



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 Operations During COVID-19 Response

Per guidance from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management in response to COVID-19, CRCL is operating under telework flexibilities while continuing to serve and support the public. As a result, mail operations may be impacted and our response to mailed letters may be delayed. If you wish to file a civil rights complaint, the best method of submission at this time is via email to: CRCLCompliance@hq.dhs.gov. CRCL staff will continue to monitor this email address, and our toll-free hotline for your questions at: 1-866-644-8360, TTY: 1-866-644-8361. For additional details on how to file a civil rights complaint, visit: <https://www.dhs.gov/file-civilrights-complaint>.

CRCL Supports Operation Allies Welcome

On August 29, President Biden directed the Department of Homeland Security to lead implementation of ongoing efforts across the Federal Government to support vulnerable Afghans, including those who worked alongside us in Afghanistan for the past two decades, as they safely resettle in the United States.

CRCL employees have answered the call to support this important mission through staff deployments abroad and within the United States, assisting our Component partners in all aspects of the operational phases of Operation Allies Welcome (OAW), including processing new arrivals at airports and military installations.

This month, CRCL representatives visited processing sites near Dulles airport and in Quantico where staff have been working 24/7 to welcome and process new arrivals. At the Dulles site, CRCL staff observed processing procedures for new arrivals and provided recommendations for ensuring the integration of civil rights and civil liberties protections into relevant operations. At the Quantico site, CRCL Officer Katherine Culliton-González and Deputy Officer Peter Mina, along with a team of CRCL staff, met with base personnel and observed housing conditions for Afghan guests on base.

Language translation and interpretation services are a critical need for OAW. CRCL staff have recently developed new resource materials to support language access needs that are now available on CRCL's [Language Access page](#). The materials feature helpful guidelines for Dari or Pashto-speaking federal volunteers or detailees assisting in language translation and interpretation services. The resources were developed specifically for individuals who are not translation professionals, but who will be supporting the mission.

- [Guidelines for Translators](#)
- [Guidelines for Interpreters](#)

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Finally, CRCL has continued its outreach and engagement with community stakeholders involved in OAW and resettlement efforts. On September 21, CRCL’s Community Engagement Section hosted a virtual listening session on the civil and human rights considerations for Afghan women and girls, which included over 30 Afghan American community stakeholders and nonprofit leaders. Participants discussed concerns with security for women in safe havens, opportunities for women to participate in leadership roles within the safe havens, ensuring access to female Pashto and Dari translators, and coordinating donations of culturally appropriate clothing and educational resources for Afghan resettlement efforts. CRCL also led a critical initiative to create videos for distribution to the military installations for Afghan guests on U.S. rights and responsibilities, as well as videos on cultural competency for state and local law enforcement and personnel supporting OAW.

Additionally, CRCL Officer Culliton-González and CRCL’s Chief of Staff Brenda Abdelall recently attended a community reception at Dar al Noor Islamic Center in Manassas, Virginia, along with other U.S. government personnel from DHS and the Department of Defense in support of OAW where they were honored to receive certificates of appreciation.



CRCL representatives join OAW partners at a community reception at Dar al Noor Islamic Center in Manassas, VA

CRCL will continue to support the critical work of OAW as our Afghan allies resettle in communities across the U.S. For more information on how you can help, please visit the U.S. Department of State’s [“Call to Action.”](#)

DHS Remembers: Honoring the Victims of the September 11th Attacks

This month, DHS marked the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, mourning the nearly 3,000 lives taken too soon. The people who perished in the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and Shanksville—including the heroic first responders who gave their lives to help others—left behind loved ones and communities who were never again the same. In the years since, more than 2,000 more were lost to 9/11-related illnesses as a result of working in hazardous conditions during recovery operations. We honor their lives and their memory and mourn what we all lost on that terrible day.



DHS Secretary Mayorkas plants a seedling from the 9/11 Memorial Survivor Tree at DHS headquarters in Washington, D.C.

On the 20th anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, DHS honors the memory of those who lost their lives by serving our mission with dedication. We remain committed to working together across every level of government to keep our Nation safe from evolving threats, both foreign and domestic.

The Department commemorated the solemn anniversary in a number of ways including a tree planting ceremony with Secretary Mayorkas and survivors, first responders, victim families, and military families. The tree was and a seedling from the [9/11 Survivor Tree](#), a Callery pear tree known as the “Survivor Tree” after enduring the September 11 2001 terror attacks at the World Trade Center.

DHS remembers September 11, 2001, and remains vigilant in our shared efforts to combat the threats of today and tomorrow alongside our partners. Together, we will continue to protect, serve, and safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values, including the civil rights and civil liberties of all individuals.



CRCL Officer Culliton-González with DHS Secretary Mayorkas at the DHS 9/11 commemoration ceremony

Secretary Mayorkas Participates in Roundtable with Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Community Stakeholders

On September 17, DHS Secretary Mayorkas and members of the DHS Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Task Force met with leaders of the AANHPI community to reiterate the Department’s commitment to racial equity and civil rights and civil liberties.

“Six months ago, following the tragic events that unfolded in Atlanta, I had the opportunity to hear from members of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community,” said Secretary Mayorkas. “It is a priority for me to meet with community leaders and discuss the important work we have done to combat domestic violent extremism and targeted violence in communities across the country. While we have made progress, these accomplishments are just the first step as we continue the important work of keeping our communities safe for all.”

“It was devastating to see the violence against members of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community in Atlanta in March,” said Deputy Secretary John Tien. “The Department of Homeland Security is committed to protecting all Americans, and I am proud to be a part of the team working tirelessly to combat domestic violent extremism and targeted violence.”

Secretary Mayorkas previously met with AANHPI community leaders in Atlanta in March 2021 and, following that meeting, formed the DHS AANHPI Task Force led by CRCL Officer Katherine Culliton-González to coordinate DHS efforts in advancing equity for members of the AANHPI community.

During the meeting, Task Force members outlined the Department’s actions on preventing and addressing domestic violent extremism, including:

- Release of two threat assessments conducted by the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis that address threats specific to the AANHPI community.
- Engagement by the DHS Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships to increase engagement with regional and local AANHPI community partners and integrate AANHPI community leaders into broader local community-based prevention efforts.

Task Force members also outlined steps the Department has taken to increase the level trust between members of the community and the Department, including:

- Release of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services’ (USCIS) Bona Fide Determination policy for U Visa Petitioners that enables USCIS to address the five-year backlog by issuing work permits and deferred action to U visa applicants with bona fide petitions.
- Translation of DHS materials into diverse languages of the AANHPI community.
- Collaboration with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in addressing equity issues in the Nonprofit Security Grant Program.

CRCL Hosts Community Engagement Roundtables in Boston and Miami

This month, CRCL hosted two virtual community engagement roundtables with stakeholders in Boston and Miami. Representatives from the DHS Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships and other federal partners participated in both meetings, along with a host of community and advocacy stakeholders.

The Boston roundtable was the first that will be held regularly with local stakeholders. CRCL Chief of Staff Brenda Abdelall welcomed participants and spoke on CRCL's role in combating discrimination and condemning racism and xenophobia, as outlined in the Administration's executive order. She also spoke on the Department's focus on domestic violent extremism as a civil rights issue. Attendees also discussed school bullying and of the need to rebuild trust with government. CRCL plans to expand its engagement with Boston communities in the future.

For the Miami roundtable, CRCL Officer Katherine Culliton-González led the discussion where she reaffirmed CRCL's commitment to returned regular engagement with local communities there. She also gave updates on the work that DHS and CRCL are doing to prevent domestic terrorism and hate crimes. Following an overview of the CRCL complaints process, the discussion focused on: data collection for hate crimes, TSA screening for transgender individuals, concerns on detention removals, requirements for naturalization interviews, and overall language access and training to address language barriers.

DHS ATD Case Management Pilot Program: National Board Application Extended to October 8, 2021

The application process to serve on the National Board of the new [DHS Alternatives to Detention Case Management Program \(CMPP\)](#) has been extended to Friday, October 8, 11:59 pm EDT. Members of the National Board must have experience in the immigration or asylum field, alternatives to detention and/or case management programs, along with additional criteria, and will be chosen via a Request for Information process, as outlined below. The National Board will be responsible for awarding funds to eligible local governments and nonprofit organizations and overseeing and managing the pilot program.

To learn more and to apply to serve on the DHS Case Management Pilot Program National Board, please view the [Request for Information](#) (RFI) and newly updated accompanying [Frequently Asked Questions](#). Per the RFI, please submit applications to: CRCL.CMPP@hq.dhs.gov.

The Family Reunification Task Force Launches Together.gov

On Monday September 13, President Biden's Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families (Task Force) launched a registration website to help parents who were separated by the prior Administration reunite with their children. President Biden established an Interagency Task Force on the Reunification of Families to identify and reunite certain families who were separated by the U.S. government between January 20, 2017 and January 20, 2021. The Task Force has established a process to bring separated family members back to the U.S. to reunite with their children and receive support services. Starting September 13, 2021, individuals, or their representatives, can self-register online as potentially qualified for reunification with Task Force support.

You may qualify for U.S. government support with your family reunification if you are either:

- A parent or legal guardian who was separated under U.S. immigration laws, including through the use of the Zero Tolerance policy, from their child by the U.S. government at the U.S.-Mexico border; or
- A child who was separated under U.S. immigration laws, including through the use of the Zero Tolerance policy, from their parent or legal guardian by the U.S. government at the U.S.-Mexico border.

AND

- The separation occurred between January 20, 2017 to January 20, 2021.

If the Task Force determines you are qualified for government support, you will be referred to the [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#) who will help you with the reunification process.

Referred individuals may file with the U.S. government for the following benefits:

- Return to the U.S.;
- Live in the U.S. for three years under humanitarian parole;
- Apply for U.S. work authorization;
- Receive counseling and other services to help ensure a successful reunification; and
- Receive travel and support services without charge.

If you believe you may qualify for this process, you can begin your registration at [Together.gov](https://www.together.gov) and [Juntos.gov](https://www.juntos.gov).

DHS Celebrates National Hispanic History Month

DHS celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 through October 15 each year. National Hispanic Heritage Month is our time to honor the contributions and the rich cultures of Hispanic and Latino Americans.



This year’s theme, “Esperanza: A Celebration of Hispanic Heritage and Hope,” reminds us to celebrate the diverse cultural history of the Hispanic and Latino community and to reflect on the impact that Hispanic and Latino Americans have made in our society. The theme also acknowledges that resilience and hope will lead to a stronger, brighter, and more unified future for all.

At DHS, we recognize our Hispanic and Latino employees for their dedication to protecting the homeland and all of its diverse people.

Learn more about [National Hispanic History Month](#) and discover virtual events, materials, and resources from across the Federal Government.

Ready/Listo.gov Launch New Latino-Focused PSAs for National Preparedness Month

In recognition of National Preparedness Month and Hispanic Heritage Month, FEMA and the Ad Council released new [Ready Campaign](#) public service announcements (PSA), developed specifically for the Latino community as part of FEMA’s approach to advance accessibility and cultural competency in boosting the nation’s preparedness. The new “Prepare to Protect” PSAs in [Spanish](#) and [English](#) inform people living in communities across the country how to prepare for natural disasters. These new PSAs represent a first for FEMA with the specific focus on the Latino community and will supplement the other elements of this year’s campaign’s work to reach all audiences around the nation.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Latino community is the fastest growing community in the nation, growing by 23% over the last decade. This growth drove FEMA’s focus for this year’s Ready Campaign to help all residents better prepare for disasters. FEMA used a data-driven approach to identify and develop culturally competent messaging tailored to resonate with the Latino community to encourage audiences to develop emergency plans. The Latino-focused ads seek to build on the Latino community’s commitment to personal planning for occasions and family milestones as a bridge to also planning for disasters. This aims to help address a gap identified in FEMA’s 2020 National Household Survey which shows 98% of households acknowledging that at least one disaster could impact where they live, yet less than half made an emergency plan or talked to others about getting prepared.

These PSAs build upon the annual month-long Ready Campaign activities that kicked off with President Biden’s [proclamation on National Preparedness Month](#). For more information and to get started on your emergency plan, visit [ready.gov/plan](https://www.ready.gov/plan) or [listo.gov/plan](https://www.listo.gov/plan).

DHS Provides \$20 Million to Local Communities to Prevent Targeted Violence and Terrorism

DHS recently announced the awarding of 37 grants, totaling \$20 million, under the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP) Grant Program. The TVTP Grant Program is managed by DHS's [Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships \(CP3\)](#) and is the only federal grant program dedicated to enhancing the capabilities of local communities to prevent targeted violence and terrorism. This year's grant program prioritized the prevention of domestic violent extremism, including through efforts to counter online radicalization and mobilization to violence.

"Domestic violent extremism and targeted violence pose significant and persistent threats to our homeland," said Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas. "Attacks on schools, houses of worship, workplaces, and public gatherings threaten Americans' lives and inflict trauma on our communities. The Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention Grant Program prioritizes investments that empower and equip communities across our country to prevent acts of violence before they occur."

The FY21 TVTP grants expand on the Department's new approach to prevention, which centers on providing local communities with evidence-based tools to help prevent violence, while protecting civil rights and civil liberties and privacy rights. These grants will help local communities strengthen online and in-person prevention efforts, including by addressing early-risk factors that can lead to radicalization and violence.

The FY21 TVTP Grant Program is open to state, local, tribal, and territorial government agencies; institutions of higher education; and nonprofit organizations. DHS anticipates the next round of funding will become available for competition in late Winter/early Spring 2022. To ensure more equitable access to this grant program, CP3 provides technical assistance to interested applicants who seek to better understand requirements for applying for federal grants.

For more information, including a full list of grant awards, please visit the [TVTP Grant Program website](#).

DACA Renewal Tips

[The DHS Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman](#) (CIS Ombudsman) is sharing the tips below for submitting a request to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to [renew your Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\)](#).

File as early as possible. USCIS recommends that applicants submit a DACA renewal request 150 to 120 days before the expiration date on the current Form I-797, Notice of Action, and Employment Authorization Document (EAD).

- Currently, you can file more than 150 days in advance of the expiration date. Filing slightly more than 150 days prior to the end of your DACA EAD may avoid a gap in employment authorization. However, doing so may also result in an overlap between your current DACA and your renewal. This means your renewal period may extend for less than a full two years from the date that your current DACA period expires.
- USCIS processing times may fluctuate, lengthening or decreasing the anticipated amount of time it will take to adjudicate your renewal. You should always consult the USCIS [Check Case Processing Times](#) web page before proceeding.

Make sure your request is complete. Before submitting your request:

- Make sure you are submitting the most recent versions of [Form I-821D](#), [Form I-765](#) and the [Form I-765 Worksheet](#).
- Review all the forms to ensure that these are signed.
- Confirm that you are paying the appropriate fee.

Check USCIS' processing times. Please visit the agency's [Check Case Processing Times](#) web page to find out the current timeframes to process the Form I-821D and Form I-765.

No expedites. Please note USCIS has traditionally not processed requests for DACA expedites.

For more information on DACA, please visit the USCIS [Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#) (DACA) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) web pages.

The CIS Ombudsman is committed to meeting with stakeholders and USCIS to address concerns related to DACA. Additional updates on this topic will be shared by the CIS Ombudsman as appropriate. For more information please visit [CIS Ombudsman](#).

DHS Recognizes Constitution Day and Citizenship Day

On September 17, we observe Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, a day to remember and honor the signing of the U.S. Constitution by our country's thirty-nine founding fathers in 1787. On this day we also recognize people from all over the world taking steps to become naturalized U.S. citizens. Read the [Presidential Proclamation](#) and learn more about [USCIS resources for learners](#) related to this important day!

CRCL on the Road, September*

Boston, Massachusetts

On September 1, 2021, CRCL hosted a virtual roundtable meeting with diverse community leaders in the Boston area.

On September 21, 2021, CRCL held a virtual meeting with Afghan American community and nonprofit leaders focused on civil and human rights protections for newly arrived Afghan women and girls.

Miami, Florida

On September 1, 2021, CRCL hosted a virtual roundtable meeting with diverse ethnic and community-based stakeholders and organizations

*Following guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to exercise social distancing, our Community Engagement team will continue to carry out our mission using various virtual and telephonic tools during this national public health emergency. While our team maintains constant communication with federal, state, local, and civil society stakeholders across the country, we encourage anyone who needs to contact us to do so via email to: CommunityEngagement@hq.dhs.gov. Thank you for your flexibility and understanding during this time.

Additional information, and contacting us

The goal of this periodic newsletter is to inform members of the public and other government partners 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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