



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.



CRCL Hosts Exchange Program with Swedish Stakeholders

CRCL coordinated the second phase of its community engagement exchange program with stakeholders in Sweden. The exchange program pairs U.S. stakeholders from specific metropolitan areas with European counterparts to foster the exchange of good practices on civic engagement, integration, youth issues, the protection of civil rights and civil liberties (human rights in the international context), and community engagement with law enforcement and municipalities to mitigate and build resilience against violent threats.

The Swedish delegation first had a briefing with CRCL Officer Megan Mack and other DHS leadership in Washington, D.C. They then traveled to Chicago where they participated in a week-long series of site visits, meetings, and briefings with civil society and federal, state, and local agencies. Highlights from the week's tour included site visits to refugee resettlement agencies, interfaith communities, and civil rights and civil liberties advocacy organizations.

CRCL conducts the community engagement exchange program in partnership with the U.S. Department of State. Since the program's inception in 2011, CRCL has coordinated stakeholders from Chicago, Columbus, Detroit, Houston, and Los Angeles to exchange with officials in Germany, Belgium, and Sweden.

FY 2015 DHS No FEAR Act Annual Report

CRCL is pleased to announce the release of the Department's [Fiscal Year 2015 "Notification and Federal Employee Anti-discrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002" \(No FEAR Act\) Annual Report](#). The [No FEAR Act](#) (Pub. L. 107-74) requires that federal agencies be publicly accountable for violations of antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws. The Annual Report summarizes the most significant accomplishments within the Department's equal employment opportunity (EEO) program, which include: continued leadership of the EEO Director's Council; timely completion of 87% of requests for EEO counseling, an increase from FY 2014; and issuance of 297 merit final agency decisions; among several other highlights. Overall, the Annual Report evidences the Department's strong commitment to abide by merit systems principles, provide protection from prohibited personnel practices, and promote accountability on the part of its leadership.

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FEMA Launches New Preparedness Feature to Smartphone App

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) launched a new feature to its free smartphone app that allows users to receive reminders on their devices (through push notifications) to take important steps to prepare their homes and families for disasters. The reminder feature enables users to receive pre-scheduled safety and preparedness tips, including testing smoking alarms, practicing a fire escape plan, updating emergency kits, and replacing smoke alarm batteries.

The new feature builds upon several innovative tools already built into the FEMA app. In addition to push notifications, the app also provides a customizable checklist of emergency supplies, maps of open shelters and open recovery centers, and tips on how to survive natural and manmade disasters. The app also offers a feature for users to receive notifications of weather alerts from the National Weather Service for up to five locations across the nation.

Some key features of the app include:

- **Weather Alerts:** Users can elect to receive alerts on severe weather happening in specific areas they select, even if the phone is not located in the area, making it easy to follow severe weather that may be threatening family and friends.
- **Safety Tips:** Tips on how to stay safe before, during, and after over 20 types of hazards, including floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes.
- **Disaster Reporter:** Users can upload and share disaster-related photos.
- **Maps of Disaster Resources:** Users can locate and receive driving directions to open shelters and disaster recovery centers.
- **Apply for Assistance:** The app provides easy access to apply for federal disaster assistance.
- **Information in Spanish:** The app defaults to Spanish-language content for smartphones that have Spanish set as their default language.

The latest version of the FEMA app is available for free in the [App Store](#) for Apple devices and [Google Play](#) for Android devices. Users who already have the app downloaded on their device should download the latest update for the reminder alerts feature to take effect. The reminders are available in English and Spanish and are located in the “Prepare” section of the FEMA app.

America’s PrepareAthon!

[America’s PrepareAthon!](#) is a grassroots campaign to increase preparedness and resilience against specific hazards: earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, and winter storms. You can join with communities across the country in discussions, drills, and exercises leading up to **National PrepareAthon Day! on April 30**, and continuing throughout May.



[Preparedness takes action!](#) Get involved by making a plan and participating in a host of preparedness activities. Learn more at www.ready.gov/prepare, and [spread the word](#) to your family, friends, and community.

CRCL on the Road, April

April 7 – Atlanta, Georgia

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

April 9 – Los Angeles, California

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

April 11-12 – Denver, Colorado

CRCL convened a community engagement town hall with diverse community organizations.

April 11-14 – Orlando/Tampa, Florida

CRCL hosted community awareness briefings in coordination with the National Counterterrorism Center and the Federal Bureau of Investigations.

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.

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

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