Homeland Security Advisory Council

Workforce Subcommittee

Homeland Security Advisory Council
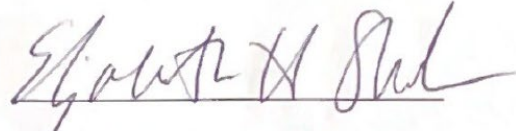September 14th, 2023

Homeland Security

This publication is presented on behalf of the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) Workforce Subcommittee Co-Chaired by Wendy Young and Elizabeth Shuler for the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Alejandro N. Mayorkas.

Wendy Young, Co-Chair

President

Kids in Need of Defense

Elizabeth Shuler, Co-Chair

President

AFL-CIO

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past 20 years, the Department has responded to an unprecedented breadth of challenges with leadership, skilled personnel, cross-component collaboration, and new programs. The Department's workforce is multifaceted with policies and infrastructure in place to support various types of work environments, ranging from administrative, international, intelligence, and law enforcement. The challenges that are emerging for all workplaces are acutely manifested in the Department, which has over 250,000 employees who are diverse, dispersed across the country and the globe, and working within multiple components with discrete missions and workforce needs.

The Department's buildings were generally 30% to 40% vacant prior to the pandemic and this trend has only increased with the transition to remote, hybrid, and telework in both government and private sector offices in recent years. The Department's physical footprint is shrinking, yet nearly 60% of the workforce remains in non-remote positions or on the front lines. With over 2,500 leases expiring in the next five years, the Department's goal is to reduce 25% of its administrative space by 2027. Remote and hybrid work are likely to remain part of the post-pandemic work landscape and policies must support this reality. With the majority of the Department's workforce unable to fully telework due to their responsibilities on the frontline, DHS is working to establish a fair and uniform approach across its workforce, and it will be important for the agency's management to collaborate on these issues closely with the employees and their unions.

To adapt to this evolving landscape, the Department must assess the current work environment and ensure the workplace model is adaptable and ready to meet future challenges. Successfully meeting the challenges of the future of work will require the Department's actions to be both mission and worker centered. An understanding of front-line work and work experiences will enhance mission as the workplace continues to evolve. The Department has a history of labor-management partnership that should be utilized to discuss workplace changes. These partnerships will assure that as mission and work evolves, employees are supported, engaged, and prepared to meet the challenges.

In alignment with the DHS 2023 priority to transform the Department's infrastructure to ensure it is a more productive and flexible workplace responsive to the needs of the workforce and the public, the Secretary tasked the HSAC Workforce Subcommittee to review the Department's current diverse work environments – from secure spaces and ports of entry to remote offices – and make recommendations for the workplace of the future. The Subcommittee was also tasked with assessing the alignment of workforce skills with work responsibilities in discrete, critical mission areas.[1]

The Subcommittee reviewed models for the next generation work environment that may be employed in different mission areas, to enable the DHS workforce to be prepared for a wide range of changes ahead. The group also assessed ways in which the Department can leverage

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[1] See Appendix 1

existing and emerging technology to enable mobile learning, cross-training, and services to develop a well-informed, skilled, and agile workforce that effectively meets evolving stakeholder needs.

In addition to this initial investigation, the Subcommittee assessed the alignment of workforce skills with work responsibilities. The Subcommittee was asked to provide recommendations on how the Department can effectively upskill and reskill certain elements of its workforce to expand their capabilities and enable them to fulfill their evolving job responsibilities more ably. Finally, the Subcommittee sought to identify how the Department can, where necessary, effect workforce composition changes to ensure the alignment of skills with new or evolving work responsibilities.

METHODOLOGY

Narrowing its focus to a few key areas of interest, the Subcommittee examined existing workplace models and accountability metrics, current learning mechanisms, upskilling and reskilling opportunities provided by DHS, and the evolving workforce composition. Shortly after the tasking was signed by the Secretary, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) released a memo in April 2023, M23-15 – Measuring, Monitoring, and Improving Organizational Health and Organizational Performance in the Context of Evolving Agency Work Environments (hereafter OMB M-23-15), to help businesses and infrastructure return to work. The Subcommittee launched its work briefly after the release of the OMB M-23-15 and began with a briefing on how the policy change affects the Department's workforce and its current plans for the future of work.

The Workforce Subcommittee continued with their research via briefings from subject matter experts and Department leaders to assess the Department's current work environment. The Subcommittee met with the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC), the Under Secretary for Management, Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, the Office of Strategy, Policy and Plan's Strategic Integration and Policy Planning sub-office, the Office of the Chief Readiness Support Office, and DHS Management Councils' Representatives. The Subcommittee met with Chief Learning Officers across the Department to obtain insights into the Department's learning, reskilling, and training environments.

The Subcommittee observed workforce operations at Dulles International Airport in Virginia to gain firsthand insight from Department employees and supervisors. Specifically, the Subcommittee toured and shadowed employee operations with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). In addition to DHS offices, the Subcommittee also met with United Airlines for insights from the private sector and how they interact with DHS agencies. Customer experience and employee safety were emphasized by the United team. This daylong event was capped off with a round table discussion with various Chief Learning Officers from around the Department. The Subcommittee gained valuable information on how operations work in an airport environment

from government and private sector employees and managers. The value of in person site visits can't be understated as this allows for more personal interactions and real-time feedback from people on the ground doing the work.

KEY FINDINGS

Addressing key issues across the Department that include increasing morale; overcoming technological barriers, and enhancing cybersecurity; bolstering access to, and organization of, training and resources; partnering with the frontline workers and their unions; fostering a diverse and inclusive environment; and improving facilities to maintain a flexible work environment will help the Department achieve a strategic uniform approach to the future of its workforce. The Subcommittee heard extensively about the impact of today's changing workplace on the Department's staffing and operations.

Finding #1: There is a dire need to maintain and increase employee morale through the Department's components.

The issue of employee morale is not new, nor surprising, but is a necessary part of any discussion on workforce. It is well known to leadership that DHS regularly scores at the bottom of the rankings in the "Best Places to Work in the Federal Government" survey.[2] DHS employees face extreme circumstances that extend beyond the mandate of their mission directly inhibiting job performance. These can include political rhetoric leading to threats, violence, and vitriol; regular threats of funding discontinuation from Congress; and public misunderstanding of mission and tactics required to perform legally mandated goals.

A core component of the Department's Future of Work Strategic objectives for 2023-2027 is "increasing workforce engagement and morale through updated and enhanced policies for benefits, compensation, work schedules and locations, training, and diversity and inclusion."[3] Additionally, though the memo's messaging and wording generated confusion and impaired morale, OMB M23-15 provides DHS with the flexibility to continue building out the Future of Work Strategic Framework while providing in-depth guidance and direction to federal agencies on workplace and workforce policies in the post-pandemic era.

An issue that came up in one of the briefings was that DHS personnel have been subject to violence and threatening behavior from the public and that threats are increasing such that many DHS employees feel unsafe. The Department has seen an increased number of significant physical and cyber threats against federal employees. While there have always been concerns about safety for law enforcement officers who deal with violent individuals or an angry public, the Subcommittee heard that non-law enforcement employees can experience safety concerns in a diverse set of jobs where encountering threats is not expected. The Subcommittee heard of threats in the form of bullying or on-line attacks, cyberthreats, and even physical threats outside of the workplace. In some cases, the mere realization that someone was an employee of DHS or the federal government led to verbal or physical threats against the DHS employee. In light of

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[2] See 2022 Best Places to Work in Federal Government Rankings, Partnership for Public Service, available at https://bestplacestowork.org/rankings/?view=overall&size=sub&category=leadership& as of September 7, 2023
[3] Former Deputy Secretary Tien outlines this in his memo to DHS Components Heads titled "Future of Work" dated February 14, 2023.

this the Subcommittee's recommendations are made with an eye towards ensuring proper protections are in place for the DHS workforce.

Without adequate morale, the near quarter million employees of the DHS team simply cannot perform their roles at the standards deserved by the American people depending on them to keep them safe and secure. By acknowledging the need to create a perception, based on reality, that employees at DHS are best in class, DHS can mature into a more desirable workplace. This will result in increased morale throughout the Department, and increased ease of hiring and retention.

Finding #2: Implementing technological advances made during the pandemic, while continue enhancing cybersecurity, can help strengthen the DHS workforce.

Technology has the potential to improve the experience of all DHS employees, if it is properly harnessed, resourced, and integrated throughout the department employees. As the department marks its twentieth year, there are now opportunities to learn from the past two decades, build off those successes, while also learning from that past, particularly the lessons born of the pandemic.

The past twenty years have shown that back-office systems developed and took hold in siloed contexts that serve specific needs but do not lend themselves to enterprise-wide collaboration and connection. These siloed systems unintentionally frustrate employees looking to access resources or information that do not lend themselves to compartmentalization.

This, then, translates into a disunified operational culture, where different agencies access different systems, often for the same need. This means, all too often, that there are duplicate, disconnected systems throughout DHS, which stymies innovation, ease of use, collaboration, and interoperability. All of this has a cost, be it inefficiently using departmental financial resources or unduly taxing employees, whose jobs are already demanding and who are looking to technology to make their work lives easier.

As for lessons learned from the pandemic, the Department's ability to pivot quickly and thoughtfully to a virtual footing illustrates that DHS can, indeed, adopt flexible approaches that on their face seem immensely challenging. Doing so permitted the department to support remotely a geographically dispersed workforce. DHS also, consequently, strengthened its ability to recruit and retain a more demographically diverse workforce not constrained by having to be in a particular labor market or needing to commute unnecessarily to a physical office daily. DHS can now more readily compete with the private sector for top talent necessary to meet the innovation demands of the next two decades and beyond.

Now, the advent of generative AI and machine learning may present the Department with new opportunities which are still unclear in their application and advantage. Emergent AI and machine learning technologies will change the workplace, and both need to be carefully evaluated and scrutinized as part of a broader objective of creating a workplace that enhances the skills of valued DHS employees. Although technology can be used as a tool to improve the workforce experience and accomplish mission support activities more effectively, the Subcommittee recognizes that the workforce can be hesitant to adopt new technology. Until fully trained and confident in newly introduced technology, comfort levels vary among employees decreasing its effectiveness. To address this issue, the Department must find ways to

effectively implement modernized systems and provide adequate training and resources to employees. Engaging with the unions could improve adoption, address workforce concerns, and ensure the people expected to utilize new technology are supported, well trained and prepared.

Finding #3: Some of the Department's training programs are currently out of date and lengthy, making balancing workloads and professional development harder to achieve.

The Subcommittee heard both pride and frustration about training at DHS. There was widespread agreement that DHS had prioritized training and across components when training to perform job functions and learn new procedures or technologies emerged, employees received the training necessary to perform their jobs at the highest level. However, there was frustration that most of the training budget ended up focused on providing more introductory, or basic training classes or for training that simply kept up with new requirements. Further, too often the training funds are seconded or sequestered during budget distress. This meant fewer options for both providing and sending employees to training courses, as well specialized training. In the briefings the subcommittee heard that while money was allocated for new personnel, new equipment, and new systems to better safeguard the public, that often funding for those projects did not account for or include the necessary employees to support new systems, projects, and personnel. There were also serious concerns about how to build in time for training given the difficulty of work coverage.

The overarching goal of training is twofold: first, to provide the workforce with the necessary skills to perform the tasks and requirements of their job well and second, to provide the workforce with skills and opportunities to professionally develop and have a meaningful career at DHS. Both goals benefit DHS by building out a highly trained and committed workforce that will have the skill and experience to advance component missions. Focusing on advanced and career enhancing training as well as immediate training needs will create an environment where employees are interested in working at DHS and finding a career path.

While all the components, offices, and individuals we met were appreciative of the real commitment that is being made to training, there were several themes that emerged on how training could be improved.

Since the pandemic, training has become more diverse and allows for more virtual learning opportunities with courses available on electronic FLETC (e-FLETC) and a vast catalogue of online refresher trainings offered to employees. Refresher FLETC operates a standard training curriculum for all law enforcement officers, and an on-demand training for other components. Several of the briefing pointed out the kinds of successes of current training in DHS.

DHS has put significant resources into building out the diverse and complex training programs required in each component that meets the needs of the component mission and the overall needs of DHS. Components use a combination of courses from FLETC for law enforcement training and build out their own internal component training systems focused on skills specific to their mission or to respond to new technology or equipment. Classes are delivered through many

forms of instruction including in person – which is largely for basic training and on-line is largely used for refresher classes and advanced training.

Increasingly complex component missions mean that there is a constant need for training. With the continuous need to adopt new technologies, equipment, and software to grapple with the ever-changing threat landscape creates a continual need for reskilling the workforce to continue to perform their job responsibilities. For example, a TSA Transportation Security Officer may have been proficient at reading x-ray baggage scanners but would need to be retrained to use Computed Tomography baggage scanners as they become more common across TSA. Resources dedicated to management training or to build new skills are low, so promoted employees start new positions underprepared. Also, concerns surfaced that there is a constant struggle to hire good instructors for training.

Maintaining a diverse workforce is a challenge, particularly in training where for example, there are few female instructors which is reflective of the current workforce. This affects the overall mission and makes training harder. Consideration of component training leadership versus DHS corporate direction caused a disconnect of what is considered strategy needs that are not consistent with the Department's overall needs and expectations.

Finding #4: There is a greater need for flexible work environments and to improve facilities to accommodate new trends towards remote and hybrid work.

In addition to training and resources, the DHS workforce is now more concerned with work-life balance and flexibility. Department employees are moving to jobs with more flexibility. While remote work allows for DHS to tap into talent nationwide, retention rates of employees are relatively low due to low wages and working conditions. Most federal employees work more hours than they are paid for, and often do not show deviations from productivity in-office to remote work, tending to be more productive remotely.

Designing the Office of the Future: In the recent past many larger employers have sought to save money through novel office environments. While less expensive to build, they have an effect on morale, productivity ("hot-desk" environments) are shown to generate stress and cause redundant work flow obligations. The Department cannot provide an "office-for-all." However, cost flexibility versus productivity and ease of use for workspace must be carefully re-thought. Access to Sensitive Compartmented Information Facilities (SCIFs) and other secured spaces, as well as technology and network barriers like building at-home security systems have become a challenge in the move to remote work. SCIFs and other secure facilities must be a priority, especially in this line of work.

Finding #5: DHS is working to combat workplace inequity with innovation while emphasizing the need for more resources and support talent.

Through its research, the Subcommittee also found a few other key issues pertaining to the DHS workforce including resources challenges and lack of support talent. Resources are lacking to support increases in staff when law enforcement is increased, similar to when new systems and training are deployed that the budget does not account for hiring critical support staff. There are

multiple missions and not enough people to support the missions. The Department must continue building its reputation as a fair and equitable workplace across components and jobs.

The Subcommittee heard extensively about the impact of today's changing workplace on the Department's staffing and operations. DHS leadership has approached diverse challenges with dedication and an openness to innovation. In line with directives from OMB, it has invested extensively in data collection to assess organizational health and performance, including evaluation of the impact of remote work policies on productivity, accountability, staff retention, and morale. It has engaged with worker unions, and also engaged its staff in surveys to gauge their experiences, attitudes, and expectations of the Department. The OMB M-23-15 also clearly favors a return to in-office work, while providing agencies with some latitude to develop policies that meet their unique needs and fulfillment of mission.

Finding #6: Diversity, equity, and inclusion is a priority DHS should champion.

The Subcommittee notes that building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive federal workforce, including among the dedicated and professional public servants of the Department of Homeland Security and its component offices and agencies, has been a priority across Presidential Administrations past and present. It is plainly stated by President Biden in his Executive Order of June 25, 2021 entitled "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce" (the Executive Order) that, "it is the policy of my Administration to cultivate a workforce that draws from the full diversity of the Nation." Further, the Executive Order states, "As the Nation's largest employer, the Federal Government must be a model for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, where all employees are treated with dignity and respect." Multiple executive orders and statements of policy from previous administrations, including Executive Order 13583 of August 18, 2011 (Establishing a Coordinated Government-Wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce), the Presidential Memorandum of October 5, 2016 (Promoting Diversity and Inclusion in the National Security Workforce) among others broadly support the same objectives.

As one of the largest cabinet departments in terms of personnel, the Subcommittee believes DHS has both a heightened responsibility and opportunity to lead. Since DHS personnel are often the face of the Federal Government in interactions with the American people and visitors alike, DHS provides validation that the reality matches the policy rhetoric – that the workforce reflects the diversity of the communities and people it serves. Just as importantly, a leadership role on diversity can also improve the effectiveness of the Department in fulfilling its mission since, as the Executive Order states, "a growing body of evidence demonstrates that diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible workplaces yield higher performing organizations."

The desire to build higher performing organizations is a goal that is also shared by many in the private sector. As stated in a research report authored by McKinsey and Company entitled *Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters* from May 2020, "the business case for inclusion and diversity…is stronger than ever. For diverse companies, the likelihood of outperforming industry peers on profitability has increased over time, while the penalties are getting steeper for

those lacking diversity." Interestingly, the McKinsey study also notes that a focus in diversity and inclusion in the aftermath of the pandemic is an opportunity strengthen performance. "Companies whose leaders' welcome diverse talents and include multiple perspectives are likely to emerge from the crisis stronger. In short: diversity wins, now more than ever."[4] The Subcommittee believes that collaboration with entities that are notable for practices on effective diversity and inclusion would be a beneficial exercise for government and all parties involved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Technology Recommendations

1. **Resource technology to support flexible work arrangements.**

Applicants are more likely to apply for roles with telework/remote flexibility. Relatedly, the department is seeing employees moving to jobs with more flexibility, inside or outside the department. Thus, it behooves DHS to resource technology sufficiently to capitalize further on the workforce gains made during the pandemic.

The Department should explore technology innovations that support the feasibility of remote work and promptly train staff in any new technology to support their effectiveness in their role.

Every employee will need significantly more internet bandwidth, speed of access, cybersecurity, and data protection training than currently available. The Department must plan to include and leverage any future technologies when planning for, managing, and maximizing its space requirements. It will also be important that the Department partner and collaborate with the unions to make sure the workforce has sufficient technology to perform work remotely and that job flexibility is fairly allocated across workplaces.

2. **Strengthen the Department's ability to adopt and use technology more extensively and cohesively.**

Invest greater resources to improve DHS's ability to adopt newer technologies and support greater nimbleness with existing ones. This means providing the sort of holistic support that permits DHS employees to function in their core jobs using technology as a mission-enhancing tool, as opposed to a mission-frustrating one. This also includes focusing on enhancing technology literacy and phasing outmoded software and hardware whose benefits are outweighed by the costs they impose on interoperability across the DHS enterprise.

The advent of generative AI and expansion of machine learning may transform work in ways that are currently unknown and in ways that can benefit the workforce. Understanding how and where generative AI fits into DHS' various workflows is key to harnessing its benefits. We recommend that the internal DHS AI Taskforce closely review how this might be implemented and, to the extent practicable, engage with workforce and workforce representatives.

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[4] Diversity Wins: How Inclusion Matters, McKinsey and Company, May 19, 2022. Available at How diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) matter | McKinsey as of September 7, 2023.

3. **Place a greater focus on reducing cultural hurdles to adopting and embracing technological innovation.**

Technology is not the problem, the way that various agencies within the department use that technology is. DHS HQ must continue to lead on building trust, credibility, and relationships across the department to build a culture that not only embraces innovation but does so from an enterprise-wide perspective. Collaboration with the employees, as noted above, could make the process of adopting and embracing technological innovation more effective and produce better outcomes. Agencies must be incentivized to collaborate across silos and disincentive to fall back on past, provincial tendencies.

Training Recommendations

1. **Prioritize the procurement of a Learning Management System (LMS) to track and assess training offered and delivered across the Department.**

The Subcommittee learned that that a DHS-wide LMS would help to solve several issues, including allowing better assessment of training delivered online, tracking the course offerings and courses already taken, enable assessment of where training is meeting needs and where there are gaps. The LMS would also improve delivery of online course material. The Subcommittee also heard that procuring an LMS had been a challenge and that the lack of having an LMS was affecting the effectiveness of the training system. Further consideration needs to be given towards requiring components to centralize learning management leadership, holding them accountable at the director or administrator level, thus strategic leadership is involved and driving the Secretary's and agency leadership's training and learning goals.

2. **Prioritize allowing the workforce to have time in their schedules to take both mission critical as well as advance trainings and professional development trainings.**

A common concern the Subcommittee heard was that employees had a difficult time getting time off from work responsibilities during the workday to pursue training opportunities. The current system, depending on the component, created hardships for employee's schedules and/or their coworkers' schedules including overscheduling and overtime. Mission critical training is hard to schedule for but is completed because of its necessity. Other trainings often don't get enrolled because there is no time permitted on worker's work schedules.

Building training into employee's schedules that does not penalize the workforce or individual worker needs to be examined and addressed so that there is access across component for employees to get the skills they need to perform their jobs and professionally develop.

Mandatory and optional training should be treated similarly with employees getting allotted time to complete it.

3. **Expand advanced training offerings and include more in-person options for advanced trainings.**

There has been an emphasis on training designed toward meeting essential mission needs. Building out more advanced training that allows for refinement of skills and furthers career development enables DHS employees to have more opportunity for job growth and advancement.

Online training is both cheaper and easier to provide, however many of the employees we spoke with said that it was easier to speed through trainings without learning much and that they were not given adequate time in their schedule to complete trainings. Consistent with the above recommendation, time should be allotted for training, including in-person training, which can be more meaningful. We recommend that in-person training should be offered alongside online training.

4. **Review training requirements to make sure that they are consistent with the jobs that people are doing.**

Training requirements are often not matched with the work required at their assigned duty station. Considering the difficulties in finding time and resources for training, training requirements should be aligned with specific mission centered goals to allow better training options for employees. For example, the Subcommittee heard about airport staff required to take defensive driving training though it had no relation to their duties. Further, they were unable to take other professional development training that would have more appropriately fit their duties and career path. A close review of required offerings with both frontline staff and leadership is warranted.

Physical Space Recommendations

1. **Address "Flex Designs and Structure" needs.**

A special emphasis of decision makers must lean heavily on considering "flex designs and structure" needs. As such the Department established a novel program to leverage changing demands of capital infrastructure, titled The DHS Nonrecurring Expenses Fund.[5] This program holds significant potential for the Agency and its components. Executives should rely heavily on this program.

Additionally, technology of the future will make the safe and secure validation of personnel who are and/or are not scheduled to be working and visitors coming on site essential. Components such as TSA, are actively seeking new screening systems and devices. These too often are need more space, power, and security. This will remain a challenge in the years ahead. So too will other components need to consider "future needs vs. growth" requirements for all facility use.

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[5] The DHS Nonrecurring Expenses Fund (NEF) Small Projects account was authorized in 2022 and the NEF the NEF allows DHS to reclaim 50% of the department's expiring fiscal year funds. Fifty percent of those expiring funds can be used for information technology modernization or 50% can be used for facilities infrastructure improvements. Within the overall NEF, DHS created a NEF Small Projects Facilities Infrastructure Improvements list to start planning and executing impactful, employee-driven projects across the department. The NEF gives DHS more flexibility to be able to designate money across the department to help Components quickly address projects that directly impact and improve the employee experience.

2. **Obtain senior approval prior to new space and facilities.**

The Department needs considerable flexibility to acquire, keep and maintain special purpose properties (e.g., shooting ranges, riverine grounds, remote desert, urban or rural environs). Where the Department must own and operate space or a facility, the Department and components should be required to seek appropriate senior leadership approval prior to seeking GSA or other authorities to acquire. Emphasis should be placed on presenting cost-benefit based options.

3. **Utilize a management infrastructure assessment system.**

The Deputy Secretary should consider, if not in-place, the development of a simple and visually compelling facility evaluation tool. Notionally it could show: Quantity of space owned and occupied vs. Un-used, outdated, unsafe, or no mission need; Office vs. Operational Functions and Support (e.g., DHS needs 40% office space vs. warehouse space) and it should track component Congressional and Executive requirements); Building Infrastructure capabilities by region; and Facility and Infrastructure Demands for 3-5 years; Under construction (and status) vs. vacating.

4. **Expand intra-/inter-agency collaboration on space needs.**

The Coast Guard has unique law enforcement and military obligations and needs. Likewise, several components (CBP, ICE, FEMA, etc.) have facility and infrastructure needs outside the Continental United States. Every effort must be considered to save time and money, maximize safety and security of personnel, and maintain efficiency of operations when establishing, changing or upgrading their needs. Existing interagency and inter-component cooperative agreements may be available to expand, or contract, necessary physical presence. DHS should consider utilizing existing USG resources or infrastructure footprints.

5. **Consider secure communications and information containment needs.**

The need for SCIFs is growing. In the past USG agencies contracted with "private" SCIF facilities. In geographically dense environments this proved beneficial. However, DHS component personnel need access to SCIF capable facilities in temporary, remote, and environmentally hostile locations. A working group of Department and component agency security officers and experts should develop ideas for lowering costs of building/operating SCIFS, as well as remote use and ease of use facilities for conversion on an as needed or temporary basis.

6. **Leverage and strategically handle vacant commercial office space.**

It is not lost on the Committee that vast amounts of high-quality vacant office space exist throughout the nation. It is important that all options are considered by department personnel when exploring methods to lower costs and improve physical environments. Working with the

GSA to explore new or novel options should be encouraged.

Recruitment and Retention Recommendations

1. **Engagement on promising practices for diversity and inclusion.**

The Secretary should instruct the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer to undertake an effort to identify entities – private, public, and non-governmental- leading on diversity and inclusion, and with whom the Department interacts. The office should develop a means for information sharing on best practices between the Department and the identified entities.

2. **Recommit to devising guidelines or staffing criteria for workplace needs vs. wants for the categories of employees.**

Specifically, positions that are in the criminal investigator series such as armed personnel need weapons training, certification, lifesaving skills/training, and legal and constitutional education/training are subject to atrophy without in-person training. Thus, the need for buildings, classrooms, or brick/mortar hands on training facilities will remain. While some virtual training can suffice it should not be the first solution but the second or third. Law enforcement is expensive, needs skilled people, the tools, training and finances to ensure quality capabilities.

Placement and location of positions must commence with an operational requirement assessment. This need not be complex, but any prior assignment or hiring must include consideration of remote facilities and worksites. Failure to do so may present considerable hiring and retention challenges, and unforeseen operational challenges. Cost savings versus cost sharing should be weighed in any decision.

3. **Assess internal engagement in personal safety.**

The Department should assess what portions of the workforce have had concerns about personal safety as related to their jobs. This will help to determine if specific components are being targeted, and if there are specific regions or if the threats are widespread.

Workplace safety must remain a priority: Hardening, expanding, and upgrading infrastructure of existing buildings needs to be a priority of every component. However, special consideration must be given to recognize these are all public facilities and are not inaccessible fortresses. The Department and components need to explore further workplace safety resources. Increased collaboration with the unions on workplace safety can also provide an opportunity to leverage front-line workers' decades of experience.

4. **Promote awareness on career advancement and opportunities.**

As DHS continues to evolve, ensuring that all employees across components have clear access to training opportunities that advance their career and understand career paths available to them

should be a priority to both attract and retain high performing employees at DHS. Given increased needs for cyber-security and technological skills of the future, the Department can explore innovative ways to seek and secure skilled experts from the private, non-profit, and academic communities. Component leaders and key departmental entities should increase use of interagency-personnel assignments, inter-governmental assignments, or similar cooperative agreements. FLETC should also be considered as a resource to work with universities and centers of excellence to recruit skilled personnel or serve as training and development hub for the Department and components. This should lead to a "pipeline" of qualified, interested, and high-quality persons to join or work with DHS.

APPENDIX 1: TASKING LETTER

Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

![Homeland Security logo]

March 27, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR:	William J. Bratton and Jamie Gorelick
	Co-Chairs, Homeland Security Advisory Council
CC:	Karen Tandy
	Vice Chair, Homeland Security Advisory Council
FROM:	Alejandro N. Mayorkas
	Secretary
SUBJECT:	**New Homeland Security Advisory Council Subcommittees**

I greatly appreciate the recently submitted HSAC reports on Intelligence and Information Sharing, Technology and Innovation Network, Supply Chain Security, and Openness and Transparency. The reports present thoughtful recommendations that we are looking forward to implementing with deliberate speed.

As signaled in our March 16, 2023 meeting, I respectfully request that the HSAC form new subcommittees to study and provide recommendations in four critical areas for our Department:

1. Development of the Department's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy. This effort will be divided into two subcommittees. One will be focused on how the Department can best use AI to advance critical missions, and the other will be focused on how the Department should be building defenses to the nefarious use of AI in the control of an adversary.

2. Potential revisions to the homeland security grant programs, including the risk methodology that is applied, to ensure the Department is operating the programs optimally in light of the changed threat landscape over the past 20 years.

3. A wholesale review of the immigration Alternatives to Detention (ATD) programs, and recommendations to modernize programs and make them more effective.

4. Potential revisions to the DHS workplace and workforce skill set. This effort will be divided into two subcommittees. One will review the Department's current diverse work environments from - secure spaces and ports of entry to remote offices - and make recommendations for the workplace of the future. The second subcommittee will assess the alignment of workforce skills with work responsibilities in discrete, critical mission areas.

These subjects are described in more detail below. I will follow up with you shortly regarding formation of the subcommittees.

I request that the HSAC submit its findings and key recommendations to me no later than 120 days from the date of this memorandum, consistent with applicable rules and regulations.

Thank you for your work on these important matters, your service on the HSAC, and your dedication to securing our homeland.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy

In November 2019, the HSAC issued a report titled *Emerging Technologies Final Report on AI and ML*, which outlined threats to the homeland from artificial intelligence and machine learning and provided recommendations to the Department. In December 2020, DHS issued the *DHS Artificial Intelligence Strategy*, which outlined the potential impacts of AI and addressed investments in AI capabilities, the mitigation of AI risks, its implications for workforce development, and how to improve public trust and engagement. The complex threat environment continues to evolve, as reflected in the rapid advances in AI over just the past few years. The Department must be equipped to leverage and address the advances with the nimbleness that the pace of advance requires.

DHS intends to ethically and responsibly leverage the potential of AI to transform its operations, and also recognizes that AI technology presents new risks and threats. AI technology can be used in innumerable ways, such as to identify and target inbound cargo that may present a potential risk to the U.S., and to create bots that increase employee efficiency. As the Department moves forward, AI must be embraced as a force multiplier and task facilitator; AI offers rich opportunities to improve the ways in which we accomplish our mission across DHS agencies and offices. The Department is currently working on congressionally mandated policy guidance, to be issued later this year, for our use of AI.

In light of the 2020 AI Strategy, the robust work underway to develop guidance, and the increased use of AI by adversaries who wish to cause harm, the HSAC will form two subcommittees. One will examine the use of AI to advance DHS's missions, and the other will examine threats AI poses to the security of our homeland and develop corresponding defense strategies.

The first subcommittee's review should include, but need not be limited to, the following:

1. An assessment of current and emerging AI uses in private sector enterprises and other government agencies.

2. An assessment of which DHS missions and operations could be most positively impacted by leveraging AI.

3. Recommendations on how DHS can ensure robust governance and oversight of AI use to prevent disparate impacts and algorithmic bias, and how DHS can most effectively communicate with the public, oversight entities, and other stakeholders to clearly explain its use of AI and build trust in it.

The second subcommittee's review should include, but need not be limited to, the following:

1. An assessment of ways in which our adversaries are already leveraging and could leverage AI in the future.

2. Recommendations on how DHS can best develop, including by investing in research and development, a forward-looking defensive strategy against adversarial AI.

Homeland Security Grant Program Review

In 2003, Congress established the Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP), which includes three individual grant programs – the State Homeland Security Program (SHSP), the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), and Operation Stonegarden – to help bolster the nation's capabilities to prevent terrorist attacks. In the decades since, the grant programs have undergone only slight legislative revision despite the dramatically changed and evolving threat landscape. The Department has made modest changes to the risk methodology and the number of jurisdictions awarded UASI grants has fluctuated, but otherwise the HSGP has remained fairly static. Now, at the 20th Anniversary of the HSGP, a thorough review is warranted.

The Department has increasingly received feedback from stakeholders that the programs have become less transparent and collaborative. This feedback also surfaced underlying tensions between stakeholder groups, which contribute to frustrations with the grant programs. There is the tension between states and localities, and a tension between emergency management and law enforcement. Driving these tensions are scarce dollars, state and local funding allocation decisions, and shifting national priorities.

The HSAC will form a subcommittee to engage with subject matter experts and provide recommendations for the reform of the HSGP, with consideration of stakeholder feedback and inclusive of potential legislative reforms. Specifically, the review and recommendations should include, but need not be limited to, the following:

1. How the Department should assess and rank terrorism risk at the national, state, and local levels.

2. Whether current congressional direction that Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) that comprise 85% of the national risk threshold eligible to receive UASI funding reflects the current threat environment.

3. How the Department should provide funding to States and MSAs.

   a. Whether funding should be distributed to recipients through State Administrative Agencies (SAAs) or directly.
   b. How SAAs can reduce the administrative burdens of the application process within their states.
   c. The appropriate State and local allocations, including allowable administration percentages.

4. Whether funding should be annual or multi-year awards, and what the respective performance periods should be.

5. Whether grant programs should be bifurcated or new grant programs should be created to account for:

   a. large, heavily-funded and smaller, seldom-funded jurisdictions;
   b. sustainment of existing capabilities and capacity building; and
   c. funding distributed among emergency management, law enforcement, and fire fighters.

6. Qualified uses of grant funding, including percentages of Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Activities (LETPA).

Immigration Alternatives to Detention (ATD)

Individuals arriving at the border who are placed in removal proceedings should have their cases decided in an orderly, efficient, and fair manner. Certain individuals at the border can be detained while they are in removal proceedings. DHS's Alternatives to Detention (ATD) programs provide oversight of certain individuals who are released from DHS custody during the pendency of their removal proceedings. The ATD programs were developed to ensure compliance with release conditions, provide important case management services for non-detained noncitizens, and alleviate stress on detention facilities. ATD consists of multiple distinct subprograms, such as the Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP), Young Adult Case Management Program (YACMP), and the Case Management Pilot Program (CMPP). Each ATD program utilizes certain tools, such as technology and case management, to support noncitizens' compliance with release conditions while on ICE's non-detained docket and to increase court appearance rates. ATD has become an important tool to ensure non-detained individuals understand and comply with their obligations while they are in removal proceedings.

The HSAC will form a subcommittee to conduct a wholesale review of the ATD programs. The review should include, but need not be limited to, the development of recommendations on the following:

1. How the Department can more effectively ensure that individuals in removal proceedings remain in contact with ICE and accessible as required.

2. The identification of new ATD programs and areas of improvement for existing ATD programs.

3. Steps the Department should take to broaden ATD, improve the reach of ATD programs, and ensure that processes are in place to monitor the effectiveness of the ATD programs.

DHS Workforce and Development

Since the creation of DHS 20 years ago, the Department has confronted challenges of unprecedented breadth, ranging from global terrorism, ransomware, a rise in targeted violence, emergent humanitarian crises abroad, natural disasters, and much more. The Department has responded to the dynamic landscape with leadership, skilled personnel, cross-component collaboration, and new programs. The workplace model has also changed in dramatic ways, from allowing for more flexible work schedules to enabling remote work, including, for example, remote interviews of individuals seeking benefits that DHS administers. The Department looks to improve the current work environment and ensure it is adaptable and ready to meet future challenges. This aligns with the DHS 2023 priority to transform the Department's infrastructure to ensure it is a more productive and flexible workplace responsive to the needs of the workforce and the public.

The HSAC will form two subcommittees:

1. The first subcommittee will review the Department's current diverse work environments, from secure spaces and ports of entry to remote offices. The subcommittee is to provide recommendations on, among other things:

   a. Models for the next generation work environment that may be employed in different mission areas, to enable the DHS workforce to be prepared for a wide range of changes ahead.

   b. How DHS can leverage existing and emerging technology to enable mobile learning, cross-training, and services to develop a well-informed, skilled, and agile workforce that effectively meets evolving stakeholder needs.

2. The second subcommittee will assess the alignment of workforce skills with work responsibilities. The subcommittee is to provide recommendations on, among other things:

a. How the Department can effectively upskill and reskill certain elements of its workforce to expand their capabilities and enable them to more ably fulfill their evolving job responsibilities.

b. How the Department can, where necessary, effect workforce composition changes to ensure the alignment of skills with new or evolving work responsibilities.

APPENDIX 2: SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS AND OTHER WITNESSES

Name	Title	Organization
Joe Abiodun	Ramp Service Supervisor	United Airlines, Dulles
Ali Algabyali	CBP Officer	U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
Jay Anthony	Executive Assistant	Transportation Security Administration (TSA)
Eric Beane	Deputy Federal Security Director	TSA
Richard Becker	CBP Officer	CBP
Laurie Boulden	Chief Learning Officer & Executive Director of Learning, Education, and Development Strategy	U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
Elizabeth Cappello	Principal Deputy Chief Information Officer	Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)
David Ceasar	Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary for Management	DHS Headquarters
Thomas D. Chaleki	Chief Readiness Support Officer	DHS
Eric Chin	Assistant Federal Security Director	Screening Operations, TSA
Lauren Colgan	Watch Commander	CBP
Dean Cummings	Special Services Team Lead & Customer Service Representative	TSA
Jim Decker	Ramp Director	United Airlines, Dulles
Robert B. Diaz	Assistant Port Director	CBP
Joshua Ederheimer	Deputy Director	Federal Protective Service, DHS

Roland Edwards	Chief Human Capital Officer	Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO), DHS
Samuel Giles	CBP Officer	CBP
Christopher Hall	Assistant Commissioner	Office of Training and Development, DHS
David Hargest	East Baggage Checked Baggage Resolution Area	TSA
Jordane Henson	Prechecked Computed Tomography Operator	TSA
Allen Holiskey	CBP Officer	CBP
Keith Holtermann	Chief Learning Officer	Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
Kimberly Hutchinson	Assistant Administrator & Chief Learning Officer	TSA
Eric Hysen	Chief Information Officer	OCIO
Scott T. Johnson	Federal Security Director	TSA, Dulles
Scott Kenney	Military Assistant	OCIO
David Larrimore	Chief Technology Officer	OCIO
Phil Letowt	Executive Director	Solutions Development Directorate, OCIO
Kyle Martin	Supervisor	Media Communication Team, TSA
Kevin Martinez	Transportation Security Manager	TSA
Kaizad Munshi	Deputy Director	FLETC
John McPhail	Assistant Port Director	CBP

Ken Montgomery	Customer Service Supervisor	United Airlines, Dulles
Febe Orellana	East Baggage On-Screen Alarm Resolution Protocol	TSA
Chakris Raungtriphop,	Branch Chief	Emerging Technologies Branch, OCIO
Mark Roby	Explosive Detection Canine Handler	TSA
Ariana Roddini	Associate Director for Training Operations	FLETC
James Schake	Director of Station Operations Center	United Airlines, Dulles
Erin Sherrow	Officer	CBP
Michael Stough	Director	Program Analysis and Evaluation, Office of the Chief Financial Officer
Jennifer Tocco	Chief of Staff	FLETC
Claudia Vogel	Customer Service Representative	United Airlines, Dulles
Michael Weissman	Digital Service Expert	SDD, OCIO
Renate Welsch	Customer Service Representative	United Airlines, Dulles
Bea Wiggins	Director of Airport Operations	United Airlines, Dulles
Kenneth Zellars	CBP Officer	CBP