

NEWS RELEASE



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City of Anniston enlists help of U.S. Department of Justice

The City of Anniston has secured a partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Relations Service to address, combat, and mitigate major conflicts and tensions in the Anniston community.

City leaders sought the help of this DOJ division in an effort to proactively assist in the resolution of disputes, disagreements, and difficulties in the Anniston community that relate to discriminatory practices based on race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and disability.

"If we are going to continue to move forward as a community, we have to do it together with everyone on the same page and at the same table," said Mayor Vaughn Stewart.

"This is our way of doing that, and it is my hope that this Service and all those involved in this process will provide some much-needed and long-overdue healing in this community. We have come too far to turn back now."

CRS services will be provided to the City free of charge and will include confidential mediation, facilitation, training, and consulting services that will help in enhancing the City's ability to alleviate, solve, and respond to future conflicts more effectively.

"This partnership shows that we are committed to sustainable efforts of inclusiveness and cultural competency," said Vice Mayor Seyram Selase.

CRS represents the Department of Justice in one of its most important missions—providing assistance and support to help state and local governments prevent violence, resolve destructive conflicts, and promote public safety.

Since 1964, the Community Relations Service has helped local communities address community conflicts and tensions arising from differences in race, color, and national origin. This jurisdictional mandate was granted to CRS under Title X of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Since 2009, CRS has also helped communities develop 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. This jurisdictional mandate was legislatively granted to CRS under the federal Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

Department of Justice: Community Relations Service

The Community Relations Service is a conflict resolution agency. Created by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, CRS is the only federal agency dedicated to helping state and local governments, private and public organizations, and community groups prevent and resolve racial and ethnic tensions, civil disorder based on race, color, or national origin, and to address and prevent hate crimes. CRS supports the U.S. Department of Justice in some of its most important missions-providing assistance to state and local authorities in their efforts to prevent violence, resolve destructive conflicts, and promote public safety and ensuring that the rights of individuals are protected. CRS works with police chiefs, mayors, school administrators, other local and state authorities, community-based organizations, and civil and human rights groups to resolve disputes, disagreements, and difficulties relating to discriminatory practices and to prevent and address hate crimes. For more information, visit <http://www.justice.gov/crs>.

The City of Anniston

Located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in northeast Alabama, Anniston sits as the county seat for Calhoun County and a regional hub for legal, medical, and banking services. Home to the bronze-level mountain bike ride center of Coldwater Mountain, Anniston offers a wide range of recreational options such as biking the Chief Ladiga Trail or visiting the Anniston Museum of Natural History. For more information about the City of Anniston, visit www.anniston.al.gov.