



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>.

CRCL Hosts DHS Equity Action Plan Listening Session

This month, CRCL convened a listening session with a wide range of community stakeholders from across the country to gather feedback on the [DHS Equity Action Plan](#) released in January 2022. The DHS Equity Action Plan, developed in response to President Biden’s [Executive Order 13985](#), [“Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.”](#) identifies seven key program areas with the greatest potential for advancing equity in DHS operations and activities. The commitments laid out in the Plan across these seven programs were developed following a 200-day assessment led by the DHS Equity Task Force, in consultation with the Office of Management and Budget, and from feedback from stakeholders representing underserved communities.

During the listening session, Senior Official Performing the Duties of the CRCL Officer Peter Mina welcomed over 240 participants, who included organizations representing traditionally underserved or marginalized communities, as well as government partners, and introduced video remarks from DHS Deputy Secretary John Tien. Deputy Secretary Tien expressed the importance of equity in all aspects of the Department’s work, thanked stakeholders for their continued partnership, and requested continued open and constructive feedback regarding the Department’s priorities as identified in the Action Plan. He also noted that DHS relies on constant evaluation from our stakeholders to address systemic barriers to accessing benefits and opportunities available pursuant to DHS policies and programs.

Attendees then joined “breakout groups,” where participants had the opportunity to provide feedback and raise concerns related to each of the key programs identified in the Action Plan:

Inside

[CRCL Hosts DHS Equity Action Plan Listening Session](#)

[DHS Testifies Before the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination](#)

[DHS Addresses Bomb Threats at HBCUs](#)

[CRCL Participates in Annual FDR Training](#)

[August 26 is Women’s Equality Day](#)

[CRCL on the Road](#)

[Contact Us](#)



1. Applying for Naturalization
2. Accessing Humanitarian Protection During Immigration Processing
3. Bidding on DHS Contracts
4. Countering Domestic Violent Extremism and Targeted Violence
5. Filing Complaints and Seeking Redress in DHS Programs and Activities
6. Airport Screening
7. Accessing Trusted Traveler Programs

Stakeholders raised several issues within each breakout group and those concerns were shared with the larger group during the summary session toward the end of the meeting. Areas of concern included: improving language access materials and services across the Department; providing open lines of communication to DHS officials to allow for real-time redress involving certain situations; and expanding DHS outreach and community engagement work to diverse communities and stakeholders to improve implementation of Department’s equity priorities now and in the future.

The DHS Equity Task Force will use the feedback provided to inform Department-wide efforts to implement the commitments identified in the Action Plan and to advance equity going forward.

U.S. Testifies Before the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

This month, CRCL Senior Official Peter Mina, along with James McCament, Senior Policy Advisor to the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Claire Trickler-McNulty, Assistant Director, Office of Immigration Program Evaluation, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), represented the Department as part of the U.S. delegation that gave testimony before the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Geneva, Switzerland. The U.S. delegation comprised senior-level officials from across government and civil society, which included representatives from the U.S. Departments of State, Justice, the Interior, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, and Defense; as well as the National Security Council, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Environmental Protection Agency, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the State of California Department of Justice, and Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens.



DHS officials from CRCL, CBP, and ICE present at the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in Geneva, Switzerland

In Geneva, the U.S. delegation [presented its comprehensive 2021 report](#) (which combined the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth periodic reports) on the implementation of its obligations under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD). The ICERD is a core international human rights treaty that requires State Parties to pursue policies that eliminate and prohibit racial discrimination in the areas of voting rights, housing, employment, medical care, and education.

CRCL Senior Official Peter Mina gave the opening statement on behalf of DHS, in which he noted the Department’s efforts to pursue equality and equity in its work, which includes:

- Fighting racially and ethnically motivated domestic violent extremism through the Department’s Center for Prevention, Programs, and Partnerships;
- Facilitating the reunification of 400 children and parents that were previously separated at the U.S.-Mexico border through the Interagency Task Force on Reunification of Families;
- Working to end the Migrant Protection Protocols program, which culminated in a U.S. Supreme Court victory to affirm the Secretary’s authority to terminate the program; and
- Investigating civil rights and civil liberties complaints through CRCL’s oversight; as a result, institutional changes and appropriate disciplinary processes are now underway.

Following each agency's opening remarks, the U.S. delegation took questions from the Committee on a broad range of issues, such as: racial profiling and racial disparities related to criminal justice, housing, education, healthcare, immigration policy, and the treatment of marginalized racial and ethnic communities.

Prior to the presentation, the U.S. delegation participated in a civil society consultation in Geneva, hosted by the U.S. Department of State. The United States also held a series of four virtual consultations with civil society groups and reviewed detailed reports submitted to the CERD Committee.

CRCL leads the Department's human rights treaty reporting, obligations, and coordination under [Executive Order 13107](#). The United States takes human rights and its treaty obligations seriously and intends to take the CERD Committee's observations and recommendations into consideration in its ongoing work to combat racial discrimination.

Addressing Bomb Threats at Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Release Date: August 30, 2022

In just the first few months of 2022, and throughout the course of the year, there has been a troubling uptick in bomb threats across the country, 49 of which targeted Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and 19 against Predominately Black Institutions (PBIs). These threats – which can traumatize campuses and communities – triggered evacuations and a broad law enforcement response.

Our top priority is keeping all communities safe and the Department of Homeland Security is fundamentally a department of partnerships. In response to the threats against HBCUs and PBIs, DHS immediately met with leaders from affected communities to learn how we can best support them and followed up with information on the resources we can provide to help them stay safe.

To address these threats, Secretary Mayorkas and the Department have expanded the accessibility of DHS's broad spectrum of services, resources, and expertise to support HBCUs across the country. In January 2022, Secretary Mayorkas [promised](#) to "...deepen our partnerships with HBCUs to protect students and faculty from an evolving range of threats."

- In August, DHS announced that we would provide \$250 million through the Nonprofit Security Grant Program to support target hardening and other physical security enhancements for nonprofit organizations that are at high risk of a terrorist attack. This year, \$125 million is provided to nonprofits in Urban Area Security Initiative-designated areas, and \$125 million is provided to nonprofits outside those designated urban areas located in any state or territory.
- DHS's [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's \(CISA\) Office of Bombing Prevention](#) developed a suite of resources to assist universities in responding to bomb threats, including [Critical Resources for Handling Bomb Threats](#), which provides an overview of available resources, a bomb threat response plan template, bomb threat awareness job aid, as well as a Tabletop Exercise Package. In the coming months, CISA will host seven additional training events scheduled at five HBCU locations to provide additional information on these resources.
- CISA also conducted 20 trainings on preparing for and responding to bomb threats, reaching more than 1,170 HBCU staff and security personnel. Further, CISA worked with the Atlanta University Center Consortium (AUCC), the world's oldest and largest consortium of HBCUs, to develop and deliver a nationwide Bomb Threat Management training that addressed the recent wave of bomb threats targeting HBCUs and available federal resources. Representatives from 36 HBCUs across 16 states participated in person, and the event was livestreamed to allow other stakeholders to observe and participate in the discussions.
- Throughout June and July, the DHS Office for State and Local Law Enforcement (OSLLE), in collaboration with its federal partners, held five regional trainings for HBCUs in Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Virginia, reaching participants from more than 60 different HBCUs.

These trainings were open to campus law enforcement and related public safety officials involved in preventing, protecting against, responding to, and recovering from threats at their campuses.

- In February, DHS hosted an HBCU symposium, “The Path Forward: Campus Safety and Resilience,” to share information on available resources and products on topics such as active shooter preparedness and school safety.
- In April, CISA also conducted an Active Shooter Preparedness webinar for HBCUs. Supported by CISA’s [Protective Security Advisor Program](#), this webinar enhanced awareness of and preparedness for an active shooter event to more than 200 participants across 16 states. Attendees included HBCU safety and security directors, administrators, emergency responders, healthcare providers, and other critical support areas.
- DHS, through OSLE and TSA, and in coordination with the Department of Justice, established the HBCU K9 Bomb Detection Adoption Program. Three HBCUs have received bomb detection K9s to support campus law enforcement response efforts during an active bomb threat incident to date.
- DHS Center for Prevention Programs & Partnerships (CP3) Regional Prevention Coordinators’ outreach efforts totaled 110 engagements that included organized meetings, provision of resources, and technical assistance to HBCU leaders, staff, security and law enforcement partners at the state and federal levels.

There is much more to be done. DHS remains committed to using all its resources, in coordination with other federal partners, to ensure HBCUs and PBIs have the capabilities and tools they need to prevent, protect against, and respond to threats made against their institutions.

DHS’s response has been a result of a concerted effort across its agencies and offices. The Department has also partnered with the Department of Education’s White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence and Economic Opportunity through HBCUs; the Department of Justice; and others to make a range of services and resources available to HBCUs.

For additional resources on campus safety, read the [DHS Summary of Resources for State, Local, Tribal, Territorial, and Campus Law Enforcement Partners](#).

[Read the full blog post.](#)

CRCL Participates in Annual FDR Training

This month, CRCL Deputy Officer Veronica Venture traveled to Phoenix, Arizona to attend the annual [Federal Dispute Resolution \(FDR\) Training](#) and speak on a panel about federal efforts to implement the Biden Administration’s [Executive Order \(EO\) 14035: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce](#), which aims to create a government-wide initiative to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) for all. During her presentation, Deputy Officer Venture discussed the Department’s priorities and strategies, modeled from the [Government-wide Strategic Plan to Advance DEIA in the Federal Workforce](#), to embed DEIA principles across DHS including, but not limited to:

- Building a representative workforce through open and fair processes consistent with merit systems principles;
- Ensuring consistent and systemic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities;



CRCL Deputy Officer Veronica Venture presents at the FDR Training in Phoenix, Arizona

- Providing opportunities for employees to learn, develop, and grow so that employees' talents are supported, utilized, and embraced to create an engaged and high-performing workforce; and
- Designing, constructing, and maintaining facilities, technologies, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them.

These efforts, and many more, underscore the Department's commitment to ensure that our workforce reflects the diversity of our nation and a recognition that embodying the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility will yield a higher-performing organization.

August 26 is Women's Equality Day

On August 26, 2022, we celebrate Women's Equality Day, the anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote, thereby allowing American women the same right as men to make their voices heard in our elections.

Congress marked this annual observance in 1973 to commemorate the hard work of the suffragettes to fight for the right to vote, as well as to acknowledge the work that remains to ensure full equity for women in every aspect of our society. On Women's Equality Day, we celebrate and continue to build on our country's progress towards gender equality.



CRCL on the Road, August*

Houston, Texas

On August 17, CRCL hosted a virtual regular roundtable meeting with diverse community leaders in the Houston area.

Chicago, Illinois

On August 23-26, CRCL hosted stakeholder engagements with community organizations and leaders in the Chicago area. diverse community leaders in the Denver area.

*Following continued guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov) 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@hq.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

DISCLAIMER: The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) provides links to non-government websites for convenience and informational purposes only. These websites may contain information that is copyrighted with restrictions on reuse. Permission to use copyrighted materials must be obtained from the original source and cannot be obtained from DHS. DHS is not responsible for the content of external websites linked to or referenced from the DHS web server. DHS neither endorses the information or content of external websites, nor guarantees the accuracy of the information contained on external websites. When you select a link to an external website, you are leaving the DHS site.

 Follow the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties on Facebook at: [facebook.com/CivilRightsandCivilLiberties](https://www.facebook.com/CivilRightsandCivilLiberties).