



CRS FACT SHEET

The Community Relations Service (CRS), an arm of the U.S. Department of Justice, is a specialized conciliation service available to State and local officials to help prevent and resolve racial and ethnic conflict, violence, and civil disorder. CRS helps governors, mayors, police chiefs, school superintendents, and civic leaders defuse and manage racial and ethnic tensions and crises. CRS helps local officials and residents develop locally defined resolutions which restore community order and stability. CRS is the only Federal agency dedicated to this mission and annually assists hundreds of State and local units of government, private and public organizations, and community groups.

Services Available

For more than 35 years, CRS has provided its experienced mediators to settle community conflicts and violence related to race, color, or national origin. CRS' highly skilled conflict resolution professionals have helped resolve thousands of cases, arising use of force incidents, hate crimes, special events, changing demographics, and many other issues.

CRS provides its services when requested or when it believes peaceful community relations may be threatened. It relies on impartial mediation practices and established conflict resolution procedures to help local leaders resolve problems and restore community stability. CRS effectiveness depends upon voluntary cooperation by the parties with CRS and other parties. CRS professionals assist in identifying the sources of violence and conflict and utilize specialized crisis management and violence reduction techniques. CRS does not have law enforcement authority and does not impose solutions, investigate or prosecute cases, or assign blame or fault. Further, CRS mediators are required by law to conduct their activities in confidence and are prohibited from disclosing confidential information.

CRS conducts its work onsite with State and local officials, police executives, school and college administrators, and civic leaders.

- CRS provides expertise and guidance on methods and policies that help calm racial tensions and resolve conflicts;

- CRS builds cooperative approaches with State and local governments and community groups to prevent and respond to civil disorders;
- CRS improves lines of communication among Federal, State, and local public officials, community leaders and residents;
- CRS resolves conflicts and disputes through formal mediation or other conciliation approaches;
- CRS helps establish programs to eliminate racial misconceptions and build multiracial coalitions;
- CRS assesses community relations involving racial and ethnic tensions.

"... discrimination is something we will not tolerate . . . The enforcement of the law and protection of the law will be accorded to every citizen, and that no citizen will be beyond the reach of the law." --

John Ashcroft
Attorney General
February 12, 2001

Significant CRS Accomplishments

During periods of heightened racial tension and conflict in our Nation, CRS has helped hundreds of communities. Examples of CRS assistance include:

- **Civil Disorders.** CRS helps mayors, police chiefs, and community leaders restore stability and order. From the civil unrest in Los Angeles to demonstrations and community tensions over police shootings in Riverside, California; New York, New York; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Providence, Rhode Island, CRS was

“on the ground, ” helping police, local officials, and leaders end the violence and begin constructive dialogue. Once stability was restored, CRS provided assistance and training to improve police community relations and avert new violence.

- **Church Burnings.** As part of a comprehensive response by Federal agencies to address church burnings, CRS staff worked directly with more than 180 rural, suburban, and urban governments in 17 States to help eliminate racial distrust and polarization, promote multiracial efforts for the construction of new buildings, conduct race relations training for community leaders and law enforcement officers, and provide technical assistance bringing together law enforcement agencies and minority neighborhoods. CRS served as a principal partner on the National Church Arson Task Force.
- **Schools, Colleges, and Universities.** CRS services are regularly requested by hundreds of school districts and colleges. CRS is asked to help address racial conflicts and violence, reduce tensions, develop plans to avoid potential incidents, and conduct training programs for students, teachers, administrators and parents. CRS offers special programs, including the Student Problem Identification and Resolution (SPIR) program, which assists school administrators, teachers, students, and parents identify and defuse racial tensions at the senior and junior high levels. A further development of this program involves local police agencies as key partners in the design of an action plan.
- **Demonstrations, Marches, and Other Special Events.** CRS mediators help make sure that local officials and event organizers plan and communicate cooperatively, thereby reducing the prospect of racial misunderstandings, conflicts, and confrontations. Key planning and crisis response assistance was provided during the Democratic and Republican Conventions, Spring Break events in the Southeast, and at numerous protests and rallies throughout the country.
- **Hate Crimes.** CRS assists in ameliorating racial tensions sparked by incidents of hate crimes. CRS supported State and local hate crime working groups, developed curriculum and conducted training programs for command and patrol officers on response to hate crimes, and assisted communities in fostering constructive community involvement in the response to hate crimes. In Jasper, Texas, CRS assisted the city of Jasper, Texas, along with Federal, State, and local law enforcement in contingency planning for demonstrations and marches by national and local organizations in the aftermath of the dragging murder of James Byrd, Jr. CRS helped the city prepare for the national attention surrounding the funeral and burial, then worked with a broad coalition of leaders to plan for racial reconciliation.

- **Housing.** CRS provides technical assistance to police departments and community agencies in managing racial tensions involving housing issues. CRS works with community leaders, housing officials, security, local law enforcement, and school officials to assure there is a coordinated response.
- **Environmental Justice.** CRS addresses racial conflicts based on environmental issues. CRS mediated an agreement between city officials and community leaders which resolved health concerns, facilitated community involvement in the development of a joint cleanup plan, and assisted community leaders in addressing community concerns over environmental issues associated with the enlargement of the sanitary landfill.
- **Native Americans.** CRS provides conflict resolution assistance on issues and disputes involving tribes, communities, and Federal, State, and local officials. CRS assistance resolved issues of using reservation lands for sanitary and hazardous waste landfills, tribal voting rights, leasing of tribal lands to non-tribal members for housing and businesses, cross-deputization between tribal and non-tribal law enforcement agencies, jurisdictional disputes between State and local governments, and tribes over gaming activities, and the return of ancient Native American remains and artifacts unearthed by new land development.
- **Federal-Local Partnerships.** CRS’ positive relationships with community organizations help support other efforts, including community-oriented policing, conflict resolution and outreach by national law enforcement organizations, state police organizations, and police unions.

"A civil society demands from each of us good will and respect, fair dealing and forgiveness." --

George W. Bush
President
January 20, 2001

CRS Mission and Goals

In accordance with Title X of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000g, CRS seeks to prevent and resolve community conflicts and tensions arising from actions, policies, and practices perceived to be discriminatory on the basis of race,

color or national origin. CRS provides services, which include conciliation, mediation, and technical assistance, directly to people and their communities to help them resolve conflicts that tear at the fabric of our increasingly diverse society.

CRS Program Goals

- To create opportunities and mechanisms for constructive civic discourse on issues of race and ethnicity. CRS helps give national leadership and assistance to efforts to establish “places and spaces” for effective race relations discussions.
- To provide a high caliber of conflict resolution and prevention services to those communities most vulnerable to significant race relations tensions, conflicts, and violence.
- To build enhanced dispute resolution capabilities in local communities, including high schools, colleges and universities, so that local institutions will be able to resolve their own conflicts without external assistance.
- To establish bridges between minority groups and law enforcement organizations in order to improve relations and community safety, and to reduce the potential for community conflict.
- To improve the preparedness of communities to respond to civil unrest including activities by hate groups, through the provision of training, contingency planning, and technical assistance.

CRS Customer Service Standards

Our goal is to provide sensitive and effective conflict prevention and resolution services. You can expect us to meet the following standards when we work with you:

- We will clearly explain the process that CRS uses to address racial and ethnic conflicts and our role in that process.
- We will provide opportunities for all parties involved to contribute to and work toward a solution to the racial or ethnic conflict.
- If you are a participant in a CRS training session or conference, you will receive timely and useful information and materials that will assist you in preventing or minimizing racial and ethnic tensions.
- We will be prepared to respond to major racial or ethnic crisis situations within 24 hours from the time when your community notifies CRS or CRS becomes aware of the crisis.

- In non-crisis situations, we will contact you within three days of when your community notifies CRS or CRS becomes aware of the situation to discuss your request for CRS services.

CRS Offices

CRS Headquarters

Community Relations Service
600 E Street, NW, Suite 6000
Washington, D.C. 20530
202/305-2935
202/305-3009 FAX

CRS Regional and Field Offices

New England Regional Office

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
408 Atlantic Avenue Room 222
Boston, MA 02201
617/424-5715
617/424-5727 FAX

Northeast Regional Office

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
26 Federal Plaza, Suite 36-118
New York, NY10278
212/264-0700
212/264-2143 FAX

Mid-Atlantic Regional Office

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Custom House
2nd and Chestnut Streets, Room 208
Philadelphia, PA 19106
215/597-2344
215/597-9148 FAX

Southeast Regional Office

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
75 Piedmont Avenue, NE, Room 900
Atlanta, GA 30303
404/331-6883
404/331-4471 FAX

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CRS Regional and Field Offices *(continued)*

Field Office

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
51 S.W. First Avenue, Suite 624
Miami, FL 33130
305/536-5206
305/536-6778 FAX

Midwest Regional Office

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
55 West Monroe Street, Suite 420
Chicago, IL 60603
312/353-4391
312/353-4390 FAX

Field Office

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
211 West Fort Street, Suite 1404
Detroit, MI 48226
313/226-4010
313/226-2568 FAX

Southwest Regional Office

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
1420 West Mockingbird Lane, Suite 250
Dallas, TX 75247
214/655-8175
214/655-8184 FAX

Field Office

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
515 Rusk Avenue
Houston, TX 77002
713/718-4861
713/718-4862 FAX

Central Regional Office

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
1100 Main Street, Suite 1320
Kansas City, MO 64105
816/426-7434
816/426-7441 FAX

Rocky Mountain Regional Office

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
1244 Speer Blvd. Suite 650
Denver, CO 80204-3584
303/844-2973
303/844-2907 FAX

Western Regional Office

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
888 South Figueroa Street, Suite 1880
Los Angeles, CA 90017
213/894-2941
213/894-2880 FAX

Field Office

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
120 Howard Street, Suite 790
San Francisco, CA 94105
415/744-6565
415/744-6590 FAX

Northwest Regional Office

Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice
915 Second Avenue, Room 1808
Seattle, WA 98174
206/220-6700
206/220-6706 FAX

CRS Website: www.usdoj.gov/crs

U.S. Department of Justice

Community Relations Service

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