



TSA Canine Requirements and Expansion Program

August 8, 2018

Fiscal Year 2018 Report to Congress



**Homeland
Security**

Transportation Security Administration

Message from the Administrator

August 8, 2018

I am pleased to present the following report, “TSA Canine Requirements and Expansion Program,” prepared by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

This report is submitted pursuant to the Joint Explanatory Statement and House Report 115-239, which accompany the Fiscal Year 2018 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (P.L. 115-141). The report discusses how TSA could increase the throughput of canines significantly, including passenger screening canines, at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland. It also explores the funding, facilities, policies, and other resources necessary to accomplish this goal.



Pursuant to congressional requirements, this report is being provided to the following Members of Congress:

The Honorable Kevin Yoder
Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Jon Tester
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

Inquiries related to this report may be directed to me at (571) 227-2801.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David P. Pekoske". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

David P. Pekoske
Administrator



TSA Canine Requirements and Expansion Program

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I. Legislative Language

This report is submitted pursuant to the Joint Explanatory Statement and House Report 115-239, which accompany the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations Act (P.L. 115-141).

The Joint Explanatory Statement includes the following requirement:

TSA's passenger screening canines play an important role in the effective and efficient screening of passengers through airport checkpoints. There is concern with the current availability of explosives detection canine teams at airport checkpoints and the unmet demand for additional canine teams throughout the U.S. transportation system. While the TSA canine training center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland is effective, it currently lacks the throughput needed to meet the demand for trained and deployed canines. TSA shall submit a report to the Committees, not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, on its canine requirements and a plan for expanding the program. The plan should propose ways to increase the throughput of canines, including passenger and cargo screening canines, at the Lackland location. The plan shall also detail funding and facilities requirements, new policies, and other resources necessary to execute this expansion.

House Report 115-239 states:

The Committee has long supported the use of explosives detection canine teams and has consistently added funding to expand TSA's deployment of these effective assets. The recommendation supports a total of 1,047 canine teams, including the 50 teams added in fiscal year 2017. TSA shall brief the Committees not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act on its canine requirements and plans for expanding the program, including efforts to further increase training capacity at the Canine Training Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland.

II. Background

The mission of the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Canine Training Center (CTC) is to support the TSA mission by providing highly trained Explosives Detection Canine (EDC) and Passenger Screening Canine (PSC) teams for deployment throughout the Nation's transportation system to provide detection capability, visible deterrence, and a timely and mobile response to security threats. The CTC is also responsible for providing up-to-date training on various canine-related matters for personnel who are supporting transportation systems across the country.

This mission supports DHS's Strategic Goal of preventing terrorism and enhancing security by aligning mission priorities, preventing terrorist travel, and enhancing aviation security. This mission also aligns with TSA's first strategic priority of improving security and safeguarding the transportation system, as outlined in TSA's Strategic Plan.

TSA's CTC has adapted and grown to address security enhancements and program growth throughout its history with TSA. CTC has expanded canine coverage capabilities as new threats have emerged in transportation systems other than aviation, to include mass transit, cargo, maritime, and passenger screening. CTC continues to evolve its program to complement TSA's threat-based security approach. CTC has provided 658 canine teams since it was transferred to TSA in 2005. This was accomplished through the expansion of CTC's overall footprint to include 25 facilities that support training, including expanding classroom capacity.

Over the past several years, the TSA canine program experienced challenges with fielding teams during peak growth phases; however, TSA has worked to increase capacity in both training and fielded teams. Past challenges were due to a myriad of contributing factors. Originally, the CTC infrastructure was not supportive of rapid annual growth. The hiring, onboarding, and training of increased staffing often lagged behind the demand for students. Additionally, CTC procured its canines through a partnership with the Department of Defense (DOD), and program expansion requirements often did not allow for timely adjustments to the required 5-year DOD canine procurement forecast. At times, training timelines to procure, prepare, and enter canines into class were not accommodated in setting expectations and scheduling increased fielded canine teams. Particularly with PSC teams, there were several years when operational use changed and drove new research and development, requiring refinement and changes in curricula and training methodologies. These challenges have been reduced or eliminated over the past several years. Additionally, TSA improved its training model by using a projected program attrition rate and improved training schedules as the basis for setting yearly training requirements. CTC has the capacity to increase throughput by 50 additional canine teams in FY 2019, for a total of 350 in that year.

III. Current Status of the Program

TSA currently is funded for 1,047 total canine teams, and 372 of these are designated as PSC. Working with DHS and Congress, TSA hopes to expand the PSC to 500 teams in the near term and 1,000 teams after that, allowing TSA to use canine teams to screen more than an estimated 30 percent of the traveling public. Additionally, TSA currently supports 675 teams led by state and local law enforcement agencies who participate in the National Explosives Detection Canine Training Program (NEDCTP). This program has a waiting list from state and local law enforcement for an additional 128 teams. All of these growth models are predecisional and would require funding approval before implementing.

In the context of CTC, funding has been steady since FY 2017; however, CTC has increased its production by 58 percent over the past 3 years, from 190 canines to 300 canines per year. CTC continues to expand its kennel space and canine training facility infrastructure and again will increase its total output by an additional 17 percent in FY 2019, bringing its capacity to 350 canines per year. The canine allocation between handler attrition, canine replacements, and new teams is scalable and is set each year on the basis of program needs. CTC currently meets program attrition requirements and has capacity remaining to field newly funded teams in a phased approach at the rate of 50 to 60 new student teams annually. Although handler attrition and canine attrition are expected, TSA is looking at ways to reduce handler attrition. For TSA PSC teams, TSA is looking at program enhancements including career progression paths to retain experienced handlers.

CTC infrastructure still is incorporating gains provided in previous appropriations cycles that will support its continued growth potential. Three additional training facilities are under construction, as are three additional kennels. CTC recently sponsored a comprehensive Joint DOD and TSA Canine Campus Area Development Plan to establish the future growth and vision for long-term land use. This plan was adopted and incorporated into the greater Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland land usage plan.

CTC is piloting a new training model with the potential of decreasing training timelines while providing better education to student handlers. The pilot began on May 30, 2018, with a graduation date for the students of August 22. The potential training time savings are realized in the current canine pretraining activities. The potential 8-week reduction in canine pretraining and increase in student handlers' training methodology knowledge should produce more proficient teams and will provide the potential for increased canine production.

To assist industry and increase the use of canines in cargo screening, TSA has made significant progress in its establishment of the Third-Party Canine Cargo (3PK9-C) Program. TSA has hosted several industry engagement sessions, established the program's framework, and has started accepting applications for third-party vendor certification authorities. Private industry will be responsible for procurement, training, certification, and maintenance of the canine teams for this program. CTC has staffed its 3PK9-C unit to provide support and oversight to industry, and to ensure that TSA standards are applied and maintained.

IV. Analysis/Discussion

FY 2018 funding supports 1,047 total canine teams, of which 372 are PSCs. These PSC teams allow TSA to cover peak hours at its top 47 airports out of 440 airports nationwide. CTC is postured to program attrition needs and to field 50 to 60 newly funded student teams annually (EDC and PSC combined, and hands-on field requirements). Future expansion of the Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland campus and its throughput will require more joint project efforts between TSA and DOD. The available land suitable for building will necessitate major roadway and parking renovation, demolition of unusable facilities, and construction of mutual-use training facilities, administrative space, and classrooms to meet the needs of TSA and DOD.

CTC is adaptable to program needs and changing requirements. It has capitalized on continuous improvement and innovation. CTC continues to expand its capability to meet operational needs, and to increase bandwidth in the event that the program requires rapid expansion and/or supported growth in funded teams.

V. Conclusion/DHS Action Plan

TSA's CTC has benefited from past appropriations cycles and has expanded capacity at its Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland facility. CTC has additional venues under construction that will continue to add to its production potential. Current space and staff numbers are sufficient to sustain the program's attrition at the currently funded number of teams while allowing for measured growth of 50 to 60 additional teams per year. CTC experienced the trials of rapid program growth, even before its current staff and infrastructure were in place. Understanding the desire to expand the use of canines, CTC continues to put innovation and planning into its production model to provide capability in response to emerging threats. To this end, CTC and the United States Air Force's 341st Training Squadron (TRS), which is responsible for the DOD Military Working Dog School, have collaborated on a long-term area development plan that provides maximum potential to both programs to accommodate growth at a faster annual rate than currently planned, by integrating requirements and utilizing joint-use facilities. CTC can maximize its capacity for training canines when the following initiatives and objectives from this plan are realized:

- CTC will analyze data from its 100-day training pilot and determine if it justifies change to the current production model.
- CTC will manage infrastructure construction throughout FY 2019 for three new kennels, a feeding center, and three training labs. Each kennel houses 50 canines.
- CTC and the 341st TRS have submitted initial approval processes authorizing future expansion of the Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland canine campus.
- CTC is working jointly with DOD to facilitate required demolition of existing unusable infrastructure.
- CTC will submit staffing and training cost increases commensurate with any program growth above current levels through the normal budget process.
- TSA will work with the 341st TRS and DOD to consider the possibility of a combined joint headquarters facility, which will include classroom space and allow classroom expansion within the current CTC training academy.

CTC will maintain its contract with DOD to meet approximately 65 to 70 percent of TSA's canine procurement requirements. Additionally, TSA anticipates having its own new blanket purchase agreement (BPA) in place by the fall of 2018. The new BPA will increase domestic vendor capabilities by allowing large and small businesses to participate, and by adding a tiered canine procurement strategy that affords TSA the ability to purchase canines with varying levels of training to assist in meeting any future requirements. TSA anticipates adding 12 new U.S.-based vendors with the new BPA.