



State of Illinois
Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes

2024

Illinois Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes Annual Report



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
- 2 OUR ILLINOIS APPROACH
- 3 PEOPLE
- 8 ABOUT HATE
- 10 HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR
- 18 CONTACT US

“ Each of us has a role to play in rooting out hate. ”

Governor JB Pritzker
October 30, 2024



Gov. Pritzker speaks at the Oct. 30 press conference launching Help Stop Hate.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

To the People of Illinois:

Under the leadership of Governor JB Pritzker, Illinois is a national leader in protecting human rights and developing a comprehensive approach to countering and preventing hate. The existence of the Illinois Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes (CDHC) is inspiring evidence of that commitment, providing a platform, resources, and expertise to make Illinois safer for all.

The Commission brings together leaders from many of our diverse communities, united in their commitment to strengthen responses to hate while developing a robust program of hate prevention, including education, community engagement, and peacebuilding.

Reactivated in 2021, the CDHC devoted its first year to study, which culminated in a set of recommendations that continue to guide our work. In 2023, we hired an executive director. And in 2024, CDHC launched Help Stop Hate, a helpline with an online portal where people can report acts of hate and receive referrals to valuable resources. We began building a network by supporting communities across the state. And we worked to increase understanding about hate through learning series and other programs.

These are challenging times, in which instability and uncertainty have led people to turn their grievance against entire communities. We do that by denying others their full humanity, by seeing them as less human, less valuable, less holy than the people we love. That is the core of hate, and we cannot surrender to it.

Throughout this year, we have embraced the truth that each of us has power to shape the world in large and small ways. Individually and collectively, we have the power to reject the normalization of hate, support victims of hate, and build a community that helps prevent and interrupt the path toward radicalization.

This is not baseless optimism, but a roadmap for creating the kind of state where hate cannot flourish and where all of us can live with dignity and safety. None of us can do this work alone; it requires a broad, growing, and evolving coalition committed to standing together - even when uncomfortable - to defend our right to belong and to live free from bigotry.

We are excited to share with you the inspiring work of our Commission, the accomplishments of the last year, our evolving knowledge, and the challenges that lie ahead.

In solidarity and power,



Jim Bennett
Chair, CDHC
Director, IDHR



Elana G. Kahn
Executive Director
CDHC

OUR ILLINOIS APPROACH

CDHC is a Governor-appointed advisory commission that has helped establish Illinois as a leader and innovator among states.

MISSION

The mission of the Illinois Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes (CDHC) is to identify and uproot sources of discrimination and bias at the source, while assisting with the development of resources, training, and information that allow for a swift and efficient response to hate-motivated crimes and incidents.

GUIDING VALUES

CDHC is guided by three foundational values:

1. We each have a role.

We believe that every person deserves to live free from hate, fear, and violence. The key is solidarity. Only by working together can we build communities that are safe and welcoming. We must engage across difference to speak out, build connection, and foster resilience.

2. The rise of hate is linked to broader threats to democracy.

Acts of hate threaten to undermine the most basic tenets of democracy. A healthy democracy requires that we stand up against hate and extremism, that we protect the rights of all people, and that we constructively approach conflict.

3. Hate is a public health issue.

Hate often emerges from larger social issues and almost always causes communal harm. A public-health approach includes evidence-informed investment in multiple levels of prevention, including addressing the primary factors that support resilience.

OUR ILLINOIS APPROACH

In Illinois, we are working to strengthen responses to hate and prevent future acts of hate through the following priorities:

- **Victim Support: Improve support for victims of hate**
- **Community Capacity Building: Engage and serve communities throughout the state**
- **Education: Increase education and training regarding hate, bias, and discrimination**
- **Hate Crime Enforcement: Strengthen hate crimes laws, policies, and practices**
- **Coordinate, Convene, and Facilitate: Lead state's effort to counter and prevent hate**

PEOPLE

People are the foundation, the substance, and the power in our shared work. Building safer communities begins with people. We are proud to work with passionate, smart, dedicated leaders, including Commissioners, staff, and a robust group of partners throughout the state.

APPOINTED COMMISSIONERS

The Commission is made up of 21 Governor-appointed and Senate-approved commissioners who are community leaders, subject matter experts, constitutional law specialists, law enforcement and other state agency professionals. They reflect a diversity of expertise, life experience, and identity that mirrors the people of Illinois. Commissioner terms are four years.

James (Jim) Bennett, Chair

Director, Illinois Department of Human Rights

Hilda Bahena

(until 12/31/24)

Associate Judge, Circuit Court of Cook County

Marcia Balonick

(from 6/3/24)

Senior Advisor, Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs

Anita Banerji

Senior Director of Strategy and External Relations, Funders' Committee for Civic Participation

Cindy Buys

Law Professor, Southern Illinois University Simmons School of Law

Chair, CHDC Legal Committee

Mitchell R. Davis III

Chief of Police, Village of Hazel Crest

David Goldenberg

Midwest Regional Director, Anti-Defamation League

Melineh Kano

Executive Director, Refugee One

Brendan Kelly

Director, Illinois State Police

Rabbi Seth M. Limmer

Director of Public Affairs, PERIL; Founder, RePair Consulting

Amy Meek

Civil Rights Bureau Chief, Office of the Illinois Attorney General

Jenan Mohajir

(from 6/24/24)

Vice President of External Affairs, Interfaith America

Mona Noriega

Community Activist; Former Chair, Illinois Human Rights Commission

Chair, CDHC Resource Network Committee

Grace Pai

Executive Director, Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago

Channyn Lynne Parker

Chief Executive Officer, Brave Space Alliance

Jason Rosensweig

Director of Legislative Affairs and Policy, Illinois Department of Human Rights

Dr. Dilara Sayeed

President, Muslim Civic Coalition

Marvet M. Sweis

Board of Directors

Arab American Bar Association

Chair CDHC Understanding Hate Committee

Karen Tamley

President and CEO, Access Living Chicago

Molly Uhe-Edmonds

Superintendent, Pawnee School District

Chair, CDHC Youth and Education Committee

CDHC COMMITTEES

Legal Committee — Chair: Cindy Buys

The purpose of the Legal Committee is to identify gaps in law and to make recommendations to the Commission for statutory, regulatory, or programmatic changes necessary to identify and eliminate hate-based crimes and incidents (including extremism) and discrimination. The Committee may also collect, review, propose, and coordinate legislative recommendations for IDHR’s Legislative Director or other state and legislative coordinators.

Resource Network Committee — Chair: Mona Noriega

The purpose of the Committee is to build a network across the state who will work in partnership with the Commission, inform Commission activities, and support in outreach activities. The Committee aims to ensure the many diverse communities in Illinois are represented and heard as they develop a robust, engaged, and interconnected community of support and prevention across the state.

Understanding Hate Committee — Chair: Marvet Sweis

The Understanding Hate Committee aims to increase knowledge and understanding about hate and bias, including prevention, available resources, and rapid response, by developing and offering programs for the community at large, targeted groups, community organizations, law enforcement, and government agencies. Through community engagement and collaborative programming, this committee will work to increase cooperation and coordination between various levels of government and community-based organizations.

Youth and Education Committee — Chair: Molly Uhe-Edmonds

The purpose of the Youth and Education Committee is to explore, address, and make recommendations to prevent and respond to the prevalence of hate incidents, hate crimes, radicalization, and extremism among youth and in educational settings.



CDHC Commissioners participate in experiential learning exercises at a commission retreat, January 2024.

CDHC

Elana G. Kahn
Executive Director

Oleavia Green
(from 05/2024)
Administrative Assistant

Samuel Tillman
(from 05/2024)
Help Stop Hate (helpline) Manager

CDHC BENEFITED FROM THE DIRECT AND EXTENSIVE INVOLVEMENT OF THE FOLLOWING IDHR STAFF:

Alex Bautista
(until 01/2025)
Deputy Director

Alan Brazil
Chief Fiscal Officer

Betsy Buttell
Executive Assistant

Kori Clemons
Trainer, Training Institute

Vanessa Davenport
Trainer, Training Institute

Cleophus Downing, Ed.D.
Instructional Designer, Training Institute

Bryant Dunbar
Director of Operations

Martin Duncan
Chief Human Resources Officer

Jayden Epps
(until 05/2024)
Executive Assistant

Allison Macfarlane
Chief of Staff

Betsey Madden
Chief Legal Counsel & Ethics Officer

Marcio Mendoza
Trainer, Training Institute

Xavier Potts
(from 09/2024)
Executive Assistant

Addie Shrodes, Ph.D.
(from 05/24)
Director of Public Affairs and Public Information Officer

Chris Smith, Ph.D., LCSW
Director, Training Institute

Michael Vernon
Staff Attorney

Victoria Villalpando Weissman
(until 02/2024)
Director of Public Affairs and Public Information Officer

WE WORK IN PARTNERSHIP

As the state body tasked with preventing and responding to hate, CDHC aims to coordinate efforts between government, community-based organizations, law enforcement, academia, etc. This includes convening; coordinating disparate efforts; elevating and supporting others' work; identifying gaps; and seeking to fill those gaps.

Some of the many city, county, state, and federal agencies; programs; and organizations with whom we engaged during 2024 include:

Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago
Advance Illinois
American Jewish Committee
Anti-Defamation League
Arab American Bar Association
Arab American Family Services
Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Chicago

Boston Children's Hospital
Brave Space Alliance
Chicago CRED
Chicago Commission on Human Relations
Chicago Lighthouse
Chinese American Service League
Consulate General of Mexico in Chicago



CDHC Commissioner (left) Jason Rosensweig (left) talks with Chair Jim Bennett, Commissioners Marvet Sweis, and Seth Limmer at the CDHC Retreat, January 2024.

List of partners, continued:

Cook County Commission on Human Rights
Cook County State’s Attorney
Cook County United Against Hate
Council on American-Islamic Relations
DuPage Foundation
Hanul Family Alliance
Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools
Illinois Association of School Boards
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Illinois Department of Human Services
Illinois Department of Public Health
Illinois Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security
Illinois Municipal Human Rights Association
Illinois Municipal League
Illinois Office of the Attorney General
Illinois Principals Association
Illinois State Board of Education
Illinois State Police
Institute of Government and Policy Affairs, University of Illinois System

Institute for Healthcare Delivery Design, University of Illinois Chicago
Interfaith America
Japanese American Service Committee
Jewish United Fund
Justice Journey Alliance Leadership Foundation of Chicago
Muslim Civic Coalition
National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives
Not in Our Town
Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Lab, American University
Refugee One
Simon Wiesenthal Center
Southern Illinois University
Teach Plus
United States Department of Justice
United States Department of Justice’s Community Relations Service
University of Illinois System
University of Wisconsin–Madison’s Division of Diversity, Equity & Educational Achievement (DDEEA)

HATE IN 2024

Acts of hate harm entire communities. They are intended to send a message that some people do not belong. Acts of hate target people based on their race, creed, color, religion, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, citizenship, immigration status, or national origin. Acts of hate can take three forms:

■ Hate crimes

Hate crimes are criminal acts that are motivated in part by bias against a protected class. Physical assaults, threatening violence, stalking someone in-person or online, sending obscene messages, or trespassing on or damaging property are all crimes. When people are targeted because of their identity, it could be a hate crime.

■ Bias-motivated civil rights violations

These acts of bias may not constitute hate crimes, but they violate one's right to equal opportunity and human rights. Discrimination, sexual harassment, or retaliation related to employment, housing, access to credit, public accommodations, or education—because of one's identity—may be a violation of your civil rights.

■ Hateful, but legal acts of hate

Many expressions of hate may be protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, for example, using racial or ethnic slurs, imitating someone with a disability, or mocking someone's culture. Expressions of hate that include threats of violence and intimidation, however, may constitute hate crimes.

Hate is on the rise in Illinois, as it is across the country. The latest FBI data, from 2023, tells us that while crime overall was down 3%¹, hate crimes are at an all-time high.² That same year saw a dramatic rise in the number of hate and antigovernment extremist groups operating within the United States.³ The data bears out what we hear in communities throughout the state – many people are feeling uncertain and vulnerable.

Specific areas of concern:

Political violence: In 2024, there were significant incidents of political violence and hostility in the United States, from assassination attempts and attacks on marginalized groups to a surge in threats and harassment.⁴ Read the report, "[Key Political Violence and Resilience Trends From 2024](https://bridgingdivides.princeton.edu/key-political-violence-and-resilience-trends-2024)," by the Bridging Divides Initiative at Princeton University.

Gender-based bigotry: A wide variety of forms of misogyny and gender-based bigotry have spiked in recent years, including a rise in forms of male supremacist violence that are recognized as part of the spectrum of domestic violent extremism. Read the report, "[Not Just a Joke: Preventing Gender and Sexuality-based Bigotry](https://perilresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/121024_IP_PERIL-Preventing-Gender-and-Sexuality-Based-Bigotry-Report-final.pdf)," by the Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Lab at American University and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

¹ <https://www.npr.org/2024/09/23/g-s1-24184/fbi-crime-data-2023>

² Hate Crimes | Facts and Stahttps://perilresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/121024_IP_PERIL-Preventing-Gender-and-Sexuality-Based-Bigotry-Report-final.pdftistics

³ Southern Poverty Law Center, "The Year in Hate and Extremism 2023," <https://www.splcenter.org/resources/guides/year-hate-extremism-2023/>

⁴ <https://bridgingdivides.princeton.edu/key-political-violence-and-resilience-trends-2024>

Online hate: Hate groups have become skilled at using social media and online forums to spread misinformation and lure people to their ideology. In Illinois, as of the 2022-23 school year, all high school students are required to participate in one unit of media literacy. More must be done.

Targeted communities: African Americans and other people of color are the most targeted community in the United States. Of the 11,862 hate crimes reported in 2023, 5,900 were motivated by bias based on race, ethnicity, or national origin, 3,027 were against Black or African American people, 812 were against Latino/a/e people, 422 were against Asian American and Pacific Islanders, and 123 were against Arab Americans.

In 2024, while the war in Israel and Gaza raged, our Arab, Jewish and Muslim communities experienced unprecedented increases in the volume and frequency of hate acts, based on reports from the U.S. Department of Justice.

Acts of hate have unique power to inflict deep physical and psychological harm. They can affect our feelings of security and belonging and can lead entire communities to feel vulnerable, disenfranchised, and defensive. If left unchecked, acts of hate can exacerbate tensions between communities and can erode trust between targeted communities and law enforcement and government.

In Illinois, we believe that acts of hate cannot be swept under the rug; they must be reported.

Underreporting remains a challenge, one that we are working to address. By speaking out, developing resources, increasing education, and building a full program of prevention, we operationalize our commitment to ensure that hate has no place in our state.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY HATE

Launched in 2024, Help Stop Hate transforms how Illinoisans report and get help after experiencing or witnessing an act of hate.

Help Stop Hate provides support and resources to people and communities who experience or witness acts of hate. The service is free, confidential, and not affiliated with law enforcement.

A helpline with an online reporting option, Help Stop Hate also serves a prevention role by providing support services to victims, thereby reducing the likelihood that victims will become perpetrators; and by communicating that acts of hate are not ignored and therefore tacitly accepted within Illinois.

Help Stop Hate seeks to support victims of hate while strengthening our state's understanding of hate.

- **Support:** When people report hate, they can access resources, such as physical and mental healthcare, trauma support, victim advocacy services, and legal aid. Help Stop Hate has built a referral listing with hundreds of valuable resources.
- **Data:** To stop acts of hate, we must know when, where, and why they happen. CDHC will share aggregated data from reports, without any identifying information, with a variety of stakeholders to help improve services, strengthen policies, and increase resources for all Illinoisans.

To support call specialists, IDHR's Training Institute developed a comprehensive training to build relevant skills, train in trauma-informed practices, and ensure cultural competency.

Funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, Help Stop Hate began receiving reports in April 2024 and fully launched on October 30, 2024.



**HELP
STOP
HATE**

ILStopHate.org 877 458 HATE

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY HATE

WE CONDUCTED RESEARCH: WE ASKED THE PEOPLE OF ILLINOIS WHAT THEY NEED.

To build a strong, strategic foundation for Help Stop Hate, CDHC worked with the University of Illinois Chicago's Institute for Healthcare Delivery Design, which conducted in-depth research with community leaders, subject matter experts, adjacent and analogous services, and people with lived experience with hate and discrimination. Among our findings:

There is a desire for sanctioned statewide leadership.

There is a need for comprehensive statewide data to tell a clear story of the problem.

There is a desire to channel energy and passion into a unified purpose for greater impact.

There is a need to address the bigger picture.



SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY HATE

The inability to collect good data is one of the biggest gaps that prevents us from understanding that size of the issue.

CDHC and IDHR Staff work with consultants to build a strategic plan for Help Stop Hate service and data stewardship, November 2024.

**HELP
STOP
HATE**

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY HATE

WE DEVELOPED A LIST OF VALUABLE RESOURCES.

To support those who report acts of hate, the CDHC created a unique list of programs and services that support people and communities affected by hate. It includes community services, crisis intervention, health services, housing, legal services, legal aid, social services, and victim resources.

AND PEOPLE RESPONDED.

113

In its first 60 days of service, (from Oct. 30-Dec. 31) Help Stop Hate received a total of 113 reports.

47%

About half of those who reported incidents (47%) received referrals to resources.

83%

Most (83%) were submitted online and (17%) by phone.

Race, religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity were the most common reported bias motivations.



EMPOWERING ILLINOISANS THROUGH EDUCATION

As Illinois, like the rest of the nation, struggles with increasing conflict and polarization, CDHC focused on arming Illinoisans with knowledge about how to recognize destructive conflict and develop tools to build community resilience.

In 2024, CDHC increased understanding through programs, town hall meetings, community visits, presentations, legislative briefings, and more, including:

- 15 Presentations at conferences, seminars, webinars, etc., including:
 - **“Supporting Victims of Hate: A Community Response,”** a CDHC session at the Illinois Municipal League’s annual conference
 - **“Hate & Discrimination: A Guide for New Arrivals,”** for more than 100 case workers at Chicago’s migrant shelters. This session included presentations by CDHC, the Illinois Department of Human Rights and the Cook County State’s Attorney on hate crimes law, human rights laws, and navigating law enforcement and the legal process.
- Launched the **CDHC Learning Series** with two programs focused on recognizing and transcending destructive conflict.
 - **High Conflict: A Conversation with Amanda Ripley**
 - **Violence, Conflict, and Building a More Civil Society: A Conversation with Curtis Toler**

Illinois Commission on
Discrimination and Hate Crimes

THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2024 | 12:00 pm - 1:00 PM

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

HIGH CONFLICT: A Conversation with Amanda Ripley

Public Meeting of the Illinois CDHC via Webex

FEATURING:

- Amanda Ripley
 - New York Times bestselling author.
 - Investigative journalist.
 - Her projects combine storytelling with data to help illuminate hard problems—and solutions.

WATCH LIVE: @ILHateCrimes

May 2, 2024: High Conflict: A Conversation with Amanda Ripley

Illinois Commission on
Discrimination and Hate Crimes

**VIOLENCE, CONFLICT,
AND BUILDING A
MORE CIVIL SOCIETY**

Tuesday, September 17
5:30-6:30 PM CST

A CDHC Learning Series Event

Curtis Toler
Director of
Outreach at
Chicago CRED

cdhc.illinois.org

Sept. 17, 2024: Violence, Conflict, and Building a More Civil Society: A Conversation with Curtis Toler

EMPOWERING ILLINOISANS THROUGH EDUCATION

Plus, participation in panels and remarks at events sponsored by the American Jewish Committee, the Mexican Consulate, the Justice Journey Alliance, Anti-Defamation League, the University of Wisconsin's Division of Diversity, Equity & Educational Achievement.

■ 3 Information sessions about mandating hate crimes training for law enforcement

Those sessions included a presentation from the Office of the Attorney General, explanation of a bill to mandate such training, reflections from a police chief, and question periods. Participants included: 10 community-based organizations; 10 police departments; representatives from three offices of the House of Representatives; and five other government agencies, offices, or commissions.



Help Stop Hate Manager Samuel Tillman meets with the board of the Arab American Bar Association, December 2024.

BUILDING A NETWORK OF GOOD

The best programs only make an impact if they reach people in communities. CDHC is building a network across the state based on mutuality, relationship, and learning. Through connections with human relations/ rights commissions, elected officials and senior staff, law enforcement leaders, and community-based organizations, CDHC visits communities to learn about their needs and share helpful resources to enable municipal governments to fight and prevent hate.

CDHC is guided by a relational approach, investing in mutual relationships based on the belief that local leaders understand the people and issues in their communities.

- In 2024, CDHC began a marathon project – meeting with and visiting community leaders, elected officials, and community-based organizations throughout the state. Those visits included learning about the landscape of bigotry and welcoming in each community, with initial visits to Bloomington-Normal, Chicago, and Moline.
- Listening sessions: In partnership with a broad coalition, CDHC helped conduct two listening sessions with urban and suburban Asian American Pacific Islander communities. In 2025, the coalition will work with other communities on additional listening sessions.



CDHC Commissioner Anita Banerji, also a board member with the South Asian American Policy & Research Institute (SAAPRI), speaks at SAAPRI's State of South Asian American Affairs, June 2024.

BUILDING A NETWORK OF GOOD

- The CDHC showed up for Illinoisans by joining communities in their celebrations, community events, symposia, and times of need, including participation at the Arab American Heritage Month reception, DuPage County MLK Day breakfast, Nelson Mandela Day, Opal's Walk for Freedom on Juneteenth, the Disability Pride Parade, Pride parades in Springfield and Chicago, and events hosted by Access Living, Anti-Defamation League, Chinese American Service League, Japanese American Service Committee, and Refugee One.
- In all, CDHC engaged more than 5,000 people through virtual and in-person meetings and presentations.
- Looking ahead, CDHC aims to deliver more resources to communities across Illinois. In 2024, CDHC began a partnership with a team from Boston Children's Hospital to bring cutting edge research to an Illinois community. Through a set of interviews and an in-person convening, that Illinois metropolitan area of more than 230,000 people will receive information to help implement tasks to prevent violent radicalization.



CDHC Commissioner Mona Noriega and Executive Director Elana Kahn visit with officials in Bloomington. Pictured: Michael Hurt, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer; Police Chief Jamal Simington; City Manager Jeff Jurgens; Noriega; Mayor Mboka Mwilambwe; Kahn; Hannah Mesouani from Bloomington-Normal Not in Our Town; and Police Lieutenant Todd McClusky, August 2024.



CDHC IS YOUR COMMISSION

Join us to help stop hate

Request a presentation
Invite us to your community
Contact us at cdhc.illinois.gov or
IDHR.CDHC@illinois.gov.

Report an act of hate at
ILStopHate.org or
877 458 HATE (4283)