



Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties



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

CRCL integrates civil rights and civil liberties considerations into all of the Department's activities by:

- Advising Department leadership and personnel and consulting with federal partners;
- Providing training, technical assistance, and best practices to state and local partners;
- Communicating with individuals and communities whose civil rights and civil liberties may be affected by Department activities;
- Investigating civil rights and civil liberties complaints regarding Department policies, programs, activities, or actions and issuing formal policy, practice, and training recommendations; and
- Leading the Department's equal employment opportunity (EEO) programs and promoting workforce diversity and merit system principles.

CRCL was created by the **Homeland Security Act of 2002** (6 U.S.C. § 345) and came into existence with the rest of the Department in 2003. It is housed within the Office of the Secretary and Executive Management.¹ The **Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties** is an assistant secretary-level, non-Senate confirmed Presidential appointee who reports directly to the Secretary. The Officer is supported by two career SES deputies: the Deputy Officer for Programs and Compliance and the Deputy Officer for Equal Employment and Diversity, who is also the Department's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Director.²

The **Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Division** leads the Department's efforts to ensure that all employees and applicants receive equal employment opportunity. The Division directs EEO complaints management and adjudication, diversity management, and alternative dispute resolution, and processes employment discrimination and harassment claims brought against DHS Headquarters units.

The **Programs Branch** works with DHS Components and leadership to ensure that policies, programs, and practices are created and implemented in a manner that protects civil rights and civil liberties. This work includes providing policy formulation and implementation advice,

¹ List of authorities available upon request.

² Organization chart available upon request.

training, program review, and engagement with DHS stakeholders. The Programs Branch operates through its five sections in the following ways:

- **Community Engagement:** CRCL performs critical outreach for DHS with the public, by convening routine stakeholder roundtable meetings for DHS in cities across the country, distinct town halls on current issues, and subject-specific events focusing on DHS priorities—some 100 events per year. CRCL also convenes national incident community coordination team (ICCT) calls with stakeholders and relevant government leadership in the immediate aftermath of homeland security incidents.
- **Department-Wide Policy Development and Implementation:** CRCL leads the Department’s policy development and implementation for the protection of civil rights and civil liberties. Projects include: immigration detention policy review; big data projects; information sharing processes and agreements, particularly in support of counterterrorism, cybersecurity, vetting, and screening activities; social media; and, the implementation of the Prison Rape Elimination Act. CRCL also plays an important role in safeguarding DHS’ requirement to provide equal access for persons with disabilities; ensuring language access for limited English proficient individuals, and applying the privacy provisions of the Violence Against Women Act. Further, CRCL plays a critical leadership role on the DHS Council on Combatting Violence Against Women and serves as the Department’s lead in implementing human rights treaties.
- **Intelligence Review:** CRCL reviews over 1000 substantial Department intelligence products each year for civil rights and civil liberties impacts and ensures that intelligence-based targeting activities are appropriately based on current intelligence and comport with individual rights and liberties.
- **Civil Rights Compliance by DHS and Recipients of DHS Financial Assistance:** CRCL has responsibility to assure nondiscrimination in the Department’s federally conducted and assisted programs in accordance with federal nondiscrimination laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, national origin, disability, sex, age, or religion in DHS programs and activities.

The **Compliance Branch** investigates complaints from the public, media reports, and other sources, alleging civil rights or civil liberties violations by Department personnel or programs, including disability discrimination prohibited by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, inappropriate use of force by DHS officers or agents, inadequate conditions of detention, violation of right to due process, and racial or ethnic profiling. In 2016, CRCL received over 2000 allegations, resulting in over 500 complaint investigations. CRCL makes formal recommendations stemming from its investigations to DHS Component leadership to rectify gaps in civil rights or liberties protections related to DHS policies, practices, and training. CRCL does not order individual relief or redress for a complainant except for disability accommodation claims under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Visit CRCL at www.dhs.gov/crcl, or contact us at crcl@hq.dhs.gov.



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