



# Evaluating the Los Angeles Initiative to Address Violent Extremism

## Background

Los Angeles is taking on the major challenge of how to move persons off of pathways leading to violent extremism. Local law enforcement and community partners in Los Angeles, with coordination and support from federal agencies, have been working together to develop community solutions to address this challenge. The “Los Angeles Framework for Countering Violent Extremism,” was developed by the Los Angeles Interagency Coordination Group (ICG) with community input and presented at the White House in February 2015. It emphasizes the key roles of community engagement, partnership, and community driven local programs in addressing the problems of violent extremism amongst a large and diverse population. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Science and Technology Directorate (DHS S&T) wanted to study the effectiveness of the Los Angeles pilot program and to deliver information that is useful to Los Angeles practitioners and national policymakers. In 2015 DHS S&T awarded the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Department of Psychiatry and the UCLA Center for Public Health and Disasters a grant to evaluate the Los Angeles (LA) program.

## Impacts

- ✓ A better understanding of how programs to prevent violent extremism need to develop, what aspects are worthy of implementation in LA and other U.S. cities, and what are desirable and undesirable unintended outcomes of those initiatives.
- ✓ Results useful for LA programs seeking to expand their resources.
- ✓ Meaningful measures that programs can use for tracking their results.
- ✓ Guidance materials for practitioners and social and community service agencies.

## Evaluation

We are public health professionals from UIC and UCLA who will conduct this independent and external evaluation. The purpose of this evaluation is to help Los Angeles understand, plan, and assess its programs to address violent extremism.

We want the evaluation to be a positive, constructive activity for the LA community and program stakeholders. The evaluation will be guided by their input. We want the results to be useful to them and help them add value and impact to their work.

To achieve this, our evaluation team is working with the Los Angeles Interagency Coordination Group and community stakeholders. First, we will meet with a broad and diverse set of community stakeholders to get their perspectives. We will use this information to understand their programs and choose how to measure program outcomes. Next, we will evaluate specific programs that aim to prevent or intervene with violent extremism and assess how they work.

**Our evaluation will describe evidence-based practices that should be used to inform how local efforts, resource needs, and federal support can be aligned.**

## Strengths and Features of this Evaluation

- ✓ Includes multiple voices and perspectives on violent extremism
- ✓ Strengthens community led approaches, including the roles of mental health, social services, and educators
- ✓ Strengthens law enforcement – community collaborations
- ✓ Understands what works and what doesn't work while safeguarding civil liberties.
- ✓ Informs best practices for addressing violent extremism
- ✓ Informs resource allocation

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