks and measures of performance and effectiveness will be included in all Federally-sponsored CVE efforts and will be tailored to each specific initiative before programs are launched. DHS, DOJ, USAID, and others have already conducted assessments relevant to CVE programs. Building on this work, the CVE Task Force will coordinate and disseminate guidelines that departments and agencies can use at all stages of domestic CVE program design, implementation, and evaluation. *(Lead: CVE Task Force; Partner: DHS, DOJ, NCTC, DOS, USAID)*

Long-term research efforts that provide objective and unclassified data can generate empirical metrics for CVE initiatives over time. Such longitudinal research efforts can demonstrate how domestic terrorist and homegrown violent extremist threats evolve, create a scientific basis for CVE programs, and enhance resource allocation and long-term program effectiveness. They can also inform CVE policies and contextualize local programs.

The Terrorism and Extremist Violence in the United States (TEVUS) portal and the Profiles of Individual Radicalization in the United States (PIRUS) dataset will become publically available later this year through the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). TEVUS data presents on a searchable map and timeline and will make it possible to visualize information on violent groups and perpetrators and the behaviors related to their violent actions in different formats. PIRUS consists of information about ideologically motivated criminals from across the violent extremist spectrum in the United States. PIRUS captures individual-level variables on radicalization, variables related to the foreign fighter phenomenon, and those related to demobilization and disengagement from violence. These unclassified and publically available data sets can inform prevention, intervention, rehabilitation, and reintegration programs and metrics and shed light on trends in violent mobilization and demobilization by violent extremists in the United States.



# Engagement and Technical Assistance

Community outreach and engagement programs can enhance trust between government and communities as well as foster cooperation and partnerships to advance a range of local interests. Sustained dialogue draws attention to concerns from the public and can help communities understand the reasons behind actions by government entities. These should not be singular events, but consistent and regular engagements on topics such as civil rights and civil liberties, education, economic stability, and other issues important to communities.

Violent extremism is one of many issues important to local stakeholders and must be addressed. Discussions about violent extremism should inform the public, build trust between government and local communities, and facilitate partnership among stakeholders. As with many other local challenges, such dialogue and partnerships will likely result in new ideas and initiatives that address specific needs related to preventing recruitment and radicalization to violence in a given location. Technical assistance may be provided to inform and enable the resulting ideas and initiatives.

When engagements focus on violent extremism and efforts to counter it, that focus should be clear and transparent. Neither broad engagement nor CVE-specific discussions are conducted for intelligence gathering purposes. Consistent with current policy, Federal law enforcement agencies have safeguards in place to ensure there is an appropriate separation between community outreach and intelligence gathering or criminal investigations. Federal departments and agencies can assist state and local law enforcement in developing similar policies and practices as needed.

## **Engagement**

### **Task 2.1 – Improve the depth, breadth, and frequency of engagement with local communities on CVE and related issues.**

Violent extremist narratives espouse a rigid division of “us” and “them” that often promotes an individual’s exclusion and isolation from his or her community and broader society and encourages a hostile relationship with government and other defined groups. Public discourse can also sometimes reinforce the “us versus them” narrative. This can obscure the actual threat and contribute to perceptions of alienation and persecution among individuals who may already feel marginalized. Federal outreach and engagement activities should aim to decrease exclusion and isolation, avoid stigmatization, encourage civic engagement, and empower potential partners to demonstrate how a thriving, inclusive community is the strongest front against violent extremism.

**A. Engage communities on all relevant issues and ensure responsiveness to local priorities.** Officials specializing in civil rights and civil liberties, immigration, transportation security, law enforcement, and other professionals from the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security regularly conduct roundtables and outreach efforts to better understand the challenges facing their jurisdictions. U.S. Attorneys are generally the lead for these types of Federal engagements given their unique, long-term understanding of local needs and their permanent presence in districts throughout the country. In addition, in many districts the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) also plays a prominent

role in community engagement through a series of quarterly roundtables. These engagements often identify ways the Federal Government can better serve local communities with respect to civil rights and civil liberties, religious and other discrimination, public safety, and security measures, among other issues. These engagements are also opportunities to inform audiences about government structure and policies as well as programs available to them. U.S. Attorneys' offices, FBI Field Offices, DHS CRCL, and other relevant Federal departments and agencies will continue to engage with community members to understand their unique interests and identify opportunities to address them. *(Lead: DOJ; Partner: DHS, FBI)*

**B. Coordinate CVE engagements in regions throughout the country.** To promote better understanding about specific jurisdictional needs, minimize duplicative engagements, and optimize the use of resources, the CVE Task Force will develop guidance for coordinating relevant Federal support to local communities, including training and technical assistance. Such guidance will ensure: activities do not conflict or place undue burdens on the local stakeholders; limited resources are distributed to communities that can use them effectively; and stakeholders have visibility and the opportunity to inform how national programs translate to the local level. In addition, the Task Force will cooperate with a variety of departments and agencies to find opportunities to integrate CVE activities into existing public safety initiatives and networks, such as those focused on bullying prevention and Internet safety. *(Lead: CVE Task Force; Partner: DHS, DOJ, FBI)*

## **Task 2.2 – Increase capacity for local engagement.**

**A. Increase CVE-specific support to the field.** Many U.S. Attorneys' offices rely on staff who are responsible for engagement across multiple issues, making full-time focus on support to CVE framework development and implementation difficult. DHS provides full-time staff in selected regions across the country who are specifically responsible for CVE efforts and serve as a connection between national and local programs. The CVE Task Force will coordinate a review of available resources for field support and, depending on the availability of funding, will work with DOJ and DHS to identify priority jurisdictions to receive additional staff. *(Lead: DHS, DOJ; Partner: CVE Task Force)*

**B. Connect promising local initiatives to one another.** Many ongoing, locally-led CVE efforts throughout the country would benefit from improved access to information and relationships with stakeholders in other jurisdictions. The CVE Task Force will identify and build awareness of promising programs to support the expansion of effective local CVE initiatives around the Nation. The Task Force, in partnership with the Department of State, will also connect interested jurisdictions to relevant international fora, including the Strong Cities Network, which aims to build the capacity of local governments to prevent violent extremism by establishing links between and among cities pursuing CVE programs. *(Lead: CVE Task Force; Partner: DHS, DOJ, DOS)*

## Technical Assistance

### Task 2.3 – Support local partnerships and prevention programs that build resilience to violent extremism.

The CVE Task Force will coordinate efforts to facilitate and support local awareness and prevention programs. Sustaining CVE efforts in the long term will require leveraging existing resources and grant programs as well as identifying new funding opportunities for CVE programming. Additionally, national programs should be flexible enough to be tailored to the specific needs of local stakeholders.

**A. Support the design and implementation of local frameworks.** In recent years, several metropolitan areas have begun implementing locally driven, partnership-dependent, multidisciplinary CVE frameworks. Where appropriate, DHS and DOJ will focus and coordinate support for implementation of these frameworks. Additionally, the CVE Task Force will coordinate Federal support to jurisdictions that have not yet adopted CVE frameworks, including by identifying promising practices and relevant subject matter experts. *(Lead: DHS, DOJ; CVE Task Force; Partner: FBI)*

**B. Integrate CVE into existing programs and partnerships, as appropriate.** The CVE Task Force will inventory relevant initiatives, including public safety and violence prevention efforts that currently include or may be relevant to CVE objectives, including those led by private sector organizations. Such initiatives may be focused on topics such as preventing discrimination or hate crimes, practicing safety online, or detecting human trafficking. *(Lead: CVE Task Force; Partner: All<sup>5</sup>)*

**C. Inform community policing strategies with relevant CVE training and tools.** Community policing strategies aim to build trust, mutual respect, and collaboration between police and the communities they serve. Community collaboration with state and local law enforcement can address gang violence, hate crimes, and other public safety issues, including violent extremism. Federal departments and agencies, in partnership with state and local law enforcement, will encourage and expand successful community policing models and increase their scope to also address recruitment and radicalization to violent extremism. *(Lead: DOJ, DHS; Partner: State and local law enforcement)*

### Task 2.4 – Build expertise and skills for preventing violent extremism.

Departments and agencies will use training and presentations to build awareness, develop the expertise and skills of program implementers, and increase the number of proficient stakeholders who are able to carry out CVE initiatives. Depending on the need, training and presentations may include: descriptions of the types of violent extremism and recruitment narratives used by violent extremist groups; factors that are often found in cases of radicalization to violent extremism; intervention methods; and ways to prevent recruitment and build resilience. They may also include information on specific resources, such as how to deliver the Community Awareness Briefing or facilitate a Community Resilience Exercise, both of which are tools used to foster dialogue, address grievances, and enhance relationships between law enforcement and local communities. Trainings and presentations will be based on sound, peer-reviewed research or analysis, as required by existing CVE training guidelines.

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5. All agencies referenced in Footnote 1.

Several organizations have developed relevant training that can be utilized and built upon, including the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, International Association of Chiefs of Police, and Federal Emergency Management Agency. The Task Force, in coordination with departments and agencies, will compile existing relevant programs, identify gaps, and make recommendations for streamlining or developing new training. Departments and agencies will seek ways to combine CVE training and presentations with other public safety topics, when possible. *(Lead: DHS, DOJ, FBI, NCTC; Partners: CVE Task Force, All)*

### **Task 2.5 – Increase access to CVE-relevant funding and resources.**

The scope of resources available to support CVE must expand in order to ensure community stakeholders are able to create, implement, and sustain effective initiatives. Resources will include: direct government grants and financial assistance; expertise from other disciplines that can inform CVE efforts; and networks that connect communities to each other and to nongovernmental and private sector organizations. There are a number of non-CVE specific DHS and DOJ grant programs that can be leveraged for local CVE work. This includes the DHS State Homeland Security Program and the Urban Area Security Initiative as well as DOJ's Community Oriented Policing Services program. Additionally, DHS created a CVE-specific competitive grant program in 2016.

The CVE Task Force will provide consolidated funding information to stakeholders and seek opportunities to connect them with applicable national resources. The Task Force will also create a public inventory of CVE-specific and CVE-relevant resources, application information, and guidance on applying for Federal funding. To the extent possible, relevant funding opportunities should be advertised, including online, in coordination with the CVE Task Force. *(Lead: DHS, DOJ; Partner: CVE Task Force; All)*

CVE frameworks are most successful when they are tailored to local realities and the roles of different stakeholders in a given place.

In Minnesota, public and private partnerships have been forged to build a more resilient local community. One such partnership is the Somali Youth Development fund, which provides public and private funding to a local non-profit, Youthprise, in support of positive youth development activities, a mentorship program, and a new community center committed to providing a one-stop shop for education and workforce resources.

In Massachusetts, Federal and local stakeholders are pursuing a public health model for prevention and intervention activities. The focus is building awareness of the issue of violent extremism and approaches to prevent it within the existing network of statewide service providers. This improves providers' ability to support individuals through programs and services already in place.



# Interventions

Successfully developing and utilizing intervention options will help keep individuals and communities safe and preserve critical resources for cases involving violent extremist crimes. These options should include alternative pathways or “off-ramps” for individuals who appear to be moving toward violent action but who have not yet engaged in criminal activity. A number of communities are developing programs designed to work with such individuals. Law enforcement officials are looking for ways to support these programs, particularly when they focus on juveniles and others who have the potential to be redirected away from violence. The CVE Task Force, in coordination with DOJ and the FBI, will support local multidisciplinary intervention approaches. In addition, DOJ and the Task Force will identify and support the development of disengagement and rehabilitation programs for potential use by the criminal justice sector in cases involving violent extremism.

## **Task 3.1 – Provide information and resources relevant to violent extremism and intervention to the general public.**

Studies indicate that family members, friends, or close acquaintances are the most likely to observe activities or behaviors suggesting an individual is being radicalized or has violent intent. Using the latest research, the CVE Task Force will coordinate the development and dissemination of resources describing possible warning signs as well as steps families and friends can take if they believe someone close to them is becoming recruited or radicalized to violence. The resources will include information for trusted members of local communities who those families and friends may call upon for guidance or assistance. *(Lead: CVE Task Force; Partner: All)*

## **Task 3.2 – Support community-based multidisciplinary intervention models.**

Local intervention teams will play a critical role in assessing the needs of individuals who may be radicalizing to violent extremism; developing appropriate support plans tailored to the individual; and making resources available to increase resiliency. Collaboration among relevant experts, stakeholders, and civil society organizations is key to ensuring that at-risk individuals have the resources needed to be redirected from violence when necessary. Many jurisdictions across the Nation already have multidisciplinary teams in place to identify and address a variety of complex issues, including gang violence, potential active shooters, and self-destructive behaviors. These teams can be led by a variety of practitioners, including, but not limited to, behavioral and mental health professionals, local law enforcement officials, and faith-based and other non-government representatives. The CVE Task Force will coordinate support to existing programs using research, best practices, and other resources. Where such programs do not exist, DOJ, in coordination with Federal partners, will facilitate discussions with and among local stakeholders to explore the potential for developing community-led intervention programs.

Many interventions teams will work independent of government. The goal is to enable communities to develop their own solutions to build local resilience while appropriately protecting civil rights and liberties, fostering greater trust, and fulfilling public safety objectives. *(Lead: DOJ; Partner: CVE Task Force, FBI, DHS)*

### **Task 3.3 – Identify and support the development of disengagement and rehabilitation programs.**

Drawing on existing research and models, DOJ, in coordination with the CVE Task Force, will identify and support the development of disengagement and rehabilitation programs for possible use by the criminal justice sector in cases involving violent extremism. Such programs would be tailored for individuals in the justice system as well as those reentering society following incarceration. *(Lead: DOJ; Partner: CVE Task Force)*

The National Institute of Justice funded a partnership between Life After Hate/ExitUSA and the Research Triangle Institute to examine individual-level pathways into and out of violent extremism. This project examined the reasons why individuals from the white power movement participated in violent activities and also looked at cases of those who voluntarily choose to leave the movement. The study utilized former violent extremists as mentors to those seeking to disengage. The findings will provide a comprehensive understanding of the ways disengagement relates to individual-level factors (e.g., identity, work, motivations) and structural forces (e.g., community organizations, the criminal justice system, barriers). This can shape future interventions with individuals looking for the support and skills they need to build a new life free from hate.





# Communications and Digital Strategy

In recent years, violent extremist groups have used and exploited digital environments and a number of communication platforms. The speed at which the digital landscape is evolving challenges government efforts to directly address individuals being radicalized to violence online; however, it also offers significant CVE opportunities, specifically through communication and partnership with communities and the private sector.

Confronting this challenge will depend on effective communication on the topics of violent extremism and CVE at the national and local level. It will require raising awareness, building expertise, and pursuing new tools and partnerships. Proactive discussions with non-governmental and private sector entities, and a networking of these entities, will improve government ability to communicate and leverage the digital environment to reach stakeholders, address violent extremist narratives, and encourage alternatives to violence.

## **Task 4.1 – Develop a platform to improve communication and increase access to CVE resources.**

Currently, general CVE information and resources are not easily accessible by stakeholders. To address this issue, the CVE Task Force will create a new online platform, including a public website, to ensure stakeholders around the country are able to quickly and easily understand national CVE efforts and adapt resources to local and individual contexts. This platform will serve as the national digital CVE clearinghouse by centralizing and streamlining access to: training; research, analysis, and lessons learned; financial resources and grant information; networks and communities of interest; and intervention resources. It will contain interactive multimedia tools with up-to-date information that are engaging, adaptable, and tailored for a variety of audiences. Through engagements with key stakeholders, relevant departments and agencies will gather requirements for other needed digital resources and develop and disseminate appropriate products using the online platform and other applicable communications tools. *(Lead: CVE Task Force; Partner: All)*

## **Task 4.2 – Strengthen collaboration with the private sector and academia to pursue CVE-relevant communications tools and capabilities.**

Active collaboration with private sector technology specialists, non-governmental organizations, and academics is key to CVE communications efforts. The private sector generally best understands emerging online trends and how to foster dialogue about the intersection of technology and important issues such as violent extremism. The United States Government best understands broad trends regarding the ways violent extremists use online platforms and the relevant policy and law enforcement implications. Bringing these competencies together will ensure our national approach to CVE appropriately incorporates modern technologies and is informed by accurate information regarding violent extremists' use of the Internet. The CVE Task Force will work to ensure engagements with the non-governmental stakeholders on this topic are consistent with protections for civil rights and civil liberties and are strategic and coordinated in order to avoid burden and to produce mutual benefit.

**A. Convene forums to discuss the digital knowledge base.** The rapid evolution of the digital environment will require routine review of emerging technology and trends as well as their potential effects for radicalization and CVE efforts in the digital arena. In partnership with the Global Engagement Center, an interagency center housed at the Department of State, the CVE Task Force will periodically convene forums to discuss these trends in both domestic and international contexts and better understand how they can be addressed. These forums will utilize expertise from inside and outside government, and the findings will be shared with CVE stakeholders. *(Lead: CVE Task Force, Global Engagement Center; Partner: DHS, DOJ, FBI, NCTC, DOS)*

**B. Work with private sector partners to identify and integrate technology solutions.** The private sector has developed numerous innovative solutions—such as those used to address cyberbullying or prevent suicide—that may be able to be used to prevent violent extremist recruitment online. Those who are experts on these potential solutions are often not well connected to individuals or organizations working to address violent extremism. The CVE Task Force will support exchanges and partnerships among relevant stakeholders so these potential tools and capabilities are more readily accessible and can be utilized appropriately to prevent violent extremism recruitment and radicalization. *(Lead: CVE Task Force; Partner: All)*

#### **Task 4.3 – Develop and implement a coordinated communications and media strategy regarding countering violent extremism efforts.**

Given the diversity of stakeholders focused on CVE, there is a need to coordinate communications and media strategies among departments and agencies. This will ensure that the United States Government is speaking in a unified and mutually supportive voice, information is shared throughout the life-cycle of various initiatives, and there is transparency and broad dissemination of information, including to the public. This will also fulfill the critical need to increase the scale and effectiveness of communications with non-Federal CVE stakeholders. *(Lead: CVE Task Force; Partner: All)*

In 2015, DOS, DHS, and other Federal departments and agencies joined with EdVenture Partners to launch the Peer to Peer: Challenging Extremism (P2P) program to spark innovative social media campaigns that address violent extremism. The objective of P2P is to engage university students, who earn academic credit, to create authentic narratives on social media that challenge violent extremist recruitment. Facebook became the first technology partner to join the project in the summer of 2015. Since its inception, the P2P program has engaged more than 125 teams and 3,000 students at colleges and universities in the United States and across the globe, reaching millions of people through campaigns to raise awareness about the dangers of violent extremism and to promote messages of tolerance and inclusiveness.