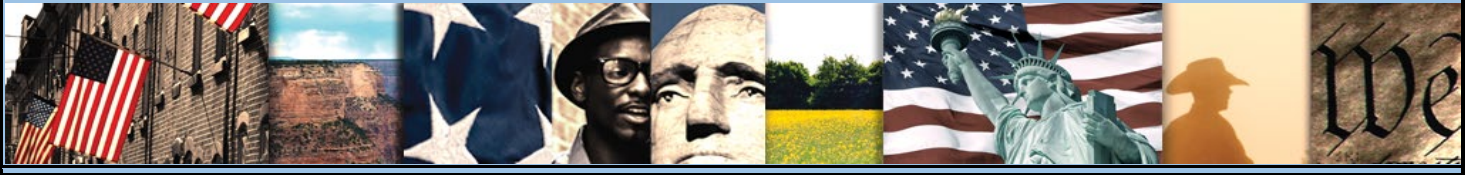




The Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) supports the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as it secures the nation while preserving individual liberty, fairness, and equality under the law.



DHS Recognizes the Anniversary of Executive Order to Improve Language Access

At DHS, [we are committed to ensuring that all persons in the United States, regardless of the language they speak, have meaningful access to the work of the Department.](#) This commitment aligns with the DHS mission and Executive Order 13166, “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency,” which recently celebrated its 24th anniversary.

At its core, the Order acknowledges a fundamental principle: that the federal government must be able to understand and communicate with all people in the United States, including those with limited English proficiency (LEP). The DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties aids the Department’s efforts to provide meaningful language access for the millions that we serve every day. This work is critical because we know that effective communication is key to providing access to DHS services and programs. DHS interacts with more people on a daily basis than any other federal agency – whether through screening at our nation’s airports and ports of entry, providing critical life-saving disaster assistance, or connecting diverse communities with law enforcement for strategies on how to better protect local neighborhoods.

DHS engages with stakeholders to understand language barriers that some populations may face in accessing federal and federally funded programs or services and works to eliminate them. For example, in November 2023, the Department joined interagency partners across the federal government in releasing its updated language access plan, an important milestone that underscores a commitment to integrate language access considerations in DHS policies, programs, and activities.

The Department works to integrate language access considerations in its policies, programs, and activities to support our workforce and the public that we serve. Together with DHS agencies and offices, CRCL has prioritized implementing policies and procedures to eliminate language barriers to our programs or the programs we fund, through the following:

- Developed the agency’s first-ever Indigenous Languages Plan in 2024, which strengthens language services for Indigenous persons from Latin America who interact with DHS;
- Individual DHS agencies and offices have developed individual language access plans, along with resources and tools that enable the Department to carry out its diverse mission while supporting its workforce and the public;
- Provide a technical assistance program for recipients of DHS financial assistance that covers recipients’ requirements for language access;
- Implemented new protocols and tools for identifying individuals’ primary language;

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- Established a multi-award language services contract for DHS agencies and offices, which requires standards and qualifications for interpreters and translators to ensure these language services are of high quality;
- Created an online portal for filing allegations of civil rights and civil liberties violations, including allegations related to language access, that is available in multiple languages; and
- Facilitate regular engagement with communities on language access at DHS.

For more information on the Department’s Language Access initiatives, please visit our [Language Access](#) page.

DHS Announces Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2024 Preparedness Grants

DHS announced [final allocations of nearly \\$724 million in six Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2024 competitive preparedness grant programs](#). This includes \$454.5 million in funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program, an increase of \$149.5 million from FY 2023, which will provide critical funding for faith-based groups and others to prevent and protect themselves from the heightened threat environment we face today.

These allocations, together with the more than \$1.25 billion in non-competitive grant funding announced earlier this year, total almost \$1.98 billion in FY 2024 to help prepare our nation against threats and natural disasters. The grant programs provide funding to state, local, tribal and territorial governments, nonprofit agencies, and the private sector to build and sustain capabilities to prevent, protect against, respond to and recover from acts of terrorism and other disasters. The total amount for each grant program is set by Congress and the allocations are made by the Department through a competitive process. Read more here: [DHS Announces Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2024 Preparedness Grants | Homeland Security](#).

CRCL Deputy Officer Peter Mina Speaks at MELOA Annual Training Conference

This month, CRCL Deputy Officer Peter Mina gave remarks at the 2024 National Diversity Training Conference for the [Middle Eastern Law Enforcement Officers Association](#) (MELOA). The annual conference brought together more than 200 Federal, state, and local law enforcement officers, primarily from DHS Components.

Deputy Officer Mina shared his personal story as a first-generation Egyptian American and his role as a senior executive at DHS. He gave an overview of CRCL’s work to integrate civil rights and civil liberties across the Department and highlighted efforts to recognize the valuable contributions that Arab Americans have made to the homeland security mission, which include:

- Earlier this year during Arab-American Heritage Month, CRCL convened a DHS-wide virtual event where Mina and others discussed their unique perspectives as Arab-Americans and DHS leaders, and provided insight on recent Federal initiatives that impact the Arab American community.
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services held its second virtual employee engagement recognizing Arab-Americans, which was attended by more than 2,300 DHS individuals.
- DHS delivers cultural awareness trainings to law enforcement officers in Detroit, Buffalo, Chicago, and other cities, and have spearheaded the first DHS Future Federal Law Enforcement Officers in Training Camp for local youth in the Detroit metropolitan area.
- A new policy directive from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget creates a race and/or ethnicity category for Middle and North African (MENA) individuals, which will aid DHS in its data collection and diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts for this ethnic group.



Deputy Officer Mina also highlighted CRCL’s partnerships with U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the DHS Office of State and Local Law Enforcement, and others, to support both law enforcement officers and communities in advancing the national security mission.

CRCL Deputy Officer Veronica Venture Presents at FDR Annual Training Conference

This month, CRCL Deputy Officer Veronica Venture presented at the Federal Dispute Resolution Training Conference in Orlando. The annual conference provides tailored, in-depth training for EEO practitioners, general counsel and attorneys, and human resources specialists from the public and private sectors. Deputy Officer Venture leads CRCL's EEO and diversity programs and initiatives. Her presentation focused on best practices for building effective civil rights, EEO, and DEIA offices. She shared tips on how to avoid common pitfalls when developing EEO/DEIA programs and to identify strategic goals for lasting impact.

Engagements on Deferred Action and Family Expedited Removal Management Process

Over the past month, CRCL hosted a series of stakeholder engagements to share information and receive feedback on high-priority DHS programs, which included information on the deferred action process and the family emergency removal process.

DHS has expanded the Family Expedited Removal Management (FERM) program nationwide so that families without a lawful basis to remain are quickly removed. Under this process, families are placed into expedited removal proceedings to occur within 30 days. This program was launched in May and has processed over 1,600 families and will continue to scale up significantly. Earlier this month, CRCL hosted a listening session with multiple national-level immigration non-governmental organizations and advocacy groups to hear their concerns regarding the family expedited removal management process. Topics discussed included: language access needs, data transparency, placement of pregnant and nursing women, access to counsel, and length of stays and conditions in CBP custody.

DHS recently updated its [labor enforcement website](#) to reflect that deferred action supported by a labor agency statement of interest will generally be granted for a period of up to four years for initial requests, rather than two years. Those workers already receiving deferred action can request an extension of their deferred action for a total of four years without having to provide a new labor agency statement of interest. On the heels of this update, CRCL hosted two engagements on deferred action – one for state and local labor agencies, and one for non-governmental organizations. Both engagements included remarks from CRCL Officer Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia and DHS Senior Counselor Charanya Krishnaswami, followed by updates and a briefing on the deferred action process, which included information from CRCL, USCIS, and ICE, and a Q&A period with DHS subject matter experts.

DHS Celebrates Women's Equality Day

On August 26, DHS recognized Women's Equality Day with two commemorative Department-wide events:

- The Headquarters Branch of Women Executives @DHS hosted a virtual panel discussion, titled "Equality Starts with Empowered Women." CRCL Deputy Officer Veronica Venture served as moderator for the panel, which included: Rene Browne, Associate General Counsel, DHS Office of General Counsel; Janene Corrado, Chief of Staff, DHS Management Directorate; and Dana Salvano-Dunn, Executive Director of the Compliance Branch, DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. The accomplished executive panelists discussed their experiences with workforce well-being and career advancement initiatives that have improved empowerment, equity, diversity, and inclusion for women.
- The Department's Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Working Group also hosted a panel for their monthly meeting, which featured: Serena Dietrich, Chief Financial Officer, DHS Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office; Karinda Washington, Executive Director, Social Impact and Campaigns, DHS Office of Partnership and Engagement; Darnelly De Jesus, Deputy Assistant Director, Office of Training, U.S. Secret Service; Daniel Babor, Supervisory Air Marshal in Charge, Transportation Security Administration. CRCL Officer Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia gave opening remarks, and the discussion was moderated by DHS WPS Manager Dr. Carolyn Washington. Panelists gave their insight on the significance that women's equality holds for them; progress that they've seen on gender equality in their life and work; advice that they'd offer to aspiring women leaders and professionals; and advice they'd give to men concerning their support of gender equality and women leaders.

DHS Establishes Women in Law Enforcement Task Force

Earlier in this fiscal year, DHS established and launched the Women in Law Enforcement Task Force to take targeted action and meaningfully address the challenges that were identified at the inaugural Women in Law Enforcement Summit in 2023. The Task Force's leading priorities are to: **Gather insights and experiences** of women in law enforcement; **Establish department-level priorities** related to recruitment, retention, career development, and total-wellbeing/work-life balance for women in law enforcement; and **Implement targeted initiatives** to drive change for women in law enforcement. These priorities will be realized through the Task Force's four initiatives: recruitment, retention, career development, and total well-being. CRCL participated in the Task Force's recent monthly meeting, in its role with leading the DHS Women in Law Enforcement Mentoring Program, which was created as a career development tool for women law enforcement officers across DHS to connect with and learn from fellow colleagues.



CRCL on the Road, August

August 3-5 – New Bedford, Massachusetts

CRCL staff met with local stakeholders and workers.

August 15 – Los Angeles, California

CRCL presented at a conference hosted by CIELO on *Indigenous Mexican Communities Abroad*.

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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