

Protecting Americans in the 21st Century: Imperatives for the Homeland

A White Paper by The National Homeland Security Consortium

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Organizations



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There has been significant effort in the past seven years to improve our national ability to prevent, protect, respond, recover and mitigate across the full range of threats and hazards confronting America. Success in these efforts requires constant assessment of our national strategic goals and the steps being taken to achieve them. No single entity, public or private, is the sole authority in defining these goals and none is solely responsible for their accomplishment. Securing America's homeland is a shared national responsibility that federal, state, local, tribal, territorial and private sector organizations share with the American people.

Our nation is at a crossroads in its efforts to secure the homeland. The federal government has the opportunity to transition from top-down direction to meaningful cooperative engagement with all non-federal stakeholders. Doing so will enhance unity and allow us to achieve more rapid progress across the many challenges we confront, among these:

The wide range of factors that influence our safety and security are rapidly evolving. Our thinking and actions must therefore be agile and progressive.

The impending change of federal leaders in key positions can create instability. We must provide the next generation of leaders with the knowledge and capabilities to sustain stability and enhance America's domestic security.

Unresolved and uncoordinated national policy discussions weaken the foundations for making critical and timely decisions and inhibit the essential collaboration necessary for building the national trust, especially during times of crisis. Accordingly we must create a robust and consistent capability for engaging *national* stakeholders in both national discussions and the resulting decision making process about the security of the homeland.

The National Homeland Security Consortium (NHSC) remains committed to a more secure America. Four principles guide our overarching imperative for unity of purpose and effort.

The value of the National Homeland Security Consortium:

The National Homeland Security Consortium is a forum for public and private sector disciplines committed to coalescing efforts and perspectives to best protect America in the 21st Century. The Consortium consists of 21 national organizations representing local, state and private professionals. It represents the array of professions that deliver services daily that are vital to the safety and security of the United States. Our members are the front lines of protecting Americans and the homeland. We understand the scope and magnitude of ensuring safety and security locally or nationally cannot be performed solely by a single entity. We know that none of us can be fully effective attempting to work in isolation.

The creation of the Consortium is an example of how a variety of independent organizations have embraced the concept of expanded national local, state and private coordination—one necessitated by growing national demands. It is the new model for the new Century.

First – Preserving the historic principles that guide how our nation is governed is imperative.

Local and state governments, the private sector and our citizens have different roles but equal responsibility with the federal government for keeping our homeland secure; they must be equal partners in setting national goals and their supporting policies and procedures.

Second – Consistent, organized communication among stakeholders is required to build trust, resolve problems and prevent conflicts. The Federal government has responsibility for providing leadership in coalescing national efforts—but federal communications must be constant, occur at many levels and their coordination responsibilities must not be construed as unilateral decision authority.

Third – We must sustain national efforts. Each national crisis provides new lessons and threats to our nation constantly evolve. Meeting current and future goals requires continued investment of intellectual capital and financial resources to maintain what exists and to create what is needed for a secure future. Protecting the homeland cannot be construed as a short-term effort—it must become our new steady state.

Fourth – We must enhance our national resiliency. Recent steps have improved some aspects of our ability to protect America; but a more comprehensive and synchronized approach is needed to mitigate the potential cascading impacts of any one event on overall national and economic security and the subsequent stability of our homeland.

The aggressive steps being taken to protect people, infrastructure, the economy and society continue to evolve. While results of specific initiatives vary, there are overarching areas of progress. These include the recognition of the inter-dependencies among all levels of government and the private sector for managing national risk, the necessity for commitment of resources to both establish and re-establish all-hazard national capabilities and the desire for consistent structure and strategy. With others, these reflect both tangible and intellectual advancement. They help frame our understanding of the inextricable relationships between prevention, protection, response, recovery and mitigation. This progress underscores the National Homeland Security Consortium's desire for better and truly comprehensive solutions for advancing national preparedness and protecting America in the 21st Century.

Current national efforts are not cohesive or comprehensive. The sheer volume of major simultaneous initiatives along with the continuing crisis environment, fueled by reality and political discourse, combine to create unintended turmoil. This turmoil inhibits our national ability to implement candid overarching assessments of the success or failure of specific programs and to effectively define a broader national approach. Federal dialogue with local, state and private sector partners lacks consistency. This causes unproductive divisions among constituencies. Federal decisions with national implications, while well intentioned, often remain uncoordinated and create unintended negative cascading effects. National efforts remain a series of independent steps instead of a united comprehensive effort—one fully informed by all relevant stakeholders. Protecting Americans in the 21st Century requires that national efforts, under federal leadership, markedly transition from being reactive and fractured, to being proactive, coordinated and comprehensive. The NHSC remains committed to working with the federal government to make progress in charting the path forward and ensuring united efforts that protect America. Members of the NHSC wrestle with the implications of the current situation daily and recognize we can and must do better.

As a starting point from our perspective, we offer a number of actions that have national implications and can serve as the beginning of a renewed commitment to collaboration. Others may offer different perspectives about where to begin. Simply, we welcome the opportunity to address any issue, especially if it leads to sustained meaningful collaboration and causes improvements that help America attain a truly comprehensive approach to protecting the homeland.

Communication and Collaboration:

Establish a robust, sustained and consistent process for soliciting local, state, tribal, territorial and private sector engagement, including unfiltered input to key federal decision makers, on the full breadth of homeland security issues.

- Ensure stakeholders are included in all aspects of national policy development as successful collaboration requires a partnership with state and local governments, the private sector and nongovernmental organizations.
- Improve the capability for federal agencies and legislative committees to communicate and work together to ensure a coordinated and unified national approach to homeland security, and consistent messages to non-federal stakeholders.
- Establish clear cross-cutting direction to federal agencies that requires their individual implementation of homeland security initiatives be fully coordinated within the federal interagency in a manner that promotes a unified national effort.
- Ensure that federal agency offices responsible for maintaining ongoing policy-level liaison with non-federal government officials and private sector executive leaders, report directly to the head of their respective federal agency.
- Convene a broad ranging discussion with relevant stakeholder organizations to formally establish consistent processes and expectations about how collaboration will occur in the future.
- Improve coordination of legislatively directed deadlines imposed on federal agencies that subsequently create corresponding requirements for state, local, tribal, territorial and/or private sector input, to minimize redundant and conflicting demands for information from nonfederal stakeholders.

Intelligence and Information Sharing:

Preserve progress to date and continue to implement and expand efforts to ensure timely and effective sharing of information. Recent national information sharing strategies affirm the importance of these principles, but implementation remains inconsistent.

- Fix federal guidelines that inhibit the granting of security clearances to local, state and private sector partners and address the continuing inconsistency of recognizing clearances granted by different federal agencies.
- Promote through policy and resources the inclusion of the private sector and nongovernmental organizations with local, state and federal information sharing.
- Sustain federal funding for state and local information sharing and make it predictable and not limited to a single threat or hazard.

- Actively engage non-federal stakeholders in the development of federal program guidance and related budget creation, essential tools for implementing national information sharing policies.
- Integrate national databases and ensure the capability for local, state, tribal, territorial and private access where needed.
- Regularly assess the capability and progress for fusing and sharing information vertically and horizontally within government and between the public and private sectors to ensure that vital information is constantly provided to those responsible for protecting the homeland.

Use of Military:

Protect the Constitutional role of states regarding control of their National Guard forces and clarify the circumstances as well as the command, control and coordination procedures under which federal active duty forces are to be employed in operations within the homeland.

- Create clear policy for the Chief of the National Guard Bureau in consultation with Adjutants General to set National Guard operational requirements for inter-state domestic disaster relief and homeland security missions, without requiring Combatant Commander approval.
- Adequately define and resource the National Guard for its domestic support/protection and war-fighting missions.
- Develop an on-going monitoring process to ensure that during periods when the National Guard is called to federal service Governors will retain sufficient manpower and resources in their states for homeland security, disaster and emergency response missions.
- The National Guard should remain under the command and control of the nation's Governors for all homeland security operations purposes.
- Continue to remove bureaucratic obstacles and streamline processes for deploying federal military resources in support of civil authorities in times of local, regional or national disasters or emergencies.
- Establish clear joint force command protocols to assure federal active duty forces engaged in domestic operations within states can be placed under the supervision or the command and control of the Governor and the State Adjutant General.

Health and Medical:

Improve efforts to enhance the full range of health and medical readiness to address trauma and exposure related injury and disease.

- Sustain funding that supports ongoing public health, medical and EMS preparedness to build and enhance medical surge capacity; promote training and workforce development; enhance technology for disease prevention, detection, and production of medical countermeasures and mass prophylaxis.
- Review the nation's health care system to assess the impact of hospital diversion, medical and public health surge capacity (including workforce issues) and alternate standards of care on our ability to provide adequate medical care during times of national crisis.
- Focus more federal preparedness activities on pre-hospital care and the role of public, private, career and volunteer EMS providers.

- Integrate any new disease surveillance systems into existing state, local and federal systems.
- Support the registration, credentialing, organization and deployment of volunteer health professionals through existing state and local systems such as ESAR-VHP, NIMS-EMS credentialing project, Medical Reserve Corps and EMAC.
- Develop with input from nonfederal stakeholders, an overarching national policy regarding Standards of Care for use under extreme conditions such as with a federal declaration of National Emergency.
- Clarify the roles of federal agencies for leading national efforts to enhance health and medical readiness for disasters and acts of terrorism and specifically assure health and medical information sharing as part of broader information sharing initiatives.

Interoperability:

Continue to promote coordinated development of governance, technology and protocols necessary to enhance minimal capabilities for interoperable communications (voice, video and data) among all levels of government and the private sector.

- Establish incentives for private sector organizations to work with government to develop and maintain public safety communications systems at the local, regional, statewide and national levels.
- Continue to promote, through policy and resources, efforts that create local, regional, statewide and nationwide operability and interoperability.
- Allocate additional radio spectrum for public safety activities to ensure sufficient capacity exists to meet growing voice and data communications needs.
- Clarify the conditions and protocols under which private entities will be required to vacate radio spectrum under their control during federally declared National Emergencies.
- Develop a clear shared definition, vision and implementation strategy for nationwide communications interoperability.

Critical Infrastructure:

Strengthen efforts to protect and make more resilient our national critical infrastructure and subsequently our national economy, as well as accelerate steps to fully integrate the full range of federal efforts with the local, state and private sectors.

- Assure that the actual protection of critical infrastructure systems remains a primary responsibility of local and state governments with the private sector and support these requirements with adequate federal resources and policy.
- Improve collaboration between state and local, private sector and federal agencies working across all the sectors to enhance the planning, protection, and recovery efforts needed to address the interdependent nature of critical infrastructure systems.
- Begin transitioning from the current tactical approach to critical infrastructure protection that favors physical site protection, response and recovery to one of strategic continuum-based resilient critical infrastructure systems assurance against all threats and natural and man-caused hazards.

- Include all stakeholders as equal partners in all aspects of creating national critical infrastructure protection policy and guidance.
- Strengthen information sharing initiatives to ensure timely sharing of critical infrastructure protection guidance and intelligence with those who need to have it.

Surge Capacity and Unified National Capabilities Approach:

Reassess our total national homeland security effort to ensure strategy and execution are targeted to provide for the highest return on investment and provides the broadest set of capabilities to address the full range of national risk—natural, human-caused and technological.

- Review and update the Defense Production Act to improve its usefulness in supporting national efforts to address 21st Century asymmetric threats, including how it can transition to support non-military government organizations that provide critical direct services for defending and protecting the homeland.
- Ensure an immediate collaborative baseline review of target capabilities to identify needed adjustments based on lessons from actual events, advancements in capabilities or changes to our understanding of threats and establish a firm timetable to provide the necessary resources to support advancement.
- Rapidly implement a nationwide credentialing process involving all relevant federal, state and local government, and private sector organizations to enhance the ability for inter-state mutual aid, and where possible, to reduce reliance on direct federal personnel support in some areas.
- Provide technical and financial support to identify, resource type and package local, state, non-profit and private sector assets for rapid and sustained deployment (e.g. nationally credentialed recovery teams that include expertise in fields such as public works, local government management, law enforcement, EMS, fire, health and information technology).
- Establish a cross cutting logistics and surge management capability that unites local, state, federal and private sector coordination and support to impacted local communities.

Sustained Resources and Capabilities:

Implement and share with all stakeholders, multiyear federal homeland security strategic budget projections to support federal and nonfederal asset and budget planning and ensure consolidated annual expenditure reporting of state and local funds supporting homeland security activities.

- Provide predictable and sustained federal technical and financial assets that are imperative to supporting the work of nonfederal stakeholders in their efforts to build and sustain capabilities that protect the homeland.
- Refine current homeland security funding approaches to ensure a national capacity to address the range and constantly changing nature of risk – from daily emergencies to natural disasters to acts of terrorism.
- Examine the full range of missions where current direct federal assistance (personnel, equipment and programs) might be more efficiently delivered by local, state, private or nongovernmental organizations and transition responsibilities and resources to establish these capabilities.
- Ensure program flexibility for including all relevant disciplines in all levels of development including training, education and funding.

Immigration and Border Security:

Implement national reforms to address the challenges immigration and border security issues create for local, state and private sector organizations.

- Congress and the Administration must actively engage with the full spectrum of stakeholders to develop policy and implementation programs to address immigration and border impacts on public safety, public health and welfare, education and business.
- Ensure state and local governments and the private sector are provided the resources needed to address immigration and border security related issues pending federal resolution of a broader national immigration and border security policy.

These priorities reflect a widely shared agreement of priority issues that can be the starting point for renewed national commitment and forward progress for protecting the homeland. The National Homeland Security Consortium is committed to working with federal elected and appointed leaders to assure a truly national and also comprehensive approach for protecting America in the 21st Century.

National Homeland Security Consortium

Purpose

The National Homeland Security Consortium is a forum for public and private sector disciplines to coalesce efforts and perspectives about how best to protect America in the 21st Century. The Consortium consists of 21 national organizations that represent local, state and private professionals. The consortium represents the array of professions that deliver the daily services that are vital to safety and security of the United States. The Consortium represents the first and secondary responders as well as those who will provide the sustained effort necessary to respond to any major emergency, including leadership and direction by elected and appointed officials.

The Consortium is an example of expanded local, state and private coordination necessitated by growing national demands. Our members recognize that people in the U.S. live in large population centers that have complex, overlapping and interrelated governmental and political structures. At the same time rural and less populated regions of the country also have citizens that expect and deserve safety and security from any hazard that may threaten their communities. Consequently, state and local government organizations that we represent have taken the initiative to significantly expand their collaboration in order to respond effectively in a crisis. We know that none of us can be effective attempting to work in isolation.

The Consortium provides a neutral forum for organizations to exchange ideas, have candid discussions, and galvanize input to the federal government. The differing perspectives of member organizations do not always provide for unanimity on specifics of implementing national initiatives. We do not aim for group think, but aspire to group understanding. More often than not, however, we have found easy consensus on our major goals.

Background

Participating organizations began meeting together in 2002 at the invitation of the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA). The National Homeland Security Consortium is an outgrowth of those initial discussions regarding the need for enhanced communication and coordination between disciplines and levels of government. The Consortium is now a recognized entity by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and works in partnership with other federal agencies such as the Department of Health and Human Services and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Consortium meets at least two times annually and shares information on a regular basis on issues of common interest. Subject matter experts within the Consortium are available as needed to provide input on national strategies, plans and policies impacting state and local governments, and the private sector.

Vision

Enhanced homeland security to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, disasters and catastrophes through strategic partnerships, collaborative strategies and information sharing.

Mission

Provide a forum of key national organizations through effective communication, collaboration, and coordination that positively promotes national policies, strategies, practices and guidelines to preserve the public health, safety and security of the nation.

Objectives

1. Provide a broad-based resource and sounding board on homeland security issues for all national stakeholders.
2. Share information, knowledge, experiences, and practices.
3. Contribute to the homeland security debate and discussion.
4. Focus efforts to resolve issues.
5. Develop recommendations in identified areas of common interest.

Participating Organizations

Adjutants General Association of the United States
American Public Works Association
Association of Public Safety Communications Officials
Association of State & Territorial Health Officials
Business Executives for National Security (BENS)
Council of State Governments
International Association of Emergency Managers
International Association of Fire Chiefs
International City/County Management Association
Major City Police Chiefs Association
National Association of Counties
National Association of County & City Health Officials
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials
National Conference of State Legislatures
National Emergency Management Association
National Governors' Association Homeland Security Advisors Council
National League of Cities
National Sheriffs' Association
Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense & Security
Urban Area Security Initiative Cities
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

For More Information:

The National Homeland Security Consortium is currently administered by the National Emergency Management Association, PO Box 11910, Lexington, KY 40578. For more information, contact the NEMA office at (859) 244-8233.