



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

DHS Publishes First-ever Language Access Plan

CRCL is pleased to announce the release of the [DHS Language Access Plan](#) (LEP Plan) to address the language needs of persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). This LEP Plan demonstrates our commitment to breaking down language barriers and providing meaningful access to homeland security programs and activities.

The release of the LEP Plan is the culmination of a year-long Department-wide effort to improve language access and integration, as required by [Executive Order 13166](#). In leading this effort, CRCL collaborated with DHS Components to develop a robust language access plan and program. CRCL also engaged and received feedback from a number of community stakeholders and federal partners through our [quarterly roundtables held in 13 cities across the country](#), and held listening sessions with advocacy groups who provided valuable insight on areas of improvement and innovative methods for language integration. Read about [the Department's many activities in place to meet the needs of LEP persons](#).

While we have achieved a milestone with the LEP Plan, there is still more work to be done. Over the next year, each DHS Component will complete its own language access plan that will further implement the Department's policy to provide meaningful access for LEP persons. CRCL will oversee and assist Component with the implementation of their plans.

We are proud of the work that we have accomplished to address and meet the critical language needs of our country's diverse landscape. CRCL will continue to support the Department's goal to achieve full language integration and ensure that all individuals can fully participate in DHS programs and activities.

Read the [DHS Language Access Plan](#) and the [Guidance on Limited English Proficiency for DHS Grant Recipients](#).

DHS Publishes Environmental Justice Strategy and Annual Implementation Report

DHS recently released its [Environmental Justice Strategy](#) in accordance with Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," which states that each federal agency, with the law as its guide, should make environmental justice part of its mission. The DHS environmental justice strategy addresses those homeland security missions most applicable to environmental justice considerations, primarily in the context of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

DHS also published its [Environmental Justice Annual Implementation Progress Report FY 2011](#), which summarizes the Department's progress toward achieving the goals of Executive Order 12898, addressing:

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implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act; implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; impacts from climate change; and impacts from commercial transportation and supporting infrastructure (“goods movement”).

Read more about the [Environmental Justice Strategy](#) and the [Annual Implementation Progress Report](#).

DHS Works to Ensure Equality for LGBT Individuals

In keeping with the Department’s commitment to equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) individuals, CRCL and the Office of the Secretary formed a LGBT Working Group, comprising representatives from each DHS Component. The purpose of the Working Group is to review, evaluate, and provide recommendations on a wide range of technical, legal, and policy issues to ensure that LGBT individuals are treated equally in DHS programs and activities.

Since its inception in 2011, the Working Group has convened cross-DHS listening sessions with several national LGBT groups and representatives from DHS Components. The listening sessions provided forums for DHS to listen to concerns of LGBT stakeholders—representatives voiced their concerns about detention facilities and treatment of LGBT detainees and those with HIV, visa petitions and the Defense of Marriage Act, the need for cultural competency training to address border screening issues, and several others. The Working Group is developing plans to address these concerns. One early achievement was a [USCIS policy change](#), bringing the agency in line with existing Department of State guidance, on renewal of visas for household members of long-term non-immigrants, including same-sex partners as well as other dependents such as elderly parents. USCIS has also developed and is now deploying a [training module for refugee and asylum officers on LGBT issues](#).

CBP Proposes Expansion of Joint Customs Declarations

CBP recently published a notice of proposed rulemaking to revise its regulations that will save returning U.S. travelers time and save the agency money while still maintaining security at our ports of entry.

The proposed update addresses when members of a family residing in one household and traveling together on their return to the U.S. may make a joint declaration for all members of the family. CBP anticipates that expanding the definition of “members of a family residing in one household” will reduce the amount of paperwork and time that CBP officers would need to review during inspection and, therefore, facilitate passenger processing. Streamlining this procedure is expected to result in more than \$2 million in time savings annually and allow CBP officers to dedicate more attention to other admissibility issues and travelers that may pose threats.

The expanded definition of the term “members of a family residing in one household” will include domestic relationships, which will allow more U.S. returning residents to file a joint customs declaration for articles acquired abroad. “Domestic relationship” would include foster children, stepchildren, half-siblings, legal wards, and other types of dependents. This definition would also include two adults who are in a committed relationship, including long-term companions and couples in civil unions or domestic partnerships where the partners share financial assets and obligations. Read the [proposed rule](#).

DHS Pride

[DHS Pride](#), the DHS-recognized employee association focusing on LGBT issues for the Department, has launched a new website: www.dhspride.org. The on-line resource includes information about the organization, along with section with news of interest to LGBT members of the federal family and the overall LGBT community.

DHS Pride is an employee association recognized by DHS under Directive No. 112-06 authorizing the formation of employee organizations.



CRCL Publishes the 2011 No FEAR Act Report

CRCL is pleased to announce the release of the [DHS Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 \(No FEAR Act\) Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2011.](#)



The [No FEAR Act, Public Law 107-174](#), requires that federal agencies be publicly accountable for violations of anti-discrimination and whistleblower protection laws. Federal agencies must post both quarterly and annual statistical data relating to federal sector Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaints on its public website, reimburse the Judgment Fund for any payments made, and notify employees and applicants for employment about their rights under the federal antidiscrimination and whistleblower laws.

This Report summarizes DHS's most significant accomplishments in the DHS EEO program, particularly focusing on the area of EEO complaint processing. It evidences the Department's strong commitment to abide by merit systems principles, provide protection from prohibited personnel practices, and promote accountability.

Read the [2011 No FEAR Act Annual Report.](#)

CRCL Participates in International Conferences to Counter Violent Extremism

Recently, CRCL representatives traveled abroad to take part in conferences in the UK and the Netherlands, both of which focused on reducing the threat of terrorism and violent extremism.

Wilton Park, a global non-profit think tank, hosted a three-day conference on building resilience and reducing threats within the Somali communities across the globe. The roundtable meeting brought together 60 senior-level practitioners, policy makers, academics and community representatives from the UK, the U.S., Italy, and Kenya to dialogue with government officials from the UK, U.S., Denmark, Saudi Arabia, and the EU on strategies to increase trust between communities and government officials and promote future collaboration on counter-terrorist activities. Key

themes discussed at the conference were the need to: challenge ideology that supports terrorism and those who promote it; protect vulnerable individuals; and support sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalization. CRCL participated in bilateral talks between the U.S. delegation to the conference and the UK Home Office, Research Information and Communications Unit, and UK Foreign Ministry.

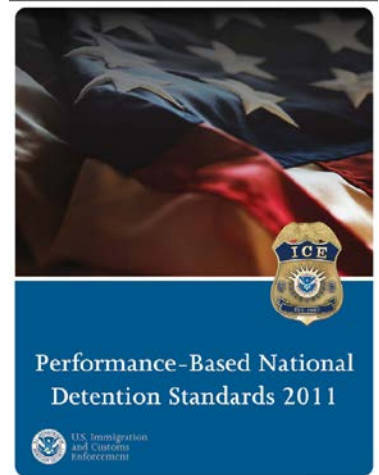


Also, a CRCL representative traveled with a U.S. delegation of federal, state and local government officials to visit the Netherlands' Counter Terrorism Coordination Centre in The Hague. The three-day conference included a series of workshops on countering violent extremism, and visits to the regional police fusion center in Antwerp and the National Threat Analysis Centre in Brussels. The U.S. delegation (pictured above) was composed of representatives from DHS, CBP, DOJ, FBI and the National Counter Terrorism Center, along with state and local law enforcement agencies. CRCL's participation in these conferences underscores our commitment to partnering with international government and stakeholders counter violent extremism.

ICE Releases Performance-Based National Detention Standards 2011

In keeping with its commitment to reform the immigration detention system, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has revised its detention standards. These new standards, known as Performance-Based National Detention Standards 2011 (PBNDS 2011), represent an important step in detention reform.

PBNDS 2011 reflects ICE's ongoing effort to tailor the conditions of immigration detention to its unique purpose while maintaining a safe and secure detention environment for staff and detainees. In developing the revised standards, ICE incorporated the input of many agency employees and stakeholders, including the perspectives of nongovernmental organizations and ICE field offices. PBNDS 2011 is crafted to improve medical and mental health services, increase access to legal services and religious opportunities, improve communication with detainees with limited English proficiency, improve the process for reporting and responding to complaints, and increase recreation and visitation.



CRCL collaborated with ICE on the development of the new standards, providing expertise and information resulting from complaint investigations, in numerous areas impacting detainee health and safety as well as in standards impacting detainees' rights.

Read more about the [PBNDS 2011](#).

Universal Periodic Review Process – US Implementation of Accepted Recommendations

In 2010, the United States participated in the UN Human Rights Council [Universal Periodic Review \(UPR\)](#) process. The UPR is a unique process which involves a review of the human rights records of all 192 UN Member States once every four years. The UPR is a State-driven process, under the auspices of the [Human Rights Council](#), which provides the opportunity for each State to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to fulfill their human rights obligations. The UPR is designed to ensure equal treatment for every country when their human rights situations are assessed.

After careful review, the United States accepted in whole or in part 173 of the 228 recommendations it received. In keeping with the United States' enduring commitment to universal human rights and fundamental freedoms at home and abroad, we have adopted a process for carrying out and reviewing our implementation of the recommendations we accepted.

These recommendations have been divided into ten thematic areas, and working groups have been formed to oversee implementation efforts in each area. The working groups are each led by the government department or agency with the greatest subject matter expertise in that area and include members from other relevant departments and agencies. The working groups and lead agencies include:

- **Civil Rights and Discrimination**
Department of Justice
- **Criminal Justice Issues**
Department of Justice
- **Indigenous Issues**
Department of the Interior
- **National Security**
Departments of Justice, Defense and State
- **Immigration**
Department of Homeland Security
- **Labor and Trafficking**
Departments of Justice and Labor
- **Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and Measures**
Departments of Justice and State
- **The Environment**
Environmental Protection Agency
- **Domestic Implementation of Human Rights**
Department of Justice
- **Treaties and International Human Rights Mechanisms**
Department of State

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Information about the working groups and additional updates on the UPR implementation process will be posted on www.humanrights.gov. Questions or comments regarding overall UPR implementation efforts may be directed to UPR_INFO@state.gov.

Women's History Month 2012

Every year in March, we recognize the many contributions that women have made to our country and society by observing [Women's History Month](#).

Across the Department, Components celebrated the thousands of women whose invaluable commitment allows DHS to accomplish its many missions. The Transportation Security Administration [profiled five of their distinguished women leaders](#), the U.S. Coast Guard recognized [women in peacekeeping missions](#) (pictured right), and CBP's Eagle Pass Border Patrol Station held an inaugural luncheon to honor women in local law enforcement.



Secretary Napolitano, and other DHS women leaders, also commemorated Women's History Month with an interactive event and panel discussion on ways that the Department supports women in the workforce and cultivates future leaders.

CRCL on the Road, March – April

March 5-7 – Detroit, Michigan

CRCL participated in the BRIDGES roundtable and held several meetings with diverse community organizations.

March 7-9 – Portland, Oregon

CRCL convened a series of community engagement meetings and a town hall with several diverse communities including the Latino, Muslim, and Somali communities.

March 15 – Hamilton, New Jersey

CRCL participated in the New Jersey Department of Homeland Security's inaugural Interfaith Council Lunch.

March 16 – New York City, New York

CRCL representatives convened several meetings with local officials and diverse community leaders.

March 17 – Durham and Raleigh, North Carolina

CRCL participated in the White House Policy Conference with the Hispanic community and convened a town hall with the Muslim community.

March 18-21 – London, UK

CRCL participated in an international conference on building resilience and reducing the threat within the Somali diaspora.

April 2-5 – Phoenix, Arizona

CRCL will participate in the National Fusion Center Conference.

April 5 – Chicago, Illinois

CRCL will convene its quarterly community engagement roundtable with diverse communities and federal, state, and local partners.

April 5 – Los Angeles, California

CRCL will participate in the White House Policy Conference with the Hispanic community.

April 17 – Detroit, Michigan

CRCL will participate in the BRIDGES roundtable with local federal partners and community leaders.

April 19 – Denver, Colorado

CRCL will convene its quarterly community engagement roundtable with diverse communities and federal, state, and local partners.

April 19 – Washington, DC

CRCL will convene its quarterly community engagement roundtable with diverse communities and federal, state, and local partners.

March 19-21 – The Netherlands

CRCL traveled with a U.S. delegation to visit the Netherlands Counter Terrorism Coordination Centre.

March 22 – Boston, Massachusetts

CRCL participated in the BRIDGES roundtable with local federal partners and community leaders.

March 21 – Portland, Maine

CRCL convened its quarterly community engagement roundtable with diverse communities and federal, state, and local partners.

April 24 – Seattle, Washington

CRCL will convene its quarterly community engagement roundtable with diverse communities and federal, state, and local partners.

April 26 – Boston, Massachusetts

CRCL will participate in the BRIDGES roundtable with local federal partners and community leaders.

April 24 – Orlando, Florida

CRCL will convene its quarterly community engagement roundtable with diverse communities and federal, state, and local partners.

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 make complaints; ongoing and upcoming projects; opportunities to offer comments and feedback; etc. We distribute our newsletters via an email list and make them available to community groups for redistribution. We also post information pulled from the newsletter on a webpage, [CRCL at Work](#). 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. If you are on this list, but no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please send an email to the same address asking us to unsubscribe you. For more information, including on how to make a civil rights or civil liberties complaint about DHS activities, see www.dhs.gov/crcl.

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This is the fourth issue in volume 2 of this newsletter; please visit our [website](#) for information from prior newsletters.

Prior newsletters:

Vol. 2 Issue 1 (Sept. 2011) *Message from the Officer on the 10th Anniversary of Sept. 11, 2001 • DHS Remembers 9/11 • September is National Preparedness Month • CRCL Attends Iftar Dinners During Ramadan • Detroit Community Celebrates 10 Years of Building BRIDGES*

Vol. 2 Issue 2 (Oct. 2011) *Guest Message from Alice Hill • New Training Guidance on CVE • CRCL Expands Community Engagement in 2011 • CRCL Submits Annual and Quarterly Reports to Congress • Disability Employment Awareness Month • Hispanic Heritage Month*

Vol. 2 Issue 3 (Jan. 2012) *Farewell Message from Officer Margo Schlanger • DHS Issues Draft Environmental Justice Strategy for Public Comment • CRCL Participates in Civil Rights Listening Session • CRCL Launches a Facebook Page • ICE Announces New Hotline and Detainer Form for Immigrant Detainees • ICC Distributes Federal Survey Regarding 2011 East Coast Earthquake • White House Releases Strategic Implementation Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism • CRCL Engages with Somali-American Communities in the Twin Cities • CRCL Third Quarter Report • Fourth Periodic Report of the ICCPR • TSA Cares*

Vol. 2 Issue 4 (Feb. 2012) *Message from the Acting Officer • 2012 State of Homeland Security Address • Religious Accommodations Guidance • African American History Month*