

CHICAGO'S ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAW

Hate crimes tear at the fabric of our communities and our city, where respect for and appreciation of the diverse cultures that make up Chicago is a critical component for thriving neighborhoods. The City of Chicago has taken a firm stand against hate and bigotry, and with the help of all of its residents, we can reduce the incidence of hate crimes.

The CCHR is charged with enforcing the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance and the Chicago Fair Housing Ordinance. The CCHR investigates complaints to determine whether discrimination may have occurred, and uses its enforcement powers to punish acts of discrimination. Under the City's Hate Crimes Law, the agency aids hate crime victims. The CCHR also employs proactive programs of education, intervention, and constituency building to discourage bigotry and bring people from different groups together.



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Contact Us

Chicago Commission on Human Relations
740 North Sedgwick Street, Suite 400
Chicago, Illinois 60654

Main: (312) 744-4111
Fax: (312) 744-1081
TTY: (312) 744-1088

email: cchr@cityofchicago.org
<http://www.cityofchicago.org/humanrelations>

Filing Complaints

Employment: (312) 744-4474
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Community Tensions: (312) 744-2571
Hate Crimes: (312) 744-4874
Education Workshops: (312) 744-2571



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WHAT IS A HATE CRIME?



Hate crimes are acts of bigotry, and are committed because of the intended victim's actual or perceived ancestry, color, creed, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability (including HIV status), or national origin. Hate crimes not only harm the victim, but also the group in which the targeted member belongs.

The charge of Hate Crime can only be added when another crime such as assault, battery, criminal damage to property, criminal trespass, mob action, disorderly conduct, harassment by telephone, intimidation, stalking, cyberstalking, or transmission of obscene messages occurs and a specific hate motive is established.

Standing alone, these predicate offenses would otherwise be considered misdemeanors and carry lesser penalties. **However, because of the chilling nature of hate crimes against the victim, and the actual or perceived group to which he, she, or they belong, the law elevates these misdemeanors to felonies which carry stiffer penalties, including civil penalties up to \$25,000.** Perpetrators of Hate Crimes are also subject to enhanced penalties if their criminal acts are committed in places of worship, schools, cemeteries, or parks.

HOW CAN THE CCHR HELP?

Victim Advocacy: The CCHR, in conjunction with the Civil Rights Unit of the Chicago Police Department and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, provides support to hate crime victims. CCHR staff and concerned community volunteers are available to accompany victims to court hearings, visit hate crime victims, and provide referrals for support services. Services may include referrals to pro bono (free) legal assistance to sue hate crime offenders in civil court for damages for psychological and physical injuries.

Education: A key component to preventing and alleviating discrimination, hate crimes and intergroup tensions is education. The CCHR offers a variety of human relations workshops and presentations to schools, religious institutions, youth agencies, and community groups on such topics as the Chicago Human Rights and Fair Housing Ordinances, prejudice reduction, hate crimes, bullying, and access to public places for people with disabilities. To request a workshop or to find out more about these programs, contact the CCHR at 312-744-2571.



WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I BECOME A VICTIM OF A HATE CRIME?

If you believe you have been a victim of a Hate Crime, **call 911 immediately and report the incident to the Chicago Police Department.** Tell them specifically that you believe you have been a victim of a hate crime. This is very important! Once a hate incident is reported to the Police, they will determine if it was a Hate Crime. The Police Department will then notify the CCHR of the incident. CCHR staff will reach out to the victim to provide information and support through the investigation and prosecution of the case.



For more information about Hate Crimes, contact the CCHR at (312) 744-4874.