



State of Illinois
Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes

Year of Impact

ILLINOIS COMMISSION ON
DISCRIMINATION AND HATE CRIMES

**STRENGTHEN.
SUPPORT.
BUILD.**

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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**CDHC IS BUILDING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO
COUNTERING AND PREVENTING HATE IN ILLINOIS.**



To the People of Illinois,

We are privileged to live in Illinois, a state with strong protections for all the members of our diverse community.

The work of the Illinois Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes (CDHC) is to operationalize hope by building communities that reflect our shared values of human dignity and equality.

In this period of national crisis – of rising hate and eroding democratic norms; of deepening division, mistrust, and high conflict; of instability and normalizing cruelty – the Commission is taking meaningful steps to build communities of connection, belonging, and support so hate cannot thrive. This vision builds a Resilient Illinois.

Resilience enables us to counter challenges with connection, cooperation, and a commitment to the common good. Resilient communities organize and recover more quickly after traumatic events. Resilient communities interrupt cycles of violence and polarization. Resilient communities strengthen relationships across ethnic, religious, and political lines. Resilient communities develop proactive approaches, signaling safety, solidarity, and stability.

Since CDHC was reactivated in 2021, we have built a comprehensive strategy to counter and prevent hate in Illinois that is rooted firmly in a tested, public health approach and a comprehensive, whole-of-society approach.

CDHC is committed to strengthening responses to hate; supporting people and communities affected by hate; and building more resilient communities. We are excited to share the details of this work.

In this time of uncertainty, CDHC is here with steadfast commitment to the people of Illinois and the moral promise of Illinois to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the people.

We are grateful for the support of Governor Pritzker and the General Assembly, the dedication of our remarkable staff and commissioners, and the partnership of municipalities and communities throughout the state.

In solidarity and power,



James (Jim) Bennett
Chair, CDHC
Director, IDHR

Elana G. Kahn
Executive Director
CDHC



CDHC is a Governor-appointed commission that has established 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.

What is Hate?



Hate Crimes

Hate crimes are crimes that are motivated by bias against a protected class. Physical assaults, harassment through writing or speech, stalking someone in-person or online, sending obscene messages, or trespassing on or damaging property are all crimes.



Civil Rights Violations

If you experience discrimination, sexual harassment, or identity-based retaliation related to your employment, housing, access to credit, public accommodations, or education that's a hate-based violation of your civil rights.



Hateful, but Lawful

Many expressions of hate are protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Examples may include 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.



ILLINOIS IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF STATE EFFORTS TO COUNTER AND PREVENT HATE AND THE VIOLENCE THAT COMES FROM IT.

Professor Cynthia Miller-Idriss

Founding Director of the Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Lab (PERIL) at American University





Strengthening Response

Acts of hate must not be met with silence. Even reporting a single act of hate helps individuals regain a sense of agency and civic connection, learn about available options, access vital resources, and recommit to building the responsive, connected, and resilient communities we all deserve.

Reporting allows officials, community members, law enforcement, and prosecutors to take strong action to protect their communities.

When acts of hate occur, strong leaders respond clearly and decisively. Strong responses are necessary to maintaining public trust, bolstering public safety, and preserving essential social bonds.

In 2025, CDHC

- **Trained and educated** thousands of Illinoisans about trends in hate and extremism, the importance of reporting, available resources, and how to effectively support victims of hate.
- Created a growing **online Resource Hub** with guides and toolkits to help people in a range of settings, from individuals and community organizations to campus leaders and government officials.
- Raised awareness and encouraged reporting through a multi-language, **statewide Help Stop Hate PR and media campaign** to encourage reporting that delivered more than 184 million impressions through news coverage; radio, digital, and community news publication ads, and outdoor signs and billboards.
- Worked closely with the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards board to increase **hate crime training for law enforcement** officers throughout the state.



Strengthening Response

CDHC reached Illinoisans where they live, study, and work, offering knowledge and training to increase reporting and improve local response and prevention.



184.7m

Impressions through
Help Stop Hate
media campaign



5000+

Individuals reached through programs,
presentations, and community visits.



50+

Partnerships with more
than 50 community
organizations
throughout the state.



13

Collaborations with national
prevention leaders and
organizations.

9

Communities hosted CDHC
for multi-day visits.

8

Universities worked with
CDHC to prevent hate-
fueled violence.



Supporting Victims of Hate

Launched on October 30, 2024, Help Stop Hate offers support, sensemaking, and referrals to vital resources for all those who experience or witness acts of hate in Illinois.

Help Stop Hate reflects a fundamental change in how Illinois supports people and communities who experience hate. When someone contacts Help Stop Hate, they communicate with a professional who lends not just emotional support, but clarity about what happened and possible next steps.

By aggregating a robust and growing list of services for those affected by hate, CDHC has become the state's central repository and connector for hate response and prevention.

Help Stop Hate data represents all acts of hate reported to the helpline, including hate crimes, bias-motivated civil rights violations, and lawful acts of hate. While reports to Help Stop Hate serve as an important indicator, the data should not be treated as representative of all acts of hate in Illinois.

CDHC does not investigate incidents and is not affiliated with law enforcement. Our purpose is to support people and their communities as a tangible way to facilitate healing, build community resilience, and improve public safety.



CDHC WAS AN ESSENTIAL PARTNER FOR OUR HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION THIS PAST YEAR. THEIR SKILL AND TRAINING HAVE LEFT COMMISSION MEMBERS CONFIDENT AND PREPARED FOR ADDRESSING NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY. WE'RE SO THANKFUL FOR THE INVESTMENT OF TIME AND RESOURCES THE CDHC HAS GIVEN US.

Sangeetha Rayapati
Mayor, City of Moline





Help Stop Hate Key Findings

Total Reports

637

Actual Reports of Hate

269

Population Reached

90% +

**Received reports from 51 counties, representing 91% of state population*

Connected

Hundreds

of people with services and support

Multi-Bias Reports

64%

**Reports included more than two or more bias motivations*

Multi-Type Incidents

81%

**Reports included more than one type of incident*

Most Common Incidents
Hate Speech & Intimidation

69%

Reports submitted online

31%

Reports submitted by phone

Incident Locations

Residence	25%
Workplace (current or former)	13%
Store/Commercial Business	9%

Bias Motivations

Race/Ethnicity	64%
Gender	26%
Religion	26%
Sexual Orientation	24%

Most Referred Services

- Legal Aid
- Government Services
- Community Services
- Victim Advocacy Services

Top Identities

African American/Black and **Hispanic/Latino** are the top identities in reports citing Race/Ethnicity as the bias motivation.

Women are the top identity in reports citing Gender as the bias motivation.

Jewish and **Muslim** are the top identities in reports citing Religion as the bias motivation.

Gay and **Bisexual** are the top identities in reports citing Sexual Orientation as the bias motivation.

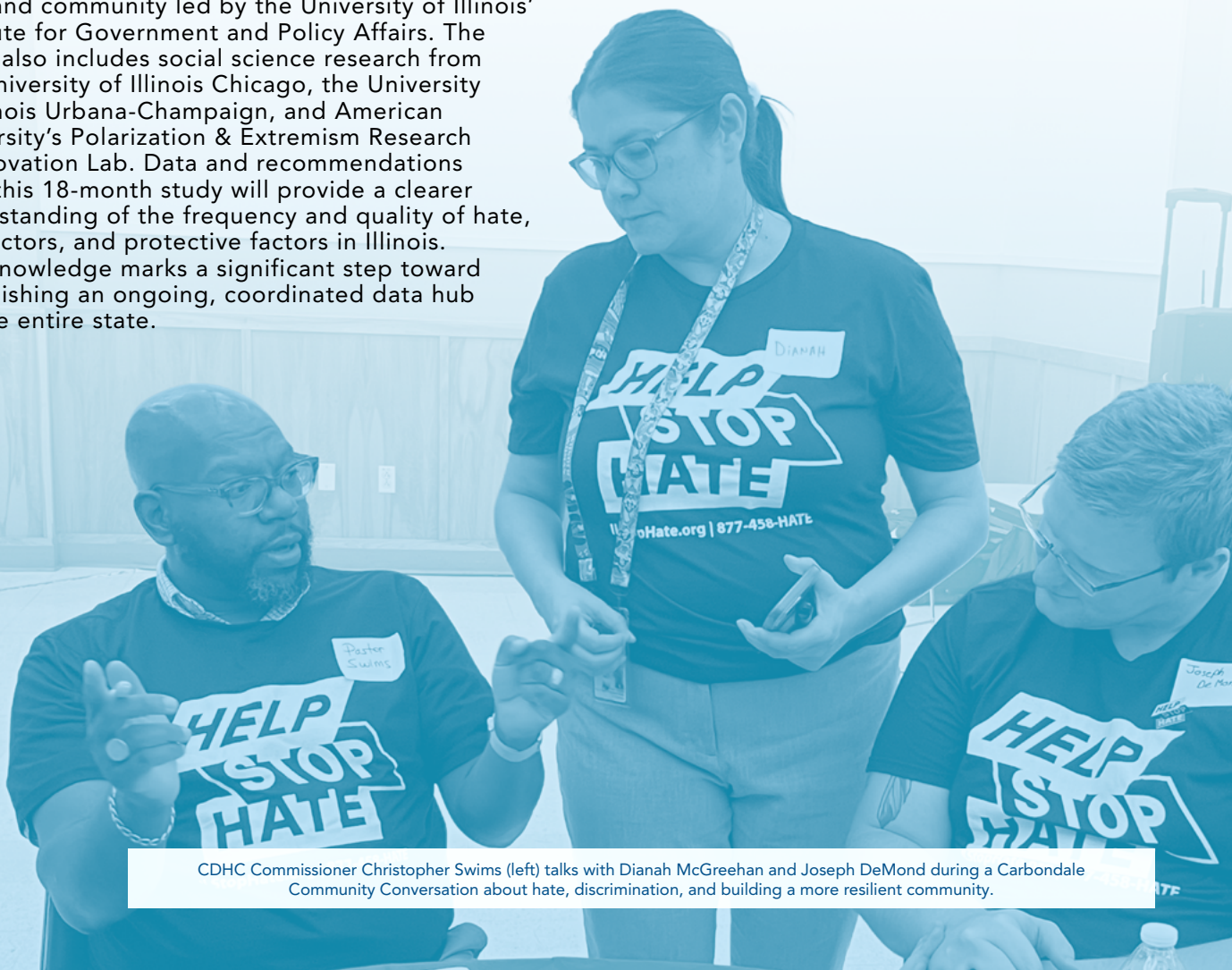


Building Resilient Communities

Building resilient communities requires an intentional set of actions based on listening; assessing strengths and identifying needs; and teaching best practices while developing community-specific programs to prevent hate-fueled violence before it begins.

During 2025, we:

- Listened to hundreds of Illinoisans about their experiences with hate and bias
- Partnered with hundreds of agencies, organizations, and communities
- Spent real time in state communities from north to south and east to west to build trusting, sustainable relationships
- Supported human relations commissions across the state to strengthen local human rights services
- Provided communities with rapid response consultation and support
- Advised lawmakers on effective policy approaches
- Laid groundwork for a robust statewide network focused on hate prevention and resilience
- Launched a comprehensive statewide research study of hate and community led by the University of Illinois' Institute for Government and Policy Affairs. The study also includes social science research from the University of Illinois Chicago, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and American University's Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Lab. Data and recommendations from this 18-month study will provide a clearer understanding of the frequency and quality of hate, risk factors, and protective factors in Illinois. This knowledge marks a significant step toward establishing an ongoing, coordinated data hub for the entire state.



CDHC Commissioner Christopher Swims (left) talks with Dianah McGreehan and Joseph DeMond during a Carbondale Community Conversation about hate, discrimination, and building a more resilient community.



CDHC works to bring cutting-edge, evidence-driven knowledge about hate prevention to leaders through Illinois. Throughout 2025, CDHC shared knowledge through public programming, consulting with elected and community leaders throughout the state, and convening the first-ever statewide conference on human rights and hate prevention.

CDHC Learning Series

Understanding Extremism: Trends, Warning Signs, and Responses



Pete Kurtz-Glovas (left), Deputy Director of Regional Partnerships at the Polarization & Extremism Research & Innovation Lab (PERIL) at American University, provided an overview of supremacist ideologies, extremist propaganda, and recruitment tactics that are used to manipulate people into joining supremacist movements. The session included practical guidance for effective response. January 2025.



Breaking the Cycle of Hate and Violence



Heidi Ellis, Ph.D., (far left) of Boston Children’s Hospital and Harvard Medical School; Dr. Laurie Rice (bottom left) from Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville; and Dion Harden, (near left) Founder of You Break It You Fix It Foundation, addressed questions of how communities can interrupt cycles of trauma, violence, and hate; support victims’ healing; and develop prevention strategies to build communal and individual resilience. The program included new data about preventing hate-fueled violence through public health approaches, data about bullying in Southern Illinois, and personal reflections. May 2025.

CDHC Leadership Series

Intentional Relationships 101 with Civity



CDHC convened officials elected and community leaders throughout the state to explore tools and approaches to counter rising hate, prevent destructive conflict, and strengthen social cohesion. CDHC convened elected and community leaders throughout the state to explore tools and approaches to counter rising hate, prevent destructive conflict, and strengthen social cohesion. Malka Koppel (far left) and Palma Strand (near left) from Civity shared their organization’s tools for cultivating relationships of respect, empathy, and trust as part of building relational infrastructure in communities. July 2025.

State Conference

Illinois State Together Against Hate: Human Rights in Action

CDHC partnered with the City of Champaign to hold the first ever statewide conference on hate prevention and the protection of human rights. Professionals and community leaders gathered in Champaign to share tools, strategies, and resources for combating hate and protecting human rights across the state. October 2025.



[THE CONFERENCE] GAVE ME NEW INSIGHTS ABOUT HOW TO CONNECT MY EFFORTS TO THE EFFORTS OF OTHER INTERMEDIARY ORGANIZATIONS IN ORDER TO PRODUCE BIGGER IMPACT.

Conference Participant





Building Resilient Communities

Empowering Through Education

CDHC worked to increase knowledge about hate and its preventions through a robust schedule of presentations and conversations. By educating and engaging key groups, including a focus on practical steps, CDHC is building a network of good in Illinois and beyond. During 2025, CDHC presented and led sessions at conferences and with groups within and beyond Illinois.

- Chicagoland Region Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
- City of Carbondale
- Cook County Antisemitic Hate Crimes Coalition
- Decatur Human Rights Commission
- Divided Communities Project
- Eradicate Hate Global Summit
- Illinois Library Association
- Illinois Minority Health Conference
- Illinois Municipal League
- Interfaith America
- Moline Human Rights Commissions
- Right to Be
- Rock Island
- State's Attorney Association
- Think Before You Hate Podcast
- U.S. DOJ's Community Relations Service



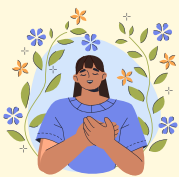
CDHC Executive Director Elana Kahn (right) speaks with Eboo Patel, Founder and President of Interfaith America at a discussion on "Conversations about Pluralism: The Past and Future of American Diversity" in May 2025.



Building Resilient Communities

How do we build resilient communities?

Community resilience in the face of hate is demonstrated through strong social bonds, collective action, inclusive leadership, and the ability to maintain safety and wellbeing for all community members. Building on the work of global researchers and practitioners, including the Trauma and Community Resilience Center of Boston Children's Hospital (BCH)¹, CDHC has developed an evidence-driven approach to build more resilient communities, which is organized into five critical tasks.



**Foster
Emotional
Wellness**



**Promote
Flexible
Thinking**



**Reduce Problematic
Internet Use**



**Advance Safety
and Fairness**



**Increase
Belonging for
All**

Foster Emotional Wellness

Creating safer communities means making sure that those who may be struggling the most are given opportunities to engage, feel hope, and address emotional problems.

Promote Flexible Thinking

Flexible thinking allows someone to take in different perspectives and understand different viewpoints. It increases empathy, which enables respectful dialogue.

Reduce Problematic Internet Use

Problematic aspects of internet use can directly impact violent extremism through features such as echo chambers that make extreme ideas seem mainstream and increase exposure to dangerous people or ideas. They can also indirectly contribute to risk factors for violent extremism, such as depression, exposure to online bullying, and isolation.

Advance Safety and Fairness

Reducing injustices — such as unfair treatment by police, exposure to trauma or childhood adversities, discrimination, and marginalization — helps individuals who are being treated unfairly while reducing the risk for violence in communities.

Increase Belonging for All

Feeling that we belong is a fundamental human need. When communities provide ways for everyone to feel like they belong without rejecting or alienating others, they are doing the work of creating safer communities.



Who We Are

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 comprised 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 geography that mirrors the people of Illinois. Commissioner terms are four years.

James (Jim) Bennett, Chair

Director, Illinois Department of Human Rights

Julia Albarracín

(from 10/10/2025)

Professor of Political Science, Western Illinois University; Executive Director, Western Illinois Dreamers

Marcia Balonick

Senior Advisor, Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs

Anita Banerji

Interim Executive Director, Funders' Committee for Civic Participation

Cindy Buys

Professor of Law, Southern Illinois University School of Law
Chair, CDHC Legal Committee

Mitchell R. Davis III

Chief of Police, Village of Hazel Crest

David Goldenberg

Chief of Staff, Anti-Defamation League

Alison Hill

(from 5/9/2025)

Deputy Chief Legal Counsel, Illinois Department of Human Rights; Former Supervising Attorney, Illinois Attorney General's Office Civil Rights Bureau

Melineh Kano

Executive Director, RefugeeOne

Brendan Kelly

Director, Illinois State Police

Rabbi Seth Limmer

Director of Public Affairs, PERIL; Founder, RePair Consulting

Amy Meek

(Until 5/2/2025)

Deputy Director, Illinois Department of Human Rights

Jenan Mohajir

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

(until 9/23/2025)

Chief Executive Officer, Equality Illinois; former Chief Executive Officer, Brave Space Alliance

Jason Rosensweig

Senior Policy Advisor, 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

Christopher E. Swims

(from 5/5/2025)

Senior Pastor, Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church

Karen Tamley

President and CEO, Access Living Chicago

CDHC Staff

Elana G. Kahn

Executive Director

Jaleesia Ross

Administrative Assistant

Samuel Tillman

Help Stop Hate Manager

CDHC benefited from the support of the following IDHR staff:

Alan Brazil

Betsy Buttell

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Bryant Dunbar

Martin Duncan

Allison Macfarlane

Betsey Madden

Marcio Mendoza

Xavier Potts

Chris Reel

Chris Smith, Ph.D., LCSW

Michael Vernon

Chief Fiscal Officer

Executive Assistant

Trainer, Training Institute

Trainer, Training Institute

Instructional Designer, Training Institute

Director of Operations

Chief Human Resources Officer

Chief of Staff

Chief Legal Counsel & Ethics Officer

Trainer, Training Institute

Executive Assistant

Director of Public Affairs and Public Information Officer

Director, Training Institute

Staff Attorney

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)**