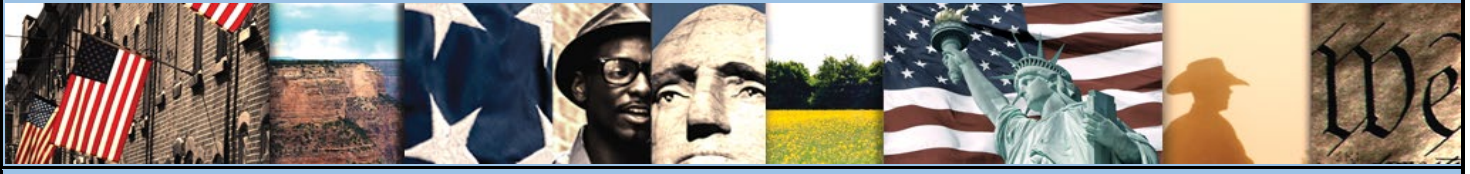




The Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) supports the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as it secures the nation while preserving individual liberty, fairness, and equality under the law.



CRCL Hosts DHS Language Access and Artificial Intelligence Symposium



DHS Language Access and Artificial Intelligence Symposium

Hosted by the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

This month, CRCL hosted the Department’s first-ever Language Access and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Symposium for the DHS workforce to learn about the use of AI in meeting language access needs. The virtual symposium featured opening remarks from Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia, Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties at DHS and Kristen Clarke, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) who discussed key principles and commitments for ensuring compliance with civil rights in the use of AI. Officer Wadhia noted that the use of AI shows great potential to increase operational effectiveness and efficiency and to further our commitment to providing meaningful access to members of the public with limited English proficiency; however, the responsible use of AI also requires identifying potential risks and developing measures to mitigate those risks.

The symposium featured interactive panels of experts who provided presentations followed by Q&A sessions with participants, where attendees raised a number of questions about emerging AI technology and its potential uses for improving language access at DHS.

Panel 1: “Civil Rights, Language Access, and AI”

- *David Larrimore, DHS Chief Technology Officer*
- *Christine Stoneman, Chief of the Federal Coordination and Compliance Section, Civil Rights Division, DOJ*

Panel 2: “Language Interactions Across DHS – Current and Possible Uses of AI to Meet Language Needs and Demos”

- *Marta Sisco-Izak, Asylum Officer, Refugee, Asylum and International Operations Directorate, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)*
- *Commander Laura Springer, Innovation Manager, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)*

Panel 3: “Accountability, Ethics, and Quality When Using AI for Language Services”

- *Dr. Bill Rivers, Chair, Stakeholders Advocating for Fair and Ethical AI in Interpreting (SAFE-AI)*
- *Katharine Allen, Member, SAFE-AI*
- *Ludmila Golovine, Member, SAFE-AI*

Panel 4: “Why It Is Critical to Promote Standards and Safeguards in the Use of AI for Language Services”

- *Helen Eby, American Translator of Association (ATA) Certified Translator (English>Spanish and Spanish>English)*
- *Andy Benzo, President Elect, ATA*
- *Christina Green, Board Member, ATA*

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DHS Statement on Safety and Enforcement During Hurricane Helene

Release Date: September 25, 2024

During emergency events, DHS works with its federal, state, local, and non-governmental partners to support the needs of the people in the areas that may be impacted.

In such circumstances, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) remind the public that sites that provide emergency response and relief are considered [protected areas](#). To the fullest extent possible, ICE and CBP do not conduct immigration enforcement activities at protected areas such as along evacuation routes, sites used for sheltering or the distribution of emergency supplies, food or water, or registration sites for disaster-related assistance or the reunification of families and loved ones.

At the request of FEMA or local and state authorities, ICE and CBP may help conduct search and rescue, air traffic de-confliction and public safety missions. ICE and CBP provide emergency assistance to individuals regardless of their immigration status. DHS officials do not and will not pose as individuals providing emergency-related information as part of any enforcement activities.

DHS is committed to ensuring that every individual who seeks shelter, aid, or other assistance as a result of a natural disaster or emergency event is able to do so regardless of their immigration status. DHS carries out its mission without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, ethnicity, disability or political associations, and in compliance with law and policy.

For information about filing a complaint with the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties about these matters, please visit our [Make a Civil Rights Complaint](#) page.

[Read the statement in multiple languages.](#)

DHS and Department of Education Announce New Student Toolkit to Combat Gender-Based Violence

The [DHS Council on Combating Gender-Based Violence \(CCGBV\)](#), a DHS body that works to advance protections for survivors of human trafficking and gender-based violence (GBV) by collaborating with agencies and offices across DHS to develop impactful policies and trainings, and the Department of Education (ED) have published a new [student toolkit](#) on GBV for international students attending colleges and universities in the U.S.



DHS and ED hosted a virtual launch of the toolkit, at which CRCL Officer Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia, USCIS Chief of Policy Avidah Moussavian, and Department of Education Assistant Secretary Catherine Lhamon engaged with stakeholders who included administrators from colleges and universities from across the country. During the meeting, DHS and ED leaders showcased the content and structure of the new online toolkit and took questions from the audience.

DHS also posted a [blog announcing the toolkit](#) and its purpose to serve as an online hub for information and resources to help international students:

- Understand what GBV is;
- Know what to do if you see or experience GBV while attending a U.S. college or university, including how to report it;
- Learn about on-campus and off-campus resources; and
- Become familiar with immigration options you might have if you are a victim of GBV.

Visit [Combating Gender-Based Violence](#) for more information on our work to combat GBV.

CRCL Celebrates Constitution Day and Citizenship Day at Naturalization Ceremony

Each year on September 17, our nation celebrates Constitution Day and Citizenship Day—a time to commemorate both the signing of the U.S. Constitution on September 17, 1787, and what it means to be a U.S. citizen. This year, USCIS welcomed more than 17,000 new citizens in over 400 naturalization ceremonies across the nation from September 14-23. CRCL Officer Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia was honored to deliver opening remarks at a naturalization ceremony at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where 48 citizenship candidates from 27 countries took the Oath of Allegiance and became U.S. citizens. In her remarks, Officer Wadhia called on the candidates to help America realize its great potential by making a positive contribution. “Register to vote and exercise this important right. Get involved in your children’s school, in your local community, serve in the armed forces, operate a business, or run for public office,” said Officer Wadhia. “Think keenly about what it means to belong and what it means beyond a piece of paper and for those who yearn for the same without one.”

For more on Constitution Day and Citizenship Day activities, check out the [USCIS Celebrates Constitution Day and Citizenship Day 2024 Fact Sheet](#).



CRCL Joins DOJ in Stakeholder Engagements

This month, CRCL’s Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia joined in two community engagement events hosted by DOJ’s Civil Rights Division. Earlier in the month, DOJ convened its quarterly interagency meeting with Muslim, Arab, Sikh, South Asian and Hindu (MASSAH) community stakeholders where Attorney General Garland and Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke of DOJ’s Civil Rights Division provided remarks underscoring DOJ’s commitment to addressing hate crimes. CRCL Officer Wadhia spoke to attendees about CRCL’s work to ensure fair and equitable treatment of individuals and guard against discrimination in DHS programs and activities in accordance with federal civil rights laws. She discussed recent efforts to address campus safety concerns and ensuring civil rights protection under Title VI to ensure that colleges and universities that receive DHS financial assistance do not engage in discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. She noted that CRCL is also working to inform DHS agency and office partners about the range of DHS legal authorities that prohibit discrimination against members of faith communities, including developing an internal fact sheet to share information on our Title VI authorities.

Later in the month, CRCL Officer Wadhia joined DOJ’s quarterly interagency meeting with Jewish community stakeholders where DOJ leaders, including Attorney General Garland and Assistant Attorney General Clark, shared information on enforcement efforts and actions to prevent and combat discrimination and hate crimes. Officer Wadhia joined leaders from other federal agencies to hear from Jewish community partners regarding a number of concerns including hate crimes and incidents, campus safety, and civil rights protections around the election, among other areas. Officer Wadhia discussed activities underway at CRCL related to Title VI, including offering training on civil rights obligations for DHS grant recipients and developing a video for the public on Title VI shared ancestry. She also shared that CRCL encourages community members to continue to submit complaints related to alleged civil rights or civil liberties violations of any DHS policy, program, or activity at [Make a Civil Rights Complaint | Homeland Security \(dhs.gov\)](#).

CRCL Participates in Campus Safety Discussion at 2024 HBCU Week Conference



Raising the Bar: Where Excellence and Opportunity Meet

SEPTEMBER 15-19, 2024 • PHILADELPHIA MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN, PHILADELPHIA, PA

This month, CRCL participated in the 2024 National Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Week Conference in Philadelphia, PA. The annual conference brings together HBCU leaders, representatives, students, and alumni with federal agencies, the private sector, and philanthropic organizations to exchange information and share innovations in higher education. During the conference, leaders from DHS, DOJ, and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) met with HBCU Presidents and Chancellors during an executive session on “Campus Safety in This Election Cycle.” The session provided an opportunity for HBCU leaders to raise campus safety concerns, highlight promising practices at HBCUs, and discuss ways the Federal Government can further support HBCU leaders in safeguarding their campuses from immediate and future threats and challenges. During the dialogue, HBCU leaders raised concerns including threats to campuses, technology and misinformation online, and safety in polling locations on campus, among other topics. Federal representatives shared information about resources, tools, and programs available to strengthen the ability of colleges and universities to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards on campus.

CRCL Participates in Equity Briefing with Civil Society Organizations

This month, CRCL Officer Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia and Deputy Officer Veronica Venture participated in a White House briefing for members of civil society organizations on how the Federal Government’s work to advance racial equity and support for underserved communities supports the United States’ commitments to uphold human rights protections. During the meeting, leaders from federal agencies had an opportunity to provide updates on progress made in advancing equity across each agency. Officer Wadhia discussed DHS’s commitment to human rights noting the Department’s participation in the 2023 U.S. Presentation on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and recent follow-up meetings. Officer Wadhia also shared a number of updates on CRCL’s equity-related work including releasing the Department’s updated Equity Action Plan, ensuring the responsible use of AI with a focus on protecting privacy and civil rights of individuals, advancing protections for survivors of human trafficking and gender-based violence through the DHS Council on Combatting Gender-Based Violence, and strengthening language access for speakers of Indigenous languages of Latin America, among others. During the meeting, civil society partners also shared information and updates regarding their work and policy priorities.

DHS Celebrates 30th Anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act

On September 13, CRCL Officer Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia joined DOJ’s Office on Violence Against Women at an event to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA). This landmark legislation is one of the first comprehensive federal responses to addressing and preventing gender-based violence in the U.S., and specifically acknowledges the unique barriers that noncitizens victims of GBV face when trying to seek safety and assistance. The event, which brought together over 350 in-person attendees, provided an opportunity to reflect on the progress we have made and reaffirm our collective commitment to enhance the coordinated community and federal response to domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, and other interconnected forms of GBV. Officer Wadhia participated in a panel discussion on “Enhancing the Federal Coordinated Community Response,” where she was joined by leaders from the Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Labor, Defense, and State.

During the panel, Officer Wadhia discussed a number of activities taking place at DHS to prevent and address GBV including strengthening language access in policies, programs, and activities across the Department; improving the T and U nonimmigrant visa process; and coordinating the DHS CCGBV, among others.

DHS also published a [blog post commemorating the special 30th VAWA anniversary](#), which highlights additional efforts taking place at DHS to prevent GBV.



CRCL on the Road, September*

Jacksonville, Florida

On September 11, CRCL conducted an engagement with diverse stakeholders in Jacksonville, Florida.

Seattle, Washington

On September 23-25, CRCL conducted engagements with diverse stakeholders in Seattle, Washington.

Austin, Texas

On September 26, CRCL delivered training on civil rights/civil liberties and privacy matters to personnel at the Austin Regional Intelligence Center.

Pearl, Mississippi

On September 18, CRCL delivered training on civil rights/civil liberties and privacy matters to personnel at the Mississippi Analysis and Information Center.

Front Range Region, Colorado

On September 23-25, CRCL conducted engagements with diverse stakeholders in the Front Range area of Colorado.

*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.

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.

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