



American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

GUIDANCE FOR COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (CVE) GRANT PROGRAMS

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) strongly cautions community groups and organization against participating in CVE programs and applying for government funding under the U.S Department of Homeland Security CVE grant program.

ADC encourages community groups and organizations to research and identify alternative forms of funding to help our community.

In the event a decision is made to apply for the grants, organizations are strongly encouraged to follow the principles outlined below. These principles have the community interest at stake, and are aimed at protecting the civil rights and liberties of all.

1. Programs should be grassroots community created and led.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Department of Justice (DOJ) are conducting CVE programs. Programs should not be organized or led by the government/law enforcement. Community/civic engagement programs should not be used for intelligence gathering or surveillance purposes.

2. Programs should put in place policies and practices to protect Arab and Muslim communities from being singled out.

Programs should not use a checklist to determine persons of concern that the program should be directed at for participation. The race, religion, national origin, or ethnicity of a person does not indicate violent behavior. Poverty, limited education, and immigrant background does not indicate violent behavior. Programs should require anti-profiling and anti-discrimination trainings.

3. Programs should protect Freedom of Speech and Constitutional Rights.

The First Amendment protects our right to freedom of speech, association, assembly, and expression. Political opinion, involvement in protests, views of government mistrust and questions of foreign policy actions do not indicate violent behavior. Programs should not watch the social media accounts, blogs, and of participants. Programs should welcome and create a safe space for all ideas, thoughts, and beliefs. Programs should put in place detailed steps to protect civil rights and civil liberties. Peacefully expressing views deemed to be extreme should not be criminalized. Failure to protect these values will stand in danger of criminalizing free thought, expression and political dissent—it is freedom of speech itself that enables dialogue on all violence.



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4. Programs must not report or communicate information, conversations, and interactions to the government or law enforcement.

We all have the right to privacy and freedom of speech without government interference. Information should not be shared with government agencies or foreign entities, especially information about individuals that have not been convicted of a crime. If information is requested, it should be pursuant to a warrant signed by a judge. Programs should not allow the government/law enforcement to seize/demand any notes or communications made by religious leaders, mental health professionals, teachers, or lawyers through this program or intervention. Regardless of whether notes or communications are protected under the law from disclosure or not, religious leaders, mental health professionals, teachers, or lawyers should not provide this information to the government/law enforcement.

5. Programs should have credibility with the local community.

A 'CVE economy' has emerged over the past few years, where money is being pushed into communities but only for CVE purposes. We must ensure that programs are credible and organizations involved are actually community based programs that both represent the community and have a responsibility to the community. Programs should not use the testimonials of former violent extremists. Programs should not involve foreign organizations, or organizations/groups that work on counterterrorism or foreign fighter issues.

6. Programs should report every year to the community it serves regarding how much funding received, how the funding was used, and if the program is effective.

Groups or persons who lead programs must have clear and open dialogue with the community they serve. The community should be aware of the program's aim and purpose, and how it benefits the community. Programs should be used to address such issues as bullying, diversity, immigrant integration and mental health to name a few.