

Organization Name: Florida International University Police Department
Project Title: Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention
Grant Number: EMW-2020-GR-00168

1. Project Overview

In 2020, the Florida International University Police Department (FIUPD) was awarded funding through Center for Prevention Programs and Partnership (CP3) Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) grant funding. As a university police department, the goal of this project was to bring awareness to the University campus and greater community about the dangers of terrorist groups, including but not limited to, domestic, foreign, and individual actors, but to also prevent and/or mitigate acts of terrorism and mass-casualty events. FIUPD works closely with, and supports, the Miami-Dade Police Department's Special Investigations Division - Homeland Security Bureau, the Miami-Dade Police Department's Threat Management Section, and the Southeast Florida Fusion center.

Our first objective was to use the awarded funding to put the 5 members of our Investigations and Threat Assessment team through the Advanced Threat Management Certification Course provided by the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association. This specialized training focused on identifying threats from social media, electronic communications, and real threats vs. perceived threats. It also gave our investigators a greater understanding of information gathering, and case management systems specifically to enhance our identification and threat assessment capabilities to keep our community safe from targeted violence.

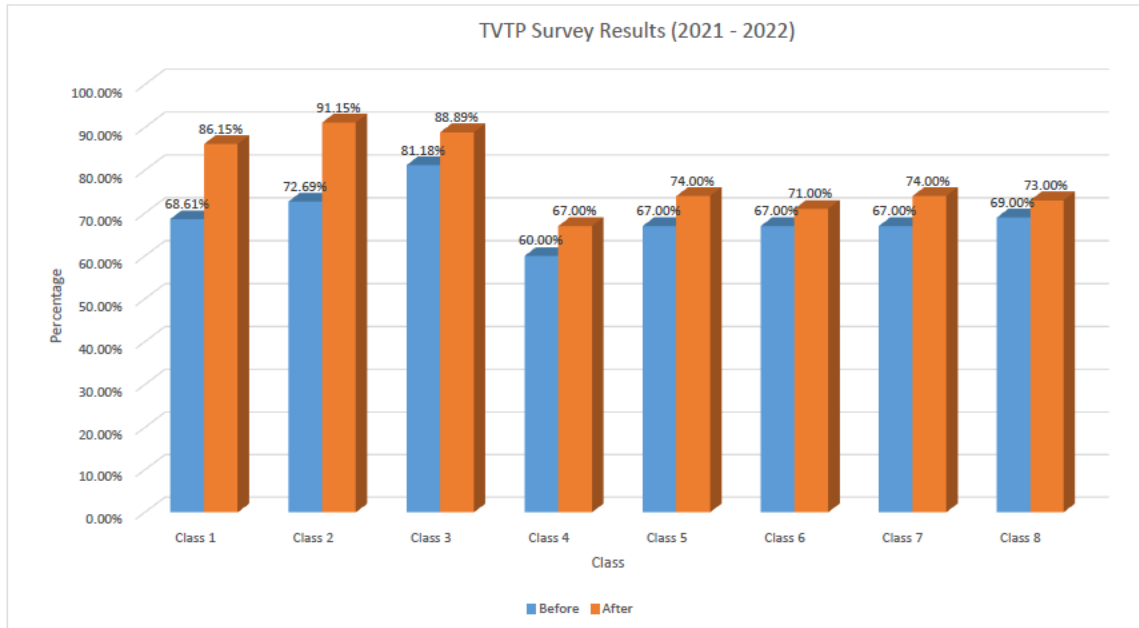
Following the successful completion of that course, our team then participated in the Train the Trainer webinar hosted by DHS, in preparation to then provide community awareness briefings to the participating University community, including students, faculty, and staff. The community awareness briefings were intended to be comprehensive presentations about the dangers, identification, reporting and awareness of terrorism, and terrorist's activities. Our department's training unit tailored an informational PowerPoint presentation specifically geared toward the FIU campus community. The PowerPoint presentation reflected critical information about terrorist threats, how to identify the potential for terrorist activity, and ways to report suspicious activity or persons.

Our second objective was through these presentations to increase the knowledge and capacity of the broader FIU community to assess threats and prevent violence/radicalization to violence in the campus community. The team conducted outreach in order to plan the community briefings during ongoing semester courses with the head of the undergraduate criminal justice department. We measured knowledge, both pre and post presentation, through an electronic survey provided to participants in order to evaluate their knowledge of the topic prior to and after the presentations.

2. Key Accomplishments

Our team was able to successfully accomplish all of our goals and objectives through efficiently executing the activities we originally listed on our IMP. A key accomplishment not listed in our IMP was the community outreach which took place. Coordinating with faculty and staff, and then engaging directly with students on our campus helped bridge some gaps. This project targeted our direct community, and our investigators were able to directly connect with the student body while delivering essential awareness regarding TVTP which had not been done prior.

Over the course of the funding period, 8 individual community briefings were conducted and a total of 230 undergraduate criminal justice students participated. Based on the entrance and exit survey conducted, each session resulted in an increase in the participant's knowledge. Prior to this project, FIU students were not specifically instructed on TVTP content.



3. Deliverables

Our department's training unit tailored an informational PowerPoint presentation specifically geared toward the FIU campus community. The PowerPoint presentation reflected critical information about terrorist threats, how to identify the potential for terrorist activity, and ways to report suspicious activity or persons. This PowerPoint presentation was submitted, in its final version, to DHS. Our investigators who were responsible for presenting the community briefings also created the entrance/exit surveys and worked with our IT staff in gathering metrics.

At this time we feel comfortable with the sharing of our community briefing presentations outside of DHS.

4. Challenges and Lessons Learned

The challenges we encountered were minor and did not hinder our ability to accomplish the objectives and reach our goals. The logistics of coordinating all schedules for community presentations was probably the most complex piece of this project. Another small challenge was that the presentations were completed often outside of an investigator's regular shift and on overtime, which can be difficult to maintain on a consistent basis.

Based on our specific project, the advice I would give to others aiming to do similar work would be to have a very clear idea of the goal you hope to reach. I suggest creating, promoting, and maintaining open communication with the community and those conducting the outreach.

5. Sustainability

FIUPD intends to continue conducting presentations to the university community on a variety of relevant TVTP topics including but not limited to, active shooter, terrorist's activities, lone actors, awareness, identification, and response to threats and reporting.