



# Advisory Report

## Oregon Can Do More to Mitigate the Alarming Risk of Domestic Terrorism and Violent Extremist Attacks

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# Advisory Report Highlights

Oregon Can Do More to Mitigate the Alarming Risk of Domestic Terrorism and Violent Extremist Attacks

## By the Numbers

Incidents of domestic violent extremism rose precipitously nationally and in Oregon from 2019 to 2021.

**493**

domestic violent extremist incidents nationwide from 2011 to 2020

**2,700**

active FBI domestic terror investigations open in September 2021

**22**

domestic violent extremism incidents in Oregon between 2011 and 2020

**11**

domestic violent extremism incidents in 2020 alone in Oregon

**10%**

Oregon accounted for 10% of all incidents in the nation in 2020

**6<sup>th</sup>**

Oregon's ranking in the nation for the number of incidents between 2011 and 2020



Source: [TapTheForwardAssist](#), CC BY-SA 4.0

This advisory report suggests actions the Legislature, Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ), and Oregon State Police (OSP) can take to mitigate the risks posed by domestic, violent extremism statewide.

Over the past decade, Oregon witnessed the sixth-highest number of domestic violent extremism incidents in the nation. That alarming trend manifest itself dramatically in 2020 both nationally and within Oregon, culminating in violent attacks on the State Capitol Building on December 21, 2020 (see photo on the cover page), and the U.S. Capitol Building on January 6, 2021.

For this advisory report, the Oregon Audits Division reviewed data and information from research and interviews pertaining to domestic violent extremism and threat management to identify gaps in Oregon's statutes, rules, and practices. Addressing these gaps could help the state mitigate the risk of future domestic violent extremism incidents. We focused on five areas of review: state governance, insider threat, critical infrastructure, Urban Area Securities Initiative grants, and public awareness.

The impact of domestic terrorism and violent extremism extends to all Oregonians and can affect communities and individuals alike. The trauma caused by these incidents can have lasting effects and may have a greater impact on communities already suffering from the COVID-19 pandemic, economic loss, or racial bias in the case of racially or ethnically motivated extremism. Depending on the nature of the incident, the continued trauma may impede the ability of individuals and communities to enjoy their economic, social, and cultural rights.

## Key issues and suggested actions

Lessons learned during 2020, a year unprecedented by the number of domestic violent extremist incidents in Oregon and nationwide, can help improve risk mitigation, interagency planning, and accountability — all areas that need strengthening based on our review.

### Concerning risks related to governance of domestic violent extremism in Oregon:

1. Oregon has experienced one of the highest rates of domestic violent extremism in the country; yet it is one of 16 states that does not have any legislation defining or criminalizing these specific acts. Such legislation may provide the state with mechanisms to mitigate future risk. ([pg. 13](#))
2. The Oregon Homeland Security Council is the advisory body for emergency management and situational awareness of domestic violent extremism risks within the state. The council should establish a statewide strategy with specific, measurable outcomes for countering violent extremism risks and activities. In the absence of such a strategy and guidance, state oversight agencies lack consistent and connected plans and outcome goals increasing the risk of gaps or redundancies in the state approach for monitoring and addressing violent extremism risks. ([pg. 14](#))
3. The jurisdiction of law enforcement agencies often overlaps when working to mitigate or respond to domestic violent extremism. In addition to potential inefficiencies, this situation can result in confusion and miscommunication. The state can better position itself to meet this threat by formalizing these relationships. ([pg. 14](#))
4. State critical infrastructure continues to be a high-risk target. While the state has worked toward mitigating that risk, its infrastructure protection plan could be revised to consider the evolving threat of domestic violent extremism. ([pg. 20](#))
5. Oregon currently receives federal funding through the Urban Area Security Initiative to improve efforts to mitigate domestic violent extremism risk. The state should continue to identify and leverage federal funding opportunities for programs to counter violent extremism and encourage local entities to do the same when applicable. ([pg. 21](#))

### Concerning state agency and law enforcement training on domestic violent extremism:

6. Identifying individuals on the pathway to violence is critical to threat management. Current law enforcement and state employee training is limited. Increased opportunities for training statewide may increase effectiveness in identifying potential threats. ([pg. 18](#))

### Concerning public awareness of the ongoing risks of risk of domestic violent extremism:

7. The lack of publicly available information regarding domestic violent extremist plots and threats compounds the difficulty for policymakers to understand the nature and extent of the threat. The state should create a system for public transparency of this information where release does not violate the privacy of any individual or cause harm to state security. ([pg. 14](#))
8. The proliferation of extremist ideologies is protected by the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The state cannot stifle those activities unless they result in violence. However, the state can work to increase public awareness on the risks of violent extremism and the methods used by extremist groups to target and recruit individuals online. ([pg. 15](#))

# Timeline of Significant Events



# Background

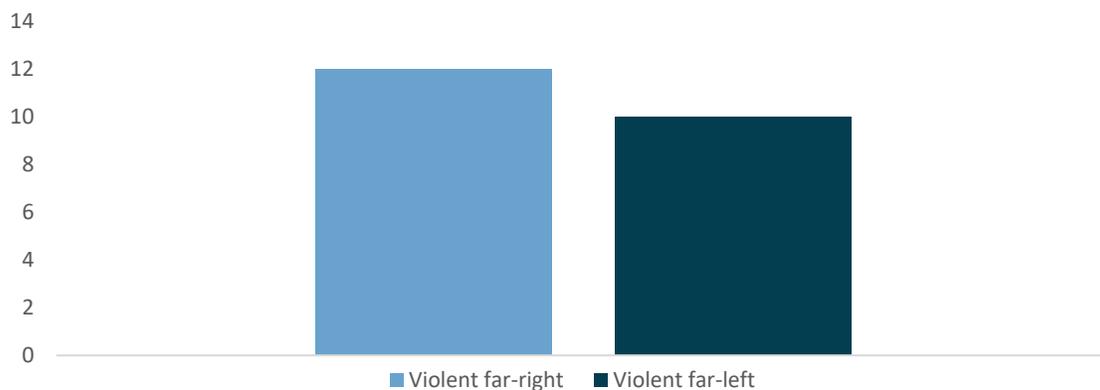
## Understanding the difference between domestic terrorism, violent extremism, and hate crimes

Domestic terrorism differs from other criminal activity in key ways. Importantly, unlike most offenders — who may be driven by self-centered motives — domestic terrorists are driven by a cause or ideology. The FBI generally relies on two definitions of domestic terrorism. First, the Code of Federal Regulations characterizes terrorism as including “the unlawful use of force and violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives.”<sup>1</sup> Second, 18 U.S.C. §2331(5) more narrowly defines domestic terrorism as occurring primarily within U.S. territorial jurisdiction, and involves:<sup>2</sup>

- ... acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State;
- appear to be intended—
  - to intimidate or coerce a civilian population;
  - to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or
  - to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping.

Domestic terrorists draw from many philosophies and worldviews to justify illegal acts. They can be motivated to commit crimes in the name of ideas such as animal rights, environmental rights, white supremacy, anti-government beliefs, and anarchism. Yet expression of these ideas, aside from criminal activities, is generally constitutionally protected.

**Figure 1: Between 2011 and 2020, the number of US domestic violence incidents based on ideological orientation between “far-right” and “far-left” was nearly equal**



Source: Center for Strategic and International Studies<sup>3</sup>

Law enforcement agencies at both the federal and state level conduct investigations focused on illegal activity. U.S. Department of Justice investigations must be conducted for an authorized national

<sup>1</sup> Cornell Law School Electronic Code of Federal Regulations: [28 C.F.R. Section 0.85](#)

<sup>2</sup> Cornell Law School Electronic U.S. Code: [U.S.C. §2331\(5\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> For an overview of the Center for Strategic and International Studies definition of terms methodology used in compiling the data set [visit this site](#).

security, criminal, or foreign intelligence collection purpose and may not solely monitor the exercise of First Amendment rights. The FBI conceptualizes domestic terrorism in terms of threats, not groups or ideas. In Congressional testimony from September 2020, the FBI director stated “regardless of the specific ideology involved, the FBI requires that all domestic terrorism investigations be predicated based on activity intended to further a political or social goal, wholly or in part involving force, coercion, or violence, in violation of federal law.”

### Definitions of key terms

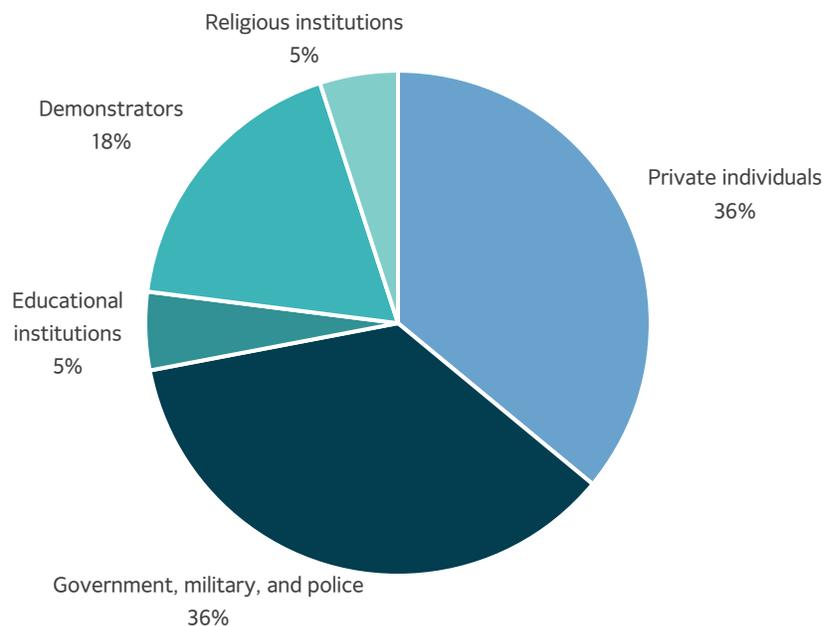
**Domestic Violent Extremist:** An individual based and operating primarily within the U.S. without direction or inspiration from a foreign organization who seeks to further political or social goals wholly, or in part, through unlawful acts of force or violence.

**Domestic Terrorism:** An act of unlawful violence that is dangerous to human life or potentially destructive of critical infrastructure or key resources committed by a group or person based and operating entirely within the United States or its territories without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group.

**Hate Crime:** Federal hate crimes include bodily injury in which certain jurisdictional prerequisites are met and in which the offender intentionally selects the victim because of the victim’s actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, gender identity, disability, or sexual orientation.

Current federal law defines hate crimes as conduct involving bodily injury in which certain jurisdictional prerequisites are met and in which the offender intentionally selects the victim because of the victim’s actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, gender identity, disability, or sexual orientation. The line may sometimes be unclear, and some cases may be investigated as both a hate crime and an act of domestic terrorism. As a result, differentiating the two may often depend on the suspect’s intent. Factors such as whether the suspect belonged to a domestic terrorist group or practiced extremist ideologies should be considered.

**Figure 2: Oregon targets over the last decade were mainly government, military, police, and private individuals**



Source: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2021

## Domestic terrorism is not a chargeable crime

While an individual's actions may be consistent with the definition of domestic terrorism, domestic terrorism is not a chargeable offense on its own. There is no federal or Oregon state criminal statute that establishes criminal penalties solely for domestic terrorism, although it may be an element of other federal crimes, such as kidnapping, or provide an enhanced sentence. Unlike domestic terrorism, there are federal and Oregon criminal statutes that allow individuals to be charged with hate or bias crimes and these statutes establish penalties for individuals convicted of hate crimes.

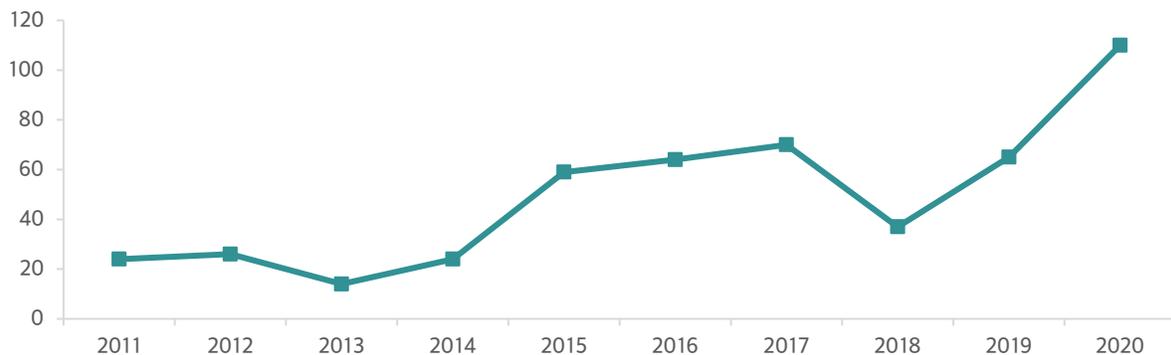
## The history of domestic terrorism and violence in the nation and Oregon is complex and evolving

In the last decade, domestic terrorists have killed Americans and damaged property across the country. Domestic terrorists are generally understood as people who commit crimes in the name of extremist ideologies and movements. Domestic terrorists are differentiated from foreign terrorists in that their targets lie within their own country. The U.S. Department of Justice and the FBI do not designate domestic terrorist organizations and instead broadly divides the threat among categories such as: racially or ethnically motivated, anti-government, animal rights, and abortion related extremism.

The U.S. is facing domestic terror and violent extremist threats that have evolved significantly and became increasingly complex and volatile in 2021. Social media and online forums are increasingly exploited to influence and spread violent extremist narratives and activity; these threats are being exacerbated by the stressful impacts of the ongoing global pandemic.

According to the FBI, the greatest terrorism threat is posed by lone offenders, often radicalized online, who look to attack soft targets, such as schools, places of worship, or businesses, with easily accessible weapons. On September 21, 2021, the director of the FBI issued testimony to Congress stating these factors increase the challenge of detecting and disrupting activities before they occur. Many of these violent extremists are motivated and inspired by a mix of socio-political goals and personal grievances against their targets. Historically, mass-casualty Domestic Violent Extremist (DVE) attacks linked to racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists have targeted houses of worship and crowded commercial facilities or gatherings.

**Figure 3: Nationwide incidents of domestic violent extremism have increased in the last six years**



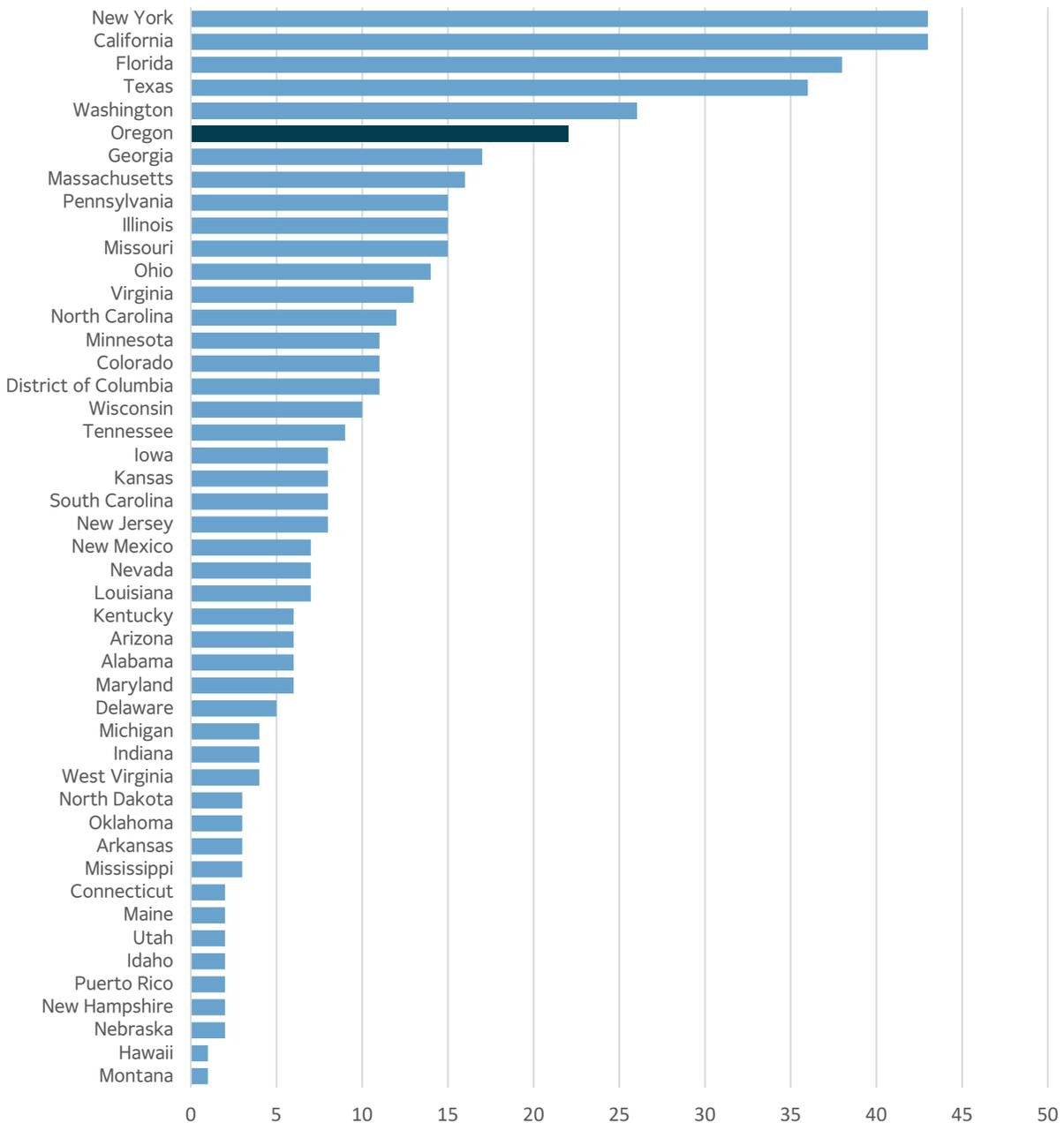
Source: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2021 <sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> For an overview of the Center for Strategic and International Studies methodology used in compiling the data set, [visit this site](#).

## Federal, state, and local governments all have roles and responsibilities in the effort to mitigate domestic violent extremism

All levels of government have public safety responsibilities for mitigating risks posed by domestic violent extremism. The federal government plays a lead role through the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security. It is the FBI's mission to proactively lead law enforcement and domestic intelligence efforts to "defeat terrorist attacks against U.S. citizens and interests through an integrated strategy to detect, penetrate, disrupt, and dismantle criminal domestic terror plots." The FBI and federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) work to provide strategic analysis of the DVE landscape.

**Figure 4: Oregon ranks sixth in the nation in the number of violent extremist attacks from 2011 to 2020 despite ranking 27<sup>th</sup> in population according to U.S. Census data**



Source: Center for Strategic and International Studies

In addition to the Oregon Homeland Security Council, which serves to advise state agencies, the Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) and Oregon State Police (OSP) have responsibilities for preventing and responding to the threat of criminal activities within the state that may fit the federal definition of domestic terrorism or violent extremism. These agencies coordinate detective and responsive activities through the operation of the Terrorism Intelligence and Threat Assessment Network (TITAN) Fusion Center, participation in the Joint Terrorism Task Force, or through sharing of information and intelligence across agency borders.

Oregon has a history of violent extremism and has received national attention for events such as those noted in the timeline on page 1. This history of violence, in conjunction with the nationwide uptick of domestic terrorism and violent extremist activity, necessitates enhanced focus on strategies and programs that may mitigate the risk of these activities. Figure 4 shows the total number of recorded DVE attacks from 2011 to 2020; Oregon ranks sixth in the nation.

### **The threat of domestic terrorism posed by lone actors and white supremacist groups is a high national security priority for the U.S. Departments of Justice and Homeland Security**

During the first half of 2021, the U.S. Department of Justice issued public reports noting DVEs, primarily those advocating for white supremacy, likely would continue to be the most lethal DVE threat to the United States. This conclusion was reinforced by the FBI director in Congressional testimony on September 21, 2021. DVEs are likely to continue to engage in non-lethal violence and other criminal activity in the future and their reactions to socio-political events and conditions could increase attacks. The U.S. Department of Justice report noted 2019 represented the most lethal year for DVE attacks since 1995, with five separate attacks resulting in 32 deaths; 24 of these occurred during attacks conducted by racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists advocating for white supremacy.

Federal authorities also warn “gamification” and “accelerationism” inspired some of the attacks in 2019 and likely will continue to inspire future plots. Gamification is the notion that violent extremists may consider fatality counts in attacks as “scores” and desire to accomplish high kill counts. Additionally, the ability to easily share propaganda through online forums and encrypted chat applications may inspire future attackers. The same online forums and encrypted chat applications also reference accelerationism, a term used to describe the belief of some DVEs that the current system of society is irreparable and violent action is necessary to start a race war.

The FBI and DHS reported DVEs would likely continue attacking soft targets and using gamification to encourage higher fatality attacks. The continued spread of accelerationism may likely increase the nationwide threat from extremists who espouse white supremacy. Political disagreements in the U.S, such as those witnessed in 2020, could present opportunities for DVEs to act.

### **The impacts of domestic terrorism and violent extremism are pervasive and wide-ranging**

While the immediate impacts of domestic terrorism and violent extremist events can be devastating — injury, property damage, loss of life — these incidents can also cause broader harm. Such indirect effects may include socio-economic impacts to individuals and communities, as well as businesses.

Direct and indirect victims of violent extremism may suffer consequences such as lifestyle changes and social disruption. The trauma from these violent incidents can have a lasting impact on social, educational, occupational, and societal functioning. As such, when assessing the toll of a violent extremist or terroristic event, the indirect impacts should be considered along with direct, tangible consequences.

### **Trauma caused by domestic terrorism and violent extremism can have lasting negative effects for individuals and communities**

Flagrant violations of individual rights can affect the individual and their membership in a community or society. Traumatization happens in three pathways: initially, through a broad negative shift in how an individual, as a member of a particular social group, is treated; subsequently, an individual may experience a serious violation of their rights; and finally, through leaving the community or alienation.

Victims of DVE attacks may suffer social consequences including changes in their lifestyle, such as avoiding the situation or context in which the incident occurred. Trauma can be disruptive to an individual's lifestyle, impact their economic opportunity, and affect their role as a parent, spouse, or member of a community.

Terrorism can also impose far-reaching economic hardship. Depending on the nature of the events, businesses may close or relocate and an individual's ability to work may be affected. Once these events instill trauma in a population, the reporting on future terrorist or violent extremist attacks may have additional, negative psychological effects on members of the wider population. Violent terrorism and extremism and the trauma that results could impede the ability of individuals and communities to enjoy their economic, social, and cultural rights.

### **There remains a disproportionate impact on younger survivors and communities targeted by racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists**

Research indicates younger survivors of terrorist attacks are especially vulnerable. Post-traumatic stress commonly affects social and academic development, which may lead to long-term effects. As a result, these young survivors may need more responsive long-term health monitoring than other groups. While there is growing evidence that most youth seem to recover without any psychological treatment, a smaller number continue to experience persistent, negative, psychological effects.

In the wake of 9/11, studies found individuals who suffered social loss, or experienced negative impacts to their families and neighborhoods, had a greater impairment than those with only individual psychological impacts. These social losses extend into the broader community as well. According to the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, mental health agencies must recognize this experience of pain as communal, not solely as an individual, and consider community-based and community-centered approaches for post-trauma interventions.

As a result, domestic terrorism's cascading effects may have a greater impact on communities already suffering economic distress, such as low-income and immigrant populations. As the threat from DVEs advocating for white supremacy continues to be the most lethal DVE threat to the U.S., it is critical the traumatic, negative effects from terrorist and extremist attacks be understood, mitigated, and, for victims of racially or ethnically motivated violence, responded to with adequate services and supports.

## Countering violent extremism requires a multi-faceted approach at the national, state, and local level

After the historic attacks of 9/11, the U.S. restructured agencies and roles in an effort to correct “intelligence failures” noted for having played a role in not preventing those attacks. Perhaps most notably, DHS was formed and a role for the Director of National Intelligence was created. Twenty years later, following the attack on the U.S. Capitol building on January 6, 2021, there is again discussion of “intelligence failures.”<sup>5</sup> Similar to events two decades ago, there are calls for changes within the government to mitigate the risk of a future event and to combat the growing threat of domestic terrorism and domestic violent extremism.

The events of January 6 and other extremist activity over the last few years may have served to lessen the focus on foreign threats and instead place renewed focus on domestic extremism. Changes are necessary to create a risk mitigation focus that minimizes the likelihood of domestic violent extremism in the future. These reforms will require close collaboration among multiple agencies at federal, state, Tribal, and local levels as the nature and extent of the threat is decentralized and complex.

Although federal law enforcement is responsible for investigating domestic terrorist threats, they rely heavily upon the multi-disciplinary input about domestic terrorist and DVE threats from state and local partners. State and local entities play a vital role in detecting and mitigating the risk of these acts. As such, any strategy for countering violent extremism depends on strong local partnerships to facilitate the flow of information. In one 2010 academic study<sup>6</sup>, the authors estimated 80% of foiled terrorist plots in the U.S. were discovered due to observations by state and local partners or the public.

### A multi-agency staffing and funding model is necessary to address the complex threat of DVE

The 2021 legislative session saw significant changes to the governance of emergency management and the role of the Oregon Homeland Security Council. These changes may improve the state’s framework as well as create new opportunities and risks that must be considered.

**Figure 5: Funding and resources for state efforts to combat DVE mainly come from three agencies**

	DOJ*	OSP*	OEM
2015-17 Total Funds	\$27,472,332	\$41,056,844	\$252,811,578
2015-17 full-time equivalent positions	53	122	42
2017-19 Total Funds	\$28,315,833	\$45,565,081	\$268,015,990
2017-19 full-time equivalent positions	59	131	44
2019-21 Total Funds	\$25,843,165	\$51,929,647	\$281,147,014
2019-21 full-time equivalent positions	59	135	44

Source: DOJ Criminal Justice Division, OSP Criminal Investigation Division, OEM; Legislatively Adopted Budgets.

Staffing to mitigate the risk of DVE is spread across multiple agencies. Some of those agencies, such as DOJ, OSP, and the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) within the Oregon Military Department, have specific budgets for DVE-related activities. OSP staffs two officers devoted to the Joint Terrorism

<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this report, auditors assume readers know of and understand high-profile, recent events, including 9/11 and the 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol.

<sup>6</sup> Strom, et al, “Building on the Clues: Examining Successes and Failures in Detecting U.S. Terrorist Plots 1999-2009”

Task Force and the Oregon TITAN Fusion Center has five staff, several of which are dependent on federal funds. The Military Department, meanwhile, staffs an Anti-Terrorism Program Manager. The center, however, appears to be well integrated into the federal and state intelligence network. The center is not operated full-time and may lack resources other states' centers are afforded.

The multi-agency staffing approach is necessitated by the nature of the complex and evolving threat and the complex and decentralized governance structure formed to meet it.

Stakeholder	Description
Federal agencies	The bulk of activity and leadership in domestic terrorism and domestic violent extremism is led by the FBI and federal agencies that provide significant resources in terms of personnel, equipment, money, and organization.
Governor	Chief executive of the State of Oregon, Chair of the Oregon Homeland Security Council, heads the overall homeland security framework for the state.
Legislature	Four legislative members; two members of each chamber are selected by the leaders of the respective chambers.
Adjutant General	Serves as the Governor's homeland security advisor and chief of staff. Vice chair of the Oregon Homeland Security Council
Attorney General	Oversees DOJ which houses the criminal justice division and TITAN Fusion Center. AG is not a sitting member of the Oregon Homeland Security Council but assigns a representative to the council.
State Police Superintendent	Heads Department of State Police, member of the Oregon Homeland Security Council.
Oregon Homeland Security Council	Council under OEM, receives briefings on security matters at least annually, can advise state agencies with responsibility for security matters on the future direction of OEM's planning, preparedness, response, and recovery activities.
OEM Director	Directs OEM, member of the Oregon Homeland Security Council
Oregon TITAN Fusion Center	The center provides an all-crimes criminal information clearinghouse supported by multiple agencies and a Fusion Liaison Officer program to protect the public from terrorist and criminal activity.
OEM	Under the Military Department, oversees state efforts at disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. Manages federal grants for emergency management and acts as a passthrough for local government bodies receiving funds.
Counties and cities	Local governments coordinate with each other as well as state and federal agencies for communication, resources, and other support.

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#### Sheriffs' and local police departments

Tasked with providing public safety in their respective jurisdictions, sheriffs and local police departments coordinate with city, state and federal leaders and stakeholders when handling domestic violent extremism-related matters.

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#### Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization

A partnership between government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private-sector stakeholders in the Portland Metropolitan Region that collaborate to increase the region's resilience to disasters.

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## Oregon enacted legislation in 2021 that may help with risk mitigation efforts, but improvements are still needed

Oregon enacted legislation in 2021 that may mitigate some of the risk of domestic violent extremism. Specifically, the state enacted the following:

**Senate Bill 554:** This legislation provided new resources and flexibility for state agencies to manage the threat of violence in a number of ways. Most notably, as it relates to mitigating the threat of domestic violent extremism, the legislation prohibits the possession of a firearm, or other instruments which may be used as a dangerous weapon, while in or on a public building. The bill also provides language relating to the storage, transfer, and supervision of firearms.

**House Bill 2927:** The bill provides substantial direction to reorganize OEM<sup>7</sup> and the Oregon Homeland Security Council. In particular, the changes to the Oregon Homeland Security Council call for the addition of new members, including representation from the TITAN Fusion Center, that may provide crucial insight for matters of domestic violent extremism. The legislation also explicitly adds to the mission of the Oregon Homeland Security Council, “to assess risks to the safety and security of the State of Oregon with special emphasis on matters related to domestic terrorism and other major threats to the people of Oregon.”

**House Bill 2936:** This legislation requires the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training to create a uniform background checklist for law enforcement units to implement during hiring processes. Specifically, this checklist must include “an assessment of the applicant’s tendencies, feelings and opinions toward diverse cultures, races and ethnicities and differing social, political, economic and life statuses.” The bill also requires law enforcement agencies to set standards for speech and conduct by officers, including social media, email, instant messaging, and video. The bill notes these policies may not violate constitutional rights to free speech and expression.

**House Bill 2986:** The bill adds gender to the list of prejudices for which all police officers are required to be trained to investigate, identify, and report in addition to those motivated by prejudice based on the perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, political affiliation or beliefs, membership or activity in or on behalf of a labor organization or against a labor organization, physical or mental disability, age, economic or social status or citizenship of the victim. Current, statute

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<sup>7</sup> House Bill 2927 restructures OEM as the Oregon Department of Emergency Management, an agency independent from the Oregon Military Department, effective as of July 1, 2022.

also requires officers receive training for investigating, identifying, and reporting crimes that constitute abuse or domestic violence.

**House Bill 2929:** This legislation establishes processes and procedures for reporting misconduct established in 2020 House Bill 4205. The bill does not, however, specifically require the reporting of risk indicators of the pathway to targeted violence.

While the state worked to enact the above legislation, other legislation that may have had an impact was not enacted. One such bill was Senate Bill 455, which sought to create a crime of threatening to commit a terroristic act; this is currently not explicitly addressed by Oregon state law.

### **Domestic violent extremist incidents in Oregon have targeted lawmakers, protesters, and the general public**

Domestic terrorism and violent extremist attacks in Oregon have varied in scale and severity. The state has endured a number of high-profile instances of domestic terrorism, not only recently, but dating back at least to the 1980s.

In 1984, members of the Rajneesh movement contaminated ten restaurants in The Dalles with salmonella. The group was practicing for a planned attack on election day, intending to sicken residents in an attempt to suppress voter turnout and influence the outcome of a county election. As a result, 751 people fell ill and 45 were hospitalized in what has since become known as the largest bioterror attack in U.S. history.

In 2020, protests in Portland turned violent and resulted in one protestor killing another. Over the course of several months, civil rights protests and demonstrations took place in Portland where demonstrators showed up daily and advocated for criminal justice reform. Tensions ran high from the nightly protests and were increased with the involvement of federal law enforcement and opposition groups. This tension culminated in an act of domestic violent extremism when a member of the far-right group was shot and killed; a member of the far-left group was charged with his murder but was shot and killed days later by law enforcement officials. According to the FBI's definition, this criminal act of homicide was an act of domestic violent extremism and served to harm the far-right community and further inflame tensions.

On December 21, 2020, the Oregon Capitol was breached by rioters associated with far-right groups. Rioters broke glass, attacked reporters, and assaulted police with bear spray. These actions led to the arrest of five men, four of whom pleaded guilty to their actions, and one who will stand trial in 2022. The attack directly impacted those officers who were charged with defending the building, but also had lasting psychological impacts on the legislative members and their staff who were in the building at the time. A similar incident would take place days later, January 6, 2021, when protestors breached the U.S. Capitol, resulting in the death of five people, four police officers, and the traumatization of countless individuals.

# Project Results

This project examined domestic violent extremism in Oregon to identify gaps in the state's statutes, rules, and policies that, if addressed, would mitigate the risk of domestic violent extremism incidents. While domestic terrorism and domestic violent extremism incidents often fall within federal jurisdiction, DOJ and OSP perform a considerable amount of work related to preventing and responding to those acts. However, Oregon continues to have a high number of incidents of domestic violent extremism disproportionate to the state's population and, along with the rest of the nation, saw a significant spike in these incidents in 2020. As the DHS continues to issue notices regarding the threat of these activities, it is paramount the state be as well positioned as possible to prevent and counter acts of violent extremism and domestic terrorism.

We identified five areas for review which impact the state's response to mitigating risk of domestic violent extremism:

- State governance;
- Public awareness;
- Insider threat;
- Critical infrastructure; and
- Urban Area Securities Initiative Grants.<sup>8</sup>

The lessons learned during responses to events in 2020 can help improve planning, coordination, reporting, and training for domestic violent extremism risk mitigation control, all areas that need strengthening.

## **The risk of domestic terrorism and domestic violent extremism is complex and requires broad strategic governance for effective mitigation**

The nature and extent of threat from domestic terrorism and violent extremism is vast and complex. As a result, the state's processes for mitigating that risk are also complex and not always optimized. Oregon's governance structure is founded in statute that may need to be revised to meet the evolving threat of domestic violent extremism. The role of effective governance is critical in establishing a cohesive strategy and framework for state agencies to follow.

We also found the state has fragmented authority over this area. The Oregon Homeland Security Council, a governing body comprised of numerous high-level officials, meets sporadically, and does not have a documented statewide strategy with specific measurable outcomes for domestic violent extremism. Relationships between DOJ, OSP, and local law enforcement agencies are not always formalized, leading to ad hoc, relationship-based cooperation which presents a sustainability risk when turnover occurs.

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<sup>8</sup> The National Counterintelligence and Security Center defines insider threat as "trusted individuals in an organization who may use their authorized access to facilities, personnel, and information to cause harm to their organization -- whether intentionally or unintentionally."

## The governance structure overseeing response to DVE has weaknesses that may hinder efforts to improve effective risk mitigation

Governance of a domestic violent extremism prevention strategy requires the organization of a complex field of players with varying capabilities, roles, and jurisdictions. Cooperation between these actors is critical to ensuring the state's mission of preventing violent extremist acts is successful.

Along with the federal government and other states, Oregon established much of its governing framework for addressing terrorism risk after the events of 9/11. The Governor established the Office of Homeland Security in 2004, now the Oregon Homeland Security Council, to provide "leadership in coordinating private and governmental sector efforts to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from, disasters and terrorist attacks making efficient and effective use of Oregon's emergency resources, including close cooperation with the state's local partners and first responders." In 2006, the national network of TITAN Fusion Centers was established, creating at least one center in each state.

The Oregon Homeland Security Council, which consists of a number of state leaders, is intended to meet regularly to discuss critical matters, such as risk of DVE. However, according to some members of the council, it meets infrequently, and the information shared is primarily around natural disaster preparation and management, with little to no information shared regarding the threat of DVE.

Although the U.S. Department of Justice is the governing entity that most often brings domestic terrorism and violent extremism charges against individuals, 34 states and the District of Columbia also have legislation making such activities a state-level felony. By defining in statute what constitutes domestic violent extremism or terroristic acts, these states enable state and local agencies to be on even footing when approaching a scenario that falls within the parameters of the law. State-level guidelines also allow the state to charge individuals when federal standards either do not apply or cannot be met.

Oregon policymakers should consider leveraging the enabling legislation in any number of these states to serve as a baseline for potential state law. For example, policymakers may want to refer to Georgia law, which defines and criminalizes domestic terrorism and includes actions against persons or critical infrastructure.<sup>9</sup> Policymakers may also want to refer to Vermont legislation that criminalizes not only domestic terroristic acts, but criminalizes any act "taking a substantial step" to commit domestic terrorism.<sup>10</sup> It is important for the various entities involved in governance to have clear terms that allow them to act on issues in their jurisdiction and competency to communicate effectively to other entities and the public.



**Georgia state law** defines and criminalizes domestic terrorism, including actions against persons or critical infrastructure.



**Vermont legislation** criminalizes acts of domestic terrorism and any act "taking a substantial step" to committing domestic terrorism.

<sup>9</sup> [GA Code § 16-11-220 \(2017\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> [13 V.S.A. § 1703](#)

## **Coordination and relationships between partner agencies are positive, but not formalized**

Coordination and communication protocols between federal, state, and local entities are generally not formalized. We found while interjurisdictional relationships were often represented positively, the only formalized agreements between law enforcement agencies that exists are the memorandums of understanding for the Joint Terrorism Task Force.

Formal working agreements between organizations and information clearing houses like the TITAN Fusion Center are essential for facilitating the efficient flow of time-sensitive information relevant for reducing the risk of violent extremist actions. We found some relationships rely entirely on the rapport of senior employees and future turnover may affect that relationship. Formalizing relationships is a critical step for improving sustainable risk management in a rapidly evolving system as well as to avoid miscommunication and response gaps during actual incidents.

## **A dedicated statewide strategy for mitigating the risk of domestic violent extremism risk is critical for effective governance, resource allocation, and ongoing improvement**

Threat assessment is an integral part of developing a strategy for approaching risk to the state, whether that risk comes from natural disasters or human-caused catastrophes. While the state considers “terrorism” in its Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment, there is no DVE-specific strategy on how the state will mitigate or respond to such scenarios. An example Oregon could follow is from the recommendation of the National Governors Association.

The National Governors Association, which received a grant from the federal government to help states mitigate violent threat, developed a Governor’s Roadmap to Preventing Targeted Violence. The first step in that roadmap is the development of governance and strategy. Establishing a specific statewide strategy with measurable goals, and a method to track progress, is core to a successful governance model. Another example Oregon could follow is from the Seattle Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment, which includes a DVE-specific scenario to gauge risk, readiness, and capability gaps.

Federal congressional researchers note, along with a statewide strategy, publicly accessible reporting of DVE plots and incidents may better help state policymakers understand the extent of threat posed. From 2004 to 2012, the National Counterterrorism Center’s Worldwide Incidents Tracking System provided an official, public record of terrorism incidents around the globe, including the United States. However, there has been no similar reporting since 2013; neither Oregon nor the federal government currently produce such a report. Without publicly available information on plots and incidents, it is especially difficult to determine the nature and extent of the complex threat of DVE. External reporting and goal tracking are vital components of effective resource allocation.

## Limited efforts exist to educate the public on the risk of domestic violent extremism and the methods used to radicalize individuals to commit violence

One of the major challenges in addressing the risk of domestic violent extremism is educating the public to prevent radicalization to violence in the first place.<sup>11</sup> In this context, within its Constitutional authority, the state has responsibilities for preventing radicalization owing to the risks posed to public health and safety where the benefits of prevention are paramount. Funding for such programs is a challenge as, traditionally, grants to counter domestic violent extremism are focused on law enforcement or security-hardening activities.

**Figure 6: U.S. DHS digital literacy tips may be leveraged to promote in state**



DHS recognizes the threat of online radicalization of domestic violent extremism and in 2019 issued a report entitled “Combating Targeted Disinformation Campaigns.” In 2021, the department issued a distilled version of similar information in a two-page primer entitled, “Media Literacy and Critical Thinking Online.” The 2019 report notes mitigating the threat of sophisticated manipulation campaigns requires a “whole-of-society” response that includes building public resilience. The report goes further to note the understanding that under no circumstance can the government dictate what content is consumed; instead, public education is critical.

The department’s 2021 primer on digital media literacy focused on the rapid proliferation of online content, coupled with the effects of public health measures imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This summary document provides a high-level overview that may be useful in developing a sense of skepticism for online information. Development of statewide public information campaigns using these documents as a foundation may prove effective in strengthening public resilience.

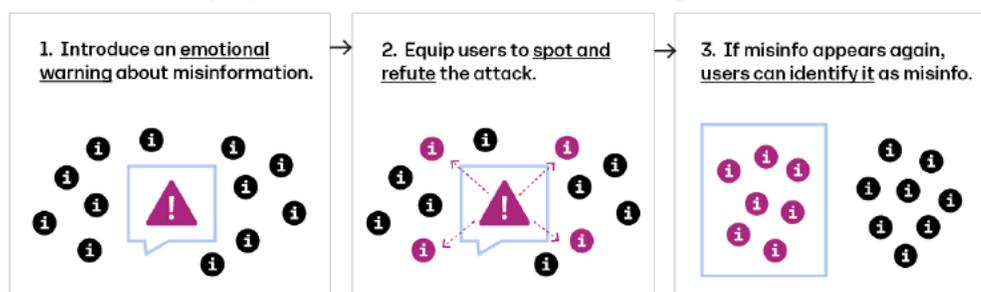
<sup>11</sup> According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, radicalization is the process through which an individual changes from a nonviolent belief system to a belief system that includes the willingness to actively advocate, facilitate, or use unlawful violence as a method to effect societal or political change.

## Academic experts on extremism have developed alternative approaches toward developing a more informed public

A similar method of public education of the threat of online radicalization to violence has been developed by researchers from American University's Polarization and Extremism Research Innovation Lab. Researchers are currently working to publish studies that have demonstrated the effectiveness of what they call "Attitudinal Inoculation."

The premise of this work is founded in the understanding misinformation is pernicious in its ability to stick with individuals; false claims are often believed at an emotional, rather than rational, level. The goal then becomes to help individuals better recognize and resist misleading messages. To do this, researchers have deployed studies where they introduce brief clips that demonstrate techniques used to influence along with a presenter who explains what is being done. Results of these studies have, so far, demonstrated effectiveness at equipping individuals to resist future messages.

**Figure 7: Some research proposes "attitudinal inoculation" to mitigate the risk of online radicalization**



Source: Jigsaw LLC<sup>12</sup>

In one such study focused on extremism, researchers tested whether participants could be inoculated against online far-right and far-left extremist propaganda. The study showed those who read a text-based inoculation message prior to seeing one of the extremist propaganda posts were less willing to support the extremist group relative to a control group that had not read the same message. This study demonstrates there may be potential to confer public resilience through education to build an understanding of online techniques used by bad actors to manipulate.

## Oregon could adopt a public information campaign similar to campaigns in other states

Some states, such as Colorado, have put more resources into maintaining public awareness about the state's efforts to combat violence extremism. In 2019, Colorado conducted public awareness campaigns through social media about the state's efforts to prevent targeted violence. The state took part in funding opportunities through the National Governors Association and applied part of that funding to informing the public.

This program uses the phrase "prevent targeted violence" instead of countering violent extremism to focus on preventing violence rather than potential motivations. The idea is to promote awareness

<sup>12</sup> Jigsaw is a technology incubator created by Google dedicated to understanding global challenges and applying technological solutions, from "countering extremism," online censorship and cyberattacks, to protecting access to information.

# PREVENTING TARGETED VIOLENCE

## WHAT IS COLORADO DOING?

### 1 WORKING GROUP

DHSEM leads strategic planning group that includes: Governor's Office, CDPS, CDHS, CDPHE, CDE, DOLA, DORA, and DOC as well as DHS and University of Harvard.

- 8 State Agencies
- 80 Participants

### 2 WORKSHOPS

DHSEM has conducted three Preventing Targeted Violence conferences and two conference calls with working group partners to create Colorado's strategic plan. 700 Threat Liaison Officers have received training across Colorado..

### 3 INTERVENTION PROGRAMMING

Formed partnerships with mental health and social service providers that have led to them conducting 40 interventions for targeted violence, leveraging existing state and local intervention programming.

### 4 OUR GOALS

- Build awareness of targeted violence by developing tailored training plans and curriculum for state agencies;
- Build trust among partners and establish a network for implementation;
- Institute intervention by developing tailored intervention plans for mental health providers, teachers, religious leaders, and law enforcement.



## COLORADO

Division of Homeland Security  
& Emergency Management

Department of Public Safety

about the evolving threats while negating the ideological misconceptions coupled with the term “extremism.” Other states and the federal government are using the same terminology.

In July 2021, OSP partnered with the FBI to deliver a series of multi-disciplinary trainings on preventing targeted violence in Oregon. While these trainings deliver a robust experience for attendees — including law enforcement, school counselors, and mental health professionals — they do not promote awareness about the evolving nature of the threat to the general public.

### While Oregon has not experienced incidents of domestic violent extremism as an insider threat, the state could follow leading practices to mitigate the risk

For much of 2021, there have been numerous calls to mitigate the threat posed from law enforcement staff or government employees who may act on behalf of violent extremist beliefs, generally described as an insider threat. These calls for risk mitigation culminated on June 15, 2021, when the White House released its National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism. As part of its strategy, the Office of Personnel Management is reviewing screening questionnaires for civil employees in “sensitive” positions, such as those with access to critical infrastructure or personnel records. As a result of the elevated threat, the U.S. Department of Defense is considering the prohibition of extremist activities for civilian and contract workers.

Some state and local governments have also worked to pass laws and make other policy changes that increase the ability to screen law enforcement personnel. Minnesota, the District of Columbia, and Oregon have all put forward proposals or changes that impact this area. In Minnesota, the state's police licensing board approved measures to ban officers from affiliating with white supremacy groups, but

legislation to codify this policy ultimately did not include that change. In Washington, D.C., a similar bill was proposed in the spring of 2021 that would require the D.C. Auditor to examine ties between hate groups and the Metropolitan Police Department.

In Oregon, House Bill 2936 passed in 2021 and requires:

- the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training to create a uniform background check for law enforcement units to implement during hiring processes; and
- law enforcement agencies to set standards for speech and conduct by officers, including social media, email, and instant messaging.

It is too soon to conclude on the outcome of any of the proposed or passed policy changes; many of them are not effective for years to come.

### The risk of insider threat extends beyond law enforcement agencies

While much of the focus has been on mitigating the risk of extremism within law enforcement, due care should also be taken for other government employees with access to sensitive information or assets.

The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency notes terrorism as an insider threat is “the unlawful use of force and/or violence by a trusted insider against their organization or workplace in furtherance of a political, religious, or social objective.” The federal agency also defines bias incidents as an insider threat in which hostile conduct is committed by a trusted insider against an associate or the organization and is “motivated by racism, religious intolerance, gender discrimination, or other prejudice.” The agency further defines a hate crime as the evolution of a bias incident to the point of breaking a state or federal law.

Figure 8: Insider threat manifests in various ways



Source: U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

Oregon has two policies for mitigating the risk of insider threat from violence in the workplace.<sup>13</sup> These policies are developed and implemented by the Department of Administrative Services. The state also offers a brief, voluntary training course, “Violence and Weapons in the Workplace,” that covers both of these policies. However, instead of voluntary training offerings, these important training programs could be part of an annual training regimen for employees similar to other required annual security training programs.

**Figure 9: Understanding red-flag indicators of terrorism, bias crime, and hate crimes is crucial**

- Expressing bias or hatred toward a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or identity
- Browsing extremist websites
- Expressing hatred or intolerance of U.S. society or culture
- Advocating violence for a political, religious, or ideological cause
- Monitoring or recording security equipment, movement, or responses
- Engaging in deception or concealment

Source: U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency

In the broader context of statewide plans to mitigate the risk of domestic violent extremism as an insider threat, it is crucial agencies like OSP and OEM coordinate with the Department of Administrative Services to clearly define the risk and develop an insider threat mitigation program for agencies to use. In order to reduce this risk, organizations should train employees on how individuals may progress on the pathway to a malicious act and on the behaviors malicious insiders may exhibit as they move from an idea to action.

In line with recommendations from the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, organizations should also strive to foster a culture of reporting, train staff on how to report concerns, and provide an accessible reporting mechanism. By bolstering reporting mechanisms, organizations may better position themselves to detect and mitigate the risk of potential insider threats.

## **Mitigating the risk of damage to critical infrastructure remains a vital component of statewide planning**

Critical infrastructure is defined by DHS as the backbone of our nation’s economy, security, and health. At the most fundamental level, infrastructure makes our societies run. Disruption or destruction of these systems would have a debilitating impact to the state and its people. These systems, such as hospitals, water treatment, and power plants, are publicly and privately controlled and their operation is critical to Oregon’s prosperity.

In line with federal guidance, Oregon has developed the Oregon Infrastructure Protection Plan. This comprehensive plan incorporates numerous programs designed to mitigate the threat to the state’s critical infrastructure. One such element is the TITAN Fusion Center which serves as Oregon’s homeland security information clearinghouse. The Fusion Center has been performing this function since 2007.

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<sup>13</sup> [DAS 50.010.02](#), Violence-Free Workplace, and [50.010.05](#), Weapons in the Workplace, serve to set state policy for employee behavior and reporting of potentially dangerous situations

The Fusion Center is staffed jointly by the DOJ and FBI and works to fulfill its mission “to protect Oregon citizens from terrorist and criminal activity.”

**Figure 10: The nature of threats is constantly evolving**



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Oregon, like all states, sets its critical infrastructure capability targets identified in the Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment process. The state performs an assessment to determine its current readiness to achieve its capability targets according to the National Preparedness Goal.<sup>14</sup> Efforts to prevent, respond, and recover from disruption or destruction of infrastructure rely on the intentional collaboration between government and industry partners. The results of the statewide assessment are leveraged by the TITAN Fusion Center which uses the information to conduct its operations. A collaborate “whole community” approach is necessary to achieve the core capabilities defined in the National Preparedness Goal.

### **Rapidly evolving DVE risks to critical infrastructure necessitate continuous reevaluation**

Oregon is required to complete a Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and Stakeholder Preparedness Review annually per federal requirements. To complete this process, a broad range of community and critical infrastructure sector input is required. The national risk management framework is illustrated in Figure 11. Oregon’s authority to manage the risks to critical infrastructure spans from multiple state statutes.<sup>15</sup>

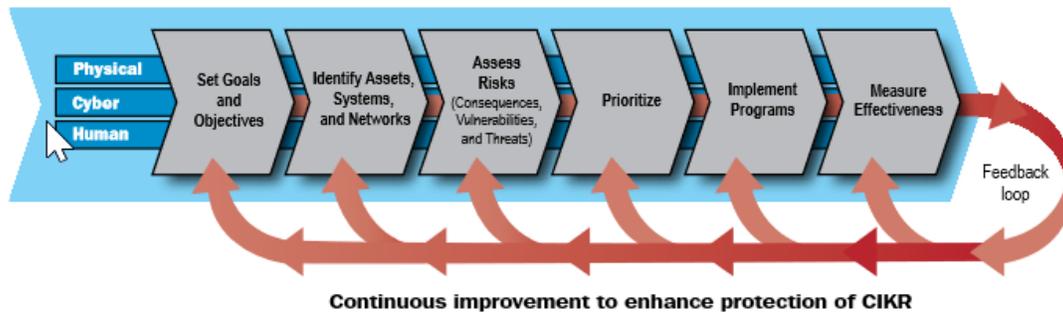
Due to the de-centralized and complex nature of the critical infrastructure environment, risk surrounding it is uncertain. As a result, the infrastructure protection plan uses an “all hazards” approach to the risk assessment to consider the rapidly evolving threat of domestic violent extremism and other unpredictable events, such as earthquakes. Plans to mitigate the risks identified in the assessment

<sup>14</sup> FEMA established the [National Preparedness Goal](#) with five mission areas: prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery, and 32 core capabilities.

<sup>15</sup> [ORS 276A](#) requires the State Chief Information Officer to address high-risk cybersecurity for the state’s critical infrastructure and [ORS 401](#) establishes the Oregon Pre-Disaster Fund, which is set up partly to provide funding to state and local governments to respond to human-caused disaster.

consider events that could disrupt or harm the people or critical assets of Oregon. While the state has outlined these plans in detail, they should be revisited to incorporate the latest DVE threat information.

**Figure 11: Oregon adheres to the national Risk Management Framework for continuous improvement**



Source: Oregon Infrastructure Protection Plan

Revised plans should continue to incorporate community partners as identified in the Oregon State Infrastructure Protection plan. Partnerships among public and private critical infrastructure asset owners and operators plays an important role in mitigating the potential consequences from domestic violent extremism.

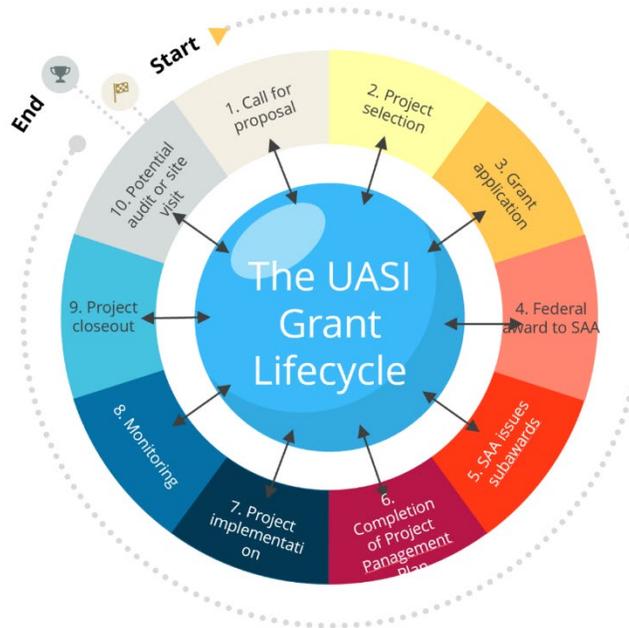
## Urban Area Security Initiative Grants are fundamental sources of funding to counter domestic violent extremism

Oregon operates a collection of grant programs aimed at improving the ability of individuals, governments, and organizations to prevent, prepare for, and respond to catastrophic events, including acts of terrorism. State statute designates OEM as the sole grant administrator for the state when dealing with federal emergency management funds.

One of these grant programs is the Homeland Security Grant Program, which is a joint grant program with DHS and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Oregon currently receives funding under two Homeland Security Grant Programs: the State Homeland Security Program and the Urban Area Security Initiative, or UASI. Together, these grant programs fund activities implementing state homeland security strategies addressing planning, organization, equipment, trainings, and exercises designed to prevent, prepare for, respond to terrorism or catastrophic events.

In February 2021, the DHS Secretary announced the agency had designated “combating domestic violent extremism” as a National Priority Area for both of these grant programs. As part of this new focus, the federal government would require 7.5% of UASI and State Homeland Security Program grant dollars to go to efforts combatting DVE, such as trainings for law enforcement officers, new equipment, and staff. This is a new priority for the federal government as there has been a lack of direct policy push to work against DVE explicitly and will likely result in more projects in the future.

**Figure 12: The UASI grant lifecycle is a continuous process with many moving parts**

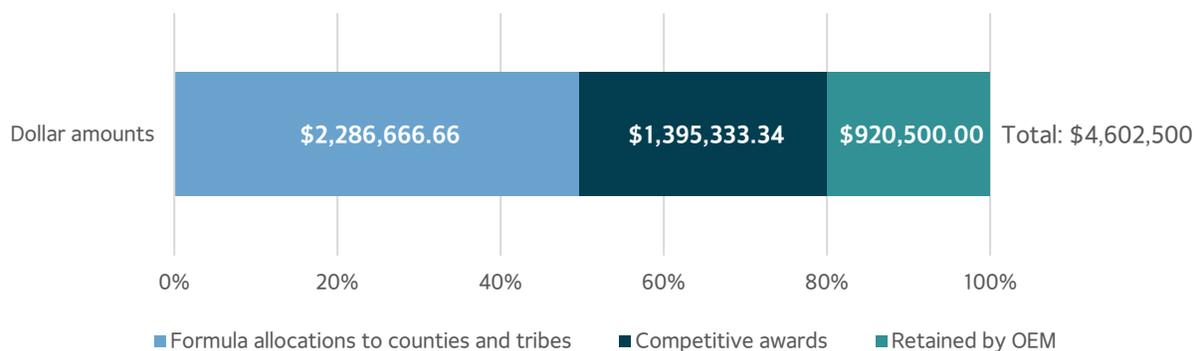


Source: Maryland-National Capital Region Emergency Response System.

Local and Tribal governments are eligible for grants under the program including Tribal nations, counties, cities, ports, transit authorities, water districts, and regional planning commissions.

OEM also operates the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which funds physical security enhancements and other security-related activities to nonprofit organizations that are at high risk of a terrorist attack. Additionally, the program seeks to integrate the preparedness activities of nonprofit organizations into state and local efforts. In Oregon, this grant funds nonprofit organizations located within Oregon's UASI-designated areas<sup>16</sup> and for-profit organizations located outside these areas. These funds are distributed through a hybrid allocation model: a formula-based allocation and a competitive application process.

**Figure 13: About half of the total State Homeland Security Project funding for fiscal year 2021 was allocated to counties and Tribes<sup>17</sup>**



<sup>16</sup> Designated areas are determined annually through a calculation mandated by U.S. Congress.

<sup>17</sup> For detailed Tribe and county specific allocations visit the [OEM FY 2021 Funding Distribution Methodology](#).

A significant portion of the UASI and Homeland Security Grant programs is operated through the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization, a partnership of government agencies and private and nonprofit organizations in the Portland Metropolitan Region. These entities work together to build and maintain regional all-hazards disaster preparedness capabilities through coordinated planning, training, exercising, and investing in technology and specialized equipment. It operates in Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, and Washington counties as well as Clark County in Washington.

Members and participants in the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization include the City of Portland, Metro Regional government, the metro-area counties, other metro-area cities, as well as a number of international, federal, state, local and private sector stakeholders.<sup>18</sup> Examples of projects funded by the organization include:<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 14: Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization funded various projects**

2020 Project Examples		
<b>Titan Fusion Center</b>	\$138,974	Funding supports 1.00 full-time equivalent position Research Analyst 3 to support the RDPO region. Provides coordination for information sharing related to terrorism and criminal activity. Coordinates information sharing between the RDPO region, states fusion centers and the National Fusion Center Network. Addresses required federal priority area.
<b>Regional Radio Encryption</b>	\$610,460	Funds radio encryption upgrades for public service agencies including police, fire, and public works agencies across the region. Funding is distributed across multiple investment justifications to meet federal investment targets.
<b>Cybersecurity</b>	\$150,000	Funding supports 1.00 full-time equivalent position Information Systems Analyst 5 to support the region focused on cybersecurity. Housed within the Titan Fusion Center. Tools include information sharing between the RDPO region, the states' fusion centers and the National Fusion Center Network. Required federal priority investment.
<b>Drone Detection</b>	\$50,000	Purchases four ground based portable drone detection systems used to identify and locate unlawful operators at high-risk events. These are deployable assets for counter terrorism to be shared regionally. Addresses federal priority areas.
2019 Project examples		
<b>SWAT Command and Team Leader Dev Trainings</b>	\$75,266	The NTOA SWAT Command and Team Leader Development Courses are multi-agency effort coordinated by the Washington County Sheriff's Office (WCSO). The training is intended to improve the capabilities of law enforcement (LE) officers around the Portland Urban Area to effectively respond to and manage terrorism, civil disturbance, and other incidents. The requested funds will pay for direct delivery costs (i.e., instructors) only.

<sup>18</sup> For a complete listing of Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization partners, [visit the organization's website](#).

<sup>19</sup> Funding amounts are a combination of state and federal dollars; breakdowns of specific funding sources were unavailable.

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**LE Crisis Comms**

\$30,000

Improves performance of emergency communications by and between all regional stakeholders including the public; accomplished through using recognized subject matter experts, experienced practitioners. Engages all sector all discipline partners including public information officers, public affairs and emergency media-related personnel in government, private and non-governmental sectors. Encourages participation of executive, elected officials and anyone concerned with critical messaging.

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# Project Approach

This advisory report — a research-based, non-audit project — included interviews, data analysis, and a review of statutes, administrative rules, and guidance on threat assessment and threat management. Those interviewed included:

- a representative from Oregon U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley’s office;
- special agents and analysts from the FBI, Portland Field Office
- state legislators and staff within the Governor’s Office;
- the Deputy Attorney General and Deputy Superintendent of Police;
- managers from the DOJ TITAN Fusion Center;
- OSP detectives assigned to the Joint Terrorism Task Force;
- other OSP supervisors and sworn officers;
- a grants coordinator at OEM;
- researchers with American University’s Polarization and Extremism Research Innovation Lab;
- U.S. Department of Justice contractors at Deloitte & Touche, LLP; and
- members of the Southern Poverty Law Center, Western States Center, and Anti-Defamation League.

We also analyzed and evaluated data from the Center for Strategic and International Studies; evaluated laws and regulations in other states; and reviewed government and academic literature on the prevention of domestic terrorism and domestic violent extremism.

We chose to perform this work as a non-audit project to reduce the impact on agencies responding to the COVID-19 emergency and ongoing law enforcement activities. We also considered the fact that the role of the state in mitigating and responding to domestic violent extremism is often supplanted by federal jurisdiction.

Accordingly, this report does not adhere to government auditing standards, including standards for detailed planning of fieldwork steps and internal control reviews of auditees. This advisory report has undergone the same rigorous quality assurance process as does each audit from the Oregon Audits Division, with auditors not involved in the project checking evidence for each assertion in the report. We also consulted with DOJ and OSP leadership prior to initiating the project, provided the agencies involved with a copy of the report, and gave them the opportunity to provide feedback.

This report complements two other audit reports conducted by our office regarding public safety initiatives and efforts of the state, as well as the division’s future work related to public safety. Collectively, this work highlights the importance of the state’s public safety focus and the urgency for the state to prepare to mitigate future risks that could impact the lives of current and future Oregonians.

We would like to thank DOJ and OSP management and staff for their cooperation as well as the many participants in the emergency response and violence prevention efforts who provided their time and information to us for this project.

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### About the Secretary of State Audits Division

The Oregon Constitution provides that the Secretary of State shall be, by virtue of the office, Auditor of Public Accounts. The Audits Division performs this duty. The division reports to the elected Secretary of State and is independent of other agencies within the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches of Oregon government. The division has constitutional authority to audit all state officers, agencies, boards and commissions as well as administer municipal audit law.

## Suggested Actions

As this is an advisory report and not an audit, we are not making recommendations that require an agency response. However, we suggest the following actions to help reduce the risk domestic violent extremism poses in Oregon. Some of these actions would likely require additional resources.

To enhance the state's ability to mitigate the risk of domestic violent extremism and protect the residents of Oregon, DOJ and OSP could:

- work with the Legislature to enact statute and rules defining and criminalizing domestic terrorism and domestic violent extremism;
- collaborate with the Oregon Homeland Security Council to:
  - establish a statewide strategy with specific, measurable outcomes for countering violent extremism;
  - establish dedicated plans to mitigate the risk of insider threat; and
  - revise the Oregon Infrastructure Protection Plan to consider the evolving threat of domestic violent extremism.
- develop and implement processes to track progress, measure effectiveness, and report on efforts to counter violent extremism activities;
- create an external reporting system of domestic violent extremism plots and incidents where release of such information does not violate the privacy of any individual or cause harm to state security; and
- formalize interagency and interjurisdictional working agreements to better facilitate the long-term success of organizations to meet future threats.

To enhance the ability of communities statewide to identify and mitigate the risk of local domestic violent extremism:

- OSP and DOJ can collaborate with the Department of Administrative Services to increase employee training opportunities statewide, including:
  - law enforcement training could be expanded to increase awareness of domestic violent extremism indicators at state and local levels; and
  - recurring training for other state employees on the risk, indicators, and how to report potential insider threat could further reduce statewide risk.
- OSP can work with state and local partners to increase public awareness of the nature and extent of the risk of violent extremism and the methods used by extremist groups to target and recruit individuals online; and
- DOJ, OEM, and other state agencies should continue to identify and leverage federal funding opportunities for funding programs to counter violent extremism and encourage local entities to do the same when applicable.



Cover photograph is courtesy of the Statesman Journal and photographer Brian Hayes. All rights reserved.

This report is intended to promote the best possible management of public resources.

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