This publication is presented on behalf of the Faith-Based Security Advisory Council (FBSAC), Building Trust and Partnerships Subcommittee, Chaired by Salam Al-Marayati and Vice-Chaired by Reverend Dr. Leslie Copeland-Tune, to the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Alejandro N. Mayorkas.

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President and Co-Founder  
Muslim Public Affairs Council

Reverend Dr. Leslie Copeland-Tune, Vice Chair  
Chief Operating Officer  
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# BUILDING TRUST AND PARTNERSHIPS SUBCOMMITTEE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The "warrior mindset" in policing refers to the idea that police officers should approach their duties with a mentality of being constantly ready for conflict and using force as necessary to protect themselves and others. This mindset can be cultivated through various factors such as training, policies, and culture within a police agency. While the warrior mindset may not be intentionally created with malice, it can lead to negative consequences such as rewarding forced compliance with the law. In contrast, the "guardian mindset" emphasizes the role of police as protectors and community members. This approach prioritizes community engagement, and awareness to gain voluntary compliance with the law.

- Derrick Crews, Nationally Certified Instructor, International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement

In January 2023, the Secretary tasked the Faith-Based Security Advisory Council (FBSAC) with forming three subcommittees. In response to that tasking, this subcommittee provides the following key findings and recommendations on how the Department can improve its partnerships with diverse communities. The Secretary specifically set the following two taskings:

1. 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
2. How the Department can empower local leaders to mobilize resources to mitigate and respond to threats.

METHODOLOGY

The subcommittee compiled its recommendations over five collaborative group sessions throughout April and May 2023, following a briefing period that extended from March 2023 to May 2023 with federal program administrators, non-governmental organizations, and others. Over the course of the entire 120-day period, the subcommittee met with ten representatives from eight different Department of Homeland Security (DHS) components from Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans, Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL), Office of Intelligence and Analysis, Office of Immigration Statistics, Office of Partnership and Engagement, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The subcommittee also met with non-DHS stakeholders, two private citizens and one local law enforcement official. Based on the input from experts, supplemental research, and the expertise and experience of its members, the subcommittee worked to identify substantive and meaningful recommendations to support and enhance DHS’s partnership building efforts with the faith-based community.
KEY OBSERVATIONS

Consistent themes that emerged from the meetings of the subcommittee included: lack of initiation of relationships with the Department by faith community leaders because of a lack of faith in DHS’s ability and desire to serve their communities; lack of knowledge of DHS, and; lack of accessibility of DHS resources.

Additional themes that emerged were: faith community leaders’ lack of trust in DHS due to lack of transparency and communication from the Department; a need for greater accountability and oversight of DHS, and; inconsistent outreach to faith communities by DHS.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Finding #1: DHS does not commit sufficient resources towards empowering local leaders to mobilize Department resources and to build long-term partnerships with local leaders.

- The hateful environment in the nation is growing. DHS does not adequately address expressions of hate and has not demonstrated a zero-tolerance policy for hate regarding aggressions against faith communities. Faith-based communities lack confidence in DHS’s ability to respond to hate crimes or other incidents. A zero-tolerance policy for hate would help address the trust gap between faith communities and DHS.
- The Department has not communicated its partnership and trust-building goals and objectives, or what it characterizes as an ideal partnership with a faith community, and thus, some faith communities do not see clear objectives or a benefit to having a partnership with DHS.
- DHS has a problem building partnerships with local communities because it does not have enough personnel committed to partnership-building. This has resulted in disengaged and skeptical community leaders.
- DHS’s outreach and partnership work is inconsistent, especially after changes in leadership in the agency. Any progress that is made is lost and communities must start anew after personnel changes, which erodes the trustworthiness of the Department.
- Many faith-based non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are themselves short-staffed and do not have the resources to make repeated attempts at building partnerships. They report not receiving prompt, meaningful communication from DHS when they do attempt to contact the Department.
- The DHS components that are engaged in outreach appear to have different types, levels, and goals of outreach efforts; many components appear to not be engaged in community outreach at all. Those components that do engage in outreach do not demonstrate that they revise their outreach efforts in response to community feedback.

• Recommendation: DHS must commit more resources to empowering local leaders and building partnerships with faith communities through the following actions:
Create a proactive communications plan, similar to its other campaigns such as "If You See Something, Say Something®", educating the public about the kinds of hate incidents the agency investigates and encouraging individuals to report all incidents of hate experienced by members of faith communities. The ongoing campaign should include a dashboard of complaints, after-action-reports about how DHS has responded, and how individuals can contact DHS for further information. These efforts will show active engagement with the community.

Build partnerships and trust with local communities by having more of an active, local presence in those communities in response to incidents or accumulations of incidents. This can be achieved if DHS partners with local and federal law enforcement and agencies such as the Department of Justice’s Community Relations Service, to engage directly and consistently with communities impacted by hate crimes in a way that conveys clear understanding of the problem and a readiness and ability to respond.

Share relevant, detailed information with the community and make it more easily accessible. Two-way communication and information sharing would help to engender trust between DHS and faith communities, especially if there is a faith community where these events regularly occur. This can be achieved through public engagements hosted by DHS with other agencies present. DHS public engagements would demonstrate that the Department takes all events that affect a faith community seriously and DHS’s presence within the community will help to counter past perceptions of indifference to, and absence in, faith communities. The engagements could also serve as opportunities to educate community leaders and their members on how to access DHS resources.

Formalize the Department’s outreach work. This could come in the form of legislation or an order from the Secretary that creates an office that oversees all DHS outreach. The appointee could have a set term, perhaps five years, and create unified, formal, consistent outreach activities for the entire Department. This appointee could adopt written minimum standard operating procedures to ensure prior outreach efforts are not lost to time or a change in staff. The office should regularly collect data, evaluate if DHS outreach efforts are effective, publicly share the results of the evaluations, and adjust the efforts accordingly.

Key Finding #2: Certain faith community stakeholders lack trust in DHS due to prior traumatic interactions with the agency, specifically Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) and ICE.

Many faith and ethnic communities have historically experienced DHS’s law enforcement components as entities to fear. Certain issues dominate cultural awareness of DHS and marginalized communities. Muslim, Arab, Sikh, South Asian and Hindu communities feel that they have had their constitutional rights violated through negative interactions with
DHS through CBP and ICE, surveillance, registering and deportation immediately after 9/11, assumptions that certain communities are prone to extremism, and the use of indicators, such as articles of faith, to show that an individual has been radicalized. Black and Brown communities that bear the disproportionate weight of surveillance, intimidation, and violence inflicted by local and regional law enforcement agencies are unlikely to experience DHS any differently.

- Repair of past harms towards these groups is crucial to building trust and partnerships in the future. Currently, faith communities report a continued loss of trust in DHS enforcement agencies due to the current climate of political scapegoating of immigrants and other minoritized communities.
- DHS must acknowledge faith communities’ perceptions and lived realities with respect to DHS policies and practices and work toward educating them about the Department’s roles and mission. This can be accomplished by collecting and publishing data about negative views towards the Department, using tools such as focus groups and surveys, to help determine whether perceptions about DHS’s work within faith communities accurately reflect what DHS is trying to achieve.
- Faith-based communities report experiencing one-way communication with the Department, where DHS absorbs communications from stakeholders but does not offer a response or provide detailed information. When no information is shared with communities, the void is filled with inaccurate information and conjecture, exacerbating the distrust between DHS and the community.
- Being transparent is one of the best and most important ways to build trust between DHS and faith communities, but the Department does not appear to have a method of effectively disseminating information and statistics about its law enforcement activities.
- Faith-based stakeholders report believing that the information they submit to DHS is used for other purposes than the submitter intended. Despite requests for assurance to the contrary, they receive no assurance that information submitted to programs such as FEMA’s Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) is firewalled from law enforcement or intelligence entities.

**Recommendation:** This subcommittee recommends the Secretary mandate that DHS Headquarters and the specific enforcement agencies embrace more diplomacy, engagement, and transparency to diminish fear of DHS through the following actions:
- Demonstrate the Department’s commitment to transparency by first issuing an unequivocal acknowledgement and condemnation of wrongs committed in the past. This must include distributing a formal admission that those methods were not effective and an explanation on how the Department’s data collection methods have changed and improved. DHS must work with faith-based communities to ensure that going forward, federal policies do not antagonize minority faith communities.
- Acknowledge the reality that bad behavior by one component can and does stain the national perception of all Department components. Trust must be
built across the Department with an awareness that any one component can erode public trust in the whole.

- Create a single website and online portal that provides data on what information the Department collects (immigration, surveillance, etc.) across all components pertaining to faith communities, with whom that information is shared, and how collection of information aligns with DHS’s overall mission and goals. If there is classified information that the Department cannot share, it must explain what the data entails and by what privilege it is withholding the data from the public. DHS should corroborate data collected by its components against data from independent sources, and any data released on the portal must be independently reviewed for accuracy.
  - As the Office of Immigration Statistics transitions into the Office of Homeland Security Statistics, it should be the office to host the website and online portal; this website would serve as the sole conduit and channel for DHS to release publicly reviewable statistics. A model for such a portal is the public-facing dashboard used by the City of Dearborn (MI) Police Department. In this manner, information sharing is viewed by faith communities as a two-way, mutually beneficial, and respectful process.
- Better educate the public about its policies regarding information sharing, which entities have access to the data DHS collects, and whether the information is subject to a public records request by an individual or organization.
- Simplify the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) process, and train faith leaders to better utilize HSIN information so that they can share it with community members specializing in security, such as security personnel at houses of worship.
- Give firm assurances that any interactions it initiates with faith community stakeholders in outreach should not and will not be used for surveillance or data collection, and data should be firewalled from enforcement agencies under DHS like CBP and ICE. Community events where law enforcement is represented (job fairs, static displays, community fairs, etc.), should not be an opportunity to take photographs of participants or attempt to gather intelligence. Opportunities to gain community trust and support should not be used as a pretext for information gathering.

**Key Finding #3:** Faith community stakeholders do not trust DHS due to lack of community oversight and lack of ability to obtain redress.

- It is unclear to faith-based communities which offices, both inside and outside of DHS, allow the community to evaluate DHS and achieve redress if an individual has a grievance against a DHS component, employee, or contractor.
- DHS presents to many faith communities as a large and complex organization and those communities report that DHS does not address or even, in some instances, acknowledge their concerns when they do make complaints or file claims for redress. This lack of responsiveness frustrates communities and causes further distrust.
Faith communities report that because there is no civilian oversight and accountability for DHS, including ways for the community to be engaged in the process, they cannot trust that DHS is going to make behavior corrections and changes when problems are brought to their attention.

**Recommendation:** This subcommittee recommends the Secretary mandate that DHS establish methods of transparent community oversight and redress through the following actions:

- Create a clear and transparent process that disciplines and corrects behaviors of all DHS employees and contractors so that they are held accountable for their actions. DHS must make the result of any correction available to the public. An example of a similar system is used by the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). It addresses trust-building and partnership in the broader community by posting information on officer-involved shootings and disciplinary hearings, etc. This transparency has helped their community outreach efforts to be more effective.
- Enhance the DHS redress process to include a financial compensation aspect, if applicable. Redress should ensure that there is no retaliation or reputation damage to the complainant, or victim-shaming by engaging in practices such as using booking photos of the victim, noting that the victim is undocumented, or reporting them to immigration authorities.
- Investigate having CRCL perform this enhanced redress process. In the immediate future, CRCL must increase its capacity exposure to faith community stakeholders, informing more communities that CRCL exists, and allocating more resources to addressing claims more swiftly, thoroughly, and effectively -- to the satisfaction of complainants.

**Key Finding #4:** Faith community stakeholders lack trust in DHS due to a lack of knowledge of DHS, its mission, and how it operates.

- Many faith community stakeholders report a general lack of knowledge of DHS, which prevents them from understanding the benefit and relevance of forming partnerships with DHS. Faith leaders are not able to understand DHS’s purpose and strategy and thus are not able to explain the purpose and strategy to their constituency.
- Faith communities report attending DHS engagements, but often individuals come away confused about which employee and which component is responsible for which task. When other non-DHS agencies are present in these interactions, faith community stakeholders experience more uncertainty on the distinct roles and responsibilities of each.
- Many faith community stakeholders perceive the Department as a large, monolithic law enforcement and intelligence agency. Because of this perception, DHS is viewed as not wanting to assist individuals, and difficult to access if communities need its services. If DHS wants to build trust with faith community stakeholders, DHS must work to improve this image and reputation in faith-based communities.
Many faith communities have only had contact with DHS in the context of criminal justice, travel, or immigration and thus any attempts by DHS to engage in outreach to faith communities is scrutinized and viewed with suspicion. Even though the Department is made up of many different components, faith communities have experienced DHS as a law enforcement agency that has an “us vs. them” mentality, a stance that leaves a significant amount of American faith communities feeling as though they are in conflict with DHS.

**Recommendation:** DHS must work towards communicating its mission, goals, and operational practices through the following actions:

- Simply and succinctly communicate to faith communities what DHS’s goals and missions are. This could be undertaken through a public awareness campaign with a clear slogan and explanations about: who DHS is; its priorities, missions, and goals, and; how it operates. This messaging must be direct and consistent.
- Further explain which components within DHS perform which functions and how each component’s duties align with the overall DHS priorities. Faith leaders need to understand why each component is needed and when. For example, faith community stakeholders are not clear which DHS components are considered law enforcement and which are not. DHS should connect each component on a visual aid that stakeholders can reference when a particular issue arises.
- Initiate more outreach and interaction with communities prior to communities needing DHS. This may be accomplished by DHS hosting more inter-governmental roundtables and ensuring that all relevant government agencies are represented at the roundtable. The roundtable should clearly discuss which agencies are represented and their roles, how they may be reached, and what stakeholders can expect from them. Any event or training DHS hosts must include speakers from the communities involved.
- Impress upon Department components, leadership, and employees that trust is a byproduct of the work; communities will trust DHS if DHS behaves in a trustworthy manner and acts respectfully. This relationship is based on mutual respect.
- Participate in faith community events such as neighborhood cleanups or recreational activities to allow for DHS representatives to establish relationships with, and learn about, the communities they serve.
- Develop a community relations program for community members such as the FBI Citizens Academy and other similar local law enforcement programs, and teach faith community leaders about the inner workings of DHS and its programs, diminish any fear of DHS, and allow community leaders to participate in partnership building with DHS. Faith leaders could then take DHS’s message out into their communities, creating a force multiplier to help all individuals understand the “why” behind DHS. FEMA already provides similar community disaster relief programs, which could serve as a model.
**Key Finding #5:** A wide range of faith community stakeholders lack trust in DHS due to prior negative interactions with DHS.

- Faith communities have reported that DHS staff appear to lack proper training, especially cultural demystification training. DHS staff display having little or no knowledge of religious articles and dietary needs or prayer practices of the faith communities with which they interact. Employees of the Department also often demonstrate having little or no knowledge of how to have basic interactions with marginalized or minority faith community stakeholders.
- Faith communities have reported multiple incidents of mishandling or discarding migrants’ articles of faith at U.S. travel borders.

**Recommendation:** DHS must utilize more cultural competency in the way they interact with faith communities, particularly components that operate with high visibility such as ICE and CBP, through the following actions:
  - Recruit more personnel who represent the communities they serve, especially in leadership roles. When the Department trains local law enforcement and/or citizens, such trainings must include speakers from the communities served by the officers and citizens receiving the trainings.
  - Conduct a comprehensive and independent audit of its training programs, using external experts to ensure the audit is neutral and nonpolitical.
  - Mandate training in cultural competency to every employee that has contact with the public, particularly CBP and ICE. Training must include how an employee can prevent themselves from being swayed by race-based conspiracy theories or cultural biases when carrying out the duties of their office.
  - Include employee training modules focused on legal issues such as civil rights, religious freedom, and compliance with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act's (RFRA) standards, including sensitivity in handling articles of faith and dietary restrictions.
  - Commit to creating a CBP policy that requires officers and agents to determine—before conducting any search or screening that could infringe migrants' religious-freedom rights—whether individuals they encounter are wearing religious attire and to inform these individuals of their rights to wear and retain it. CBP policy must ensure that any search or screening that involves officers or agents touching, seeking removal of, or confiscating religious garb—whether in the field or at a port of entry, border patrol station, processing or detention facility, checkpoint or anywhere else—complies with RFRA’s strict-scrutiny standard.

**Key Finding #6:** Faith community leaders are not empowered to access DHS resources because of lack of knowledge about, and the format of, those resources.
Faith-based organizations report not receiving feedback after they submit applications for grants, such as the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) and NSGP grants. They do not understand how to improve their chances of receiving a grant in the future, and it is not clear to the general public if the grants are distributed equitably and fairly.

Faith community stakeholders have asserted a lack of transparency, as DHS does not release sufficient information on how DHS allocates resources. The TVTP and NSGP grants are examples where a lack of transparency in terms of the programs are detrimentally impacting the trust of faith communities, and therefore it is becoming more difficult to gain the support of faith communities for these programs.

The public does not understand who is receiving the grants and DHS has not explained why they cannot share more information.

When a faith-based organization contacts the federal government, it is not automatically apprised of the DHS resources available to it. For example, if a faith-based organization is applying for or renewing their IRS non-profit status, it does not automatically receive information on DHS grants or other DHS resources that will assist its community.

Many faith-based organizations serve communities where English is not the primary spoken language. Faith communities report not having sufficient resources available to them in languages that they understand.

Faith communities report that even where resources are available, the resources are overly long, complex, or difficult to understand.

**Recommendation:** DHS must be transparent about resource allocation and make the resources more easily accessible through the following actions:

- Provide clear information on the intent of its resources, such as the NSGP, and provide transparent and current data on how the resources were awarded. The Department must release data on which communities and religious denominations have received the grants, which ones have not, and why. DHS must explain the grant selection process and give faith leaders instruction on how to ensure their stakeholders are receiving grants, such as offering recommendations on how to fill out the applications. This can be achieved by creating a website that releases real-time information and statistics about DHS grant distribution.

- Improve responsiveness to stakeholder questions and release information about their response process. Stakeholders should know how often the Department receives inquiries and how often it responds to stakeholders’ questions.

- Create a process, if one does not already exist, for sharing information with stakeholders when they request it. This process must include responding to the inquiry with an acknowledgement of receipt and inform the requester when a response with the requested information will be forthcoming. The process should have a specific time limit, for at least the initial acknowledgement of receipt, that is no longer than three to five business days. In answering these...
inquiries, DHS could create a triage system based on the communication received, which would dictate which inquiries receive feedback first. If DHS cannot give requested information about grants, it should provide a reason as to why it cannot give the information.

- Regularly review all grants DHS distributes, including grants administered by FEMA, for equity in application and disbursement and that evaluation should be released to the public. The Department must make changes and corrections if a review demonstrates lack of equity.
- Make Department resources more accessible and easier to understand by publishing shorter, less complicated versions of its resources. It is essential that DHS translate the resources into more languages, based on other languages spoken in the United States, and according to prevalence of these languages.
- Work with more agencies in a community-based approach. Once a faith-based NGO contacts the federal government, it should be provided all relevant resources that will assist it in serving its community. For example, when an NGO applies for non-profit status with the IRS, they should be forwarded relevant DHS resources; this can be achieved best by working with other government agencies in tandem to create a searchable clearing house.

CONCLUSION

DHS has invested substantial resources towards building trust and partnership with faith communities. Improving upon those efforts is possible with accountability, education, transparency, and enhanced accessibility. This subcommittee welcomes the opportunity to explore the Key Findings and Recommendations herein more thoroughly. The topics explored in this Report are critical to DHS’s mission and deserve significantly more time and attention. This subcommittee advises Secretary Mayorkas to task the FBSAC, through this subcommittee or another, to expand upon these Recommendations to make them more detailed and substantive.
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.
## APPENDIX 2: SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS AND OTHER WITNESSES

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