



About the Community Relations Service

The Community Relations Service (CRS), a component of the U.S. Department of Justice, is the Federal government's "peacemaker" for community conflicts and tensions arising from differences of race, color, and national origin. CRS was created by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and is the only Federal component dedicated to assist State and local units of government, private and public organizations, and community groups with preventing and resolving racial and ethnic tensions, conflicts, and civil disorders, with the intent of restoring racial stability and harmony.

With the passage of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act in October, 2009, CRS is authorized to work with communities to employ strategies to prevent and respond to alleged violent hate crimes committed on the basis of actual or perceived gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or disability. CRS will continue to employ strategies to prevent and respond to community tension relating to alleged discrimination and violent hate crimes committed on the basis of race, color, or national origin.

For 45 years, CRS has been asked to provide its experienced mediators to help local communities settle destructive conflicts and disturbances relating to race, color, or national origin. Each year CRS' highly skilled conciliators bring hundreds of community-wide conflicts to peaceful closure in every State, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. territories.

CRS lends its services when requested or accepted by the parties. The Service uses impartial mediation practices and conflict resolution procedures to help local leaders resolve problems and restore stability. CRS has no law enforcement authority and does not impose solutions, investigate, prosecute, or assign blame and fault. All CRS mediators are required by law to conduct their activities in confidence, without publicity, and are prohibited from disclosing confidential information.

CRS conciliators work with State and local officials and community leaders to provide a wide variety of services to address racial issues and prevent violent hate crimes committed on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. CRS' services include:

- Contributing expertise and guidance on methods and policies that calm tension and conflicts associated with race, color, or national origin or with preventing and responding to violent hate crimes committed on the basis of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.
- Enhancing strategies of State and local governments and community groups to prevent and respond to civil disorders.
- Improving lines of communication between parties experiencing tension or conflict, including Federal, State, and local officials, community leaders and residents.
- Helping schools and universities effectively deal with incidents of tension or violence associated with race, color, or national origin or with preventing and responding to violent hate crimes committed on the basis of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.