

U.S. Department of Justice
Community Relations Service



COMMUNITY RELATIONS SERVICE

ANNUAL REPORT

2017

America's Peacemaker
conciliate | mediate | facilitate | educate

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the
United States of America in Congress Assembled:

With this statement, I hereby transmit a report on the activities of the Community Relations Service of the United States Department of Justice for Fiscal Year 2017. This report is required by Section 100 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-352) and by Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1966, as revised by 28 C.F.R. 0.30(b).

This report describes the Community Relations Service's conflict resolution activities so that Members of Congress may assess its performance in executing its statutory mandate.

Respectfully submitted,



Gerri Ratliff

Deputy Director



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Message from the Deputy Director ▼

The Community Relations Service (CRS) plays a key role in helping communities prevent and respond to conflicts and tensions arising from differences of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and disability.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 saw community conflicts and tensions throughout the country: from protests and counter-protests; to hate crimes and bias incidents in places of worship (including mosques, synagogues, gurdwaras, and temples) and against individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity; to bullying and crimes against students of color and persons with disabilities; to the race-based tensions that communities have faced since before the creation of CRS. Clearly, the role CRS plays as “America’s Peacemaker” is as important as ever.

The year included the loss of one of CRS’s early pioneers, Roger W. Wilkins, who passed away on March 26, 2017. As the second national director of CRS, Roger W. Wilkins built a diverse, talented, and committed workforce that helped the nation find peace during the turbulent times of the 1960s. Director Wilkins understood that CRS was tasked with a complex and



▲ Gerri Ratliff, Deputy Director, Community Relations Service (U.S. Department of Justice)

enormous responsibility. In the agency’s first Annual Report to Congress, Director Wilkins wrote, “the work of the Community Relations Service is not quantifiable. Its mandate is to help communities and the people residing in them.... Basically, the Community Relations Service is working on a complex process of social change in communities across the country.” Former Director Wilkins’ legacy

lives on in CRS today as our conciliators work with hundreds of local communities to build their capacities to reduce civil rights-related tensions and prevent and respond to hate crimes and bias incidents. CRS will continue to confront issues leading to conflict and tension in American communities with the same dedication of purpose that former Director Wilkins displayed both as the leader of CRS and throughout his life.

its first National Program Manager for Muslim, Arab, Sikh, South Asian, and Hindu (MASSAH) communities.

In this critical role, Mr. Mokha began serving as a key advisor to law enforcement, government, community groups, and faith-based organizations across the country as they worked to encourage hate crimes reporting and promote successful interactions with MASSAH communities. In FY 2017, CRS facilitated 10 Bias Incidents and

Former Director Wilkins' legacy lives on in CRS today as our conciliators work with hundreds of local communities to build their capacities to reduce civil rights-related tensions and prevent and respond to hate crimes and bias incidents.

A comparison of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Hate Crime Statistics reports from 2015 to 2016 shows a rise in the number of reported hate crimes. From 2015 to 2016, reported hate crime incidents overall increased close to five percent including an increased number of bias incidents against Muslims.¹ In FY 2017, CRS responded to these troubling trends by selecting Harpreet Singh Mokha as

Hate Crimes Forums and 18 related informal educational events in cities across the country to bolster community relationships with local law enforcement, answer questions about hate crime laws and reporting, and reduce fear and intimidation stemming from hate crimes and bias incidents. In addition, CRS facilitated 12 training sessions for government and local law enforcement groups on best practices for

¹ <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2016/tables/table-1> and <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015/tables-and-data-declarations/1tabledatadecpdf>

Message from the Deputy Director ▼

successful interactions with Arab, Muslim, and Sikh communities.

According to the FBI, the number of reported hate crimes against individuals based on gender identity and sexual orientation also increased from 2015 to 2016. In FY 2017, CRS supported community efforts to prevent and respond to alleged hate crimes motivated by these biases. For example, in New York City, local officials requested CRS services to help the community maintain peace at a planned LGBTQs United

CRS supported requests and collaborated with other U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) components to reduce community tensions in the aftermath of Federal investigations and prosecutions of hate crimes or other civil rights related incidents. For example, following the announcement in May 2017 that DOJ would not file criminal charges against police officers in the shooting of a black man, Alton Sterling, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, CRS worked with government, law enforcement, and community leaders to reduce tensions in the region. CRS

CRS also supported requests from the other U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) components to reduce community tensions in the aftermath of Federal investigations and prosecutions of hate crimes or other civil rights related incidents.

as One rally to raise awareness of the rise in hate crimes against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer and/or questioning (LGBTQ) community. CRS facilitated dialogues with transgender groups, law enforcement, and faith-based groups to improve stakeholder relations and communication in advance of the rally, which ultimately took place without violence or arrests.

played similar roles in FY 2017 by collaborating with other DOJ components in Cincinnati, Ohio and St. Louis, Missouri.

This year brought opportunities for CRS to collaborate with other federal agencies on cross-cutting programs, such as participating in Preventing Arson at Houses of Worship events during the Federal Emergency Management



▲ Natalia Casella, CRS Program Specialist, and Tim Haugh, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Supervisory Community Relations Officer – Southeast Region, survey damage from Hurricane Irma in South Florida. They both served as volunteers with FEMA's Surge Capacity Force (SCF) interagency effort. (U.S. Department of Justice)

Agency's (FEMA's) National Arson Awareness Week. And in response to the disasters caused by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, CRS supported the deployment of employees who volunteered as part of the FEMA Surge Capacity Force program. In these ways, CRS eagerly shared its expertise and resources in community relations to help address larger challenges facing the nation.

Finally, the positive impact CRS has on communities across the country would simply not be possible without the passion and commitment

of our dedicated staff. I am grateful to be a part of the crucial mission of CRS and humbled to work alongside our talented team of professionals as we support the needs of communities across the country.

Respectfully,

Gerri Ratliff
Deputy Director

Congressional Mandate ▼



▲ President Lyndon Baines Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964, surrounded by civil rights and congressional leader



Excerpt from the Civil Rights Act of 1964:

“It shall be the function of the Service to provide assistance to communities and persons therein resolving disputes, disagreements, or difficulties relating to the discriminatory practices based on race, color, or national origin which impair the rights of persons in such communities under the Constitution or laws of the United States or which affect or may affect interstate commerce. The Service may offer its services in cases of such disputes, disagreements, or difficulties whenever, in its judgment, peaceful relations among the citizens of the community involved are threatened thereby, and it may offer its services either upon its own motion or upon the request of an appropriate State or local official or other interested person.”

—42 U.S.C. 2000g-1



▲ President Barack Obama stands on-stage with Dennis and Judy Shepard (left), parents of Matthew Shepard, and Louvon Harris and Betty Byrd Boatner (right), sisters of James Byrd, Jr., during his remarks marking the enactment of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, in the East Room of the White House, October 28, 2009. (Official White House photograph/Chuck Kennedy)

Excerpt from the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act:

“There are authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Justice, including the Community Relations Service, for fiscal years 2010, 2011, and 2012, such sums as are necessary to increase the number of personnel to prevent and respond to alleged violations of section 249 of title 18, United States Code ... Whoever, whether or not acting under color of law, willfully causes bodily injury to any person or, through the use of fire, a firearm, a dangerous weapon, or an explosive or incendiary device, attempts to cause bodily injury to any person, because of the actual or perceived race, color, religion, or national origin of any person— ... Whoever, whether or not acting under color of law, in any circumstance described in subparagraph (B) or paragraph (3),

willfully causes bodily injury to any person or, through the use of a fire, a firearm, a dangerous weapon or an explosive or incendiary device, attempts to cause bodily injury to any person, because of the actual or perceived religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability of any person—(i) shall be imprisoned not more than 10 years, fined in accordance with this title, or both; and (ii) shall be imprisoned for any term of years or for life, fined in accordance with this title, or both, if—(I) death results from the offense; or (II) the offense includes kidnapping or an attempt to kidnap, aggravated sexual abuse or an attempt to commit aggravated abuse or an attempt to kill.”
 —P.L. 111-84, §§4706-4707.



America's Peacemaker

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Mission Statement ▼

The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) Community Relations Service (CRS) serves as “America’s Peacemaker” for communities in conflict by mediating disputes and enhancing community capacity to independently prevent and resolve future conflicts.

Pursuant to Title X of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, CRS works with community groups to resolve community conflicts and prevent and respond to alleged violent hate crimes arising from differences of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.

With its unique mission, CRS is the only federal agency dedicated to assisting state and local units of government, private and public organizations, law enforcement, and community groups to resolve conflicts based on these aspects of identity, whether related to an individual’s race, religion, gender, or other statutory category. CRS helps facilitate the development of viable, mutual understandings and agreements, as alternatives to coercion, violence, or litigation. Additionally, CRS conducts trainings and helps develop locally-based, long-term mechanisms that communities may use to prevent tension and violent hate crimes. CRS Conciliation Specialists are impartial and do not take sides among disputing parties. Rather, CRS aids parties in developing their own mutually agreeable solutions.

Who We Are ▼

CRS's alternative dispute resolution services are facilitated by highly-skilled Conciliation Specialists who provide mediation, facilitated dialogue, training, and consultation services to communities experiencing conflict across the United States and in its territories.

Conciliation Specialists bring together community leaders; education representatives; private and public organizations; civil rights groups; law enforcement; and federal, state, and local officials to facilitate open discussions that lead to collaborative solutions to conflicts arising from the identity-based disputes enumerated in CRS's authorizing legislation.

CRS staff travel to local cities and towns to work directly with all community conflict stakeholders and assist them in developing strategies to respond to conflicts and reduce tensions. CRS Conciliation Specialists are trained professional mediators, facilitators, trainers, and consultants who are experienced in bringing community members together to help them enhance their ability to prevent and resolve existing and future conflicts.

What We Do ▼

To accomplish its mission, CRS provides four services: facilitated dialogues, mediation, training, and consultation. These services help communities enhance their ability to alleviate tension, resolve disputes, and prevent future conflicts more effectively.

Facilitated Dialogues: Conciliation Specialists provide facilitated dialogue services to help communities open lines of communication by listening to the issues of each stakeholder group and learning from each party about the problem and underlying issues of the conflict. These dialogues often include various local agencies, institutions, and community residents, and may be conducted in person or by telephone. Topics of discussion frequently include race, police-community relations, perceived hate crimes, tribal conflicts, and protests and demonstrations. The dialogues help communities develop action plans for promoting peace and resolving conflicts in neighborhoods and schools.

Mediation: Conciliation Specialists serve as mediators to help diverse stakeholders resolve community level disputes. As mediators, Conciliation Specialists assume the role of neutral third parties who facilitate problem-solving discussions with parties in conflict. These mediation sessions are confidential, allowing for candid discussion of issues, interests, values, and, ultimately, sustainable solutions. Mediation provides a framework that helps communities resolve misunderstandings, establish mutual trust, and independently prevent and resolve future conflicts. The intent of mediation is not

to determine fault. Frequently, the results of a community's mediation will be memorialized in a document, such as a Memorandum of Understanding, Mediation Agreement, Resolution, Proclamation, Collaborative Agreement, Community Pact, or Ordinance.

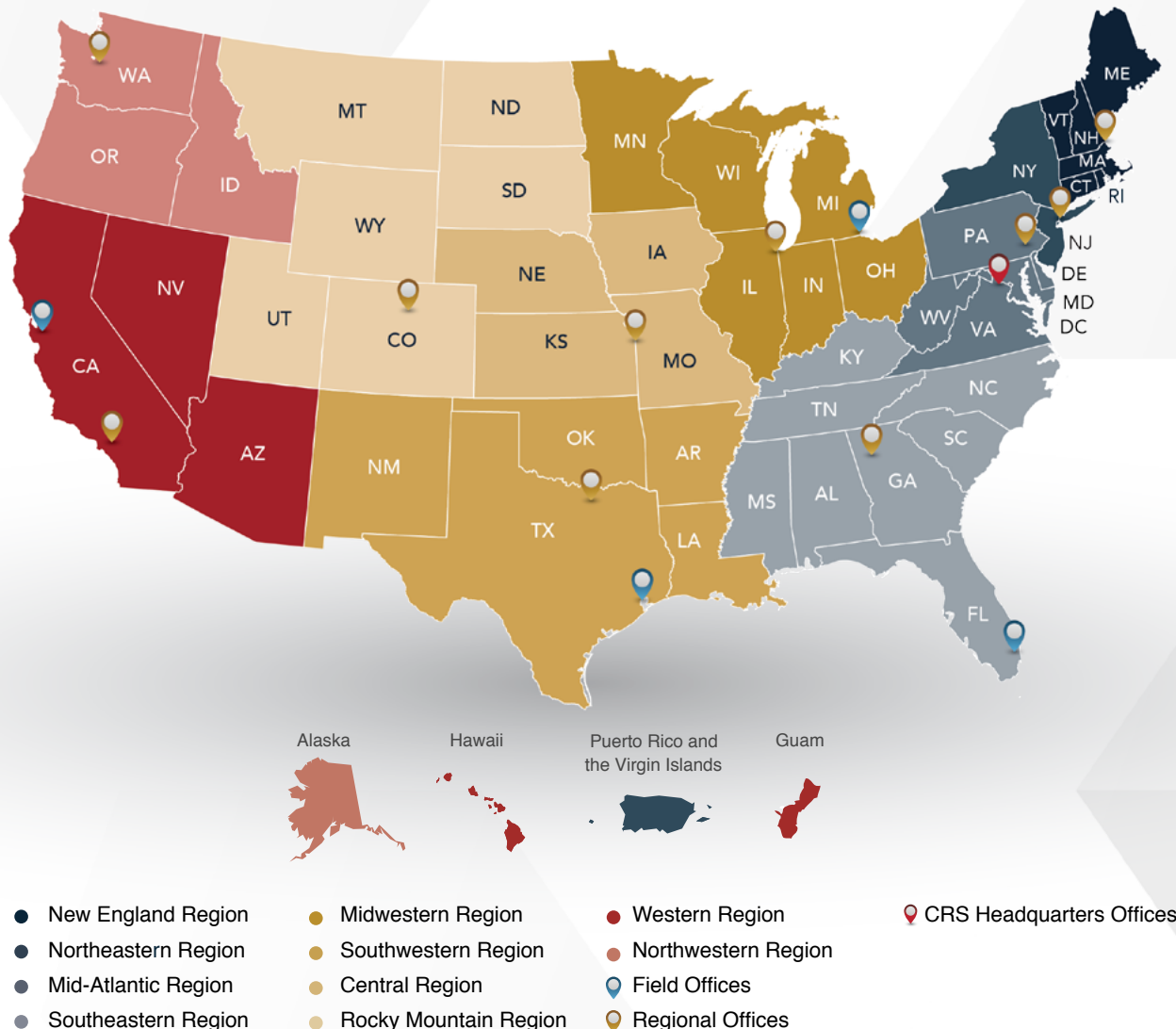
Training: Conciliation Specialists provide an array of training programs to communities experiencing tension, as a tool for cultivating understanding resolving disputes, and preventing future disagreements. These programs bring together representatives from local government agencies, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, advocacy groups, and businesses, in order to develop collaborative approaches for reducing conflicts and addressing the factors that have contributed to community-wide disagreements.

Consultation: Conciliation Specialists offer consultation services to help educate and empower communities, as well as to refine conflict resolution strategies and improve their ability to address underlying issues. Through consultation, CRS provides technical assistance, as well as information on best practices. This service also includes giving advice, sharing insight, and referring communities to available resources.

CRS Regional Map ▼

CRS has ten Regional Offices across the country.

The Regional Offices are in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Kansas City, Denver, Los Angeles, and Seattle. Additionally, CRS has four Field Offices which support the Regional Offices' activities. The Field Offices are in Miami, Detroit, Houston, and San Francisco. All CRS offices are strategically located to increase the availability of CRS services to the communities they serve and to allow for rapid deployment to communities in crisis. Contact information for the Regional and Field Offices can be found on page 42 of this report, as well as on the CRS website.



CRS Programmatic Services ▼

CRS programmatic services assist communities to solve conflicts and build the skills and capacity necessary to prevent and respond to future issues and tension.

The services bring together representatives from local government agencies, community and faith-based organizations, law enforcement agencies, advocacy groups, and businesses to develop collaborative approaches for reducing tensions and addressing the factors that have contributed to the conflict. CRS's programmatic services include:

School-Student Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together

(School-SPIRIT): The SPIRIT program is an eight-hour student-focused, problem-solving program that engages student leaders in identifying issues impacting their school and developing solutions to resolve these issues. The SPIRIT program engages students, school administrators, teachers, school resource officers, local officials, community leaders, and parents in the process of identifying and responding to conflicts and creating welcoming and safe learning environments.

City-Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together (City-SPIRIT): City-SPIRIT is an eight-hour problem-solving and resolution program that brings together representatives from local government agencies, communities, faith-based organizations, and law enforcement to develop collaborative approaches for reducing

tension and addressing factors that contribute to conflicts. The parties may also develop approaches for preventing and responding to alleged violent hate crimes on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. This program helps communities establish a lasting capacity to prevent and respond to conflicts.

Engaging and Building Partnerships with Muslim Americans and Sikh Americans:

These trainings are designed to familiarize law enforcement and government officials with customs and cultural aspects of Muslim and Sikh communities. The programs are an effective tool for creating cultural awareness and sharing best practices to assist public and safety personnel and others when engaging with the Muslim and Sikh Communities. The training also may be given as part of a broader initiative to strengthen the relationship between local officials and the Muslim and Sikh communities that they serve. Additionally, CRS offers a Train-the-Trainer program for Muslim and Sikh community leaders. This training prepares these leaders to present CRS trainings to local law enforcement officials, first responders, community leaders, and government and elected officials.

Bias Incidents and Hate Crimes Forum:

The Bias Incidents and Hate Crimes Forum provides community members and law enforcement with information related to the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA), as well as state and local bias incidents and hate crimes laws. The program seeks to engage local law enforcement and district attorneys, along with federal law enforcement, in facilitated discussions and information sharing related to agency procedures on combatting and responding to bias incidents and hate crimes. In addition, CRS facilitates customized, informal community awareness forums and information sessions designed to share information and strengthen relationships between community groups and federal, state, and/or local law enforcement or other government agencies, usually in response to the occurrence of actual or perceived hate crimes or bias incidents and related tensions.

Event Marshals: CRS assists local law enforcement, city officials, and event organizers with planning and managing safe marches and demonstrations. CRS facilitates meetings between the parties to ensure public safety, improve communication and coordinate logistics.

Rumor Control: As part of CRS's consultation services, the agency assists local leadership in establishing rumor control measures following critical incidents to prevent further increases in community tension and conflict. CRS offers technical assistance on how to control rumors and misinformation by employing a proactive and coordinated approach to publicity, a formalized community-notification process, and other appropriate information-dissemination measures.

Law Enforcement and Transgender

Community Training: This training is a four-hour program that provides law enforcement and other first responders with definitions related to the transgender community; the impacts of hate crimes; and best practices for engagement, communication, and problem solving. The program serves as a tool for law enforcement to successfully engage with the transgender community, and can be used as part of a broader initiative to strengthen the relationship between local officials and the transgender communities that they serve. The training's intent is to support law enforcement's role in protecting and serving all community members.

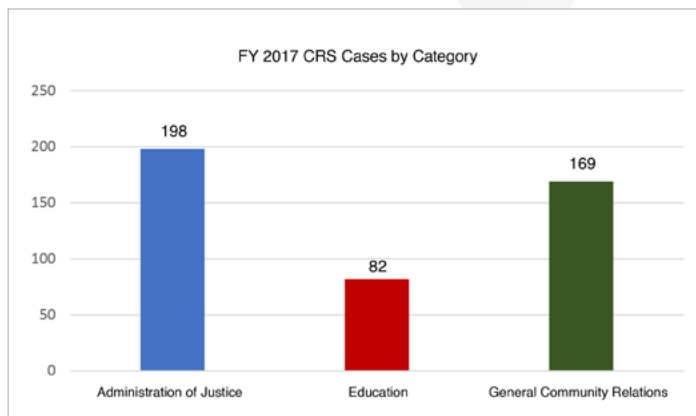
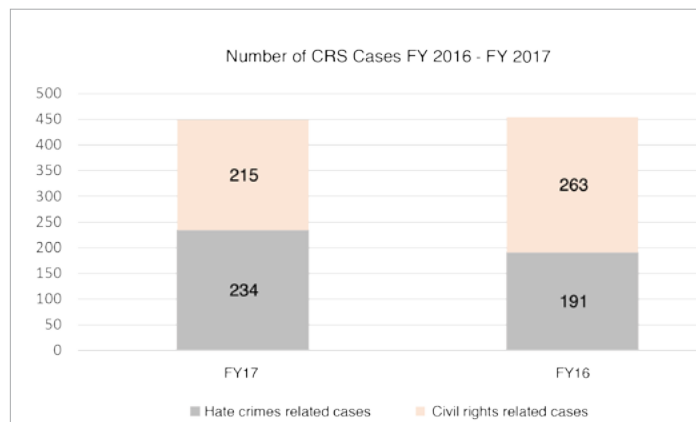
Summary of CRS Activities and Accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2017 ▼

In FY 2017, CRS was called upon by federal, state, and local government officials; law enforcement agencies; school administrators; community leaders; and civil rights organizations to address conflicts and to prevent and respond to alleged violent hate crimes based on actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.

These conflicts ranged from allegations of disparate treatment in school systems to targeted and violent alleged hate crimes committed against many communities, including: African Americans; Hispanic Americans; Asian Americans; Muslim Americans; Sikh Americans; American Indians; Americans with disabilities; and LGBTQ Americans.

Most notably, the number of CRS hate crimes-related cases increased from 191 in FY 2016 to 234 in FY 2017, while civil-rights related cases declined from 263 in FY 2016 to 215 in FY 2017. The increase in hate crimes-related cases corresponds to the overall increase in reported hate crimes between 2015 and 2016.^{1,2}

CRS's services are classified under three primary categories: Administration of Justice, Education, and General Community Relations. In total, during FY 2017, CRS completed 449 cases, compared to 447 cases in FY 2016, throughout the United States and its territories. Cases included CRS



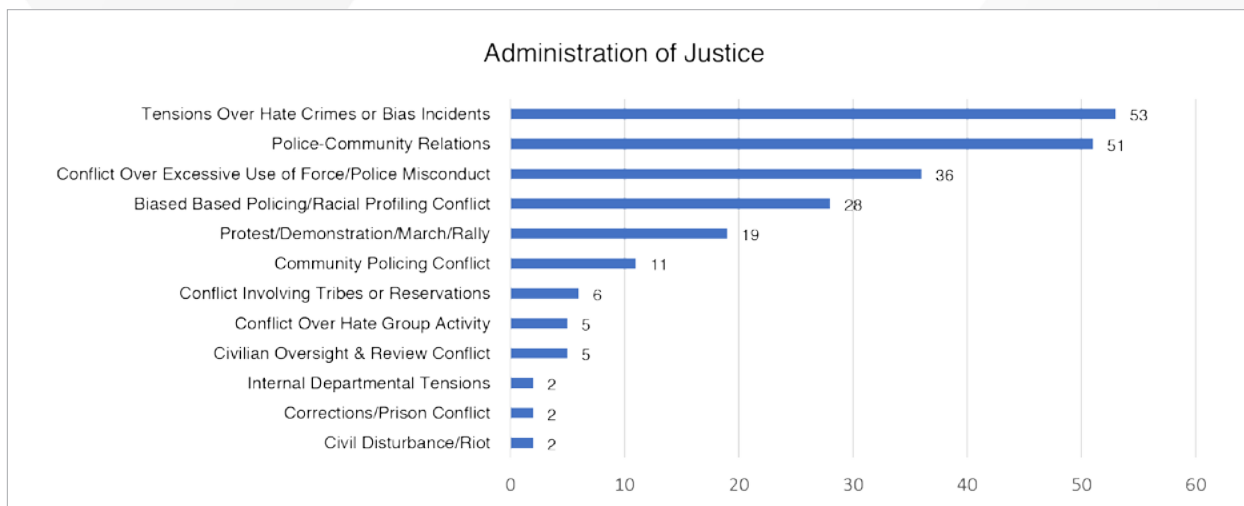
facilitated dialogues between aggrieved parties, mediations, and training, all in support of resolution efforts by law enforcement agencies, U.S. and district attorneys, school administrators, civil rights organizations, and community leaders across the country.

² <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2016/tables/table-1> and <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2015/tables-and-data-declarations/1tabledatadecpdf>

Administration of Justice Cases ▼

Administration of Justice cases are defined as those where tension exists between law enforcement and the community.

In FY 2017, CRS completed 198 Administration of Justice (AOJ) cases, compared to 225 cases in FY 2016. The largest number of these cases resulted from tension related to alleged hate crimes or bias incidents, which increased from 38 in FY 2016 to 53 in FY 2017. The remaining AOJ cases were largely in the areas of police-community relations; conflict over allegations of excessive use of force by law enforcement; tension related to allegations of bias-based policing and racial-profiling by law enforcement; and protests, demonstrations, and marches.



*Please note that CRS cases may fall into more than one of the above categories. Category totals may not reflect agency case totals.

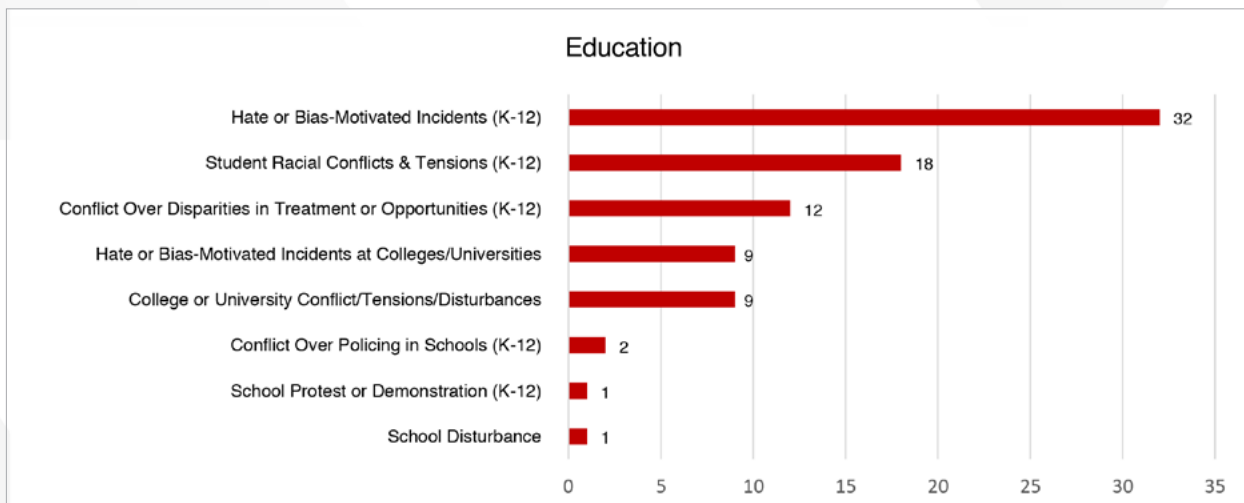
In many cases, CRS was invited by local government officials and law enforcement to provide conflict resolution and mediation services, conduct cultural awareness training, and to provide technical assistance in resolving conflicts. In other instances, CRS was asked by community and civil rights organizations to facilitate community dialogues with law enforcement, local government agencies, and other entities within their communities.

Summary of CRS Activities and Accomplishments in Fiscal Year 2017 ▼

Education Cases ▼

Education cases are those that derive from school-related actions or incidents and increase community tension.

In FY 2017, CRS completed a total of 82 Education cases, compared to 80 cases in FY 2016. The largest portion of Education cases stemmed from hate or bias-motivated incidents at all levels of schools from elementary, middle, and high schools to college and university campuses. The number of these hate or bias-motivated cases increased from 24 in FY 2016 to 41 in FY 2017. Cases involving racial conflicts and tensions between students in elementary and secondary schools also comprised a significant part of CRS's Education casework. Some of these incidents received media attention and raised community-wide tension, but in many instances, these cases caused conflicts that were known only to local communities or the school's direct stakeholders.

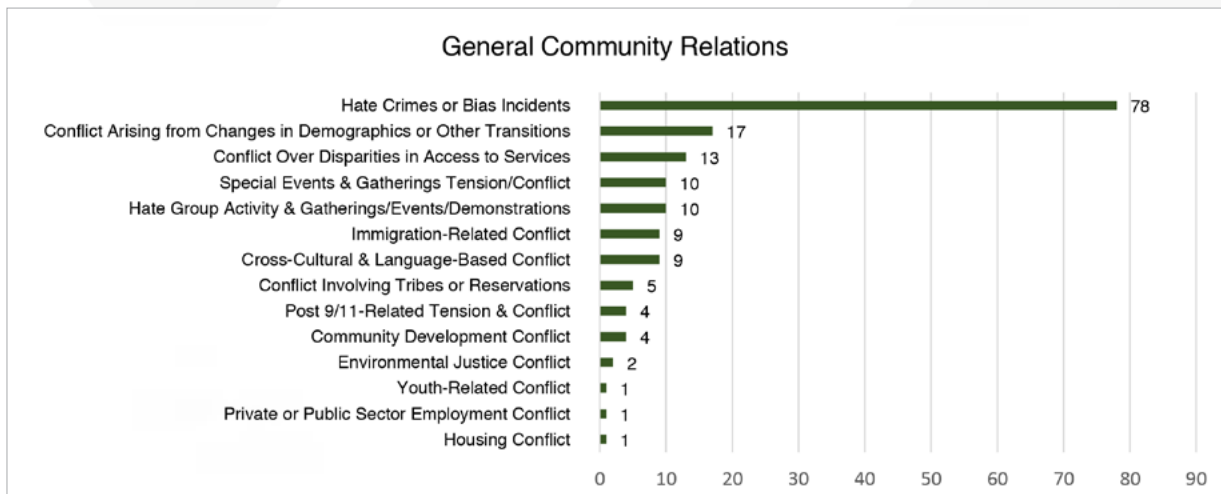


*Please note that CRS cases may fall into more than one of the above categories. Category totals may not reflect agency case totals.

General Community Relations ▼

General Community Relations cases derive from events not related to educational institutions or law enforcement action that raise tension in the community.

In FY 2017, CRS completed a total of 169 General Community Relations cases, compared to 142 cases in FY 2016. The largest growth in the general community relations caseload was in cases related to hate crimes or bias incidents where CRS saw an increase from 44 in FY 2016 to 78 in FY 2017. This type of case was by far the largest type in this category.



*Please note that CRS cases may fall into more than one of the above categories. Category totals may not reflect agency case totals.

CRS in Action Highlights ▼

In FY 2017, CRS honored the life of one of its early leaders, Roger W. Wilkins, and continued his proud legacy of promoting civil rights and peaceful communities. CRS also implemented the National Program for MASSAH Communities to foster dialogue and improve relations between law enforcement, government, and community organizations, and the MASSAH communities they serve.

Honoring the Life and Legacy of Roger W. Wilkins ▼

On March 26, 2017, Roger W. Wilkins, CRS's second Director, passed away at the age of 85. Former Director Wilkins was a champion of civil rights and devoted his life to addressing the causes of community racial conflicts and tensions. After first serving at the inception of CRS as an Assistant Director, Roger W. Wilkins was appointed as Director by President Lyndon B. Johnson and confirmed by the United States Senate on January 27, 1966.

During his time at CRS, Director Wilkins worked to build a diverse workforce that better reflected the overall composition of the nation. His mission was to address the problems and racial tensions that caused the urban riots of the 1960s and to find ways to promote peace in those communities. Director Wilkins fostered a spirit of collaboration at CRS and inspired a generation of young leaders to push for a better country and stronger, more resilient communities through public service. After his time in government, former Director Wilkins went on to a distinguished career as an author, academic, and Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist.

On September 12, 2017, CRS hosted a ceremony and reception honoring former Director Wilkins' life and dedication to civil rights. Current and former CRS staff from



▲ Former Director Roger W. Wilkins addresses the audience at CRS's 45th Anniversary Celebration in 2009 (U.S. Department of Justice)

across the United States, Department of Justice leadership, and leaders from stakeholder organizations inspired by former Director Wilkins' legacy gathered in



▲ On behalf of the Wilkins family, Patricia King accepts a commemorative plaque presented by CRS in memory of the life and legacy of Roger Wilkins. (U.S. Department of Justice)

the Great Hall at the DOJ's Robert F. Kennedy Building. Distinguished guests included former Director Wilkins' wife, Patricia King, and other members of the Wilkins family. Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein described Director Wilkins' many contributions to the Department of Justice. In addition, Hilary O. Shelton, Director, Washington Bureau, and Senior Vice President for Advocacy and Policy, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and Cecelie Counts, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) Legislative Representative, shared their

personal remembrances of the civil rights leader.

To honor the legacy of former Director Wilkins, CRS announced the creation of the Roger W. Wilkins Peacemaker Award. This award will recognize a CRS employee whose extraordinary contributions reflect Director Wilkins' lifelong commitment to public service and the principles underlying the Civil Rights Act of 1964. By honoring such contributions, CRS will continue Roger Wilkins' legacy of building relationships to resolve conflicts and reduce tensions among the diverse communities within this nation.

Establishing the National Program for MASSAH Communities ▼

In FY 2017, CRS acted on its commitment to supporting communities working to address hate crimes and bias incidents against MASSAH communities by appointing Harpreet Singh Mokha as the first CRS National Program Manager for MASSAH Communities.

Throughout the year, Mr. Mokha and CRS conciliators worked with law enforcement, government, civil rights groups, faith-based groups, and other community organizations across the country to share information and foster dialogues on ways to prevent and respond to alleged hate crimes against MASSAH communities through:

Education. Sharing practices, customs, and beliefs important to MASSAH communities to create greater cultural awareness and sensitivity among groups and individuals that interact with MASSAH community members.

Engagement. Facilitating dialogues, in which stakeholders share experiences, lessons, and best practices to prevent and respond to hate crimes against MASSAH communities. These dialogues help improve police-community relations and build stronger working relationships.

Collaboration. Assisting MASSAH organizations in collaborating with law enforcement, government, and community groups to support outreach efforts. Collaborations support greater community coordination and information sharing in the prevention and response to hate crimes and bias incidents.

One of the goals of CRS's education, engagement, and collaboration efforts is to



▲ Harpreet Singh Mokha (U.S. Department of Justice)

encourage MASSAH community members to report incidents of hate crimes to law enforcement. This outcome can be achieved through greater awareness of individual rights and enhanced trust between the MASSAH communities and law enforcement.

Through the National Program for MASSAH Communities, CRS provided the following services:

In FY 2017, CRS held 18 informal events in Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington D.C. to bolster community relationships with local law enforcement and answer questions about hate crime reporting and investigatory procedures. In addition, CRS facilitated 12 training sessions for local law enforcement groups in best practices for successful interactions with Arab, Muslim, and Sikh communities.

Bias Incident and Hate Crimes Forums and Informal Educational Sessions. CRS held 10 Bias Incidents and Hate Crimes Forums in New York, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, Kansas, Missouri, Oregon, and Washington. These well-received forums engaged stakeholders in education and dialogue on how the entire community can work together to help prevent and respond to hate crimes and bias incidents against the MASSAH community. Participants left with valuable resources and connections to help them continue addressing alleged hate crimes in their communities. CRS also held 18 informal events in Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington D.C. to bolster community relationships with local law enforcement. These sessions were held in MASSAH places of worship and community centers with the goals of educating attendees on hate crime laws and reducing fear and

intimidation in an effort to increase hate crime reporting to law enforcement.

Engaging and Building Partnerships with Muslim Americans and Sikh Americans Program Trainings. CRS facilitated 12 targeted trainings for federal, state, and local government and law enforcement groups on best practices for engaging with Muslim-American and Sikh-American communities. Topics ranged from school bullying to religious and cultural customs.

Outreach and Collaborations. CRS engaged with government and community groups across the country working to improve relations with MASSAH communities. CRS also participated in the White House Initiative on Asian American and Pacific Islander (WHIAAPI) Bullying Prevention Task Force, which includes federal partners from other DOJ components, the Department of Education, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

The stakeholders with whom CRS collaborated in FY 2017 were able to build a deeper foundation for continued dialogue with law enforcement, government, civil rights groups, and community organizations to collectively combat hate crimes against MASSAH communities. With much work still left to be done, CRS continues to engage with these groups to facilitate relationship building and collaboration.

Regional Case Highlights ▼

New England Region ▼

Boston, Massachusetts

In August 2017, CRS provided best practices in managing mass demonstrations to law enforcement officials and protest organizers in Boston, Massachusetts. CRS services were requested in response to community tension following the announcement of a free speech rally on the Boston Common. Community racial tension was further heightened when it was announced that a large-scale counter-protest would be organized for the same day. On the day of the event, the free speech protestors assembled at the Parkman Bandstand on the Boston Common as the counter-protestors marched over two miles from the Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center to meet free speech protestors at the Boston Common.



CRS provided technical assistance in managing mass demonstrations as well as best practices to guide law enforcement, campus safety officials, and community stakeholders in responding to demonstrations, rallies, and other events.

CRS worked with the Boston Police Department, the event organizers, and officials from Roxbury Community College and the Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center to prevent violence and maintain peace during the event. CRS provided technical assistance in managing mass demonstrations as well as best practices to guide law enforcement, campus safety officials, and community stakeholders in responding to demonstrations, rallies, and other events. While the event attracted a small group of free speech protestors, it drew more than 40,000 counter-protestors. Despite the large turnout, the day concluded without major violence or civil unrest.

Northeastern Region ▼

Geneva, New York

In June 2016, at the request of Matt Horn, Geneva, New York, City Manager, CRS facilitated a series of community dialogues with local stakeholders in response to a violent altercation involving African American and Latino high school students. While over 50 students were involved in the incident, only African American students were arrested, resulting in allegations of disparate and unfair treatment of African American youth by police.

Through the fall of 2017, CRS held separate meetings with various stakeholder groups including local government and law enforcement, community organizations, and residents. The meetings focused on tensions between the African American and Latino communities, as well as between both communities and law enforcement. The meetings also identified ways the various groups could address and reduce these tensions. CRS then facilitated a dialogue with the parties to share lessons learned and potential solutions to the community tensions, which included changes to the local civil service exam, resources for diversity and cultural events, and additional Spanish translation services.

To support the community, CRS provided technical assistance and consultation services. The collaboration between CRS and local stakeholder groups produced a list of concerns



and suggested solutions to be used by the City Manager, the Mayor, law enforcement, and community to help address and reduce the conflicts and tensions with the community.

Hato Rey, Puerto Rico

In April 2017, CRS services were requested by school officials in response to community tension following allegations of disparate treatment of students based on race and color. These allegations stemmed from reports that school officials, instead of disciplining black students for school infractions, were referring them to law enforcement, where they faced the possibility of criminal charges. Schools' unresponsiveness to racial bullying concerns was also alleged in reports and contributed to tensions among the local community, schools, and local law enforcement. As an example, CRS received

reports that a black 11-year-old student was being held in a juvenile detention facility after shoving two other students in reaction to an alleged bullying incident.

In May 2017, CRS met with school officials and law enforcement officials in separate meetings to identify ways in which both institutions could work together to address tensions within the community. Concerns about how the treatment of students in Puerto Rican schools contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline problem were also

CRS met with school officials and law enforcement officials in separate meetings to identify ways in which both institutions could work together to address tensions within the community.

addressed. As a result of these discussions, law enforcement officials pledged the services of the internal social services division to work with students and agreed to make an effort to recommend mediation, instead of legal proceedings, for school cases when practical.

New York City, New York

In December 2016, CRS services were requested by LGBTQ leaders in Bronx, New York, as a result of the rise in perceived hate crimes against LGBTQ communities across the country. The resulting community tension prompted community leaders, including community advocates, clergy members, and elected officials, to come together to develop strategies to unite the community and raise awareness about impacts of bias and hate in New York City.

CRS provided consultation services to LGBTQ leadership, including best practices on conducting safe public events, effective working group structures, and the use of event marshals to improve public safety. CRS also provided facilitated dialogue services that improved communication between local law enforcement and event organizers during the event.

The LGBTQs United as One rally took place on April 1, 2017, outside the Bronx Supreme Court, and included speakers from LGBTQ groups and the faith-based community. The event, which lasted about six hours, was peaceful and well received by the community.

Mid-Atlantic Region ▼

Rockville, Maryland

In response to multiple bomb threats to Jewish Community Centers across the country, government and community leaders in Rockville, Maryland, requested CRS services to educate the community, increase trust in local law enforcement, and restore confidence in public safety. In January 2017, more than 300 people, including 200 preschool children, were evacuated from a Rockville Jewish Community Center after officials received an anonymous bomb threat. By March, this center had received five more bomb threats. These incidents, coupled with a rise in threats against Jewish institutions across the country, created a heightened sense of fear and unrest in the community.

In May 2017, CRS met with leaders from the community and law enforcement to address these recent threats to the local community. These meetings led to the creation of an educational forum in coordination with members of federal, state, and local government; law enforcement; and civil rights groups. This forum helped educate the community on individual rights and provided best practices for preventing, reporting, and countering the impact of hate crimes. This forum was widely praised by attendees as a unifying event for the community, government, law enforcement, and civil rights partners. The event also helped to alleviate concerns about public safety and religious intolerance within the community.

This forum helped educate the community on individual rights and provided best practices for preventing, reporting, and countering the impact of hate crimes.

Regional Case Highlights ▼

Fairfax, Virginia

In February 2017, CRS provided facilitated dialogue and consultation services to local officials and community leaders in Northern Virginia who were concerned about the impacts of reported hate crimes and bias incidents directed towards MASSAH community members.

CRS services assisted the All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS) Center, local officials, and concerned community leaders to facilitate an educational forum, which included a CRS-facilitated panel of federal, state, and local law enforcement officials and civil rights groups.



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These experts, including representatives from the Eastern District of Virginia United States Attorney's Office and Federal Bureau of Investigation, the State Attorney General, local law enforcement, and civil rights groups, provided information on local and federal civil rights laws and best practices to prevent and respond to hate crimes.

Southeastern Region ▼

Memphis, Tennessee

In March 2017, the Memphis Police Department (MPD) requested facilitated dialogue and consultation services from CRS following reports that community groups planned to stage protests amid racial tensions in the community and nationally.

The protestors sought to bring public attention to alleged social injustices in the community, and the possibility of a larger protest was anticipated. In 2016, Memphis experienced a massive protest that resulted in the shutdown of the Hernando de Soto Bridge on Interstate 40. With tensions high in the region, MPD Police Director Michael Rallings requested CRS's assistance in ensuring that the MPD had a productive dialogue with the community.

CRS provided technical assistance to the MPD as it prepared to host a public forum to address policing concerns expressed by African American community members. The event was designed to give the community an opportunity to provide input on solutions and strategies when interacting with police officers.

The forum took place in July 2017 and approximately 120 community members attended. CRS facilitated a dialogue between the community and the forum panelists, which included members of the MPD, state government, faith-based groups, civil rights organizations, and community youth.



The event was designed to give the community an opportunity to provide input on solutions and strategies when interacting with police officers.

Regional Case Highlights ▼

Midwestern Region ▼

Detroit, Michigan

Two transgender community advocacy and service provider organizations requested CRS assistance to address allegations of disparate treatment of LGBTQ community members by local law enforcement officers in greater Detroit, Michigan. The request was an extension of meetings and facilitated dialogues in 2016 concerning claims of biased treatment of an African American transgender woman by police based on her gender identity. Both organizations, as well as the local law enforcement departments, had experienced recent changes in leadership, and the LGBTQ organizations asked CRS to help build capacity between the groups to address bias concerns.

In October 2016, CRS led and facilitated a coordinated Law Enforcement and Transgender Community Training Session with southeastern Michigan law enforcement officers, LGBTQ advocacy and service provider community leaders, federal partners, and transgender community members in Detroit. There were 32 participants in the training program. CRS provided consultation, facilitated dialogue, and training to the parties.

Cincinnati, Ohio

In June 2017, CRS provided consultation and facilitated dialogue services to help reduce tension and maintain peace in response to a jury retrial in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio. The retrial involved



a white former university campus police officer accused of fatally shooting an unarmed black motorist. The first jury trial resulted in a hung jury and mistrial.

CRS met with the Office of Cincinnati's Mayor, John Cranley, the Cincinnati Police Department, and community advocates to assist with contingency planning around community safety and security. CRS facilitated dialogues with key officials and community leaders. CRS also facilitated an on-campus community forum on understanding the pretrial process, including a dialogue on the voir dire process for the retrial. CRS was present during the pretrial period to assist in reducing campus and broader community tension.

A hung jury and mistrial was again declared on the second jury trial resulting in several demonstrations to protest the mistrial. The protests were peaceful, and no arrests were made.

Southwestern Region ▼

Tulsa, Oklahoma

The City of Tulsa asked for CRS's support to respond to racial tensions resulting from the September 2016 shooting death of an unarmed African American man by a police officer, which was captured on video by police cameras. The incident received national attention, sparking allegations from community members of racially biased treatment of African Americans by the police. The ensuing tensions between the community and local police resulted in civil unrest and mistrust among the parties.



CRS provided the parties with a framework for establishing advisory boards to help law enforcement, government, and community leaders address concerns related to policing and public safety.

CRS worked with the city to facilitate a meeting with various stakeholder groups, focused on conflict resolution. The meeting involved the Mayor, the City Council, community advocates, the District Attorney, the City Attorney, the Police Chief, and the Sheriff. The dialogue produced interest in creating partnerships between the community and the police. CRS provided the parties

with a framework for establishing advisory boards to help law enforcement, government, and community leaders address concerns related to policing and public safety. The recommendations were well received, and the local police and sheriff's departments expressed interest in continuing to partner with the community to prevent and respond to conflicts.

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

In a case of national significance beginning in 2016 and continuing into 2017, CRS addressed racial tension in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, after the July 2016 police shooting death of an African American man, Alton Sterling. This incident, which was followed by the shooting death of five police officers by a lone gunman, was addressed in detail in CRS's 2016 Annual Report. The events triggered widespread civil unrest resulting in threats to public safety and law enforcement personnel. CRS was requested by the Deputy Attorney General's Office, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and the FBI to respond to the critical high-tension events. Later, city officials sought additional CRS services in response to longstanding tensions and mistrust between the local community and the police.

CRS services continued into FY 2017. In November 2016, CRS facilitated community conversations between community leaders, government officials, and law enforcement representatives. The conversations addressed issues surrounding the relationship between law enforcement and the African American community, including youth, with the goal of developing a mutual

understanding of the underlying issues and causes of the tensions. CRS also worked with the participating stakeholders to develop viable and self-sustaining measures to increase mutual trust and respect between the police and the community.

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In April 2017, CRS met with the new Mayor-President and the U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Louisiana to discuss the action items identified during the community conversations. To help facilitate concrete next steps, CRS provided recommendations for creating community partnerships to allow law enforcement, government, and community leaders to work collaboratively to improve community-police relations and public safety.

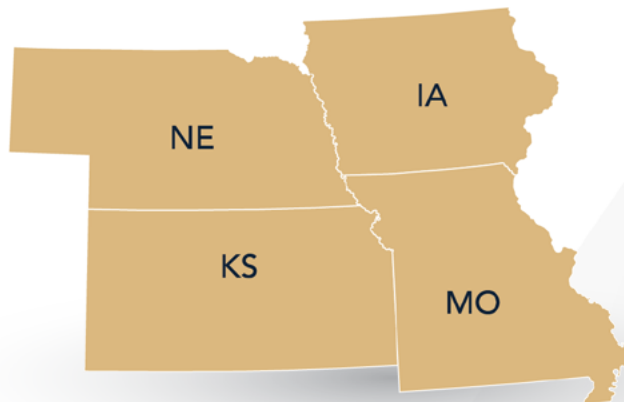
Central Region ▼

St. Louis, Missouri

In September 2017, CRS worked with local officials and community organizations to maintain peace in the aftermath of the “not guilty” verdict of a white former St. Louis police officer accused of murdering Anthony Lamar Smith, an African American male. Prior to the verdict, local officials were concerned that the outcome of the trial would spark community tension and violence.

In anticipation of protests, CRS facilitated meetings with local law enforcement, community leaders, faith-based groups, and civil rights organizations. The purpose of the meetings was to open a dialogue between stakeholder groups to strengthen community relations prior to anticipated protests and to share best practices to support public safety during demonstrations.

The verdict led to multiple protests in the city of St. Louis and St. Louis county. While some of the protests resulted in arrests, CRS’s support helped local officials ensure many of the protests remained peaceful. After the protests subsided, CRS continued to provide services by identifying key leaders in the community and state and city governments to engage in future dialogues to promote peace in the community.



Independence, Missouri

CRS assisted local school district officials and community leaders in reducing tension after a protest at Fort Osage High School in April 2017. Students walked out of classes to protest what they called a racially charged culture in the classrooms, prompted by social media postings that included a race-based threat to African-American students and a claim of a student pulling a hijab off the head of a Muslim student.

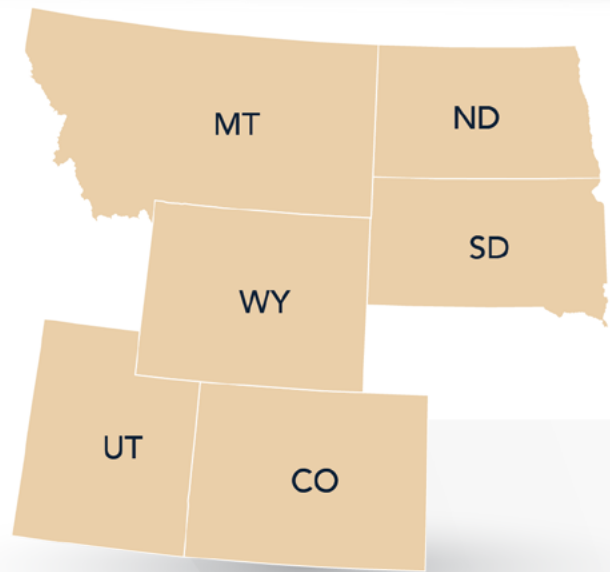
African American community leaders who called for the protest were joined by parents and students. At the request of the Kansas City branch of the NAACP, CRS facilitated dialogue to open lines of communication between community and school stakeholders. This dialogue reduced tensions and created capacity for the parties involved to work proactively in identifying underlying sources of conflict and having the tools to resolve future tensions.

Regional Case Highlights ▼

Rocky Mountain Region ▼

Ft. Yates, North Dakota

CRS helped to facilitate a peaceful outcome to the mandatory evacuation of occupants at a Native American Camp in December 2016. The evacuation impacted a Native American tribe and other groups protesting the development of the Dakota Access Pipeline which was planned to run through the camp. Protesters from the tribe and other groups vowed to stay at the camp, despite the mandatory evacuation. This standoff



CRS mediated discussions among the various stakeholder groups to reduce people’s fears and misconceptions regarding the evacuation, disseminate information on transportation and relocation services, coordinate health and safety measures, and support education and child welfare services.

heightened tension in the region and created a threat to public safety and the welfare of families and children due to the harsh North Dakota winter.

Amid these tensions, CRS met with representatives from federal, state, and local government; social service groups; and the Native American tribe to facilitate dialogue. CRS mediated discussions among the various stakeholder groups to reduce people’s fears

and misconceptions regarding the evacuation, disseminate information on transportation and relocation services, coordinate health and safety measures, and support education and child welfare services. In February 2017, the state issued another order for the protesters to evacuate the camp due to the dangers of impending spring floods in the area. With support from CRS and other stakeholders, most protesters left the camp peacefully by the deadline imposed and without incident.

Western Region ▼

Berkeley, California

In April 2017, CRS provided onsite facilitated dialogue and consultation services to local officials and law enforcement and event organizers during the “Patriots Day Free Speech” rally in Berkeley, California. In response to the event, counter-demonstrators planned to disrupt the rally. CRS services improved communication between local law enforcement, event organizers, and civil rights groups and helped to maintain public safety and minimize violence during the event.

After this initial engagement, CRS continued to provide services to Berkeley officials through September 2017 by facilitating dialogues with stakeholder groups and providing best practices in ensuring peaceful protests. As three additional protests occurred in the city, the level of violence, property damage, and arrests resulting from these protests declined.

Roseville, California

In June 2017, CRS provided onsite facilitation and consultation services to local law enforcement, city officials, and event organizers during a “March Against Sharia” protest in Roseville, California. In response to the event,



counter-protestors planned to hold their own event, which raised concerns of potential violence and confrontations between the opposing groups. CRS provided consultation services to local law enforcement that assisted in the creation of a contingency plan that separated the groups and minimized potential violence. Specifically, this contingency plan included separating the three opposing groups — “anti-fascist” groups, a faith-based unity group, and supporters of the “March Against Sharia” — on three different street corners with no pedestrian traffic allowed in the street between them. CRS services aided law enforcement and demonstrators to conduct a safe and lawful event.

Los Angeles, California

In June 2017, CRS provided onsite facilitated dialogue and consultation services during a spontaneous demonstration at Los Angeles International Airport. The event was reportedly aligned with “March Against Sharia” events that had been planned across the country on the same day. These spontaneous events provided little-to-no advance notice to local law enforcement and public officials. Upon learning of the event, CRS deployed to the demonstration

Sacramento, California after a spike in violent crimes against Asian Americans. These crimes, especially home robberies involving firearms, caused tensions between members of the Asian American, African American, and Latino American communities. The violence and racial tensions created fear in the community, resulting in losses for local businesses. Local officials also received reports of the Chinese-American and other Asian-American communities forming armed citizen patrols, via social media, to patrol and protect their businesses.

The dialogue CRS facilitated led to greater community collaboration on crime prevention efforts, an end to armed citizen patrols, and the creation of rumor control networks that countered misperceptions regarding police response to the robberies.

and provided best practices for crowd separation to airport security officials. CRS services helped law enforcement, demonstrators, and airport officials conduct a safe and lawful event.

Sacramento, California

Through facilitated dialogues between community groups and local law enforcement, CRS helped de-escalate community tension in South

To help the community de-escalate tensions, CRS facilitated a series of conversations with law enforcement and leaders from Asian American, African American, and Hispanic American groups. The local police strongly discouraged citizen patrols, citing concerns about public safety. The dialogue CRS facilitated led to greater community collaboration on crime prevention efforts, an end to armed citizen patrols, and the creation of rumor control networks that countered misperceptions regarding police response to the robberies.

Northwestern Region ▼

Portland, Oregon

In June 2017, CRS assisted local community and interfaith leaders in reducing tension after a fatal stabbing on a crowded commuter train in Portland. The suspect allegedly began yelling hate speech directed against various religions and ethnicities and targeted two young women who allegedly appeared to be Muslim. As others tried to intervene, the suspect purportedly became violent and stabbed three men, killing two and seriously injuring the third.

CRS met with 18 members of the Oregon Coalition Against Hate Crime (OCAHC) and the Portland Police Bureau to discuss concrete ways to confront this and other bias-motivated incidents and hate crimes that had been occurring statewide.

CRS helped OCAHC members coordinate efforts to raise awareness of hate crimes through a series of public meetings and conversations. These efforts included facilitating a Bias Incidents and Hate Crimes Forum in Portland, Oregon, with three panels (Law Enforcement, Community and Faith Leaders, and Resources). Approximately 180 people from the community attended the forum. Key issues discussed during the event included the reporting of hate crimes and bias



incidents in the greater Portland area, the need to identify resources for victims and vulnerable communities, and an awareness campaign to confront acts of hate.

As a result of input received during the forum, OCAHC identified several actions for the coalition to take, including continuing support of neighborhood discussions on race and pursuing de-escalation training. In addition, OCAHC decided to conduct outreach to communities relating to hate crime reporting and encourage law enforcement to expand diversity within patrol officers' ranks. CRS shared information at the forum on ways to advance diversity in law enforcement agencies and best practices for minority recruitment.

Frequently Asked Questions ▼

What is the United States Department of Justice Community Relations Services?

The Community Relations Service is an agency within the U.S. Department of Justice that is congressionally mandated to assist communities in resolving conflicts based on race, color, and national origin. Under the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, CRS also works with communities to prevent and respond to alleged violent hate crimes committed on the basis of 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.

What is CRS's jurisdiction?

Pursuant to Title X of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, CRS provides its services to local communities where there are community-wide conflicts, tension, or violence stemming from racial or ethnic issues. In 2009, CRS's jurisdiction expanded, with the passage of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, to include providing services to help communities prevent and respond to alleged violent hate crimes committed on the basis of actual or perceived race, color national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. CRS does not provide services to individuals in non-community conflicts.

Where does CRS work?

CRS works in all 50 states and United States territories. It assists communities large, small, rural, suburban, and urban. Much of CRS's work comes from requests by local law enforcement agencies, community leaders, school administrators, civil rights organizations, government officials, and other local and state authorities.

What kinds of issues does CRS become involved in?

Most of the work CRS performs involves situations where there is racial conflict or violence involving police agencies, schools, or communities struggling to recover in the aftermath of an alleged violent hate crime committed on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, religion, disability, gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Often, the most volatile situations CRS responds to are negative reactions to incidents involving police use of force, the staging of major demonstrations and counter events, major school disruptions, and organized hate crime activities.

Who provides CRS services?

CRS services are provided by highly-trained, impartial conflict resolution experts, known as Conciliation Specialists, who are based in ten Regional and four Field Offices across the country. Conciliation Specialists are available on a 24-hour basis, and follow established and standardized procedures in their work. In each incident, CRS first assesses the situation by determining what tensions or issues may be present in a community. This often includes meeting face-to-face with the affected parties. After gaining an in-depth understanding of the situation, and establishing whether the Agency has jurisdiction, CRS works with the parties to determine the actions or services necessary to help resolve the conflict and prevent violence from occurring.

Can a community refuse CRS's services?

Yes. CRS provides its services at the request of local officials or community leaders. Communities may decline CRS services at any time.



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