

Donald Trump Halts Funding for Group Countering White Extremism



Washington, July 3 (RHC)-- An organization dedicated to countering neo-Nazi and white nationalist extremism has been excluded from receiving federal funding under U.S. President Donald Trump's administration.

The Department of Homeland Security has released a list of 26 police and community groups receiving a total of \$10 million in grants for Countering Violent Extremism, CVE, programs. The Chicago-based organization Life After Hate has now been removed from the list.

"It's not completely unexpected, but it is very unfortunate," Angela King, one of the founders, told the Foreign Policy magazine. Established in 2009, Life After Hate is run by 50 former members of right-wing hate groups, who now work to de-radicalize others from extremism.

It was initially awarded a \$400,000 grant as part of the CVE program in January during the closing days of the Obama administration. But those funds were frozen and the program was placed under review when Trump took office.

“Obviously we are disappointed in that decision,” Life After Hate co-founder and board member Tony McAlver told the U.S. magazine Mother Jones. He said the group had received 10 times more requests for help in the past year than in the previous five combined.

The \$400,000 grant was intended to fund a project aimed at preventing neo-Nazi recruitment online. “It was not to pay salaries and stuff. It was for a specific online campaign,” McAlver said.

Life After Hate has launched a crowdfunding campaign to help make up for the sudden shortfall. The DHS didn’t clarify why the organization was dropped off the list. But Reuters has previously reported that Trump planned to rebrand and rename the CVE program to focus solely on Islamist extremism, and would no longer target groups such as white supremacists.

However, an April 2017 report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that attacks motivated by right-wing extremism have killed almost as many Americans as Islamist-inspired violence since 9/11.

In an e-mail response, DHS spokesperson Lucia Martinez said the program hadn’t been altered to focus on “any one type of violent extremism,” adding that 16 out of the 26 selected projects “address all forms of violent extremism, including domestic political violent extremism and white supremacist violent extremism.”

The University of North Carolina, UNC, at Chapel Hill is another organization that saw its funding stripped. Its \$867,000 grant is aimed at developing information campaigns to counter jihadist and white supremacist recruiting.

"It's heartbreaking," Cori Dauber, a communication professor and one of two principal investigators on the grant proposal, said to North Carolina Public Radio. "We put an enormous amount of energy and commitment into this. We believe in our program, we believe in our team and in our kids."

Matthew Levitt, director of the counter-terrorism program at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, told Foreign Policy that it would be a shame if the federal government only focuses on Islamist-affiliated terrorism.

He said “Because we do face threats from multiple types of violent ideologies, and we should as a government and a society be committed to fighting all of these violent ideologies equally.”

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