



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.



### Five Federal Departments Reaffirm Shared Commitment to Uphold Civil Rights Laws and Advance Environmental Justice

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The Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division and officials from the Department of Health and Human Services’ Office for Civil Rights; Department of Transportation’s Departmental Office of Civil Rights; Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of External Civil Rights Compliance; Department of Homeland Security’s Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties; and Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity jointly reaffirmed their shared commitment to uphold civil rights laws and advance environmental justice in communities across the United States.

In the [statement](#), the agencies reaffirmed their commitment to vigorously using all applicable civil rights laws, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, to advance environmental justice and to actively work with state, territorial and local governments and all other entities that receive federal funding to ensure compliance with these important laws. The joint statement also reminds recipients that civil rights obligations are separate and distinct from recipients’ other obligations, including obligations to comply with federal, state, territorial and local environmental laws.

[Read the entire announcement.](#)

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## **Notice of Funding Opportunity: FY 2023 Case Management Pilot Program**

The Case Management Pilot Program (CMPP) has announced its [FY 2023 Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) for an anticipated \$20 million in grant funds. CMPP makes funds available through a solicitation to local governments and/or nonprofits to provide voluntary case management and other services to eligible noncitizens. CMPP funds will be awarded through a competitive solicitation process to eligible subrecipients by the CMPP National Board, chaired by the Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. CMPP services are to be made available to eligible noncitizens in geographic locations served by the CMPP. Services can include: mental health services; trafficking screening; legal orientation programs; cultural orientation programs; connections to social services; and for individuals who will be removed, reintegration services. Once awarded, the National Board will release its own solicitation to request applications from local governments and nonprofit organizations to provide CMPP services to eligible noncitizens enrolled in the program.

## **CRCL Hosts DHS AANHPI Heritage Month Program**

This month, CRCL brought together nearly 300 members of the DHS workforce for a Department-wide Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month event. CRCL Officer Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia delivered keynote remarks and reflected on this year's theme, "Advancing Leadership through Innovation." She noted how the contributions of AANHPI leaders drive diversity, progress, and innovation forward at DHS and in our communities. Participants then heard from a panel of distinguished DHS leaders including: Dorris Lin, Director of Inclusive Diversity, Management Directorate (Moderator); Iranga Kahangama, Assistant Secretary for Cyber, Infrastructure, Risk and Resilience, Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans; Ted H. Kim, Associate Director, Refugee, Asylum & International Operations, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; Dr. Steven Sano, Federal Disaster Recovery Officer, Interagency Coordination Division, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); and Norma A. Su'a Owens, Office of the Chief Information Officer, FEMA and President of DHS AAPIN. The panelists shared their experiences as leaders in government, spoke to the need to demonstrate how empathy in leadership matters, and emphasized how mentoring others will help increase the number of future AANHPI leaders within the Department.



*DHS leaders engaged in a discussion about how heritage plays an important part in our lives and work.*

## **CRCL Officer Participates in AANHPI Heritage Month Panel Discussion**

In recognition of AANHPI Heritage Month, CRCL Officer Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia recently participated in a virtual panel discussion on “Civil Rights and Liberties Affecting Asian Pacific Americans” hosted by the Washington Lawyers’ Committee. Panelists included Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia, DHS Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties; Joanna Derman, Asian Americans Advancing Justice; Amandeep Sidhu, Winston & Strawn; and Joanne Lin, Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs. During the conversation, CRCL Officer Wadhia shared how her identity shaped her career as an immigration attorney, law professor, and CRCL Officer. She also highlighted current initiatives taking place at DHS to increase representation of AANHPI employees in the DHS workforce, including in senior leadership roles. She discussed how DHS is improving recruitment, retention, and advancement of public servants by increasing and supporting AANHPI employee associations.



## **CRCL and DOJ Meet with Community Leaders**

On first day of Jewish American Heritage Month, CRCL Officer Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia participated in an interagency civil rights and civil liberties meeting with Jewish community stakeholders facilitated by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Civil Rights Division. Attorney General Merrick B. Garland spoke with those at the meeting and underscored DOJ’s commitment to addressing antisemitic hate crimes. Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of DOJ’s Civil Rights Division outlined enforcement efforts across DOJ and highlighted actions to prevent and combat hate crimes. CRCL Officer Wadhia then provided information on the Department’s efforts to keep faith-based communities safe. She discussed the DHS Non-Profit Security Grant Program (NSGP), which awarded \$305 million in FY23 for physical security enhancements for nonprofits that are at a high risk for terrorist attacks. Officer Wadhia shared additional information regarding tools and resources from DHS partners including the DHS Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3), Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to [protect against targeted violence](#).

## **DHS Celebrates 2024 Arab American Heritage Month**

Last month, CRCL hosted a Department-wide program recognizing Arab American Heritage Month. During the virtual event, CRCL Officer Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia moderated a panel discussion among distinguished DHS leaders including: Hala Furst, Associate Director, CP3; Peter Mina, Deputy Officer, CRCL; and Kareem Shora, Deputy Director, CP3.

The 2024 theme for Arab American Heritage Month, “Celebrating Arab American Resilience and Diversity,” reflects the diversity of the Arab American culture, which encompasses 22 different nations across the Middle East and North Africa. The theme also celebrates the resilience of this population through various conflicts and discriminations, while recognizing the perseverance of Arab Americans to thrive because of their close-knit culture.

Over 180 DHS employees joined the event to hear panelists offer their perspectives and personal stories about how their heritage and culture has shaped their leadership values. Panelists discussed the theme of diversity and the rich heritage and history of the more than 3.5 million Arab Americans across our country who are interwoven into the fabric of America’s story.

## **DHS Participates in 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Federal Interagency Holocaust Remembrance Program**

This month, the U.S. Department of State hosted the 31st Annual Federal Inter-Agency Holocaust Remembrance Program, “Stories of Courage,” which featured two Holocaust survivors: Ruth Cohen from North Bethesda, Maryland, and Allan Hall from Miami, Florida. The program was moderated by Ellen Germain, Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues at the U.S. Department of State. During the remembrance program, the speakers shared their personal stories of survival and bravery during this period of great tragedy. Ms. Cohen shared that she and her sister survived because they were chosen to work upon being sent to Auschwitz. Her mother, brother, and cousins were immediately selected to go to the gas chambers. She and her sister were sent to several concentration camps and were liberated together in 1945. Mr. Hall shared that his father saved his family several times by being able to speak fluent German. For nearly two years, Mr. Hall lived in hiding in an office closet with his mother for safety. These stories of courage and strength inspire and educate federal employees, students, and the public about the tragedies that occurred during the Holocaust. The Federal Interagency Holocaust Remembrance Program began in 1994 and now comprises over 40 federal agencies. CRCL participates on the Federal Interagency Holocaust Remembrance Committee and helped coordinate this program.

More information can be found here: [Holocaust Remembrance Home Page](#).

## **DHS Recognizes First Anniversary of U.S. National Plan to End Gender-Based Violence**

This month, we recognize the first anniversary of the [National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence](#) laying out whole-of-government approach to move us closer to ending gender-based violence (GBV) in the U.S. The Plan defines GBV as “any harmful threat or act directed at an individual or group based on actual or perceived sex, gender, gender identity, sex characteristics, or sexual orientation.” To fulfill the vision of the National Plan, DHS and other federal agencies committed to concrete actions to strengthen prevention and response to GBV. Over the last year, DHS partners have led key activities to support the seven strategic pillars within the National Plan. Highlights include:

- **FEMA GBV/Human Trafficking Training:** FEMA’s Office of Equal Rights partnered with trainers from the DHS Center for Countering Human Trafficking (CCHT) and the Blue Campaign and hosted a FEMA-wide GBV/Human Trafficking training attended by over 550 FEMA employees.
- **FEMA National Advisory Council (NAC) GBV Subcommittee:** FEMA’s Office of Civil Rights, in partnership the FEMA NAC, convened a FEMA NAC GBV Subcommittee to further FEMA’s goals and objectives for implementing a victim-centered approach and addressing GBV in disaster response and recovery.
- **Indigenous Languages Plan:** DHS published its first-ever [DHS Indigenous Languages Plan](#) to strengthen language access for Indigenous migrants of Latin America who are encountered and served in DHS programs and activities. In developing the plan, DHS engaged with Indigenous migrant leaders regarding language access considerations for Indigenous women and girls, in particular survivors of GBV.
- **DHS Council on Combating Gender-Based Violence (CCGBV) Directive:** DHS CCGBV published the “Preventing and Addressing Gender-Based Violence Through a Victim-Centered Approach” Directive, reinforcing DHS’s commitment to supporting individuals who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing gender-based violence.
- **S&T Analytical Tools for Faster Human Trafficking Case Development:** The DHS Science and Technology Directorate provided DHS law enforcement with 45 analytic software tools to generate human trafficking case leads, automating many manual processes for speech, text, and unstructured data analytics, computer vision triage capabilities, data visualization, and predictive models.
- **CCHT Advanced Trafficking Training:** The CCHT hosted a three-day, in-person Advanced Human Trafficking Training for 80 investigators and others supporting human trafficking investigations.

DHS remains committed to preventing gender-based violence in the homeland security space and will continue to implement the Nation Plan now and in the future.

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

### *New Hampshire*

On May 5, CRCL conducted a virtual engagement with diverse stakeholders in New Hampshire.

### *Denver, Colorado*

On May 13-16, CRCL conducted engagements with diverse stakeholders in the Denver area.

### *Dallas, Texas*

On May 7-10, CRCL conducted engagements with diverse stakeholders in the Dallas area.

### *Arizona*

On May 15, CRCL conducted an engagement with diverse stakeholders in Arizona.

\*CRCL's Community Engagement team conducts in-person, virtual, and hybrid engagements with federal, state, local, and civil society stakeholders across the country. We remain available to respond to any stakeholder questions or concerns via email at: [CommunityEngagement@hq.dhs.gov](mailto: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](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@hq.dhs.gov](mailto: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](http://www.dhs.gov/crcl).

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