



2020 Threat Incident Summary for State and Federal Grants

This document is a reference to be utilized in establishing your organization's demonstrated need for target hardening activities in both the State PCCD and Federal NSGP grants. Your first references should be any incidents directed toward your facility, employees, members or clients. You should also reference the 10/27/18 attack on the Tree of Life building. If you have had no direct threats, it is advisable to include an example of a national incident that occurred in an organization that is similar to your own.

According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Threat Assessment published in October 2020, ideologically motivated lone offenders and small groups pose the most likely terrorist threat to the Homeland, with Domestic Violent Extremists (DVEs) presenting the most persistent and lethal threat. Among DVE's, White Supremacist Extremists (WSEs) will remain the most persistent and lethal threat to the Homeland. Since 2018, they have conducted more lethal attacks in the United States than any other DVE movement.

On Nov. 12, 2020, John Pulcastro, a Supervisory Intelligence Analyst at the Pittsburgh FBI stated that Pittsburgh has become a hub for white supremacy and extremists, noting a dramatic increase in white-supremacist ideology and an influx of white supremacists moving in to the Pittsburgh area.

Defending against mass shootings, active threats, and violence in the Jewish community has taken on a continued urgency as the frequency and lethality of attacks has increased. The past two years has seen an accelerationism in white supremacy and anti-Semitism.

The 2019 FBI Hate Crime Statistics report, released on November 16, 2020, shows that while overall hate crimes rose just 3%, the crimes were more violent than in previous years. For the third consecutive year, more than 7,000 hate crimes were reported. Jews continue to be the focus of hate crimes as 60.3% of religious bias attacks were directed at those of Jewish faith. The report can be found here, [FBI — 2019](#).

Local Threats

The October 27, 2018 attack on the Tree of Life building in Pittsburgh was the deadliest attack against the Jews in U.S. History, 11 worshipers were killed, 2 worshipers and 4 law enforcement officers were injured. The assailant verbally stated his hatred of Jews during the attack and posted anti-Semitic ideology on-line prior to the attack.

There was an increase in reporting via the Virtual Command Center (VCC), a database that is tied to law enforcement in Pittsburgh, with 131 incidents from January 2018 to November 2020. From January 2020 to November 2020 there have been 41 incidents. Threats via email, US mail, flyers, social media, telephone threats, verbal assaults, physical threats, etc. are shared with the FBI and Law Enforcement instantly through the VCC.

On October 10, 2020, white supremacists gathered in Pittsburgh for a “WON’T SAY SORRY” concert. The approximately 100 attendees were comprised of local people as well as others from out of state. The venue served as a gathering place to exchange white supremacy ideology. This event was followed by several Patriot Front demonstrations in Pittsburgh.

The Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh closely tracks these threats and coordinates with law enforcement for a swift and thorough response. Since January 2018, these threats have varied in severity, but they have been consistent in occurrence.

National Threats

April 27, 2019, a white-supremacist extremist open-fired at Chabad of Poway in Poway, California, killing one person as she protected a Rabbi. Three others were injured. The assailant’s weapon malfunctioned, and he fled and was captured within minutes. Prior to the attack the individual reportedly posted an online manifesto consistent with white supremacist extremist ideology, stating his intent to kill Jews.

July 28, 2019, a domestic terrorist shot and killed three individuals and injured 13 others before killing himself at the Gilroy Garlic Festival in California. FBI subsequently recovered a list of targets that included Democratic and Republican political organizations, religious institutions, and federal buildings.

In August 2019, police in Ohio arrested a man for threatening to attack a Youngstown Jewish Community Center.

On August 8, 2019, a Nevada-based individual was charged with a federal firearms violation after a search of his residence revealed firearms and components of explosive devises. According to the federal complaint, the individual discussed committing an attack against a local synagogue.

In September 2019, the FBI arrested a Florida man who threatened to attack a synagogue.

On November 2, 2019, a Colorado-based individual was charged with three federal counts-including hate crimes-regarding an alleged plot to attack a local synagogue using explosives with the intent to intimidate the local Jewish community.

On December 10, 2019, two armed assailants open-fired on a Jewish kosher supermarket in Jersey City, NJ, four people were killed, including a police officer, and three were injured. The assailants shared anti-Semitic, white supremacy, and anti-law enforcement ideologies.

On December 28, 2019, a masked attacker armed with a machete entered the home of a Rabbi during a Hanukkah celebration in Monsey, NY, killing one person and wounding four. After leaving the residence, the attacker attempted to gain entry to the synagogue next door but worshippers barricaded the door.

March 24, 2020, a Missouri man was killed in a gunfight with law enforcement as he was attempting to acquire bomb making material to bomb a hospital treating COVID-19 patients. The planned attack was motivated by his white-supremacy ideology and his hatred of the Jews; it was to be an act of retaliation thwarted by the FBI. He was part of neo-Nazi movement and had been under investigation by FBI for several months.

April 2, 2020, a Massachusetts man was arrested for a hate crime in East Longmeadow, MA as he attempted to set Ruth's House, a Jewish assisted-living facility, on fire in an act of anti-Semitism. The assailant was charged federally with hate crimes.

May 12, 2020, two New York men were arrested by the FBI after purchasing a cache of weapons with obliterated serial numbers. The on-line investigation revealed anti-Semitic ideology, celebratory posts of the Monsey, NY attack on the Orthodox Jews, and floor plans and photos of many area Jewish organizations to include the local Jewish Community Center.

October 16, 2020, the United Hebrew Temple in Benton, IL was the target of theft and vandalism. Damage included 10 stained-glass windows that were broken, prayer books and kippot (religious head coverings) thrown on the floor, and vandalism to the kitchen. The congregation reports this was the third incident in less than a month. More than a week earlier, another reported break-in resulted in stolen electronic equipment. Two windows also were broken in a previous but recent incident.

October 20, 2020 (The Jewish News of Northern California), a swastika was discovered painted on the historic wooden sanctuary doors of Oakland's Temple Sinai. The graffiti was reported as a hate crime and is being investigated as such by the Oakland Police Department. It's the latest incident of vandalism at the synagogue over the past few weeks. The synagogue dates back to 1914, and the doors are believed to be original.

November 9, 2020 (Lexington Herald Leader), the sign and menorah outside the Chabad of the Bluegrass Jewish Student Center near the University of Kentucky campus were vandalized. The sign was "bashed-in" and there was evidence of an attempt to tear down the menorah. The vandalism follows telephone threats made in August against the Center's director, Rabbi Shlomo Litvin, after he had publicly vowed to teach against pamphlets dropped around Central Kentucky by a neo-Nazi group. This is the fourth time the Jewish Student Center has been vandalized according to Litvin.

November 11, 2020 (Sun Sentinel/Jewish Journal/JTA), one of the leaders of the Proud Boys, a far-right group, is trying to rebrand the organization as explicitly white supremacist and anti-Semitic. Kyle Chapman, the founder of a "tactical defense arm" of the Proud Boys known for engaging in street violence, claimed in a message on the encrypted chat app Telegram that he has

staged a “coup” against the current leadership of the Proud Boys. “We will confront the Zionist criminals who wish to destroy our civilization,” Chapman wrote after using other bigoted language. “We recognize that the West was built by the White Race alone and we owe nothing to any other race.”

Sources:

https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2020_10_06_homeland-threat-assessment.pdf

<https://www.post-gazette.com/local/region/2020/11/12/Pittsburgh-Pennsylvania-hub-white-supremacy-racism-extremism-FBI-proud-boys-patriot-front-neo-nazi/stories/202011120145>

Jewish Federations of North America Nonprofit Security Grant Program Threat Incident Report, November 15, 2020, see separate attachment.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING THE JEWISH COMMUNAL SECURITY PROGRAM, PLEASE CONTACT
SECURITY DIRECTOR, SHAWN BROKOS AT sbrokos@jfedpgh.org /412-598-2591
SECURITY PROGRAM COORDINATOR, ERIN WYLAND AT ewyland@jfedpgh.org / 412-992-5252.
YOU CAN ALSO VISIT OUR COMMUNITY SECURITY WEBSITE <https://jfedpgh.org/security>**