



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.



Public Notice on the Current Flooding in Louisiana

In support of the ongoing federal, state, and local efforts to carry out response and recovery activities in the areas affected by the severe storms and flooding in the state of Louisiana, the Department of Homeland Security's law enforcement components stand ready to help anyone in need of assistance. As the Department has said during other disasters, given the situation, our priorities are to promote life-saving and life-sustaining activities, safe evacuation and sheltering, speedy recovery, and maintenance of the public order. Consistent with their enforcement authorities, the Department's immigration enforcement agencies (Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) are not conducting enforcement operations in connection with evacuation, sheltering and return, and disaster response activities in the impacted parishes.

FEMA's Individuals and Households Program is available to disaster-stricken U.S. citizens, noncitizen nationals and qualified aliens in counties with a federal disaster declaration. Federal disaster assistance for individuals and families can include the provision of temporary housing or money for rental assistance, and money for essential home repairs for owners, personal property loss and other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance.

While undocumented immigrants are not eligible for FEMA cash, housing assistance or Disaster Unemployment Assistance, households with varying citizenship status, only one member needs to be a U.S. citizen, noncitizen national or qualified alien to be eligible to qualify that household for FEMA aid.

An undocumented parent or guardian may apply for monetary or housing assistance on behalf of a minor child who is a U.S. citizen, noncitizen national or Qualified Alien. Although the adult will be expected to sign a Declaration and Release (FEMA Form 009-0-3) in the child's name, no information will be gathered on the person signing for the child.

All individuals, regardless of citizenship status, affected by a major disaster may be eligible for other non-monetary, in-kind emergency disaster relief programs. These include search and rescue, medical care, shelter, food and water as well as disaster legal services, disaster case management and crisis counseling.

People who don't qualify for monetary or housing assistance may still call the FEMA registration line for referrals to voluntary agencies.

Residents and business owners who sustained disaster-related losses can apply for assistance by registering online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov or call 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY). If you use 711 relay or Video Relay Service (VRS), call 800-621-3362 directly. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (Central Time) seven days a week until further notice.

Inside

[Public Notice on the Current Flooding in Louisiana](#)

[CRCL Participates in Inaugural MELOA Conference](#)

[CRCL Leads Youth Engagement Activities on Campus](#)

[Federal Civil Rights Guidance for Disaster-related Activities and Services](#)

[National Preparedness Month](#)

[CRCL on the Road](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Download the FEMA App](#) to locate and get directions to open shelters across the state, apply for FEMA assistance, and receive weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five different locations anywhere in the United States.

[Read this Notice on DHS.gov.](#)

Translations available in [Spanish](#), [French](#), [Chinese](#) and [Vietnamese](#).

CRCL Participates in Inaugural MELOA Conference

This month, CRCL Officer Megan H. Mack and Deputy Officer Veronica Venture joined Secretary Johnson and several other DHS leaders at the [Middle Eastern Law Enforcement Officers Association \(MELOA\)](#) inaugural training conference in Dearborn, Michigan. The theme of the two-day conference was “Building Trust Through Community Partnership,” where law enforcement professionals networked and learned about best practices in community engagement.



Secretary Johnson provided keynote remarks at the conference, emphasizing the Department’s commitment to community engagement. Secretary Johnson also affirmed MELOA’s work to promote trust and encouraged the organization to continue growing.

CRCL Officer Megan H. Mack also addressed attendees describing the work of CRCL and its efforts to engage communities as part of the core mission of the office. Ms. Mack described CRCL’s Community Engagement program which convenes quarterly roundtables with federal, state, and local government officials and



community members to discuss DHS programs and activities and address complaints. She reaffirmed CRCL’s commitment to working with its law enforcement partners, ensuring access to DHS resources and training, and encouraging collaboration between law enforcement and communities. Officer Mack concluded her remarks stating, “We join you in the

commitment to ensuring our civil rights and civil liberties are recognized and protected. I am heartened by the strength of our communities, and committed to continue to work together to keep America moving forward.”

Later in the conference, CRCL Deputy Officer Veronica Venture spoke on a panel focused on diversity and inclusion, alongside representatives from the Transportation Security Administration, U.S. Customs and Immigration Enforcement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the [Michigan Roundtable](#).

National Preparedness Month

September is [National Preparedness Month](#) (NPM) which serves as a reminder that we all must take action to prepare, now and throughout the year, for the types of emergencies that could affect us where we live, work, and visit. Last year’s theme, “*Don’t Wait, Communicate. Make Your Emergency Plan Today,*” returns with an emphasis on preparedness for youth, older adults, and people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs.

Help promote #NatlPrep with our 2016 Social Media Toolkit by visiting: www.ready.gov/september



Federal Civil Rights Guidance for Disaster-related Activities and Services

In the 11 years since Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, we have learned many critical lessons about how recipients of federal financial assistance engaged in emergency management activities can more effectively ensure that all members of the community receive critical services. For that reason, DHS has joined with the U.S. Departments of Justice, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, and Transportation to issue [guidance to assist these recipients](#) (e.g., state and local emergency management agencies, law enforcement, healthcare service providers, housing and transit authorities, etc.) in ensuring that individuals and communities affected by disasters do not face unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency). These protections are provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The [guidance](#), which has been released at the height of hurricane season (June 1 – Nov. 30), offers a series of steps recipients can adopt now to ensure compliance:

- Share information about housing, health services or other emergency-related services and nondiscrimination rights to diverse racial, ethnic, and limited English proficient (LEP) populations;
- Engage with and seek input from diverse racial, ethnic, and [LEP populations](#) to determine how best to tailor emergency planning, response and recovery efforts;
- Widely disseminate evacuation and disaster preparedness plans, including to LEP populations;
- Ensure that all entities know that most public services for protection of life and safety provided by recipients of federal financial assistance do not have immigration status restrictions;
- Routinely collect and analyze information about the potentially affected populations to help ensure effective, nondiscriminatory allocation of resources and services.

Complying with Title VI requirements, as well as requirements to ensure equal access to [persons with disabilities](#) as required by federal civil rights law, becomes even more important during emergencies and disasters in order to ensure that no one is unjustly denied critical services and support. This guidance embraces the principles of the National Preparedness Goal and National Planning Frameworks in which the federal government seeks to enable the whole community, including but not limited to persons with disabilities, those from racial and ethnically diverse backgrounds, and persons with limited English proficiency, to contribute to and benefit from national preparedness.

This whole of community approach is reflected in other DHS resources, such as [Tips for Effectively Communicating with Protected Populations During Preparedness, Response, and Recovery](#). If you have any questions or need additional information on [Title VI obligations at DHS](#), contact CRCL at: crcl@hq.dhs.gov.

Translations of the guidance are now available in [Spanish](#), and will soon be available in Haitian Creole and Vietnamese. A press release on the guidance was issued in English and Spanish and will be available soon in Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Russian, Haitian Creole, and Arabic.

CRCL Leads Youth Engagement on Campus

Earlier this month, a CRCL representative traveled to Los Angeles, California to conduct a series of meetings with college students as part of CRCL's campus youth engagement initiative.

At the first event, students from California State University Northridge and several other regional, smaller universities and colleges came together to discuss a number of issues involving DHS programs and activities, including immigration concerns regarding removal of family members and enforcement activities occurring near schools and colleges. During the second event, graduate students met for an in-depth policy discussion involving CRCL's statutory responsibilities and best practices in community outreach and engagement.



Later, students participated in an interactive session developing ideas to improve the travel experience for religious minorities and people with disabilities. The last session included younger students who had experienced problems when traveling or in immigration detention. During this meeting, CRCL set up a “mobile redress station” where attendees could directly file [DHS TRIP](#) complaints. Discussion also involved DHS’ work to combat violence against women and efforts to eliminate gender identity discrimination.

CRCL on the Road, August

August 9 - 10 – Detroit, Michigan

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

August 17 – Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota

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

August 23 – Columbus, Ohio

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

August 11 – Los Angeles, California

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

August 19 – Denver, Colorado

CRCL provided cultural competency trainings to local law enforcement

August 31 – Atlanta, Georgia

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

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@hq.dhs.gov. For more information, including how to make a civil rights or civil liberties complaint about DHS activities, visit: www.dhs.gov/crcl.

CRCL Phone: 202-401-1474 • Toll Free: 866-644-8360 • TTY: 202-401-0470 • Toll Free TTY: 866-644-8361

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