

# 2026 VHPA Security Brief

Tuesday, May 5, 2026

Zoom 9pm

Shawn A. Brokos



**JEWISH  
FEDERATION**  
GREATER PITTSBURGH

# Communal Security Program

## Scope

*Over 50,000 people in the greater Pittsburgh area*

*Over 70 organizations in over 60 separate buildings*

*Program inception - January 2017*

*Over 510 training/drills for over 51,000 people*

## Program Priorities

*Organizational and building assessment which lead to target hardening and emergency planning*

*Training and drills; 3-5 minutes until LEO arrive*

*Mitigation of threats and Law Enforcement facilitation to those threats*

# Four Pillars of our Program



Training



Law  
Enforcement/  
Community  
Liaison



Target  
Hardening  
Facilities



Situational  
Awareness/  
Threat  
Mitigation

# Security Essentials

**Emergency  
Operations  
Plans**

**Communication  
Plans**

**Cultivate Police  
Relationships**

**Form a Security  
Committee**

**Maximize State  
and Federal  
Security Grants**

**Culture of  
Security**

**Evacuation/  
Lockdown Drills**

**Incident  
Tracking**

**Construct Go  
Bags**

**TRAINING**

**Build Network  
of Faith Based  
Partners**

**Emergency  
Relocation  
Location**

# TOP 10 SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 1) Limit entrance points. Have a single point of entry and establish access control measures (including checking every guest or visitor). Ensure all windows, doors, and other entry points are secure. Test alarm systems.
- 2) Make sure exits and entrances are clearly marked and unobstructed.
- 3) Ensure trusted individuals have access to floor plans, necessary keys, or passwords to physically access the building; the ability to operate alarm systems; and access to online platforms in use (e.g., Zoom, Facebook Live).
- 4) Enable caller ID on phones, place an incident checklist near every phone, and train staff on what to say and not say when answering the phone (e.g., do not give out security information related to your facility).
- 5) Have first aid kits, Stop the Bleed® kits, and functional AEDs strategically located throughout the facility. Make sure individuals are trained in how to use these.
- 6) Conduct training repeatedly. Contact your Jewish security initiative to facilitate training such as BeAware: Introduction to Situational Awareness; Countering Active Threat Training; and Stop the Bleed®.
- 7) Convene a security committee to review plans, processes, and procedures, and your Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).
- 8) Invite local law enforcement agencies to conduct a walkthrough of your facility. Ensure they have copies of relevant floor plans, EOP and are aware of events and general operating times.
- 9) Establish ways to quickly communicate with staff, faculty, students, guests, and parents in the event of an incident both inside the facility and elsewhere in the community. Test and update these systems regularly.
- 10) Always report incidents, suspicious activity, or other concerns to local law enforcement and your Jewish security initiative

# GREETER/USHER CHECKLIST

<b>GREETER/USHER SECURITY CHECKLIST</b>		<b>Y/N</b>
1)	Do I know the policies of my Rabbi or other leaders about my security role?	
2)	Do I have a G/U post assignment?	
3)	Do I know where other G/Us are supposed to be?	
4)	Have I talked with other G/Us to develop plans about emergency responses?	
5)	Am I comfortable being assertive with a suspicious person or situation?	
6)	Do I know the best route to every exit in my synagogue building?	
7)	Do I know how to covertly signal another G/U to call 911 or to assist me?	
8)	Do members of my synagogue know my role if an emergency occurs?	
9)	Have I walked the route from my G/U post to every exit in my synagogue building?	
10)	Have I ever practiced getting to another area while staying low?	
11)	Do I have a plan for how I can separate a suspicious person from other people in the lobby or sanctuary?	
12)	Do I know what items or areas in every part of the building would provide the best protection, barricade or concealment?	
13)	Do I know where mechanical and utility areas and items are located and how to access them? (Electrical boxes, water supply, alarms, gas, fire extinguishers, ladders, tools, potential weapons, office keys, etc.)	
14)	Do I know where crawl spaces, overhead storage and closets are located and if they would be useable for concealment?	
15)	Could I lock every front door quickly?	
16)	Do I know which interior doors have locks?	
17)	Do I know the best location outside for viewing each parking area?	
18)	Do I know where there is a flashlight in several areas of the building?	
19)	Have I ever checked to see if I could move a pew, desk, table or other item if it was necessary to do so in an emergency?	
20)	Do I have a plan for how I might respond to an emergency in a variety of synagogue areas? (Lobby, during the service, classroom, social hall, parking lot?)	

A few examples of questions to ask:

"Good afternoon, how can I help you today?"

"Welcome to Temple \_\_\_\_\_, what brings you here today?"

"Shabbat Shalom, how are you? I don't think we've met before - I'm \_\_\_\_\_"



## PCCD Nonprofit Security Grant Fund Program (State Grant)

The PCCD Nonprofit Security Grant Fund is available to nonprofits serving individuals, groups or institutions that are included within a bias motivation category for single bias hate crime incidents as identified by the FBI's Hate Crime Statistics Publication. In FY2024-25, the General Assembly approved approximately \$10 million for this program. Grants were awarded to 208 nonprofit organizations across 31 Pennsylvania counties.

Applicants are encouraged to have a Threat, Vulnerability, Risk Assessment (TVRA) of their facility to identify and prioritize vulnerabilities to be addressed with grant funds. This is NOT a requirement.

PCCD allowable security enhancements include:

- Safety and security planning
- Purchase of safety and security equipment
- Purchase of security-related technology, which may include, but is not limited to:
  - Metal Detectors
  - Protective Lighting
  - Surveillance Equipment
  - Special Emergency Communications Equipment
  - Electronic Locksets
  - Deadbolts
  - Trauma Kits
  - Theft Control Devices
- Safety and security training
  - Threat awareness and response training
  - Upgrades to existing structures that enhance safety and security
  - Vulnerability and threat assessments
  - Specialty-trained canines
  - Any other safety or security-related project that enhances safety or security of the non-profit organization

Projects budgets cannot exceed \$225,000.

- Budgets over \$25,000 require matching funds.
- Budgets between \$25,001 and \$75,000 require a 33% match. The cost to the applicant will be \$8,250-\$24,750.
- Budgets between \$75,001 and \$150,000 require a 50% match. The cost to the applicant will be \$37,500 - \$75,000.

The federation security team recommends organizations have a current risk, vulnerability, and threat assessment completed in the last 3 years. Additional details are here:

<https://www.pccd.pa.gov/schoolsafety/Pages/Non-Profit-Security-Grant-Fund.aspx>

*For further information or questions, please contact Erin Fagan, [efagan@jfedpgh.org](mailto:efagan@jfedpgh.org) or Shawn Brokos, [sbrokos@jfedpgh.org](mailto:sbrokos@jfedpgh.org).*

# GRANT GUIDANCE

# Community Security Resources



The image features a dark, almost black background. In the center, the text "ANY QUESTIONS?" is written in a bold, white, serif font. Behind the text, several hands are visible, raised and spread out, suggesting a group of people or a collective gesture. The hands are rendered in a dark, muted color, blending into the background but still clearly visible. The overall composition is simple and direct, focusing on the central text and the symbolic gesture of raised hands.

**ANY QUESTIONS?**