The Leadership Conference

The Leadership Conference Education Fund

Supporting Community Resilience

A Resource for Municipalities on Preventing and Responding to Hate Crimes

Acknowledgements

Supporting Community Resilience is an initiative of The Leadership Conference Education Fund. This resource was developed in partnership with Susan Bro, the Khalid Jabara Foundation, the 2nd Lt. Richard W. Collins III Foundation, and the Matthew Shepard Foundation. **Supporting Community Resilience** is a resource that is informed by the experiences of victims and survivors directly impacted by hate crime. In drafting this resource, we partnered with individuals who have lost loved ones to hate crimes, met with organizations and government officials who responded to mass hate crimes, and compiled resources and best practices from organizations that have been doing this work in communities across the country.

The Leadership Conference Education Fund was founded in 1969 as the education and research arm of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the nation's oldest and largest civil and human rights coalition of more than 240 national organizations. For more than five decades, The Education Fund has served as a force multiplier and has amplified the call for a just, inclusive, and fair democracy.

Susan Bro is a nationally acclaimed speaker and advocate for justice. She is the mother of Heather Heyer, who was killed on August 12, 2017, in Charlottesville, Virginia. Heather was a young woman who dedicated her life to promoting equal rights for all people. Her life was cut short when she was participating in a peaceful counter-protest against the "Unite the Right" rally. Susan launched the Heather Heyer Foundation, which operated from 2017 to 2022 to support positive social change, anti-racism, and help bridge divides in our country. Susan played a critical role in securing passage of the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which included the Khalid Jabara and Heather Heyer NO HATE Act.

The Khalid Jabara Foundation was launched in 2018 with the mission to make neighbors out of strangers by building kind communities free from hate. The foundation honors the life of Khalid Jabara, a 37-year-old beloved son, brother, uncle, and friend. Khalid was known for his sense of humor and for creating every Jabara family joke. He cared for the entire family, his friends, and people he didn't even know. A kind spirit with a big heart, Khalid tragically lost his life to anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hate on August 12, 2016, when he was shot outside his family home by a neighbor who had terrorized the family for years. Khalid had his whole life ahead of him, but all of that was taken away by a hateful man and a system that failed to protect him and the community. The family of Khalid Jabara was instrumental in passing the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act, which included the Khalid Jabara and Heather Heyer NO HATE Act.

KJF
KHALID JABARA FOUNDATION

The 2LT Richard W. Collins III Foundation was founded in 2019 to honor and advance the legacy of Lt. Richard W. Collins III. Stabbed by a White man on the University of Maryland campus on May 20, 2017, just days after he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and days before his college graduation ceremony, Lt. Collins' life was stolen just as his potential was being realized. The Collins family, a three-generation military family, established the 2LT Richard W. Collins III Foundation with the mission to invest in the education and empowerment of promising young Americans who have proven themselves to be outstanding citizens and are committed to working toward a hate-free, more just society for all. The 2LT Richard W. Collins III Foundation was instrumental in passing the Collins' Law in Maryland — a stronger state hate crime law that closes the loophole that required hate to be the sole motivating factor for an act to be considered a hate crime.

The Matthew Shepard Foundation was established in 1998 by Dennis and Judy Shepard to honor the life and aspirations of their son. The foundation's mission is to amplify the story of Matthew Shepard to inspire individuals, organizations, and communities to embrace the dignity and equality of all people. Matthew's life was violently cut short in one of the most notorious anti-gay hate crimes in American history, which spawned an activist movement that, more than a decade later, would result in passage of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, a federal law against bias crimes directed at lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people. The foundation's work is an extension of Matthew's passion to foster a more caring and just world.

Staff assistance for **Supporting Community Resilience** was provided by Nadia Aziz, Fey Cardenas, Oprah Cunningham, Nisreen Eadeh, Mattie Goldman, Liz King, Khalid Pitts, Scott Simpson, Carter Wynne, and Corrine Yu. The report was designed by Christian Madison.

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Authors' Notes about Definitions

Throughout this resource, we use the following definitions:

Community Resilience: A community's persistent sustainability in the face of new and ongoing hate, discrimination, and violence. In the context of hate crimes, a resilient community is one that is: (1) inclusive; (2) has an anti-hate infrastructure; and (3) supports the diverse needs of survivors and victims of hate crimes and hate incidents.

Hate Crime: A crime against a person or property in which the perpetrator intentionally selects a victim because of their actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender/sex, gender identity, disability, or sexual orientation.[i] Individuals are often targeted because of the intersection of multiple protected classes.

Hate Incident: An incident where the perpetrator selects the victim because of their protected characteristic. There are two main kinds of hate incidents: (1) acts of hate that are not crimes but violate civil rights laws, and (2) acts of hate that may not violate the law. Both types cause significant harm to communities.

A note on the use of the terms "victim" and "survivor." Throughout this resource, when discussing individuals who have experienced a hate crime or hate incident, we use "victims and survivors" to respect how any individual chooses to identify to the experience. Service providers engaging with people targeted for hate will often be in the position to know which term to use in the given circumstance.

A note on the use of the term "family." We encourage the most inclusive use of the term "family" to include any person(s) who plays a significant role in an individual's life (biological, adoptive/foster, caretakers, guardians, spouse/domestic partner/significant other, bonus and chosen family members). Recognizing that certain entities may have legal restrictions on information they can share in the aftermath of a hate crime or hate incident, we encourage service providers and support teams to be as inclusive as possible.

Introduction

Everyone in the United States deserves to live in inclusive communities where they are safe and not targeted for who they are. Yet many across the country have and continue to experience the scourge of hate-motivated incidents and crimes. This resource collects information sourced from individuals, communities, and local governments who have experienced and responded to hate crimes.

Hate crimes and incidents are not a new phenomenon for our nation. They have occurred throughout our history. Increases in hate crimes have roughly paralleled increases in divisive public rhetoric, changes in demographics, and incidents of mass violence.

The most recent data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has shown the highest number of reported hate crimes on record, even with thousands of law enforcement agencies in the country failing to participate in the FBI's data collection effort and other agencies failing to report credible data. In 2023, for example, some 60 agencies serving populations of 100,000 or more affirmatively reported that they had zero (0) hate crimes.[ii]

The repeated record-breaking number of hate crimes reported in the past several years is alarming, but it is even more devastating when the human impact is considered.

Research has shown that hate crimes have a unique impact on the victim and the victim's community. Hate crimes "hurt more" than non-bias motivated crimes.[iii]

They are "more likely to involve excessive violence, multiple offenders, serial attacks, greater psychological trauma to victims, a heightened risk of social disorder," and more.[iv] Hate crimes can cause more adverse psychological symptoms and for longer periods of time.[v] Because perpetrators of hate crimes target an individual's personal characteristics — who they are, or how they worship, or who they love — the impact has been described as "scar[ing] the victim far more deeply."[vi]

Understanding the impact of hate crimes and the intersectional nature of identities is critical to prevention and necessary to provide the much-needed support for victims and survivors.

A hate crime can turn someone's life upside down in an instant, making them feel unsafe and unwelcome in their own community, leaving them reeling with grief, anger, and unanswered questions.

Ripples of fear and uncertainty can be felt by the broader community, leaving individuals to fear that they too could be targeted because of who they are.

The message that an entire community is "less than" or "not welcome" is one way hate crimes undermine an inclusive democratic society, and it is precisely why the federal government, 46 states, and the District of Columbia have enacted hate crime laws.[vii]

Governments at all levels should actively work to address hate crimes. While policies and programs at the federal level typically get the most airtime and play the most significant role in shaping public discourse, people in the United States have the most interaction with their local governments.

Municipalities across the country have different structures and vary significantly in size, but an important commonality is the influence they can have over one's day-to-day life — operating libraries; funding police departments, fire departments, and schools; providing emergency medical services; operating public works; and more. In the wake of a hate crime, effective response by local government officials — including first responders and service providers — can play a key role in safeguarding and reassuring victims and survivors who often interact most closely with local governments.

Nearly every component of a local government has a role to play in addressing hate crimes. From the office of the mayor to the city council to police departments and human relations commissions, countering hate and building inclusive communities requires an all-of-government approach.

This resource is not intended to be all-encompassing. It is an entry point and resource for municipalities looking to engage in the critical work of building inclusive communities, developing and strengthening anti-hate infrastructure, and supporting victims and survivors of hate.

Preventing Hate Crimes by Building Inclusive Communities

Preventing Hate Crime by Building Inclusive Communities

Hate crimes are message crimes. They send a message to the targeted individual and the entire community that they are viewed as "less than" or are not welcome. Countering hate crime, therefore, must necessarily involve countering the message that perpetrators seek to send. Moreover, hate crimes don't happen in a vacuum. Consistent protection and enforcement of civil rights and individual dignity helps to create environments that reduce the potential for acts of hate.

While countering the message that hate crimes send is often discussed in the aftermath of an incident, government actions, policies, and programs should be sending messages about belonging and inclusion long before a hate incident occurs.

For example, a local government that seeks to understand and remedy racial disparities in its community sends a message that no one community is forgotten or left behind. A town that develops outreach to include recently resettled refugees in local economic life is embracing individuals of all backgrounds. A city that ensures their libraries are places where all community members are reflected in books is acknowledging a common humanity.

Local governments across the country have prioritized creating inclusive communities through policies and programs as well as outreach efforts. From establishing community-based advisory committees to hosting public engagements centered on inclusiveness, municipalities are working to create environments where all members of their community are valued.

This work proactively counters hate crime by publicly demonstrating that the local municipality sees and appreciates the inherent value of a diverse community.

Developing and Strengthening Local Anti-Hate Infrastructure

Developing and Strengthening Local Anti-Hate Infrastructure

Two municipal agencies that are key to developing and strengthening local anti-hate infrastructure are police departments and human relations commissions.

A. Law Enforcement Anti-Hate Infrastructure

Identified as "Critical Issue 1" in a guide produced by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and the International Association of Chiefs of Police on enhancing the response to hate crimes, increasing community and law enforcement collaboration to address hate crimes is necessary to increase capacity for local municipalities to address hate. Below are some examples of best practices.

Best Practices

➔ **Hate Crime Task Forces**

Generally referred to as "hate crime task forces" in many jurisdictions, the law enforcement agencies typically convene these regular meetings. However, each community is different, and how these regular convenings are conducted may vary depending on the level of comfort and trust between communities and police departments.

These meetings provide an opportunity for community leaders, relevant government agency professionals, and law enforcement officials to meet before an impactful hate crime occurs. They can help law enforcement understand what hate looks like to different communities, including understanding potential bias indicators.

They can assist local police departments in identifying trends and community leaders in understanding the investigatory process. Having these pre-existing relationships is important, as it allows law enforcement to better serve their community while also giving community leaders a direct point of contact in advance of a potential crisis.

The Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations (PCHR) is an example of a successful hate crime task force model. PCHR convenes quarterly interagency civil rights meetings that bring community leaders to the table. These meetings include representatives from municipal, state, and federal agencies, including law enforcement, and provide an opportunity to share information about municipal updates and initiatives as well recent experiences and incidents of bias that community leaders and their communities may be experiencing.

In addition to hate crime task forces, it is important that police departments demonstrate their commitment to addressing hate crimes through the adoption and posting of departmental policies and actions. This could include adopting a robust hate crime policy, creating community specific liaison units, transitioning to the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS), and collecting and reporting hate crime data to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program every year. Depending on resource availability, some departments may also establish dedicated hate crime units.

➔ Hate Crime Policy

The International Association of Chiefs of Police updated its Model Policy for Investigation of Hate Crimes in 2021.[viii] This thoughtful, inclusive model policy establishes guidelines for identifying, investigating, and reporting hate crimes and hate incidents as well as best practices for assisting victimized individuals and communities.

➔ Community Specific Liaison Units

A community specific hate crime liaison unit can be a valuable resource, especially for larger communities. These designated officers operate as a dedicated team within a police department and can focus on building relationships with specific segments of the local population, such as the LGBTQ, Latino, or Asian Pacific American communities. These units can help foster trust and improve communication between the department and these communities, which can lead to a deeper understanding of the unique needs and cultural dynamics of the community.

➔ National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS)

In January 2021, the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) became the national standard for law enforcement crime data in the United States. NIBRS is an improvement over previous reporting systems because it can allow for more detailed data about the characteristics of criminal incidents, including specific bias motivations.

While law enforcement agencies across the country were expected to fully transition to NIBRS by 2021, as of May 2024, some jurisdictions have yet to transition, including more than 50 law enforcement agencies serving populations of more than 100,000. Using NIBRS is essential to addressing hate crime.[ix]

➔ FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR Program)

Solving the nation's hate crime problem requires accurate information about its nature and magnitude. The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program publishes data from more than 18,000 law enforcement agencies that participate voluntarily by submitting crime data to the program.[x] The Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990 first required the attorney general to publish an annual report on crimes that show evidence of bias.[xi] Law enforcement agencies that report hate crime data and statistics through the UCR program help provide an essential understanding of what communities across the country are experiencing.

B. Community Collaboration

There are many avenues for community collaboration across municipal government. For example, establishing community liaisons within a mayor's office is an important way to build trust with communities who experience hate crime. Liaisons can help direct individuals to specific government services, including applying for permits or mediation services.

Recognizing the historic distrust between many communities and law enforcement, jurisdictions across the country, often led by local human relations commissions, have established various structures for community collaboration to strengthen the response to hate crime and support directly impacted individuals outside of the law enforcement context. Regular convenings and two-way communication can help ensure that communities feel seen, remain safe, and are included.

LA vs. Hate is a program of the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations and is an example of a successful and robust community collaboration.[xii] It is a community-centered system designed to address the normalization of hate and inspire people to stand up to it, build understanding about what constitutes a hate act and how to report it, and support individuals and communities as they heal from the trauma of hate.

Getting Started

Municipalities looking to establish this infrastructure can begin by following the best practices and action agenda outlined in the Action Agenda on Enhancing the Response to Hate Crimes developed by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and International Association of Chiefs of Police.[xiii] Congress has authorized several hate crimes-related grant programs to assist in capacity building.[xiv]

These grant programs are administered through the U.S. Department of Justice and include the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Program, which supports state and local law enforcement and prosecutors in conducting outreach, educating practitioners, and investigating and prosecuting hate crimes, and the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act State-Run Hate Crime Reporting Hotlines program to establish non-law enforcement reporting and resource hotlines.[xv]

The Emmett Till Cold Case Investigations Program provides support to state, local, and tribal law enforcement and prosecutors in their investigation and prosecution of cold case murders associated with civil rights violations. In recent years, these grants have also funded innovative restorative justice initiatives.[xvi]

Strengthening Current Engagement

Municipalities looking to strengthen local hate crime task forces or roundtables can conduct regular audits of their meetings to better understand which communities are regularly represented in meetings, and which communities may need additional outreach. Seeking regular feedback from individuals who are represented at convenings and who are recipients of active outreach, as well as from those who do not engage regularly, will both strengthen current engagement and build trust.

C. Rapid Response Teams

A hate crime rapid response team is an interdisciplinary group of individuals who represent government agencies, community organizations, and law enforcement.

Rapid response teams can be made up of a diverse group of stakeholders from hate crime task forces or working groups who have connections with community members and who can help facilitate community dialogue when needed. The purpose of a rapid response team is to ensure a well-coordinated response for municipalities in the wake of potential hate crimes.

These teams can demonstrate that a municipality is taking the incident seriously, serve as a tool to inform stakeholders about procedures for investigations, and help address community concerns.

The Philadelphia Civil Rights Rapid Response Team (PCRRRT), led by the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations, is one example of an established rapid response team. PCRRRT members include the mayor's office, police department, district attorney's office, the local office of immigrant affairs, and the Department of Justice's Community Relations Service, as well as community organizations represented in various hate crime task forces. In the wake of an incident, there are many actions that the rapid response team may take, including issuing a statement that can help ensure communities that the incident is being taken seriously while upholding the integrity of the investigation, activating a community victim response, and establishing a messaging campaign.

Supporting Survivors and Victims in the Aftermath of a Hate Crime

This section was informed by families who have lost loved ones to acts of hate. While each of the individual recommendations may not apply to every situation, they can inform those who engage directly with victims and survivors in the aftermath of a hate crime. Though there will be some commonalities, there are more differences between experiences. These practices are meant to serve as a broad overview of considerations in the event of a hate crime, not an exhaustive list. Practice should be informed both by what is most common and an individual's experience.

Supporting Survivors and Victims in the Aftermath of a Hate Crime

In addition to engaging in efforts to prevent hate crimes, local government officials and employees should be prepared to support the various needs of victims and survivors of hate crimes. This support team should include police officers, investigators, victim advocates, and local prosecutors.

The sections below address three time periods:
(A) the immediate aftermath, including the initial notification of a hate crime;
(B) trial; and (C) the longer-term aftermath. There are several common themes that run throughout the below recommendations. These include:

- An understanding of the intersectional nature of identities and many hate crimes.
- A recognition of risks of secondary victimization and the need for general self-awareness of potential biases.
- A commitment to ensuring information shared is understood, not just communicated.

A. Immediate Aftermath

The immediate aftermath of a hate crime is an incredibly vulnerable time for those directly impacted. Those engaging with victims and survivors during this time should be especially mindful to avoid potential secondary victimization, or victimization that can occur "through the response of institutions and individuals."[xvii]

This section includes recommended best practices that can help avoid secondary victimization.

The potential that an incident is bias motivated may not be known immediately and may only be uncovered during the investigation. It is important to note that when engaging with victims, survivors, and their loved ones, even absent direct evidence, individuals can feel and understand that they were targeted because of a protected characteristic. The experiences and perspectives of the individual victims and survivors should be documented in law enforcement reports, fully considered during the investigation, and should always be respected when engaging with survivors, family, and loved ones.[xviii]

1. Initial Notification

This section is most relevant in situations where an individual was severely injured or killed. The recommendations below are for individual instances. Mass violence incidents have unique challenges, some of which are expanded upon in the Mass Hate Crime section.

The manner in which an initial notice of an incident or death is given to next of kin and surviving family members will differ depending on the situation. In every case, however, the moment an individual is notified of their loved one's severe injury or death is a moment in time that is forever ingrained in their memory. While delivering such news is challenging, hearing the information is infinitely worse.

Law enforcement agencies should consider incorporating the below recommendations into their incident or death notification policy:

- ➔ When gathering basic information about the victim prior to notifying the next of kin and surviving family, law enforcement should confirm that they are using the victim's chosen name and pronouns. Where possible and when needed, any photos of the victim used should be of how the victim most often appeared in the days leading up to their death.
- ➔ Law enforcement should consider potential communication and language needs and limitations before contacting an individual. They should be accompanied by a language interpreter or American Sign Language interpreter if needed. Communicating with an older adult or someone with a learning disability may require more flexibility and support to ensure these individuals can adequately process the information that is being communicated.
- ➔ When law enforcement first notifies an individual that a loved one has been severely injured or killed, they should be mindful of the range of experiences that individuals and communities may have had with law enforcement and approach the individual with the utmost humility.
- ➔ Whenever possible, a victim advocate or community liaison should be present during the notification. If a victim advocate cannot be present, next of kin should be provided with a direct point of contact for a readily available victim advocate.
- ➔ Law enforcement should honor the wishes of the next of kin regarding sharing difficult information with their loved ones. For example, if one member of the family wishes to share the news with other members of their household instead of having law enforcement do so, law enforcement should defer to the wishes of the family member. Ensuring an individual has autonomy is a key component of trauma-informed practices.
- ➔ It is important to be clear and direct when sharing the facts of the situation. Law enforcement should be prepared to answer basic questions. Families should not have to plead with authorities to obtain basic information, and they should be told directly prior to information being released to the media.

- ➔ While initial notification is not the time to discuss graphic details or return the victim's personal effects, the law enforcement agency in charge of the investigation should work with the family to retrieve and return the victim's personal effects in a respectful and timely manner once they are no longer needed for the investigation, prosecution, or appeal.
- ➔ In these difficult and traumatizing moments, compassion and respect are critical and go a long way toward maintaining trust and reducing the likelihood of secondary victimization.

2. Logistical Needs

In the immediate aftermath of a potential hate crime, various logistical needs may arise that municipalities — including community liaisons, law enforcement, and victim advocates — can help address and support, including:

- ➔ Providing a referral list of trusted community organizations that are active in local hate crime task forces can be helpful to next of kin and surviving family members. These organizations can help field incoming press inquiries, connect families to mutual aid groups, and help identify a shelter should they need to be relocated.
- ➔ When a crime occurs on private property, the property owner is usually responsible for cleanup. If this happens on the victim's property, it is helpful to have a list of organizations or companies that can handle this as well as information about how to cover the costs of such cleanup or submit for a reimbursement through a victim services office.
- ➔ Offering a police escort can help relieve the stress associated with high profile incidents. This is especially helpful for those seeking privacy and refuge from hovering media.

3. Safety

Family members of a victim of a hate crime can quickly be situated in the public eye. The physical and emotional safety of family members can be at risk when they receive a high degree of public attention. Individuals may not feel comfortable returning to their homes, places of work, or houses of worship. They should be encouraged to share information regarding potential threats or safety concerns they may have. Law enforcement can share basic safety tips with concerned family members and provide a direct contact number should any issue arise.

B. Engagement with Criminal-Legal System/Courts & Trial Preparation

Many victims and survivors may only engage with law enforcement in the immediate aftermath and may not see criminal charges brought. This can be for many reasons, including potential difficulty identifying the perpetrator. In these instances, victim support is essential. Law enforcement and/or an assigned victim advocate should continue to provide support as much as they are able, including providing victims and survivors with a list of referrals — including community organizations and support services.

For instances where criminal charges are brought, navigating the criminal-legal system and the nuances of criminal proceedings, especially a trial, can be daunting, particularly for those struggling with the trauma of experiencing a violent crime or the loss of a loved one. Victim advocates — whether assigned through a local police department or state's attorney's office — are important sources of knowledge and support and can help ensure victims and survivors have agency over their engagement during the process. While not all hate crimes will result in a trial, many of the recommendations below also apply to navigating the criminal-legal system more broadly:

- The victim's family should be made aware of options to legally seal certain pieces of evidence, such as violent video footage, so the public will not have access.

  Note: Options here may differ depending on whether the trial takes place in federal or state court.

- Having a court escort who is familiar with the process can help prevent unnecessary stress. This escort can help the family with logistical issues such as parking and locating the proper rooms within the courthouse, explain how court proceedings typically work, and assist with dealing with any intrusive press or media.

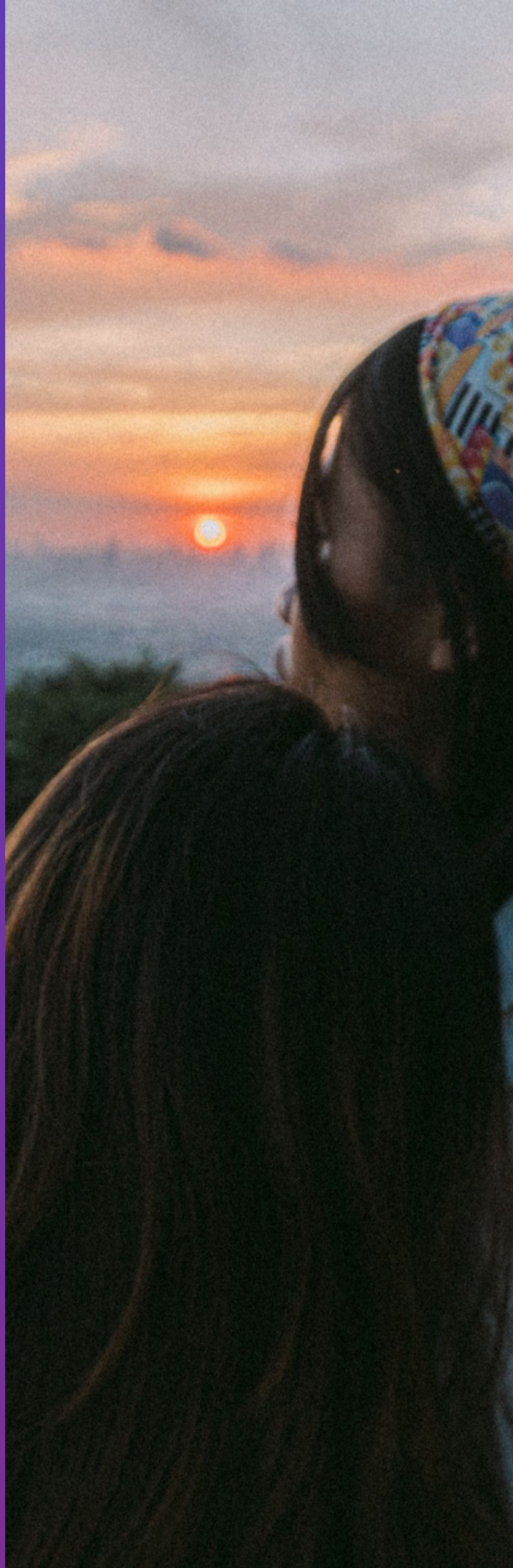
- Proceedings can take years and be very mentally and emotionally draining. A victim advocate can help manage a family's expectations around the criminal-legal system and trial process.

- A victim advocate should provide and facilitate, as needed, requests for accommodation with both law enforcement and the court system. In addition, the victim advocate should ensure that all processes are accessible to victims and survivors.

  Note: Accessibility includes physical accessibility as well as with language access and effective communication.

- Some states have crime victim resource offices that help survivors get legal advice, connect with support groups, and file motions with the court on their behalf. Providing a list of local bar associations, including minority bar associations, may also be helpful for victims and survivors.

- The victim's family will need emotional support and require advance warning when graphic, hateful, or violent content or evidence is shown or discussed. Some families may choose to leave the courtroom during these times. Connecting the impacted family with a network of survivors or community organizations can provide emotional support that victim advocates may otherwise be unable to provide.
- Many hate crimes can be prosecuted locally and federally. In these instances, while it may be necessary legally, it is often difficult for the victim. Efforts should be made by all parties to ensure maximum collaboration, consistent communication, and regular support for victims and survivors.
- Courts should give timely and efficient communication to families while a criminal case is pending and through all major proceedings, including bond hearings and appeals. VINE and other automated notification systems are not always timely or sufficient.
- Documents should always be translated for victims and survivors into their home language, including Braille.



C. Longer-Term Aftermath

The process of supporting victims and survivors of hate crime does not end when an investigation is closed or when a trial concludes. For many, the impact of the hate crime, the desire to honor the life of a loved one, and the fight for justice will be ongoing. Hate crimes can change the entire trajectory of someone's life.

- Every state and local community has different types of support groups, which can include grief support groups and homicide support groups. Sharing a list of opportunities for victims and families to connect with others about their experience, including even virtual groups that meet outside of the jurisdiction, can serve as an important reminder for families that they are not alone — and that support does exist.
- Those impacted by hate crimes may be interested in continued engagement from their local government. Inviting families to share stories of their experience at public events or commemorations can educate the public and counter the message that hate crimes send and demonstrates respect.

Responding to Mass Hate Crimes

Responding to Mass Hate Crimes

The information below shares recommended best practices identified by those who have responded to mass hate crimes. Mass hate crimes, and mass violence incidents more generally, bring unique challenges for municipalities and support teams. The National Mass Violence Center has extensive resources to assist in these situations.

It is important to remember that not every victim or survivor has the same level of access to resources, social services, or community support. Creating opportunities to share resources in multiple formats and in accessible ways is critical to ensuring all victims and survivors are supported.

Some best practices identified by those who have responded to mass hate crimes include:

- In the immediate aftermath of a suspected mass hate crime, leaders should use language that demonstrates that law enforcement and others will follow the facts where they lead. Do not use language that prematurely rules out hate or bias motivation.
- Ensure that updates from law enforcement are provided in as many languages as necessary to reach the victim communities most impacted. Ensure effective communication with people with disabilities, which includes a qualified sign language interpreter or notetaker, a qualified speech-to-speech transliterator,* and translation of materials, including into Braille. This includes updates about the apprehension of suspects as well as other information.
- Hold a public resource convening for victims of a mass hate crime and advertise the event in local news, social media, and with signage. Ensure language access for people who do not speak or read English or who are deaf, have hearing loss, or are deaf-blind. Find ways for people to access the convening without having to engage with the media if they are not ready to do so.
- All external outreach, materials, or programs should be available in multiple languages and delivered across multiple formats (e.g., large print, Braille, electronic).
- Make sure there is engagement with organizations that have pre-existing relationships with the directly impacted community and provide direct services.[xix] These organizations have established relationships and a level of trust that outside organizations coming in to help may not have.
- Ensure everyone who will have contact with a victim or survivor through their professional capacity has access to support services. Vicarious trauma impacts a wide range of professions from first responders to funeral home staff.
- When possible, offer free health care services and checks. Understanding and treating the physical impact of stress and trauma is an important survivor-centered approach.

*A qualified speech-to-speech transliterator is trained to recognize unclear speech and repeat it clearly.

➔ Be mindful that not everyone who is a victim or survivor of a mass hate crime will have the same experience, and in some cases, those targeted are only connected through the traumatic event.

- The relationships between victims and survivors of a mass hate crime at a house of worship may be different from the relationships between victims and survivors of a mass hate crime at a shopping center. In these situations, it is important to understand that "community" has different meanings to different people.
- As much as possible, public information officers and other government officials should uplift diverse narratives and voices in the aftermath of a mass hate crime. This includes holding space for those directly affected by the incident and those in the community who have experienced vicarious trauma.[xx]

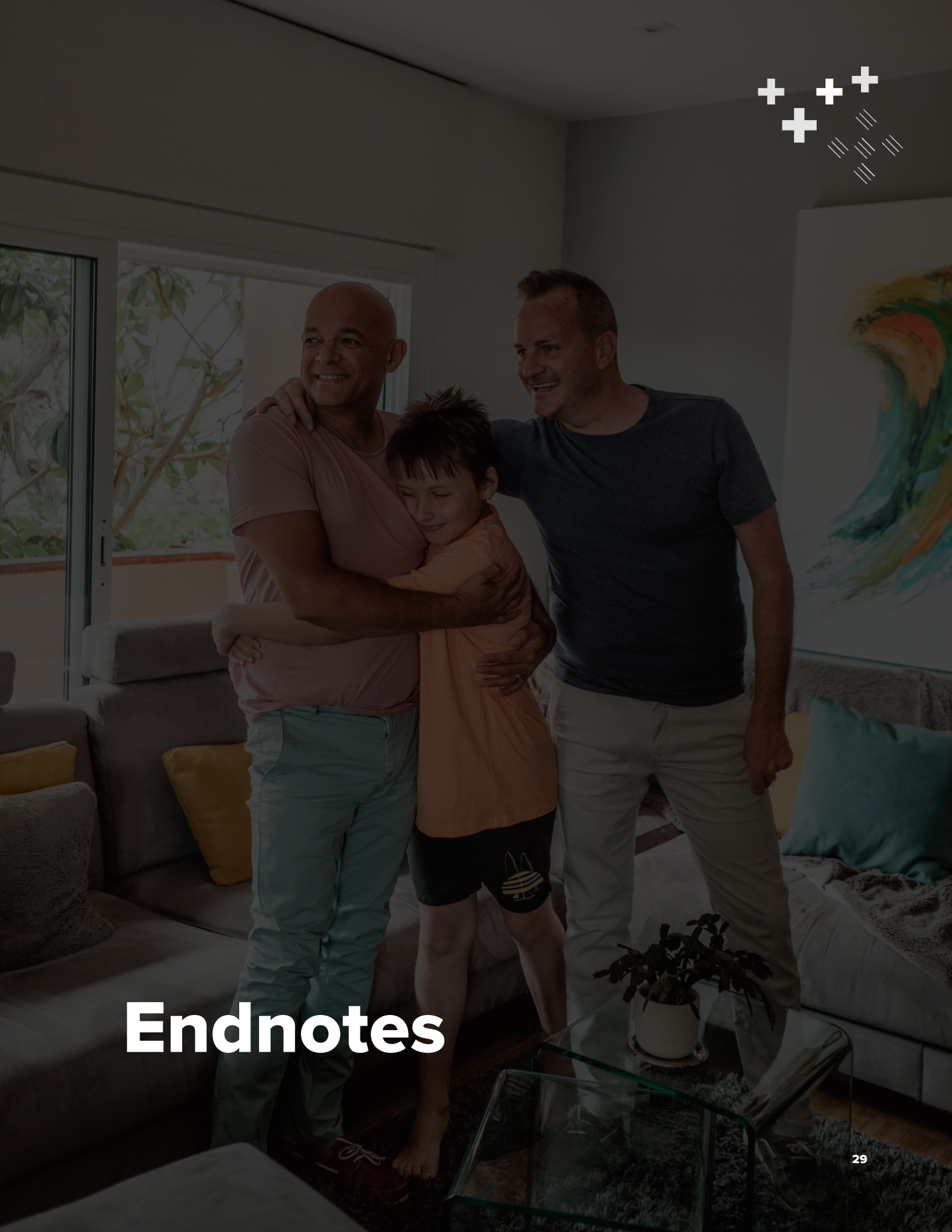
Resource Appendix

Resource Appendix

QR Code

To ensure that all provided resources are up to date, we have created an online resource appendix that is accessible via the QR code below. You may also visit the resource directly at:

https://civilrights.org/community-resilience-toolkit/



Endnotes

[i] U.S. Department of Justice. “Hate Crimes – Laws and Policies.” January 2025. https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/laws-and-policies#Federal-HClaws.

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