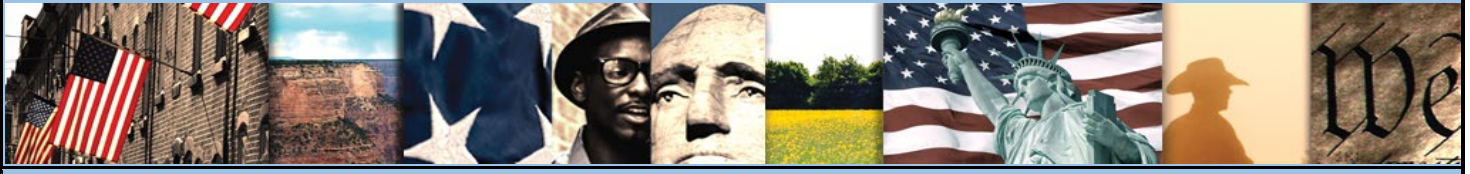




The Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) supports the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as it secures the nation while preserving individual liberty, fairness, and equality under the law.



### **DHS Holds Listening Sessions on DHS Environmental Justice Program**

This month, CRCL and the DHS Office of the Chief Readiness Support Officer hosted listening sessions with external stakeholders and Tribal leaders on the Department’s Environmental Justice Program. DHS convened the listening sessions to provide information about the [Request for Information](#) (RFI) DHS posted to the Federal Register, which closes on February 16, 2024. The RFI is seeking public comment and feedback on how environmental justice is considered Department-wide, how it can provide opportunities for meaningful engagement in decision-making that impacts human health and the environment, and what to include in the next DHS Environmental Justice Strategy.

The listening sessions provided an opportunity for interested stakeholders to share their ideas, raise questions, and offer recommendations in response to the questions in the RFI. DHS will continue to engage with external stakeholders in the months ahead as we advance the environmental justice program.

[Translations of the RFI](#) are available in Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese. For questions, please contact [dhsenvironmentaljustice@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:dhsenvironmentaljustice@hq.dhs.gov). For free language services, including written translation or oral interpretation, or to request information in alternate formats such as Braille or large print, please contact us at [crcl@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:crcl@hq.dhs.gov).

### **DHS Helps Hold Exploitative Employers Accountable**

**DHS Press Release Date:** January 17, 2024

Through the enhanced process announced one year ago, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in partnership with the Department of Labor and other federal, state and local labor agencies, has protected over one thousand noncitizen workers who were victims of, or witnesses to, a violation of labor rights. [This process](#) to streamline and expedite consideration of workers’ deferred action requests has maintained DHS’s longstanding practice of using its discretionary authority to consider labor and employment agency-related deferred action requests for workers on a case-by-case basis.

These improvements advance the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to empowering workers and to improving workplace conditions by enabling all workers, including noncitizens, to more freely assert their legal rights. Fear of reporting violations due to immigration-based retaliation can create an unfair labor market and perpetuate the commission of unlawful and inhumane acts by employers, ranging from nonpayment of wages to imposing unsafe working conditions and chilling workers’ ability to organize and collectively bargain to improve their work conditions. Workers can visit [DHS.gov](https://www.dhs.gov) for additional information and to submit requests.

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“Noncitizen workers should never be afraid to report exploitation in the workplace or fear retaliatory actions from an abusive employer,” said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas. “No employer is above the law. DHS will work with our law enforcement partners to hold those who prey on the vulnerability of migrants accountable and provide protection to those who come forward to report abuse. Combatting labor exploitation helps ensure fair wages and safe working conditions for all workers in our country.”

DHS is announcing new guidance for noncitizen workers requesting a renewal of deferred action through these processes. A noncitizen granted deferred action based on a labor agency enforcement interest may request a subsequent period of deferred action for an additional two years when there continues to be an ongoing labor agency need. This will protect workers when the labor agency investigation or enforcement action has not yet concluded. DHS is also releasing information for labor agencies on how to provide updated statements describing the ongoing labor agency need.

Subsequent requests from workers must be accompanied by an updated statement from the labor agency explaining the continued need for workers to assist in their investigation or prosecution, or in the enforcement of any court order or settlement agreement.

Agencies tasked with enforcing labor and employment laws depend on the cooperation of these workers in their investigations and enforcement actions. DHS’s practice of offering discretionary protection on a case-by-case basis to workers increases the ability of labor and employment agencies to more fully investigate worksite violations and support those agencies in fulfilling their mission to hold abusive employers accountable through their enforcement actions.

Noncitizens can submit such requests to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) through a central intake point established specifically to support labor agency investigative and enforcement efforts. Learn about [the process for workers and labor agencies](#).

## **CRCL Continues Outreach on Process Enhancements for Supporting Labor Enforcement Investigations**

As related to the DHS announcement noted above, in the year since DHS announced [process enhancements for supporting labor enforcement investigations](#), CRCL, in collaboration with DHS partner Components, has engaged in outreach to educate stakeholders about the centralized process for deferred action requests.

This month, CRCL Officer Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia provided remarks during an event hosted by the American Federal of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) to recognize the one-year anniversary where she noted that over the last year, DHS has protected over one thousand workers under the enhanced process. She shared that DHS announced new guidance for noncitizen workers requesting a renewal of deferred action based on a labor agency enforcement interest may request a subsequent period of deferred action for an additional two years when there continues to be an ongoing labor agency need. In her closing, she thanked meeting participants for their partnership in supporting the advancement of workers’ civil rights and civil liberties.

Also this month, CRCL representatives continued outreach efforts to share information on the enhanced process leading a virtual engagement in collaboration with USCIS and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) partners. Participants included nearly 80 state and local labor agencies representing 22 states. The event provided a forum for attendees to ask questions about the process to streamline and expedite consideration of workers’ deferred action requests and support renewal requests. In addition to their outreach efforts, since the inception of this process, CRCL has provided and will continue to provide regular and ongoing technical assistance to labor agencies regarding their role in supporting deferred action for workers within the scope of their investigations or enforcement actions.

CRCL and DHS Components will continue to engage and connect with communities and state and local partner agencies to share best practices. For more information, contact CRCL at: [CommunityEngagement@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:CommunityEngagement@hq.dhs.gov).

### **CRCL Participates in #WearBlueDay**

Every year, millions of men, women, and children are trafficked worldwide—including right here in the United States. It can happen in any community and victims can be any age, race, gender, or nationality. Each year, on January 11, DHS recognizes National Human Trafficking Awareness Day or [#WearBlueDay](#) to raise awareness of the heinous crime of human trafficking. This January 11, CRCL employees were proud to wear blue in recognition of [#WearBlueDay](#). Learn more about the [Blue Campaign's](#) fight against human trafficking.



### **CMPP National Board Announces Selection of Subgrantee Service Providers**

The Case Management Pilot Program (CMPP) National Board recently announced the selection of four lead organizations to implement the Case Management Pilot Program, delivering voluntary case management and associated services to individuals enrolled in ICE Alternatives to Detention programs. The subgrantees for this round of CMPP funds are: BakerRipley in Houston, Texas; Los Angeles County Office of Immigrant Affairs in Los Angeles, California; Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service in Baltimore, Maryland; and Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area in Washington, DC.

These organizations join the existing CMPP service providers selected by the National Board in 2022: BakerRipley in Houston, Texas (a recipient of past and current funding) and International Rescue Committee in New York, New York. There are now five geographic locations served by CMPP.

Location	Lead Provider
New York, New York	International Rescue Committee
Houston, Texas	BakerRipley
Los Angeles, California	LA County Office of Immigrant Affairs
Baltimore, Maryland	Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Washington, DC	Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area

CMPP is a federally funded program that provides voluntary, trauma-informed, and culturally competent case management and related services to asylum seekers and other noncitizens in ICE Alternatives to Detention

programs. CMPP services include, among others: mental health services; human trafficking screening; legal orientation; cultural orientation; referrals to other services identified by participants as priorities; and departure planning and reintegration services for individuals returning to their home countries.

The CMPP National Board is chaired by the DHS Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties and comprises nonprofits with experience providing and evaluating case management programs for noncitizens. Board member organizations are Church World Service, Catholic Charities USA, and The Center for Migration Studies of New York. Church World Service serves as the National Board's Secretariat and Fiduciary Agent. For more information about CMPP please visit <https://cmpp.org/>.

### **CRCL on the Road, January\***

*Newark, New Jersey*

On January 18, CRCL conducted engagements with diverse stakeholders in New Jersey.

*Houston, Texas*

On January 29, CRCL conducted engagements with diverse stakeholders in Houston, TX.

*New Orleans, Louisiana*

On January 31, CRCL conducted engagements with diverse stakeholders in New Orleans, LA.

\*CRCL's Community Engagement team conducts in-person, virtual, and hybrid engagements with federal, state, local, and civil society stakeholders across the country. We remain available to respond to any stakeholder questions or concerns via email at: [CommunityEngagement@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:CommunityEngagement@hq.dhs.gov).

### **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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.dhs.gov/crcl).

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