

## DHS Adjusts Grant Programs

By Eileen Sullivan, CQ Staff

States and large urban areas will have to prove that they are at risk of a terrorist attack and in need of federal funds to receive two popular types of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grants, according to a department document released last week.

In the past, the State Homeland Security Grant Program awarded a base amount to each state; the rest of the funds were distributed according to population. This year, each state will receive a minimum amount, and the rest of the funds will be distributed using a formula that calculates risk and need.

Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grants previously have been distributed based on risk alone. This year, they will be handed out based on risk and need, according to the 200-page grant guidance document.

In another change, DHS will not award grants until applicants have defined their priorities and explained how they would spend the money.

“This approach will help ensure that capabilities are built and sustained to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks, major disasters and other emergencies, while achieving the greatest return on our national investment in homeland security by addressing the greatest risks and needs,” according to the guidance document.

“This year, there’s definitely more accountability with the program,” DHS spokesman Marc Short said Tuesday. For instance, he said, state homeland security advisers will participate in reviewing grant applications.

DHS plans to announce the list of urban areas that may qualify for UASI funds within the next two weeks.

Congress has had an ongoing debate over what portion of grants should be awarded based entirely on risk. Those who advocate risk-based funding say a sparsely populated state like Wyoming should not receive more money per capita than a state like New York, which has proven terrorist targets.

*Eileen Sullivan can be reached at [esullivan@cq.com](mailto:esullivan@cq.com).*