U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service

Protecting Places of Worship

Through Education and Dialogue

The U.S. Department of Justice Community Relation Service's (CRS) in-person facilitated program, Protecting Places of Worship, educates local communities on how to prevent and respond to hate crimes that target religious institutions and fosters dialogue to strengthen relations between government, law enforcement, and faith communities.

This three-hour program is in response to a series of violent acts against houses of worship in multiple communities across the United States and is designed to increase the security of local religious centers. Upon request, CRS convenes subject matter experts to provide an overview of hate crime laws, statistics and case studies, and physical security. The program also facilitates dialogue and improves partnerships between law enforcement and faith communities.

Program Goals

Educate communities on hate crime prevention and response

Provide communities with best practices and resources on how to secure places of worship and respond in active shooter situations

Improve relations between government agencies and faith leaders in the community

Program Overview

Hate Crimes Prosecution Panel
Representatives from the local U.S. Attorney's Office and the county or state prosecutor's office discuss federal and state hate crime statutes to increase public awareness of hate crimes reporting procedures and prosecutions.

Hate Crimes Statistics and Case Studies
Representatives from federal law enforcement or recognized civil rights organizations present data and trends on hate crimes and provide recent examples of hate crimes that have occurred in places of worship.

Responding to Active Shooters and Securing Places of Worship
Experts from federal, state, or local law enforcement provide overviews on responding to active shooters and best practices for assessing the physical security of places of worship.

Faith Community Leaders Panel
A panel of faith and community leaders presents strategies to improve communication and trust between law enforcement, safety experts, and faith communities.

About CRS

Established by Title X of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and expanded by the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, CRS serves as "America's Peacemaker" for communities facing tension or conflict based on differences of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and disability. CRS services aim to enhance the ability of local communities to independently and collaboratively prevent and resolve future conflicts through the use of problem solving, increased knowledge, and improved communication.

CRS Services and Programs

CRS provides an array of programs to communities experiencing tension, as a tool for cultivating understanding, improving collaboration, and preventing future disagreements. CRS staff are professional mediators, facilitators, trainers, and consultants experienced in bringing community members together to help enhance their ability to resolve existing conflict and prevent future conflicts.

Where We Work

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

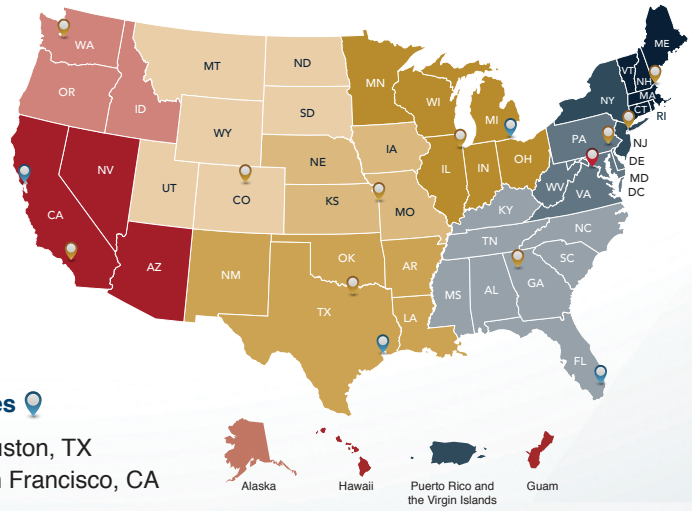
Rocky Mountain
Denver, CO

Western
Los Angeles, CA

Northwest
Seattle, WA

CRS Field Offices

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



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For more information on this program or other CRS services, please contact your local CRS office:
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