

# #MuslimAnd Countering CVE (Countering Violent Extremism)

## What is CVE or TVTP?

### How does it harm our communities?

Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) is a federal United States program that claims to prevent “ideologically motivated violence to further political goals”. CVE is part of a long tradition of law enforcement surveilling and undermining Black, Indigenous, and people of color, (BIPOC) communities.

In 2020, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) created the Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP), which is a continuation of CVE-style surveillance programs and is often referred to as “CVE 2.0”. Federal law enforcement and security agencies use surveillance to determine who may be vulnerable to “radicalization”. This program can include recruiting nonprofits, doctors, teachers, and other community members to report on others in the community. The program stigmatizes the Muslim community and brings suspicion on everyday activities.

CVE programs were created to target Muslim communities of color- primarily Arab-Muslims and Black Muslims. The program is carried out through organizations like the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Department of Justice (DOJ), and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCC). Oftentimes, members of Muslim communities are recruited to “spy” on one another and share information about any “suspicious” activity. The DHS finds and trains these community members to serve as informants and directly report information on activities such as community events, political involvement, and religious events, among others, to US Government agencies. This tool of “informal surveillance” allows Government agencies to collect information about Muslim communities even when they are “officially” unable to.

### Where is CVE or TVTP implemented?

CVE and Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP aka CVE 2.0) programs provide grants across the country “to establish or enhance capabilities to prevent targeted violence and terrorism”. Current recipients of TVTP grants are operating in Boston, the

Bay Area, Chatham County Georgia, Bexar County Texas, Hawaii, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, New York City, Denver, Utah, Oklahoma, Florida, D.C., Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and nationally. Grant recipients include hospitals, local governments, universities, police departments, and community organizations. Many programs target young people of color, young immigrants, young refugees, and young Muslims. Local institutions, universities, nonprofits, and other organizations work with the DHS, FBI, DOJ, and NCC on CVE and TVTP programs. Decisions on this program are made in your community by local organizations and on the federal level by agencies such as the DHS or DOJ.

### How can I act to prevent CVE-style surveillance and targeting in my community?

Learn more about how these programs operate in your communities. Take a look at grant recipients and look into their surveillance programs at <https://www.dhs.gov/tvtpgrants>. Team up with local organizers working on countering surveillance in your community to work towards ensuring your local governments, hospitals, universities, and other institutions are not working with CVE or TVTP programs. Know your rights and find more information on what to do if approached for questioning by police or the FBI at <https://www.aclum.org/know-your-rights>.

### What does a CVE-style surveillance program look like?

CVE and TVTP surveillance programs function as “trojan horses” and can often look like community outreach programs on the surface. These programs target young people and even school aged children. For example, the FBI launched a CVE program targeting schoolchildren in 2016. This included an interactive website that taught children about violent extremism and aimed to turn “teachers and students into government spies, monitoring one another for tell-tale expressions of unorthodox ideas” according to a Brennan Center report. Be aware of CVE and TVTP grant recipients in your area and learn more about how they participate in harmful and often Islamophobic community surveillance.

## How are young people affected?

CVE and TVTP grant recipients often serve in the place of surveillance for communities that are already targets of law enforcement and disproportionately suffer from state violence. These include immigrant, refugee, Muslim, and Black and brown communities. Islamophobia, racism, anti-immigrant bias, and other systemic biases that criminalize these identities make these communities particular targets of selective law enforcement. A document titled "Black Identity Extremism Likely Motivated to Target Law Enforcement Officers" was released by the Counterterrorist Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 2017. This document specifically defines Black Muslim identity as a risk factor for extremist behavior. It also names Black nationalism and community aspirations towards Black autonomy as encompassing extremist ideology. This document illustrates the anti-Black racism and Islamophobia that shape programs like CVE and TVTP. Additionally, TVTP specifically targets young people in its programming and surveillance.

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