Homeland Security

Science and Technology

BACKGROUND

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) conducts evidence-based research to improve the effectiveness of public safety and violence prevention efforts implemented by government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This research enables policy makers and operational decision-makers to make informed choices that reroute vulnerable individuals from potential violence, thwart potential offenders, mitigate vulnerabilities, save lives, and enhance community resilience.

UNDERSTANDING THE THREATS, BUILDING COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS

The nation faces an ever evolving and more complex threat landscape. Designing effective responses requires a sophisticated understanding of the threat environment and innovations in technology and applications. S&T is building this understanding by using social science tools to better understand the nature of the threats. This includes drawing on expertise garnered from the fields of psychology, economics, criminology, political science, sociology, biostatistics, and other social and evaluation disciplines.

Knowledge and findings from S&T's research portfolio are enabling DHS to engage and collaborate with local communities to build education and awareness and reinforce a whole-of-society prevention architecture. Current and future prevention efforts will equip and empower local efforts—including peers, teachers, community leaders, and law enforcement—to minimize a threat as it evolves while enhancing emergency preparedness and response.

S&T INITIATIVES SAFEGUARD PUBLIC SAFETY

Thwarting Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP): Addressing the persistent threat to public safety, stability, and prosperity by conducting applied research and evaluation and integrating scientifically derived knowledge to inform policy and programs throughout the nation's Homeland Security Enterprise.

Tackling Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation: Addressing the growing problem of human trafficking through social science-based research. S&T efforts are enabling, informing, and assisting operational partners, decision-makers, and policy makers in reducing the human, social, and economic costs of human trafficking.

Countering Foreign Influence and Disinformation: Addressing the growing problem of foreign influence and disinformation by building and supporting resilience and information-sharing capabilities throughout federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and NGO partners.

In addition, we're piloting, evaluating, adopting, and transferring to our government and NGO partners tools and techniques for local use, to support their development of new products, initiatives, and programs.

S&T activities planned for **Fiscal Year 2021** include:

- Office of TVTP FY20 Grants evaluation
- Evaluating a crisis assessment and referral protocols for a local call center that deals with reported hate crimes.
- Increasing the utility of the Cyber Tip-line, which combats online exploitation of children, by examining the overall process, from reporting to review/analysis with recommendations for improvement
- Countering foreign influence survey
- Countering foreign influence environmental assessment
- Foreign influence and radicalization study
- Evaluation of DHS Blue Campaign to counter human trafficking
- Assessment of privacy concerns in efforts to counter human trafficking
- Evaluation of soft target security and prevention
- Assessment of flood insurance marketplace
- Strategic communication to counter online malicious activity via our Moonshot — Countering Violent Extremism
- Supporting Campbell Collaboration systematic reviews on counter-terrorism evaluation research
- Developing protocols and best practices for reintegration programming for returning spouses and children.