



Issue Brief: **HOMELAND SECURITY**

Updated April 2008

Background

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, all levels of government—federal, state and local—have allocated resources to improve homeland security and prepare for future terrorist attacks.

President Bush enacted on November 25, 2002, legislation (Public Law # 107-296) to create a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to coordinate intelligence about terrorism and tighten the nation's domestic defenses. The new department absorbed a huge swath of the executive branch, including the Coast Guard, Secret Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Immigration and Naturalization Service and Customs Service, as well as the new agency in charge of airport security, the Transportation Security Administration. The new department also assists state and local governments to prepare for and to defend against future terrorist attacks through its Office of Domestic Preparedness. The office is responsible for managing the new department's resources for state and local homeland security efforts, serving as a clearinghouse for information sharing, research and technical support.

Department of Homeland Security's Disaster Response Plan

In January 2008, the Department of Homeland Security released its streamlined disaster response plan, *The National Response Framework* (NRF), which affirms the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) authority to coordinate federal disaster operations. The NRF offers comprehensive guidance on the intergovernmental response to national emergencies, including terrorism, and becomes effective on March 22, 2008. Of particular importance to local governments is the chapter which focuses entirely on the role of local elected and appointed officials during a disaster response. The plan also outlines the roles and responsibilities of the states, the federal government and the private sector. The NRF can be found at: <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/>.

Application Guidance for Federal Grant Programs

The Department of Homeland Security announced the release of application guidance for 14 federal grant programs whose collective purpose is to strengthen prevention, protection, response and recovery capabilities at all levels of government. Guidance on all 14 grant programs is being released simultaneously to allow applicants more time to plan and apply for funding, as well as more rapidly begin implementing security measures. Additionally, as part of the recommendations of the Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act, the DHS regional offices will have an enhanced role in administering grant programs. More information on each grant program can be found at <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/index.shtm>.

FY 2008 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations

In the final hours of the 2007 legislative session, Congress approved and the President signed *the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2008* (Public Law # 110-161). The law provides \$36.3 billion in funding for the Department of Homeland Security, including \$950 million for the State Homeland Security Grant Program and the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program, \$820 million for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Grants, \$750 million for FIRE Grants, and \$300 million for Emergency Management Performance Grants.

September 11th Commission Recommendations

Also on the Homeland Security front, on August 3, 2007, the President signed legislation, H.R.1 (Public Law # 110-53), implementing many of the recommendations made by the September 11th Commission. Most significantly for states and local governments, the law provides more anti-terrorism funding through state homeland security grants based on risk of a terrorist attack, lowering the minimum allocation of grant funding per state from 0.75 percent to 0.375 percent of total funding through FY08 and then decreasing the state minimum to 0.35 percent over the next five years. The law also authorizes a grant program dedicated to interoperable communications. While a specific amount was not authorized for FY 2008, the legislation authorizes \$400 million in each fiscal year between 2009 and 2012. Finally, the legislation creates the National Strategy for Public Transportation and Security, which will make grants to public transportation agencies through its Public Transportation Security Assistance Program to help minimize security threats through physical improvements, training and public awareness campaigns. For FY 2008, \$650 million has been authorized increasing to \$750 million for FY 2009, \$900 million for 2010 and \$1.1 billion for FY 2011.

Additional Resources

- Department of Homeland Security – Office for Domestic Preparedness (www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp)
- FEMA (<http://www.fema.gov/>)
- National Emergency Management Association (<http://nemaweb.org/index.cfm>)
- For legislation go to (www.thomas.gov)