
RECOMMENDATIONS

The authors identified several avenues for the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) to pursue to support effective interventions in this area:

■ Continue efforts to **build and sustain consistency in messages and activities**. Many external stakeholders noted the importance of rebuilding trust, and how sustainable and continuous actions and relationships were essential for fostering that trust.

■ Continue to **codify and standardize internal office procedures**—with explosive growth comes a renewed need for new internal institutions to keep all personnel on the same page.

■ More clearly **define the elements of a public health–informed approach** and how they will be applied to violence prevention for CP3 programs and outreach. There are many definitions present in practitioner circles and the academic literature; choosing one and fully exploring its implications will be key for aligning stated CP3 goals with programmatic action.

■ **Invest further in program evaluation.** The research team recognizes that evaluating effectiveness in this area is difficult, but, without standardized evaluation, supporting the impact of CP3 programs will be difficult as well.

■ **Commit to transparency and external communication.** Transparency in actions taken and evidence collected, as well as communication with skeptical audiences, will be key in showing change and growth in CP3 to external actors.
Responding effectively to the potential for individual-level violence poses a major challenge for government. After an incident occurs—whether a school shooting, an incident of workplace violence, or a targeted attack motivated by hate or ideology—the criminal justice system can punish the perpetrators, but that does little for the people injured or killed in the attack or the other damage done. Often, investigation shows that there were warning signs of what was to come, leading to regret that an opportunity to intervene and prevent the incident was lost. But although there is relatively little dispute that perpetrators of violence should be punished, early intervention is controversial because even signs suggesting that someone might do great harm are often not definitive and many actions such people take, although they might be worrisome, are often not illegal. Even positive early intervention brings up broad questions of who should be in charge of intervening, what form intervention should take, to whom it should be applied, and how the intervention will be resourced.

The area in which this controversy has been greatest is government efforts to respond to the risk of ideologically motivated terrorism and violence. In the two decades after the September 11, 2001 (9/11), attacks on the United States, part of many countries’ responses to terrorism was programs designed to intervene early with people at risk of being radicalized to violence. Under the term *countering violent extremism* (CVE), the goal of these efforts was to provide alternatives to criminal justice approaches to violent threats and options that did not require waiting for someone to do something that would necessitate their arrest.

In the United States, the full potential value of CVE efforts as a complement to criminal justice approaches was never realized because of key disconnects between the *intent of CVE programs and the realities of their implementation*. The United States came to CVE much later than many countries, starting nearly a decade after 9/11, and its investments in building real and substantial capacity for non–criminal justice approaches to violence intervention—until recently—were minimal (Jackson et al., 2019). As a result, although the goal might have been to replace action in the criminal justice system with other types of intervention, in practical terms, law enforcement (LE) was often involved in responding to potential threats because alternative options simply were not available. The relatively limited investments in these capabilities also meant that opportunities to evaluate their success were similarly constrained, so evidence for their effectiveness was comparatively thin. Furthermore, although the intent of CVE efforts might have been to respond to potential threats from all ideologies, the post-9/11 reality meant that concerns about threats coming from Islamist-extremist sources, such as al Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), dominated thinking in many efforts, in spite of persistent—although, at the time, less salient—domestic threats.1 Although it might not have been the intent, from the very beginning, this reality singled out and stigmatized American Muslim communities.2 Representatives of these communities cautioned against stigmatizing individual communities while ignoring broader domestic threats; their concerns were validated by subsequent instances of extremist violence, including, at national scale, on January 6, 2021. The disconnect between stated intention and reality

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**Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>September 11, 2001</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAB</td>
<td>community awareness briefing</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</td>
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<tr>
<td>COVID-19</td>
<td>coronavirus disease 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>CP3</td>
<td>Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships</td>
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<td>CVE</td>
<td>countering violent extremism</td>
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<td>DHS</td>
<td>U.S. Department of Homeland Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>FOIA</td>
<td>Freedom of Information Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY</td>
<td>fiscal year</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSOAC</td>
<td>Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>LE</td>
<td>law enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTVTP</td>
<td>Office of Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMI</td>
<td>pointwise mutual information</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLTT</td>
<td>state, local, tribal, and territorial</td>
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stimulated potent opposition to CVE as a concept, and policy debate about these programs—or any potential alternatives—was largely poisoned by differing assumptions about why the disconnects existed.

Against this backdrop, the federal government decided to make significant changes in its approaches in this policy area. As part of that process, researchers from the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC) carried out a substantial assessment of past CVE efforts and developed a menu of potential policy options that could be part of a path forward (Jackson et al., 2019). During that effort, the research team assessed lessons from other fields and, although the challenges associated with CVE were intense, the same types of controversies and concerns exist elsewhere as well, from public health–informed efforts to prevent particular types of violence (e.g., domestic violence, child abuse) to criminal justice initiatives to intervene and provide diversion options for responding to potentially violent people before they ruin their life and the lives of others.

Between 2017 and 2021, several significant changes were made in federal efforts in this area (Figure 1), including renaming of the responsible organization within DHS from the Office for Community Partnerships, founded in 2015, to the Office of Terrorism Prevention Partnerships in 2017, the Office of Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (OTVTP) in 2019, and finally the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) in 2021. At the same time as the series of name changes, DHS’s programs and efforts in this area also changed, including reconstitution and expansion of its grant program supporting local prevention efforts, expansion of staffs around the country to build partnerships and facilitate program development, and a shift to using public health–informed approaches drawn from other violence prevention efforts as the foundation for their programming.

In late 2021, DHS asked HSOAC to examine and characterize the changes that had been made, providing an outside viewpoint of the extent of change and how those changes had responded to the concerns about CVE efforts. Although the 2019 HSOAC report (Jackson et al., 2019) provided a substantial foundation for this effort, the view of this examination was broader, framing the recent policy and program changes in the larger context of the history of CVE in the United States. This report presents the results of that examination. It is based on

- external literature, quasisystematically reviewed
- internal documents, covering a variety of internal and external CP3 documentation,

FIGURE 1
Timeline of Federal Efforts
including that of programs, strategic action plans, terminology, and other efforts4
- interviews (15 internal to CP3 and 11 with external stakeholders)5
- data on personnel numbers, budget, grants, and stakeholder interactions.

We describe the changes made in CP3 and its predecessors, the use of a public health–informed model as the basis for violence intervention prevention, and the changes in government strategic and other documents laying out the intended goals and purposes of such programming then draw on available data to assess the extent to which the CP3’s actual activities and investments have shifted as a result. We conclude with some observations and recommendations on a path forward for DHS in this policy area.

**Expansion and Weathering Coronavirus Disease 2019**

Since 2019, there has been a significant personnel expansion in CP3, with much of the expansion in the area of field operations, employees focused on fostering regional engagement and networks (see Figure 2). Both the expansion and the focus on expanding especially in local efforts are consistent with recommendations from the previous HSOAC work (Jackson et al., 2019). The impacts of the expansion of personnel and budget can be seen in the standardization of messaging, codification of field personnel training, expansion of such efforts as the CP3 digital forums, and the expansion of grants given by CP3. Despite this expansion, there were concerns that CP3 was not yet well known by all relevant external stakeholders.6 This expansion coincided and interacted with the impact of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), which posed significant challenges and had both negative and positive externalities for CP3.

**FIGURE 2**

Number of Full-Time Employees, 2016 to 2022

![Graph showing the number of full-time employees from 2016 to 2022.](image)

Several relevant measures chart the expansion of CP3. Numbers of full-time employees have jumped from hovering around 12 to 16 personnel from 2016 to 2019 to 38 personnel in 2021 and 2022. The majority of the personnel growth is in the number of field personnel, something well aligned with the previous HSOAC work’s recommendation encouraging the federal government to rely further on local and outside organizations (Jackson et al., 2019, p. 249). An external stakeholder noted that it was especially important that the augmentation of the field staff be done with federal employees because this would help continuity and sustainability of engagement and efforts in the field.7

CP3’s overall budget has increased in step with its personnel increases, as highlighted in Figure 3.

This funding is necessary to create and support institutions required to train and support an increasing network of personnel and a wider array of programs, especially during the era of COVID-19.

The funding that CP3 releases in its grant cycles has increased. In 2016 and 2020, CP3’s predecessors offered $10 million in grants. This was then doubled to grant rounds of $20 million each in 2021 and 2022. External stakeholders have noted that the grants are one of CP3’s most-valuable contributions to local groups working to prevent violence; they have also noted the importance of continuity in this funding in order to create sustainable relationships and engagements with funding-seeking groups in violence prevention.8 Despite this enormous growth, both internal and external stakeholders noted the need for additional and continuous resourcing of the CP3 grants to further build and sustain intervention capacity at the local level.9

Beyond the undeniable fact that CP3 has significantly expanded in personnel and budget, this expansion has enabled increases of institutionalization and expansion of services in multiple directions that were not possible previously. Several research, policy, and communication personnel in

![Figure 3: Appropriated Budget for the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships](image-url)
CP3 now focus on defining and standardizing the organization’s terminology, definitions, and strategies. Training, especially for field staff, has become more centralized and regularized; although the training system was still undergoing change as of late 2021, the evolution of training materials shows increasing efficiency and standardization. Additionally, the expansion of the organization has led to engagement efforts in multiple new communities by new field staff. There are also expanded efforts in national-level CP3 programs, such as the Digital Forums on Prevention, which have broadened from a narrow focus on technology companies to themed forums on a broader variety of topics, including education and veteran communities.

Notably, associated with the grant program has been increased work to support the evaluation of funded projects, standardizing evaluation practices, and making evaluation outcomes and metrics clearer for grantees. This is key because both external stakeholders and the previous analyses recognized grant evaluation and assessment as difficult in this area for several reasons, including the low incidence rate of violent extremist action and prevention efforts being nested in broader national prevention efforts, which makes separating out the impacts of particular programs difficult. Both internal and external stakeholders noted that CP3 has clearly invested time and effort to better evaluate and assess its grants. External stakeholders observed that CP3 grants were increasingly rigorous, of higher quality, and more narrowly focused on strategies to prevent violence, communitywide approaches, and multiple types of threats.

There have been growing pains associated with the expansion of CP3—some internal, some external. Internally, multiple staff have been required to play multiple roles simultaneously and balance many competing demands on their time; balancing such tasks as defining terminology, managing other employees, performing engagements with local stakeholders, and creating training material can be difficult.

Additionally, many of these standardization processes and new initiatives are still in progress. Communication is a combination of formal and informal methods. Internally, such topics as definitions and terminology still seem to pass through both ad hoc and more-formalized channels. Externally, knowledge of available resources, such as grants and how to request CP3 outreach (including delivery of the community awareness briefings [CABs], which is a core element of CP3’s outreach-facing program), seem to pass through established social ties. The former leads to challenges speaking “with one voice,” which multiple internal stakeholders noted as an issue that concerned them. The latter leads to concerns about CP3’s profile, especially if the intent is to become a broad-based national effort with CP3 as enabler of local prevention efforts, most especially local prevention efforts from smaller local groups. An external stakeholder noted on this topic, I think they have an uphill battle—[a CP3 employee] wanted to talk about how CP3 is supposed to work—a lot of things there sound good—but I talk to people [and] communities around the country who talk about extremism—no one ever talks about CP3.

CP3 has made efforts to ameliorate this issue, reaching out more to state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments, to the point that the abbreviation SLTT was one of the most-common phrases in its strategic documentation, which indicates the stress that CP3 has put on reaching out, at least rhetorically. But there is still a gap that must be bridged. Such communication and integration challenges are not unexpected in an organization that has grown from a small, largely collocated group, in which less formal methods could still effectively get needed information to all personnel involved, to a much larger and geographically spread organization.

In March 2020, the COVID-19 national emergency was declared. This event at a key point in CP3’s growth had both negative and positive repercussions. With enormous personnel growth, an all-remote working environment made it tough to create a work social network for many new personnel, made it hard to communicate important and sensitive updates and terminology, and made it more difficult to make these new staff members
used in this work, such as those of resilience and countermessaging.

Use of public health approaches to address violence concerns is not new and not a creation of DHS or CP3. Public health and public health–informed approaches to violence prevention have been applied to sexual violence, childhood abuse, gun violence, and other forms of violence as well. However, across the relevant literatures addressing these varied public health approaches to violence prevention, there is still no true consensus on exactly what a public health approach or public health–informed approach to violence entails. This is reflected in a proliferation of different definitions, often with overlapping key concepts, but many with added nuances or additional factors appended in different literatures or policy documents. Many of these definitions appear at their core to evolve from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) definition of the public health approach to violence prevention. This definition offers a four-step process rooted in empirical scientific methods (Dahlberg and Krug, 2002):

1. Define and monitor the problem.
2. Identify risk and protective factors.
3. Develop and test prevention strategies.
4. Ensure widespread adoption.

This is a very broad and process-focused definition, and what risk or protective factors are involved and what prevention strategies are viewed as relevant leave wide latitude for what exactly the implementation of a public health approach would look like in practice.

Many articles or policy papers from outside of DHS and CP3 attempt to offer a generalized definition of a public health approach to violence prevention (see Table 1). The majority of academic articles or policy reports we reviewed dealing with public health approaches to violence (broadly, not just radicalized violence) cited the CDC definition, as discussed above, or the UK Faculty of Public Health, 2016, or World Health Organization, undated, public health framework definition, the latter two of which have been characterized as similar to CDC’s framing (Bhui et al., 2012). These scholars and policy practitioners then take
Influence the definition used—this could indicate a personal preference rather than a coalescing around a particular definition.24

Finally, some of this involves the level of abstraction at which the writers were working; discussion of an applied public health framework for violence prevention might focus on concepts different from those considered in an abstract public health framework for general use.

This lack of consensus in external definitions is echoed by a similar lack of a uniform internal definition across CP3 staff. Internal stakeholders, when asked about public health approaches (out of a total of 11 of interviews that covered this topic), included a variety of overlapping but differentiated keywords:

- Eight interviewees mentioned risk factors or protective factors.
- Five interviewees mentioned ideology- or group identity–agnostic programs or approaches.
- Four interviewees mentioned each of the following:
  - more prevention and less threat assessment focus

### TABLE 1

**Definitions of a Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collecting information on risk or protective factors</td>
<td>Berkell, 2020; Bhui et al., 2012; Butts et al., 2015; Cerdá, Tracy, and Keyes, 2018; Challgren et al., 2016; Emergency Preparedness Research and Evaluation and Practice Program, 2016; Gebo, 2016; Nguyen and Southorn, 2019; Williams and Donnelly, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Included monitoring and evaluation or built-in data collection</td>
<td>Bhui et al., 2012; Cerdá, Tracy, and Keyes, 2018; Eisenman and Flavahan, 2017; Ritter, 2009—but likely in more reports implicitly in the sense many are about evaluation of these programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requiring a wider societal view of the problem or corresponding wider engagement on a societal level, population based, or focused on broader community mobilization</td>
<td>Berkell, 2020; Bhui et al., 2012; Butts et al., 2015; Cerdá, Tracy, and Keyes, 2018; Challgren et al., 2016; Ritter, 2009; Weine, Ellis, et al., 2015a; Williams and Donnelly, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducted by multidisciplinary teams (including, often, health professionals)</td>
<td>Eisenman and Flavahan, 2017; Emergency Preparedness Research and Evaluation and Practice Program, 2016; Weine, Ellis, et al., 2015a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of or direct attempts to include primary, secondary, and tertiary approaches, where those terms reflect different types of interventions responding to potential violence in different ways</td>
<td>Berkell, 2020; Challgren et al., 2016; Gebo, 2016; Nguyen and Southorn, 2019; Shortland, Evans, and Colautti, 2021; Weine, Eisenman, Jackson, et al., 2017</td>
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whole-of-society approaches
involvement of multidisciplinary teams or stakeholders.

Although we do not see a coalescing around a single, uniform definition with a few associated concepts, we see extensive overlap in the concepts that internal CP3 stakeholders attributed to a public health–informed approach to preventing targeted violence and the key concepts that the external literature also linked to this framework.

Despite the lack of a fully agreed-upon definition for the concept of a public health–informed approach to violence prevention, the concept still appears to be popular with external stakeholders. However, concerns were raised about longer-term implications of the shift. Externally, concerns were about use of such an approach strengthening the argument that CP3 should be located in a public health agency, such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, rather than DHS. Internally, concerns were that maintaining the shift in framing would be difficult without CP3 recruiting more staff with public health credentials. Even if one puts these concerns aside, this framing indicates a significant shift in rhetorical context for CP3’s actions. The next two sections focus on how that framing is represented in DHS policy and other documentation around CP3 and its predecessors, as well as whether this rhetorical shift is linked to a corresponding change in CP3 activities.

**New Rhetoric, Changing Intentions**

Given the changes in how internal stakeholders in CP3 frame its programs, as discussed earlier, we looked to the broader body of strategy, policy, and other government documents in this area to characterize how the rhetoric of formal DHS documentation had changed. Although changes in language are not everything—and can be dismissed by critical audiences as “words rather than actions”—how government describes what it is doing is nonetheless important because those words do shape how actions and programs are designed and implemented.

To track the overall rhetorical shifts in public DHS documents, we compared matched documents over time, split into three periods (2010 to 2014, 2015 to 2018, and 2018 to the time of our research). We compared in two ways (keyness and collocation) using RAND-Lex, a RAND-built content analysis software tool. Keyness is a measure of the frequency of terms compared with a default baseline corpus or dictionary of terms; it highlights terms that are over- or underrepresented in the documents. Collocation measures the strength of the relationship between neighboring words—how frequently they appear together. The documents we analyzed included webpages, strategic documents, and associated action plans, such as the 2016 CVE strategy (DHS, 2016) and DHS websites related to CVE. Although we go in depth into these particular analyses, we did additional comparisons on CABs and grant notices of funding opportunities over time. The trends observed in these analyses were similar to those found in the documents we explore in this section.

In the keyness of particular terms over time, there are clear changes throughout the period analyzed in the language that DHS has used to describe its violence prevention activities (see Figure 4). From 2010–2014 to 2015–2017, we see the growth of CVE as a term present in the documents, but otherwise there is significant overlap in the terminology used—violence in 2010–2014 to violent in 2015–2017 and extremism in 2010–2014 and extremist and extremism in 2015–2017. The major shift in rhetorical presentation comes in 2018, when CVE is not present at all and is replaced with new terms, such as targeted, domestic, prevention, and partners—although some terms, such as violence, do carry over. The lack of any form of CVE when compared with a baseline document not focused on violence prevention does capture success in unifying these documents into one voice and standardized terminology.

A similar but clearer trend is observed in the collocation analysis (Figures 5 and 6).

In examining the ten terms most frequently collocated with three-word phrases, we removed...
any phrases that closely duplicated each other (such as targeted violence preventing and targeted violence prevention). The continuity from 2010–2014 to 2015–2017 was also consistent in the collocation analysis, so the research team chose to combine the two periods for simplicity. This makes the shift from 2010–2018 to 2018 to the time of our research clearer; this collocation analysis highlights the complete disappearance of CVE, radicalization, and violent extremism from key policy documents and the replacement of these terms with targeted violence and more-conceptual language. Additionally, although it does not appear in the figures, in 2010–2017, local law enforcement appeared in the ten most-collocated three-word phrases and disappeared as well in the period that began in 2018.

Overall, this analysis reveals a quick, essentially complete shift from CVE and related terms toward targeted violence prevention—the words that appear with this shift also indicate a shift from discussion of local law enforcement partners toward socialization of new terms, such as targeted violence (note the inclusion of concept and definition in that set of most-collocated terms). There is an additional focus on drivers, which reflects the further upstream approach to violence prevention that CP3 has tried to adopt in more-recent years. It is surprising that there is little direct discussion of public health, and the public health framing, although this could be due to a lack of related three-word public health–related terms.

Interviews added further nuance to these findings. Although it does not appear in our broader content analysis because targeted identity terms did not appear as frequently, or as frequently collocated, in any of our three periods, multiple internal interviews indicated that the office has shifted toward less “targeted” violence prevention, focusing more on preventing violence generally. The organization saw first an expansion from jihadism and foreign terrorism to then include domestic terrorism, and then a shift further to also include nonideological “targeted violence”—this shift is evidenced in the content of the CABs, which became less focused on particular ideological identities over time. External stakeholders said that they appreciated DHS’s rhetorical shift toward a broader view of extremism but expressed that it was overdue and that there was a need for greater emphasis on threats posed to communities of color by both bias crime and racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism.

In the next section, we discuss whether this shift toward ideology-agnostic approaches to engagement are captured in CP3 actions and are not merely rhetoric.
FIGURE 5
Collocation of Terms, 2010 to 2017

NOTE: The figure illustrates the ten terms determined to appear most frequently together, with frequency measured as pointwise mutual information (PMI). The higher the PMI score, the likelier the terms are to be collocated. The figure excludes five words that were also among the ten highest-PMI terms but were considered grammatical bridges or connectors: is (PMI of 9.6), out and about (PMI of 10.13 for each), has (PMI of 10.95), and at (PMI of 11.95).

Changes in Activities Reflecting Changes in Framing

As we looked at the transition between words and actions, we found real changes in what CP3 has been doing—although some appeared to be in their early stages, and progress has potentially slowed as a result of COVID-19. Our analysis is based on available data on CP3’s two central levers to strengthen local prevention capacity and capability: stakeholder outreach and grant funding.

Expansion to New Stakeholders and Indications of a Shift Away from Criminal Justice– and Security-Focused Entities

Given CP3’s role as a convener of local organizations and facilitator of building local prevention capabilities, a shift in the types of stakeholders with which CP3 is interacting over time would support that there had been a real shift in priorities and activities. Internal stakeholders offered anecdotal, but strong, evidence of expansion to new stakeholders. Three major examples came up
in our interviews: (1) the already-discussed shift in rhetoric toward a whole-of-government or whole-of-society approach, (2) the clear shift in the digital forum themes from a closed focus on technology companies to a variety of themed groups, and (3) expansion in the groups included in roundtables and seminars that we observed, such as CDC and the Southern Poverty Law Center. Although all these shifts indicate a change in focus, we conducted additional quantitative analysis to further analyze the question of stakeholder shifts, discussed throughout this section.

Available data on stakeholder contacts support these conclusions. Since early 2020, CP3 has implemented a contact management system to help manage its activities as a distributed organization with field staff across the country. We drew on data captured by that system to examine the organizations with whom CP3 staff were interacting and looked for changes over time. In the system, its users categorize each contact with the sector to which it relates, reflecting a combination of factors including the topic of the meeting and the organizations involved. We examined contacts at the sectoral level: When the CP3 system used more-detailed categories, we aggregated them into top level sectors (e.g., higher education groups, homeschooling groups, school boards, and school security staff and others were all combined into an education-sector category). Because both

NOTE: The figure excludes three words that were also among the ten highest-PMI terms but were considered grammatical bridges or connectors: one (PMI of 8.3), both (PMI of 9.33), and may (PMI of 10.07).
2020 and 2022 data cover only parts of those years because of when the system was put in place and when this analysis was completed,\textsuperscript{35} the percentage of the total contacts in each period that involved each sector are shown to illustrate shifts in emphasis among sectors. Percentages add to more than 100 percent because multiple sectors can be represented in a single contact,\textsuperscript{36} but the percentages provide a measure of the intensity of CP3’s focus in each area during each period.

Across the sectors of all contacts (Figure 7) during each period, the trends show large increases early in 2022 in emphasis on contacts with education and technology and innovation stakeholders, a gradual though less dramatic increase in public health–sector outreach (which interviewees noted was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which occupied many public health stakeholders), and a decrease in criminal justice– and homeland security–related contacts into the first quarter of 2022.\textsuperscript{37}

Although the core of CP3’s mission to support the development of local prevention frameworks is focused at the state, local, and community levels, given that CP3 is an organization within the federal government, its staff are in frequent contact and consultation with other parts of the federal government and, in some cases, representatives from foreign governments. Although such contacts are part of the role of such entities, they provide less insight into CP3’s activities than outreach and interaction with others would because we would expect these to be mostly unchanged by the changes in how CP3 is framing its programs. As a result, we also examined contacts over time excluding federal and international entities.\textsuperscript{38} Figure 8

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure7.png}
\caption{Percentage of All Contacts in Each Sector, by Year}
\end{figure}

NOTE: In some cases, categories that represented very small portions of CP3 activity (corrections, funding groups, military, and industry) were dropped from analysis and presentation.
holders, we identified the first meeting for each stakeholder in the data set and dropped all subsequent meetings with that same stakeholder. In each quarter, we calculated a similar distribution of initial contacts, as shown in Figures 7 and 8. The goal in doing so was a window into how outreach and collaboration activities might be shifting and a leading indicator for future activity. Maintaining the lens on CP3’s state, local, and community activities, Figure 9 shows the distribution of all nonfederal, noninternational new contacts. The observed trends were similar, although, in some cases, somewhat stronger, than those seen when all contacts were included. The focus on education is even more pronounced in this tabulation, and—in the data for the first quarter of 2022—the percentage of all initial contacts that were public health–related was higher than ones focused on criminal justice or homeland security.

shows that breakdown of contacts in different sectors in the same period shown in Figure 7. Without federal or international contacts, the increase in the percentage of contacts that are related to public health is more pronounced, and the decrease in the emphasis on criminal justice and homeland security is somewhat flatter. There is also a decrease in the proportion of contacts that focused on civic and faith organizations, which is consistent with moving to a more ideologically neutral approach and away from specific religious communities. The early-2022 increase in the proportion of contacts that were related to education (driven by CP3 activities focused on school violence concerns) is even more dramatic.

Although looking at all stakeholders with which CP3 is interacting provides one view of ongoing activities, in an effort to get a clearer picture of CP3’s emphasis in seeking out new stakeholders, we identified the first meeting for each stakeholder in the data set and dropped all subsequent meetings with that same stakeholder. In each quarter, we calculated a similar distribution of initial contacts, as shown in Figures 7 and 8. The goal in doing so was a window into how outreach and collaboration activities might be shifting and a leading indicator for future activity. Maintaining the lens on CP3’s state, local, and community activities, Figure 9 shows the distribution of all nonfederal, noninternational new contacts. The observed trends were similar, although, in some cases, somewhat stronger, than those seen when all contacts were included. The focus on education is even more pronounced in this tabulation, and—in the data for the first quarter of 2022—the percentage of all initial contacts that were public health–related was higher than ones focused on criminal justice or homeland security.
Shifts in the Sectors and Types of Projects Supported by Grant Programs

Other than outreach and education efforts to stimulate entirely local efforts to develop intervention capacity, CP3’s main tool for pursuing its mission is its grant programs. Although funding to those programs has increased substantially and rapidly since 2019 (as the FY 2016 grant program was closing out), total funding for these programs remains modest compared with the investments made by other countries (Jackson et al., 2019)—comparing U.S. funding to that from other countries not just in absolute terms but relative to populations and to levels of terrorist activity. Direct grants are the mechanism through which CP3 can directly contribute to building intervention capacity nationally.

Furthermore, federal grants aimed at building local capacity were a focal point of critics of CVE over the years, including sufficiently focused action that some grant recipients halted grant-funded efforts as a result of the opposition. As a result, the portfolio of work funded under the grant program is an important measure of whether activity has changed along with changes in rhetoric and policy.

Figures 10 and 11 show significant shifts in the types of organizations that were primary grant awardees—and therefore in the most central position to shape uses of the funding—have shifted in the three years of grantmaking. Figure 10 shows the percentages of the awards given to performers in each sector, while Figure 11 shows the percentage distribution of the funds awarded. Representing both as percentages addresses the fact that different total numbers of awards and the total pool of grant resources differed year to year.
FIGURE 10
Percentage of Awards Made in Each Sector, by Primary Grant Recipient, by Fiscal Year Grant Program


FIGURE 11
Percentage of Grant Funding Given to Each Sector, by Primary Grant Recipient, by Fiscal Year Grant Program

Each figure shows a substantial change in the focus of the grant portfolio, including the following:

- increases in awards and funding to community organizations
- a decrease for religious and cultural organizations, which is consistent with movement away from projects focusing on specific ideologies
- an increase in support for projects being done by research and policy organizations (although some such projects are intervention capacity-building efforts managed by universities and others)
- a large decrease—starting in 2020 but continuing in 2021—in projects managed by LE and public safety organizations.

In addition to examining the shifts in types of organizations serving as primary grantees for the grants in the three fiscal years, we examined available information on the grants to determine

- the nature of other core partners (other organizations that were mentioned as central in managing and executing the grant project): In this first analysis, we looked specifically at the role of LE and criminal justice organizations that might be centrally involved in grants but not the primary grantees because the scope and reasons for LE in CVE programs was a central point of concern for entities that were critical of these initiatives.
- the focus of the program each grant was putting into place. In this second analysis, the goal was to assess each grant’s ideological focus, given concerns that CVE had focused disproportionately on American Muslim communities and the intent of a public health–informed approach to shift to earlier-stage, less ideologically specific efforts. In our interviews, multiple external stakeholders cited CP3’s shift toward a more diverse portfolio of funded grants, particularly programs related to mental health and multiple risk factors, and its increasing emphasis on identity-agnostic initiatives.39

Given those observations, we sought to assess the scope of those trends based on data from the grants themselves.

Our examination of the three FY grant portfolios does support the views of our interviewees. Beyond the substantial drops in the numbers of LE, public safety, and legal or judicial primary grantees, the fraction of the grants with LE centrally involved has fallen in the three years. In FY 2016, 58 percent of the grants had core LE, criminal justice, or public safety involvement. In 2020, that dropped slightly, to 55 percent; in 2021, it dropped more substantially, to 41 percent.

The shift in ideological focus of supported projects has been even more substantial. In 2016, two-thirds of the grants focused on Islamist extremism specifically, with most of the remaining third of the projects responding to sources of extremist violence in a more general way. In 2020 and 2021, most projects focused either on domestic sources of terrorism (including white supremacism and racially and ethnically motivated violence) or projects that did not specify any ideological focus or were responding to targeted and extremist violence broadly. In 2020, more than two-thirds of projects were broadly or non–ideologically focused, while approximately 28 percent focused on domestic extremism. In 2021, the split was more even, with 45 percent being projects centering broadly on targeted violence and 46 percent focused on domestic extremism.40

We were unable to definitively characterize two projects in the 2020 grant portfolio and several of the projects included in the 2021 grant portfolio based on available information. Our analysis was based on project narratives and application packages of funded projects released by DHS under the auspices of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. § 552). As a result, before information is released, applicants have the right to request that specific information be concealed under several exemptions laid out in the act. From 2016 to 2021, there has been a trend of increasing deletion of

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39. Each figure shows a substantial change in
the focus of the grant portfolio, including the following:

- increases in awards and funding to community organizations
- a decrease for religious and cultural organizations, which is consistent with movement away from projects focusing on specific ideologies
- an increase in support for projects being done by research and policy organizations (although some such projects are intervention capacity-building efforts managed by universities and others)
- a large decrease—starting in 2020 but continuing in 2021—in projects managed by LE and public safety organizations.

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material from released grant applications utilizing various exemptions to FOIA:

- In 2016, redactions of grant applications were limited and focused almost solely on the names and contact information of performers or grantee financial information. In our review, we could not find any information from the substantive descriptions of the projects themselves that was concealed.
- In 2020, there were more-substantial redactions of staff information (e.g., removal of the resumes submitted documenting the expertise of key performers), one grant had substantive portions of its project description redacted under the FOIA exemption allowing removal of “trade secrets” or commercial information, and, in one grant, the deletions cited the exemption covering records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, but only to the extent that the production of such law enforcement records or information . . . (E) would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law. (5 U.S.C. § 552[b][7][D–E])
- In 2021, seven of 37 grants had redactions of material in the substantive description of the project, in some cases making it difficult for us to fully assess what those projects were intended to do. In most cases, those redactions were based on the trade-secret exemption to FOIA, but, in two cases, the deletions cited the exemption covering LE techniques and procedures.

Given that a central driver of the opposition to CVE efforts was the belief that the programs were disguised LE surveillance activities, it is difficult to envision a more potent threat to the credibility of these efforts than performers arguing that information should not be released because it described “techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations.” More broadly, however, the increase in the number of grantees hiding details about their activities for any reason is concerning, given the importance of transparency in building trust in current efforts.

What information in a grant application an applicant asks to redact and the reasons chosen to justify its removal are not under CP3’s control. However, although concealment might serve the private interests of a funded organization, there could be a more substantial, longer-term price of doing so. Even now, there is a “public blind spot” around the activities of a significant subset of the 2021 CP3 grantees. If the number of requests to conceal substantive elements of grant applications continues to increase, it could soon become impossible for the public to functionally understand the activities supported by the grant portfolio. Interviewees who had been skeptical of CVE efforts in the past flagged the crucial importance of having trusted and credible information about DHS-funded activities performed by grantees. Performing organizations’ private interests preventing DHS from being transparent could jeopardize the longer-term success of DHS’s effort to strengthen the national intervention capability.

**Considering the Shifts in the Context of Past Critiques of Efforts to Counter Violent Extremism**

CP3 and its previous iterations have faced significant critique for their past actions, and CP3 is taking steps to be responsive to many of those concerns. According to several critical sources, prominent recommendations included

- shifting away from a focus on particular identities (Brennan Center for Justice, 2019; Schanzer and Eyerman, 2019)
- less focus on LE (Schanzer and Eyerman, 2019)
- promoting local groups rather than federal efforts (Jackson et al., 2019; Schanzer and Eyerman, 2019)
Recommendations for CP3 have included shifting away from a focus on particular identities; less focus on law enforcement; promoting local groups rather than federal efforts; increasing funding and staffing to strengthen local connection; and improving data on capacity, evaluation, and assessment.

- increasing funding and staffing to strengthen local connection (Jackson et al., 2019)
- improving data on capacity, evaluation, and assessment (Jackson et al., 2019).

Many of CP3’s efforts to change show real attempts to align itself more closely with these recommendations, although, in many areas, actual evidence of effectiveness still has yet to be revealed.

LE is an important partner in preventing terrorist or extremist activity. However, for CP3, many critics indicated a desire for less focus on prevention programs targeting particular identities and on extensive involvement of LE. Although further evidence is required, both rhetorically and in the stakeholders engaged with and grants distributed, CP3 appears to be refocusing, still engaging with long-term LE partners while reaching out to new partners in education and health. Multiple internal stakeholders stressed the ideology-agnostic approach to violence prevention up until the present, and those who received grants from CP3 shifted extensively away from focusing on American Muslim groups and (to a lesser but still significant extent) show continued engagement with LE but increased engagement with other groups. Although this shows rhetorical and programmatic progress, external stakeholders expressed that many in the civil rights community and civic leaders in stigmatized communities remain skeptical about both DHS and CP3.

Some said that they were simply not convinced that any real change had occurred and that current efforts were simply “CVE under another name.” One external stakeholder suggested that community leaders with whom they interacted remained concerned that DHS unfairly differentiates between violence perpetrated by white supremacist and Islamist extremists. Given the history of CVE efforts in the United States, it is unsurprising that there would be skepticism in communities that have been significantly affected by past programs. Reestablishing trust in such communities will be difficult. Doing so puts a premium on CP3 remaining sufficiently and credibly transparent about its efforts and programs that members of civil society groups and members of all communities believe they have enough information to assess and reach their own conclusions about the value, appropriateness, and legitimacy of DHS’s violence prevention efforts.

Critics have recommended that CP3’s goal should be promoting the efforts of local groups rather than federally led efforts. Internal interviews strongly reflect this approach and a framing of CP3’s role being to make connections between different groups and between groups and resources that might benefit them at both the federal and local levels. Some external stakeholders said that they recognized this shift, and some did not. And although there have been increases in resources allocated to CP3’s grant programs, the reality
remains that even tens of millions of dollars is a relatively small investment in capacity for a country the size of the United States: At such funding levels, national-level success currently depends on that investment being leveraged and magnified by local groups rather than being solely dependent on the effect of direct grant funding.

Increasing funding and staffing is a clear-cut answer. Past critiques suggested more grant funding and more personnel, especially in the field, to enable DHS and the rest of the federal government to begin to credibly invest in violence prevention efforts. As discussed earlier in this report, grant funding and field personnel have increased.

Increasing the amount of data, especially evaluation data, was suggested in Jackson et al., 2019, and CP3's grant department is putting clear effort into increasing evaluation, especially standardized evaluation, of grants selected for funding. As an external stakeholder said,

For a long time [. . .] they weren't trying, [they were] throwing pickles at a wall but didn't know which would stick and why. They're doing a much better job at what is effective in implementing programs, what the outcomes are. I have to fill out a progress report; it's a pain, but it has been necessary for a long time.46

As highlighted in this quote, external stakeholders said that they recognized that increased evaluation was a good thing, but internal stakeholders and multiple external stakeholders also noted the tensions with this (i.e., concerns about how increased evaluation could exclude key smaller local community-based organizations that could be key in building effective nongovernmental capacity for intervention in particular).47 These are organizations that might be unable to bear the increased burden of evaluation or increased grant requirements more broadly.

Overall, these changes reflect a turning of the ship, an effort to realign the organization based on some of the critiques that have been presented to it. Although there is still room for growth and significant evidence that needs to be brought to light from these efforts, such as increasing evaluation, CP3 as an organization appears responsive to critiques from external stakeholders.

### Concluding Observations

As the overall framing of DHS efforts focusing on violence prevention have shifted from CVE to public health–informed approaches to violence prevention, there has been real change in both the government's intentions in this area (reflected in the rhetoric of policy and strategic documents) and the reality of the programs being implemented and how they are aligned with this intent. Those changes are, however, still a work in progress in important respects. Although the pace of some change has been very rapid, other efforts were slowed by COVID-19, and changes in some parts of CP3's activities are dependent on others—most significantly, the choices of potential grantees and the types of activities and programs they seek to implement with federal support. And more growing pains associated with going from a small group of staff focused on this mission area to a large and geographically spread CP3 are almost certainly still ahead, and that transformation represents a crucial time when the foundation is being laid for the national effort to build alternative approaches to violence prevention going forward.

Building trust in communities and with organizations that were critics of CVE is also in its early stages. Among our interviewees, some expressed significant optimism about the shifts that had occurred, but others were skeptical. Building legitimacy and trust with still-critical audiences will be a challenge and requires continued efforts to ensure transparency of CP3 and associated activities. Whether such communities and groups eventually are persuaded is outside CP3's control, beyond providing sufficient and credible information on activities and programming for them to assess in light of their concerns. Multiple interviewees reflected that the fact that violence prevention efforts have been cast in starkly political terms at times poses a real challenge for building but also, more importantly, sustaining trust and legitimacy of these efforts and that finding ways to shield
intervention efforts from such pressures should be a long-term goal.

In the near term, CP3’s program already reflects the core components responding to many of the past critiques of DHS programs and federal programs more broadly:

- efforts to build and sustain consistency in messages and activities
- efforts to more clearly define the elements of a public health-informed approach to violence prevention for CP3 programs and outreach
- investments in program evaluation
- commitment to transparency and external communication.

Across internal and external stakeholders with whom we spoke, several noted progress but flagged many of these efforts as areas in which further improvement was needed. With continued efforts to do so, over time, these components can ideally build credibility and trust among both those stakeholders and others who remain concerned about the effects that violence prevention efforts can have at the individual and community levels. From our research and interviews during this study, there are opportunities to strengthen activity in each of these areas.

**Consistency**, both in internal voices and in external presence, remains important. Inconsistencies now reflect the challenge of speaking with one voice during rapid growth and the obstacles posed by COVID-19. This research does not suggest an urgent problem here but rather the need for continuation of current efforts to unify internal staff around terminology and concepts. The goal need not be a rote definition that every staff member can regurgitate but rather the ability to communicate the same key concepts in broad strokes to internal and external stakeholders. This need to strive to further define concepts in the field of violence prevention is not singular to CP3 but rather echoes issues that external actors in violence prevention also experience more broadly around shifting terminology and what is included or excluded from violence prevention in different definitions. The need for external consistency is the need for CP3 to remain in a steady state, as much as possible, so that external stakeholders can come to rely on and trust it. This was present in external stakeholder interviews on multiple fronts, including the importance of full-time federal employees in the field as points of continuity in ongoing relationships, as well as the importance of regular grant cycles to spread awareness of CP3 and sustainability of its funded programs.

**Investment in internal management and institutions** will be key for office cohesion moving forward. CP3 has had enormous growth in the past few years and is currently in a transition state that requires creating an office culture in a challenging scenario of continued growth, COVID-19 effects, and a large amount of (necessarily) geographically separated personnel. CP3 has already taken steps to address new internal management needs by working on and updating its training system. However, we recommend that it continue to focus on its onboarding structure and, after onboarding, to make more efforts to encourage employee engagement and a sense of belonging. Partnership for Public Service, a nonpartisan organization focused on improving the federal government at the workforce level, has stressed the importance of “robust onboarding programs, mentorship programs, professional development opportunities and cross-agency or government collaboration initiatives” (Partnership for Public Service, 2021, p. 7) for the federal workforce. Internal stakeholders we interviewed all expressed excitement to be in their jobs and that their work was important, but several noted having struggled to connect cohesively with the office and other employees, especially with the challenges of COVID-19.

The shift in approach from previous CVE initiatives and a broader, **public health-informed approach** has made significant progress, but the fact that there is no broad consensus—inside or outside government—about specifically what such an approach entails is an obstacle. Significant changes have been made—in both rhetoric and activity—from past CVE-framed efforts to today that reflect elements highlighted in public health literatures. Fewer funded grants are focused on specific ideologies and more are broadly focused
and some who have many protective factors will. Although some of the very late-stage indicators for violence are more definitive (e.g., surveilling potential targets and acquiring weapons), not all are—and none of the early-stage risk factors is. This poses a communication challenge because programs must be shaped to be responsive to risk factors or strengthen protective factors, but opponents of these programs have argued that risk factors are stigmatizing (i.e., suggesting that anyone from an affected community is potentially violent) (Brennan Center for Justice, 2019).

This is not a problem only for violence prevention efforts: Appropriately communicating about risk factors to nonspecialist populations has been a challenge in the medical and other fields for decades, with no clear answer for how to address it. Nonetheless, developing approaches to do so is important because interventions to address risk factors (which can include everything from building mental health system capacity or providing counseling to help people at risk maintain stable employment) are valuable for reasons well beyond their potential to reduce violence risk, building broad-based consensus around their implementation is important. Furthermore, although it might seem tempting to discuss risk factors only in specialist audiences in an effort to sidestep the difficulty of communicating about them more broadly, having different messages for policymakers and the public could be a fraught strategy. One of the key arguments in opposition to CVE efforts was that their true goals differed from how they were presented to the public. Discussing parts of the program with only certain audiences—however well-intentioned the practice—risks reinvigorating similar objections to public health–informed efforts.

Continued investment in evaluation is key to providing a strong evidence base for CP3’s efforts in the future. Current efforts to evaluate grant-funded programs and begin to assemble supported best practices are very important in spite of the well-understood difficulty of evaluating prevention efforts for low-base-rate violent incidents. In our discussions, external stakeholders expressed wanting even more focus on grants and grant
evaluation. One external stakeholder specifically argued for funding interventions with evaluation in mind—that is, fund grant programs with narrowly scoped and well-defined programs; those that included experimental designs, implementation and process evaluation metrics, and other measurable outcomes; those that utilized a theory of change or evaluation; and those that described strategies for communicating success. Investment in evaluation is also a path to addressing another concern raised by one interviewee, that public health approaches require planning for and maintaining stakeholder buy-in and ensuring high implementation fidelity.

There is a tension between the need for evaluation and other key goals—including involving a broad cross-section of nongovernmental and service-providing organizations in developing prevention capacity. That decentralization is key both to ensure that organizations are available to meet a wide variety of intervention needs and to make prevention a local effort rather than something built from the top down. Evaluation and the need to collect data to support it can be a burden on such local organizations, many of which can lack the capacity of larger organizations to balance implementation and more in-depth evaluation activities. CP3 is already making efforts to bear some of the costs of evaluation and looking for other innovative methods to balance evaluation with capacity-building, including beginning to develop a set of proven programs in which the goal of grants is expansion of capacity rather than testing and assessment of new approaches. There are other models that could also support broadening of the pool of prevention providers and evaluation needs. In other sectors—including criminal justice and public health preparedness—grants supporting the development of capacity have been paired either with funded support centers or with external technical assistance providers to help awardees as they implement their programs. Implementation assistance can support new providers in putting solid programs in place; simultaneously, the assistance provider can collect data that support evaluation of the grants’ effectiveness in building capacity. An example of this model was CDC’s Cities Readiness Initiative, which was designed to build capacity to respond to public health disasters. Information collected as a result of technical assistance that was part of that program later supported a comprehensive evaluation of the program’s success in building that capacity (see Willis et al., 2009, and Nelson et al., 2012).

Finally, transparency and communication will be key for CP3 moving forward. Although CP3 has, as we argued in the previous section, set itself on a path that answers some of the major critiques that external stakeholders have levied against it, communication with skeptical audiences will be key in showing external actors that CP3 and its activities have changed and grown. Such stakeholder groups might not be aware of CP3’s most-recent activities, funded grants, and areas of focus. In our interviews, some skeptical stakeholders indicated that they had intentionally avoided CP3, given their previous concerns about CVE programs and activities. External stakeholders indicated wanting more transparency in several areas; one suggested being more transparent about the problems local communities are facing in violence prevention and how CP3 can be helpful. Another requested increased transparency and communication around evaluation and its resourcing. One external stakeholder suggested developing communities of practice by convening grantees and leaders of similar programs to facilitate information exchange and peer learning. Two others suggested being more transparent about the problems local communities are facing in violence prevention and how CP3 can be helpful. Another requested increased transparency and communication around evaluation and its resourcing. Given the variety of areas raised in which external audiences wanted to know more about what CP3 was doing, ensuring that information is readily available to them must be an enduring goal.

Although critical audiences often fault the government for lack of transparency, our examination of publicly releasable information on CP3’s grant portfolio revealed an unexpected threat to being open about violence prevention efforts: grant recipients’ requests to hide key details about their projects. For the current grants affected by this, we recommend that CP3 ask current grantees to reconsider their requests for concealment to make
it possible to be more forthcoming with the public about their projects. For the future, we recommend that CP3 include consideration of the eventual releasability of grant materials as it makes funding decisions. Transparency in the activities within the grant portfolio is a necessity for maintaining the legitimacy of programs to reduce violence going forward. If applicants include information in the substantive description of their initiatives that they will require be hidden if the project is funded, that information should be identified at the time of the proposal—and its presence should result in lower priority for funding than a promising project that is committed to full transparency.

Past efforts in violence prevention have drawn criticism and been controversial, but CP3 appears—rhetorically and in practice—to be attempting to align itself further with a public health–informed approach to violence prevention and to respond to the major critiques of its work. Evidence of efficacy and of change is still very necessary to confirm this realignment but could take time to emerge. Many of the suggestions we make in this report are to continue to invest—in consistency, sustainable relationships, transparency with external stakeholders, and efforts to evaluate its work.

Appendix. Methods: Content Analysis/Quasisystematic Literature Review

The content analysis of DHS documentation was a comparison of matched documents over time, split into three periods (2010 to 2014, 2015 to 2018, and 2018 to the time of our analysis). All documents were compared in two ways (keyness and collocation) using RAND-Lex, a RAND-built content analysis software tool. Further information on RAND-Lex is available in Irving, 2017.

- Keyness is the frequency of terms compared with that in a default baseline document—in this case, the Freiburg–Brown Corpus of American English (Mair, undated).

- Collocation measures the strength of relationships between neighboring words, and this analysis focused on three-word phrases.

Documents included webpages, strategic documents, and associated action plans. All documents included in this content analysis were the following:

- the central website of the effort, whatever it was called at the time, from 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020, and 2021
- “The Department of Homeland Security’s Approach to Countering Violent Extremism” (DHS, undated)
- “Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States” (Executive Office of the President, 2011a)
- “Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States” (Executive Office of the President, 2011b)
- “Strategic Implementation Plan for Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States” (Executive Office of the President, 2016)
- Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence (DHS, 2019)

The seed set used for the quasisystematic literature review conducted in this report included the documents identified in Table 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Civil Liberties Union</td>
<td>“What Is Wrong with the Government’s ‘Countering Violent Extremism’ Programs”</td>
<td>American Civil Liberties Union, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression</td>
<td>“Addressing Violent Extremism as Public Health Policy and Practice”</td>
<td>Weine, Eisenman, Kinsler, et al., 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School</td>
<td>“Beyond CVE: Evolving U.S. Countering Violent Extremism Policy to Prevent the Growing Threat of Domestic Terrorism”</td>
<td>Guittard, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brennan Center for Justice</td>
<td>Countering Violent Extremism</td>
<td>Patel and Koushik, 2017</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Fixing CVE in the United States Requires More than Just a Name Change”</td>
<td>Rosand, 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional Research Service</td>
<td>Countering Violent Extremist in the United States</td>
<td>Bjelopera, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>DHS</td>
<td>Interim Report and Recommendations</td>
<td>CVE Subcommittee, 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategic Framework for Countering Terrorism and Targeted Violence</td>
<td>DHS, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Countering Violent Extremism: Developing a Research Roadmap—Literature Review</td>
<td>Owens et al., 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington University Program on Extremism</td>
<td>Terrorism Prevention in the United States: A Policy Framework for Filling the CVE Void</td>
<td>Ingram, 2018</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Countering Violent Extremism in America</td>
<td>Vidino and Hughes, 2015</td>
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<td>Heritage Foundation</td>
<td>“Revisiting Efforts to Counter Violent Extremism: Leadership Needed”</td>
<td>Inserra, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism</td>
<td>Lessons Learned from Mental Health and Education: Identifying Best Practices for Addressing Violent Extremism</td>
<td>Weine, Ellis, et al., 2015b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAND Corporation</td>
<td>Practical Terrorism Prevention: Reexamining U.S. National Approaches to Addressing the Threat of Ideologically Motivated Violence</td>
<td>Jackson et al., 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting Online Voices for Countering Violent Extremism</td>
<td>Helmus, York, and Chalk, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTI International</td>
<td>Engaging with Communities to Prevent Violent Extremism: A Review of the Obama Administration’s CVE Initiative</td>
<td>Schanzer and Eyerman, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies in Conflict and Terrorism</td>
<td>“Community Stakeholder Responses to Countering Violent Extremism Locally”</td>
<td>Ambrozik, 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washington Institute for Near East Policy</td>
<td>Defeating Ideologically Inspired Violent Extremism: A Strategy to Build Strong Communities and Protect the U.S. Homeland</td>
<td>Levitt et al., 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes

1 In the early period of CVE efforts in the United States, strategic documents explicitly framed the programs as addressing “all forms of extremism” (e.g., see the review of 2016 CVE implementation documents in Schanzer and Eyerman, 2019). The broad framing wavered during subsequent years, with the next administration initially considering a narrower focus on Islamic extremism (e.g., Ainsley, Volz, and Cooke, 2017) but ultimately maintaining a broader focus and expanding consideration of threats from domestic sources (e.g., see U.S. Department of Homeland Security [DHS], 2019).

2 In a June 2021 statement about DHS’s changes, John Cohen, then Assistant Secretary for Counterterrorism and Threat Prevention, acknowledged that “[p]revious countering violent extremism ‘CVE’ efforts proved ineffective and at times harmful by engendering community mistrust exacerbated by unfairly targeting Muslim, South Asian, and Arab American communities” (Cohen, 2021).

3 The research team created a seed set of relevant but diverse documents on topics of interest, then conducted two searches from this seed set. The seed set from which we worked is provided in the appendix. First, we performed a backward search, going through every document that these seed-set documents cited. Second, a conducted a forward search, going through each document that cited the seed-set documents in Web of Science, Google Scholar, or Scopus. Team members then reviewed the literature for relevance and, if a piece was on extremism with a focus on the United States or programs in the United States, we included it in the literature review.

4 In the interest of space, detailed information on the content analysis methods is included in an appendix.

5 External interviews were focused on those in relevant civil society groups, academic areas, and other government agencies. In a specific additional effort to explore sentiments about meaningful community engagement and trust-building strategies, we conducted interviews with a small group of thought leaders and practitioners who were knowledgeable about communities stigmatized by past CVE or violence prevention efforts. This is not a representative sample of those affected by CP3 and DHS violence prevention efforts but reflects a cross-section of varied external stakeholders who could provide an outside view of changes made in DHS programs and activities.

6 External interview 7, conducted April 1, 2022.

7 External interview 1, conducted February 14, 2022.

8 External interviews 1, conducted February 14, 2022; 7, conducted April 4, 2022; and 9, conducted April 7, 2022.

9 In external interview 1, conducted February 14, 2022, we discussed both in depth. An interviewee for external interview 3, conducted February 28, 2022, said, “The amount of money allocated to these grants is wholly inadequate.” An interviewee for external interview 7, conducted April 4, 2022, said, “Needs a lot more funding—sustained funding over time.”

10 In external interview 6, conducted March 24, 2022, we discussed this in depth. It was also mentioned in external interview 1, conducted February 14, 2022.

11 The analyses include Jackson et al., 2019.

12 Internal interviews 1, conducted January 4, 2022; 4, conducted January 5, 2022; 6, conducted January 6, 2022; and 8, conducted January 7, 2022.

13 Internal interviews 1, conducted January 4, 2022, and 6, conducted January 6, 2022.

14 External interview 7, conducted April 1, 2022.

15 For example, an interviewee in internal interview 5, conducted January 5, 2022, mentioned this but was one of several.

16 The personnel issues were mentioned in multiple interviews, including internal interviews 4, conducted January 5, 2022, and 5, conducted January 5, 2022. Interviewee in internal interview 9, conducted January 10, 2022, said, “We do our best with Zoom and Teams, but a lot of connections are made at conferences with people. We’ve been going to them virtually, but it isn’t the same.” An interviewee in internal interview 4, conducted January 5, 2022, echoed this sentiment. An interviewee in internal interview 14, conducted January 14, 2022, said, “It is going to take us a lot longer to foster relationships over the internet.”

17 In external interview 6, conducted March 24, 2022, we discussed this in depth. It was also mentioned in external interview 1, conducted February 14, 2022.

18 Internal interview 5, conducted January 5, 2022.

19 Internal interview 9, conducted January 10, 2022.

20 Internal interview 13, conducted January 14, 2022.

21 Internal interview 15, conducted January 26, 2022. This echoes challenges cited in Jackson et al., 2019, that preventive efforts aimed at less frequent violent events are often challenged by near-term requirements to address other threats and priorities.

22 Internal interview 6, conducted January 5, 2022.

23 Mentioned in multiple interviews, including internal interviews 2, conducted January 4, 2022; 3, conducted January 4, 2022; and 6, conducted January 4, 2022.

24 In an effort to partially guard against this, we tried to avoid consistent duplication of author clusters in these citations.

25 Internal interview 1, conducted January 4, 2022, commenting on an external phenomenon.

26 Discussed in external interviews, such as external interview 7, conducted April 4, 2022:

Either a separate government entity or just not sitting in DHS. Low ceiling for what DHS—what you can do with this center if it is housed in DHS. [If it is taken]
out of DHS, if pursuing public health, [it has] got to have the federal health agency intimately involved. HHS [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services] leadership or coleadership.

27 Internal interview 1, conducted January 4, 2022.

28 We chose these three periods to reflect some of the major shifts in the office, with the formation of the official working group in 2014 and the shift to OTVTP in 2018.


30 External interview 11, conducted April 14, 2022, and internal interviews 3, conducted January 4, 2022; 13, conducted January 14, 2022; and 10, conducted January 20, 2022.

31 For example, external interviews 4, conducted April 4, 2022, and 8, conducted April 5, 2022.

32 Because this system was still comparatively new—in its second operational year—at the time of this examination, CP3 staff consulted during our work indicated that different staff members were not always using it identically (e.g., there were some differences in staff practice for capturing less formal versus more-formal meetings or discussions in the system). As a result, we used these data to provide an overall, general picture of CP3’s activities rather than looking in detail at particular regions of the country. The total number of records in the system was more than 5,000 contacts (covering April 2020 through May 2022), including those from individual meetings between CP3 staff and organization representatives, participation of organizations in CP3 events, and made by staff at larger gatherings, such as conferences or in gatherings in other government venues.

33 For example, an individual meeting with a local public health agency would be categorized as public health, but a meeting with a specific office within the federal government might be categorized based on the focus (e.g., a meeting with DHS’s Science and Technology Directorate might be tagged as academic research).

34 The categories included in each sector were

- **public health**: mental and behavioral health, human and social services, fire and emergency medical services, public health, support groups, and victim services

- **education**: career services, higher education, homeschooling, kindergarten through 12th grade (youths), parent–teacher associations, school boards, school security and safety, technology resources and education, and youth engagement groups

- **civic and faith groups**: civic organizations, religious organizations and houses of worship, affinity organizations, immigrant organizations, interfait organizations, refugee resettlement agencies, and volunteer organizations

- **criminal justice and homeland security**: law enforcement, judicial, emergency planning and response and homeland security, dispatch organizations, prosecutors, other attorneys and organizations, training academies and centers, and security

- **corrections**: corrections, probation and parole, and reintegration services

- **technology and innovation**: communications; digital and social media; innovation; mis-, dis-, and malinformation; and online gaming and esports

- **research**: academic research, consulting, and think tanks

- **funding groups**: charities, philanthropy, and venture capital

- **government**: executive organizations, legislative organizations, policy, and public works

- **military**: active-duty military, national guard and reserve, and veterans’ service organizations

- **industry**: financial institutions; the film, television, radio, and streaming content industry; hospitality; sales; sports leagues; transportation and shipping, and community theater.

In some cases, categories that represented very small portions of CP3 activity were dropped from analysis and presentation.

35 For 2020, we had three calendar quarters of data; 2022 includes only the first calendar quarter of the year.

36 In some cases, our collapsing of more-specific categories reduced double-counting (e.g., a meeting with a particular group tagged with CP3’s three categories of affinity organizations, immigrant organizations, and civic organizations would be condensed into only one category in our analysis: faith and civic organizations). However, in other cases, it did not (e.g., a meeting with a state-level policy office that covered law enforcement and corrections and set policy might be tagged in CP3’s classification as related to law enforcement, legislative organizations, and policy and reintegration services, which would still fall into three of our categories: criminal justice, corrections, and government).

37 This includes a great diversity of contacts, from one-on-one meetings, virtual contacts, some other communications, attendees at CP3 virtual and in-person events, and contacts in other contexts, such as conferences. Note that these data could be analyzed in a wide variety of ways (e.g., focusing on or excluding specific types of venues or contact modes or tabulating quarterly rather than annually). Although we conducted some exploratory analyses of these types in the course of this effort, several factors led us to focus on just the overall data, examined annually. For shorter periods, single large events (e.g., a major conference at which many contacts occurred) could cause large shifts from period to period, complicating presentation. Similarly, focusing on subsets of contact types (e.g., just more formal outreach to organizations) resulted in analysis of smaller numbers of events, raising concerns about the ability to distinguish trends from noise. The one exception to this was our dropping all federal and international contacts from the data set for one subset analysis to provide a picture of activity more focused on the state, local, and community levels.

38 Of the just over 5,000 contacts in the database, approximately 1,650 (or nearly one-third) were with other federal entities or representatives of international governments or agencies.
39 One respondent suggested that OTVTP’s role was particularly important given the high cost of implementing public health–informed approaches (e.g., costs related to scaling mental health–related interventions), particularly in lower–socioeconomic status communities that were affected by multiple stressors.

40 We were unable to definitively assess approximately 3 percent of the projects in 2020 and 14 percent of the projects in 2021 based on available information, as discussed.

41 Although these recommendations are echoed in other important works on these topics, for the purpose of this study, we identified key examples of these recommendations from external organizations engaged to examine government efforts in this area.

42 The points in this section and the following section are built from 15 internal interviews and 11 external interviews conducted by the research team.

43 External interviews 9, conducted April 7, 2022; 10, conducted April 12, 2022; and 11, conducted April 15, 2022.

44 External interview 11, conducted April 15, 2022.

45 Internal interview 1, conducted February 14, 2022.

46 External interview 6, conducted March 24, 2022.

47 Discussed in, for example, external interviews 1, conducted February 14, 2022; 3, conducted February 28, 2022; and 6, conducted March 24, 2022.

48 Mentioned by several interviewees (such as in internal interviews 5, conducted January 5, 2022; 9, conducted January 10, 2022; and 13, conducted January 14, 2022) but discussed at length in internal interview 13, conducted January 14, 2022.

49 Discussed in several internal interviews, including internal interviews 4, conducted January 5, 2022, and 5, conducted January 5, 2022.

50 Discussed in the most-extensive detail in external interview 5, conducted March 17, 2022.

51 One example we found in the literature was relating risk factors to the numbers of people with a particular factor who would and would not develop a particular condition:

If a group of 100 people like you are followed for 10 years, research indicates that nine will develop cardiovascular disease, while 91 will not. I do not know whether you would be one of the 91 or one of the nine. (Hollnagel, 1999)

Another was how weather reporting communicates chances of precipitation as a percentage given a set of conditions (Monahan and Steadman, 1996).

52 External interview 9, conducted April 5, 2022.

53 External interview 7, conducted April 4, 2022.

54 External interview 8, conducted April 5, 2022.

55 External interviews 1, conducted February 14, 2022, and 8, conducted April 5, 2022.

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CVE Subcommittee—See Countering Violent Extremism Subcommittee.


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About This Report

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has changed and expanded its efforts in violence prevention in the past five years. DHS asked the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC) to examine the change in efforts by the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3) and its predecessor organizations to prevent terrorism and other violence. The research team was tasked with reviewing current prevention policies and programs and providing a focused discussion of the current programs in the context of a public health model and CP3’s overall approach to violence prevention. The report, based on a quasisystematic literature review, interviews with internal and external stakeholders, and quantitative analysis of DHS documentation and stakeholder engagements, explores change over time and what it indicates for CP3’s work moving forward.

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