



Archived Content

In an effort to keep DHS.gov current, this document has been archived and contains outdated information that may not reflect current policy or programs.



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 Convenes ICCT Call in Response to Tragic Mass Shooting in Buffalo, NY

On May 16, CRCL activated the Incident Community Coordination Team (ICCT) national conference call in response to the tragic shooting of 13 individuals at a grocery store in Buffalo, NY on May 14, which claimed the lives of 10 African American persons. Per a manifesto, that is believed to be authored by the shooter, the Black community was intentionally targeted. CRCL's ICCT provides rapid two-way communication between the Federal Government and impacted communities in the aftermath of a homeland security incident or emergency. The ICCT national call provides timely information to communities and allows them to provide feedback to senior government officials.

Nearly 1,200 participants joined the call, which included a cross-section of national and local community leaders, government officials, and other stakeholders. Peter Mina, the Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, opened the call by offering deep condolences to all that were affected by the tragic incident, and that CRCL is partnering across DHS to respond to all communities under threat. Mr. Mina then introduced Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, who reaffirmed the Department's commitment to combat terrorism and targeted violence (see the Secretary's official statement, below).

Senior government officials provided information on their agencies and discussed current initiatives underway to respond and help protect communities from domestic terrorism and targeted violence. Government speakers included: DHS Under Secretary for Strategy, Policy, and Plans Robert Silvers; Department of Justice (DOJ) Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Kristen Clarke; Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Acting Deputy Assistant Director for Civil Rights and Hate Crimes Aaron Tapp; Executive Assistant Director for Infrastructure Security, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), Dr. David Mussington; DOJ Acting Deputy Director for Community Relations Service Antoinette Barksdale; and Counterterrorism Director for DHS Intelligence and Analysis Jim Dunlap. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee also gave remarks, along with leaders

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from national civil rights organizations: Ebonie Riley, Senior Vice President of Policy and Strategic Partnerships at the National Action Network (who provided written remarks); and Joi O. Chaney, Senior Vice President of Policy and Advocacy at the National Urban League and Thomas Beauford, President/CEO of the Buffalo Urban League.

During the call, several community participants raised a number of questions and concerns involving the current status of the investigation and how it will be prosecuted, as well as the social impacts to the Buffalo community where many are traumatized and fearful for themselves and their loved ones. Participants also expressed the need for more outreach to neighborhoods to reassure safety and security, and that access to groceries and pharmacy services were limited due to the store's closure in the immediate aftermath of the shooting.

DOJ is currently investigating this incident as a hate crime and an act of racially-motivated violent extremism. If members of your community have been or may be targets of hate crimes or other forms of violence, please contact your local law enforcement officials. For more information on available federal resources to protect communities, visit: <http://dhs.gov/community-outreach-and-training> or contact CRCL at: CommunityEngagement@hq.dhs.gov.

Statement from Secretary Mayorkas on Mass Shooting in Buffalo, NY

Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas released the following statement regarding the mass shooting in Buffalo, New York:

“Our nation mourns the loss of life caused by the horrific shooting in Buffalo, New York. Our hearts break for the families and friends of the victims, and we stand with them and the entire Black community that was targeted by this hateful act of violence. The Department of Homeland Security continues to work closely with our partners across the country to combat violent extremism, including racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism, which continues to pose one of the most significant terrorism-related threats to the homeland. We are devoting every available resource to combat all forms of terrorism and targeted violence to keep our communities safe and secure.”

“Make no mistake: when one community is targeted, we are all targeted. This country stands as one, and we will combat violent extremism as one.”

Statement from Secretary Mayorkas on Shooting in Uvalde, Texas

Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas released the following statement regarding the mass shooting in Uvalde, Texas:

“No words can come close to comforting the families of those lost in Uvalde yesterday. We at the Department of Homeland Security are horrified by this callous act of violence. We grieve for the families and loved ones of the children and teachers lost, and with the people of the community of Uvalde. We are hopeful for the full and fast recovery of those who suffered injuries.

“We are grateful for the courageous members of our Border Patrol, many of whom are part of the Uvalde and surrounding communities, who immediately responded to the scene along with local and state law enforcement. Without hesitation, they put themselves between the shooter and students to end the bloodshed and administer medical aid. Without question, their heroism yesterday saved lives. A Border Patrol Agent was injured in the crossfire yesterday and we know the loss and trauma from this tragedy will continue to impact many other CBP families for a long time to come.

“The Department will continue coordinating with federal, state, and local partners and offering our full support to the Uvalde community. As we pray for the families and loved ones and recognize the bravery of frontline law enforcement personnel, we must redouble our collective efforts to make our communities safer.”

Read the DHS statement on safety and enforcement following the Uvalde shooting in [English](#) and [en Español](#).

Report on Advancing the Human Rights of LGBTQI+ Persons Around the World

In April, the White House released the first ever public report on the U.S. government's implementation of the Presidential Memorandum on Advancing the Human Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex Persons Around the World. This historic report provides detailed, transparent reporting from U.S. government agencies engaged abroad in efforts to protect and promote the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons around the world. Through this report, the U.S. government shares what it has done to achieve progress toward the goals of the Presidential Memorandum. The report aims to inspire other governments to undertake similar actions to advance the human rights of LGBTQI+ persons and integrate their needs across foreign assistance and foreign policy.

In its submission, DHS highlighted the following efforts, among others:

- A review of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' (USCIS) policy on the recognition of same-sex marriages that are not formally recognized in the couples' home country. USCIS has since concluded its review and in February 2022 issued revised guidance on the topic
- Updated trainings centered on the rights and protections of LGBTQI+ persons; including trainings for refugee officers that incorporate new theoretical and practical instruction on cases involving LGBTQI+ claims, along with trainings that focused on utilizing trauma-informed interviewing theory with vulnerable populations, such as LGBTQI+
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) continues to consider updates to its Transgender Care Memorandum to better align with forthcoming policies related to the custody, supervision, and alternatives to detention for non-citizens, including the transgender population; and is considering modifications to its Risk Classification Assessment tool to align with new or revised policies and better evaluate how to identify LGBTQI+ persons, and other vulnerable individuals, earlier in the immigration process
- USCIS updated the Assisted Reproductive Technology policy to address eligibility for immigration benefits, which also reflects additional considerations for members of the LGBTQI+ community

In addition to these efforts, DHS continues to review and update policies, guidance, and training, and to advance the rulemaking and form updates. *Read the full [interagency report](#) here.*

DHS Statement on District Court Ruling on Title 42

As we have repeatedly stated, Title 42 is not an immigration authority, but a public health authority employed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to protect against the spread of communicable disease, in this case, COVID-19. We will comply with the court's order to continue enforcing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Title 42 Order as long as it remains in place. Meanwhile, DHS will continue to execute its comprehensive, whole-of-government plan to manage potential increases in the number of migrants encountered at our border. As part of this effort, DHS has established a Southwest Border Coordination Center to execute those plans. DHS will also increase personnel and resources as needed, and has already redeployed more than 600 additional law enforcement officers to the border.

DHS Statement on Safety and Enforcement Following Recent Wildfires

The Department is working with its federal, state, local, and non-governmental partners to support the needs of the areas affected by the devastating wildfires in New Mexico, Nebraska, and throughout the Southwest and Midwest.

In light of these circumstances, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection reminds the public that sites that provide emergency response and relief are considered protected areas. To the fullest extent possible, ICE and CBP do not conduct immigration enforcement activities at protected areas such as along evacuation routes, sites used for sheltering or the distribution of emergency supplies, food or water, or registration sites for disaster-related assistance or the reunification of families and loved ones.

At the request of FEMA or local and state authorities, ICE and CBP may help conduct search and rescue, air traffic de-confliction and public safety missions. ICE and CBP provide emergency assistance to individuals regardless of their immigration status. DHS officials do not and will not pose as individuals providing emergency-related information as part of any enforcement activities.

DHS also encourages all eligible individuals to apply for and seek out assistance. Please go to <https://www.disasterassistance.gov/get-assistance/forms> for instructions on how to apply for FEMA disaster assistance.

DHS is aware that some survivors may fear applying for FEMA assistance due to their immigration status. If you or a member of your household applies for FEMA assistance, FEMA does not collect information regarding your immigration status and does not proactively provide your personal information to ICE or CBP for immigration enforcement. However, in rare circumstances, based on a specific request, ICE or CBP could request this information if you are a current threat to national security or public safety because you pose an articulable risk of death, violence, or physical harm to any person. Please see, [FACT SHEET: Citizenship Status and Eligibility for Disaster Assistance FAQ | FEMA.gov](#)

If you believe that the emergency event may affect USCIS application, petition, or immigration status, please contact USCIS or visit: www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/special-situations for more information.

DHS is committed to ensuring that every individual who seeks shelter, aid, or other assistance as a result of the wildfires is able to do so regardless of their immigration status. DHS carries out its mission without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, national origin, or political associations, and in compliance with law and policy. [View translations of this press release.](#)

Update on the Family Reunification Task Force

Earlier this month, Secretary Mayorkas announced that 200 families have been reunified so far and hundreds more are in the process for reunification. While we know there is still more work to be done, we continue to see an increase in registrations and reunifications.

Following the Task Force's trip to Guatemala, U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala William Popp released a [video](#) encouraging families to register for reunification on Together.gov and Juntos.gov. Ambassador Popp outlined the reunification process and how Kids in Need of Defense, Justice in Motion, and the International Organization for Migration, are working to assist in reaching families and helping them through the process. We encourage you to share this video with your networks and with families.

CRCL Hosts Virtual Community Engagement Roundtable with Atlanta Stakeholders

This month, CRCL's Community Engagement Section held a virtual community roundtable meeting with diverse stakeholders in the Atlanta area. Catholic Charities Atlanta served as the community host for the event, which featured presentations from DHS representatives from the Family Reunification Task Force and the ICE Health Service Corps (IHSC). Other DHS representatives joined the meeting from CBP, FEMA, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO), along with more than a dozen local community leaders.

During the meeting, stakeholders raised several questions to DHS representatives involving how to work with ODIO on specific cases requiring immediate attention, how IHSC handles medical referrals, and the status of specific complaints submitted to CRCL, among others.

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.

DHS Announces \$1.6 Billion in Preparedness Grants

Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas has announced \$1.6 billion for eight Fiscal Year 2022 preparedness grant programs. Together, these programs provide critical funding to help state and local officials prepare for, prevent, protect against, and respond to acts of terrorism and other hazards. This funding is in addition to the \$405.1 million announced last month for the Emergency Management Performance Grant Program.

“Since the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the threat landscape has continued to evolve. DHS has remained vigilant while adapting to protect the homeland. Through our grant programs, DHS makes critical investments to support our partners across every level of government and in the private sector as we work together to keep our communities safe.”

The Fiscal Year 2022 grant guidance will continue to focus on the nation’s highest risk areas, including urban areas that face the most significant threats and national priorities. This year, the Urban Area Security Initiative will enhance regional preparedness and capabilities by funding 36 high-threat, high-density urban areas. This includes five additional urban areas who will receive funding to build and sustain capability based on an evolving threat environment. This represents Congressional intent to limit these funds to those urban areas that represent up to 85% of nationwide risk.

DHS has identified six national priority areas in the FY 2022 grant cycle: cybersecurity; soft targets and crowded places; intelligence and information sharing; domestic violent extremism; community preparedness and resilience; and election security. Grant recipients under the State Homeland Security Program and Urban Area Security Initiative will be required to dedicate a minimum of 30% of their awards across these six priority areas. Twelve percent is required through minimum spend amounts for four priority areas, and recipients have flexibility on how to allocate the remaining 18% across the six priority areas: cybersecurity (no minimum spend); soft target and crowded places (3%); information and intelligence sharing (3%); domestic violent extremism (3%); community preparedness and resilience (3%); and election security (no minimum spend).

For more information on DHS’s preparedness grant programs, visit: www.dhs.gov and www.fema.gov/grants.

DHS Celebrates Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Each May, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) joins the Nation in celebrating the history, contributions, and achievements of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders during Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AA and NHPI) Heritage Month. The White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANPI) announced that the theme for 2022 is Building Legacy Together: Our Communities’ Journey of Strength and Resilience.

Since our Nation’s founding, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AA and NHPs) have shaped and strengthened the fabric of the United States. Yet many AA and NHPI communities continue to face barriers to prosperity and safety, including xenophobic violence and health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This month, we celebrate AA and NHPs’ resilience and pay tribute to generations of AA and NHPs who paved the way for greater opportunity. From soldiers serving with distinction in the U.S. Armed Forces to the election of the first woman of Asian descent as the Vice-President of the United States, Kamala Harris, AA and NHPs’ experiences reveal a continuum of challenges and triumphs in past and modern-day history. We also recommit ourselves to confronting discrimination and hate in all their forms – so that together, we can create an America that is truly equitable and inclusive.

In his first year of office, President Biden issued the most comprehensive Executive Orders and related statements in history to advance equity and opportunity for AA and NHPI communities across the country. CRCL leads the Department’s efforts in implementing EO 14031, Advancing Equity, Justice, and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AA and NHPI), and serves on the WHIAANHPI Interagency Working Group, working to advance equity for AA and NHPs, focusing on five

strategic priority areas: (1) promoting belonging, inclusion, and addressing anti-Asian hate/discrimination; (2) language access; (3) COVID-19 response and recovery; (4) capacity-building; and (5) outreach and engagement.

CRCL on the Road

*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@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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