



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



### **DHS Releases Draft Component Language Access Plans for Public Comment**

The ability to communicate efficiently and effectively is critical to DHS' diverse missions. CRCL recently announced for public comment the [release of draft Language Access Plans from the Department's component agencies](#), which address the language needs of persons with limited English proficiency. These draft Language Access Plans, developed pursuant to [Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency](#) and the [DHS Language Access Plan](#) issued in February 2012, provide a framework for the Department's components and offices to improve delivery of language services for diverse communities across the country.

DHS welcomes public and stakeholder feedback now through **October 31, 2014**, by providing written comments or through participating in stakeholder engagement meetings, including a national meeting in Washington, DC on October 24, 2014. CRCL, together with representatives from across the Department and the federal government, will review your comments and work to implement your suggestions in the final version of the plans.

For more information or to RSVP for the national stakeholder meeting, or to submit written comments, please email [CRCLOutreach@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:CRCLOutreach@hq.dhs.gov). For those who do not speak or write in English CRCL has access to interpreters and translators who can communicate in any language.

### **Violence Against Women Act**

September 13, 2014, marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the [Violence Against Women Act](#) (VAWA), landmark legislation that changed the way our country responds to domestic abuse and sexual assault. VAWA created a network of services for victims and their families, expanding shelters and rape crisis centers across the country, and establishing a national hotline for victims. The legislation also changed state and local laws to hold offenders accountable and ensured that law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges understand the realities of domestic and sexual violence through regular trainings. Read [remarks from Vice President Biden](#), who drafted the VAWA legislation with support from a broad coalition of advocacy groups.

In response to Congress' decision to authorize the sharing of information of victims of human trafficking, other serious crimes, and self-petitioners for relief under VAWA with national security officials for national security purposes, CRCL developed and issued guidance to all Department components on providing appropriate confidentiality and safeguards in the sharing of this information.

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## **CRCL Officer Tours Artesia Family Residential Center**

CRCL Officer Megan Mack, along with a delegation of other DHS senior leaders, recently toured the Artesia Family Residential Center (AFRC) in Artesia, New Mexico. Originally a location for the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, the AFRC was recently converted to a temporary housing facility for detained women and their children, to allow families to remain together while in custody of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

ICE's Juvenile and Family Residential Management Unit is responsible for monitoring activity at the AFRC and ensuring it is in compliance with ICE's Family Residential Standards. At present, approximately 187 ICE employees are detailed to the facility, which includes staff from the ICE Health Services Corps, as well as staff from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

ICE recently announced plans to open and operate a similar new residential center in Dilley, Texas to house adults with children in response to the influx of adults traveling with children apprehended along the Southwest border. Initial capacity at the South Texas Family Residential Center will be up to 480 residents, while the facility will ultimately accommodate up to 2,400 residents on the approximately 50-acre site. ICE expects to open the facility to its first residents in early November and for the site to be ready for full capacity within 210 days.

ICE is operating residential centers for adults with children to maintain family unity while families await the outcome of immigration hearings or return to their home countries. ICE ensures that these residential centers operate in an open environment, which includes medical care, play rooms, social workers, educational services, and access to legal counsel.

In addition to the facilities in Artesia and Dilley, ICE also is using a newly modified residential center in Karnes City, Texas and a long-standing facility in Leesport, Pennsylvania to house adults with children. CRCL will continue to work with ICE to monitor civil rights and civil liberties concerns regarding these facilities.

## **CRCL Hosts Secretary Johnson and Belgian Delegation for Townhall**

As part of its ongoing countering violent extremism (CVE) community engagement exchange program, CRCL recently hosted a delegation from Vilvoorde, Belgium in Columbus, Ohio. This was the second phase of the exchange program which is coordinated with and funded by the State Department. The first phase occurred earlier this year when key stakeholders from Columbus visited Vilvoorde.

The Belgian delegation included the mayor of Vilvoorde, the Vilvoorde chief of police, and members of the city council elected from key demographic populations representing disaffected communities.

One of the Belgian government's key subject-matter experts on Syria foreign fighters, and recruitment tactics of violent extremist groups at the EU level, also was part of the delegation.



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The tour began with a day spent in Washington, DC, and continued with four days in Columbus. During the week-long exchange, the delegation participated in a series of meetings and events with partners from federal, state, and local governments, as well as nongovernmental organizations and academia. The events ranged from CRCL-led community engagement roundtables with diverse communities, to visiting local schools to meet with student leaders and administrators.



While in Columbus Secretary Johnson joined the group for a townhall held at the Noor Islamic Cultural Center. Johnson remarked on the ways we can remain vigilant in countering violent extremism, including offering people—particularly young people—opportunities to channel their energy and passion into different directions.

The exchange program is designed to help community stakeholders, educators, youth leaders, and local law enforcement partners exchange best practices that may benefit trust-building efforts, further the protection of civil rights and civil liberties (human rights in the broader and European context), reduce alienation, promote effective integration, and help build communities that are resilient and able to counter the narrative of Al-Qaeda (including ISIS), its supporters, affiliates, and similarly placed ideologies.

### **Constitution Day and Citizenship Day**

On September 17, DHS observed Constitution Day and Citizenship Day. The holiday became a national observance in 2004, when Congress designated it as a day for citizens to remember the signing of the Constitution and learn more about our nation’s founding document.



This year, USCIS welcomed more than 27,000 new citizens in more than 160 naturalization ceremonies between September 17 and 23. An ongoing partnership with the National Park Service and an agreement with the Institute of Museum and Library Services allowed USCIS to showcase some of the nation’s prominent landmarks and important community institutions during this year’s Constitution Day and Citizenship Day celebration. For a full list of featured naturalization ceremonies and landmark locations, visit [www.uscis.gov/news](http://www.uscis.gov/news).

### **National Preparedness Month**

Each September we recognize [National Preparedness Month \(NPM\)](#) as a time to focus on taking steps to prepare for emergencies in our homes, businesses, schools, and larger communities. The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Ready Campaign offers resources and tips on how you can take action to [promote and participate in NPM](#):

- Join the [National Preparedness Community](#) to learn more on how to prepare for disasters and other emergencies
- Plan or participate in a National PrepareAthon! Day event on or around September 30
- Share information and promote NPM via [Facebook and Twitter](#)



## **CRCL on the Road, September**

### *September 15 – Chicago, Illinois*

CRCL hosted a townhall meeting with the Syrian-American community.

### *September 22-26 – Columbus, Ohio*

CRCL hosted a delegation of Belgian officials as part of its CVE exchange program.

## **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. We also post select articles from the newsletter 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).

If you are on this list, but no longer wish to receive the newsletter, please send an email to the same address asking us to unsubscribe you. 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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