

MEMORANDUM FOR: Kiran Kaur Gill
Chair, Faith-Based Security Advisory Council

CC: Julie Schonfeld
Vice Chair, Faith-Based Security Advisory Council

FROM: Alejandro N. Mayorkas
Secretary

SUBJECT: New Faith-Based Security Advisory Council Subcommittees and
Taskings

I respectfully request that the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Faith-Based Security Advisory Council (FBSAC) form three subcommittees to provide findings and recommendations in these critical areas of the Department's work:

1. How the Department can more efficiently and effectively share information to enhance the security and preparedness of places of worship, faith communities, and faith-based organizations.
2. How the Department can most effectively and appropriately share resources that meet the needs of diverse faith-based organizations and communities, including remedying challenges to applying for DHS grants.
3. How the Department can build trust and resilience with faith community stakeholders.

These subjects are described in greater detail below. My staff will follow up with you shortly regarding formation of the subcommittees.

I request that the FBSAC submit its findings and key recommendations to me no later than 120 days from the date of this memorandum, consistent with applicable rules and regulations.

Thank you for your work on these important matters, your service on the FBSAC, and your dedication to securing our homeland.

Information Sharing

To protect faith-based organizations and all members of the public, we must prioritize timely two-way sharing of threat and security-related information with faith-based organizations.

This subcommittee is tasked to:

Review and assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's information sharing to enhance the security and preparedness of places of worship, faith communities, and faith-based organizations. This includes recommendations for new information-sharing mechanisms, whether via existing information-sharing platforms or networks, or by creating a new process that will effectively communicate threat information and other relevant federal resources to faith communities of diverse backgrounds.

DHS Grants and Resources

Following the hostage situation at the Congregation Beth Israel synagogue in Colleyville, Texas, I called for an increase in funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP). This program provides essential resources to help protect nonprofit organizations at risk of terrorist attacks. In Fiscal Year 2022, Congress provided \$250 million for the NSGP, an increase of \$70 million from the prior year. For Fiscal Year 2023, Congress increased the NSGP funding to \$305 million, a 22% increase on Fiscal Year 2022. These increases allowed more nonprofit organizations across the nation to make physical security enhancements to help protect against attacks. These increases also enable DHS to expand participation in this critical program and increase our support to historically marginalized communities and Historically Black Colleges and Universities in an effort to build capacity and address an evolving threat environment. One of my priorities is to ensure equity in all DHS grant awards.

This subcommittee is tasked to:

- a. Provide recommendations for how the Department can most effectively and appropriately address challenges to applying for DHS grants for which faith-based organizations are eligible, as well as how best these grants can meet the needs of faith-based organizations, and;
- b. In addition to relevant DHS grants, provide recommendations for how the Department's existing resources can better meet the needs of diverse faith-based organizations and communities. This includes recommendations for the development and implementation of specific best practices to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from acts of targeted violence or terrorism, major disasters, cyberattacks, or other threats or emergencies while preserving individual privacy and civil rights and civil liberties.

Building Partnerships

DHS is defined by its partnerships—not only with law enforcement, emergency responders, and our international partners, but also with the diverse communities we serve. To protect the homeland, we must have strong relationships with these communities and work in partnership to build strong, resilient communities.

This subcommittee is tasked to:

Provide recommendations for how the Department can build trust with faith community stakeholders to better understand their concerns, including real or perceived threats from violent actors or groups, and empower local leaders to mobilize resources to mitigate and respond to threats.