

2017-  
2022

PREPARING FOR A



# CAPSTONE REPORT

LESSONS LEARNED AND ADVICE  
FROM THE KANSAS CITY METRO REGION

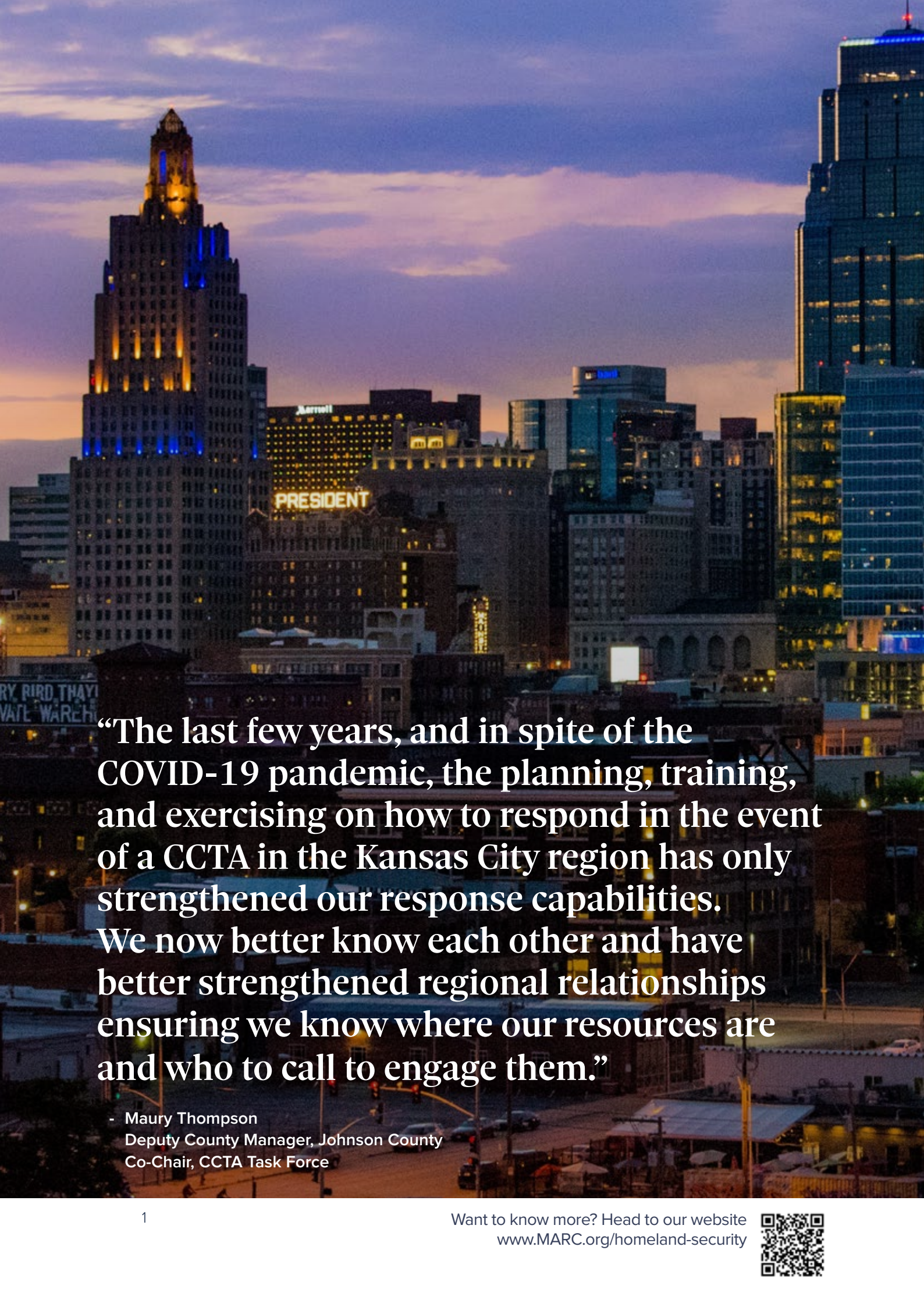


MID-AMERICA REGIONAL COUNCIL

**HOMELAND**

**SECURITY**





**“The last few years, and in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, the planning, training, and exercising on how to respond in the event of a CCTA in the Kansas City region has only strengthened our response capabilities. We now better know each other and have better strengthened regional relationships ensuring we know where our resources are and who to call to engage them.”**

- Maury Thompson  
Deputy County Manager, Johnson County  
Co-Chair, CCTA Task Force



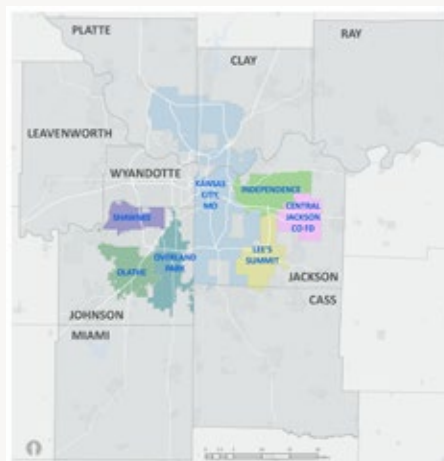




# INTRODUCTION

Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks (CCTAs) have emerged as a significant terrorist threat with the potential for producing mass casualties. Global events in Madrid (2002), London (2006), Mumbai (2008), and Paris (2017), and domestically in Boston (2013) highlighted the evolving threat to metropolitan areas. In the Kansas City region, the Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee (RHSCC) recognized this emerging threat. In late 2017, the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) received a three-year, \$2.25 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Program to Prepare Communities for Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attacks on behalf of the RHSCC to advance preparedness and response efforts for a CCTA and other hostile events within and across jurisdictions in the nine-county, bi-state region.

**This report describes the multi-jurisdictional and collaborative planning efforts undertaken in the Kansas City Metro area with the hope of increasing awareness of the risk of CCTAs and supporting planning efforts of other communities.**



For more information on specific efforts or to access products, [Marc.org/homeland-security](http://Marc.org/homeland-security).

The RHSCC acknowledges the emergence of the term Complex Coordinated Attack (CCA). The term CCTA is used in this report to be consistent with the original program language.

## FEMA defines a CCTA/CCA as:

- ▶ Synchronized attacks conducted by one or more independent teams.
- ▶ Occurring at multiple locations sequentially or in close succession.
- ▶ Initiated with little or no warning.
- ▶ Employing one or more weapon systems such as explosives, fire as a weapon, vehicle ramming, or high-caliber gunfire.



The region's response community includes:

- 70+ law enforcement agencies
- 30+ Emergency Medical Service (EMS) agencies
- 70+ fire departments
- 30+ hospitals
- 40+ Public Safety Answering Points for 911 calls

# WHERE WE BEGAN: INITIAL CAPABILITY GAPS

Early in the process, the region had identified existing vulnerabilities and capability gaps that would be addressed by the CCTA grant funding and associated activities.

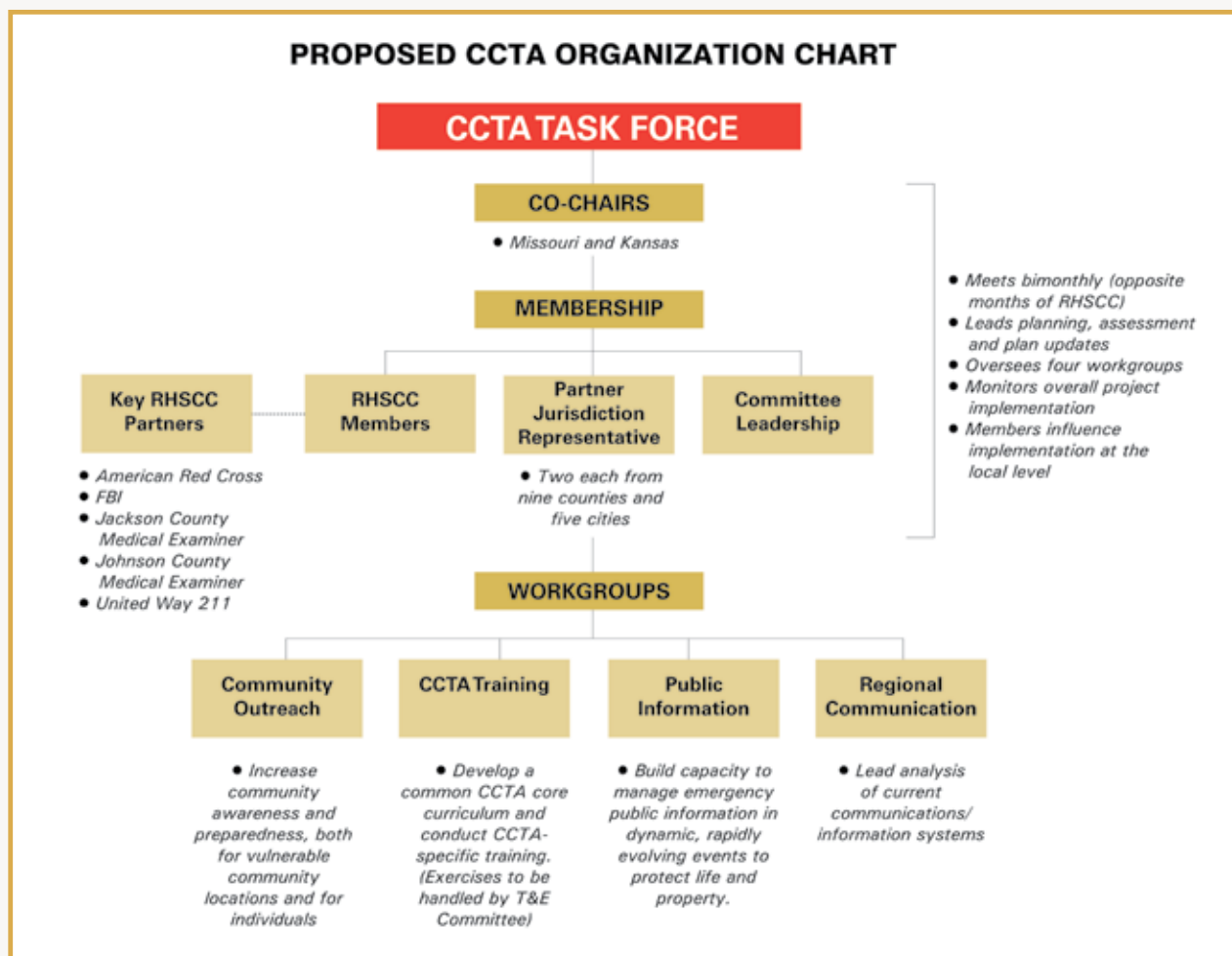
1. Limited interdisciplinary planning, training, and exercise efforts for first responders, first receivers (e.g., hospitals), senior leaders and command staff, community partners, and other regional responders.
2. Inability to create a real-time common operating picture in a complex, dynamic environment for situational awareness, resource requests and prioritization, and coordination within or across jurisdictions and state lines.
3. Inadequate Public Information Officer (PIO) capacity for high-level, coordinated social media monitoring and response.
4. Lack of training in specialized tactics for law enforcement agencies to engage and counter-maneuver against trained, motivated attackers.
5. The need for coordinated processes for victim accounting, family reunification, and addressing the information and assistance needs of survivors and families of victims.
6. Venues and special event employees and volunteers have a limited awareness of the threat and risk of a CCTA, lack training in the actions to take in the event of a CCTA, and need additional knowledge of physical security measures.
7. Hospitals need additional joint planning with EMS for patient tracking and joint training with law enforcement for processes such as security and evidence collection.
8. The Regional Fusion Center is not connected to all key response agencies.



# HOW WE COORDINATED: THE CCTA TASK FORCE

The Kansas City Metro region has a well-established foundation for emergency preparedness and response led by the Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee (RHSCC). Since CCTAs do not adhere to city, county or state boundaries,

building on this existing regional structure was critical for a coordinated response. Since the RHSCC is focused on all-hazards, a multi-disciplinary, multi-jurisdictional Task Force was established to concentrate specifically on a CCTA and to manage grant activities.



The CCTA Task Force served as a forum for collective learning and used lessons from real-world events to inform planning efforts. They approved Guiding Principles for all project activities and brought together stakeholders to consider plans and monitor project implementation. The Task Force also developed a sustainability plan to transition the project efforts to existing regional committees after the grant period.

# THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE CCTA EFFORT

The CCTA project activities were guided by three fundamental elements. These elements provided for a common purpose, defined a clear scope for project activities, and ensured a coordinated project approach.



## 1. A Clear Project Vision:

“Through a proactive, cooperative, community effort, relationships and systems needed to prevent and respond to CCTAs are in place across the region. Synchronized and well-practiced plans are established, and the region is ready to mobilize resources to interdict threats and conduct operations to minimize loss of life and meet the needs of survivors.”

## 2. Defined Project Goals:

1. Enable the region to respond to CCTAs using three scenarios that require differing levels of coordination and requiring mutual aid from neighboring jurisdictions and across the state line.
2. Increase CCTA response proficiency within specific disciplines while improving prevention and response planning and information sharing across disciplines and jurisdictions.
3. Increase coordination and interoperability among all audiences and improve the ability to respond to a CCTA through joint training and exercises.
4. Increase community situational awareness of activities and locations vulnerable to CCTAs, helping both community partner organizations and individuals be better prepared.
5. Build the capacity to manage public information in high-stress, dynamic, and evolving situations to help protect victims, responders, and the public.
6. Meet the information and assistance needs of survivors, victims, witnesses, families, and affected agencies by pre-planning with community agencies.
7. Decrease the time needed to recognize an incident as a CCTA to raise situational awareness and expedite operational coordination.
8. Build regional capacity for sustainment of CCTA-related capabilities.



## 3. Distinct Project Scenarios:

Three distinct planning scenarios were selected to focus planning efforts. During the planning process, the three scenarios demonstrated the increasing complexity of communications, resource management, and operational coordination when multiple incidents occur in a single jurisdiction, across multiple jurisdictions, and across state lines.



# WHAT HAPPENED WHEN: PROJECT TIMELINE EVENTS

2017

## Grant award.

- Conducted CCTA-focused Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) workshop.
- Conducted CCTA Regional Kick Off Meeting.

2018

## First meeting of the CCTA Task Force.

- Designed CCTA Self-Assessment Metrics and conducted in-person, local assessments.
- Assessed local emergency operations plans based on CCTA characteristics.
- CCTA Task Force agreed upon metrics and guiding principles.
- Began to conduct workshops and training programs.
- Published "An Analysis of Recent CCTA Responses" with research of CCTAs and other incidents.
- Active shooter tabletop exercise with the Community Disaster Resiliency Network (CDRN).
- Assessed current outreach efforts for venues and venue operators with the FBI, Regional Fusion Center, and CISA.

2019

## Continued to conduct workshops and training sessions.

- Identified and developed a Core Curriculum to train responders for a CCTA.
- Conducted the first Counter-Terrorism Response Training (CTRT) for law enforcement.
- Drafted first CCTA Local Emergency Operations Plan Special Incident Annex Template.
- Conducted Immediate Human Services Response Workshop.
- Conducted the first Community Outreach Train-the-Trainer.
- Held kick-off meeting for "KC Ready: Prepared, Aware, and Proactive" Campaign.
- Finalized CCTA Outreach and Training Package.

2020

## Adjusted scheduled event for COVID-19.

- Held a Special Event Stakeholder meeting.
- *March 7: First confirmed case of COVID-19 in the region.*
- *March 16: Postponed five scheduled events between March and June due to COVID-19.*
- Partnered with University of Kansas Master Program to conduct CCTA program interviews and gather feedback.
- Adjusted training and exercise programs to be conducted virtually.
- Began to develop Special Event web-based training for volunteers and staff.
- FEMA approved a request from MARC to extend the project period from to May 31, 2021, due to COVID-19.
- Conducted the first CTRT training since COVID-19.
- Hosted crisis Leadership in an Active Threat Environment Virtual Seminar.

2021

## Resumed scheduled events with COVID-19 precautions.

- Reconvened the Resource Sharing Workgroup to approve the draft Regional Resource Annex.
- Modified the CCTA Outreach Strategy considering COVID-19 impacts.
- FEMA again extends the project period from May 31, 2021, to May 31, 2022, due to COVID-19.
- Held a strategic planning session with the CCTA Task Force to assess progress and review project timeline.
- Conducted 25 CTRT courses throughout the year with COVID precautions.

2022

## Project Closeout

- Conducted survey to assess progress toward implementing the CCTA Core Curriculum and identify training needs.
- Revised Regional Hostile Event Integrated Response (HEIRT) Framework.
- Finalized the Regional Coordination Guide and associated documents.
- Conducted on-scene Communication and Coordination Functional Exercise.
- Finalized web-based training modules.
- Conducted CCTA Capstone Full-Scale Exercise Toolkit Workshop.
- Published the CCTA Capstone Report.



# WHAT WE DID: ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Through associated activities, the CCTA Task Force was able to address identified preparedness, prevention, and response gaps to advance the level of community readiness across the region. Through initial gap assessments, planning efforts, training activities, and exercise activities, first responders/receivers, senior command staff, and others across the region were able to enhance their ability to prepare for and recover from a CCTA.



## 1. Performed Risk Identifications and Gap Assessments

A comprehensive process of assessing local and regional risks, vulnerabilities, and gaps allowed the CCTA Task Force to outline a strategy to best achieve the project goals. This strategy was updated throughout the project and was used to strengthen planning, training, and exercise activities.

### Self-Assessment Tool

Developed and modified a local CCTA Self-Assessment Tool for local jurisdictions.

### Threat and Hazard Identification

Updated the regional Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment/Stakeholder Preparedness Review (THIRA/SPR).

### Summary

Provided a summary report to each local jurisdiction after the self-assessment.

### Regional Fusion Center

The Regional Fusion Center and local jurisdictions conducted site assessments and outreach to special event organizers, sports arenas, tourist destinations, and other large public gathering spaces.

### Communication Systems

Examined regional communications systems with the Department of Homeland Security's Interoperable Communications Technical Assistance Program (ICTAP).

### Regional Metrics

Developed regional metrics for each Project objective to gauge progress.







## 2. Integrated Local, Regional, and Community Planning Efforts

### Local Planning Efforts

The resources and templates developed that could support local CCTA planning efforts include:

- ▶ CCTA Local Emergency Operations Plan Special Incident Annex Template
- ▶ CCTA Local Planning Guide

### Regional Planning Efforts

A coordinated regional response required a significant update to the existing Regional Coordination Guide (RCG).

- ▶ Added, updated, and streamlined CCTA information to the RCG Base Plan
- ▶ Finalized updates to Emergency Support Function (ESF) 2: Communications, ESF8: Public Health and Medical, ESF13: Public Safety and Security, and ESF15: Emergency Public Information Annexes
- ▶ Expanded the RCG Special Incident Annex for Terrorism to include a CCTA
- ▶ Created a CCTA Special Incident Annex: Field Operations Guide for Operations in Human Services
- ▶ Updated the Regional Resource Annex and drafted a Resource Sharing Agreement to provide a safety net for resource sharing across jurisdictions and disciplines
- ▶ Updated the Regional Hostile Event Framework (formerly the Active Shooter Framework)

### Community Planning Efforts

Planning efforts were underway to engage special event and sports venues, businesses, and community members when COVID-19 emerged in March 2020.

- ▶ KC Ready: Prepared, Aware, and Proactive campaign materials (designed but not implemented because of COVID-19)



### 3. Developed an Inclusive and Incremental Training Program

The CCTA Training Workgroup led the creation and implementation of a regional training program designed to increase response proficiency within and across the various disciplines and jurisdictions in the region. The Workgroup reviewed the FEMA catalog for existing training programs to consider or pilot. It also employed a train-the-trainer methodology (especially within law enforcement) to develop a cadre of regional trainers to offer continuous training programs. Hospitals and medical examiners/coroners were the recipient of

several discipline-specific trainings, and the Kansas City Regional Fusion Center was key to outreach efforts that connected law enforcement with special event venues, local businesses, and community members. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the CCTA training schedule. Adjustments were made to offer in-person programs virtually, and some programs were canceled or postponed. 149 classes were offered reaching 2,712 participants. Some highlights follow below.

1. **Designed and Conducted Counterterrorism Response Team trainings**  
(CTRT) training to prepare law enforcement with active countermeasures against highly motivated attackers  
**(96 courses / 1,421 attendees)**
2. **Conducted Integrated Response trainings for multi-disciplinary groups**
3. **(21 courses/528 attendees)**
  - Hostile Events Integrated Response Training (HEIRT)
  - ALERRT Active Attack Integrated Response Course
  - PER335: Critical Decision Making for Complex Coordinated Attacks
  - Command Peer Support Training
  - Counterterrorism Operations Planning Course
4. **Conducted Community Outreach, Sports Venue, and Special Event trainings**  
**(5 courses / 156 attendees)**
  - You're the Help Until Help Arrives
  - Stop the Bleed
  - Suspicious Activity Reporting/ Protective Actions
  - MGT412: Sport and Special Event Evacuation Training and Exercise
5. **Conducted Hospital and Mass Fatality trainings**  
**(5 courses / 45 attendees)**
  - PER233: Medical Preparedness and Response to Bombing Incidents
  - G0386: Mass Fatalities Incident Response
6. **Conducted other discipline specific trainings for key stakeholders**  
**(13 courses / 91 attendees)**
  - G290: Public Information Officer Basics
  - MGT318: Public Information in an All-Hazards Incident
  - Interoperable Communications and Metropolitan Area Regional Radio System training
  - Incident Tactical Dispatcher
7. **Developed web-based training modules**
  - Hostile Event Integration Response Training (HEIRT)
  - Evidence Preservation and Collection for the Healthcare Provider
  - Baseline Security Awareness Training for Special Event Volunteers



## 4. Designed and Conducted an Exercise Program

The CCTA Task Force implemented a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional, capability-based exercise program to validate plans, measure response capabilities, practice new techniques acquired in training programs, and test roles in receiving and providing mutual aid and support. Exercise evaluation helped identify gaps and areas for improvement that were incorporated into future training and exercise efforts. In total, the exercise program included 847 participants.

### Exercises for a Mass Fatality and Human Services Response

- January 10, 2019: Regional Planning for Mass Casualty and Fatality Workshop (69 participants)
- September 23, 2019: Immediate Human Services Workshop (57 participants)
- October 24, 2019: CCTA Extended Human Services Workshop (57 participants)
- September 23, 2020: CCTA Virtual Family Assistance in a Complex Coordinated Attack Functional Exercise (35 participants)
- February 23, 2022: Family and Friends Notification/Reception Center Seminar (79 participants)
- **Total: 297 participants**

### Exercises for Public Information Officers

(PIOs were also incorporated in a number of the other exercises as appropriate)

- October 26, 2018: RAPIO CCTA Tabletop (38 participants)
- June 28, 2019: PIOs Response to a CCTA Workshop (32 participating agencies)
- September 30, 2020: CCTA Virtual Joint Information System Functional Exercise (35 participants)
- **Total: 105 participants**

### Local Integrated Response Exercises

- February 27, 2019: Johnson County Workshop (43 participants)
- March 18, 2019: Independence County Workshop (28 participants)
- April 15, 2019: Combined Local Initial Response to CCTA Tabletop Exercise (67 participants)
- August 29, 2019: Integrated Response to a CCTA Tabletop Exercise (45 participants)
- **Total: 183 participants**

### Regional Integrated Response Exercises

- May 1, 2018: CCTA Workshop (57 participants)
- December 17, 2018: Community Disaster Resiliency Network (CDRN) Tabletop Exercise (38 participants)
- March 25, 2019: Multi-Jurisdictional Improvised Explosive Device (MJIED) Workshop (27 participants)
- April 12, 2019: MJIED Workshop for Law Enforcement, SWAT, and Bomb Squad/Explosive Ordinance Disposal team members (21 participants)
- June 24, 2019: Regional Response to a CCTA Workshop (20 participants)
- December 3, 2019: CCTA Resource Management Workshop (42 participants)
- October 12, 2020: Crisis Leadership in an Active Threat Virtual Seminar (137 participants)
- March 9, 2022: CCTA On-Scene Communication and Coordination Functional Exercise (58 participants)
- May 31, 2022: CCTA Capstone Exercise Toolkit Development (35 participants)
- **Total: 435 participants**





# WHAT WE LEARNED: OUR ADVICE

Is your community ready to embark on a similar program?

The CCTA Task Force offers these bits of advice to help you on your journey.

- ▶ Review and leverage training programs and technical assistance from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA).
- ▶ Take and adapt materials developed and readily available from other communities. Reach out to those further along in their preparedness efforts.
- ▶ The value of this program is the multidisciplinary planning process and range of activities more than the final products. Planning efforts provide an understanding of capabilities and limitations across disciplines and systems.
- ▶ Build upon your existing structures and relationships. While there may not be enough time in the existing structures to devote to CCTA planning, it is important to integrate into these structures to simplify the process.
- ▶ Create workgroups and subgroups to reduce this large effort into more efficient parts.
- ▶ Engage subject matter experts from each discipline rather than finding personnel that are experts in all fields.
- ▶ Understand that regardless of location, we are all vulnerable and a response will have to be multidisciplinary. Gather a wide variety of stakeholders to embark on holistic efforts to address the CCTA scenario and all of its components.
- ▶ Do not skip the local assessment stage. You will have to know your community and its vulnerabilities to implement a practical program.
- ▶ Create an agreed upon set of guiding principles to advance planning.
- ▶ Use a common planning scenario. Focus on a common threat and its unique characteristics to inform the planning process and provide a basis for training and exercise scenarios.
- ▶ Establish program metrics early in the grant period, determine how you will measure success, and keep evaluating progress toward your goals.
- ▶ Keep an eye toward sustainment. Use the train-the-trainer strategy for multiple trainings and create replicable exercise materials.
- ▶ Develop localized web-based training to address specific gaps.
- ▶ Collaboration and coordination with regional partners is critical for success, especially with high-risk/low-frequency events. Relationships between community partners have a direct impact on ability to respond. These relationships are strengthened through planning, training, and exercise activities, as well as response.
- ▶ The efforts and activities in this program will take time. Give yourself more time than you think an effort will take. This applies especially to developing and implementing training curriculum.



# WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED: IMPACT ON REGIONAL PREPAREDNESS

The CCTA grant program has significantly improved the state of readiness in the Kansas City Metro area despite the challenges that COVID-19 produced. This program was able to develop new and strengthen existing relationships across the region.

## Successes

- ▶ Provided responders, elected officials, and community members a greater understanding of a CCTA occurring, the characteristics and complexities of a CCTA, and an understanding of how to be better prepared.
- ▶ Developed a local training cadre and a common curriculum offered to local law enforcement agencies to increase their skills for well-trained, motivated attackers.
- ▶ While the region already included a CCTA scenario as part of the THIRA, the quality of the scenario and the understanding of the associated capabilities increased through this project work.
- ▶ Jurisdictions in the region have the increased awareness, guidance, planning tools and momentum to continually improve the capabilities needed to cope with the realities of a CCTA and respond to a wide variety of other types of events.
- ▶ Provided a functioning pilot system for timely emergency notifications regarding significant events that can expand in the near future.
- ▶ Developed a baseline security and special events checklist.
- ▶ Increased capacity to manage public information and media during a large-scale event.
- ▶ Improved mass casualty and mass fatality management preparedness for an event that occurs in more than one location.
- ▶ The drafted Regional Resource Sharing Agreement provides a better mechanism of resource sharing and allocating scarce resources (particularly across state lines).
- ▶ Provided more realistic community expectations and awareness of responder capabilities, tactics, and response time.
- ▶ Connected appropriate agencies to the Kansas City Regional Fusion Center.
- ▶ Improved coordination in response for police, tactical, and other responders through interdisciplinary training for interoperable communications and joint police-EMS training.
- ▶ Developed new or updated web-based training on key topics that addressed identified gaps.

## Challenges

# COVID-19

Standardizing education and training related to CCTA events. There was a significant effort to “get everyone on the same page” throughout the training program.

Attempts to implement various technology platforms to promote situational awareness and a common operating picture. There are various versions of software platforms, different radio channels, and agency-level policies that prevent access to some apps that could enhance coordination.

Getting everyone with different work schedules in the same room to discuss how to implement the activities themselves.

Keeping participants engaged and supportive in the scope of work over multiple years.

Building region-wide recognition and acceptance of the threat of a CCTA.

Personnel changes within all agencies during the course of the grant.



## Sustainability and Future Initiatives

By design, the end of the grant funding is not the end of the region's CCTA planning efforts. The momentum created under this program has been folded into the RHSCC and incorporated into existing regional all-hazards planning efforts to ensure the continuation after the grant period ends. A CCTA scenario has been and will continue to be a part of the annual regional THIRA/SPR process. Additionally, planning materials created as part of this program are available to local jurisdictions and other communities. The web-based training courses are now available and will remain available to support regional training programs. Finally, the CCTA Capstone Exercise Toolkit has been made available to local jurisdictions and other communities that embark on the CCTA planning journey.

The RHSCC has committed to maintaining training programs with a CCTA focus and addressing the efforts that were interrupted by COVID-19. A targeted campaign will promote the web-based training resources for large venue and special event staff and volunteers. The Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Regional Training and Exercise Program already includes CTRT and HEIRT training programs and support for the cadre of trainers established during this effort. Additionally, it includes a large multi-jurisdictional CCTA full-scale exercise planned for 2023. The RHSCC will continue to assess the risk, promote coordinated planning efforts, and provide training and exercise opportunities for CCTA events.



# WHO PARTICIPATED: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you to the agencies and organizations that collaborated to increase the region's collective readiness for a CCTA. Thank you for the many in-kind donations of space, time, and expertise of the many emergency services and community partners.

## CCTA PARTNER JURISDICTIONS

**Kansas:** Johnson County, Leavenworth County, Miami County, Unified Government of Wyandotte County/  
Kansas City, City of Olathe, City of Overland Park, City of Shawnee

**Missouri:** Cass County, Central Jackson County Fire Protection District, Clay County, Jackson County, Platte  
County, Ray County, City of Independence, City of Kansas City, City of Lee's Summit

## KEY REGIONAL COMMITTEES

Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee

CCTA Task Force

RHSCC Law Enforcement Subcommittee,  
Regional Training and Exercise  
Subcommittee, Policy Subcommittee

Kansas City Regional Fusion Center

Kansas City Regional Mortuary Operational Response  
Group (KCRMORG)

Regional Hospital Committee

Mid-America Regional Council Emergency Rescue  
(MARCER)

Metropolitan Emergency Managers Committee (MEMC)

Regional Association of Public Information Officers  
(RAPIO)

Public Safety Communications Board and  
Interoperability Committee

Heart of America Fire Chiefs and Metro Police  
and Sheriffs Association

## MID-AMERICA REGIONAL COUNCIL

MARC Emergency Services, Public Safety Communications, Government  
Training Institute (GTI), and Public Affairs Staff. With special appreciation to  
Diana Mendoza-Cauley and Sean Hurly who were part of the MARC Emergency  
Services staff to help implement these activities across the region.

## OTHER CORE PARTNERS

Department of Homeland Security (DHS), CISA DHS Cyber and  
infrastructure Agency, FEMA, FBI, American Red Cross, Kansas Highway  
Patrol, Kansas Division of Emergency Management, Missouri Department of  
Public Safety, and Missouri Emergency Management Agency.

