U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service

Transforming Conflict and Developing Solutions Through Dialogue on Race

The U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service's (CRS) Dialogue on Race program is an interactive, facilitated process that opens lines of communication and fosters mutual understanding to help address racial conflict and decrease racial tensions.

The Dialogue on Race program convenes participants from as many parts of the community as possible to exchange information face-to-face or virtually, share personal stories and experiences, honestly express perspectives, clarify viewpoints, and develop solutions that address community concerns. Dialogue emphasizes listening to deepen understanding and encourages participants to question and reevaluate their assumptions. Through this process, participants learn to work together to improve race relations and racial equality in their community.

Why should communities consider a Dialogue on Race program to resolve racial conflict and decrease tension?
A dialogue process can improve understanding and motivate communities to work toward changes that address racial conflict and reduce community tensions.

Program Objectives

Transforming perspectives and empowering change. Dialogues have the potential to go beyond sharing between participants and can be the catalyst for change.

Uniting divided communities through a structured, civil, and informed sharing of local racial history and its impacts on different communities.

Developing solutions. Dialogue facilitates solutions and collaborative action.

Reaching beyond the usual boundaries. Dialogues involve the entire community, offering opportunities for new, unexpected partnerships.

Program Overview

Each facilitated dialogue session guides individuals through a process from sharing personal experiences, to gaining a deeper understanding of those experiences, to committing to collective action. The Dialogue on Race program has four steps.

Step 1
The first step sets the tone and explores the question "Who are we?" through the sharing of personal stories.

Step 2
The second step helps participants understand "Where are we?" through a deeper exploration of personal and shared racial history in the community.

Step 3
During the third step, participants develop a vision for the community, in response to the question "Where do we want to be?"

Step 4
Finally, in the fourth step, participants answer the question "What will we do as individuals and with others to make a difference?"

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 that cultivate understanding, improve collaboration, and prevent future conflicts. 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

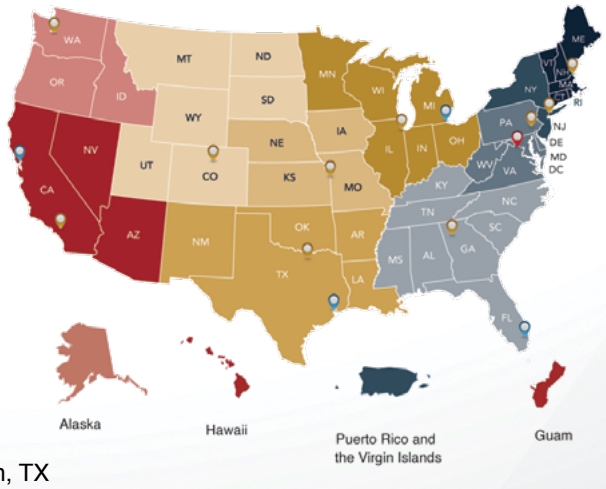
Central
Kansas City, MO

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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