



The Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) supports the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as it secures the nation while preserving individual liberty, fairness, and equality under the law.



CRCL Operations During COVID-19 Response

Per guidance from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management in response to COVID-19, CRCL is operating under telework flexibilities while continuing to serve and support the public. As a result, mail operations may be impacted and our response to mailed letters may be delayed. If you wish to file a civil rights complaint, the best method of submission at this time is via email to: CRCLCompliance@hq.dhs.gov. CRCL staff will continue to monitor this email address, and our toll-free hotline for your questions at: 1-866-644-8360, TTY: 1-866-644-8361. For additional details on how to file a civil rights complaint, visit: <https://www.dhs.gov/file-civil-rights-complaint>.

Secretary Mayorkas Holds Listening Session with Black Community Organizations

This month, DHS Secretary Mayorkas, along with senior leaders from the DHS Domestic Violent Extremism (DVE) Task Force, hosted a listening session with leaders from Black community organizations regarding domestic violent extremism and other threats affecting Black communities in the U.S. Other DHS participants included DHS Senior Counselor for National Security Samantha Vinograd, the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Peter Mina, CRCL Deputy Officer Veronica Venture, and CRCL Chief of Staff Brenda Abdelall.

Secretary Mayorkas welcomed participants and recognized Black History Month as a time to celebrate the resilience and immeasurable contributions of generations of Black Americans—and a time to confront the injustices that still exist today. He stated that DVE poses the most lethal and persistent terrorism-related threat to our nation, especially to racial and ethnic minority communities. These real and persistent threats continue as we’ve seen a series of recent bomb threats at multiple Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) across the country. He shared that the Biden Administration’s [National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism](#) specifically highlights and addresses the legacy of racial violence against Black Americans, noting that DHS is educating, empowering, and equipping communities with the tools to prevent, respond to, and be resilient against acts of domestic violent extremism. Through the DHS DVE Task Force and other Department-wide initiatives, we seek to build trust, establish partnerships, and collaborate with the diverse American communities we serve.

Participants then raised a series of questions and concerns and engaged in dialogue with DHS leaders on the following topics: partnering with DHS on countering DVE; addressing crime and violence and building trust with local law enforcement; ensuring equity in law enforcement and policing policies; improving access to and information about DHS grant opportunities; and TSA screening policies for diverse communities, among others.

DHS leaders also shared information about resources available to communities and reiterated our commitment to address community concerns and promote access to federal tools and resources to keep communities safe.

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DHS Issues National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) Bulletin

On February 7, 2022, DHS issued a [National Terrorism Advisory System \(NTAS\) Bulletin](#) regarding the continued heightened threat environment across the United States. This is the fifth NTAS Bulletin issued by DHS since January 2021.

“DHS remains committed to proactively sharing timely information and intelligence about the evolving threat environment with the American public,” said Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas. “We also remain committed to working with our partners across every level of government and in the private sector to prevent all forms of terrorism and targeted violence, and to support law enforcement efforts to keep our communities safe. This NTAS Bulletin outlines the key factors that have increased the volatility, unpredictability, and complexity of the current threat environment, and highlights resources for individuals and communities to stay safe.”

- [Read this Bulletin translated into various languages](#)

CRCL Hosts Symposium for HBCU Community on Campus Safety and Resilience

This month, CRCL hosted a multi-agency symposium for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The symposium, “A Path Forward: Campus Safety and Resilience,” featured senior leaders from the DHS Office of Partnership and Engagement’s Office of Social Impact and Campaigns and Office of Academic Engagement, as well as the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency’s (CISA) Infrastructure Security Division, who spoke on the missions of their respective programs. Following the remarks, participants from public, private, and law enforcement sectors spoke on panels on the following topics: Law Enforcement and Campus Safety; DHS Centers of Excellence; Research Grants and Workforce Development; the Blue Campaign; and the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Higher Education and Homeland Security Programs. During the panels, DHS leaders from the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships, the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A), and CISA shared resources available to HBCUs to improve their security and infrastructure. Attendees also received information on the [DHS Pathways Program](#), new internships at DHS, and I&A’s Internship Program designed for current undergraduates and graduate students seeking to launch a career in homeland security and intelligence.

DHS Celebrates Black History Month

Each February, DHS is proud to celebrate Black History Month. This year, the Association of the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) announced the theme, “Black Health and Wellness,” which emphasizes the need to confront and counter racial inequities and disparities in the U.S. health care system.



HBCUs have served as prominent institutions for Black professionals in all aspects of society including the field of medicine and other health-related professions. These institutions remain critical in elevating communication and influencing policy related to health care coverage and access to services for this community. These resources are vital in producing current and future health care professionals. As role models for so many in the Black community, HBCUs and Black professional organizations provide a pathway for advancing educational and professional opportunities. These resources reinforce positive images and help the Black community prioritize education and make informed healthy choices to maximize health outcomes. DHS is a proud partner of the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through HBCUs. The Initiative is dedicated to a Government-wide policymaking effort to eliminate barriers HBCUs face in providing the highest-quality education to a growing number of students. DHS looks forward to continuing to expand the Department's HBCU partnerships in the years to come.

This month, DHS and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) hosted a Department-wide Black History Month program featuring guest speaker, Jean Bacon, PhD - Executive Director of Butterfly LCSW, PC, who discussed Black health and mental wellness. Dr. Bacon shared information about health inequities in the U.S. and provided resources and recommendations on how to overcome barriers to mental health and wellness in the Black community.

DHS Convenes Council on Combatting Gender-Based Violence

This month, the DHS Council on Combatting Gender-Based Violence (CCGBV) had its first convening. The purpose of the Council is to streamline DHS's efforts to combat gender-based violence. The Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Chief of the Office of Policy and Strategy co-chair the CCGBV. Senior Counselor to Secretary Mayorkas Carrie Anderson provided opening remarks and CRCL's Chief of Staff Brenda Abdelall represented CRCL at the CCGBV kick-off meeting. The meeting included an introduction of the CCGBV's incoming coordinators, its history, and a discussion of projects underway through its four subcommittees: Section 1367 Confidentiality, Stakeholder Engagement, Outreach Strategies, and GBV Policy. Subsequent meetings will be held quarterly beginning in May 2022.

Upcoming FEMA Nonprofit Security Grant Program Technical Assistance Webinars

FEMA's Grant Programs Directorate (GPD), in partnership with the DHS Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, and CISA, invites faith-based, community, and nonprofit organizations to participate in upcoming webinars regarding the fiscal year (FY) 2022 Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP).

The NSGP provides funding support through a competitive process for facility hardening and other security enhancements to nonprofit organizations at high risk of a terrorist attack and promotes emergency preparedness coordination and collaboration between public and private community representatives, as well as state, local, tribal, and territorial governments.

FEMA and its partners are committed to providing quality customer service to all our partners including socially vulnerable, underserved, and under-represented communities. As such, and building on last year's efforts, GPD is offering the following informational NSGP webinars for all nonprofit organizations interested in learning more about the program, priorities, eligibility, and application process.

Each webinar will present the same content, including:

- Physical Safety/Security: Vulnerability Self-Assessment Information and Tools
- NSGP Overview and FY 2021 NSGP Recap
- Preparation for the FY 2022 NSGP: What Nonprofit Organizations Should Do Now
- Open Forum: Moderated Question and Answer Session

Dates	Time (ET)	Zoom Webinar Link	Audio/Video Meeting ID	Passcode
03/04/22	3 PM	https://fema.zoomgov.com/j/1614042372	161 404 2372	FY22NSGP
03/10/22	3 PM	https://fema.zoomgov.com/j/1602354220	160 235 4220	FY22NSGP
03/16/22	3 PM	https://fema.zoomgov.com/j/1619667216	161 966 7216	FY22NSGP
03/25/22	3 PM	https://fema.zoomgov.com/j/1612960254	161 296 0254	FY22NSGP
04/01/22	3 PM	https://fema.zoomgov.com/j/1610707162	161 070 7162	FY22NSGP

Additional information related to the NSGP can be found at www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/nonprofit-security. The vulnerability self-assessment tool, as well as other helpful safety and security information for nonprofits, can be found at the Hometown Security website at www.cisa.gov/hometown-security.

*Due to the potential number of participants and the limited capacity of online meetings, the webinar will open **30 minutes prior to the published start time of each event**. If you are unable to join or the event is at capacity, please join the next available offering. All webinars will cover the same content. **No prior registration is available or required.***

If you have any questions regarding these webinars, or require special accommodations, please contact FEMA-NSGP@fema.dhs.gov.

International Day of Zero Tolerance

On February 6, the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), CBP, and CRCL joined other U.S. government agencies and the international community in calling for an end to the practice of female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C). Millions of women and girls across the globe remain at risk of FGM/C and other forms of gender-based violence that undermine their security and human rights, including here in the United States. This day serves as an opportunity to remember the many women and girls who have died or suffered lifelong health complications from the practice. This day also renews a global commitment to the health and well-being of all women, girls, and communities through ongoing efforts to eliminate the practice. FGM/C is the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for no medical reason. It is recognized internationally as a human rights violation and a form of child abuse, gender discrimination, and violence against women and girls. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates approximately 500,000 girls in the United States are at risk of having or have had FGM/C performed on them. Anyone who performs FGM/C on a woman 18 years old or older without her consent may be charged with a crime under other laws. Committing FGM/C on children is a crime under federal law and in 40 states. People who commit this crime can face prison time and significant immigration consequences.

We reiterate our strong and unwavering support for local, state, national, and international efforts to combat FGM/C. We continue to work with interagency partners to implement the [Department of Homeland Security's Female Genital Mutilation or Cutting \(FGM/C\) Outreach Strategy](#).

We will continue to identify opportunities to #EndFGM in the United States and worldwide. Read more information about the practice of FGM/C in the [USCIS FGM/C brochure](#), the [U.S. Government Fact Sheet](#), and on the [United Nations' Zero Tolerance Day](#) website.

CRCL on the Road, February*

Miami, Florida

On February 23, CRCL hosted a virtual regular roundtable meeting with diverse community leaders in the Miami area.

Additional information, and contacting us

The goal of this periodic newsletter is to inform members of the public and other government partners about the activities of the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, including: how to file complaints; ongoing and upcoming projects; opportunities to offer comments and feedback; etc. We distribute our newsletters via our stakeholder email list and make them available to community groups for redistribution. Issues of the newsletter can be accessed online at: www.dhs.gov/crcl-newsletter.

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email, want to request back issues, or have other comments or questions, please let us know by emailing crcloutreach@dhs.gov. For more information, including how to make a civil rights or civil liberties complaint about DHS activities, visit: www.dhs.gov/crcl.

CRCL Phone: 202-401-1474 • Toll Free: 866-644-8360 • TTY: 202-401-0470 • Toll Free TTY: 866-644-8361

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*Following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to exercise social distancing, our Community Engagement team will continue to carry out our mission using various virtual and telephonic tools during this national public health emergency. While our team maintains constant communication with federal, state, local, and civil society stakeholders across the country, we encourage anyone who needs to contact us to do so via email to: CommunityEngagement@hq.dhs.gov. Thank you for your flexibility and understanding during this time.