

## Report Highlights

### A Review of Pennsylvania's Homeland Security Program

Senate Resolution 366 directed the LB&FC to conduct a review of homeland security funding as well as the adequacy of the coordination and direction of federal grants to state and local agencies.

#### Study Findings:

- **In 2007, PA received a 45% increase (to \$34.7M) in its federal Homeland Security grants.** Prior to 2007, federal Homeland Security grants decreased sharply for two years. PA's federal grants to improve public health protection, which amounted to \$53.2M in 2006, have also fluctuated in recent years.
- **Federal Dept. of Homeland Security grants are now based, in part, on state needs and performance.** The PA Emergency Management Agency still allocated funds to the regional task forces based solely on population until September 2007 when it began to base 20% of allocations on risk.
- **PEMA generally complies with federal DHS grants monitoring requirements.** PEMA, however, should improve its procedures for monitoring its sub-recipients financial and program performance.
- **Timeliness of payments to vendors and reimbursements to task forces has improved.** However, delays still occur in PEMA's processing of grant awards to the task forces. Payment policies for multi-jurisdictional projects are being revised to improve timeliness.
- **The Department of Health appears to adequately administer federal public health grants.** Some stakeholders, however, expressed concerns about PA's public health preparedness, especially regarding a pandemic disease.
- **Significant issues exist regarding the organization and authority of state and local agencies charged with homeland security.** In particular: (1) PEMA lacks enforcement authority over county Emergency Management Agencies; (2) Title 35 and Act 227 take different approaches to emergency management; (3) the authority of regional task forces is unclear; (4) PA's Right-to-Know Law may not offer necessary protections; and (5) PA lacks a statewide mutual aid agreement.

- **PEMA needs to provide additional program assistance to local responders and regional task forces and identify gaps in homeland security.** Areas needing assistance include providing technical assistance, developing a web-based system to facilitate grant administration, and developing, or at least setting standards for, a computerized inventory system.
- **The Commonwealth Fusion Center lacks funding.** This center, designed to coordinate state, local, and private homeland security intelligence efforts, lacks funding.

#### Recommendations:

- The General Assembly consider consolidating and amending Title 35 and Act 227 to: (1) provide a mechanism (e.g., withholding certain grant funds) to enable PEMA to ensure all levels of government are prepared for a disaster; (2) incorporate an "all-hazards" approach to terrorism and disaster planning; (3) define in statute the role and authority of the PA Office of Homeland Security; (4) define more specifically the status of the regional task forces; (5) provide explicit immunity for certain volunteers; (6) establish a statewide mutual aid agreement; and (7) amend the Right-to-Know law.
- The Governor's Homeland Security Cabinet and the OHS review this and related reports and make suggestions for improving PA's emergency management system.
- PEMA consider need and performance when allocating Homeland Security grants and consider establishing a certification process as a condition for local entities to receive certain grant funds.
- The General Assembly and the Administration consider ways to encourage private entity involvement in homeland security.
- DOH consider ways to reduce paperwork requirements in its hospital grant program.