

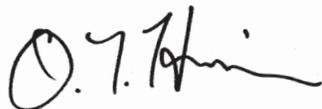
Transmittal Letter to Congress

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assembled:

With this statement, I hereby transmit a report on the activities of the Community Relations Service (CRS) of the U.S. Department of Justice for Fiscal Year 2008. This report is required by Section 100 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352), and by Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1966, as revised by 28 C.F.R. 0.30(b).

This report describes CRS' conflict resolution activities, so that Members of Congress may assess its performance in executing its statutory mandate.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "O. T. Harris". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "O" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ondray T. Harris
Director

America's Peacemaker

Community Relations Service

U.S. Department of Justice



Annual Report Fiscal Year 2008

www.usdoj.gov/crs

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FUNCTIONS OF THE SERVICE

“It shall be the function of the Service to provide assistance to communities and persons therein in resolving disputes, disagreements, or difficulties relating to the discriminatory practices based on race, color, or national origin which impair the rights of persons in such communities under the Constitution or laws of the United States or which affect or may affect interstate commerce. The Service may offer its services in cases of such disputes, disagreements, or difficulties whenever, in its judgment, peaceful relations among the citizens of the community involved are threatened thereby. Further, CRS may offer its services either upon its own motion or upon the request of an appropriate State or local official or other interested person.” (42 U.S.C. 2000g-1)

FOREWORD

It is my honor to submit to the Congress of the United States of America the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Relations Service (CRS) Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2008. The Community Relations Service responded to hundreds of conflicts based on race, color, or national origin in American communities in 2008. Community racial conflict remains at the forefront of national attention in the aftermath of conflicts at schools across our country. Our work in schools has increased significantly following these events, and our Agency's involvement has helped restore peace. Public awareness and reporting of incidents provide a greater opportunity for CRS to offer services to address community racial tensions in schools across America. Moreover, allegations of excessive use of police force against and perceived racial profiling of minorities nationwide have increased racial tension in communities experiencing significant demographic shifts. The work of CRS continues to make a difference in communities experiencing racial and cultural growing pains as a result of these changes. The work that we do helps to resolve disputes and prevent violence that often divides neighborhoods, diminishes the effectiveness of schools, and stunts the capacity of communities to reach their full potential and effectively serve the people.



The work that CRS has done this fiscal year, and our work yet to come, will continue to assist communities in addressing race, color, and national origin based conflicts as they occur. CRS works with communities to enhance their abilities to develop mechanisms, with their particular needs as first and foremost, such as human relations commissions, community/police advisory boards, and other self-sustaining partnerships which assist in decreasing tensions in communities. The goal of the Community Relations Service is to help communities prevent conflict from occurring and to equip communities to manage conflicts should they occur in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "O. T. Harris".

Ondray T. Harris
Director

SUMMARY OF FISCAL YEAR 2008 ACTIVITIES

Overview of CRS Activities

In Fiscal Year 2008, CRS was called upon by Federal, State, and local community leaders and government officials to address conflicts based on race, color, and national origin. These conflicts ranged from disparity of treatment allegations in local school systems to issues pertaining to hate incidents and hate crimes. CRS worked with community members from diverse racial, ethnic, and national origin backgrounds, including African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, Muslim Americans, Sikh Americans, and many other groups to address conflicts occurring in their communities. CRS facilitated dialogues, conducted mediations, and provided conciliation services in these matters. CRS provided training to law enforcement personnel, U.S. and District Attorneys, school administrators, Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration personnel, and other parties throughout the country. CRS assisted local communities to equip them to effectively and independently resolve conflict based on race, color, and national origin. The major areas in which CRS offered its services are administration of justice, education, and general community relations.

Administration of Justice

In Fiscal Year 2008, the largest numbers of administration of justice cases resulted from hate crimes and incidents, conflict over hate group activity, police-community relations conflicts, allegations of bias-based policing and racial profiling, conflicts stemming from police use of force and allegations of police misconduct. CRS provided conflict resolution and mediation services, cultural diversity training, and technical assistance to address these conflicts. CRS services to law enforcement included the following cases described in this report which are representative of the Service's work.

Education

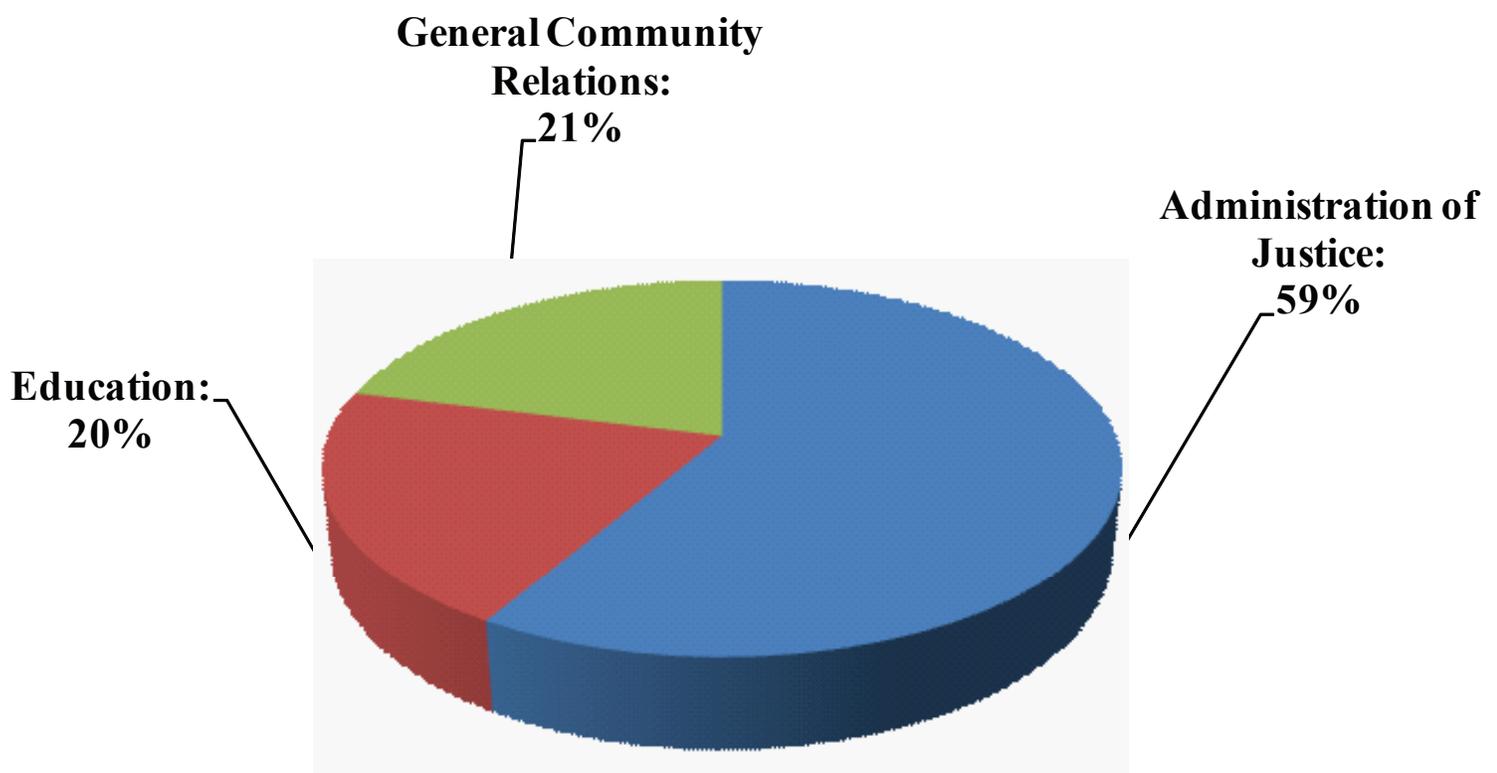
In Fiscal Year 2008, most education cases resulted from student racial conflicts in schools—primarily middle schools and high schools. There were also significant conflicts over disparities in treatment or educational opportunities based on race, color, or national origin. Some of these received significant media attention and raised community-wide tensions. A racial incident in the small, rural community of Jena, Louisiana, remains a top news story two years later after national civil rights leaders conducted a rally and march in support of six Black students of Jena High School. The reports of the national media on racial issues still present after the Jena incident resulted in increased CRS education cases.

CRS provided conflict-resolution and mediation services to address community conflicts at schools and universities. CRS services to schools included the following cases described in this report which are representative of the Service's work.

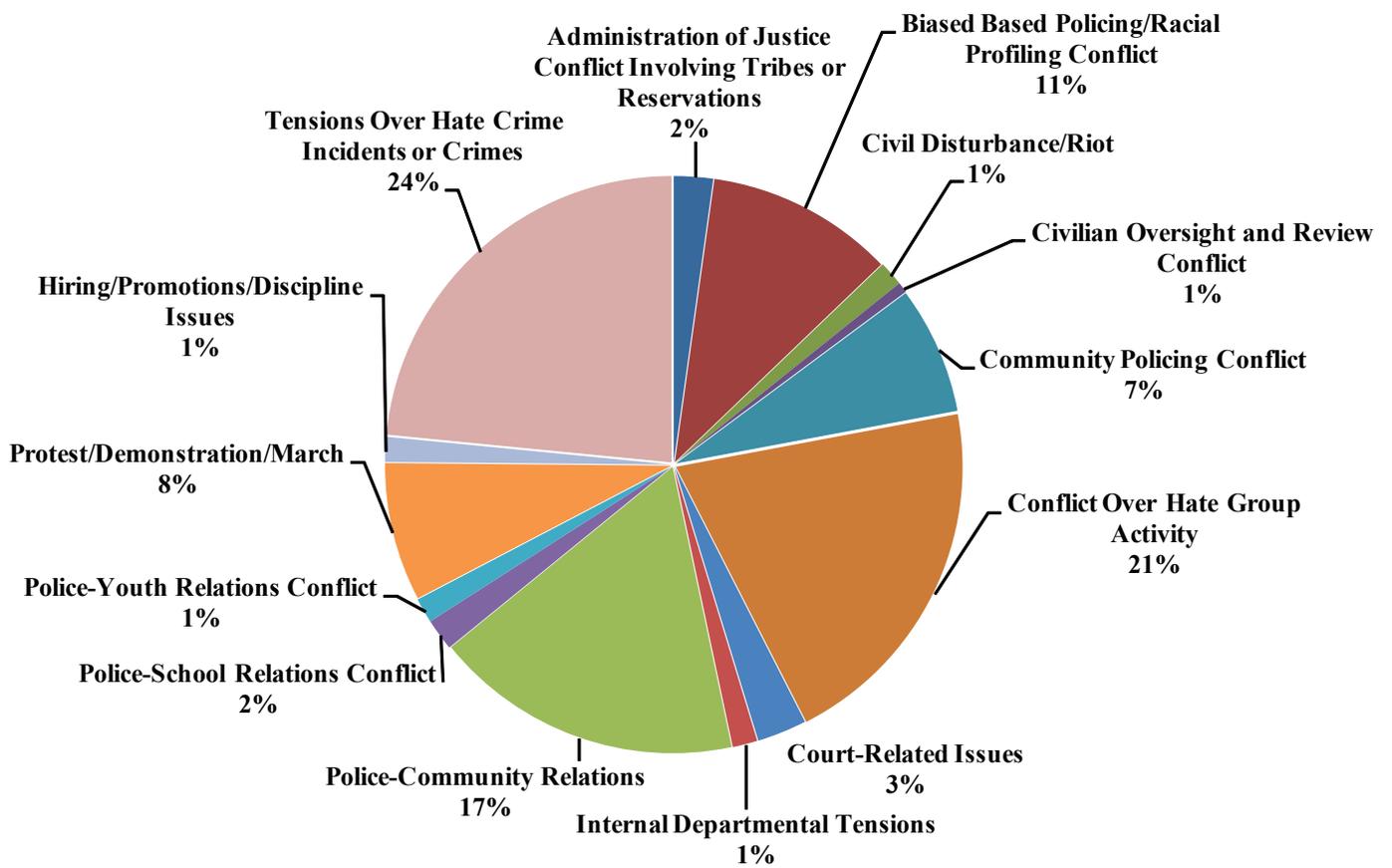
General Community Relations

In Fiscal Year 2008, the largest number of CRS cases resulted from conflicts arising from demographic changes, conflicts resulting from immigration, and conflicts over disparities of and access to public services. CRS services in the area of general community relations included the following cases described in this report which are representative of the Service's work. Often these cases emerge in disputes between communities and law enforcement, hate incidents, racial conflict in schools, or in transportation security screening complaints. There were also a number of cases involving Native Americans and the communities bordering Native American reservations.

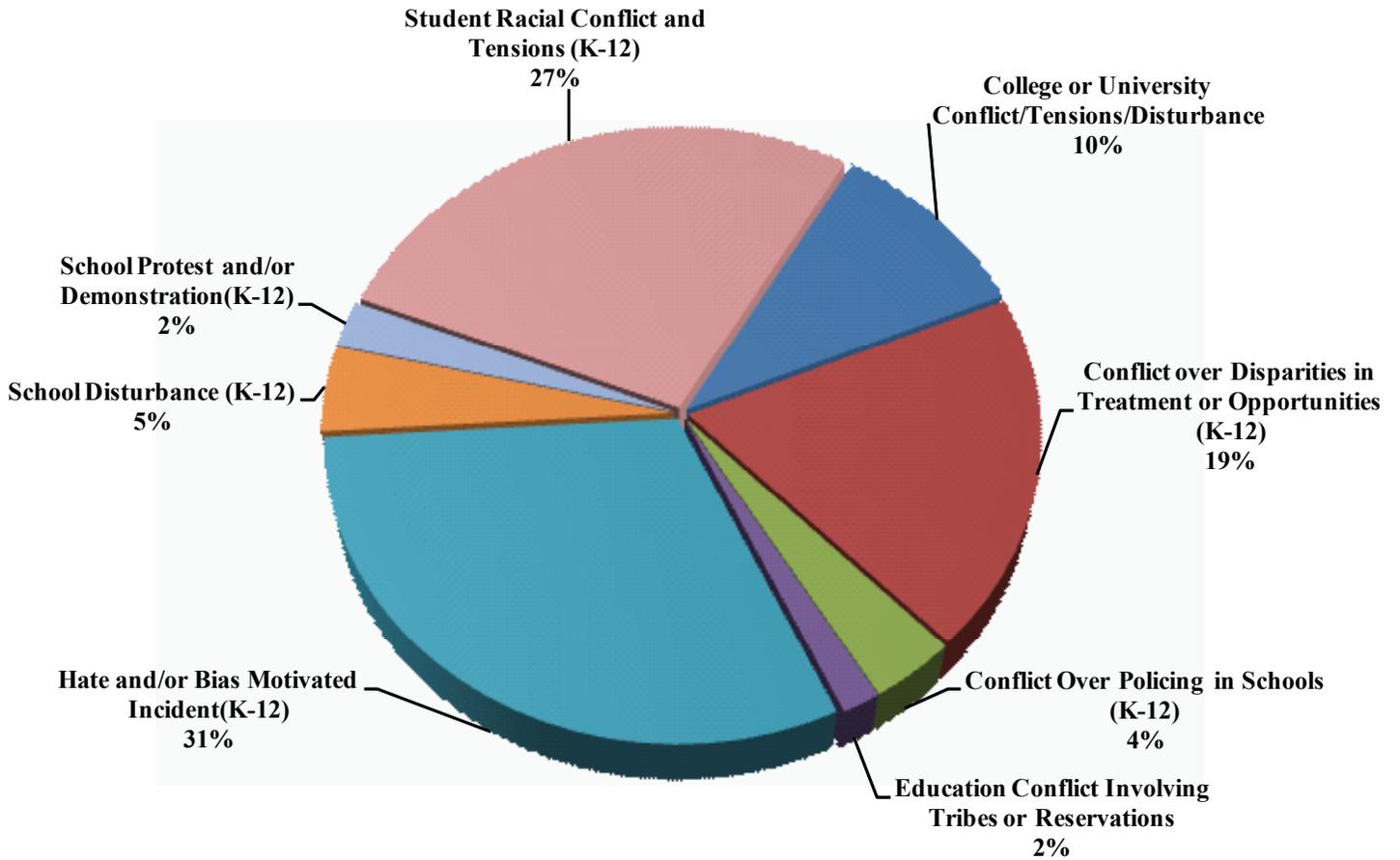
MAJOR ISSUES IN CRS CASEWORK FISCAL YEAR 2008



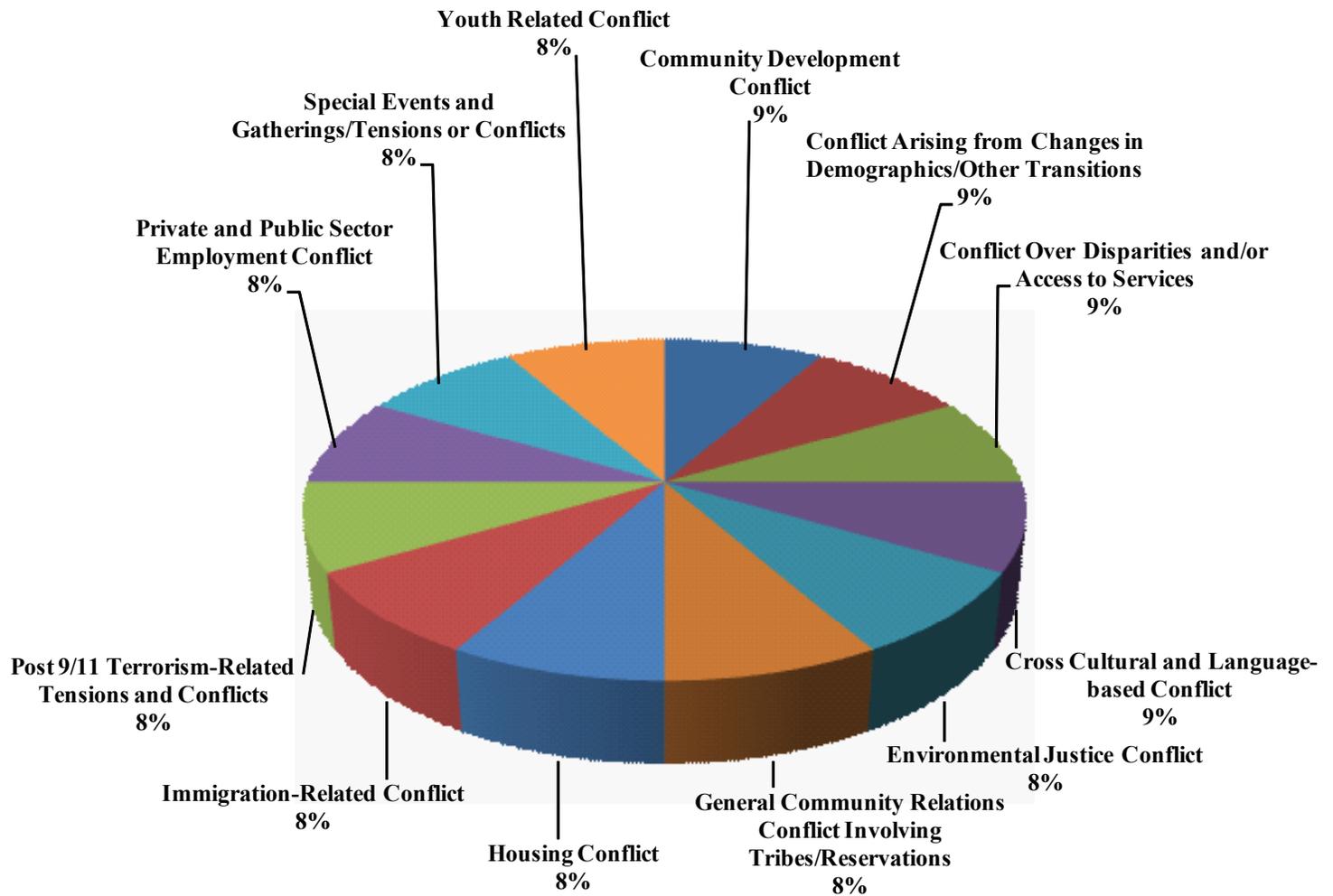
ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE



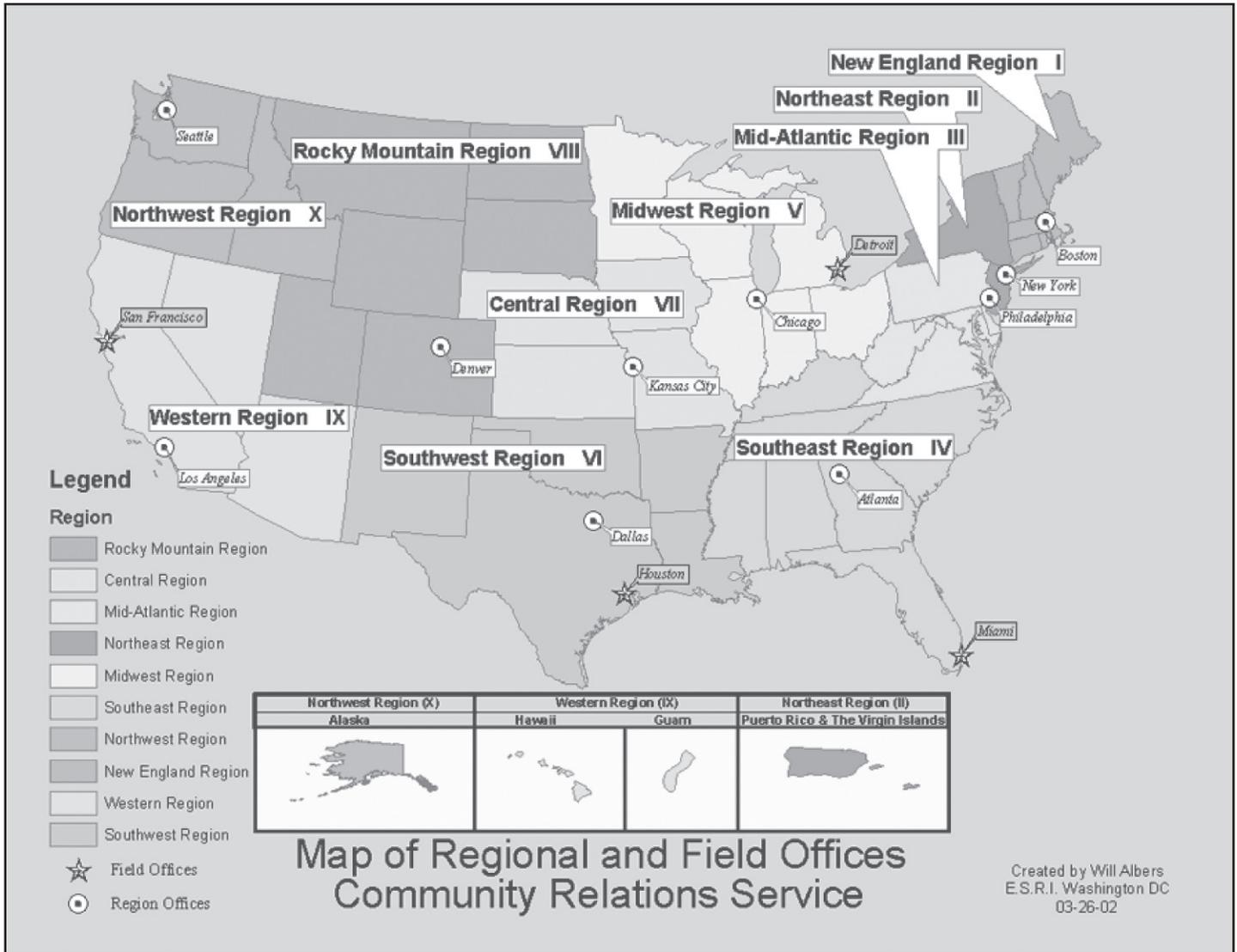
EDUCATION



GENERAL COMMUNITY RELATIONS



MAP OF CRS REGIONAL OFFICES AND SERVICE AREAS



REGIONAL REPORTS

REGION 1 – NEW ENGLAND

Serving Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont

New London, Connecticut

In April 2008, CRS participated in a public dialogue and panel discussion on hate crimes in New London, Connecticut. CRS was invited by community representatives after three U.S. Navy personnel in New London were arrested for allegedly defacing a local building with graffiti containing racial slurs and swastikas. That incident was preceded by two other incidents in the community involving nooses. In the first incident, a noose was placed on the bag of an African American cadet at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, and the second incident involved a noose discovery in the office of a Caucasian Coast Guard officer who had recently conducted diversity training at the Academy.

Stratford, Connecticut

In January 2008, local law enforcement and government officials in Stratford, Connecticut, invited CRS to conduct a “Cultural Awareness and Competency Program” training for the city’s police and fire departments, as well as its government employees. The request came in response to community allegations that some local government employees were racially biased against African Americans. Tensions were further heightened when African American community members threatened to publicly protest a local Caucasian family’s display of a “hanging man” in their yard as a Halloween decoration in October 2007. CRS conducted four training sessions. Approximately 500 city employees, police officers, and firefighters attended.

Nashua, New Hampshire

In November 2007, senior education administration officials invited CRS to assist them in organizing the first Southern New Hampshire Urban Schools Education Dialogue. The purpose of the dialogue, held in December 2007, was to provide southern New Hampshire’s academic leaders with an opportunity to hear from racial and ethnic minority groups in the region. The event enabled participants to identify concerns and to discuss workable solutions. Education officials from schools in the cities of Manchester, Nashua, Portsmouth, and Rochester participated in the dialogue, along with school officials and the members of the New Hampshire State Board of Education.

Springfield, Vermont

In June 2008, officials from the Vermont Department of Education asked CRS to assist them in responding to several racially charged incidents at a local high school. One such incident involved an African American student who was reportedly victimized with “severe racial graffiti.” Physical violence escalated at the school in the wake of this and other incidents. The Vermont Board of Education asked CRS to assist in its response to the incidents after several students, including the alleged victim of the incident, were suspended for fighting. CRS conducted a two-day “Student Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together” (SPIRIT) dispute-resolution program. Approximately 65 students participated in the SPIRIT program, which received positive reviews from both students and faculty.

REGION 2 – NORTHEAST AND CARIBBEAN

Serving New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands

New York, New York

In April 2008, three Caucasian New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers were acquitted of manslaughter and reckless endangerment in the November 2006 shooting of three African American men. One of these men was 23-year-old Sean Bell, who was killed by the officers on the eve of his wedding. The other two victims survived the shooting. The case received national media attention because the officers fired over 50 shots into the car that Bell was driving and because it was later discovered that the three men were unarmed. In the weeks following the verdict, the NAACP, the New African American Panther Party, the National Action Network, and other civil rights activist organizations staged dozens of rallies, protests, and marches throughout New York City and its suburbs. In response, CRS sent a National Deployment team to New York to help local law enforcement and government officials ensure peaceful demonstrations. Over the next three weeks, CRS responded to more than 25 community events throughout New York City, Brooklyn, and Queens. On May 7, 2008, CRS was on-site in multiple locations throughout New York City and Brooklyn to monitor events and provide assistance during six highly publicized “Civil Disobedience for Sean” demonstrations led by Reverend Al Sharpton and his National Action Network members, as well as the NAACP. Hundreds of protestors participated in the six demonstrations, which consisted of blocking public access to the Triborough, Manhattan, and Brooklyn bridges and other acts of civil disobedience.

Harlem, New York

In May 2008, local clergy in Harlem asked CRS to assist in addressing growing tensions between the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and local youth. This came in the weeks following the acquittal of three police officers charged in the shooting of Sean Bell, an African American man killed on the eve of his wedding in November 2006. The clergy alleged that police were subjecting a disproportionate number of Harlem’s African American and Hispanic youth to “stop and frisk” searches. In June 2008, CRS facilitated a community dialogue between the NYPD and representatives of the Harlem African American and Hispanic communities. The parties agreed to the creation of safe passage corridors, wherein African American and Hispanic youth in the community could travel to and from basketball leagues and other activities without being subject to perceived “racial profiling or police harassment” by the NYPD. All parties that participated in the dialogue later reported that CRS’ involvement helped establish improved relationships and communication between the Harlem African American and Hispanic communities and the NYPD.

Brooklyn, New York

In May 2008, representatives of the African American and Jewish communities in Brooklyn, New York, together with New York City local government and law enforcement officials, asked CRS to help de-escalate growing racial tensions between African American and Jewish communities in the Crown Heights neighborhood. Tensions between the communities arose after two African American males allegedly assaulted and robbed a Jewish male teenager. Community leaders feared a recurrence of the 1991 Crown Heights riots that resulted in two deaths, multiple injuries, and significant property damage. CRS facilitated meetings between leaders of Brooklyn’s African American and Jewish communities, along with representatives from the New York City Mayor’s Office of Community Affairs, the Crown Heights Community Mediation Center, and Project C.A.R.E. Project C.A.R.E. is a community organization that was created after the 1991 Crown Heights riots to bring conflicting community groups together to find peaceful solutions and ease racial

tensions. At the meetings, CRS provided technical assistance to the parties and trained the participants on how to address and resolve racial conflicts. As a result of the meetings, leaders from Brooklyn's African American and Jewish communities, along with local clergy, educators, law enforcement officials, community board members, and city council members agreed to join Project C.A.R.E. in an effort to enhance its capacity as a rapid response mechanism to address and resolve future conflicts.

Syracuse, New York

In May 2008, CRS learned through media reports that a noose had been discovered at the Syracuse Fire Department. The victim of the incident, an African American female recruit, was reportedly shown a noose by a Caucasian male recruit during a training exercise. The incident furthered tensions felt by the local African American community and provoked allegations that the fire department was resisting efforts to diversify its ranks. In response to the incident, CRS facilitated community dialogues between African American and Hispanic community leaders, local clergy, members of the Syracuse City Council, city safety officials, and other community leaders to discuss the incident and seek a peaceful resolution. As part of the dialogues, CRS provided technical assistance on how to develop and integrate a cultural awareness curriculum into the training of recruits at the Syracuse Fire Department. As of August 2008, more than three quarters of the firefighters in the department had completed the new cultural awareness training program. The fire department also expanded its policies and procedures to include a zero tolerance response to alleged hate crimes and other related incidents. The revised policies further provided a system wherein race-based incidents could be reported outside of the fire department's structure of command. Since CRS facilitated the initial dialogues between the parties, the relationship between the City of Syracuse and its African American and Hispanic communities has improved, and communications between the groups have been positive and ongoing.

Onondaga County, New York

In May 2008, CRS learned through media reports that an African American Onondaga County maintenance worker had discovered a noose inside his locker at the Onondaga County civic building. The incident sparked racial tensions between the African American community and Onondaga County employees. African American community leaders expressed concern that the incident was the second involving a noose in less than a month (the other aforementioned incident occurred at the nearby Syracuse Fire Department). In response, CRS facilitated a community dialogue between law enforcement and city officials, civil rights leaders, African American community leaders and clergy, and other community organizations to discuss long standing racial tensions in the county. In addition, CRS provided technical assistance to Onondaga County with the creation and implementation of a diversity program to help county employees recognize and resolve racial conflicts. CRS further identified and coordinated a coalition of non-government community groups to assist Onondaga County in its efforts to resolve disputes and conduct future trainings. Among these groups were the Onondaga County Human Rights Commission, several local community organizations, and other local faith-based groups. As a result of CRS' involvement, communication between the parties was enhanced, and the partnership between local government, law enforcement officials, and the Onondaga County Human Rights Commission, as well as the local chapter of the NAACP, were all strengthened.

REGION 3 – MID-ATLANTIC

Serving the District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia

Washington, D.C.

Between February and July of 2008, CRS coordinated its regional offices across the country to monitor hundreds of Native Americans as they participated in the Longest Walk II (LWII), a cross-country march from California to Washington, D.C. The stated intent of the march was to bring attention to the economic plight of Native Americans, who believe this plight is due to discriminatory practices, and to highlight the impact that ecological waste and pollution has on the environment. The LWII participants trekked to Washington along two separate routes, one in the north and one in the south. Both groups of marchers arrived in Washington on July 11, 2008. From July 11-13, the marchers celebrated and performed Native American ceremonies on the National Mall. The march concluded with the presentation of a proclamation at the Capitol Building. Throughout the six-month march and during the three-day event in Washington, D.C., CRS provided the participants with technical assistance to accomplish a peaceful event. In addition, CRS worked extensively with local law enforcement and government officials across the country to help ensure the safety of the marchers and to offer on-site assistance in the event of a jurisdictional conflict.

Washington, D.C.

In April 2008, CRS learned that the National Socialist Movement (NSM) planned to conduct a high-profile march in Washington, D.C., on April 19, 2008, to promote its separatist pro-Nazi agenda. CRS further learned through its contacts with federal, state, and local law enforcement officials that several anti-racism groups with a history of violence were planning to confront NSM members at the march. In response, CRS provided on-site mediation services and technical assistance during the event. CRS helped calm public tensions that arose

from the NSM's display of swastikas and Nazi flags as they marched to the Capitol Building. Due in part to CRS' efforts, no major altercations or incidents beyond verbal exchanges were reported.

Shenandoah, Pennsylvania

In July 2008, CRS responded to media reports of increasing racial tension and potential violence in Shenandoah, Pennsylvania, after an Hispanic migrant worker was beaten to death by a group of Caucasian youths who reportedly uttered ethnic slurs during the attack. CRS coordinated with federal, state, and local law enforcement officials, as well as other support service organizations, to assist with a peaceful demonstration hosted by various national Hispanic civil rights organizations and a candlelight vigil hosted by local Caucasian and Hispanic church leaders. CRS' efforts resulted in greatly reduced tensions in the community and the formation of a diverse coalition of local leaders to address this and future incidents. CRS continues to monitor the situation and provide assistance when needed as the suspects' trials move forward.

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

In early 2008, CRS was asked by school administration officials to help ease growing racial tensions between Caucasian and African American students at a local high school in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The racial tensions between Caucasian and African American students at the school had grown from numerous reported cases of racial name calling to physical altercations and threats of violence at the school. The tensions became so dangerous that the school was closed for three days in an attempt to calm things down. Partnering with state and local service organizations, CRS hosted a "Student Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together" (SPIRIT) program at the school from February 5-6, 2008. The SPIRIT program is designed to enhance cultural awareness among students and teachers and to promote a safe, multicultural learning environment. As a result of CRS' involvement, racial tensions at the school subsided. Furthermore, a diverse group of student leaders continue

to work closely with the school's principal to promote tolerance and improve race relations at the school.

Calvert County, Maryland

In January 2007, a grand jury in Calvert County, Maryland, cleared a local police officer in the shooting of an unarmed African American man during a traffic stop. The grand jury's finding angered minorities in the community, including civil rights organizations and leaders, and further stressed the relationship between minorities in the community and local law enforcement. In response, CRS mediated discussions between local minority community leaders, civil rights organizations, and local law enforcement to identify areas of mutual understanding and trust and to improve the relationship between the community and local law enforcement. On November 5, 2007, the parties signed an agreement mediated by CRS in which local law enforcement agreed to improve understanding and transparency regarding its data collection and use-of-force policies, to train NAACP officials on how to take citizen complaints for follow-up by law enforcement, and to improve the Sheriff Department's minority recruitment efforts.

REGION 4 – SOUTHEAST

Serving Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee

Marshallville, Georgia

In February 2008, CRS was asked by local government officials in Marshallville, Georgia, to help address growing racial tensions and unrest in the town. The tensions reached an apex when the home of the town's Police Chief was destroyed by fire shortly after an African American man died while in police custody. While no arrests were made in the fire, city government and law

enforcement officials blamed a local civil rights group for inciting animosity between law enforcement and the African American community following the incident. The city's initial efforts to address the tensions between the minority community and police were rejected by several influential civil rights groups in the community, at which point CRS was asked by the city to help address the issue. In July 2008, local law enforcement, city officials, and civil rights leaders participated in a mediation session conducted by CRS. They agreed to work together to develop several projects that would foster an improved relationship between city leaders and the African American community, as well as to ease future tensions.

Georgetown, Kentucky

In September 2008, CRS responded to growing racial tensions in Georgetown, Kentucky, after local police ruled that the death of an 18-year-old African American student who was discovered with a noose around his neck inside a Georgetown College fraternity house occupied by mostly Caucasian students was a suicide. Local African American community leaders criticized the finding, alleging that the predominantly Caucasian local police department did not conduct a sufficiently fair or thorough investigation of the incident. In response, state law enforcement officials intervened and conducted an independent inquiry into the local police department's findings. Ultimately, they substantiated the initial determination of suicide as accurate. Community unrest continued to escalate after criticism that state police should have conducted a full investigation instead of simply ordering an inquiry. Since the incident, numerous protests and demonstrations have been organized on the Georgetown College campus. In response, CRS facilitated community forums and meetings on the campus and in the community to reduce the growing unrest. In addition, CRS coordinated discussions with local government and law enforcement officials, representatives of Georgetown College, leaders in the African American community, and the US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Kentucky, to develop strategies to prevent continued racial tensions in the community.

Fountain Inn, South Carolina

In February 2008, CRS responded to growing racial tensions in Fountain Inn, South Carolina, after a 25-year-old African American inmate was found dead in a Fountain Inn jail cell in July 2007. After two independent inquiries, the death was ruled a suicide. Leaders in the African American community alleged that law enforcement in the town had a history of abuse against minorities and that the young man's death was the result of deadly force. A month after the incident, Reverend Jesse Jackson took a tour of the Fountain Inn jail with a group of protesters and later alleged that the young man had been "beaten to death." In response to this and growing unease in the local African American community, CRS hosted a series of mediation sessions in the town between February and August. The mediation sessions were attended by city officials, law enforcement, and representatives of the local African American community.

On August 11, 2008, the parties signed an agreement in which they jointly agreed to take steps to improve police relations in the community. The Fountain Inn Police Department publicly agreed to seek state accreditation, and city officials committed to create a citizens review committee to hear citizen complaints, review police handling of cases, and review appeals. Speaking about the agreement, Fountain Inn's mayor stated: "People who have questions about the city, about deliberations, about law enforcement, will have a place to go. It's given each citizen an opportunity if they feel like somehow they've been wronged, not been treated right, they have a board that will be put in place where they can go." A local newspaper later reported that race relations had improved in Fountain Inn because of CRS' efforts in mediating the agreement.

Memphis, Tennessee

April 4, 2008, marked the 40th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Memphis, Tennessee. Led by community and labor leaders, activities at the Lorraine Motel and two major marches were planned to coincide with the anniversary. CRS developed an operation plan for a National Deployment Team to monitor the events and provide technical assistance in the event of a conflict. CRS' National Deployment Team worked in collaboration with local law enforcement, civil rights organizations, community leaders, and labor organizations to monitor the more than 7,000 march participants and ensure a peaceful event.

Pinellas County, Florida

In June 2008, CRS responded to growing racial tensions in Pinellas County, Florida, after an African American high school student was shot and killed by a Caucasian police officer during a graduation ceremony in St. Petersburg. The officer involved in the shooting reported that the teenager had been armed and was later cleared by the state of any wrongdoing. Racial tensions mounted in the community when several people who were reported to have witnessed the incident stated publicly that the teenager had not been armed at the time of the shooting. On August 30, 2008, CRS, along with state and local government officials, local law enforcement, civil rights organizations, faith-based organizations, community leaders, and a local human relations committee, participated in a community forum designed to initiate dialogue between law enforcement and the affected African American community to reduce the escalating racial tensions. CRS has been asked to conduct a series of similar forums in the community in 2009.

REGION 5 – MIDWEST

Serving Illinois, Indiana, Michigan Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin

North Chicago, Illinois

In 2008, CRS responded to growing racial tensions in North Chicago, Illinois, after two African American males were reportedly severely beaten by Caucasian police officers after refusing to leave a fast-food restaurant. The incident occurred when the restaurant manager asked the two men to leave, calling the police when they refused. A coalition of community minority groups filed a complaint with the police department alleging excessive use of force. Racial tensions in the community further escalated when the police department's internal investigation of the incident was delayed. To address the situation, the City of North Chicago requested CRS to mediate the dispute. After three mediation sessions, the parties signed an agreement wherein the city committed to clarify its complaint process, hold monthly citizen meetings, actively recruit more minorities for city positions, conduct a study of police traffic stop procedures and patterns, implement more bilingual interpretive services, conduct trainings on cultural competency, form an advisory council, and to host more community outreach activities.

Mount Pleasant, Michigan

In 2008, CRS responded to growing racial tensions in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, after the local prosecutor elected not to file charges against the perpetrators of a noose incident at Central Michigan University. The prosecutor reportedly believed the incident to be a prank. Minorities in the community responded by planning a demonstration on the University campus to protest the decision and invited religious and minority leaders from across the state of Michigan to participate. Prior to the demonstration, CRS met with local law enforcement

and representatives from Central Michigan University campus police to develop a contingency plan to monitor the protest. CRS also contacted the demonstration's organizers to understand their plans and facilitated communication between them and local law enforcement. Approximately 150 people participated in the demonstration. CRS officials were on hand to monitor the protest and provide technical assistance in the event of a conflict. The University pledged to take steps to address the issues that originally contributed to the noose incident.

Saint Paul, Minnesota

From September 1-4, 2008, the Republican National Convention was held in St. Paul, Minnesota. Approximately 45,000 delegates and volunteers attended the event. In addition, twenty-five separate groups consisting of a total of approximately 50,000 people organized ten distinct marches to protest the event. Historically, CRS has provided on-site conciliation services where the potential for violence surrounding issues of race, color, and national origin has been a concern. CRS coordinated with state and local law enforcement, as well as other federal agencies to coordinate efforts in preparation for the marches. CRS further provided marshal training and technical assistance to several law enforcement and other community organizations. At the convention, CRS provided conciliation services, technical assistance, and on-site coordination at four of the ten planned marches in order to reduce racial tensions and prevent violence and disorder. The six other marches did not fall within CRS' jurisdiction and were monitored by local, state, and federal law enforcement.

Monona Grove, Wisconsin

In 2008, CRS was asked by Monona Grove School District officials to help address racial tensions at a local high school after several racially motivated incidents occurred between Caucasian and African American students and their families. The most recent of these

incidents involved a deer carcass being thrown on the car of an African American family whose son attended the school. On May 1, 2008, CRS conducted an Assessment of Racial Tension Breeding Factors (ATBF) training exercise at the school. Approximately 70 teachers, staff members, and school district officials attended the exercise, the purpose of which was to determine ways in which the school could reduce racial tensions and improve the relationships between its Caucasian and African American students and their parents. The results of the assessment indicated that the school needed to train its teachers in cultural competency, establish better communication protocols for reporting racially motivated incidents, develop procedures to control rumors, garner more involvement from parents of minority students, enhance the cultural curriculum, and to maintain regular communication between the high school and school district officials. The adoption of these changes would help the school not only address racial conflicts, but also prevent them from arising in the future.

Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin

In February 2008, CRS gave a presentation on how to respond to allegations of racial profiling to approximately 250 members of the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association (WCPA) in Ashwaubenon, Wisconsin. The training, given at the WCPA's mid-winter conference, addressed the findings of the Wisconsin Governor's Commission on Racial Profiling, which conducted hearings on the issue in 2007. The WCPA believed the training would help its members discuss and develop ways to reduce Wisconsin's number of incarcerated minorities.

REGION 6 – SOUTHWEST

Serving Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas

Jena, Louisiana

On January 21-22, 2008, CRS provided on-site conflict-resolution services in Jena, Louisiana, during the town's three-day parade and activities commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Racial tensions were high in Jena after six African American high school students who were involved in the beating of a Caucasian student at the high school were charged with more severe crimes and penalties than the Caucasian students who had previously been involved in similar acts against African American students. The case earned national notoriety in 2007 when a reported 15,000-20,000 demonstrators descended on the small town to protest the charges against the "Jena Six" as being excessive and racially discriminatory. Although the charges against the students were eventually reduced to lesser offenses, tensions in the community were still high when the town celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in 2008.

CRS was asked by local and state law enforcement to provide technical assistance and other services during the commemorative events. The police reported that several groups with racially-oriented missions planned to host a myriad of protests and counter-protests in the town during the commemorations, the most notable being the Nationalist Movement which planned to conduct an armed protest march through the town. Prior to the event, CRS successfully mediated a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Jena's Mayor and representatives of the Nationalist Movement in which the Movement agreed not to bring weapons to its demonstration. While some protestors ignored the agreement and brought weapons anyway, no incidents were reported at the event. CRS further provided technical assistance and on-site conciliation services during Jena's Martin Luther King, Jr. Five Mile Parade and prayer vigil.

On January 21, 2008, CRS conducted a training session for local youth on hate, diversity, and sensitivity. The training was requested by local leaders and law enforcement in hopes that it would deter local youth from attending or joining the planned protest and counter-protest efforts of the Nationalist Movement, the New Black Panther Party, the January 21st Committee, the Revolutionary Community Party, and the Ku Klux Klan during Jena's Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebrations.

On April 21-23, 2008, CRS conducted a "Student Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together" (SPIRIT) training program at a local high school in Jena, Louisiana, after several race-related incidents were reported at the school, including a noose incident and several physical altercations between Caucasian and African American students. The training was attended by state and local government officials, business leaders, community representatives, local clergy, and approximately 50 junior high and high school students of different races. Special speakers included the local parish superintendent, the Principal of Jena High School, and the U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Louisiana. Among the issues discussed were the state of race relations at local schools and what could be done to improve them. The students were attentive and contributed significantly to the discussions. Evaluations provided by those who participated in the program lauded CRS' efforts as outstanding and successful.

Natchitoches, Louisiana

In April 2008, CRS was asked by the Director of the Louisiana NAACP Gulf Coast Academy Center and the Natchitoches branch of the NAACP to mediate growing racial tensions between the local minority community and the Natchitoches Parish School Board. The NAACP alleged that the School Board disparately disciplined minority students more frequently and more harshly than Caucasian students, that it poorly administered minority student individual education plans, that its membership did not equitably represent the local minority community, and that it verbally abused its minority students.

The school board and the NAACP requested CRS to mediate. On June 18, 2008, the parties publicly signed an agreement to formally address the NAACP's allegations and to work together towards a solution.

Ferriday, Louisiana

In May 2007, CRS was asked by the civil rights and community leaders in Ferriday, Louisiana, to provide technical assistance in addressing growing racial tensions between the minority community and the Concordia Parish School System. The NAACP alleged that the school system disparately gave minority students less access to school programs, funds, and services than it did to Caucasian students. They also alleged that the school system disciplined minority students more frequently and more harshly than Caucasian students, that it unequally administered minority student individual education plans, and that it provided fewer programs for disabled minority students than for disabled Caucasian students. CRS met with members of the NAACP, local teachers, school district officials, and local minority clergy leaders to discuss the allegations and an acceptable resolution for all parties. On July 22, 2008, the parties publicly signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that created a multi-racial commission to advise the school system on the equitable treatment of minorities and to address issues important to the local minority community.

Arlington, Texas

In December 2007, CRS responded to growing tensions in Arlington, Texas, after local press reported that an African American family in the community found the phrases “Kill” and “Die N-----” spray-painted on the garage of the home they were building in a predominantly Caucasian neighborhood. Shortly after the incident, a Caucasian woman allegedly came to the African American family’s home and attacked the African American woman who lived there with a two-by-four piece of wood, hospitalizing her. The local press reported that members of the community were outraged by the incidents and wanted them prosecuted as hate crimes. CRS worked with local law enforcement and government officials, civil rights groups, and local clergy to develop a unified plan to calm the escalating racial tensions and to strengthen the city’s community relations. On January 5, 2008, CRS provided on-site technical assistance and conflict-resolution services at a 300-person protest rally that was organized by community members of all races to denounce the incidents. The rally attracted a heavy police presence and received extensive media coverage. CRS provided similar services at a second rally held at Arlington’s City Hall on February 22, 2008. The protestors alleged that the city had failed to adequately address the incidents. Soon after the rally, CRS debriefed with the mayor and community leaders on the two marches and detailed ways to help calm the continuing racial tensions in the community.

In March 2008, CRS was asked by the Arlington city officials to conduct its CITY-SPIRIT Program (Student Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together) for the city as a way to begin healing the community’s racial divide. It was reported that several race-related incidents had occurred in the city since the December 2007 attack. On August 16, 2008, CRS hosted the “Arlington Coming Together: City SPIRIT” program. The training was open to the public and was attended by the city officials, members of the community, local clergy, community activists, and the U.S. Attorney for

the Northern District of Texas. Local television and newspapers heavily covered the training. The Fort Worth Star Telegram reported that participants felt the SPIRIT program was the first step to begin racial healing in Arlington. Local residents were quoted as saying that they felt the “Arlington Coming Together” session was extremely helpful and that they looked forward to working with the mayor’s office to begin implementing the recommendations discussed at the forum.

Dallas, Texas

In May 2008, CRS conducted a community forum in Dallas, Texas, with local law enforcement officials, community leaders, and representatives from the Dallas Independent School District to discuss race relations in the city’s schools. Specifically, the parties met to discuss the potential for future racial conflicts between African American and Hispanic students in the wake of the city’s pending plan to close several schools in the community and relocate the affected students to those schools in the area that were staying open. Furthermore, the School District’s representatives sought CRS’ guidance on how to improve the District’s problem-solving techniques and procedures, how to develop skills in conflict-resolution, and how to enhance the learning environments in its schools. On May 30, 2008, CRS signed an agreement with the Dallas Independent School District to conduct a series of trainings on conflict-resolution and capacity-building. Furthermore, as part of the agreement, the Dallas Independent School District and its partners officially recognized the CRS “Student Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together” (SPIRIT) program as a proven conflict-resolution and capacity-building training method. Following the signing ceremony, District officials publicly stated that the District’s participation in CRS’ conflict-resolution programs will contribute to improving race relations in Dallas schools and communities and to enhancing the learning environments for its students.

REGION 7 – CENTRAL

Serving Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska

Saint Louis, Missouri

In February 2008, CRS was asked by several community organizations in St. Louis, Missouri, to provide assistance in organizing a public forum and dialogue after an African American man killed six city officials at a City Hall meeting in Kirkwood, Missouri. On February 28, 2008, CRS hosted the first in a series of dialogues in the community to address the racial tensions that had escalated in the aftermath of the shooting. Together, city officials and representatives from the minority community established a community resolution initiative to help calm the tensions that had surfaced, and to provide a framework for addressing similar tensions in the future.

Junction City, Kansas

In October 2007, CRS was asked by the NAACP in Junction City, Kansas, to help address growing racial tensions in the community after a 14-year-old African American male was assaulted by a group of Caucasian teenagers at a party. Reports alleged that the victim became inebriated at a party and was further victimized. Furthermore, one of the alleged perpetrators was reportedly the son of a local deputy sheriff. Over the course of several months following the incident, CRS provided technical assistance to local law enforcement and community leaders, providing trainings on best practices during this and similar events.

Cedar Rapids and Iowa City, Iowa

In June 2008, CRS learned through media reports that minorities in eastern and central Iowa were alleging disparate treatment by the state regarding preparations for flood control. In July 2008, CRS hosted separate community forums and dialogues in Cedar Rapids and Iowa City between local minority community leaders,

representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), state officials, and local government officials from both cities. The forums provided minority leaders with an opportunity to address the needs of the minority communities in preparing for floods and other natural disasters. The parties later stated that CRS' assistance in organizing the events helped ease racial tensions in the two cities and facilitated the establishment of better communication between the city governments and their minority communities.

Des Moines, Iowa

In June 2008, CRS was asked by local government officials in Des Moines, Iowa, to help the city address the tensions surrounding the recent influx of various Islamic ethnic groups that had moved into the city. City officials expressed concern that acts of violence against these groups were increasing and sought CRS' guidance on how to best address the increased ethnic tensions resulting from these changing demographics. On September 8, 2008, CRS hosted an Arab, Muslim, and Sikh (AMS) cultural awareness program at the Des Moines Botanical Gardens Center. The event was attended by members of the local Arab, Muslim and Sikh (AMS) communities and 75 human resource specialists from Iowa's major corporations. At the event, participants learned the basic tenets of the AMS cultures and discussed ways to facilitate understanding and awareness of the AMS communities throughout Des Moines.

Omaha, Nebraska

In July 2008, CRS met with the local law enforcement officials in Omaha, Nebraska, to help them prepare for a scheduled demonstration by the National Socialist Movement (NSM) on July 5, 2008. In addition, CRS provided self-marshaling services by training members of the Omaha Hate Crimes Coordinating Council on how to monitor and provide assistance to police at the rally. At the rally, CRS provided on-site technical assistance and conciliation services. Due in part to CRS' efforts,

the demonstration and counter-protest ended peacefully and without incident. The Omaha Chief of Police later contacted CRS to express the police department's gratitude for assistance in executing a successful operations plan at the rally.

REGION 8 – ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Serving Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming

Aurora, Colorado

In December 2007, CRS was asked by the Aurora Human Relations Commission and local law enforcement officials in Aurora, Colorado, to help the city respond to two racial incidents involving two African American city employees. The two employees found nooses on their lockers and exposed razor blades in their tool belts. The incidents received significant state and local media coverage, leading some in the Aurora community to express concerns over growing racial tension within the community. In response, CRS facilitated a community dialogue with city officials, local law enforcement, local clergy, the Aurora Human Relations Commission, and members of the community to develop a contingency plan to control rumors and coordinate efforts during a series of planned protest marches. In addition, CRS trained the dialogue's participants on how to report and respond to racially motivated hate crimes and incidents. CRS hosted an additional training session with the FBI for the Aurora Human Relations Commission. CRS provided technical assistance to the Arapahoe County Sheriff's office in developing a "zero tolerance" policy to discourage Sheriff's office employees from engaging in racially offensive behavior. Finally, CRS assisted the Key Community Response Team of Aurora prepare and plan for the public's reaction to the announcement that a county employee had been arrested in connection with the noose and razor blade incidents.

Denver, Colorado

From August 25-28, 2008, the Democratic National Convention was held in Denver, Colorado. In anticipation of large demonstrations and possible civil unrest, CRS provided contingency planning and training services to demonstration groups, state and local law enforcement, and city officials. Throughout the week, CRS also monitored protest activities for jurisdictional conflict. CRS assisted in the creation of a law enforcement-protest group liaison program, which increased communication and developed working relationships between community organizers, protest leadership, and law enforcement. This technical assistance provided by CRS resulted in a low number of arrests throughout the convention. Additionally, CRS facilitated self-marshal training with law enforcement and community leadership. This training aided the parties in clarifying the chain of command during a march and a protocol for exchange of information amongst all groups involved. In all, CRS monitored and assessed fifteen demonstrations, protests, and marches for jurisdictional conflict during the convention.

Boulder, Colorado

On February 27, 2008, CRS assisted the University of Colorado administration, faculty, student services, and student leadership in the resolution of campus community conflict and racial tensions following an alleged racially-intolerant editorial written by the campus newspaper. CRS facilitated a campus-wide community forum, provided contingency planning services prior to a protest and demonstration, and provided on-site conciliation services and best practices training in campus community conflict-resolution. Most notably, CRS' conciliation services helped the parties to identify issues and concerns related to campus climate and racial diversity. Furthermore, CRS facilitated the formation of working groups to identify and resolve campus conflict and established increased opportunities for dialogue between diverse student groups and the University administration.

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

In April 2008, CRS learned from various local media reports that approximately 150 members of the Yankton Sioux American Indian community were protesting the construction of a hog farm on the Yankton Sioux Reservation land. This Sioux Community perceived this construction to be disrespectful and discriminatory. An assessment by CRS determined that twenty-two arrests had been made by the local Sheriff's Department and the potential for violence existed between law enforcement and the protesting community because of these arrests. CRS deployed to the site, with more than 150 protestors and demonstrators present. CRS provided conciliation services, and facilitated meetings between the hog farm ownership, Yankton Sioux Tribal Officials and state and local law enforcement. As a result, the parties agreed to halt construction pending a public forum and community meeting that took place in Wagner, South Dakota. The early and immediate intervention by CRS prevented a likely violent confrontation between tribal members and law enforcement, created a cooling-off period, and ultimately allowed for the matter to be duly resolved in a court of law.

included public protests and demonstrations, as well as community dialogues. CRS will continue to be involved in this community in jurisdictional matters, as needed.

Honolulu, Hawaii

In March 2008, CRS was asked to assist in addressing growing conflicts between Samoan and Chuukese residents in their public housing developments. Tenants and staff of the housing developments reported a growing number of incidents, including several stabbings between these groups. Honolulu's U.S. Attorney, faculty from the University of Hawaii, and directors of several major mediation centers on the island of Oahu requested assistance from CRS in addressing the growing conflict. On September 25, 2008, CRS deployed to the site and provided a 10-hour conflict-resolution training program for the housing development. On October 16, 2008, CRS facilitated a follow-up video conference training initiative with the parties. One outcome was that a local conflict-resolution group would provide advanced training in mediation for housing development residents in January of 2009.

REGION 9 – WESTERN

Serving Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, and Nevada

Phoenix, Arizona

Maricopa County law enforcement and local communities have a history of persistent and active differences regarding immigration-focused law enforcement activity. Tensions were at an all-time high in 2008. Allegations of racial profiling resulted in public expressions of concern throughout the county. CRS provided conciliation services in high profile protest/counter-protest situations. Additionally, CRS provided facilitation and training to local human relations commissions to build their capacity to provide peacekeeping services in the controversy, which

Los Angeles, California

On May 1, 2008, CRS was on-site at the May Day 2008 march, where protesters alleged economic and racial discrimination and mistreatment of Latino immigrants living in the Los Angeles area. The same organizational march disrupted community activities in 2007, resulting in a year-long controversy regarding alleged excessive use of force by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). CRS worked closely with the LAPD to develop a specialized operation of Community Liaison Teams that was adopted for all major marches and demonstrations. CRS also participated in and facilitated exercises, and worked with event organizers, law enforcement, and human relations commissions to install the new program. This plan included specialized response teams directly connected to march organizers and the incident commander in preparation of the event. The contingency

planning contributions of CRS addressed complex march arrangements that had three concurrent assembly areas for participants as they converged on downtown Los Angeles. Due in part to CRS' involvement, the event was executed more smoothly than the previous year.

REGION 10 – NORTHWEST

Serving Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington

Boise, Idaho

In October 2007, CRS was contacted by Middle Eastern community leadership in Boise, Idaho. They expressed concerns over a planned "Islamofascism Awareness Week" that was being planned for October 22-26, 2008, on numerous college campuses across the country. A civil rights organization alleged that this event promotes racial polarization and divisiveness. On October 23, 2007, CRS conducted a community dialogues in Boise to address tensions stemming from these events.

Seattle, Washington

On October 24, 2007, CRS provided on-site contingency planning in Seattle prior to a protest regarding these same tensions at the University of Washington. CRS met with University faculty, student leadership, Arab American Community Coalition leadership, and campus security regarding the demonstrations. Event organizers requested that CRS stay on-site during the protest to monitor the event and provide conciliation services, as necessary. The demonstration was attended by more than 100 protestors, with local television and print media reporting. Due in part to CRS' assistance, the event was peaceful and ended incident-free.

Seattle, Washington

In November 2007, CRS was contacted by The Sikh Coalition concerned an alleged hate/bias incident

involving a Sikh cab driver being assaulted by a drunken passenger. Reportedly, the passenger removed the driver's turban while yelling "terrorist" and then bit the cab driver while threatening to kill him. This incident outraged the community. On November 29, 2007, CRS facilitated a dialogue with Arab, Muslim, and Sikh communities, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the U.S. Attorney, and local law enforcement concerning this incident.

Lynnwood, Washington

In December 2007, CRS was contacted by school officials in Snohomish County regarding racial tensions within their school district. The concerns included increased hostility, racial slurs, and threats that they believed had the potential to escalate into violence. Throughout January 2008, CRS led three Student Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together (S.P.I.R.I.T) workshops to enhance students' cultural awareness and promote a peaceful multicultural learning environment. The program applied principles of mediation and problem-solving, and required the full engagement of the school community to assist in the improvement of the racial climate of the schools.

Eugene, Oregon

On June 24, 2008, CRS was present at the University of Oregon to provide on-site conciliation services and assist in contingency planning for a vigil taking place on campus. The vigil was in response to the beating of a 59-year-old African-American man by three Caucasian males. The incident was being investigated as a hate/bias incident. In addition to this incident, hate graffiti had been discovered at local elementary schools, on a Jewish family's home, and on windows and walls of local businesses. CRS met with vigil leadership and offered contingency planning and self-marshaling training. CRS maintained communication with campus security and event leadership, and the event concluded peacefully and incident-free.

CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENT

The Commerce, Justice, State, Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Conference Report for fiscal year 1999 included Congressional notification requirements for CRS. The report stated:

Close coordination between the Administration and Congress could help stabilize racially motivated local incidents. As the people's body, Congress must be kept informed when the Administration responds to a domestic crisis. Therefore, the Attorney General is directed to notify the relevant committees whenever requests by local officials prompt the deployment of CRS personnel to mediate conflict.

Whenever CRS mediators conducted violence prevention and conflict resolution activities in fiscal year 2008, CRS notified the two U.S. Senators of the State where the conflict occurred, the U.S. Representative of the affected Congressional district, and Senate and House Appropriations Committee staff members. CRS continues to meet this ongoing notification requirement.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CRS uses the following terms in its publications to describe certain activities.

“Dialogue”

Dialogue is a form of conciliation in which CRS facilitates discussions among a racially and ethnically diverse public which reflects various local agencies, institutions, and community residents. Topics of a dialogue include race, police-community relations, and other issues. Problem solving activities develop work plans for promoting peace and resolving conflict in neighborhoods and schools.

“Facilitate Communication” or “Open Lines of Communication”

Communities involved in racial disputes, conflicts, disturbances, or violence often have a history of poor communication among parties, which leads to misperceptions of each other’s actions, lack of trust, and avoidance of face-to-face discussion. CRS provides conflict resolution services by listening to the issues and concerns of each party and learning from each party about the problem and potential resolutions to the conflict.

As a “third ear,” CRS is able to serve as a liaison for promoting better communities. By reframing and clarifying the issues, CRS can often move parties towards resolving their problems. When the parties listen and understand each other, they may develop resolutions together. These communications may be in person, by telephone, e-mail, or fax, over a substantial period of time. The fundamental building block to building trust is communication, which reduces tensions and establishes important relationships for community stability.

“LEM”

LEM stands for Law Enforcement Mediation. LEM was developed by CRS in conjunction with the California Peace Officers Standards and Training Commission. It is a program designed for police officers engaged in community policing activities. LEM assists officers in racially diverse communities to strengthen their skills in

cross-cultural communication, investigation, problem-solving, anger management, and mediation techniques. Benefits of LEM include a reduction of potential violence and improved community relations.

“Mediation”

Mediation consists of structured, formal, face-to-face negotiation. Participation is voluntary, and participants may include city officials, law enforcement officers, and community groups. CRS facilitates discussion between willing parties in order to achieve a documented agreement. Such mediation may result in a signed agreement witnessed by the Community Relations Service mediator. Occasionally, courts will request CRS to mediate a dispute, particularly if it involves community groups and public agencies.

“Monitor Racial Tensions”

CRS monitors racial tensions to ensure they do not escalate and lead to violence. In some circumstances, when parties are not ready to use CRS services, CRS will step back and monitor racial tensions in the community as the parties consider their next course of action. CRS may also monitor community racial tensions after services have been provided to ensure that an agreement or resolution is effective. CRS may monitor a resolution through face-to-face meetings, e-mails, telephone conversations, or faxes with community leaders, law enforcement, and local officials.

“Provide Conciliation Assistance”

This is a comprehensive term to describe CRS’ conflict resolution and violence prevention services. Conciliation is a process by which CRS facilitates communications between the parties in conflict to reduce the likelihood of violence or disruption.

“Provide a Federal Presence”

CRS deploys staff to be available on location when conflict resolution services may be necessary to resolve or prevent conflict associated with a march, demonstration or community meeting. As an impartial Federal agency, CRS provides a stabilizing Federal presence when parties are in conflict or in direct physical contact with one another. CRS staff wear distinctive official clothing and station themselves at critical locations where parties may interact with one another or where crowd congestion could create tensions. This allows parties to recognize CRS staff and call on CRS services. During contentious situations, the mere presence of CRS staff may be enough to prevent intense emotion from developing into violence.

“SPIRIT”

SPIRIT stands for Student Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together. It is an innovative program created by CRS that recognizes the value of student participation in solving racial conflict. SPIRIT brings together students, administrators, teachers, and parents to identify issues that are perpetuating conflict, and to develop solutions. As part of the program, school staff identifies student leaders to help guide the program. Since its inception, SPIRIT has been conducted in hundreds of schools across the country, and has been integral in preventing violence and conflict in areas with changing demographic populations.

City-Student Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together (City-SPIRIT) Program relies on the accomplishments of the SPIRIT initiative as a model. Unlike the normal SPIRIT program that focuses on educational institutions, City-SPIRIT involves civic leaders and local government officials who form a cadre of concerned citizens from all levels and backgrounds of society. It is an inclusive and participatory effort to improve race relations community-wide.

“Technical Assistance”

Because of CRS’ long history and experience in resolving racial conflict, it is often requested to provide expert materials, information, and experience to help communities resolve racial conflict and prevent violence. In some cases, CRS will provide expert technical advice

to help overcome a major barrier to resolving a dispute. For example, CRS might provide technical insights on the structure and function of a Human Relations Commission. This kind of intervention can help address police, community, or school conflicts.

“Training”

Training is provided by CRS in response to an existing conflict to help State, local, and tribal governments and communities create an immediate capacity to address racial conflict situations. Whenever necessary, CRS seeks to strengthen community capacity to address local racial disputes by providing on-the-spot training.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Relations Service?

The Community Relations Service (CRS) is a Congressionally mandated Federal agency that assists communities by resolving conflicts based on race, color, and national origin. Trained Federal mediators provide services to local officials and community leaders on a voluntary and cost-free basis. Types of assistance available from CRS include mediation of disputes and conflicts, training in cultural competence, conflict resolution skills, technical assistance, and facilitation in developing strategies to prevent and resolve conflicts.

What is CRS' jurisdiction?

CRS provides its services to local communities when there are community-wide conflicts, tension, or violence stemming from racial or ethnic issues. CRS provides services on a voluntary and confidential basis, according to provisions in Title X of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Where does CRS work?

CRS works in all 50 States and territories, and in communities large and small: rural, suburban, and urban. Much of CRS' work comes from requests by local law enforcement officials, school administrators, government officials, community leaders, and other local and State authorities. Parties request CRS' assistance where neutral mediators are needed to help calm tensions, prevent violence, and facilitate communication.

Who provides CRS services?

Trained impartial CRS conflict resolution mediators, known as Conciliation Specialists, are based in 10 regional and 4 field offices across the country and are available on a 24-hour basis. They follow established and standardized procedures in their work. In each incident, CRS first assesses the situation by determining what racial, ethnic, and cultural origin tensions or issues may be present in a community. This often includes meeting face-to-face with the affected parties. After gaining an in-depth understanding of the situation, CRS will determine action

necessary to help resolve the conflict and prevent violence from occurring.

When are CRS services appropriate?

CRS work often involves situations of racial conflict or violence involving police-community relations, hate incidents, cultural awareness needs, and perceptions of disparate treatment or discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. The most intense casework tends to involve police excessive use of force, major demonstrations and counter-demonstrations, major school disruptions, and hate incident activity.

Can a community refuse CRS services?

CRS provides its services at the request of local officials or community leaders. Communities may decline CRS services at any time.

Why are Federal CRS mediators a good choice to resolve community racial conflict?

Since CRS mediators are federally funded, they are able to ensure their impartiality in helping to resolve conflicts on Federal, State, and local levels. CRS is a component of the Justice Department's mission to help State and local governments prevent community violence and promote public safety.

Why is CRS located in the Justice Department?

CRS is not a law enforcement agency, nor does CRS prosecute or investigate issues. CRS' purpose is to represent the Department of Justice in one of its most important missions — providing assistance and support to Federal, State, and local authorities in their efforts to prevent violence and resolve conflicts based on race, color, and national origin. As representatives of the Department of Justice, CRS mediators have the credibility and trust to work effectively with people on all sides of the conflict. CRS is not part of the Civil Rights Division, but is an independent agency within the Department of Justice.

How does CRS know if it has been successful?

The level of satisfaction among the recipients of CRS services is the best indication of whether CRS has been successful. Whenever possible, CRS will contact local officials to review the status of agreements, programs, and community-wide tension or conflict. An internal reporting system registers outcomes and accomplishments for each CRS case activity.

CRS OFFICES

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