



CommUNITY 2000

# Fight Hate

*A Rapid Response Strategy*

**NFHA**  
National Fair Housing Alliance

**Lcef**  
Leadership Conference Education Fund

Steps for Providing Immediate Assistance  
to Victims of Housing Related Hate Activity

# QUICK GUIDE FOR RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY HATE CRIMES

## A Resource for Communities

The National Fair Housing Alliance and the Leadership Conference Education Fund have compiled this guide to assist you in responding to and preventing hate crimes in your community. The guide includes:

- A definition of hate crimes and bias-motivated incidents
- Immediate response steps
- Checklist for developing a community response network
- Checklist for developing a community response protocol
- Roles and responsibilities for network members
- Victim care and assistance guidelines
- Rapid response checklist
- Additional contacts and resources



*Hate crimes include acts of violence, threats, property damage, or other criminal conduct directed against people because of their race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability. Hate crimes are also acts of violence against the American ideal—that we can make one nation out of many different people. Americans are proud that we are people with different backgrounds, faiths, viewpoints, and personal characteristics. But we are also one people, bound together not by bloodlines, but by our respect for human rights and the Constitution. In spite of our nation's substantial advances toward equality over the past 40 years, bias-motivated crimes are still devastating our communities—victims, families, friends, and entire neighborhoods. So we can all do more...even those of us living in the midst of apparent harmony.*

## What Is A Hate Crime?

A hate crime is a criminal act directed against people because of their race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability. Hate crimes may involve conduct such as assault, homicide, arson, threats, or vandalism. Hate incidents are bias-motivated acts—such as threats or property damage—that do not involve criminal activity. Federal and state statutes vary as to what particular groups are protected.

Key indicators that a hate crime may have occurred include:

- Use of bias-motivated language, epithets, or slurs by the perpetrator
- Victim and witness perceptions
- Pattern of similar incidents in general locale
- Local activity of an organized hate group
- Timing of crime with specific holiday or date of particular significance
- Absence of any other motive.

## Respond Immediately!

It is critical to respond *immediately* when you believe a hate crime has or is occurring or that someone is in imminent danger of physical harm. Specifically:

- Call 911 or your local emergency number if medical care is required or if there is risk of imminent continuing violence.
- Call the police and report the details of the incident.
- Find a safe haven for the victim, such as a friend's house.
- Prepare a narrative account of the incident.

Contact resources, such as the local fair housing hate crime coordinator, victim services professional, state or county attorney general, district attorney's office, or a civil rights advocacy group.

# Checklist for Developing a Community Response Network

*Developing a network of key resources in the community is important in establishing a coordinated response to hate crimes.*

## Assess your options

The first step in organizing a hate crime response team is to explore your options. A hate crime task force may already exist in your area, providing the option of tapping an ongoing resource. If you cannot locate an existing group, meeting with law enforcement and civil rights advocacy professionals and other related groups is a good way to begin building a network.

## Build a network

The guiding force behind a network should include:

- Local police, FBI, and other law enforcement contacts
- Civil rights advocates
- Local fair housing organization
- Victim service providers.

Collaboration among additional community resources is helpful in building a network:

- Religious leaders and institutions
- School representatives
- Community-based organizations such as the National Urban League or National Coalition for Community and Justice (NCCJ)
- Members of local real estate board or association.

## Identify your community's needs

Answering the following questions will help your network define its role in the community.

- Have community relations been historically peaceful among diverse groups?
- Has hate activity been prevalent in the past?
- Are there many complaints of discrimination in your community?
- Are new groups of people moving to the community?
- Are real estate professionals educated about fair housing and housing-related hate?
- Do diverse groups of children play together?
- Is bullying prevalent in local schools?
- Has racist, anti-immigrant, or anti-gay graffiti or literature been seen in your community?

## Identify your assets

Explore the available hate prevention resources in your community using these questions as a guide:

- Do organizations already exist to prevent and respond to housing-related and other hate activity?
- Are there youth, arts and sports programs in place to bring young people together and give diverse youths an opportunity to interact?
- Are there opportunities for religious exchanges among people of different faiths?
- Does your human relations commission offer workshops in diversity and conflict resolution?
- Do local radio and television have and air public service announcements about accepting and interacting with diverse people?
- Do local schools teach diversity curricula?

Answering favorably to the questions above still does not eliminate the need for a response network in your community! Hate crimes can occur *anywhere*.

## Define your network's role—will it...

- Compile and disseminate resources for hate crime response?
- Assume an advisory role to the police or serve as a "watch dog"?
- Train service providers to better respond?
- Educate public officials and media?
- Provide direct services and coordinate resources?

## Define network member responsibilities

- Neighbors
- Police and justice system
- Fair housing center
- Victim service providers
- Offender rehabilitation services
- Religious institutions
- Schools
- Businesses
- Media.

Suggested roles and responsibilities are provided later in this guide.

# Checklist for Developing a Community Response Protocol

*Developing a response protocol helps ensure your community is prepared to respond to hate crimes or bias-motivated incidents.*

## Choose network coordinators

Because of their critical expertise in responding directly to hate crime and fair housing complaints, the three natural candidates for coordinating the network include:

- Police
- Victim service providers
- Local fair housing organizations.

## Choose response coordinators

Designate two or three coordinators as central points of contact. Provide names, phone numbers, and pager numbers. Be sure to designate a backup coordinator in case of an emergency.

## Create a response checklist

Identify a clear role for each network member to implement during a crisis response. Clarify roles and responsibilities of each network member:

- Police
- Victim service providers
- Fair housing
- Neighbors
- Religious organizations
- Schools
- Community organizations
- Business professionals.

Suggested roles are discussed on the pages that follow.

## Establish the initial point of communication

- Establish good working relationship with your local police department; request a community contact within the department who will alert the network's contact of any hate activity.
- Identify network member to be contacted after a report of a hate crime or serious hate incident has been made to police. Anyone who learns of a hate crime should call the police.

## Design a response protocol

Although each network will create its own protocol, the steps below provide some helpful guidelines:

- Network point-of-contact notifies police immediately (or network coordinator is alerted by the police) about a neighborhood hate crime or serious bias incident.
- Response coordinators discuss appropriate action and convene response team meeting/telephone call comprising those network members whose expertise best corresponds to the situation.
- Designated response team member determines what has occurred and addresses urgent victim and community needs.
- Response team reports back to the network coordinators.
- Network coordinators convene a full network meeting to identify short-, medium-, and long-term next steps.
- Network makes assignments and creates a schedule of next steps, which most likely will address:
  - Victim care
  - Assistance with completing and filing legal or administrative complaints
  - Public communication and reconciliation
  - Media outreach.

# What You Can Do Now...

## Police

Based on guidelines published by the International Association of Chiefs of Police:

- ❑ Establish a “zero tolerance” policy for discrimination within the department to help boost public confidence in the department’s effectiveness and fairness in hate crime response.
- ❑ Train police force to recognize hate crimes and understand the specific state and federal fair housing laws and local fair housing ordinances.
- ❑ Help ensure that victims report their victimization by demonstrating that law enforcement will respond swiftly and compassionately, and through a widely publicized relationship with the local fair housing organizations.
- ❑ Help engage the media as partners in restoring victimized communities and promoting positive intergroup interactions in the event of a housing-related hate crime through sensitive and accurate reporting.
- ❑ Work with schools to develop strategies for preventing and responding to school-based tensions and hate activity; work with fair housing advocates to explain to school officials how school-based tensions are often first indicators of housing-related hate activity.

## Fair housing centers

- ❑ Train intake staff to recognize and respond effectively to hate crimes
- ❑ Help victims receive assistance to repair vandalized property (e.g., paint, repair locks) by leveraging business & housing contacts
- ❑ Coordinate with other civil rights organizations that value inter-group relations and/or hate crime reduction and prevention
- ❑ Deploy testers to see if housing discrimination is occurring in an area experiencing tensions or where a housing-related hate crime has occurred.

## Victim service providers

- ❑ Interview a victim reluctant to report a hate incident and ease comfort with making a complaint
- ❑ Provide referrals for counseling
- ❑ Facilitate liaisons with appropriate agencies for case follow up and other needed services

- ❑ Become familiar with legislation and programs that affect traditionally targeted groups.
- ❑ Help service providers and associations improve outreach to different communities in your area, including racial, ethnic, religious, gay and lesbian communities.

## School and youth organizations

- ❑ Develop and publicize a zero-tolerance policy toward hate on campus. Establish an on-campus hate-crime response protocol.
- ❑ Appoint a school representative to serve on the community’s response network, and build relationships with other entities in the community that can support youth-focused anti-hate initiatives.
- ❑ Work with the community response network to use any incident of intergroup tensions or housing-related hate as a “teachable moment” in schools. Give students and administrators opportunities to vent their concerns and fears.
- ❑ Offer extra credit or community service credits to students who participate in mediation and hate crime prevention workshops.
- ❑ Incorporate a section on fair housing and hate crimes in civics or social studies classes
- ❑ Offer training for school staff, students, and community members about preventing hate conflict through understanding, sensitivity, mediation and conflict resolution skills.
- ❑ Host community events that establish a space for integration and cultural exchange, or provide space for community training and meetings hosted by other organizations or the network.

## Community organizations

- ❑ Participate in the local response network.
- ❑ Develop, produce, and disseminate a local resource kit with educational resources and contact data.
- ❑ Educate diverse constituencies about their civil rights, including fair housing and court and legal procedures.
- ❑ Lobby the prosecutor’s office to designate one or more victim/witness advocates.
- ❑ Lobby legislators for expanded hate crime legislation, enforcement, and prevention funding.

# ...And After A Hate Crime Has Occurred

## Police

In the event of a community hate crime, the International Association of Chiefs of Police recommends that officers should immediately:

- Secure the scene
- Stabilize the victim and request medical attention when necessary
- Ensure the safety of victims, witnesses, and perpetrators
- Assign only one officer to interview the victim to minimize trauma
- Preserve the crime scene and collect and photograph all physical evidence
- Identify criminal evidence on victim
- Request assistance of translators when needed
- Conduct a preliminary investigation and document the incident thoroughly
- Arrest the perpetrator if probable cause exists
- Explain to the victim and witnesses the likely progression of the investigation.

Additional guidelines are provided in the victim care section of this guide.

## Fair housing centers

- Spearhead reconciliation efforts and other unity-building initiatives to help victims feel safe again and choose to stay in the neighborhood.
- Secure decent housing for victims if they decide to move; help identify caring neighbors or a local organization to welcome the victim.

## Victim service providers

- Coordinate logistics for the victim (e.g., child care, transportation, or transitional housing).
- Provide continual emotional support to victims and other community members to help promote healing.
- Act as an expert witness in sentencing hearings.

## Religious leaders

- Establish safe home shelters within houses of worship. Victims of housing-related hate crimes may need temporary housing, either while property damage is repaired or while they take time to heal in the aftermath of the crime.

- Identify caring neighbors who support a victim by visiting frequently, bringing meals, baby-sitting, or providing transportation to and from court.
- Provide counseling by clergy or church members. This can be done as part of the response network or as a supplement to the counseling offered through the network.
- Take collections for food, clothing, money and other necessities that will help the victim in the period of stress or transition following the incident.

## Neighbors

- Reach out with small acts of kindness—a meal, phone call, letter, visits, or flowers can help. Emphasize that the hate act does not characterize the sentiments of the rest of the community.
- Offer to provide a safe haven in your home.
- Help with any clean-up efforts, such as painting over hate symbols.
- Call your local elected officials to ensure that they respond proactively and publicly to the incident.
- Write letters to the editor of your local and regional newspaper and other widely circulated publications condemning the hate incident and conveying how diversity is welcomed in your community.

## School and youth organizations

- Facilitate mediation of hate-related activity that occurs at school.
- Solicit support of other network resources.
- Conduct programs to promote cultural awareness and understanding.

## Business & real estate professionals

- Allow victims and witnesses time off to testify without losing pay.
- Help locate temporary housing.
- Assist with repairs to damaged property.

# Victim Care and Assistance

## Understanding victim trauma

Victims of hate crimes may experience:

- Deep personal crisis
- Increased vulnerability to repeat attack
- Anger/desire for revenge
- Acute shock and disbelief
- Sense of community/system betrayal
- Shame and humiliation
- Extreme fear of certain groups
- Hopelessness.

## Why victims may be reluctant to report

- Fear of retaliation
- Fear of having privacy compromised
- Mistrust of law enforcement
- Cultural or language barriers
- Fear of jeopardizing immigration status
- For gays and lesbians, fear of repercussions of being “outed” to family members
- Employer’s response.

- Work in partnership with the police to address the victim’s immediate safety.
- Ensure a victim services professional addresses the needs of the victim.
- Assess the need for a mediator or conflict resolution specialist in case of conflict between the neighbors.
- Assist in finding alternative or interim emergency housing if needed.
- Identify a victim services provider or other resource to follow up with the victims to ensure their safety and help them deal with logistics in the aftermath of the incident.

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## If you’re on the response network...

Victim care is the first priority of the response network. Refer to your specific response protocol as you mobilize the team to provide safety and assurance:

# Contacts and Resources

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American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee  
4201 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Ste. 300  
Washington, DC 20008  
(202) 244-2990  
[www.adc.org](http://www.adc.org)

American Jewish Committee  
165 E. 56<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10022  
(212) 751-4000  
[www.ajc.org](http://www.ajc.org)

American Muslim Council  
1212 New York Avenue, NW, Ste. 400  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 789-2262  
[www.amconline.org](http://www.amconline.org)

American Psychological Association  
750 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002-4242  
(202) 336-5500  
[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith  
823 United Nations Plaza, #1100  
New York, NY 10017  
(212) 490-2525  
[www.adl.org](http://www.adl.org)

Asian American Legal Defense & Education Fund  
99 Hudson Street, 12<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10013  
(212) 966-5932  
[www.aaldef.org](http://www.aaldef.org)

Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR)  
P.O. Box 50469  
Atlanta, GA 30302  
(404) 221-0025  
[www.publiceye.org/cdr](http://www.publiceye.org/cdr)

Center for the Prevention of Hate Violence  
96 Falmonth Street  
Portland, ME 04104  
(207) 228-8152

Asian Law Caucus  
720 Market Street, Ste. 500  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
(415) 391-1655  
[www.asianlawcaucus.org](http://www.asianlawcaucus.org)

Coalition for Human Dignity  
P.O. Box 40344  
Portland, OR 97240  
(503) 281-5823  
[www.halcyon.com/chd](http://www.halcyon.com/chd)

FBI (Attn: FOI-PA Section)  
Chief J. Kevin O'Brien  
Freedom of Information  
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20535  
(202) 324-3000  
[www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)

Klanwatch  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
400 Washington Avenue  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
(334) 956-8200  
[www.splcenter.org](http://www.splcenter.org)

Lambda Legal Defense & Education Fund, Inc.  
120 Wall Street, Ste. 1500  
New York, NY 10005-3904  
(212) 809-8585  
[www.lambdalegal.org](http://www.lambdalegal.org)

NAACP  
4805 Mt. Hope Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21215  
(410) 521-4939  
[www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org)

National Urban League  
1111 14<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 898-1604  
[www.nul.org](http://www.nul.org)  
The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force  
1700 Kalorama Road, NW  
Washington, DC 20009-2624  
(202) 332-6483  
[www.nglftf.org](http://www.nglftf.org)

The National Fair Housing Alliance  
1212 New York Ave.  
Washington, DC 20005  
[www.nationalfairhousing.com](http://www.nationalfairhousing.com)

Partners Against Hate  
1100 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Suite 1820  
Washington, DC 20036  
[www.partnersagainsthate.org](http://www.partnersagainsthate.org)

National Crime Victims Bar Association  
2111 Wilson Boulevard, Ste. 300  
Arlington, VA 22201  
(703) 276-0960  
[www.victimbar.org](http://www.victimbar.org)

National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)  
1730 Park Road, NW  
Washington, DC 20010  
(202) 232-6682  
[www.try-nova.org](http://www.try-nova.org)

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office for Victims of Crime (OVC)  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001  
(800) 627-6872  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/help](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/help)

U.S. Department of Justice  
Community Relations Service  
600 E Street, NW, Ste. 6000  
Washington, DC 20530  
(202) 305-2935  
[www.usdoj.gov/crs](http://www.usdoj.gov/crs)

The Women's Project  
Arkansas Progressive Network  
2224 Main Street  
Little Rock, AR 72206  
(501) 372-5113  
[www.members.aol.com/wproject](http://www.members.aol.com/wproject)

Leadership Conference Education Fund  
1629 K Street, NW, Ste. 1010  
Washington, DC 20006  
(202) 466-3311  
[www.civilrights.org](http://www.civilrights.org)

Western Justice Center  
85 South Grand Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91105  
(626) 584-7494  
[www.westernjustice.org](http://www.westernjustice.org)

AAR International  
Box 54511  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5M 4N5  
(416) 410-5631  
[www.artistsagainstracism.org](http://www.artistsagainstracism.org)