

Methods for Reporting Hate Incidents: An Environmental Scan and Literature Search



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DIVERSITY EQUITY INCLUSION & BELONGING



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Overview

The City of Fredericton's *Office of Community Inclusion's Anti-Racism Task Force* has provided 14 recommendations to the City Council ([Anti-Racism Task force for the city of Fredericton -final recommendations-](#)) on combating systemic racism and racial discrimination in the Fredericton community to foster a diverse, inclusive, and equitable society. The student-consultant team from the University of New Brunswick's Renaissance College have been engaged to address Recommendation 3B:

3 (b) establish a centralized data bank to record all reported hate incidents. The data bank will also measure the effectiveness of reporting and training. An external data analyst should analyze this data regularly to identify trends, patterns, and areas of concern. The findings should inform us of targeted strategies and interventions to effectively prevent and address hate incidents.

Two primary research sources were used: Google Scholar and WorldCat. Keywords and search terms such as: hate incidents, Canada, and racialized incidents. Similar keywords were used for academic sources for the literature search; however, terms like hate crimes and hate speech were used. This environmental scan examines how four Canadian municipalities and one province report hate incidents:

- We Support Hamilton- *Hamilton, Ontario*
- Report Hate- *Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario*
- Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission- *Province of Nova Scotia*
- Inter-cultural Association of Greater Victoria- *Victoria, British Columbia*
- Stop Hate AB- *Province of Alberta*

The environmental scan is a thematic search with guiding questions:

Process

- What mechanisms are organizations/municipalities/provinces across Canada using to report hate incidents?

Response

- What are the actions being taken with the collected information?

Accountability

- How are cities/municipalities being held accountable?

Cost and Size

- What is the general scale and budget of the reporting mechanism?
- While researching, two primary research sources were used: Google Scholar and Worldcat
- When reviewing the various reporting methods across these five organizations a top priority was determining what methods were effective for reporting and the types of access/support the people of these cities/provinces were looking for. The scan gathers general information about the platforms/organizations, analyses various reporting methods of reporting, uses data reports from the organizations yearly reports to better inform how the City of Fredericton should proceed and lastly any additional commonalities that were found to be beneficial to the platform and its success.

Literature Search- Defining Hate Incidents

The phrase "hate incident" is used and yet contested by scholars as its definition overlaps with terminology such as hate crime and hate speech; there is no agreed-upon definition amongst scholars. Socially, legally, and politically, these terms intersect and are nuanced. Increased understanding of the term, hate incident, delivers a more precise and effective approach to addressing hate incidents. By establishing clear definitions, the framework can promote consistency in reporting and analysis, ultimately contributing to better policymaking and community support.

Vergani et al.'s *Mapping the scientific knowledge and approaches to defining and measuring hate crime, hate speech, and hate incidents* explores the overlaps between hate crime, hate speech, and hate incidents, offering a comparative perspective on how they are defined and measured in academic and government policy contexts. The authors emphasize that "The lack of standard definitions leads to variability in reporting and understanding across regions stating, "the lack of definitional clarity and the limitations of measurement approaches pose real challenges to policy, practice and research focusing on tackling hate crime, hate speech and hate incidents." (Vergani et al., 2022 para. 4).

The authors conclude hate incidents can be defined as often non-criminal acts motivated by bias or hate but do not necessarily meet the threshold of a hate crime, which can be defined as "malicious behaviors motivated by hate that fall below the threshold of criminality" (Vergani et al., 2022 para. 10). Parsing out hate crime and hate incidents; the authors offer these definitions.

- **Hate Crimes:** "malicious behaviors motivated by hate that fall above the threshold of criminality" (Vergani et al., 2022 para. 10).
- **Hate incidents:** Hate Incidents are described as non-criminal harmful actions against an identifiable minority group (Vergani M, 2023, para 1).

This definition aligns with GFSI's objectives and provides a clear framework for identifying and addressing incidents motivated by bias or prejudice. By establishing this definition, GFSI can ensure consistency and clarity in its reporting and intervention strategies.

Environmental Scan: Four Municipalities, One Province

We Support Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario

[Home Page | We Support Hamilton](#)

Organisational Overview

We Support Hamilton is a community-driven platform designed to report and track hate incidents in the greater Hamilton, Ontario, area. The platform provides tools and resources to address and understand local hate-related issues. The initiative encourages community involvement to improve awareness and response to such incidents In Partnership with Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Center (HARRC) ([Home | Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre](#)), We Support Hamilton operates as a platform for reporting hate incidents, leveraging HARRC's resources, expertise, and community connections to support victims and drive anti-racism initiatives.

Process

Website format where users can report hate incidents through an online survey. The platform has a four step process: introduction, incident details, demographic questions and submission consent. The website values confidentiality and gives a user warning of how to clear search history for users who have concern about people viewing the device (view appendix 1).

Response

Users are given various avenues to take after submission . Options include:

- Follow up from HAARC with resources for support- [Resources | We Support Hamilton](#)
- With consent, data collection for report and analysis

Accountability

- The organization provides data and annual reports to the City of Hamilton.

Cost and Size

- N/A

Report Hate- Kitchener- Waterloo, Ontario

<https://reportinghate.ca/>

Organisational Overview

Report Hate was created through The Coalition of Muslim Women of Kitchener-Waterloo (CMW) (<https://cmw-kw.org/anti-hate-services/>). This group oversees the platform, focusing on combating hate through education, support, and advocacy. Reporting Hate Canada enables individuals to report incidents motivated by hate in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. Their goal is to raise awareness, track patterns of hate, and create a supportive community for those impacted.

Process

Report Hate, Kitchener-Waterloo, based in Ontario, has five different ways users can report a hate incident:

- Anonymously, through the report hate website
- Via a phone number
- Through WhatsApp
- Speaking directly to designated staff at CMW
- Report via email

Response

The platform offers support services including:

- Mental health support in the form of culturally appropriate counselling
- Assistance in reporting/filing cases with the proper authorities
- Mediators for *sulah*/restorative justice/mediation
- Set up access to free legal support
- Advocacy for victims dealing with individuals, policymakers, schools, school boards, landlords, service providers, hospitals, clinics, etc.
- Delivery of community education sessions on hate, discrimination, racism, etc., and how to report it

Accountability

The data used from the incident reports is given to the Waterloo Region to show the progression year-to-year.

Cost and Size

- N/A

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission- Province of Nova Scotia

[Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission](#)

Organisational Overview

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission is an independent government body that upholds the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. The commission provides support through education, complaint resolution, and public engagement to combat various forms of discrimination across the province. They seek to resolve issues related to unequal treatment in areas such as employment, housing, and public services

Process

Individuals start by completing an Inquiry Form, available online or in person in the office. The form asks the reporter to describe the incident, provide details such as when and where it occurred, and explain its impact. Once the form is submitted, a Human Rights Officer reviews it to determine whether the incident qualifies under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act ([The Nova Scotia Human Rights Act](#)). If the incident falls within their jurisdiction, the inquiry can proceed to the formal complaint process in which various avenues can be taken:

- Facilitated Discussion/ Mediation
- Investigation
- Resolution Conference

Response

Insights from resolved cases influence public policy, workplace standards, and education programs. The Commission uses trends or recurring issues from collected data to inform training sessions, public campaigns, or legislative recommendations.

Accountability

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission is an independent government body that upholds the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. The commission partners with the government to keep the province accountable.

Cost and Size

- N/A

Inter-cultural Association of Greater Victoria- Victoria, British Columbia

Racist Incident Helpline – Inter-cultural Association of Greater Victoria

Organisational Overview

The Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA) is a non-profit organization focused on supporting immigrants and refugees in Greater Victoria, BC. Their services aim to help newcomers integrate into the region's social, economic, and civic life. The ICA provides a structured incident reporting system through its Racist Incident Helpline to support individuals who have experienced or witnessed racism, hate, or discrimination.

Process

The website provides details for a Racist Incident Helpline. The line is available Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm. Calls are answered by United Way BC Helpline Services (<https://uwbc.ca/helpline-services/>). The operators are professionals trained in trauma response and cultural sensitivity training.

Response

- On the call, operators will:
 - ◆ Listen to the caller's experience
 - ◆ Provide information about local support services
 - ◆ Share next steps based on the caller's comfort level
 - ◆ Give reference to services that best match the caller's needs.
- to support, guide and enhance the province's anti-racism programs, services and initiatives.
- The Helpline collects the data from consenting people to support, guide and enhance the province's anti-racism programs, services and initiatives.

Accountability

The ICA works closely with the provincial government of British Columbia, the partnership aims to:

- Address racism and support diverse communities.
- Increase understanding of expertise needed to provide anti-racism initiatives and programs.
- Increase use of data-informed decisions for future anti-racism work.

Cost and Size

- N/A

Stop Hate AB- Province of Alberta

[Stop Hate AB – Documenting Hate Incidents in Alberta](#)

Organisational Overview

StopHate AB is an initiative in Alberta focused on documenting incidents of hate and discrimination that may not meet the criteria for a criminal hate crime but still reflect harmful behaviors. It provides a platform where individuals can report non-criminal hate incidents to increase awareness and inform the public. The goal is to support the Alberta Hate Crimes Committee's outreach and educational efforts.

Process

Stop Hate AB, Alberta allows users to report hate by using an online platform. This can be done through an online survey.

Response

→ The website has a link to a guidebook for Supporting Victims of Hate Crime and Incidents.

Data is used for the improvement of the website. Accountability

→ N/A

Cost and Size

→ N/A

Research Deep Dive

Following the initial environmental scan which named 5 different reporting mechanisms across Canada, the next steps of the research was to continue to explore these platforms and how they were run. In this section, we will discuss 3 out of the 5 mentioned reporting mechanisms (We Support Hamilton, Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission, Stop Hate AB), providing further insight that will help support recommendations being made for the creation of a platform in Fredericton.

We Support Hamilton

Funding

- The city of Hamilton provided seed funding to get the program started.
- McMaster University donated space for the Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre to work out of for the reporting program.
- The Hamilton Community Foundation provides funding.
- The organization also relies on community donations.

Involvement

- There is a small team at the Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC) that collaborate to work through the reports of racism and bias they receive. The Executive Director and Program Manager do a further intake with the individuals who file reports.
- All the training is provided in house as We Support Hamilton is more of an advocacy and referral service rather than a crisis hotline. If there is an incident they do not know how to proceed with, they reach out to the School of Social Work at McMaster University for guidance.
- We Support Hamilton/HARRC allows this program to function through tremendous collaboration within the organization and with the aid of other professionals.

Data

- The HARRC provides an annual report with the data collected from the reports that are received.
- Aside from the annual report, the staff at HARRC reach out to individuals who have submitted a report to determine what kind of resolution they are looking for.

- Any further action taken based on the report is always up to the individual, meaning the HARRC will only proceed if the individual is comfortable with it.
- Further actions can include: a human rights report being filed, public announcements, providing multiple types of support to the individual, a police report (if it turns out to be a hate crime), and reaching out to government officials (MLA's, Mayor, etc...).

Important message from the executive director of HARRC:

- During the creation of the reporting mechanism, ensure to have as much community feedback possible, specifically from individuals that are more likely to experience racism, bias, and hate. The reporting mechanism is meant to be something to help marginalized demographics, making their input crucial.
- Once a report is filed, and you are conducting an intake, ensure that you are approaching the situation with trauma-informed care practices and compassion. No matter how big or small, this experience could have been traumatizing for the individual and having to ask further questions on the matter could potentially retraumatize them. Provide a warning at the beginning of the conversation that you will need to ask them a few more questions, and if they are not okay with that then do not ask the questions. Acknowledge their experience and apologize.

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Funding

- Funding for the NSHRC comes directly from the government of Nova Scotia.
- In the 2024-2025 fiscal year they had an operating budget of \$3,044,000.

Involvement

- The NSHRC is an independent agency of the Government of Nova Scotia tasked with administering the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act ("the Act"), mandated to help build inclusive communities and protect human rights.
- There is currently a board of 13 commissioners.
- In the 2024-2025 fiscal year the NSHRC had 26 full time staff.
- The NSHRC holds many partnerships and relationships with key community partners to collaborate on initiatives such as: African Nova Scotian Affairs, Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, Immigrant Services Association of NS (ISANS), and more.

Data

- On average the NSHRC receives approximately around 2800 inquiries each year. In the 2022-2023 fiscal year they received 1765 inquiries
- Inquiry forms are reviewed by Human Rights Officers (HRO) within the NSHRC's dispute resolution department. The dispute resolution process works to resolve allegations of discrimination on both an individual and systemic level.
- The specific area of complaint (employment, accommodations, etc.) as well as characteristics (age, association, race/colour, disability, etc.) are collected as a part of inquiry forms and used in data analysis.
- The NSHRC publishes annual reports with information on how their processes, pro-active education, and advocacy work is contributing to positive change in the province.

Stop Hate AB

Funding

- Stop Hate AB is funded in numerous ways including government grants, partnerships, and private donations.
- Various levels of government (provincial and municipal) have been contributors to Stop Hate AB's development.

Involvement

- Stop Hate AB is a Alberta Hate Crimes Committee initiative.

- It is a non-emergent reporting mechanism.
- The Human Rights Education and Multiculturalism Fund supports the website.
- MacEwan University office of Human Rights, Diversity, and Equity support Stop Hate AB through data analysis.
- In developing the questions for their reporting mechanism, Stop Hate AB did research, community consultation, and looked into the best practices of other platforms. They also consulted with academics and experts in hate crime and social justice, community organizations representing affected marginalized communities, legal professionals and policymakers to align with human rights frameworks, and individuals with lived experience to ensure accessibility and relevance.

Data

- All collected reports are stored in a secure and confidential manner.
- The data collected is not made publicly available and is analyzed internally. The information is then used to inform advocacy, community organization and policy makers about hate trends in Alberta.
- The Hate Incident Map is a tool used internally to track reports. This is not available to the public. It is used to direct internal advocacy efforts, and to develop educational initiatives in targeted areas

Best Practices

- Find sustainable funding:
 - There cannot be an overreliance on government funding, because it could be cut at any time without sufficient warning to find alternative funding, which may result in a failed project.
- Involve non-profits:
 - Non-profits provide an opportunity for additional resources to be extended to those who use the reporting system. Engaging with non-profits ensures that there is strong partnership and a collaborative approach to the reporting mechanism management.
- Provide annual reports:
 - Providing annual reports to the municipal government is an essential way to see movement towards change in the community. With data from the reports, municipalities can evaluate the prominence of the issue in the community, and make efforts towards promoting change, education, and inclusion. In a Yearly Review report created by the Coalition of Muslim Women (CMW) the data found that “over the course of 2022, a total of 97 unique incidents were reported. The breakdown of reporting showed that 34 informants chose to report anonymously on the website; whereas 63 chose to report in ways that connected them to staff at CMW.” (Gordoet al., 2023, pg. 4). The Coalition emphasizes the need for in-person avenues as many people reporting incidents favored in- person reporting because people reporting felt heard. (view appendix 2).
- Have data publicly available:
 - Making the data from the reports available to the public facilitates a deeper awareness of how common incidents of hate are, and types that are most common in their area. This would also be beneficial as an educational tool to inform the public about what incidents of hate might entail, and how to be a good bystander.
- Deliver sensitivity and awareness training:
 - Increased competency and humility would be gained through this training, ensuring that reporters are not having their acts of hate amplified by workers who are not fully prepared and knowledgeable on the topic of hate.
- Define platform objectives:
 - The platform should include some basic definitions of a hate incident versus a hate crime to help prevent receiving hate crime reports, as those should be directed towards law enforcement.
- Access to multiple languages:
 - Having access to multiple languages is essential when it comes to reporting hate. It is not enough to only have the

official languages, English and French, as instances of hate are oftentimes experienced by newcomers, who's needs would be best met through their first language. Four had access to more languages than English. Though it may not be causal, those who did have more languages had a higher number of reports made. Having a large range of languages available for any form of reporting method will invite a larger population to feel comfortable enough to come forward with an incident. According to stats Canada, the most common mother tongue languages other than English or French in Fredericton are Mandarin, Arabic, and Korean (Stats Can, 2016). These languages should be considered when creating an online platform.

→ Hybrid reporting system:

- While some people would rather submit their incident through an online survey for simplicity or for safety concerns, others may find it to be more beneficial to be able to do a phone call, or an in-person report.

→ Person-to-person communication for hotlines:

- When phone hotlines are automated and don't allow for person-to-person contact, reporters are more likely to feel as though their report is not actually being considered. By ensuring that there is a person on the other end of the line, people feel more comfortable, confident, and capable to follow through with their report.

Final Suggestions

For the implementation of a hate incident reporting initiative in New Brunswick, we came up with the following suggestions. In running the platform, there needs to be an organization that can handle calls in a variety of languages and collaborating with 211, would allow for the use of their pre-existing phone lines and person-to-person communication. For online access, collaboration with Civic Techs volunteers across the province can help build the reporting platform and track metrics for the Fredericton, Moncton and St Johns regions. There would also need to be a committee to support the function and goals of the project and should be drawn from members of the community with diverse needs such as NBMC, Ability NB, Inclusion NB and other private partners who support diversity initiatives.

This of course would require funding, but drawing on established systems such as GFSI, Civic Tech and 211 will keep costs to achievable levels.

Appendix 1

Disclaimer given before filling reporting a hate incident through We Support Hamilton

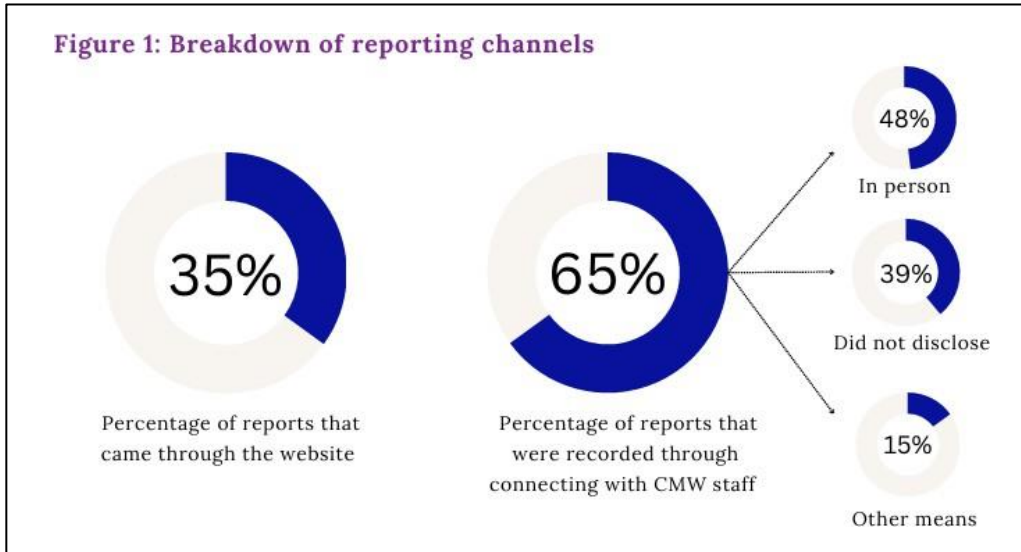
Before You Submit A Report

If you are concerned about other users of this device seeing your browser history of this form, you can [clear your browser history](#) and submit this form [using a private window/incognito mode](#).

This form allows you to save a draft of your report and return to complete your submission at a later date.

OK

Appendix 2



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