



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

Pollock of JCRC Explains How to Apply for Security Grants at Sanders' Clergy Breakfast

[James Sanders Jr.](#)

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State Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Rochdale Village, Far Rockaway) hosted his monthly Community Clergy Breakfast on March 31, 2017 at Macedonia Baptist Church in Arverne. The guest speaker was David Pollock, the Associate Executive Director and Director of Public Policy at the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, a pro-active central coordinating and resource organization for the Jewish community in the New York metropolitan area.

Pollock explained how faith-based leaders could apply for security grants to help protect their houses of worship against security threats, particularly terrorist attacks. The funding can be used to cover the purchase and installation of equipment for "target hardening" such as alarm systems, CCTV systems, and blast mitigation or security film for doors and windows. The grant cannot be used for overhead or to hire staff such as security guards.

"It is unfortunate that we live in times where we have to think about protecting a church or any other house of worship from terrorism or any other act of violence, but that's the reality," Sanders said. "My friends, we cannot stand idly by and be sheep. We must take the necessary precautions to stay safe and if there is funding available to help you in that mission, then you should take advantage of it."

There are grants available of up to \$75,000. During his presentation, Pollock explained that grant proposals are scored on seven sections of investment justification: Risk (12 points), Milestones (9 points), Target Hardening (8 points), Project Management (5 points), Impact (4 points) and Background (2 points). These can be divided into two major sections - developing and documenting a plan that identifies and addresses one's risks (65 %) and having a house of worship show that it is capable of implementing their proposed plan (35%).

While houses of worship are supposed to be, by definition, welcoming places, clergy members can still embrace newcomers while also being cautious. Using the example of the South Carolina church shooting, Pollock noted that the gunman sat among the congregants for 45 minutes without being asked any questions. He suggested that starting a "welcoming conversation," could provide insight into why a stranger has come to a house of worship. One could ask the unknown person questions such as: How did you learn about us? Where do you usually worship? What is your favorite hymn? or Who is your pastor at home?

More information about security grants can be found at:

<http://www.jcrcny.org/securitygrants>

These clergy breakfasts, which are more like training sessions, are held by Senator Sanders every month, with a new topic each time, but always aimed at educating faith-based leaders and giving them the tools and information they need to help themselves and their congregations.