U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service (CRS)

# Working with

## Muslim, Arab, Sikh, South Asian, and Hindu Communities

The Department of Justice Community Relations Service (CRS) provides services to communities across the U.S., including Muslim, Arab, Sikh, South Asian, and Hindu (MASSAH) organizations, to reduce community conflicts and tensions and support their work to prevent and respond to hate crimes and hate incidents. CRS has a long history of working with MASSAH groups in collaboration with law enforcement, government, and other community stakeholders.

CRS serves as "America's Peacemaker" for communities in conflict by mediating disputes and enhancing community capacity to independently prevent and resolve future conflicts.

Under Title X of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, CRS responds to community conflicts arising from differences of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. CRS does not have law enforcement or prosecutorial authority. Rather, CRS works with communities in conflict to help rebuild relationships, facilitate mutual understanding, and encourage the development of local solutions.

CRS' conciliators work directly with state and local officials, community-based organizations, community and civil rights advocates, faith-based groups, and law enforcement on a voluntary basis. CRS serves as a neutral-third party, and its services are free and confidential.

**CRS provides four unique services to communities:**

**Facilitated Dialogue.** CRS facilitates dialogues between community stakeholders to open lines of communication between parties. Frequently addressed topics include alleged discrimination, police-community relations, hate crimes and hate incidents, tribal conflicts, protests and demonstrations, and other issues important to community members.

**Mediation.** CRS provides mediation services to help communities resolve conflicts and tensions through face-to-face negotiations between stakeholders. The goal of mediation is to develop agreements between community members that increase trust, improve community partnerships, and build local capacity to prevent and respond to future conflicts.

**Training.** CRS training programs bring together representatives from state and local government agencies, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, advocacy groups, and other groups to develop common understanding and identify collaborative approaches for reducing community conflicts.

**Consultation.** CRS offers consultation services to help communities respond more effectively to conflicts. These services include technical assistance in the formation of human relations commissions; best practices for engaging with diverse communities; and coaching on issues of communication, dispute resolution, and joint problem-solving.

## CRS supports MASSAH communities:

CRS is committed to working with MASSAH communities to prevent and respond to conflicts, tensions, hate crimes, and hate incidents. In FY 2017, CRS' National Program Manager for MASSAH communities facilitated hate crime forums across the country, from the east coast (New York and Pennsylvania), to the Midwest (Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and South Dakota), to the west coast (Washington and Oregon).

## Four CRS programs have been widely adopted in MASSAH communities:

**Engaging and Building Partnerships with Muslim Americans and Sikh Americans.** CRS offers Muslim-American and Sikh-American community awareness programs intended to familiarize law enforcement and government officials with best practices for successful interactions with Muslim and Sikh communities. The training also may be given as part of a broader initiative to strengthen relationships between local officials and the Muslim and Sikh communities they serve.

**Bias Incidents and Hate Crime Forums.** This half-day 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 bias incidents and hate crimes laws. The program engages local law enforcement and district attorneys, along with federal law enforcement, in discussions and information sharing on procedures to combat and respond to bias incidents and hate crimes. CRS also facilitates informal community awareness forums and information sessions to strengthen relationships between community groups and federal, state and/or local law enforcement or other government agencies.

**Protecting Places of Worship Forums.** This half-day forum provides faith-based leaders and congregations with information about religious hate crimes, local, state and federal law enforcement threat assessments, and steps to protect places of worship from potential hate crimes and other threats of violence. The program encourages the implementation of a security program, offers best practices for security, fosters networking and community outreach, and provides resources such as examples of security plans and community responses.

**City or School-Problem Identification & Resolution of Issues Together (City-SPIRIT and School SPIRIT):** This eight-hour problem-solving and resolution program brings together representatives from local government, communities, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, and others to develop collaborative approaches to reducing tension and addressing the factors that contribute to conflicts by identifying concrete actions the parties are willing to take together.

## CRS operates nationally from ten regional offices and four field offices:

**CRS Headquarters**
Washington, DC

**CRS Regional Offices**

**New England**
Boston, MA

**Northeast**
New York, NY

**Mid-Atlantic**
Philadelphia, PA

**Southeast**
Atlanta, GA

**Midwest**
Chicago, IL

**Southwest**
Dallas, TX

**Central**
Kansas City, MO

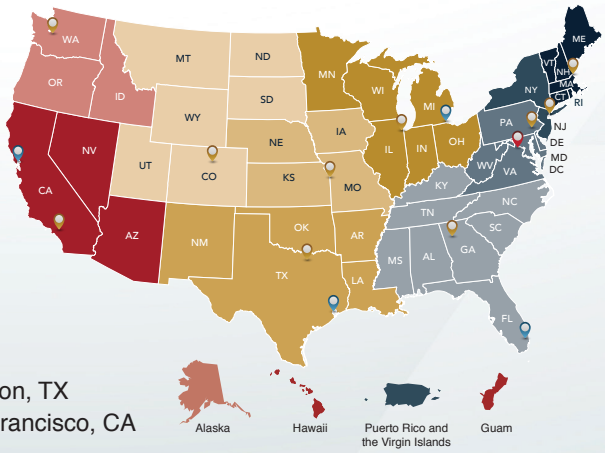
**Rocky Mountain**
Denver, CO

**Western**
Los Angeles, CA

**Northwest**
Seattle, WA

**CRS Field Offices**

Miami, FL
Detroit, MI
Houston, TX
San Francisco, CA




## For more information on CRS services:

Please call us at 202-305-2935, email us at askcrs@usdoj.gov or visit us at: **www.justice.gov/crs**.

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To report a hate crime, please contact your local FBI field office: https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices.