



South Texas Development Council- Region 19

Risk-Informed Methodology for State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) Sub-allocation

FY 2022

The South Texas Region 19 Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC) is composed of representatives from four counties: Jim Hogg, Starr, Webb, and Zapata and seven cities: Laredo, Rio Bravo, El Cenizo, Roma, Rio Grande, La Grulla, and Escobares. Each jurisdiction has one representative on the committee except for City of Laredo who has two representatives due to the greater population. Each representative is appointed by a local elected official to represent the city or county on the committee and membership is updated every two fiscal years. Items voted on by the HSAC are then submitted for final approval to the South Texas Development Council Board of Directors that is composed of elected officials from all the jurisdictions in our region.

A primary responsibility of the HSAC is to reach consensus regarding the use and distribution of the regional State Homeland Security Program funds. Several tools and documents are updated and approved throughout the year by the committee in order to guide the project selection process, which are sequentially distributed in the narrative below.

Through the upkeep of the Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Plan (RCPP), the HSAC evaluates the level of risk associated with each natural hazard and man-made threat that the region is susceptible to. Terrorism is considered at this phase of the process along with border security threat. There are four areas that are measured for each type of hazard and threat: Frequency, Magnitude, Warning Time, and Severity. Based on the evaluation of these four areas, one of three priority risk levels is assigned: Low, Medium, and High to each hazard or threat. The results of this assessment are transferred to the Preparedness Assessment Section of the Regional Homeland Security Implementation Plan (IP) and used as a foundation for the regional Threat and Hazard Identification Risk Assessment (THIRA).

The THIRA is completed through the collaboration of members of the Homeland Security Advisory Committee and other local stakeholders. Worst case scenarios, specific to our region, were identified and provided with capability targets composed of desired outcomes and estimated impacts.

The capability targets that are identified through the THIRA process are then transferred to the State Preparedness Report (SPR). Through the completion of the SPR, each jurisdiction in our region evaluates each of the thirty-two core capabilities designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the National Preparedness Goal. Each core capability is evaluated by their level of preparedness in each scenario. The results from the SPR are used to update the

Concept and Implementation section of the Regional IP which mirrors the Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan.

The Regional IP outlines the major goals and objectives that the region will work to reach during the given year and the priority actions necessary to fulfill each individual objective. Additionally, performance measures and the five elements of Preparedness, Planning, Operations, Equipment, Training, Exercise (POETE), are described for each objective.

A component of the POETE portion of each objective is a description of the Cost and Funding Source for each of the tasks under each element. This information provides a good overview on how other funds (local, state, federal) are being used to achieve the regional goals.

In order to select specific projects for implementation through the use of State Homeland Security Program Funds each year, the major goals and objectives listed in our Regional IP are reviewed and prioritized by the Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC). The priority list for FY 2022 State Homeland Security Program Funds is below:

- 1) OBJECTIVE 4.3: Achieve statewide communications operability and interoperability in Texas.
- 2) OBJECTIVE 1.3: Prevent terrorists and criminal enterprises from exploiting Texas' international borders, including land, air, and sea.
- 3) OBJECTIVE 2.6: Enhance statewide cybersecurity efforts to protect information assets.
- 4) OBJECTIVE 4.7: Ensure updated and validated emergency plans are in place at public agencies that provide vital services and encourage such planning within private entities.
- 5) OBJECTIVE 4.1: Enhance the systems and organizational structures that coordinate and manage response operations to ensure unified, efficient effort.
- 6) OBJECTIVE 2.2: Reduce the risk of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives (CBRNE) incidents by enhancing control and early detection capabilities.
- 7) OBJECTIVE 3.1: Use mitigation planning to reduce the threats disasters pose to people, property, and critical functions throughout the state.
- 8) OBJECTIVE 5.2: Strengthen preparedness for whole community recovery through outreach programs, training, and exercise.
- 9) OBJECTIVE 4.2: Build and maintain the response teams and qualified personnel essential to all-hazard response operations.

Based on that order, regional projects that align with priority actions within each objective and that will enable the region to reach each said objective are developed with input from all entities present in our regional meetings. Quotes are obtained from vendors in order to attach costs to each project. Based on fund availability within the last years, regional projects have taken a priority over local projects in order to maximize the benefited areas and funds.

At the time when funds become available, potential applicants participate in a workshop (as required by HSGD) covering eligibility requirements, state investment priorities, and regional priorities prior to submitting a proposal to the Council of Governments (COG). Proposals deemed eligible based on the criteria covered in the workshop are presented to the HSAC for approval to be submitted onto the state grant management system, currently eGrants. Regional applications are submitted and managed by the COG, while local projects are submitted and managed by the corresponding jurisdiction/agency.

Based on available funds and project scope, applications are ranked by the HSAC according to regional priorities and feasibility. The list of ranked projects is then submitted onto eGrants for state use in consideration of final application selection.

For several years now, one of the major objectives has been to achieve statewide communications interoperability. Given the rural nature of the majority of our region, local first responders rely on mutual aid from neighboring jurisdictions and the heavy involvement of state and federal agencies. It is for this reason that regional stakeholders deem communications interoperability as a high priority that if reached and sustained will increase first-responder safety and allow them to more effectively interject, disrupt, and respond to terroristic events and natural hazards or man-made threats.

For projects under Objective 4.3: Achieve statewide communications operability and interoperability in Texas, the Regional Interoperable Communications Plan (RICP) has been developed to delineate the communications projects that are necessary to reach statewide and federal interoperability goals and P-25 standards. Progress is measured during the annual State Communications Interoperability Plan Focus Group and reported to the Statewide Communications Interoperability Coordinator (SWIC).

