



*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 civil rights complaint, the best method of submission at this time is via email to: [CRCLCompliance@hq.dhs.gov](mailto: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-civilrights-complaint>.

## **DHS to Serve as Lead Federal Agency Coordinating Efforts to Resettle Vulnerable Afghans**

President Biden has directed the Secretary of Homeland Security to have his department serve as the lead agency coordinating ongoing efforts across the federal government to resettle vulnerable Afghans, including those who worked on behalf of the United States.

Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas announced that Robert J. Fenton, Jr. will lead the interagency Unified Coordination Group. The Unified Coordination Group will report directly to Secretary Mayorkas and will include a broad range of services throughout the resettlement process, from initial immigration processing, COVID-19 testing, and isolation of COVID-positive individuals for anticipated quarantine, to resettlement support for individuals who are neither U.S. citizens nor lawful permanent residents. The resettlement support will include initial processing at pre-designated U.S. military bases prior to being resettled into communities.

“The Department of Homeland Security is prepared to serve as the lead federal agency coordinating efforts across the federal government to welcome vulnerable Afghans to our Nation in a way that is consistent with our laws and our values,” said Secretary Mayorkas. “This mission reflects the best of who we are as a country and our Department is honored by the trust the President has placed in us. There is no one better than Bob Fenton to help lead our efforts. Bob has dedicated his career to public service and has decades of experience managing complex and critically important missions. He will help lead this interagency effort with incredible adeptness and the highest standards of honor and integrity.”

The Unified Coordination Group will ensure federal resources, authorities, and expertise are utilized in a unified and synchronized manner to support the goals of the operation. This initiative will be undertaken in close collaboration with DHS partners in state and local government and with non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

### **Inside**

[DHS to Serve as Lead Federal Agency Coordinating Efforts to Resettle Vulnerable Afghans](#)

[DHS Statement on Safety and Immigration Enforcement During Hurricane Ida](#)

[CRCL Leads Listening Session on Afghanistan](#)

[CRCL Releases Semiannual Report](#)

[CRCL Participates in USCIS Webinar on TPS for Haiti](#)

[DHS Issues New NTAS Bulletin](#)

[CRCL Listening Session with Southern Border Stakeholders on Title 42](#)

[Civil Rights Back-to-School Resources](#)

[DHS Women in Law Enforcement Working Group](#)

[CRCL Listening Session on Racial Profiling](#)

[ICE Announces Updated Policy to Support Noncitizen Victims of Crime](#)

[New Alternatives to Detention Case Management Pilot Program](#)

“I am honored by the confidence placed in me and I am privileged to be able to contribute to this vital mission,” said Fenton.

Fenton has served as FEMA’s Regional Administrator for Region IX since 2015. During the presidential transitions of 2017 and 2021, Fenton served as Acting FEMA Administrator. Since joining FEMA in 1996, Fenton has played a significant and senior role in numerous large-scale response and recovery operations in the United States and has responded to more than 100 federal disasters, including Hurricane Katrina, the four Florida Hurricanes of 2004, Southern California Wildfires of 2003 and 2007, Super Typhoon Pongsona in Guam, and the 9/11 World Trade Center terrorist attacks.

### ***DHS Statement on Safety and Immigration Enforcement During Hurricane Ida***

Release Date: August 27, 2021

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is closely monitoring the impact of Hurricane Ida. Our highest priority remains the preservation of life and safety.

Absent exceptional circumstances, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) will not conduct immigration enforcement at locations where disaster and emergency relief related to this storm is being provided, 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.

DHS officials do not and will not pose as individuals providing emergency-related information as part of any enforcement activities.

[Read this statement translated into various languages.](#)

### **CRCL Leads Listening Session on Afghanistan**

August 20, 2021, CRCL Officer Katherine Culliton-González hosted with the Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman a listening session with Afghan American stakeholders and nonprofit organizations on the current crisis in Afghanistan. Over 30 community-based organizations participated, along with leadership from several other DHS offices. Officer Culliton-González thanked attendees for joining the meeting and expressed her concern over the unfolding situation in Afghanistan. Participants then shared several concerns including the urgent need to protect and assist Afghans in country and abroad and the need for clear guidance from the U.S. Government regarding evacuations on the ground. Participants also shared that given the crisis, humanitarian programs should be implemented within DHS and other federal agencies. She encouraged participants to continue to reach out to CRCL and our DHS partners to share information and raise additional concerns as they arise. She noted that CRCL will share information with our federal partners to help facilitate support for the Afghan people.

On August 25, 2021, CRCL’s Chief of Staff Brenda Abdelall participated in a listening session on refugee resettlement hosted by the DHS Office of Public Engagement. Over 200 individuals from refugee resettlement organizations and legal service providers attended the virtual event. The attendees relayed concerns and provided information relating to the resettlement of Afghans in America.

### ***CRCL Releases Semiannual Reports to Congress***

CRCL has published its [FY 2020 Third and Fourth Quarters Semiannual Report](#) as required by section 803 of the *Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007*, 42 U.S.C. § 2000ee-1(f). The Reports include information on CRCL’s investigative work during this time period.

## **CRCL Officer Participates in USCIS National Webinar on TPS for Haiti**

On August 20, 2021, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) hosted a national stakeholder engagement regarding Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haiti. CRCL Officer Katherine Culliton-González provided opening remarks during the webinar, sharing her concern for the people of Haiti who have been devastated by recent disasters including the 7.2 magnitude earthquake. In her remarks, Officer Culliton-González highlighted the importance of TPS status for Haiti; shared information about CRCL mission and priorities; and discussed current efforts taking place across DHS on immigration reform and racial justice, including the new DHS Equity Task Force led by CRCL to advance racial equity, combat discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation, and condemn racism and xenophobia.

Following her remarks, USCIS provided an overview of TPS, including an explanation of eligibility requirements and filing tips. USCIS then responded to questions submitted in advance and via chat during the webinar. Information on the webinar can be found in the [USCIS Electronic Reading Room](#).

## **DHS Issues New NTAS Bulletin**

On August 13, 2021, the Secretary of Homeland Security issued a new National Terrorism Advisory System (NTAS) Bulletin regarding the current heightened threat environment across the United States. The Homeland continues to face a diverse and challenging threat environment leading up to and following the 20th Anniversary of the September 11, 2001 attacks as well as religious holidays we assess could serve as a catalyst for acts of targeted violence. These threats include those posed by domestic terrorists, individuals and groups engaged in grievance-based violence, and those inspired or motivated by foreign terrorists and other malign foreign influences. These actors are increasingly exploiting online forums to influence and spread violent extremist narratives and promote violent activity. Such threats are also exacerbated by impacts of the ongoing global pandemic, including grievances over public health safety measures and perceived government restrictions.



- [Read this Bulletin translated into various languages](#)
- [Subscribe to NTAS Advisories via Email](#)

## **CRCL Conducts Listening Session with Southern Border Stakeholders on Title 42**

On August 19, 2021, CRCL Officer Katherine Culliton-González held a listening session on the Department's enforcement of the Centers for Disease Control's order under its Title 42 public health authority ("Title 42"). The listening session provided an opportunity to hear from southern border stakeholders regarding how the Department's activities impact border communities and others affected by Title 42. Over thirty stakeholders joined the virtual event to share their concerns and offer feedback and recommendations to DHS and other federal agencies regarding implementation and enforcement of Title 42.

### ***Back-to-School Resources from the Department of Justice, Department of Education, and Health and Human Services***

[View the Back-to-School Message for Transgender Students](#) from Department of Justice Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke for the Civil Rights Division, Department of Education Acting Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Suzanne Goldberg, and Department of Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Health Dr. Rachel Levine.

Read the guidance on [Confronting Discrimination Based on National Origin and Immigration Status](#) in English and [Spanish](#) from the Departments of Justice and Education.

## **DHS Leads Women in Law Enforcement Interagency Working Group**

This month, CRCL Officer Katherine Culliton-González provided opening remarks at the first meeting of the Women in Law Enforcement Interagency Working Group. The new working group was developed following a recommendation from a study on women in federal law enforcement conducted by CRCL.

The Women in Law Enforcement Interagency Working Group includes members from over 15 federal entities, including the Department's law enforcement operational Components. The Working Group aims to develop strategies to improve the hiring, retention, and advancement of women in federal law enforcement, as well as to identify and start to remove barriers in the workplace for women federal law enforcement officers. The end goal is a workplace free from impediments where women in law enforcement have improved levels of representation and advancement.

Officer Culliton-González relayed that the Women in Law Enforcement Working Group aligns with the work of the White House Gender Policy Council (GPC), established in March 2021, by President Biden. CRCL has an important role on the GPC, as DHS Secretary Mayorkas designated the CRCL Officer as the Department's representative on the Council. As part of the work with the GPC, CRCL Officer Culliton-González established a DHS Gender Policy Working Group to advance gender equity and equality issues throughout the Department. One area of focus for the DHS Gender Policy Working Group is the examination of underrepresentation of women in nontraditional occupations, including women in law enforcement. She then welcomed the President of the Women in Federal Law Enforcement (WIFLE) Foundation, Catherine Sanz, who spoke about the challenges that women in law enforcement have faced over time.

## **CRCL Hosts National Stakeholder Listening Session on Racial Profiling**

Last month, CRCL held a virtual engagement with national stakeholders to discuss racial profiling and its impact on immigrants and communities of color. The virtual event provided a space for open dialogue with representatives from several civil and human rights nonprofit and advocacy organizations.

CRCL Officer Katherine Culliton-González led the discussion with participants, which focused on policy guidance, civil rights training for law enforcement, border concerns, data collection, and counterterrorism. The Officer shared the Department's current efforts to strengthen related policies and improve data collection, and CRCL's work on the [DHS internal review team](#). She further emphasized that CRCL will remain engaged and continue to prioritize these conversations with diverse stakeholders to build trust and break down barriers that adversely impact communities of color.

## **ICE Announces Updated Policy to Support Noncitizen Victims of Crime**

This month, ICE announced its [updated policy to support noncitizen victims of crime](#). ICE will help victims seek justice and facilitate access to immigration benefits for noncitizens who have been victims of crime. This new policy is designed to improve victims' ability to seek justice against perpetrators of crime, including in cases of human trafficking.

“This policy update facilitates victim cooperation with law enforcement, enhances ICE's criminal investigative efforts, and promotes trust in ICE agents and officers enforcing our laws. It is ICE's commitment to assist victims of crime regardless of their immigration status,” said Acting Director Tae Johnson. “Through this approach, we minimize the fear of repercussions that enforcement decisions may have on the willingness and ability of noncitizen crime victims to contact law enforcement, participate in investigations and prosecutions, pursue justice, and seek benefits.”

This new directive stems from the ICE leadership memorandum issued July 30, 2021, to review agency, directorate, and program office policies, procedures, guidance and resource needs to ensure that our activities are carried out through a victim-centered approach.

Additionally, ICE also recently launched the Victims Engagement and Services Line (VESL) expanding its services to better assist all victims. These services may be accessed by contacting 1-833-383-1465 or by visiting <https://www.ice.gov/vesl>.



## **DHS Announces Alternatives to Detention Case Management Pilot Program**

DHS recently announced a new Alternatives to Detention (ATD) Case Management Pilot Program (CMPP), which will provide voluntary case management and other services to ensure that noncitizens in removal proceedings have access to legal information and other critical services. Alternatives to Detention is an important tool used by DHS for individuals and families as they await the outcome of immigration proceedings. This new congressionally directed pilot will supplement existing Alternatives to Detention programs run by ICE and will inform best practices moving forward.

“We are excited to partner with nonprofit organizations and local governments on this pilot program to improve services for noncitizens in immigration proceedings,” said CRCL Officer Katherine Culliton-González, who will chair the National Board for the Case Management Pilot Program. “I encourage organizations working with noncitizens to apply to serve on the Case Management Pilot Program National Board and help us make this pilot program a success.”

Funds will be awarded to nonprofit organizations and local governments through a National Board, similar to the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Emergency Food and Shelter Program. Case Management Pilot Program services will include, among others: mental health services; human and sex trafficking screening; legal orientation programs; cultural orientation programs; connections to social services; and departure planning and reintegration services for individuals returning to their home countries.

As part of the United States’ COVID-19 mitigation efforts, DHS continues to expel the majority of single adults, and, to the extent possible, families encountered at the Southwest Border in accordance with the CDC’s Title 42 Order. Individuals participating in this program are those who cannot be expelled under or are otherwise excepted from Title 42.

The application process for the ATD Case Management Pilot Program National Board is currently open. Members of the National Board must have experience in the immigration or asylum field, alternatives to detention and/or case management programs, along with additional criteria, and will be chosen via a Request for Information process. The National Board will be responsible for awarding funds to eligible local governments and nonprofit organizations and overseeing and managing the pilot program.

To learn more and to apply to serve on the Case Management Pilot Program National Board, please view the [Request for Information](#) (RFI) and accompanying [Frequently Asked Questions](#). Applications are due by September 17, 2021. Per the RFI, please submit applications and any questions to: [CRCL.CMPP@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:CRCL.CMPP@hq.dhs.gov).

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

#### ***Chicago, Illinois***

On August 18, 2021, CRCL hosted a virtual roundtable meeting with diverse ethnic and community-based stakeholders and organizations.

#### ***Minneapolis, Minnesota***

On August 12, 2021, CRCL hosted a virtual roundtable meeting with diverse ethnic and community-based stakeholders and organizations.

#### ***Denver, Colorado***

On August 18, 2021, CRCL hosted a virtual roundtable meeting with national stakeholders regarding racial profiling.

\*Following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 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](mailto: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 and other government partners 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@dhs.gov](mailto: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](http://www.dhs.gov/crcl).

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