

Background Information on Urban Areas Security Initiative

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Issue

Provide background information on the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) program.

Summary

UASI is a federal grant program that provides funding to major metropolitan areas at high risk of terrorist attacks to help them prepare for and respond to such attacks.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) determines eligible high-risk areas for UASI grant purposes through an analysis of relative risk of terrorism faced by the 100 most populous metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in the country and awards funding based on the level of risk and the anticipated effectiveness of proposed projects. Risk assessments are recalculated every year based on available data.

Twenty-nine urban areas were designated eligible for UASI funding in FFY 16. The FFY 16 funding amounted to \$580,000,000. The same amount was allocated in FFY 17, but the number of areas designated eligible for funding increased to 33. No area in Connecticut was designated eligible in any of these years, and the state has not received any funding under the program since FFY 10, when Bridgeport received \$2,812,361 and Hartford received \$2,752,043.

UASI

“The UASI program is intended to provide financial assistance to address the unique multi-discipline planning, organization, equipment, training, and exercise needs of high-threat, high-density Urban Areas, and to assist these areas in building and sustaining capabilities to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from threats or acts of terrorism using the Whole Community approach.”

<http://www.homelandsecuritygrants.info/GrantDetails.aspx?gid=17162>

UASI

The UASI program was authorized by the 2002 Homeland Security Act and is managed by DHS through the Federal Emergency Management Agency ([6 U.S.C. § 603](#)). UASI provides funding to high-risk, high-threat metropolitan areas to help them “build, sustain, and deliver the capabilities necessary to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism.” The program guidelines specify how UASI funds may be used, including for planning organization, equipment, training, and exercise needs.

As mandated by the Homeland Security Act, each year DHS conducts a risk assessment of the 100 most populous MSAs to determine the relative risk of terrorism faced by these areas. The risk assessment is based on three principal variables: relative threat (likelihood of a terrorist act); vulnerability (likelihood that an attack is successful); and consequences of a terrorist act. According to the DHS, the risk methodology takes into account the potential risk of terrorism to people, critical infrastructure, and economic security. The threat analysis accounts for threats from domestic violent extremists as well as international terrorist groups and those individuals inspired by terrorists abroad. The risk assessment results determine the final funding allocation. The risk assessments are recalculated every year using the updated data.

UASI funds are allocated based on two factors: DHS’ risk methodology and anticipated effectiveness of proposed projects. Anticipated effectiveness is assessed based on the applicant’s description of how proposed projects align with state hazard incident risk assessment and state preparedness report results.

Three areas in Connecticut were previously deemed eligible for UASI funding: Bridgeport, Hartford, and New Haven. According to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, FFY 2010 was the last year that Bridgeport (\$2,812,361) and Hartford (\$2,752,043) received funding. New Haven received funding (\$10,371,407) in FFY 04. These areas have not been designated as eligible to receive funds since then.

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