

April 16, 2025

To: Mayor and Members of City Council

202500743

From: Sheryl M.M. Long, City Manager

Subject: **Hate Crime Incident Procedures**

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**REFERENCE DOCUMENT #202402433**

The Council at its session on December 11, 2024 referred the following item for review and report.

MOTION, submitted by Councilmember Albi, WE MOVE that the City Administration provide a report within ninety (90) days on the feasibility of creating a holistic strategy to combat hate crime and incidents.

**REFERENCE DOCUMENT #202500166**

The Council at its session on February 5, 2025 referred the following item for review and report.

MOTION, submitted by Vice Mayor Kearney, WE MOVE that the Administration provide a report within sixty (60) days including but not limited to information on what resources and mechanisms are in place for the public to report and address hate crimes, the existence of a hate crimes hotline, availability to the public of collected data, follow-up procedures, and policy for reporting data on hate crimes to City Council.

**REFERENCE DOCUMENT # 202500171**

The Council at its session on February 5, 2025 referred the following item for review and report.

MOTION, submitted by Vice Mayor Kearney, WE MOVE that the administration provide a report within ninety (90) days on ways that the City currently is supporting our immigrant communities.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This report is submitted in response to motions from City Council requesting information and recommendations regarding the City's response to hate crimes and incidents. The motions call for both an assessment of current procedures (Motion #202500166) and the feasibility of expanding the City's strategy through new mechanisms, such as a public portal, increased investigative capacity, and Council communications protocol (Motion #202402433). In addition, a portion of a third motion (Motion #202500171) asks about the feasibility of creating information on the City's website regarding the process to report and address hate crimes. This consolidated report addresses the overlapping topics from these motions.

### **Existing Procedures for Reporting and Addressing Hate Crimes**

The Cincinnati Police Department (CPD) currently operates under Procedure 12.417, which outlines the response to hate crimes involving racial, religious, ethnic/national origin, or sexual orientation bias. At a high-level, hate crime is defined as a criminal act motivated by bias against protected classes. CPD investigates such crimes under both the Ohio Revised Code and the Cincinnati Municipal Code.

Currently, hate crimes are typically reported via telephone through the Emergency Communications Center (ECC)'s 311 and 911 lines for investigation by a police officer. CPD encourages anyone with knowledge of a hate crime to report through ECC, by calling the front desk of any police district, or by speaking to an officer patrolling the community directly.

Officers are trained to provide victim assistance, secure crime scenes, conduct initial investigations, and notify supervisors and partner agencies, such as the Office of Human Relations (OHR), formerly known as the Cincinnati Human Relations Commission (CHRC), if applicable. OHR's role is to act as a liaison with victims and advocacy groups and may respond to the scene upon request.

CPD's district-level Neighborhood Liaison Unit (NLU) officers continuously attend community meetings and will discuss hate crime offenses taking place in the neighborhoods or topics pertaining to hate crimes.

Offenses which require a National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) offense report are marked as biased for a potential hate crime if the preliminary investigation determines the offense may be a hate crime. When tasked, the Police Intelligence Unit follows up on hate crime offenses and will relay pertinent information to the chain of command. Any potential hate crime will be addressed and investigated according to Procedure 12.417, which is available to view via [CPD's public-facing online Procedure Manual](#). CPD is in the process of reviewing Procedure 12.417, for possible revisions to conform to current practices.

## **Greater Cincinnati Fusion Center**

The [Greater Cincinnati Fusion Center \(GCFC\)](#), which is staffed and led by CPD but serves as a regional cooperative, accepts tips about suspicious activity through an online portal and a telephone hotline. GCFC is part of a national network of Fusion Centers that serve as focal points in states and major urban areas for the receipt, analysis, gathering and sharing of threat-related information between State, Local, Tribal and Territorial (SLTT), federal and private sector partners. GCFC's reporting portal and tip line are not geared toward hate crimes specifically, but this is one avenue in which intelligence regarding these types of incidents may be reported, gathered, and disseminated to appropriate agencies.

## **Data Transparency**

Data on hate crimes is collected, but there is no central public-facing repository for hate crime statistics.

Within police record-keeping systems, offenses that are potentially bias-related are noted as such on the offense report. This could be leveraged to create a data dashboard on [CincyInsights](#), the City of Cincinnati's official visual open data portal. Based on an initial review of available data, it could be feasible to create a dashboard allowing the public to review hate crime offense data in various ways, such as time trends, types of offenses, or geographic distribution.

CPD will collaborate with the Office of Performance & Data Analytics (OPDA) to ensure statistics for bias marked offenses, which have been investigated and substantiated, are available through CincyInsights. Following collection and analysis of data for one year, CPD will provide a report to City Council on data trends and any associated findings. CPD's Intelligence Unit, in conjunction with the district of occurrence of a potential hate crime, will follow up on any hate crime offense or incident, and notify the Greater Cincinnati Fusion Center (GCFC) and the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office. The GCFC would then create an Intelligence Unit Investigative Summary of the offense or incident. CPD's Public Relations Unit is responsible for providing factual information to the media.

## **Feasibility of a Public Reporting Portal and 311 Integration**

Reports of hate crimes are accepted by telephone at the Emergency Communications Center (ECC), through 911 and 311, because these are the current mechanisms to generate an immediate response. This is especially necessary when someone may be injured, there is a need to provide safety instructions, or there is a chance of apprehending the offender.

The 311Cincy self-service portals are used to accept requests for services that vary in urgency and are routed directly to departments, bypassing ECC. The bandwidth of staff, within departments, to review these requests as soon as they are received is limited. While a dedicated online portal for bias incident reporting could improve

accessibility for non-emergency situations, its implementation would need to account for limitations in staff capacity. Staff training, public education, and new protocols would be necessary, along with clear guidance to the public about appropriate use of such a portal versus 911 and 311 phone lines.

The 311 system is limited to the City of Cincinnati's boundaries and services. This limitation presents a challenge, as the impact of hate-related crimes will transcend municipal boundaries. A regional approach may be more effective in capturing reports that reflect the full extent of these incidents. One such model is Los Angeles County's use of its 211 system to collect reports of hate incidents across the region. Through its [LA vs Hate](#) initiative, the 211 LA system enables individuals across a large geographic area to report hate incidents, offering a unified and accessible reporting mechanism beyond individual city limits.

The LA vs Hate program emphasizes that it is not affiliated with law enforcement, and that reporting parties should contact their local police department if they wish to file a police report. The system promises confidentiality and commits that it will not share information reported with law enforcement. This is likely possible as it is operated by a non-governmental organization. The City's 311 system, upon receipt of information indicating that a crime has occurred, has a duty to notify law enforcement. In addition, the City is limited in what confidentiality it may provide based on Ohio's public record laws.

### **Investigative Resources**

To best utilize CPD's personnel resources, CPD's Intelligence Unit investigates and follows up on these and other types of incidents. The frequency of reporting, at this time, does not warrant dedicated investigators.

### **City Council Communication Protocol**

A protocol for notifying City Council Members is in place. The City Manager has the ability to issue an emergency alert to the Mayor and City Council Members using the CincyAlert system, which is part of the administration's existing emergency incident communication plans. This would be the mechanism used in the event of a serious hate crime to keep elected officials informed.

### **CONCLUSION**

The City of Cincinnati has foundational procedures in place to respond to hate crimes, as detailed in CPD Procedure 12.417. However, CPD is reviewing this procedure for any needed updates, and will work with OPDA to explore the feasibility of new or enhanced public-facing data dashboards. Following collection and analysis of data for one year, CPD will provide a report to City Council.

Self-service reporting could be valuable from an accessibility perspective, but a regional and/or non-governmental approach may be more effective than a City 311 approach. If such a system were established, it would be in addition to existing police-based reporting mechanisms. In the future, if an external or regional entity established a system similar the program in LA, the City's website and 311 platforms could link to such a system in addition to emphasizing the need to utilize existing police reporting.

cc: John S. Brazina, Interim Assistant City Manager  
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