

CRS Report for Congress

Selected Federal Homeland Security Assistance Programs: A Summary

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Shawn Reese
Analyst in American National Government
Government and Finance Division



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Summary

Congress has supported a limited number of programs specifically designed to assist state and local governments with homeland security activities. Some programs assist first responders with preparing for terrorist attacks, particularly those involving weapons of mass destruction. In addition, Congress has authorized several general assistance programs that states and localities may use for terrorism preparedness.

The Department of Homeland Security administers most of the assistance programs, and on August 3, 2007, Congress enacted P.L. 110-53, the *Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007*, which changes the distribution methods the Department of Homeland Security uses to allocate the funding for most of these programs. P.L. 110-53 requires the department to allocate homeland security grants based on risk from FY2008 through FY2012. On December 26, 2007, the President signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-161) and the act required the department to allocate the FY2008 state and local homeland security assistance programs as required by P.L. 110-53.

In addition to the Department of Homeland Security, other agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, Energy, and Justice administer programs that provide various kinds of homeland security assistance. Congress authorizes these assorted programs to provide help in a variety of forms, including grants, training, technical assistance, equipment, and exercises. Most of the programs focus on assisting state and local first responders — such as fire service, emergency medical service, and law enforcement personnel — prepare for potential attacks. Some observers believe that with the threat of bioterrorism, public health officials should also be considered first responders.

This report will be updated as congressional or executive actions warrant.

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Selected Federal Homeland Security Assistance Programs: A Summary

Introduction

This report lists and describes selected federal homeland security assistance programs for state and local governments, particularly those that assist in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from terrorist attacks, including incidents involving weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Some of the programs provide aid specifically for this purpose, while others are general assistance programs that recipients may use for homeland security. Depending on the structure of the program, local governments seeking assistance may apply directly to the federal agency or to their state program administrator.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) administers most federal homeland security assistance programs. Other programs are administered by several agencies, including the Departments of Defense (DOD), Energy (DOE), Health and Human Services (HHS), and Justice (DOJ). These agencies provide grants, training, and technical assistance for a wide range of homeland security activities.

This report provides the title, a brief description, and administering federal agency. It does not provide details on course offerings, application requirements, or appropriations.

Table 2 provides information on eligible activities and applicants for the assistance programs in this report.

Department of Homeland Security

Within DHS, the Office of Grant Programs provides homeland security assistance to state and local governments. All these assistance programs provide grants to state and local entities, including law enforcement agencies, fire departments, emergency medical services, and emergency managers. These programs provide funding to prepare for, prevent, mitigate, and respond to manmade or natural hazards.

State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP). This assistance program provides financial assistance to states and territories to prepare for terrorist attacks involving WMD. In accordance with their approved homeland security plan, states must allocate 80% of the grant funds to localities and distribute the funds within 45 days after receiving the allocated funds from the Office of Grant Programs. There is no matching fund requirement for this program.

The program authorizes purchase of specialized equipment to enhance state and local agencies' capability in preventing and responding to WMD incidents, and provides funds for protecting critical infrastructure of national importance. This program provides grant funds for designing, developing, conducting, and evaluating WMD exercises; developing and conducting WMD training programs; and updating and implementing each state's Homeland Security Strategy (SHSS).¹

Funds from this program may be used to plan for, design, develop, conduct, and evaluate exercises that train first responders, and to assess the readiness of state and local jurisdictions to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks. Exercises must be threat- and performance-based, in accordance with the National Integration Center's (within the Federal Emergency Management Agency) Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) manuals. Exercises conducted with funds from this program must be managed and executed in accordance with HSEEP.²

Funds from this program may be used to enhance the capabilities of state and local first responders through the development of a state homeland security training program. Allowable training costs include establishment of WMD training capacities within existing training academies, universities, and junior colleges.³

States are the only authorized applicants, with the following state and local entities eligible to receive funding:

- emergency management agencies or offices;
- homeland security agencies or offices;
- fire departments;
- law enforcement agencies;
- emergency medical services;
- hazardous material-handling personnel;
- public works agencies or offices;
- public health agencies or offices;
- governmental administrative agencies or offices; and
- public safety communications agencies or offices.⁴

For information on how DHS allocates funding for this program, see CRS Report RL34181, *Distribution of Homeland Security Grants in FY2007 and P.L. 110-53, Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act*, by Shawn Reese and Steven Maguire.

Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program (LETPP). From FY2004 through FY2007, Congress appropriated funding for this program, however,

¹ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office for Domestic Preparedness, *Fiscal Year 2007 Homeland Security Grant Program: Program Guidance and Application Kit* (Washington: 2006).

² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

in the FY2008 Consolidated Appropriations Act (P.L. 110-161) there is no separate line item for LETPP. In accordance with the Implementing Recommendations of the 9-11 Commission Act (P.L. 110-53) grant recipients are to obligate no less than 25% of their SHSGP and the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) allocations on law enforcement terrorism prevention activities.

Urban Area Security Initiative Program (UASI). This program is a discretionary grant program that provides funding to metropolitan areas (including counties and mutual aid partners), to prepare for, prevent, and respond to terrorist incidents. DHS conducts a vulnerability and threat assessment that considers location of critical infrastructure and population density of all major metropolitan areas. Based on these assessments, and at the DHS Secretary's discretion, selected metropolitan areas receive grant funds that are passed directly through from the states.⁵ Each local government within the threat urban area shares a portion of the allocated funds. There is no matching requirement for this program. For information on how DHS allocates funding for this program, see CRS Report RL34181, *Distribution of Homeland Security Grants in FY2007 and P.L. 110-53, Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act*, by Shawn Reese and Steven Maguire.

Metropolitan areas may use funds from this program to purchase specialized WMD equipment, plan and execute exercises, pay first responder overtime costs associated with heightened threat levels, and train first responders. Additionally, funds from this program can be used for port and mass transit security, radiological defense systems, pilot projects, and technical assistance.⁶ DHS selects metropolitan areas to receive funding based on the department's vulnerability and threat assessment.

Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grants. These grants are for multi-jurisdictional efforts to promote regional preparedness for all-hazards catastrophic disasters, including mass evacuations. A portion of the funding is to be awarded to UASI recipients, with the remainder of funding allocated based on all-hazards assessments of regional applications.⁷

Assistance to Firefighters Program.⁸ This program awards one-year grants directly to fire departments to enhance their abilities to respond to fires and fire-related hazards.⁹ The program seeks to support fire departments that lack the

⁵ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office for Domestic Preparedness, *Fiscal Year 2007 Homeland Security Grant Program: Program Guidance and Application Kit* (Washington: 2006).

⁶ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of the Press Secretary, "Securing the Homeland: Protecting Our Urban Areas," press release, May 14, 2003. Available at [<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=677>], visited April 1, 2004.

⁷ Conference report accompanying P.L. 110-161, Div. E, Title III.

⁸ For further information on the Assistance to Firefighters program see CRS Report RS21302, *Assistance to Firefighters Program*, by Len Kruger.

⁹ In the conference report to accompany H.R. 2555 (H.Rept. 108-280), the Assistance to (continued...)

tools and resources necessary to protect the health and safety of the public and firefighting personnel.¹⁰ The program's grant application process is competitive, and applications are peer reviewed by state and local fire department officials.

This program provides funds to support firefighter safety, fire prevention, emergency medical services, and firefighting vehicle acquisition. Individual fire departments are eligible to apply for grants under this program.

Citizen Corps' Community Emergency Response Teams. On January 29, 2002, President Bush issued an executive order¹¹ which established the USA Freedom Corps. USA Freedom Corps' mission is to increase opportunities for citizens by expanding and enhancing public service. Within the USA Freedom Corps, the *Citizen Corps* program was established to coordinate volunteer organizations, with the mission to make local communities safe and prepared to respond to any emergency situation. Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) is the only program of the four which Citizen Corps administers that provides grant funding to volunteer first responders. The grant funding formula used for this program is based on population, with a minimum of 0.75% guaranteed to every state, with the remaining amount distributed in direct proportion to the population of each state as directed by the USA PATRIOT Act.¹²

CERT trains people to be prepared to respond to emergency situations in their own local communities. CERTs are groups of volunteers within communities that are trained by professional first responders to assist in the event of a disaster. CERT members give critical support to first responders, provide immediate assistance to victims, and organize spontaneous volunteers at a disaster site.

This program authorizes the funding to provide for training of CERT members only. The CERT program is a professionally instructed course is taught by a team of first responders who have the requisite knowledge and skills. The course, taught to groups of citizens within their communities, and consists of two and a half hour sessions held one evening a week, over a seven week period.¹³ States apply for a grant under this program, while any community that has established a Citizen Corps Council is also eligible to receive funding from this program.

⁹ (...continued)

Firefighters grant program is to be administered by ODP. It also specifies that the grant administration process will not be changed from the present procedures, to include peer review and involvement by USFA.

¹⁰ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, "FY2003 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program Guidance," (Washington: 2003), p. 2.

¹¹ U.S. President, Bush, "Establishing the USA Freedom Corps," Executive Order 13254, *Federal Register*, vol. 67, February 1, 2002, section 1, p. 4869.

¹² P.L. 107-56, sec. 1014(c)(3).

¹³ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, *Community Emergency Response Team Overview*, [<http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/CERT/overview.asp>], visited April 1, 2004.

Emergency Management Performance Grants. This program is designed to assist the development, maintenance, and improvement of state and local emergency management capabilities. It provides support to state and local governments to achieve measurable results in key functional areas of emergency management.¹⁴ The grant formula used for this program is based on population, with a minimum of 0.75% guaranteed to every state, with the remaining amount distributed in direct proportion to the population of each state.¹⁵ The distribution of funds from states to localities is at the discretion of each state's EMPG administering agency, typically the state emergency management agency or office. The state matching requirement for this program is 50%.¹⁶

EMPG funds are used for emergency management personnel costs, travel, training, supplies, and other routine expenditures for emergency management activities.¹⁷ Funds from this grant program may also be used for consequence management preparedness projects and programs that develop and improve the capabilities of states and localities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism involving WMD.¹⁸

States may use the funds provided through the EMPG to structure their individual emergency management programs based on identified needs and priorities for strengthening emergency management capabilities. States may also use EMPG funds to develop intrastate emergency management systems that encourage partnership building among government, business, and volunteer and community organizations.¹⁹ State emergency management agencies or offices are eligible applicants and recipients of this grant program; additionally, state emergency management agencies may pass funds to emergency management offices at the local level.

Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces. The *Federal Response Plan* calls for Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) task forces to provide special rescue assistance to state and local authorities when requested following a disaster.²⁰ Such

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, *FY2003 EMPG Guidance to States*, (Washington: 2003), p. 2.

¹⁵ R. David Paulson, Director, Preparedness Division, Federal Emergency Management Agency, *Allocation of FY 2003 Emergency Management Performance Grant Funds*, memorandum for regional directors and acting regional directors, March 20, 2003, p. 1. P.L. 107-56, sec. 1014(c)(3). This formula mirrors the Office of Grant Program's State Homeland Security Grant program and is based on the USA PATRIOT Act.

¹⁶ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, *FY2003 EMPG Guidance to States*, (Washington: 2003,) p. 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

²⁰ The *Federal Response Plan* (FRP) outlines procedures for FEMA and other federal agencies in meeting needs of state and local governments overwhelmed by disasters. The
(continued...)

capabilities include locating and extricating victims in collapsed structures and providing on-site medical treatment as necessary. Each task force has at least 62 personnel, with at least two people in each of 31 positions. Most members are either firefighters or paramedics, but some are private sector specialists.²¹

FEMA provides full funding for the initial equipment costs of new task forces, which amounted to \$1.7 million for each task force when the program started. FEMA also provides some funds to meet ongoing training and equipment costs. According to program officials, state and local governments can expect to pay 80% of the long-term costs associated with sponsoring a US&R task force. In addition to providing funding for equipment and training, FEMA also provides hands-on training in search and rescue techniques and equipment, and technical assistance to local communities that support US&R task forces.²²

Most US&R funds are used to purchase or upgrade equipment, and provide training to US&R task force personnel. Funds also provide for equipping new task forces. Several years have passed since new task forces were initiated, however, FEMA has not determined how much funding would be necessary today to equip a new task force. Funding is directed to the 28 nationwide US&R task forces, which are the only eligible applicants under this program.

Other DHS Homeland Security Assistance Programs and Activities.

The Office of Grant Programs also administers noncompetitive grant programs. Grant recipients are determined at the DHS Secretary's discretion. Primarily, DHS conducts threat and risk assessments to determine what entities or jurisdictions are eligible to receive funding. These grant programs include:

- Metropolitan Medical Response System;
- Public Transportation Security Assistance and Railroad Security Assistance;
- Port Security Grants;
- Over-the-Road Bus Security Assistance;
- Trucking Industry Security Grants;
- Buffer Zone Protection Program.²³

Additionally, The Office of Grant Programs conducts research and development through its Equipment Acquisition and Support Program within SHSGP, which works

²⁰ (...continued)

role of US&R Task Forces is discussed in Emergency Support Function #9. Available at [<http://www.fema.gov/rrr/frp/>], visited April 1, 2004.

²¹ An example of private sector specialists would be members with hazardous materials training.

²² U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, *National Urban Search and Rescue System*, [<http://www.fema.gov/usr/nusrs.shtm>], visited April 1, 2004.

²³ Conference report accompanying P.L. 110-161, Div. E, Title III.

with federal, state, and local entities on equipment related issues such as testing, standards, and the identification of new equipment needs.²⁴

The National Integration Center offers a number of training and technical assistance programs to state and local agencies to enhance their ability to respond to domestic emergency incidents. The center works with a number of specialized institutions in the design and delivery of the training programs, one of which is the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium, a partnership involving several public universities and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

Technical assistance is generally targeted to state and local agencies to enhance their ability to develop, plan, and implement programs for WMD preparedness. The Office of Grant Programs provides specific assistance in such areas as the development of response plans, exercise scenarios, conduct of risk and vulnerability assessments, and the development of the domestic preparedness strategies.²⁵

Emergency Management Institute. The Institute provides training for state and local emergency response personnel in basic emergency management and terrorism preparedness and is intended to improve emergency management practices among state and local emergency managers, as well as federal officials. Programs embody the Comprehensive Emergency Management System by unifying the elements of management common to all emergencies: preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. It provides training in the following areas:

- mitigation;
- readiness and technology;
- professional development;
- disaster operations and recovery; and
- integrated emergency management.²⁶

National Fire Academy. The Academy provides training for state and local emergency managers to increase the professional level of the fire service and emergency medical service. Courses are offered at the National Fire Academy training facility in Emmitsburg, MD, but also through regional offices and distance learning mechanisms. The Academy offers a wide selection of courses in such areas as professional development, incident management, information management, hazardous materials, fire prevention, and volunteer leadership.

²⁴ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office for Domestic Preparedness, *About the Office of Domestic Preparedness Support - Philosophy*, pp. 1-2. Available at [<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/about/philosophy.htm>], visited April 1, 2004.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

²⁶ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, *FY2003-FY2004 Emergency Management Institute Course Catalog*, available at [<http://www.training.fema.gov/emiweb/>], visited April 1, 2004.

Department of Defense

Presently, DOD provides only one program for state and local first responders. This program, through the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID), provides medical training for public health professionals.

U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases. USAMRIID provides training opportunities for public health professionals. Courses are taught at the USAMRIID facility in Aberdeen, MD, but are also available through satellite broadcasts and other distance learning mechanisms. Courses focus on recognizing signs of bioterrorism attacks, planning and preparing for mass casualties, and preventing the spread of disease.

Department of Energy

DOE , through its Office of Assets Utilization, provides homeland security assistance by providing equipment to state and local first responders. DOE also conducts research and development activities in the field of homeland security technologies; however, this research and development program does not provide direct assistance to state and local governments for domestic preparedness activities.

Homeland Defense Equipment Reuse Program. DOE's Office of Assets Utilization offers surplus radiological detection instrumentation to cities through its Homeland Defense Equipment Reuse Program. Equipment is "older-generation" instrumentation that would otherwise be destroyed. Recipients receive equipment training from ODP.

Department of Health and Human Services

HHS provides grants and planning assistance to states and localities for public health and medical preparedness and response through two grant programs, the Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) Cooperative Agreement, administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Healthcare Systems Preparedness grants, administered by the office of the HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR).

Public Health Emergency Preparedness Cooperative Agreement. CDC administers this program that provides formula grants to the health departments of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. territories, and the nation's three largest municipalities (New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles County) to upgrade state and local preparedness for responding to bioterrorism attacks and other public health threats and emergencies. Funding must be used for preparedness planning, expanding disease surveillance and epidemiologic capacity, strengthening lab capacity, establishing a secure communications network among state and local public health agencies, joint training and exercising, and community engagement.²⁷

²⁷ For more information, see CDC, Cooperative Agreement Guidance for Public Health Emergency Preparedness, at [<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/planning/coopagreement/>].

Bioterrorism Hospital Preparedness Program. ASPR administers two Healthcare System Preparedness grant programs: (1) The Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP) that provides formula grants to the health departments of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Territories, and the nation's three largest municipalities (New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles County). The program facilitates state and regional planning with local hospitals and other health care facilities, upgrades the preparedness of these entities to respond to bioterrorism, natural outbreaks of infectious disease, and other public health emergencies; and (2) the Healthcare Facilities Partnership Program (HFP), which provides competitive grants to partnerships of hospitals or healthcare facilities and state or local governments, to improve medical surge capacity and enhance community and hospital preparedness for public health emergencies.²⁸

Department of Justice

DOJ provides training and technical assistance to state and local law enforcement personnel through its Bureau of Justice Assistance. Other assistance provided by DOJ, such as the Justice Assistance Grant Program and Community-Oriented Policing Service, are within the Office of Justice Programs and provide assistance for public safety. They are not specifically focused on homeland security, and therefore are not covered in this report.²⁹

State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training. Funding is available to provide training and technical assistance to state and local law enforcement personnel. Four broad categories are funded:

- providing state and local law enforcement agencies with knowledge of “political” extremist movements;
- disseminating information relating to vital elements of law enforcement preparedness for terrorist attacks;
- providing a general planning orientation to state and local law enforcement agencies pertaining to crisis and consequence management and incident command; and
- maintaining and enhancing a domestic terrorism database.

²⁸ For more information, see ASPR, National Healthcare Preparedness Program, at [<http://www.hhs.gov/aspr/opeo/nhpp/index.html>].

²⁹ For more information on these programs, see CRS electronic briefing book apcjs28, *Office of Justice Programs (in the CRS Commerce, Justice, and State Appropriations Briefing Book)*, by Bill Krouse, and Cindy Hill. Available at [<http://www.congress.gov/brbk/html/apcjs28.html>], visited March 25, 2004.

Table 1. Eligible Activities and Applicants for Selected Federal Homeland Security Assistance Programs

Program	Eligible Activities					Eligible Applicants
	Planning	Personnel	Equipment	Training	Exercises	
DHS						
State Homeland Security Grant	X		X	X	X	States
Urban Area Security Initiative	X	X	X	X	X	NA ^a
Assistance to Firefighters			X	X		Individual fire departments
Community Emergency Response Teams				X		States
Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention (now part of SHSGP and UASI)		X	X			States
Emergency Management Performance Grants	X	X	X	X	X	States
Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces			X	X		NA ^b
Emergency Management Institute				X		States
National Fire Academy				X		State and local governments
DOD						
U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases				X		State and local governments

Program	Eligible Activities					Eligible Applicants
	Planning	Personnel	Equipment	Training	Exercises	
DOE						
Homeland Defense Equipment Reuse Program			X			Local governments
HHS						
Public Health Preparedness and Response to Bioterrorism Program	X		X	X		States and selected local governments
Bioterrorism Hospital Preparedness Program	X	X	X	X		States and selected local governments
DOJ						
State and Local Anti-Terrorism Training Program				X		State and local governments

Source: U.S. Departments of Homeland Security, Defense, Energy, Health and Human Services, and Justice.

a. The Urban Area Security Initiative program is a discretionary grant program; DHS selects the recipients, through risk and threat assessments.

b. Twenty eight federally recognized Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces receive direct funding from DHS without an application. No other urban search and rescue task forces receive grant funding from this program.