

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

A White Paper by The National Homeland Security Consortium
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Endorsing Organizations



National Homeland Security Consortium

2010 Urgent and Emerging Issues

A Supplement to the White Paper: Protecting Americans in the 21st Century: Imperatives for the Homeland

We have made progress. But the homeland security challenges the nation faces today are just as complex as they were on September 11, 2001; during those tragic late summer weeks in 2005; and most recently, in the waters and on the beaches of the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.

The global financial crisis and recession have also degraded the ability to prevent, protect, mitigate, respond and recover due to the devastating impacts on non-federal government budgets and the homeland security capabilities of the private sector. And finally, but most ominous, is the steadily increasing attempts to once again bring terror and manmade destruction to the homeland of the United States.

In 2008, the National Homeland Security Consortium declared their priorities for the continued protection of the nation in order to inform the national candidates and subsequent administration. This publication proposed 46 strategic actions that the member associations of the consortium viewed as critical to safeguard the public health, safety and security of the United States. A 2010 update to the original white paper follows this supplement.

The consortium members have revisited and reviewed those calls for action and reaffirm their credence, relevance and importance today. The members also reiterate the four overarching strategic principles that need to guide our unity of effort and purpose:

- Preserve the historic principles that guide how our nation is governed.
- Require consistent and organized communication among stakeholders to build trust, resolve problems and prevent conflicts.
- Sustain national efforts.
- Enhance our national resiliency.

This supplement is written on the eve of yet another significant leadership transition. In 2011, there will be a transition of over half of the state and territorial governors which will also drive the turnover of many state homeland security leaders. The loss of institutional knowledge to the homeland security enterprise can set back current efforts unless there is a robust and engaging transitional strategy.

It is with the above in mind that the member associations of the National Homeland Security Consortium rededicate themselves to their individual and collective missions to protect the health, safety and security of all Americans. The consortium reaffirms and reemphasizes the principles and strategic recommendations of their previous paper but also illuminate six critical issues that need to be highlighted for near term policy and strategic action.

Wisely Sustain Homeland Security Investments and Efforts

The success of the homeland security enterprise in the past nine years can partially be attributed to the financial investment of all levels of government and the private sector towards programs and activities that enhanced our overall capacities and capabilities. But in the same period, terrorist threats have evolved and the scope of homeland security has expanded. The nation has funded countless new or enhanced programs, activities and resources in an attempt to try and cover all our risks and all our constituencies. Most of these efforts must be sustained and at the same time, incentives must continue to support innovations and creative solutions.

The challenge is how to determine which activities are most important to overall success versus those that can be lessened or eliminated in priority and funding. ***The consortium calls for a shift in the way we discuss and decide homeland security funding.***

- Future fiscal decisions should not create a “competition of grant writing,” where one entity can “prevail” at the expense of another.
- Grant investment decisions must both recognize the need for risk based allocations in certain geographical areas while at the same time provide some funding to sustain basic response infrastructure for public safety and public health emergencies wherever they might occur.
- Funding must be allocated for multi-year periods to allow for the completion of projects and activities versus one-time injections of resources that will be re-assigned after each fiscal year.
- Homeland security resources should enhance the ability of the enterprise to address most natural and manmade hazards. The “dual use” flexibility of these funds must be maintained but must not become so diffused that we lose focus on the very threats that homeland security was created for in the first place.
- And most importantly, collectively, we must decide on our strategic homeland security goals. We must determine, together, what success should look like, who is best suited to bring it about, how we will know when we achieve it, and what resource methodology to use to support the conclusions of this rational sequence.

Allocate the 700 MHz D Block Radio Spectrum to Public Safety

The broadband revolution presents America’s first responders with the opportunity to take advantage of new technology that could greatly enhance public safety communications. For example, wireless broadband access will enable the development and widespread adoption of devices to track firefighters inside burning buildings; allow law enforcement to access video surveillance networks capable of identifying known terrorists through the use of video analytics, criminal records, automated license plate recognition and biometric technologies; and allow paramedics to share a patient’s vitals remotely with medical staff at a hospital. In order for our nation’s first responders to access this new technology, the federal government must support the development of a nationwide, interoperable, public safety wireless broadband network as well as provide for a dedicated stream of funding to enable the creation and implementation of a nationwide public safety interoperable wireless broadband network.

Currently, public safety has been licensed 10 MHz of spectrum by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to develop a nationwide public safety wireless broadband network; however, studies indicate that a truly resilient network would require 20 MHz. Public safety seeks another 10 MHz through the D Block to add to its already licensed spectrum in order to build out a mission critical public safety network. ***The consortium calls upon Congress, the administration and the FCC to act without delay in enacting legislation that allocates the D Block — a vital resource — to the public safety community.***

Address Immigration Reform

Intense and direct pressures created by the absence of comprehensive immigration reform at the national level are severely impacting the tribal, local and state public safety and governing entities. Federal agencies and non-federal governments struggle to balance the goals of public health and safety, economic development, and community cohesion amidst a debate that creates considerable conflict and political turmoil within communities, regions, and across the nation. Lack of a comprehensive reform built with collaborative partners jeopardizes the safety and security of our citizens and immigrants alike, imposes significant burdens on the economic and social fabric of our nation and creates intergovernmental tensions that may impede effective working relations on other issues.

The clearest nexus between immigration policy and homeland security occurs along the borders of the country. But addressing border issues alone is akin to treating the symptoms, not the root cause. ***The consortium is well aware of the divergence of views on the specific policies and strategies necessary. However, it calls upon leadership at all levels to make it a priority to move from debate and conversation to action.***

Measuring Homeland Security Performance

How successful have we been and how do we know it? What would we do with the answer if we knew it? The measurement of the performance of the homeland security enterprise has been frequently, and often vehemently, demanded. Few are satisfied with efforts to date. What on the surface appears to be a simple and objective endeavor is in reality, a complex and subjective under-taking.

While the measurement of relatively small pieces of homeland security overall might be accomplished in straightforward methods, as soon as we attempt to aggregate or integrate relationships among the various parts of the enterprise, the conclusions become unreliable and suspect. The whole is not the same as the sum of its parts. Therefore, measurement philosophies, methodologies and processes must account for the evolving nature of homeland security. There are many players involved and the environment is constantly evolving and adapting; therefore it is unwise to over-simplify this task.

The consortium stipulates that homeland security performance can and should be measured, but not in the conventional ways that other less complex government programs are measured. In other words, homeland security performance might look more like the results we expect to see from national security measurements, rather than, for example, measurements of emergency service response times to incidents. Additionally, the outcomes we select to measure homeland security must come from our national and our communities' priorities, not solely those of the homeland security government sector.

Securing Cyberspace

U.S. cyber systems have developed over time with an emphasis on capturing economic and social benefits, rather than emphasizing security. Digital devices and information systems have become so integral to our commercial activities and the operation of the nation's critical infrastructure that they are ubiquitous. Still, public and private sector stakeholders believe that the widespread connectivity of IT and critical infrastructure needs to be increasingly balanced, if not required, with security in mind.

While many of the issues and challenges facing homeland security are complex, securing the electronic enterprise may be the least understood and most poorly defined of all. While the Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR) recently identified the safety and security of cyberspace as one of the five mission areas of the homeland security enterprise, the answer to precisely who, what, how and when remain unclear and is becoming increasingly

unfocused. Even the most preliminary steps of awareness and education are haphazard and ineffective, let alone the understanding of roles, responsibilities and desired outcomes of all the interested and affected communities. While Homeland Security Presidential Directive 23 may clarify some or all of the above, its classification nullifies its effectiveness as a national, collaborative strategy.

It's the consortium's belief that 1) multiple federal agencies have lead responsibilities across the domains of *federal* cyber security; 2) many states have enacted and drafted their own plans; 3) the private sector is organizing activities to protect its assets; and 4) the international community is pursuing various paths to secure the global cyber infrastructure. ***The consortium strongly urges that the leaders of governments and the private sector set cyber security as a priority policy issue; perform some very basic steps of task organization delineating roles and responsibilities; commit to a unified, collaborative and integrated approach; and resource the requirements.***

Strategizing Long-Term Disaster Recovery

The homeland security community has become attuned to the need for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach in the rebuilding of communities struck by major disasters. At the same time, it recognizes that along the timeline from emergency response to community normalcy post event, a multitude of shifts occur in roles, responsibilities and the provision of resources. For example, the emergency management discipline has obvious authorities and capabilities in the immediate aftermath of an event, but gradually its influence, importance and even necessity wane as the needs and requirements of a full recovery are sometimes best led and coordinated by others. Another example is how the public works community has obvious primary responsibilities at one point in the recovery continuum while at another primacy may belong to a land-use authority. There is no national understanding and agreement on the responsibilities of government, the private sector and the general public for long term recovery. There are no criteria from which to determine that long term recovery is accomplished or when it transitions into something more akin to economic development. ***The consortium advocates that more discussion and planning are needed to address long term recovery.***

Conclusion

The consortium recognizes the progress made in a number of strategic areas highlighted by the 2008 white paper. Participating organizations commend the increased collaboration and coordination among the principle actors of the national homeland security enterprise. This was most clearly demonstrated in the construction and development of the QHSR.

More evidence of progress can be found elsewhere. The Department of Defense committed to and achieved the formation of the Council of Governors to bridge a communications gap. There is now a forum to discuss issues concerning the domestic use of the military. The nation's fusion centers have begun to make significant progress in the sharing of information and intelligence while consistently emphasizing the need to avoid infringement of the personal rights and civil liberties of Americans. Executive and legislative branches continued to support and sustain the federal investments in efforts to protect and secure the homeland while understanding that the challenge is national, and efforts are weakened when divided by levels of government, government agencies, professional disciplines or selfish propositions of "risk superiority."

The consortium takes to heart the realization that homeland security strategic objectives and critical issues can be resolved when addressed in a collaborative and coordinated policy environment. This brief narrative highlights these critical issues as the next focus for our community and our leaders.

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

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There has been significant effort in the past nine years to improve our national capability 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, state, and territorial 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. These recognitions 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.

The NHSC remains committed to continuing to work with the federal government to make progress in charting the path forward and ensuring united efforts that protect America. We offer a number of actions that have national implications and that can serve as a continued commitment to collaboration. Others may offer different perspectives about where to focus efforts first or more. Regardless, we welcome the opportunity to address any issue, especially if it leads to sustained meaningful collaboration and brings about 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.

- Fully implement and monitor the effectiveness of the Presidential Executive Order on Classified National Security Information Programs for State, Local, Tribal and Private Sector Entities.
- Streamline the granting of security clearances to local, tribal, state and private sector partners and address the continuing inconsistency of recognizing clearances granted by different federal agencies.
- Promote through policy and resources additional 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 which are 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 and enhance efforts to provide for a full range of public health and medical readiness to address injuries, illness and exposure related diseases.

- 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 initiatives in preparedness and response activities on pre-hospital care and the role of public, private, career and volunteer EMS providers.

- Integrate any new disease and biohazard (biological, chemical, radiological) surveillance systems into existing state, local and federal systems and properly equip mobile first responder assets in the field to respond effectively to any threat detection.
- 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 the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC).
- Develop, with input from nonfederal stakeholders, an overarching national policy for tribal, state and local jurisdictions regarding the use of Standards of Care under extreme conditions, (for example during 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.
- Review the current Public Health Emergency Countermeasures Enterprise in conjunction with the Emergency Services Sector, in order to assure a comprehensive medical countermeasure system that will protect emergency response personnel into the 21st century.

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, with particular emphasis on coordinating the broad range of emergency and law enforcement first responder resources deployed across the country.
- Allocate the D Block spectrum to the public safety community in order to build out a mission critical public safety wireless broadband network.
- Establish protocols under which state and local governments can use federal resources and infrastructure to build out a nationwide public safety broadband network.
- 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 the owners and operators in partnership with local and state governments and support these requirements with adequate federal resources and policy.
- Ensure that local, regional and state agencies are provided adequate federal support and funding to procure and operate the proper, safe and effective equipment required to support our collective homeland security mission.
- 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).
- Develop region-based teams that are credentialed and trained and capable of a rapid and sustained response, so that a full range of services can be provided in a coordinated way for weeks at a time in catastrophic situations.

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.
- Provide funding and other support required to upgrade and improve law enforcement and other emergency first responder resources as new technologies or state-of-the-art product solutions become available.

Immigration, Border Security and Global Supply Chain Security:

Implement national reforms to address the challenges immigration, border security and global supply chain 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 that 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.
- Balance federal enforcement of immigration laws with support for immigration integration in communities where law-abiding individuals are working and supporting their families while they await visas.
- Congress and the Administration should engage the private sector to leverage their efforts to enhance security of the global supply chain. Efforts to expand trusted shipper programs through a global harmonization effort would further assist in facilitating legitimate trade and enhancing national security.

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.

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)
Governors' Homeland Security Advisors Council
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
National League of Cities
National Sheriffs' Association
Naval Postgraduate School Center for Homeland Defense & Security
State Homeland Security Advisors
The Council of State Governments
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.