U.S. Department of Justice Community Relations Service

Working with the Community Relations Service (CRS) during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Frequently Asked Questions

CRS is an agency within the Department of Justice (DOJ) that is congressionally mandated by Title X of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009 to work with community groups to resolve community conflicts and prevent and respond to alleged hate crimes committed on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and disability.

Q: What is CRS?

CRS is the only federal agency that is congressionally mandated to assist communities in resolving conflicts based on actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and disability. CRS is not an investigatory or prosecutorial agency, and it does not have any law enforcement authority. All CRS services are confidential and provided free of charge to the communities. CRS provides four services: facilitated dialogue, mediation, training, and consultation. These services help communities in conflict enhance their capacity to independently prevent and resolve future conflicts.

Q: Is CRS open for business during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Yes. CRS continues to fulfill its critical mission and remains open for business amid the COVID-19 pandemic. CRS currently is working with communities to address pandemic-related and other bias incidents and hate crimes in accordance with the agency's jurisdiction. CRS's team of conciliation specialists are available telephonically and virtually through video conferencing, teleconferencing, and webinars to serve communities in all 50 states and U.S. territories.

Q: What has CRS done to assist communities during the COVID-19 pandemic?

CRS is committed to ensuring communities have access to our services even during challenging circumstances. Read here for examples of how CRS has helped communities during the pandemic: justice.gov/crs/highlights/covid-19.

Q: What kinds of virtual services does CRS provide?

Although most of CRS's work typically is conducted through in-person sessions, CRS also provides virtual and telephonic services. These services include facilitation of virtual dialogues, community meetings, and webinars that can provide information to community groups and other stakeholders about hate crimes reporting procedures and resources, and can support the development of action plans focused on bias incidents and hate crimes prevention and response. Additional services include consultation and sharing best practices.

In addition, CRS provides educational forums that can be conducted as webinars to allow information to be shared with large numbers of stakeholders simultaneously:

- **The Bias Incidents and Hate Crimes Forum**, facilitated by CRS, convenes local and federal law enforcement and community-based organizations in discussions to share approaches to prevent and respond to bias incidents and hate crimes. This forum also facilitates the exchange of information and strengthens relationships between stakeholders.

- **The Protecting Places of Worship Forum** offers best practices to help communities protect places of worship against potential threats. The forum convenes local, state, and federal law enforcement officials and faith-based organizations in a dialogue to provide information and resources related to hate crime laws, active shooter situations, and physical security at religious buildings.

Q: How do I contact the CRS staff?

To contact CRS, please send an email to askCRS@usdoj.gov. Please note in your email the state or U.S. territory where you reside or want services. CRS conciliation specialists are located in 10 regional offices and four field offices across the country. The regional offices are located in Boston, New York City, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Kansas City, Denver, Los Angeles, and Seattle, with field offices in Miami, Detroit, Houston, and San Francisco.

Q: Where can I access DOJ resources on bias incidents and hate crimes prevention and response?

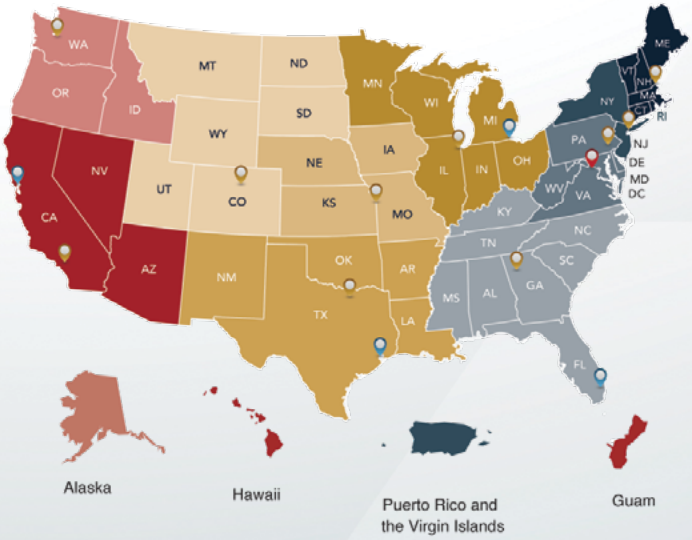
Visit the DOJ CRS Resources Center page for training videos, brochures, facilitator guides, and annual reports at www.justice.gov/crs/crs-resource-center. For more information regarding hate crimes prevention and response, visit www.justice.gov/hatecrimes.

Q: Where can I find current answers to questions about COVID-19?

For the latest information regarding the coronavirus, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html.

Where We Work

- New England Region
- Northeastern Region
- Mid-Atlantic Region
- Southeastern Region
- Midwestern Region
- Southwestern Region
- Central Region
- Rocky Mountain Region
- Western Region
- Northwestern Region
- Field Offices
- Regional Offices
- CRS Headquarters Offices



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