



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



DHS Responds to Hurricane Harvey

DHS Components have been assisting the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in [Hurricane Harvey](#) preparedness and response activities. On August 25, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) issued a [joint statement](#) reinforcing that their highest priorities are to promote life-saving and life-sustaining activities and safe evacuation, and therefore, non-criminal immigration enforcement operations will not be conducted at evacuation sites, or assistance centers such as shelters or food banks. The statement is translated into: Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Tagalog, and Urdu. FEMA also [published information](#) regarding sheltering for all individuals affected by the hurricane, including undocumented immigrants.

Additionally, CRCL has coordinated with FEMA’s [Office of Disability Integration and Coordination](#) covering response activities involving individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs. CRCL and FEMA published guidance, “[Tips for Effectively Communicating with the Whole Community](#),” for disaster assistance providers highlighting effective communication practices to ensure non-discrimination in the provision of disaster-related services.

Message from Acting Officer Veronica Venture



Every day, the dedicated men and women of DHS strive to keep our country safe by protecting our people, our homeland, and our values. One of these values central to our American tradition is the freedom of speech and expression enshrined in our Constitution—but discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, disability, gender, sexual preference, religion, or age is unlawful and contrary to our core civil rights values of equality, liberty, and fairness.

Americans of all backgrounds must feel safe and secure in their communities. DHS will continue to counter all forms of violent extremism from global jihadists to violent white supremacists, who threaten our safety and security from within our own neighborhoods. DHS will continue to work closely with state, local, and community partners and assist in response to tragedies, such as what occurred in Charlottesville, Virginia.

CRCL is actively engaging community leaders around the nation to ensure civil rights and civil liberties are protected, and that they are aware of the numerous Department resources available to help enhance the safety and security of the gathering places and houses of worship in their communities, including mosques, churches, synagogues, gudwaras, and community centers, which have been the target of hate incidents, crimes, and violence. Any person who believes someone has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, religion, sex or age in a DHS program or activity, may [file a complaint](#) with the DHS [Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties](#).

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CRCL Participates in Second Annual MELOA Diversity Training Conference

CRCL representatives recently participated in the second annual [Middle Eastern Law Enforcement Officers Association \(MELOA\) Diversity Training Conference](#) in Dearborn, Michigan. MELOA is a DHS-recognized association composed of Federal law enforcement agents and officers from across DHS components. The two-day training focused on resiliency, and brought together homeland security professionals, law enforcement, and community members to learn about community-based policing best practices, suicide and opioid abuse awareness and prevention, trauma informed policing, and implicit bias. CRCL provided a presentation highlighting programmatic updates and community engagement best practices. A highlight of the discussion focused on sharing contextual information on ‘hot topics’ related to civil rights and homeland security potentially impacting law enforcement operations and the communities in which officers live and serve.



CRCL Leads Community Engagement Meetings in Minneapolis

CRCL’s Acting Deputy Officer Dana Salvano-Dunn recently joined CRCL’s Community Engagement Section in Minneapolis, Minnesota to lead the quarterly roundtable meeting and attend a series of engagement events with local stakeholders. Over 100 participants attended the roundtable held at the Hennepin County Sheriff’s Office. Ms. Salvano-Dunn delivered an in-depth presentation on CRCL’s statutory obligations and its complaints process. A representative from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) also presented on internet safety, social media, and cyberbullying, as requested by stakeholder parents and students.

While in Minneapolis, CRCL representatives also attended separate meetings with local community partners, including the [Islamic Association of North America](#); [Ka Joog](#), an organization focused on programs and services for Somali youth and their families; and [Isuroon](#), a Somali women’s empowerment organization. Discussion at these meetings covered allegations of profiling at a local airport, hate crimes and fear of attacks against local mosques, allegations of inadequate medical care at ICE detention centers, and broadening CRCL’s engagement efforts in Minnesota among other topics.



CRCL Acting Officer Leads EEO and Diversity Training

This month, CRCL’s Acting Officer Veronica Venture spoke at the [32nd Annual Federal Dispute Resolution Training](#) in San Francisco, California. The annual event offered in-depth training on a wide range of human resources, equal employment opportunity and diversity, and alternative dispute resolution matters.

Ms. Venture led a presentation called “Meeting the Challenge: Being a Model Employer of Employees with Disabilities,” which covered recent Equal Employment Opportunity Commission final rules regarding individuals with disabilities in federal employment. Ms. Venture discussed strategies to achieve hiring and retention goals, ensuring reasonable accommodation procedures, and creating funds for certain accommodations.



CRCL Leads Roundtable and Cultural Awareness Training in Columbus

Last week, CRCL representatives traveled to Columbus, Ohio to lead engagement activities with local community stakeholders and local law enforcement. During the quarterly roundtable, hosted by Ashland University, officials from DHS Headquarters, ICE, and the FBI presented on a number of topics. A representative from the DHS Office of Community Partnerships delivered a community awareness briefing on domestic violent extremism, and an ICE Community Relations Officer provided an overview of ICE and its current priorities and policies.

While in Columbus, CRCL representatives also met with law enforcement and other staff from the Franklin County Sheriff's Department to discuss CRCL's community outreach activities, as well as provide training on civil rights and civil liberties and cultural competency. The goal of the training was to improve communication, build trust, and encourage collaboration between officers and the communities they serve and protect. Topics covered effective policing without the use of ethnic or racial profiling and best practices in community outreach.

CRCL on the Road, August

August 22-26 – Columbus, Ohio

CRCL convened its quarterly community engagement roundtable with diverse ethnic and community-based organizations and conducted cultural awareness trainings.

August 24 – New York City, New York

CRCL convened its quarterly community engagement roundtable with diverse ethnic and community-based organizations.

August 24-26 – Detroit, Michigan

CRCL participated in the second annual Middle Eastern Law Enforcement Association Conference.

August 29-30 – Denver, Colorado

CRCL convened its quarterly community engagement roundtable with diverse ethnic and community-based organizations.

CRCL on the Road Ahead, September

Seattle, Washington: Quarterly roundtable and community engagement meetings, September 7

Chicago, Illinois: Quarterly roundtable and community engagement meetings, September 14

Phoenix/Tucson/Yuma, Arizona: Quarterly roundtable, community engagement meetings, and townhall, September 19-23

Miami, Florida: Quarterly roundtable and community engagement meetings, September 24-25

Tampa/Orlando, Florida: Quarterly roundtable and community engagement meetings, September 26-27

For more information on engagement events, email: communityengagement@hq.dhs.gov.

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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