



*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>.

### 2020 State of the Homeland Address

This September, as we remember the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, DHS Acting Secretary Chad Wolf delivered the 2020 State of the Homeland Address where he reflected on that day 19 years ago. In his remarks, he described the strength and resolve of the Department and thanked the men and women of DHS for their unwavering dedication to our mission: with honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values.



“We cannot gather as family in September and fail to remember that day 19 years ago. The smoke has long since disappeared over New York, Shanksville, and the Pentagon, right across the Potomac from where we gather today. But for us, the skies of September are never clear.

We rose from the ashes of that day with one purpose: to protect America. Here, liberty and the rule of law live together and sustain one another. DHS stands against all enemies seeking to weaken or destroy them.

For more than 17 years after the Department was founded, our resolve to safeguard the Homeland has never been stronger.”

Watch the full [2020 State of the Homeland Address](#).

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## CRCL Deputy Officer Participates in 2020 Federal Identity Forum & Expo

This month, CRCL Deputy Officer Peter Mina participated in the 2020 Federal Identity Forum & Expo (FedID). The FedID Forum is a multi-day event focused on bringing together identity experts to share information on U.S. Government identity programs and discuss the federal government's toughest identity challenges. Mr. Mina spoke on the panel, "Finding Common Ground on the Use of Facial Recognition," which covered privacy and bias concerns related to facial recognition technology.



During the discussion, Mr. Mina expanded on CRCL's goals and functions, as well as the most pressing concerns regarding the use of facial recognition technology. Specifically, CRCL is focused on ensuring that civil rights and civil liberties concerns are integrated into programs across the Department. Mr. Mina also discussed CRCL's community engagement function that hears feedback from a wide array of stakeholders regarding facial recognition technologies, as well as CRCL's public complaint process for individuals who believe their rights have been violated by DHS policies or personnel.

Accuracy and reliability of facial recognition technology varies depending on how the technology is employed. Legal and civil rights and liberties policy implications of facial recognition technology depend on how the technology is implemented. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that the most accurate algorithms are employed and evaluated in accordance to each use of the technology and that the civil rights and civil liberties equities are considered from the start.

## September is National Preparedness Month

Disasters don't wait. Make your plan today. September is [National Preparedness Month](#) (NPM) and a great time to plan for and practice safety with your family, co-workers, school, neighbors, and yourself! [Ready.gov](#) featured specific steps to strengthen your knowledge of preparedness each week in September:

- September 1-5: [Make A Plan](#): Talk with your family and create an emergency plan;
- September 6-12: [Build A Kit](#): Identify and set aside emergency supplies to keep at home. Don't forget to pack supplies in case you need to leave your home or evacuate;
- September 13-19: [Prepare for Disasters](#): Know what disasters and hazards could affect your area and take steps to prepare for them; and
- September 20-26: [Teach Youth About Preparedness](#): Share preparedness advice with your kids and their friends. These tips about staying safe can be fun and easy!



Visit [www.ready.gov/september](http://www.ready.gov/september) to learn more about NPM and find tools, tips, and resources to help you stay safe and participate. Are you a social media user? Follow FEMA on social media platforms: [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#) using the hashtag #BeReady.

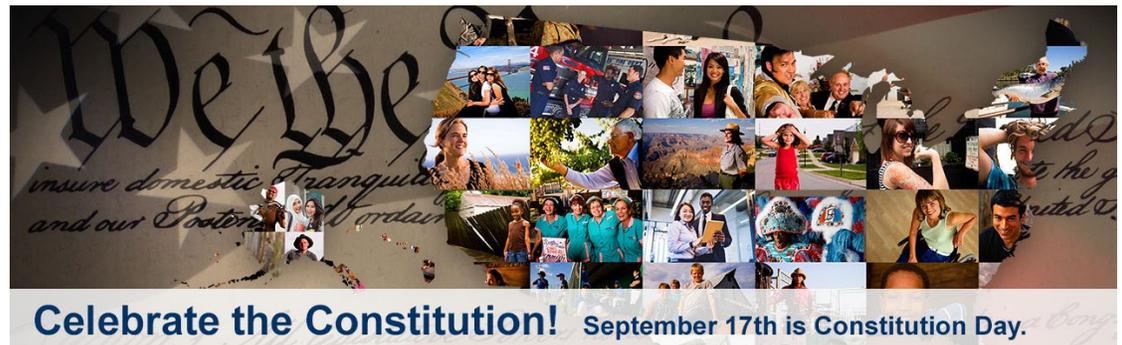
To learn more about personal and community preparedness, please visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

## **CRCL Hosts Virtual Meetings with Chicago and Atlanta Stakeholders**

In the midst of the ongoing global health pandemic, CRCL continues to engage with community leaders, state and local law enforcement, regional DHS officials, advocacy groups, and other stakeholders through virtual and telephonic meetings. This past month, CRCL met with stakeholders in Chicago and Atlanta, which garnered feedback that included the continuing pandemic and its impacts on DHS operations and the local community, as well as recent protests and civil unrest. CRCL will continue to work with communities and DHS Components to address concerns and provide an open forum for public grievances and redress.

## **DHS Celebrates Constitution Day and Citizenship Day**

Each September 17, we observe Constitution Day, a day to remember and honor the signing of the U.S. Constitution by our country's Founding Fathers in 1787. For the past 225 years, the Constitution has served as the supreme law of the land, and along with the Bill of Rights and other amendments, define our government and guarantee our rights and liberties. During this time, DHS encourages Americans to reflect on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and what it means to be a U.S. citizen.



We also recognize people who are taking steps to become U.S. citizens. To help them prepare, USCIS offers study resources for the civics and English portions of the naturalization interview and test. The Constitution and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship are important in the U.S. and prospective citizens may see these items in several places on the naturalization test. There are many questions on the civics test on these two topics, such as, “What is the supreme law of the land?” and “What are two rights of everyone living in the United States?”

[Read more about materials for learners and teachers](#) that are related to this important day.

## **CRCL Conducts Language Access and Disability Access Webinars for Grant Recipients**

CRCL continues its monthly webinars series to provide technical assistance on civil rights requirements to organizations receiving grants and other types of financial assistance from DHS. Recipients of DHS financial assistance are prohibited from discriminating in their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin (including language), disability, age, sex, or religion. The September webinar focused on developing a language access policy and procedures to assist recipients in fulfilling their obligation to take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to persons with limited English proficiency. The upcoming October webinar will focus on ensuring effective communication and access to programs and services for persons with disabilities, including developing a reasonable accommodation process. For more information, or to register for a webinar, email: [CivilRightsEvaluation@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:CivilRightsEvaluation@hq.dhs.gov). For more information on recipient civil rights requirements and presentations from previous webinars, visit: <https://www.dhs.gov/resources-recipients-dhs-financial-assistance>.

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

#### ***Phoenix, Arizona***

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

#### ***Atlanta, Georgia***

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

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

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

### ***New York, New York***

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

### ***Detroit, Michigan***

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

### ***Seattle, Washington***

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

## **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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** Follow the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties on Facebook at: [facebook.com/CivilRightsandCivilLiberties](https://www.facebook.com/CivilRightsandCivilLiberties).**

\*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.