



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 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-civil-rights-complaint>.

CRCL Hosts National Listening Session on Racial Equity and Community Policing

This month, CRCL held a listening session with national advocacy groups and community stakeholders to discuss racial profiling, community policing, and related issues, particularly those that affect the African American community and other diverse communities of color across the country.

CRCL Officer Katherine Culliton-González opened the conversation by acknowledging decades of over-policing, excessive use of force, and other misconduct by law enforcement that disproportionately affect African Americans and people of color. She echoed President Biden’s sentiments that we must confront, head on, systemic racism and racial disparities that exist in policing and our criminal justice system more broadly. Through its role in leading the Equity Task Force (see more details in story below), CRCL is coordinating the Department’s work to implement the Administration’s robust efforts to address and eliminate racism and xenophobia within the federal government and society.

Following the Officer’s remarks, there was an open dialogue with attendees that included communities’ distrust of law enforcement, immigration enforcement concerns, and the rise of domestic violent extremism (DVE) as the current and most persistent threat to our country today. In addition to its regular engagement roundtables, CRCL will continue to prioritize additional conversations with African Americans and other diverse stakeholders to build trust, combat DVE, and break down barriers that adversely impact communities of color.

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Family Reunification Task Force Issues Initial Progress Report, Will Reunite 29 Families

The Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families submitted to President Biden its [Initial Progress Report](#), which details ongoing efforts to identify and reunite children who were unjustly separated from their parents at the United States-Mexico border under the prior Administration.

“The Department of Homeland Security is committed to the relentless pursuit of reunifying families who were cruelly separated by the previous Administration,” said **Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas, who serves as the Chair of the Task Force**. “When we reunified the first seven families last month, I said that this was just the beginning. In the coming weeks, we will reunify 29 more families. In close coordination with non-governmental organizations, legal, and interagency partners, the Task Force will continue this critical work.”

The CRCL Officer is a member of the Task Force, which also announced in its report the anticipated 29 families to be reunified in the United States in the coming weeks. More reunifications are to follow, as nearly 50 requests have been filed with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Thirty-seven of these requests have already been reviewed and granted humanitarian parole. Once they enter the United States, these individuals will be allowed to remain for an initial 36-month period with the opportunity to apply for work authorization. This includes individuals from the families who were reunited in May as well as the 29 families that will reunite in the weeks ahead.

“For too long, families have been separated under the inhumane policies set in place under the previous Administration,” said **Task Force Executive Director Michelle Brané**. “In the coming weeks, twenty-nine families who were separated under the previous Administration will be reunified, in addition to the seven families previously reunited in May. We will provide support and services for these families to begin rebuilding their lives.”

In close coordination with NGOs, the Task Force has identified 3,913 children who were separated from their families at the U.S.-Mexico Border between July 1, 2017 and January 20, 2021, based on the “Zero-Tolerance” policy. Through the support of NGOs, 1,779 children were reunified with their parents in the United States under past court orders. Over the last 30 days, through the Task Force and NGO coordination, 7 additional children were [reunited](#) with their parents, bringing the total number of reunified children to 1,786. There are 2,127 children for whom the Task Force does not have a confirmed record of reunification. Additional reunifications are in process and the Task Force expects that the pace will increase as procedures fall into place.

The Department of Homeland Security leads the President’s Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families and is joined by the Department of State, Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of Justice.

USCIS Issues Policy Providing Further Protections for Victims of Crime

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is updating the [USCIS Policy Manual](#) to implement a new process, referred to as Bona Fide Determination, which will give victims of crime in the United States access to employment authorization sooner, providing them with stability and better equipping them to cooperate with and assist law enforcement investigations and prosecutions. These policies have positive racial and gender equities, as applicants in the backlogs are primarily women and people of color.

USCIS will deem a petition bona fide if:

- The principal petitioner properly filed [Form I-918](#), including [Form I-918B U Nonimmigrant Status Certification](#);
- The principal petitioner properly filed a personal statement from the petitioner describing the facts of the victimization; and
- The result of the principal petitioner’s biometrics has been received.

For more information, please visit: uscis.gov.

USCIS Updates Policies to Improve Immigration Services

USCIS has issued new policy updates in the [USCIS Policy Manual](#) to clarify the criteria and circumstances for *expedited processing*; improve *request for evidence and notice of intent to deny guidance*; and increase the validity period for initial and *renewal employment authorization documents* for certain noncitizens with pending adjustment of status applications.

“We are taking action to eliminate policies that fail to promote access to the legal immigration system, and will continue to make improvements that help individuals navigate the path to citizenship, and that modernize our immigration system,” said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas. For more information, please visit: uscis.gov.

CRCL Hosts Virtual Engagements with Stakeholders in Los Angeles and New York City

This month, CRCL hosted two virtual events with stakeholders in Los Angeles and New York City to discuss the recent rise in hate crimes and violent incidents against Jewish, Arab American, and Muslim American communities. Officer Katherine Culliton-González opened the events by emphasizing the Department’s commitment to protect the homeland against domestic terrorism, including that motivated by white supremacy, and CRCL’s work to support that effort while also preserving civil and human rights of all individuals.

Following the Officer’s remarks, senior officials from the Cybersecurity Infrastructure Administration (CISA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Justice (DOJ), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) joined the discussion to share the following federal resources that can assist diverse faith-based and ethnic communities:

- **DOJ:** noted a 25 percent increase in hate crimes over the past five years; works collaboratively with the FBI and U.S. Attorney’s Offices to combat and prosecute hate crimes; this work includes law enforcement support and training and public outreach and partnerships with local and national community groups
- **FBI:** investigating hate crimes is one of their highest priorities; stressed that reporting is critical as law enforcement relies on accurate data; civil rights coordinators in all 56 FBI field offices coordinate data collection; the [FBI’s Victim Services Division](#) also works to protect victims who report hate crimes
- **FEMA:** provides [grants to faith-based and community organizations and state governments](#) to prevent and combat terrorism; the Nonprofit Security Grant Program provides funds for nonprofits to remediate or mitigate vulnerabilities at their facilities; the Homeland Security Grant Program provides funds for regions/territories to help fortify infrastructure and support training, etc.
- **CISA:** provides a [dedicated website to support faith-based communities](#); offers an online interactive self-assessment tool for houses of worship to mitigate risks, as well as an active shooter preparedness video; local Protective Security Advisors also work with houses of worship to assess vulnerabilities

CRCL will continue engaging with community stakeholders working with federal partner agencies to address and prevent terrorism, hate crimes, and racially motivated violence.

CRCL Leads DHS Equity Task Force

In January 2021, the Biden Administration announced several Executive Orders (EO) to address and advance a comprehensive equity agenda across government. Officer Katherine Culliton-González is leading the DHS Equity Task Force to implement the Department’s obligations to comply with a variety of equity-related EOs. In this capacity, Officer Culliton-González will ensure that DHS mission-related programs, policies, and expenditures advance racial equity, support underserved communities, and are free of illegal discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation.

Executive Order 13985; Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. January 20, 2021

- EO 13985 recognizes that diversity is one of our country’s greatest strengths and that the Federal Government should pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of

color and others who have historically been underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.

- Per EO 13985, the Working Group on Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities will conduct an equity assessment of six key programs across DHS to identify barriers to underserved communities in accessing DHS benefits, programs, and opportunities.

Executive Order 13988; *Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Sexual Orientation*. January 20, 2021

- EO 13988 established that the official policy of the Administration “to prevent and combat discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation, and to fully enforce Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation.”
- The Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Working Group comprises representatives from across the Department and has identified the following priorities: preventing and combatting discrimination against members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, + (LGBTQ+) community in areas such as our law enforcement efforts; our facilities and how they are used and maintained; and our human resources efforts and programs to evaluate how we can creatively and effectively be more inclusive towards our LGBTQ+ colleagues.

Executive Order 14019, *Promoting Access to Voting*. March 7, 2021

- The right to vote is the foundation of American democracy. Free and fair elections that reflect the will of the American people must be protected and defended. But many Americans, especially people of color, confront significant obstacles to exercising that fundamental right. EO 14019 states it is the role of the Federal Government to expand access to, and education about, voter registration and election information, and to combat misinformation, in order to enable all eligible Americans to participate in our democracy.
- The DHS Working Group on Promoting Access to Voting has identified the following priorities to implement EO 14019: reaffirm outreach to new citizens regarding voter registration and understanding voting rights; identify nonpartisan ways to promote voter registration; identify strategies to ensure DHS’s overseas civilian employees have complete and unfettered access to voter registration and voting processes; ensure access to voting for Active Duty Military members and their dependents; and issue recommendations that protect the cybersecurity of elections.

Executive Order 14020, *Establishment of the Gender Policy Council*, March 8, 2021

- This Executive Order calls for a comprehensive approach to ensure that the federal government is working to advance equal rights and opportunities, regardless of gender or gender identity, in advancing domestic and foreign policy—including by promoting workplace diversity, fairness, and inclusion across the federal workforce and military.
- The DHS Working Group supporting the Gender Policy Council has developed input toward the *Government-Wide Strategy to Advance Gender Equity and Equality*, focusing in particular on:
 - The participation of women in occupations in which they have historically been underrepresented, including law enforcement, scientific, security, and intelligence positions.
 - How immigrant women are treated in their interactions with the federal government and its programs.

Executive Order 14031, *Advancing Equity, Justice, and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders*, May 28, 2021

- Recognizing the disturbing rise in xenophobia, discrimination, and hatred toward Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders since the Covid-19 pandemic, this Executive Order redoubles the federal government’s commitment to advance equity, justice, and opportunity for these communities in the United States.

- The Department is standing up a working group to support the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, charged with carrying out this important work.

In the months ahead, the Equity Task Force Working Groups will continue to coordinate and complete tasks and deliverables, including assessments associated with each EO in coordination with interagency partners and diverse community-based organizations to implement the EOs across the Department.

CRCL Leads Interactive Training on Language Access

Since 2020, CRCL’s Antidiscrimination Group (ADG) has led a series of webinars providing information and technical assistance to recipients of federal financial assistance on meeting their requirements with civil rights laws and regulations. This month, ADG representatives provided a comprehensive online training on “Language Access Policy and Procedures in Recipient Programs and Activities.”

Every year, DHS distributes grant funds to assist states, local areas, tribal and territorial governments, nonprofit agencies, and the private sector in fulfilling the homeland security mission. When an organization receives a grant or other type of financial assistance from DHS, they cannot discriminate in their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin (including language), disability, age, sex, or religion.

The three-hour webinar provided an in-depth overview of how recipients can operationalize the requirement under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to recipient programs and activities for persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). The webinar offered useful information on how organizations can develop a language access plan and covered the five elements of an effective plan:

1. Identify LEP persons who need language assistance
2. Identify the ways your organization will provide language services
3. Distribute your plan and train your staff
4. Provide notice to LEP individuals
5. Monitor, assess, and update your plan

The webinar also provided tips for design considerations for websites and other digital platforms to ensure language access, as well as interactive breakout sessions featuring scenarios where recipients had an opportunity to discuss ways to improve their language access planning. For more information about Title VI and language access, and to access CRCL’s technical assistance webinars, please visit: [Civil Rights Resources for Recipients of DHS Financial Assistance | Homeland Security](#). Also, be sure to join our mailing list to receive notifications about future training opportunities. To join, email: CivilRightsEvaluation@hq.dhs.gov.

DHS Celebrates LGBTQ+ Pride Month

Throughout the month of June, DHS celebrated LGBTQ+ Pride month. The celebration kicked off when Secretary Mayorkas raised the LGBTQ+ Pride flag for the first time in DHS history at the Department’s Headquarters on the St. Elizabeth’s campus. During this momentous occasion, DHS leadership and staff proudly gathered to recognize and celebrate the contributions of the Department’s LGBTQ+ employees. [Watch the Pride event here.](#)

Across the Department, Components and offices held a number of Pride events and activities throughout the month. CRCL and DHS Pride, an employee association for LGBTQ+ employees, hosted a Department-wide virtual event, “Not a Straight Line: The Ebbs and Flows of Progress.” This adopted theme was penned by a member of the DHS Pride employee association and it reminds us that Pride Season 2021 uniquely symbolizes transitions and living with life’s ups and downs—its beauty and its challenges. Being out, like much of life, is not a straight line.



The event featured a panel of DHS employees who shared their stories of finding balance and navigating the hurdles they have faced in the workplace and in their personal lives. Panelists took questions from the audience and shared their experiences and lessons learned about living as your own authentic self. Officer Katherine Culliton-González delivered remarks and shared some important information about CRCL’s work to support Executive Order 13988, *Preventing and Combatting Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identify or Sexual Orientation*, issued by President Biden in January 2021. CRCL has convened a Sexual Orientation and Gender Identify Working Group comprising representatives from across DHS to prevent and combat discrimination against members of the LGBTQ+ community.



At DHS, we recognize and value our LGBTQ+ employees who work diligently to protect our homeland each day. They contribute to the rich diversity of our DHS workforce and strengthen our mission areas. We stand with our LGBTQ+ family as we move towards full equality and access recognizing that while much has been accomplished, much remains to be done.

World Refugee Day

On World Refugee Day, June 20, Secretary Mayorkas [gave remarks honoring the nearly 80 million refugees across the globe](#). He also shared how the Department is working to provide relief for those displaced and in need as part of our homeland mission.



DHS and DOJ Announce Dedicated Docket Process for Efficient Immigration Hearings

Last month, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas and Attorney General Merrick B. Garland announced a new Dedicated Docket process to more expeditiously and fairly make decisions in immigration cases of families who arrive between ports of entry at the Southwest Border. This new process should significantly decrease the amount of time it takes for migrants to have their cases adjudicated while still providing fair hearings for families seeking asylum at the border.

“Families arriving at the border who are placed in immigration proceedings should have their cases decided in an orderly, efficient, and fair manner,” **said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N.**

Mayorkas. “Families who have recently arrived should not languish in a multi-year backlog; today’s announcement is an important step for both justice and border security.”

Under this new process, certain recently arrived families may be placed on the Dedicated Docket. Families may qualify if they are apprehended between ports of entry on or after Friday, May 28, 2021, placed in removal proceedings, and enrolled in Alternatives to Detention. DHS, in partnership with the Department of Justice (DOJ) Executive Office for Immigration Review, will make available information services to help families understand the immigration system and refer families to pro bono legal service providers for possible representation.

Prepare Now for the 2021 Atlantic Hurricane Season

June 1 marked the start of the Atlantic hurricane season. The [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) recently released the 2021 outlook, which predicts another active season.

No matter what the hurricane season outlook predicts, it’s important to remember that it only takes one storm to devastate a community. Now is the time to prepare your home and your family. Remember, hurricanes are not

just a coastal problem, so it's important to know the risks where you live: rain, wind and flooding could happen far from the coast.

Although FEMA has had a very busy year supporting President Biden's COVID-19 vaccination mission and other disasters, the agency is ready to handle future disasters. "More than 20,000 FEMA employees across the nation stand ready to support our state, local, tribal and territorial partners in hurricane prone areas to provide any help they may need to protect lives and property," said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. "The best way to help your community recover from a disaster is by taking steps now to prepare yourself and your family BEFORE a disaster strikes. Visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) to start your planning today."

Consider these actions to start your preparedness today:

- In addition to being prepared for a disaster, ensuring that you and your family are vaccinated against COVID-19 helps your entire community be more resilient before future disasters. COVID-19 vaccines are effective at preventing COVID-19 disease, especially severe illness and death. Vaccines also reduce the risk of people spreading COVID-19, making all our communities safer.
- Everyone can take steps to make sure they're prepared for any disaster. Visit [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) to learn about how to prepare for disasters that might happen where you live, work or visit.
 - [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) also has information for [individuals with disabilities](#), [families](#), [kids](#), [pets](#) and [businesses](#) on how to prepare. Find updated information from the Centers for Disease Control on [how to prepare for the hurricane season during the pandemic](#).
 - Build an [emergency kit](#). If you live in Hawai'i, Puerto Rico or the U.S. Virgin Islands, consider having supplies to last at least 10 days.
 - Visit [Ready.gov/hurricanes](https://www.ready.gov/hurricanes) for the latest information on being prepared for this hurricane season.
- You can also download the free FEMA App to receive weather alerts and warnings for up to five different locations in the United States.

CRCL on the Road

*Following guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov) 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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