

United States Department of Justice



**Community Relations Service
FY 2020 Performance Budget
President's Budget Submission**

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COMMUNITY RELATIONS SERVICE

I. Overview for Community Relations Service

FY 2020 Budget Request

The Community Relations Service (CRS), an agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, was established by Title X of the historic Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. §2000g et seq.) and signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on July 2, 1964. In addition, pursuant to the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act enacted in 2009, CRS is authorized to work with communities to help them develop the capacity to prevent and respond more effectively to violent hate crimes allegedly committed on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.

CRS engages in two key activities: (1) providing assistance to State and local communities in the prevention and resolution of tension, violence, and civil disorders relating to actual or perceived discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin; and (2) working with communities to voluntarily develop and employ locally defined strategies to prevent and respond to violent hate crimes committed on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. The FY 2020 President's Budget is not requesting an appropriation for the Community Relations Service, and instead proposes to consolidate those functions within the Civil Rights Division (CRT). This consolidation would appropriately right-size the Federal role in local conflict resolution, while eliminating duplicative functions and improving efficiency. The Budget transfers \$5 million and 15 positions to CRT to support that proposal.

Program Overview

CRS's headquarters is in Washington, D.C. and is a single decision unit that plays a significant role in accomplishing **DOJ's Strategic Goal #2 –Prevent Crime, Protect the Rights of the American People, and Enforce Federal Law**. Within this goal, CRS specifically addresses Strategic Objective 2.5— Promote and protect Americans' civil rights. CRS assists state and local government officials, law enforcement officers, community leaders, and others in resolving and preventing community-based conflicts and civil disorder around issues of race, color, and national origin and developing local capacity to prevent related community conflict and tensions. CRS also works to prevent and respond to alleged violent hate crimes on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability and decrease related community tensions. CRS's services assist willing parties in developing and implementing local strategies that can help law enforcement, local officials, community and faith-based organizations, civil rights organizations, and interested community groups respond to alleged hate crimes and find ways to prevent future incidents.

CRS provides four services to communities throughout the United States: 1) mediation, 2) facilitated dialogue, 3) training, and 4) consultation. By mandate, CRS' services are confidential, voluntary, and impartial (42 U.S.C. §2000g). State and local law enforcement

officials and community leaders may request CRS services to reduce tensions stemming from hate crimes, hate incidents, and planned rallies and marches or to promote reconciliation after such events, as well as to improve communication between law enforcement and community members in the aftermath of a hate crime. CRS can provide facilitated dialogue between law enforcement and community members to increase mutual understanding about the investigative and prosecutorial process and increase public safety.

CRS services also address perceptions of discrimination, which can be as disruptive to community stability as actual discrimination. Specifically, CRS's mediation and facilitated dialogue services provide a framework for parties to discuss perceptions of discrimination and issues impacting communities. These services also facilitate the development of partnerships and voluntary agreements to improve communication and trust, increase local capacity to prevent and respond to future conflicts, and improve public safety.

CRS does not have law enforcement authority, nor does it investigate or prosecute cases. As an impartial agency, CRS does not look to assign blame or fault to any individual or group. In contrast, CRS helps communities develop and implement their own solutions to reducing tensions. Furthermore, as alternatives to coercion or litigation, CRS facilitates the development of viable and voluntary solutions for resolution of community tension.

III. Appropriations Language and Analysis of Appropriation Language

SALARIES AND EXPENSES, COMMUNITY RELATIONS SERVICE

Appropriations Language

Since the Department plans to transfer the Community Relations Service's functions to the Civil Rights Division, no appropriations language is requested.

Analysis of Appropriations Language

There are no substantive changes proposed.

VII. Exhibits