

# Working with Religious Groups



U.S. Department of Justice  
Community Relations Service



The Community Relations Service (CRS) is a component of the Department of Justice that works to resolve conflict — by engaging communities in difficult conversations through peaceful dialogue.

CRS works with religious organizations from all faiths to address real or perceived hate crimes and hate incidents within the community.

## Facilitated Dialogue

Conciliation specialists provide customized facilitated dialogues to open the lines of communication and improve information sharing among community stakeholders.

■ **Bias Incidents and Hate Crimes Forum:** The Bias Incidents and Hate Crimes Forum provides community members and law enforcement with information related to the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, as well as state and local hate crimes laws. This program engages local and federal law enforcement, district attorneys, civil rights organizations and community organizations in discussions and information sharing on methods to combat and respond to bias incidents and hate crimes.

■ **City-Site Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together (City-SPIRIT):** The City-SPIRIT program brings together diverse community stakeholders — such as public officials, law enforcement, the faith-based community, and community groups — to identify issues impacting their community and develop solutions that reduce conflict, improve communication and minimize the potential for future conflict.

■ **Protecting Places of Worship Forum (PPOW):** This forum offers best practices to help communities protect places of worship against potential threats. CRS convenes subject matter experts from federal, state and local law enforcement agencies as well as faith-based organizations to provide information and resources related to hate crime laws, active shooter situations and physical security at religious buildings.

■ **Strengthening Police and Community Partnerships (SPCP):** SPCP convenes law enforcement and diverse community leaders in problem-solving discussions focused on improving public safety by increasing trust and developing partnerships. The program is designed to increase local capacity and develop solutions to address police-community relations issues.



## Training

Our training programs provide representatives from government, faith organizations, law enforcement, civil rights groups and other community organizations with knowledge and skills that increase understanding and improve collaboration between diverse stakeholders.

■ **Engaging and Building Partnerships with Muslim Americans and Engaging and Building Partnerships with Sikh Americans:** The goals of these two programs are to increase public awareness of civil rights-related issues that impact Muslim and Sikh Americans; enhance understanding of beliefs and religious practices of Muslim and Sikh Americans to improve communication and public safety for all community members; and provide best practices for collaboration with the Muslim and Sikh American communities.

■ **Facilitating Meetings Around Community Conflict (FMACC):** The FMACC training program provides community leaders with skills and tools to facilitate meetings in communities where tensions and conflict are present. This program enhances community leaders' effectiveness as facilitators; expands community leaders' listening and observation skills; and provides resources to prepare for, conduct and follow up after meetings aimed at resolving community conflict.

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## Program Brochures and Resources

- [Bias and Hate Crimes Forum: Guide for Community Leaders](#)
- [Engaging and Building Relationships with Muslim Americans](#)
- [Engaging and Building Relationships with Sikh Americans](#)
- [Protecting Places of Worship Through Education and Dialogue](#)
- [Strengthening Police and Community Partnerships \(SPCP\)](#)
- [Video: Engaging and Building Relationships with Muslim and Sikh Americans](#)