



## Support for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP)

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### Justification:

The Department of Homeland Security has assessed that faith based institutions are at risk of attack because they are perceived to be vulnerable “soft targets” of opportunity:

- New federal counterterrorism reports warn that the U.S. is facing one of the most challenging threat environments since 9/11, as foreign terrorist organizations exploit the Internet to inspire, enable, or direct homegrown violent extremists to commit terrorist acts against “soft targets” such as places of worship. (Sources: National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) Bulletin, September 14, 2018; National Counterterrorism Strategy, October 4, 2018; September 2019 National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS))
- On August 3, 2016, the National Counterterrorism Center, DHS and FBI reported that since mid-2015, homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) are increasingly favoring softer civilian targets, such as Jewish houses of worship, having judged them to have lower levels of security and as a result of direct encouragement from overseas violent extremists, such as ISIL. According to the assessment, HVEs would likely target softer civilian targets over law-enforcement personnel, military members, and US Government-associated targets. (Sources: NCTC CURRENT Article: 2016-1727, August 3, 2016; New York Times, May 20, 2009)
- **“Most religious facilities are nonprofit. Many have very small budgets that are used to pay for the basic operation of the facility and to provide services to the congregation and surrounding communities. Many do not have the financial resources to implement extensive security measures, especially physical security equipment.”** (Source: DHS, Houses of Worship Security Practices Guide, May 2013)

The NSGP program was designed to support the acquisition and installation of physical target hardening measures to protect against the types of threats DHS’s Office of Infrastructure Protection has identified as of most concern to at-risk nonprofit institutions:

- These include protection against explosive device, arson, active shooter, assassination/kidnapping, chemical/biological agents, and cyber-attacks.
- The program provides for the installation of access controls, barriers, blast-proofing, monitoring and surveillance capability, and cyber security enhancements, preparedness training and emergency operations planning.

## **These concerns are not abstract notions.**

### Illustrations of Threats to Jewish Institutions:

- **Pittsburgh, October 2018:** Pittsburgh, October 2018: A mass shooting occurred at Tree of Life Congregation during morning services. Eleven people were killed, and nine were injured. The suspected gunman Robert Gregory Bowers is said to have yelled “All Jews must die” as he entered the synagogue. This shooting was the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in the history of the United States. Social media accounts believed to belong to Bowers were filled with anti-Jewish slurs and references to anti-Jewish conspiracy theories, including a post by Bowers that “all Jews should die” for helping immigrants at the U.S. border.
- **Aventura, April 2016:** James Gonzalo Medina attempted to bomb the Aventura Turnberry Jewish Center, a synagogue and school, during the Jewish holiday of Passover when large numbers of congregants would be present. According to FBI charging documents, he wanted the attack to “look like it's ISIS here in America” and for the news of the attack to inspire copycat attacks.
- **Kansas City, April 2014:** Frazier Glenn Miller, a neo-Nazi, attacked the Jewish Community Center of Greater Kansas City and the nearby Village Shalom Jewish retirement community. Three people were killed in the shootings, two at the community center and one at the retirement community. The Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City is located in the JCC. As he was led away, Miller made anti-Semitic remarks, according to witnesses.
- **Washington, DC, June 2009:** White supremacist James Wenneker von Brunn entered the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum with a rifle and fatally shot Museum Special Police Officer Stephen Tyrone Johns, before other officers returned fire, wounding von Brunn. The museum was crowded with visiting schoolchildren at the time of the attack. In 2002, federal prosecutors said two white supremacists plotted to blow up the museum with a fertilizer bomb, as was used to blow up a federal building in Oklahoma in 1995
- **New York, May 2009:** Four men from Newburgh, New York were convicted for plotting to blow up a synagogue and Jewish community center in the Bronx. They were arrested after placing three inert bombs each equipped with 30 pounds of C-4 plastic explosives inside cars parked outside the synagogues. The group’s leader, James Cromitie, is reported by the FBI to have said he wanted to join the Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist organization and to “do jihad.”
- **Seattle, July 2006:** Naveed Afzal Haq, a U.S. citizen of Pakistani descent, shot six women at the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington, killing one. One of the wounded was pregnant at the time of the shooting. He gained entry into the building by placing a gun to the head of a child. He is reported to have said that the attack personal statement against Jews.
- **Los Angeles, August 1999:** White supremacist Buford O. Furrow, Jr. walked into the lobby of the North Valley Jewish Community Center and opened fire with a semi-automatic weapon, firing 70 shots into the complex. The gunfire wounded five people: three children, a teenage counselor, and an office worker. Shortly thereafter, Furrow murdered a mail carrier as he fled the scene. He later surrendered to authorities.

- **Sacramento, June 1999:** Arsonists attacked three synagogues, gutting a library and leaving leaflets at two of the houses of worship blaming Jews for the war in Kosovo. The worst of the damage was at 150-year-old Congregation B'nai Israel, possibly the oldest synagogue in the West. The Reform synagogue's library housing tapes and other materials on Jewish history was blackened, its contents destroyed. The fires caused nearly \$1 million in damage.
- **Washington, DC, March, 1977:** Members of the Hanafi movement, a militant black nationalist Muslim group, stormed several buildings during a deadly 3-day siege, including taking over 100 hostages at the headquarters of B'nai B'rith International (a human rights and community service organization). The attack, led by Islamic leader Hamaas Abdul Khaalis, was intended to draw attention to the murder of several of his family members, victims of a conflict between Sunni Muslims and Black Muslims. "Throughout the siege Khaalis denounced the Jewish judge who had presided at the murder trial of his family members. "The Jews control the courts and the press," he repeatedly charged. Additionally, Khaalis had made threats against several Jewish leaders in Washington, D.C. whom he thought were responsible for a conspiracy to kill Malcolm X and all his followers.

Illustrations of Threats to Other Faith-Based Institutions:

- **Victoria, January 2017:** Marq Vincent Perez was convicted of federal arson and hate crimes for burning down the **Victoria Islamic Center**. The informant told authorities Perez "hated" Muslims and had previously broken into the mosque to look for hidden weapons.
- **Charleston, June 2015:** White supremacist Dylann Storm Roof opened fire at **Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church**, killing nine people, including the pastor.
- **Oak Creek, August 2012:** White supremacist Michael Page fatally shot six people and wounded four others at the **Sikh temple in Oak Creek**, Wisconsin. The injured included a responding officer, Lt. Brian Murphy, who was shot fifteen times at close range, including once in the face and once in the back of the head.

The number of known US-based hate groups is growing (exceeding 900). Incidents reported on threats to nonprofit institutions are occurring at unacceptable levels and include: incitement, vandalism, harassment, assault, arson, bombing, shooting and mass shooting.