



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. 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>.

FEMA Releases COVID-19 Guidance for 2020 Hurricane Season

To address the challenges of managing disaster response and recovery efforts during this year’s hurricane season, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is releasing the “[COVID-19 Pandemic Operational Guidance for the 2020 Hurricane Season](#)” to help emergency managers and public health officials best prepare for disasters, while continuing to respond to and recover from Coronavirus (COVID-19). The guidance can also be used by private sector and non-governmental organizations to gain an understanding of the government’s posture, planning and readiness efforts.

The guide provides actions emergency managers and public officials can take to prepare for response and recovery operations during ongoing COVID-19 pandemic response efforts. Specifically, the guidance:

- Describes anticipated challenges to disaster operations posed by COVID-19;
- Highlights planning considerations for emergency managers based on current challenges;
- Outlines how FEMA plans to adapt response and recovery operations;
- Creates a shared understanding of expectations between FEMA and emergency managers; and,
- Includes guidance, checklists, and resources to support emergency managers’ response and recovery planning.

Although some aspects of FEMA’s program delivery are different this year others remain the same. FEMA does not anticipate major changes in program eligibility, timeliness of grant awards, or level of assistance provided under the Individual and Households Program.

While the guide focuses on FEMA’s program delivery during the 2020 hurricane season, most planning considerations can be applied to any disaster operation during the COVID-19 pandemic, including no-notice incidents.

FEMA will continue to operate under the framework of locally executed, state managed, and federal supported incident response. By creating a shared understanding of expectations among FEMA and state, local, tribal and territorial partners prior to hurricane season, the nation will be better positioned to achieve operational outcomes in disaster response and recovery efforts.

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This Month at CRCL – Division Updates

CRCL's **Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Division (EEOD)** 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, alternative dispute resolution, and processes employment discrimination and harassment claims brought within Headquarters units.

- This month, **EEOD** was pleased to cohost the 2020 DHS Asian American and Pacific Islander Commemorative Observance Program, along with DHS Asian American and Pacific Islander Program Managers and the DHS Asian American Pacific Islander Network. The virtual event, "Unite Our Nation by Empowering Equality" honored the achievements of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the DHS workforce. The keynote speaker, Rear Admiral Joseph M. Vojvodich, Deputy Commandant for Mission Support, Deputy for Material Readiness, U.S. Coast Guard, shared his experiences in leadership development throughout his career.

CRCL's **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 month, staff across Programs continue to be involved in response to COVID-19. Highlights include:

- The **CRCL Coronavirus Disaster Civil Rights Coordination Team (DCCT)** has held regular meetings to discuss and coordinate CRCL's various response activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The DCCT comprises representatives from across all CRCL Sections and meets regularly during disasters to identify and discuss CRCL activities to protect the civil rights and civil liberties of individuals impacted by a disaster.
- The **Director of the Programs Branch** participated in a recent DHS and HHS Civil Rights Stakeholder Teleconference to share information and respond to civil rights-related concerns and questions.
- The **Antidiscrimination Group** has coordinated with the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division and other federal agency civil rights offices to address civil rights and civil liberties issues arising from COVID-19, including impacts on persons with disabilities, those with limited English proficiency, and diverse racial and ethnic communities. Federal civil rights resources are now included on the [CRCL Civil Rights in Emergencies and Disasters webpage](#).
- The **Community Engagement Section** hosted virtual meetings with community stakeholders in Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona; Denver, Colorado; Minneapolis, Minnesota; New York, New York; and Portland, Oregon where discussion focused on the impacts of COVID-19 to local communities. Topics of discussion included: identification requirements at testing sites, COVID-19 cases at detention centers across the country, language access concerns in public messaging, and immigration enforcement during the pandemic.

CRCL's **Compliance Branch** reviews and investigates civil rights and civil liberties allegations filed by the public regarding DHS personnel, programs, or activities.

- In April 2020, Compliance received 344 allegations and opened 123 complaints for investigation. The majority of concerns reported involve medical and mental health care, conditions of detention, and due process in immigration detention.
- Compliance continues to receive allegations related to COVID-19. So far, CRCL has reviewed 268 matters for investigation. Of those, 103 were opened as complaints. The issues raised include legal access, access to equipment and supplies, transfers between facilities, procedures for removal, communication outside a facility, medical treatment for non-COVID-19 medical issues, and uses of force and hunger strikes, among other things.

DHS Commemorates 2020 Police Week

During Police Week, May 10-16, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Chad F. Wolf paid his respects to law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty last year by participating in the [national candlelight vigil](#), leading a [virtual Police Week 5k](#) with leaders from across the Department, laying a wreath at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, and dedicating a new DHS Wall of Remembrance at DHS headquarters. Though Police Week was conducted virtually this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, DHS has still made honoring our brothers and sisters in law enforcement a priority.

DHS is the largest employer of federal law enforcement agents. Approximately one-third of our 240,000 employees serve as law enforcement officers, and nearly 70 percent perform law enforcement functions. The Department's law enforcement family includes U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Federal Protective Service, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Transportation Security Administration, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Secret Service. DHS also plays an important role in training law enforcement across the country through the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC), which provides vital training to more than 90 federal partner organizations, as well as many state and local officers. Since its inception in 1970, FLETC has trained more than one million law enforcement professionals nationwide.

CRCL's law enforcement partners are critical stakeholders in our many mission areas, from participating in our community outreach roundtables and trainings on a wide array of civil rights and civil liberties topics, to joining CRCL's Women in Law Enforcement mentoring program, which focuses on career development and advancement from non-supervisory positions to supervisory roles in Components across the Department.

The Department sends its best wishes to all the brave men and women across our country who serve as law enforcement officers at the federal, state, and local levels, and to their families. We will always remember those we have lost in the line of duty this year, and every year.

FY 2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Grant Program Application Submission Deadline Extended to June 17, 2020

This notice extends the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) Grant Program application submission deadline from May 29, 2020, to June 17, 2020. This extension is granted given potential disruptions to applicants' normal operations as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. This extension applies to the FY 2020 TVTP NOFO released on March 30, 2020 (funding opportunity DHS-20-TTP-132-00-01).

DHS/FEMA will accept FY 2020 TVTP applications until June 17, 2020, at 5 p.m. ET. DHS/FEMA will not review applications that are received after the deadline or consider them for funding. DHS/FEMA may, however, extend the application deadline on request for an applicant who can demonstrate that good cause exists to justify extending the deadline. Good cause for an extension may include technical problems outside of the applicant's control that prevents application submission by the deadline, or other exigent or emergency circumstances.

Any questions regarding this notice may be directed to TVTP at TerrorismPrevention@hq.dhs.gov or the FEMA Centralized Scheduling and Information Desk (CSID) at askcsid@fema.dhs.gov or (800) 368-6498, Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. ET.

Additional Information:

Prevention capabilities allowable under this program are separate and distinct from counterterrorism, intelligence, and surveillance activities by any local, state, or federal agencies and offices with explicit legal authority to conduct such activities. Preventing targeted violence and terrorism involves locally-based training, engagement, education, social services, mental and public health services, and alternative messaging to communities on a voluntary basis. DHS is prohibited from collecting or using personally identifiable information of individuals who participate in prevention activities of its grantees.

DHS Accessibility Day 2020

This month, the DHS Office of the Chief Information Officer, Office of Accessible Systems and Technology (OAST) hosted “DHS Accessibility Day 2020.” The day-long virtual event was open to all DHS employees and contractors and featured the latest best practices and tips on accessibility tools and technology at DHS. Keynote speakers included Beth Capello, DHS Acting Information Officer, and Cameron Quinn, Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. Accessibility experts from several DHS Components presented on a number of topics including:



- Best practices and challenges of document remediation;
- Challenges for deaf and/or hard of hearing employees while interacting with Microsoft PowerPoint;
- Federal efforts to promote accessibility across government; and,
- Goals and priorities of the DHS Disability Employment Program.

OAST is dedicated to guiding and supporting all DHS Components in removing barriers to information access and employment of qualified individuals with disabilities in accord with Section 508 requirements. OAST strives to ensure that electronic and information technology (EIT) procured, developed, maintained, or used is accessible to DHS employees and customers with disabilities through a range of policy, training, technical assistance, and compliance activities.

CRCL on the Road, May*

May 11-15 – New York, New York

CRCL convened a series of teleconference calls with diverse ethnic and community-based stakeholders and organizations.

May 12 – Minneapolis, Minnesota

CRCL convened its regular community engagement roundtable virtually with diverse ethnic and community-based stakeholders and organizations

May 13 – Phoenix/Tucson, Arizona

CRCL convened its regular community engagement roundtable virtually with diverse ethnic and community-based stakeholders and organizations

May 14 – Portland, Oregon

CRCL convened a teleconference call with diverse ethnic and community-based stakeholders and organizations.

May 18 – Denver, Colorado

CRCL convened its regular community engagement roundtable virtually with diverse ethnic and community-based stakeholders and organizations

May 22 – El Paso, Texas

CRCL convened a teleconference call with diverse ethnic and community-based stakeholders and organizations.

*Following guidance from the CDC 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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