



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 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>.

DHS Celebrates Women’s History Month

This month, DHS celebrated the history, contributions, and achievements of women across the Department and across our country during National Women’s History Month. Our nation’s story is made richer because of the sacrifices, resilience, and fortitude of women from diverse backgrounds throughout history. CRCL participated in two events recognizing Women’s History Month at DHS. CRCL’s Deputy Officer Veronica Venture joined a panel discussion with women leaders at DHS for a special [live-streamed event](#): “Why We Serve: A Conversation with the Women who Lead DHS.”



CRCL Deputy Officer Veronica Venture speaks on a panel at the Department’s Women’s History Month event

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DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas welcomed attendees and thanked the panelists for their leadership and dedication to public service and the DHS mission. During the panel discussion, top women leaders from across DHS shared their experiences climbing the ranks in the public and private sectors and offered their perspectives and advice to the next generation of women leaders across the Department. CRCL Deputy Officer Venture was joined by the following speakers: Kristie Canegallo, DHS Chief of Staff; Linda Fagan, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) Vice Commandant; Deanne Criswell, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Administrator; Jen Easterly, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) Director; Jennifer

Higgins, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Deputy Director; Gloria Armstrong, U.S. Secret Service (USSS) Assistant Director; Kathryn Coulter Mitchell, Science and Technology Directorate (S&T) Under Secretary (Acting); and Marsha Espinosa, Office of Public Affairs Assistant Secretary.

CRCL also hosted a Department-wide event celebrating Women's History Month with a virtual program featuring the theme: "Women Providing Healing, Promoting Hope." This theme is a tribute to the ceaseless work of caregivers and frontline workers during this ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Senior Official Performing the Duties of the CRCL Officer Peter Mina provided opening remarks and welcomed keynote speaker Rear Admiral Aisha K. Mix, Chief Nurse Officer, Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service. With more than 20 years in nursing as a clinician, public health practitioner, educator, and emergency manager, she has made outstanding contributions to nursing and public health throughout her career. During her remarks, Rear Admiral Mix shared her experiences in "providing healing, promoting hope" during the challenges of the COVID-19 global pandemic, as well as her personal story of rising to leadership in the nursing and public health fields while championing nursing as a profession.

DHS Remembers the One-Year Anniversary of the Atlanta Spa Shootings

John K. Tien, Deputy Secretary

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Today marks the somber one-year anniversary of the tragic spa shootings near my current hometown of Atlanta, Georgia that claimed the lives of eight people, six of whom were women of Asian descent. We honor the lives of these individuals and send our thoughts and support to their families and loved ones.

Domestic violent extremists, including those motivated by racial or ethnic beliefs and anti-government or anti-authority grievances, remain one of the most significant terrorist threats to the United States.

DHS recognizes that the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) community continues to face increased incidents of targeted violence. This violence is unacceptable and un-American.

DHS stands alongside our country's resilient AANHPI community in combatting all forms of racism, misogyny, hatred, discrimination, and harassment. We denounce the dangerous racial slurs and denigrating stereotypes that provoke and stoke acts of hatred. DHS is committed to combatting violence resulting from the mis- and disinformation that perpetuates false narratives and conspiracy theories, including those about the AANHPI community, such as the false scapegoating of AANHPI persons for COVID-19. This rhetoric and these attitudes must change. We each have a responsibility to speak up and speak out when we witness harassment and discrimination. Silence is not an option.

The Department has a number of resources aimed at combatting threats of targeted violence and terrorism.

- The DHS [Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships](#) (CP3) supports communities across the United States with tools and resources designed to prevent radicalization to violence. CP3's Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) Grant Program provides funding for state, local, tribal, and territorial governments; nonprofits; and institutions of higher education to develop capabilities to prevent targeted violence and terrorism and local communities. Information on the [FY2022 TVTP Grant Program](#) is now available along with [resources](#) that can help familiarize applicants with the program and application steps.
- DHS recognizes that communities are the first line of defense in keeping the public safe and secure. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's [Hometown Security Program](#) provides access to tools and resources to support community security and resiliency. CISA also provides [resources](#) in a variety of languages to assist organizations and communities in preparing for and responding to active shooter incidents.

- The [DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties](#) convenes national calls in response to incidents of targeted violence to bring together community organizations, law enforcement, and government officials to provide timely information about the incident and share federal resources to help communities prepare and respond to violent incidents.
- DHS convened the first-ever Equity Task Force in response to the Biden Administration’s call to advance racial equity and support for underserved communities throughout the Federal Government through [Executive Order 13985](#). The DHS Equity Task Force is reviewing key programs across the Department with the greatest potential to advance equity by eliminating and reducing barriers to accessing DHS’s programs and services. The Task Force has also outlined ways to increase targeted outreach to diverse communities, including the AANHPI community, through continued dialogue with DHS leaders about combatting domestic violent extremism and targeted violence in communities across the country.

These are just a few examples of how DHS is working to keep our communities safe. The Department’s mission is to safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values. We are committed to building partnerships across all levels of government and community organizations to better protect communities and share important resources to prevent targeted violence and terrorism. On this solemn anniversary, we recommit to partnering with you in this continued, and most critically important, pursuit.

DHS Designated as Lead Federal Agency to Respond to Russia-Related Impacts in U.S.

The President has designated the Department of Homeland Security as the lead federal agency to coordinate domestic preparedness and response efforts related to the current Russia-Ukraine crisis. While there are no specific threats to the homeland at this time, DHS is taking appropriate steps to ensure federal efforts are coordinated should the need arise.

As lead federal agency, DHS has established a Unified Coordination Group (UCG) to ensure unity of effort across the Federal Government in preparing for and responding to possible threats to the homeland; develop and pursue strategic objectives and priorities; and coordinate with federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial officials, as well as representatives of the private sector and nongovernmental entities in support of these objectives and priorities.

As the situation continues to evolve, organizations – regardless of size – are encouraged to improve both their physical and cyber resilience. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency’s [“Shields Up” webpage](#) provides information on how to improve their cybersecurity and protect critical assets.

CRCL Hosts Virtual Community Roundtables in Miami and El Paso/Rio Grande Valley

In the past two months, CRCL conducted virtual engagement events with community stakeholders in major cities in Florida and Texas. CRCL’s Community Engagement Section leads efforts to engage with diverse American communities in many metropolitan areas across the country to hear community concerns regarding DHS programs and policies, share information on the Department’s priorities, and provide information on avenues for redress and complaints.

In late February, CRCL convened a virtual roundtable meeting with diverse stakeholders in the Miami area where meeting participants included local community organizations and representatives from several DHS Components and offices including CRCL, CISA, CP3, USCIS, the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), along with federal partners from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Local government participants also joined the roundtable including representatives from the Office of the Miami-Dade County Mayor and the Miami-Dade Police Department. During the meeting, OIDO representatives provided an overview of the mission and activities of the office. Later, community representatives raised a number of key issues including access to federal resources on protecting places of worship, concerns with local immigration detention facilities, and CRCL’s complaints investigations processes.

In March, CRCL hosted a virtual roundtable meeting with diverse stakeholders from the El Paso and Rio Grande Valley areas. This meeting brought together community groups and DHS representatives from CRCL, CBP, ICE, and USCIS to discuss the following issues raised by community organizations: Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) enrollment and processing, expulsions under Title 42, and the status of certain civil rights complaints made to CRCL, among other topics. CRCL will continue to dialogue with community partners about these issues and raise these concerns with senior government officials and counterparts.

DHS Announces National Board Members for Case Management Pilot Program

As part of our [partnership with nonprofit organizations and local governments](#) on the pilot program to improve services for noncitizens in immigration proceedings, DHS is announcing that Catholic Charities USA, Center for Migration Studies of New York, and Church World Service have been selected to serve on the National Board for the DHS Case Management Pilot Program (CMPP).

The pilot program will provide voluntary case management and other services to ensure that noncitizens in removal proceedings have access to legal information and other critical services. The selection of qualified Board member organizations is key to this program's success, and we are fortunate that these experienced groups, which focus on the delivery of high-quality case management services to immigrant communities, are willing to serve.

The National Board will be responsible for awarding funds to eligible local governments and nonprofit organizations and overseeing and managing the pilot program. Church World Service has been selected to serve in the capacity of the Board's Secretariat/Fiscal Agent.

DHS [announced](#) the new program in August of 2021. The CMPP includes trauma-informed case management and other critical services, such as mental health services, human trafficking screening, legal orientation programs, cultural orientation programs, connections to social services, and departure planning and reintegration services for individuals returning to their home countries.

The National Board plans to solicit proposals from potential CMPP service providers later this year.

CRCL on the Road, March*

El Paso and Rio Grande Valley, Texas

On March 17, CRCL hosted a virtual regular roundtable meeting with diverse community leaders in the El Paso and Rio Grande Valley areas.

*Following continued 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.

Additional information, and contacting us

The goal of this periodic newsletter is to inform members of the public 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.

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