



A COMMUNITY GUIDE FOR OPPOSING HATE

A publication of the Bard Center for the Study of Hate, Western States Center, and the Montana Human Rights Network

LOVE
NOT
HATE

LOVE!
LOVE!

ARE YOU
REALLY FREE?



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|----|--|
| 5 | PREFACE |
| 9 | ORGANIZING A COMMUNITY GROUP |
| 27 | ONLINE VERSUS IN-PERSON ORGANIZING |
| 29 | WHAT TO DO NOW THAT YOUR GROUP IS ORGANIZED, ESPECIALLY IN RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT OF HATE |
| 33 | MESSAGING: RESPONDING TO MESSAGES OF HATE, BIGOTRY, AND EXCLUSION |
| 39 | DISINFORMATION, MISINFORMATION, AND DEALING WITH TROLLS |
| 43 | COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES |
| 49 | SOCIAL MEDIA |
| 51 | POLITICAL AND POLICY WORK |
| 57 | OTHER STEPS TO MOBILIZE YOUR COMMUNITY: BUILDING A MOVEMENT AGAINST HATE |
| 61 | THE IMPORTANCE OF OPPOSITION RESEARCH |
| 65 | WORKING WITH ACADEMICS |
| 65 | WORKING WITH SCHOOLS |
| 67 | SOME WORDS ABOUT SPEECH |
| 69 | TURNING FREE SPEECH RIGHTS ON THEIR HEAD |
| 71 | COMMUNITY SYMBOLIC REJECTION OF HATE |
| 72 | HOW TO DEAL WITH, AND REPORT, A HATE CRIME OR HATE INCIDENT |
| 75 | SECURITY |
| 77 | SCENARIOS FOR ACTION |
| 77 | SCENARIO 1: A community leader or member receives multiple threats, both online and in person, over the span of a few days following the publishing of their name/organization by a right-wing media outlet |
| 79 | SCENARIO 2: A community group/center is targeted by a white nationalist group with flyers |
| 80 | SCENARIO 3: A nationally-recognized speaker with a long history of anti-Muslim animus has been invited by a church in your town to speak about the “dangers of Islam.” |

Table of Contents (continued)

- 83 SCENARIO 4:
LGBTQ groups and a local library are targeted due to a drag queen story hour event that is set to take place at the library in the coming weeks
- 85 SCENARIO 5:
Local law enforcement officers are cooperating or coordinating with paramilitary groups in response to civil rights demonstrations organized by groups such as Black Lives Matter or Showing Up for Racial Justice.
- 86 SCENARIO 6:
A Black, Indigenous, and People of Color-, or BIPOC-, owned restaurant whose owners are outspoken social justice allies, is vandalized
- 88 SCENARIO 7:
Local groups with agendas promoting discrimination or hate against members of our community (simply based on who they are or who they love) announce their intention to testify in opposition to a piece of progressive legislation at a city council or committee hearing at the state legislature
- 90 SCENARIO 8:
After an incident involving an alleged undocumented immigrant, anti-immigrant groups and elected officials host a nativist event in your area
- 92 SCENARIO 9:
Local houses of worship are targeted for their pro-immigrant and/or pro-refugee stances
- 93 SCENARIO 10:
Elected officials are meeting with or coordinating with local anti-democratic groups in your area
- 95 SCENARIO 11:
An elected official posts hateful speech on their personal social media accounts
- 96 SCENARIO 12:
A religious institution in your community is vandalized in a likely hate incident
- 98 SCENARIO 13:
A local Planned Parenthood clinic is dealing with a weekly far-right mobilization couched as a church sermon/protest outside of its building organized by an antichoice group that attracts other far-right groups
- 99 CONCLUSION
- 101 RESOURCE DIRECTORY
- 103 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PREFACE

The purpose of this manual is to provide those who want to “do something” about hate the something they can do, step by step, not only for the immediate aftermath of a hateful act, but for years to come to improve their community.

First, though, what is hate?

Philosophers and authors have struggled with the concept for millennia, perhaps because it’s part emotion, part attitude, part behavior.

Consider the following:

- a. “Hate is a bottomless cup; I will pour and pour,” Euripides, *Medea*
- b. “In time we hate that which we often fear,” William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*
- d. “To die hating them, that was freedom,” George Orwell, *1984*
- e. “Allow enemies their space to hate; they will destroy themselves in the process,” Lisa Du
- f. “Let’s not hate the existence of hatred,” Toba Beta, *Betelgeuse Incident*
- g. “Hate is the father of all evil,” David Gemmell, *Fall of Kings*
- h. “Hate is a faith,” Jean-Paul Sartre, “Antisemite and Jew”
- j. “Unanimous hatred is the greatest medicine for a human community,” Aeschylus, *Eumenides*
- k. “[E]njoying and hating the right thing seem the most important factors in virtue of character,” Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*
- l. “You can safely assume you’ve created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do,” Anne Lamott

However one chooses to define it, hate is at its most dangerous when it is seen as something noble—and not only noble, but as a “truth” that’s a rallying point to organize around, in order to inflict it on our neighbors. Expressions of hate are shocking, a swastika on a wall, a noose on someone’s locker, a rally by white supremacists in full regalia or business suits, explaining why other human beings—the “theys”—are a threat to “us,” so much so they should have fewer rights, if not outright expelled or murdered.

This manual has been written by people who have spent decades combating hate and hate groups. If we’ve learned one lesson, it’s that organized haters are classic bullies. If they get away with bullying, they will only bully more.

But we’ve learned another lesson too, that communities CAN push back against hatred. It’s hard work, but not daunting or overly complicated. This manual will show you how.

Our goal here is to provide different organizations in different regions—small rural coalitions, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in larger cities, and everything in between—the best practices to combat hate and hate groups. Some of the strategies are reactive, but the most important ones are proactive—organizing so when hate comes to town, it has a lesser chance of success.

Hate may be manifested by different means (rallies, posters, social media postings, crimes, etc.) and may have a variety of targets (people of different ethnicity or religion, gender or sexual identity, even different politics). But we make a huge mistake when we ignore hateful acts against *anyone*. This isn’t just a matter of the famous quote from Martin Niemöller: “First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.” And it’s not just that hate threatens democratic norms and institutions. It’s also that hate imbedded as a noble idea can inspire individuals to acts of violence.



We also make a mistake when we try to pigeonhole a hateful act based upon who the hater targets—it’s the *ideas* that propel the actor that are key. The mass murderer at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh in 2018 was upset that brown-skinned people were “invading” the US, and he thought Jews, who had supported liberal immigration rights, were responsible. A few months later the mass murderer at the El Paso Walmart chose to kill Mexicans and Mexican-Americans directly. Their ideologies were nearly identical. They chose different victims. We see one instance as antisemitic, the other as racist, but when we organize against the ascendancy of these ideas and the people who are organizing to propel them in our communities, we must have a larger lens and a more comprehensive game plan involving institutions that can help reduce the effect of hate around us—groups like ethnic and religious groups, businesses, labor unions, academics and other teachers, peace and human rights groups, government officials, journalists, and others.

And it’s also important to recognize that while hate groups in a community amplify hate, they don’t “create” it—they use the divisions and ideas that already exist in our communities to propel their agendas. Frequently they will find other issues to hook people into their orbit. During the 1990s militia movement, for example, white supremacists used gun rights and land-use controversies to draw people to their meetings. Once people are brought inside these groups, they are exposed to more and more hateful ideas and conspiracy theories, including antisemitic ones.¹

And while hate isn’t just an ideology of the far right, in America the most dangerous hatred, and the most destructive domestic hate groups, are those built on white supremacy. From the Ku Klux Klan of post-Civil War era (and its resurgences in the 1920s, 1950s, and 1960s), to the militia movement of the 1990s, to Charlottesville, and, most recently, to the 2021 Capitol Insurrection, white supremacist groups have always been part of America’s

1. Antisemitism—a belief that Jews conspire to harm non-Jews, and that this Jewish conspiracy is the reason so much goes wrong in the world—is a core ideological component of much white supremacy and indeed has informed many of the groups and movements that spread hate against people of color, government officials, and others. For further reading see, for example, <https://politicalresearch.org/2017/06/29/skin-in-the-game-how-antisemitism-animates-white-nationalism> and <https://www.amazon.com/Force-upon-Plain-American-Movement/dp/0806129263>. Also see Travis McAdam speaking on The Racist Roots of the Militia Movement, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jA6Hx7Et1xc&t=17s>.

political landscape—sometimes relegated to the margins of society, but sometimes coming closer to political leaders and structures wielding power.

What you'll see in this manual are tried-and-true strategies for organizing against hate, from the nuts and bolts of how to build and sustain groups and coalitions, how to reach out to others for help, how to report crimes to the police, how to work with journalists and politicians, and how to research hate groups in your community.

This manual builds on two important documents from the 1980s and 1990s: the Center for Democratic Renewal's *When Hate Groups Come to Town*, <https://www.amazon.com/When-Hate-Groups-Come-Town/dp/1881320057> and Montana Human Rights Network cofounder Ken Toole's *What to Do When The Militia Comes to Town*, http://www.mhrn.org/publications/whattodo_militia.pdf. Some of what you will see here comes directly from those documents.

Today, unlike 30 and 40 years ago, we live in both a real and an online world, and so this manual updates the principles of community organizing for this new time. Some of the hate we see today is on social media—and it can threaten and terrorize people just as effectively, perhaps more effectively, than the vehicles for promoting hate in the last century. Conversely, as you will see in these pages, community groups countering hate have the advantage of being able to see how hate groups are forming and working because the evidence of their handiwork and sometimes their plans are now more easily visible and searchable. Additionally, community groups can use these same social media and other online platforms for their work too, from keeping their members updated about the state of hate in their communities, to providing resources for journalists and others, to organizing programs and projects designed to combat hate and its manifestations.

Finally, a few words on nomenclature. Hate isn't the sole province of any particular ideology. It is part of the human condition; it exists across the entire political spectrum. But from the Ku Klux Klan of years ago to the militia movement of the 1990s to the Capitol Insurrection of 2021, the manifestations of hate in your community are more likely to come from those promoting a far-right, white supremacist agenda. So these groups will be the ones we largely address in our examples, but the principles described here are useful for organizing against any group promoting hate against our neighbors.



ORGANIZING A COMMUNITY GROUP

Timing

Many local organizations formed in response to the presence of hateful groups in their community have come into being around specific events: a militia group had a meeting or a racist group said they were moving to town or a Jewish family was being harassed. In such instances a local group forms quickly and involvement by a broad spectrum of the community is easily obtained.

The problem for groups that form in this environment is that there is almost always a calm after the precipitating event when the group is forced to struggle with identity issues.

On the other hand, some groups have formed out of general concern about the issues rather than in response to a specific incident. These groups will often have a more difficult time in initial recruitment because the need for their existence is not readily apparent to many people. These groups have the luxury of discussing their identity at the outset.

Allies

There are many groups that are naturally inclined to be of great assistance in a community organizing effort to counter hate group activity. In beginning a community effort, it is often helpful to approach individuals within various constituency groups rather than the groups themselves. When an organization is new and not yet well defined, established community groups are rightfully hesitant to commit themselves to it.

Organizers should recognize that putting together a local group to counter hate, particularly from the radical right, is often controversial. There are often charges and countercharges and high-profile public debate about the activities of these extremist groups. After all, part of the task is to expose these groups and they don't like that.

This controversy can be difficult for people involved in the organizing effort. More important, this controversy can be difficult for other community organizations and institutions to deal with.

There are two subsets of groups that will be helpful in a community effort to counter hate groups. Tier A groups are likely to be helpful in establishing a sustained long-term organization dedicated to responding to bigotry and intolerance. In a most general sense, these tend to be groups that associate social justice with structural and political issues in society. Tier B groups will cooperate for specific purposes for fairly limited times. These groups often have a more limited view of social justice, focusing instead on individual advocacy or service to the community.

Tier A Groups

Organizations built around protecting the rights and safety of particular racial, ethnic, and religious communities.

These groups are often the first to recognize the presence of hate groups in the community. Further, members of these organizations understand the threat posed by hate groups and the need to be active in countering their rhetoric. In recent years there have been organizations working against the hate that targets religious groups such as Muslims, Sikhs, Mormons, Hindus, and others.

The Jewish community: For the same reasons as other minority-focused groups, many Jewish organizations fully understand the need for action in the face of hatred. In addition, members of the Jewish community are very well informed about farright activity because of national groups like the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and/or because

of the community work of some local congregations and Jewish Federations. The Anglo-Jewish press also devotes substantial coverage to these issues.

Churches: Churches can play a critical role in developing community responses. Often, radical-right organizations claim scriptural justification for the positions they take. Churches are the most effective voice to counter this rhetoric. It is important to understand that in many churches the level of involvement will be dictated by the nature of the congregation. In approaching churches, be flexible and understand the constraints of local church leadership. Take some time to figure out which congregations in a community are most involved in social justice issues (some even have social justice committees) and begin there. Black churches, some of which have been targeted with arson and murder and other acts of hate over the decades, might be particularly good partners.

Labor unions: Labor unions are critical to community responses. Hate groups often target union members for recruitment, particularly when economic times are tough. Because labor organizations understand this phenomenon, they have education programs in place and mechanisms for delivering their message. More important, most union activists understand hateful and right-wing activity and are very experienced at organizing. They are an important asset.

LGBTQ advocacy groups: These can be very helpful because people in this community are frequently targets of extremists, and many local LGBTQ groups/centers have connections to regional or national groups, which may have resources about countering hate and hate groups.

The education community: Teachers, the Parent Teacher Association, school administration, and, in larger towns, the university community are usually concerned about manifestations of bigotry and intolerance. Thanks in large part to organizations like the National Education Association, there has already been a great deal of discussion about bigotry and intolerance in the world of education. Also be aware that there are curriculum or subject-specific associations of teachers within the education community. There is likely to be a state association of social studies teachers with local members who will be informed about and interested in extremist groups. Likewise, as mentioned in the [section](#) “working with academics,” later in this manual, there is a growing interdisciplinary field of hate studies, and if academics associated with this initiative are in your community, they may help provide guidance and other intellectual resources. (The Bard Center for the Study of Hate maintains an international database of syllabi about hate, <https://bcsh.bard.edu/hate-studies-syllabi/>.) Finally, the Western States Center has a toolkit for confronting white nationalism in schools, <https://www.westernstatescenter.org/schools>.

Peace groups/human rights groups/civil rights groups: In many communities there are groups formed around peace and justice and human rights issues. Members of these groups understand the connection between violence and politics that is fundamental to the ideologies that drive hate groups.

Environmentalists: Sometimes environmental groups and activists have become targets for harassment in communities. As that has occurred, environmental activists have become more interested in participating in community groups that counter bigotry.

Pro-immigration and refugee settlement groups: Many hate groups fear the demographic growth of non-white members of our society, with particular focus on non-white immigration. Groups that support immigrants and refugees may be natural coalition partners.

Good government groups: Groups such as the League of Women Voters that support democratic principles and processes are good candidates for an anti-hate group, particularly to the extent that the group deals with issues affecting participation in government.

Women's organizations: Women's organizations are often very concerned about hate groups because they are often hostile to women's rights.

Tier B Groups

Service clubs: Groups like Kiwanis and Rotary that dedicate themselves to community-improvement projects can be very helpful in providing volunteers and organizing events. In addition, these groups often include community leaders who have a great deal of credibility in the “mainstream.”

Business groups: Local groups concerned with economic development or business improvement can also be particularly helpful in establishing the credibility of a new organization in the community (but a word of caution—sometimes these groups may be more concerned with not wanting the community to get the “bad press” that hate groups are present).

The law enforcement community: While we realize that not every group will be comfortable with this approach, we suggest that early contact should be made with the law enforcement community. Such contacts are critical if confrontations develop or if individuals begin to receive threats.

Local government officials: These folk are our elected representatives and they often articulate the “position” of the community. They should be invited early to participate in the effort. They too are sometimes the targets of extremist groups.

The media: The media should be approached as members of the community and asked to participate. Often local media will decline on the grounds of preserving their objectivity. But sometimes events in the community may cause them to reconsider their position and become involved.

As you and/or your neighbors and colleagues set about forming a community organization and begin approaching these groups and individuals, it is important not to be restrictive. Very valuable group members may come from groups in Tier B while people in Tier A groups may be decidedly uninterested. The key is to be flexible and encourage as much involvement as possible.

The First Meeting

Generally, discussion of forming a community group or coordinating community efforts begins with two or three people. These individuals need to reach out to others to form a somewhat larger core. This can be done by approaching individuals involved in the groups listed above.

Some effort should be made at this point to make sure that different sectors of the community are involved.

Organizers should be aware that similar groups may be forming around the same concerns at the same time. This is particularly true if there has been some recent event that has attracted public attention. There also may be groups in the community that have been working on a specific issue that organizers wish to address. If this is the case, special efforts should be made to consolidate or at least coordinate activity.

The Organizers

It often appears that community groups come together spontaneously; they don't. There is always someone making the phone calls and sending emails, inviting people to meetings, setting the meeting agenda, facilitating the meetings, and so on. That may be one person or it may be a small group. This role is critical to getting a group going. (If you are reading this manual, it is likely to be you!)

The core organizers should quickly look to inviting a somewhat larger group (10 to 20 people) to discuss forming a group and the kinds of activities the group might sponsor. Some thought should go into who is invited to this meeting.

There are several things organizers should be looking for:

- People who have some concern about what is going on in the community
- People with some connection to a larger constituency group as previously discussed
- People who have had some involvement organizing community events

The core organizers should call or visit people individually to invite them to the initial meeting. Invest time making these initial contacts. And while you may want to promote your group's work later via social media, now is not the time. This time is the organizers' chance to set the stage for the initial meeting of the larger group and to ensure that the first meeting goes well and that participants feel it is a productive effort. It also enables the organizers to identify problems that might arise in the initial meeting and to develop strategies to handle them.

Physical Issues

The meeting should be held in a convenient location² with which people are familiar. It is a good idea to avoid having the initial meeting in someone's house. Local schools, libraries, community halls, and senior centers are public settings that can be used as meeting places. The organizers should also have something set out for people to eat and drink at the meeting.

The meeting time is also important to facilitate involvement. Meetings right after work are often difficult for people with children. Wednesday nights are often church nights, and some people will have a hard time meeting then. Weekends pose obvious problems. Early-morning meetings often don't allow enough time to get business done. The same is true of lunch meetings. Employment often prohibits daytime meetings.

Seem hopeless? Think about this. In each month—except February—there are several weekdays that occur five times. In busy people's schedules, these days are the most likely not to have conflicts because regular meetings of other groups are often set on a particular day of the month. For example, the local peace group may schedule its meeting for the second Tuesday of the month, the local chamber of commerce for the third Thursday, and so on. These groups almost never schedule on these "fifth days."

Organizers should have some kind of writing materials available for each person who is coming. Butcher paper and markers, a chalk board, or some method of being able to write things down where people can see them is also a good idea. The seating should be set up so that people can see the other participants and the person running the meeting. Classroom seating is bad; circles are good; people around a table is best.

Follow-up calls are essential. If a person was invited on Monday to a meeting on Thursday night, they should be reminded (via phone, text, and/or email) on Wednesday night or Thursday during the day. In all activities and meetings, participation is directly related to the amount of follow-up.

Organizers should make sure that everyone in attendance fills out a sign-in sheet with their address, email, and cell phone number. This should be done at all meetings.

Someone should agree to facilitate the meeting. The facilitator is responsible for assuring that the meeting sticks to the agenda and for making sure that people are not talking over each other or interrupting others. If the facilitator is not one of the individuals who has been organizing the meeting and contacting people, the organizers need to spend some time talking to the facilitator and letting that person know what is hoped to come out of the meeting.

2. While an in-person meeting is always best, we recognize that conditions—like those created by the COVID-19 pandemic—may make such gatherings difficult or impossible. In that case, organize the meeting over Zoom, with online security protocols as mentioned in this [section](#) of this manual.



The Content

The first meeting of the group should be fairly direct but also allow time for discussion. Organizers should hope to achieve a tentative agreement that there is a need for a group in the community to counter the activities of those promoting hate, and to reaffirm the principle that everyone, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, immigration status, gender identity, or sexual orientation, is a valued member of the community. In addition, the first meeting should move the group toward sponsoring some kind of community event.

The meeting should have the following components:

Introductions: The facilitator should introduce themselves and spend some time explaining how the meeting came about. Once that is done, people should be asked to introduce themselves and provide a little information about why they came.

The pitch: Organizers should set out an analysis of what they see as the problem, how it affects the community, and what they think should be done about it. Others will join in this discussion. Organizers should have a strong sense of the group's views going into the meeting from the contacts they made inviting people. A fair amount of time should be allowed for discussion. Organizers should be looking toward building a consensus within the group that an organization could be beneficial to address problems. At a minimum, the participants should agree that a community event would be a positive step.

Planning: To the extent that some agreement comes out of the discussion, the next step should be to plan an event. This event is important for two reasons: It will establish the group in the public eye, and it will begin to build a base of support. It is also important to do something active in the community quickly to give the group a sense that it has accomplished something.

There will likely be people who want to get immediately into organizational issues like bylaws and articles of incorporation and setting up an internet and social media presence. There are two ways to handle this issue. One is to form small committees to do the organizational tasks. The other is to defer the discussion. The important thing is to avoid letting the whole group get involved in lengthy organizational discussions at the first meeting. This discussion bores a lot of people and is not terribly productive in terms of community action. The focus should be directed more toward an initial community event.

And as you're planning, it's important to remember that this event is not the end goal, but only the first step. Too often communities that want to respond to hate think they can hold one event, declare victory, feel good, go home, and then hate will disappear. It won't. A successful initial event is something to celebrate—but it's a step in building a local group to combat hate for years, even decades, to come.

Closure

Summarize areas of agreement: We want to establish a sustained presence in the community. Define what you are going to do next: We are going to sponsor a community event. Review assignments: so-and-so is going to contact potential speakers; so-and-so is going to get the room for the event. Discuss the agenda for the next meeting. Three items will be on it that people should think about: a name for the group; designating a spokesperson; a progress report on the event. Set the next meeting date.

Pitfalls

All of this seems simple on paper. It is far from simple in practice. Anytime you get a group of people together and talk about becoming active on an issue there will be bumps along the way. Being successful in bringing a community group together is one part science, two parts art, and three parts faith in human nature. There are some issues that will come to the fore and challenge the group. Very likely a number of these will come up at the group's initial meeting.

"We should enter into a 'meaningful dialogue' with our opponents." There are those who believe that the solution to all problems lies in talking things out. And, of course, this is true, to some degree. Unfortunately, dialogue is ineffective when confronting racial supremacists, militias, and other similar groups. In fact, entering a discussion with them gives them credibility. The best approach to this issue is to focus the discussion on the idea that violence and intimidation are simply not debatable.

"We should have a positive message." Of course that is true, and many people are very uncomfortable saying negative things about anything or anybody. Unfortunately, part of the work that needs to be done in any community effort is naming and exposing the opponent. There should be a positive aspect to the work of supporting pluralism and democracy. Individuals who are uncomfortable directly countering bigotry should be channeled into working on positive events.

"We should be proactive." Yes, the group wants to develop a program that is positive and proactive, but time and time again community groups facing opponents who are fundamentally opposed to their mission will find that a portion of their effort will be devoted to reacting to their opponents. Failing to recognize that at the outset and planning for it makes the group very vulnerable. Perhaps more importantly, doing only proactive, positive things simply will not address the problem.

"We don't want to give them attention." Many people believe that hateful organizations are simply after attention and if we respond to them we are playing into their hands. The reality is that these groups seek attention so long as it is not critical. They do not seek nor do they benefit from attention that is critical of what they have to say.

“They have free-speech rights too.” Many people are rightfully concerned about the free-speech rights of marginal groups in our society. Too often people forget that free speech does not apply only to marginal opinions. It should be emphasized that the community group is exercising its free-speech rights in expressing opposition to what these groups have to say.

“There are racists behind every tree.” There are a number of people who will see a radical-right presence in everything going on in a community. It is important to keep the problem in a realistic context or the group can lose credibility. Recognize that the process of change and education is incremental and if a group gets too far ahead of the curve, even if the group is right, the result is a loss of credibility.

The First Event

If all has gone well, the group will now move to sponsoring a community event in the near future. The purpose of the event is to begin the process of community education. The theme of the event should be very clear. Most often groups bring in an expert speaker who takes on the problem directly. This avoids ambiguity and confusion about what the community group is about and what the issue is that they wish to address. The event should be free unless the speaker is very famous and will clearly attract a lot of people.

The speaker: Remember, most people think the farther a speaker comes, the more expert they are. Consider getting in touch with national groups to see if they can provide a speaker. There may be state or regional organizations that can provide speakers. If that fails, try getting in touch with colleges or universities to see if there is a faculty member who can address the topic.

Promotion: The more promotional activity, the more successful the event will be. If possible, you want to promote your event through direct contact with individuals. One of the best ways to do that is through email. Remember those constituency groups we already discussed. Most of them have mailing lists and may be willing to email information to them. They also have phone trees and social media accounts they may be willing to activate to turn people out.

Media promotion is also important. Public-service announcements should be given to all radio stations, and TV spots should be broadcast about two weeks before the event. A press release should go out three or four days prior to the event (earlier if you’re in a rural community with weekly newspapers that might need to receive it a week in advance or even earlier). If the local paper has bought into the community effort, it may provide free advertising. Don’t spend much money on advertising in the paper, as the cost of running these advertisements generally outweighs the response. Encourage your members to promote the event on their own social media accounts too.

Posters should be put up around town in grocery stores, laundromats, school bulletin boards, virtually anywhere that will take them. Banks and other businesses have electronic reader boards and may take an announcement. Church bulletins and group newsletters will often print and/or email blast an announcement (or at least include a paragraph about the event—that you supply—in their regular electronic communications and/or put a notice in their online calendar). Creating a Facebook event that can be easily shared around social media can also help with turnout.

Schools should be approached about attending the community event. Depending on the speaker, teachers will often offer extra credit to students who attend these presentations. This is true at the college and high school levels. Not only does this help reach a very important group—students—it also helps assure good turnout.

On the day of the event your speaker should be on radio talk programs, doing television interviews, and meeting with print reporters (you’ll need to schedule these interviews ahead of time). And before the event, the speaker can do interviews remotely. All of this activity will help promote the event.



The event itself: This is the group's first chance to build a mailing list. Organizers need to do everything they can to get people to sign up. Log-in sheets should be provided at the doors. More important, sign-up sheets should be circulated in the audience during the introductions and someone should be assigned to make sure they keep moving. You want to ask for people's emails and cell phone numbers. Make sure you protect the list—you don't want it to go missing. And watch for anyone copying names off the lists, or taking photos of the lists from their phones. Stop them. This is best accomplished by a volunteer asking them to keep the list moving.

Law-enforcement officials should be invited to the event. If the event is a reaction to the presence of militia or other extremist elements in the community, it is very likely that members of these groups will attend. Be sure to invite law-enforcement personnel early on so the event can be incorporated into their planning. Even if local law enforcement cannot have someone at the event, it's good to let them know when and where the event will take place. Should members of the extremist groups be disruptive to the point that law enforcement should be called, it helps if the department knows what's going on ahead of time.

Make sure your group takes pictures at the event to be used in subsequent publications. Consider videoing the event and later posting it on social media, including YouTube. The group may want to circulate the link to the video later as part of its community-education effort. In any event, get pictures of the audience as well as of the people on the podium. (Remember the guy who was copying names off the sign-up list? Be sure to get a picture of him.)

The event should begin with a presentation by the group's spokesperson. The presentation by the spokesperson should include: welcome, explaining what the group is, how to get in touch, what the group wants to do, and an appeal for contributions. Baskets for contributions should be passed out at the beginning along with sign-up sheets, and you should distribute cards with information about how people can make online donations if you have this system already set up, or mail a check later if not.

If it looks like a lot of opponents are there, the spokesperson should also cover some ground rules.

These should include:

- No interrupting the speaker
- Hold your questions or comments until the end of the presentation (you may decide to pass around index cards for people to write out questions that a moderator can pose to the speaker, although allowing questions to be asked directly is a better way to make people feel involved).
- Individuals in the room are entitled to courtesy and respect regardless of their views
- No personal attacks or insults

Some discussion should go into this issue before the event. Have a plan in place if someone interrupts or breaks the rules. If these groups have been visible in the community to any degree, count on their attendance. If they are in attendance, count on them to be vocal. Take heart, they are generally pretty easy to control. Certainly, most people who speak to the activities of these groups in community settings are used to handling them in meetings.

At the end of the meeting there should be a list of names and addresses and a small amount of money. The media attention to the event has also begun to set the group in the community eye. The group now has a base to work from. The core of activists has that warm fuzzy feeling that comes from a success and is beginning to develop a sense of itself as a group.

Back to the Organizational Issues

Organizational issues are often the death of fledgling community groups. Half of the people in the group can't seem to agree and the other half are bored to tears. This is one reason to have the first activity of the group be some kind of event. There are some things the group can do to make the process of setting up the organization go more smoothly.

Borrow what works from other groups. There is no reason to reinvent the wheel. Get copies of bylaws and organizational documents from other groups (or google them). Set up a committee that is focused on the organizational issues. This will prevent the whole group from getting stuck on these issues. A word to the wise here: the committee doing the organizational stuff should be empowered to do its job. There is nothing worse for people than to have a larger group nitpick every decision it makes. So when that committee makes its report some people in the group need to be ready and willing to jump in and remind people that the committee had a job to do and that the larger group doesn't need to go over all the same issues again. Making sure that the organizational committee does a thorough job of giving a report to the full group will help tremendously.

But even if there is an effective and fully empowered organizational committee, some issues need to be addressed by the full group, including:

- Group name
- Mission statement
- Legal status (to incorporate or not to incorporate; and if to incorporate, to do so as a nonprofit or not, and if so, what type)
- Membership based (yes or no)
- Spokesperson/leadership
- Whether to develop a website and social media presence (if yes, details can be delegated to a committee—this committee might also consider questions of online security, or delegate that to another committee, subcommittee, or member expert).
- Board size and method of recruiting board members
- Decision-making process (consensus, *Robert's Rules*, other?)

Don't force the discussion of these issues quickly. If people are not ready to make the decisions, refer them to a smaller group or defer them to another meeting.

Planning: Sometime after the first event it is important that the group come together to develop a plan. The plan can be for any period of time, but a year is usual for most groups. The plan is important because it gives the group definition and an understanding of what comes next. The annual plan also prevents the group from just dying out for lack of a next task.

A good process to use for planning is to take a calendar and identify those dates that might provide an opportunity to organize activity. For example, many local human-rights groups often sponsor a variety of activities around the Martin Luther King holiday. Others focus on Presidents' Day as a time to celebrate democratic principles. It is valuable to be aware of election cycles and other political events that might afford opportunities for community education.

The group should allow plenty of time for annual planning. Half a day should be sufficient for a local group. Consider having a facilitator (someone not a member or participant in the local group) volunteer their services to help this process along.

Fundraising and budgeting: An important subset of planning is budgeting. Depending on the aspirations of the local group, this may be a critical portion of the planning process. If the group would like to have an office, staff, phone, and all of that neat stuff, it is critical that a budget be established. If, on the other hand, the group wants to remain essentially volunteer-based, the budget may be more loosely constructed.

An organization's budget is nothing more than paper unless it is accompanied by a fundraising plan that specifies how the money is to be raised. If the community group plans to pursue staff, office, phone, website, etc., it is critical to recruit individuals to the board who have experience in management and fundraising.

If the group plans to start small and remain volunteer-based for a time, money and a budget are still important. Too often volunteer groups don't like to raise money because it is not pleasant to ask for it. But it must be done.

Here are some things to consider:

- Events. Fundraisers tend to be labor-intensive and often have a relatively low return for the effort put in. Nonetheless, fundraisers are important to community groups not only because they raise money but because they also provide recognition in the community.
- Direct appeals. Email requests are easily done and can raise significant funds. A group needs access to lists (remember those allies) and needs to write a good fundraising letter (and to provide a short pitch about your group that allies can incorporate into their communications, if they are willing). If you plan on having a website or social media presence, build in a "donate" button and set up an account to accept online donations (for example, via PayPal). If you solicit checks by mail, you might consider setting up a post office box to receive them.
- Personal appeals. This is the best way to raise money. Get each board member to commit to asking 10 people for contributions of \$50-100. This can mount up fast. It also can fall flat; much depends on the people on the board.
- Large donors. There are people and institutions in every community who will contribute significant amounts of money to combat bigotry. Finding them and asking them takes time and effort but is well worth it.
- Grants. Getting money through foundations requires expertise and familiarity with the foundation world. Find individuals with this experience and solicit their involvement in the group.

There are numerous fundraising resources available in all communities. People with fundraising experience should be recruited to the group. But organizers should keep two basic principles in mind: (1) All community events cost money, and where possible that money should be recovered. (2) Nothing ventured, nothing gained. It is necessary to take some reasonable risks in fundraising.

Selecting a spokesperson: One of the first difficult challenges any group will encounter is selecting the individuals who will represent the group to the public. The problem is rarely choosing one out of many willing people. Far more often it is finding someone who is willing to take on the task.

There are several things that can be done to make this easier:

- Make the initial approach to people outside the group setting. Organizers should identify people who have the skills and/or the standing in the community to be a credible representative and talk to them before the group takes up the topic. Have someone ready to nominate the person(s) in the meeting.
- Make the commitment for a limited period of time. People are more willing to take on tasks that they can see an end to.
- Share it among several people. People will commit more easily if they see others making a similar commitment.

The group should also be mindful that their spokesperson may be singled out for special attention from extremist groups. This may take the form of midnight phone calls, anonymous letters, or vile emails, or it may take the form of public attacks on the person's patriotism or religious beliefs. The group should be prepared to bring others into the limelight and to support those who have opened themselves to the criticism that flows from this kind of work.

The mission statement: Groups will struggle mightily with a concise mission statement. These statements are important because they sum up the essence of the group in a short memorable statement. If all else fails, try this: To promote democracy and pluralism and to counter bigotry, hatred, and intolerance.

Promotional piece: The group will probably want to have some kind of brochure that articulates what it is about. Promotional materials should be available at all events sponsored by the group. This piece should include the mission statement, goals, accomplishments (once there are some), address, email address, phone number, and when you have them, a URL for your website and social media tags. This piece is often the first contact people have with the organization. It is very important that it be professionally prepared (for both printing and for posting online).

Sustaining a Community Group

As stated earlier, often community groups form around an immediate crisis or in response to the activities of extremist groups. When this is the case, there often comes a time when the immediate threat has passed and the group struggles to sustain itself. This is the primary reason for the planning activities discussed previously. There are issues the group will face as it matures. These often include the following:

Dealing with the Opposition

Racist and other extremist groups can be very aggressive. They may target a new community group for infiltration or they may send activists to disrupt community events sponsored by it. In the worst-case scenario, members may begin to receive threats. The following are some strategies to handle some of these issues.

Disruption or infiltration at board meetings: The best solution to this is prevention. The group should discuss the need for security and commit early on to inviting only individuals people know to be committed to the principles of the group. Board meetings do not have to be announced publicly. Some may object to this "exclusive" approach; they should be reminded that board meetings are to get the work of the organization done and that can't be accomplished with individuals who do not support the goals of the organization.

If opponents do show up at a board meeting, they should simply be asked to leave. Board meetings are not public and opponents have no right to be in attendance. Don't play games here. Their goal is not to participate with the group in furthering its goals. It is disruption. You should think through, in advance, what you will do if this happens. Some groups will feel comfortable telling disrupters that if they don't leave, the authorities will be called. If that is your plan, and the disrupters refuse to leave, then follow through. Other groups will feel less comfortable with this option. For example, your meeting might include undocumented people who fear arrest, or there might be a risk of escalation if police show



up. Perhaps you have a person trained in de-escalating the situation (although not having such a person should NEVER be a reason to postpone meeting to further the work of your organization). The point is, have a plan for dealing with a disruption that will work for your community that may or may not involve law enforcement, and then follow it.

While in-person meetings are best to form a group identity, especially as your group gets under way, from time to time you'll want to have virtual meetings via Zoom, especially for discussing specific tasks or committee meetings (like your group creating bylaws). Make sure you have your security settings in place—require passwords and registration with unique links for your Zoom meeting. (Good resources are <https://explore.zoom.us/docs/doc/Securing%20Your%20Zoom%20Meetings.pdf> and <https://blog.zoom.us/7-tips-to-help-secure-your-webinars/>.) SEE ALSO the section of this manual about online security.

Opponents at community meetings: These meetings are different because they are public. It is not wise to ask opponents to leave public meetings unless they are engaging in some disruptive activity, such as not allowing the speaker to make a presentation. If they behave themselves, they should be welcome to stay.

The best way to deal with their presence is to make sure that rules of conduct are reviewed at the beginning of the meeting and posted in the front of the room. Then make sure the rules are strictly followed. If an individual refuses to follow the rules, ask them to leave and be prepared to call the police.

Remember! Freedom of speech does not give anyone the right to disrupt your meeting!

Threats to activists: One of the most insidious things that happens in community-organizing efforts is threats directed toward people who speak their minds (and in some instances, women and people of color may be especially targeted). This is serious business indeed, make no mistake about it. Anytime anyone involved in the group receives a threat, either directly or virtually, several things have to happen. First, the police must be given a full and complete report on the incident. Often these cases are very difficult to investigate, but the police should have a record of it. Equally important is letting the community at-large know that the threat has occurred and that the police have been informed (although you may not want to release the name of the person threatened). Being public about the threat is important

for two reasons. First, the community is often in denial about the activities of these groups and this kind of revelation forces recognition that things are happening in the community. Second, the perpetrators are often quite disturbed to see in the press that the police have been notified.

Anyone in a group who is receiving or has received threats has to be supported by the group. People should check in with the person to see how things are going. Individuals may want to swing by the person's house at night just to make sure everything looks alright. (Let them know that you will be doing this. Then don't stop, just drive by.)

The person who is the target of the threat can also do some things. If the threat was left on a home phone answering machine or voicemail on their cell phone, they should save the recording for the police and should also let neighbors know that they should call the police if they see or hear anything suspicious. If the threat is in the mail, put the letter—and the envelope—in a plastic bag and save them for the police. And if it is via email or social media, save it and/or take a screen shot.

Keep in mind that it is very rare that the people making threats actually take any action. Their purpose is to frighten people into silence. When that doesn't happen very often the threats stop.

Research

Later in this manual there is much more information about how to research hateful groups in your [community](#). But as you are starting out, here are some general points and principles. First, to do effective community work to counter hate-promoting groups, research is critical. These groups are a complex social phenomenon. Their leadership is usually sophisticated in masking their full agenda.

One of the first things for local organizers to do is to gather information about these groups from national and regional organizations.

The groups include:

- Anti-Defamation League (ADL), <https://www.adl.org/>
- Political Research Associates (PRA), <https://politicalresearch.org/>
- Montana Human Rights Network (MHRN), <https://mhrn.org/>
- Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), <https://www.splcenter.org/>
- Western States Center (WSC), <https://www.westernstatescenter.org/>

State agencies, Jewish organizations, civil-rights groups, labor organizations, and some environmental groups may also have pertinent information.

The community group should spend some time assessing the activities that have occurred locally. Start with the local papers and online resources. Review the papers for stories about far-right or other similar groups. See if a specific reporter seems to be on the story; if so, call them and talk about it. Also search online to see if local far-right groups are organizing in your area.

When these groups do advertise meetings, some advanced researchers might consider going in person and reporting back—although a security assessment **MUST** be made first, and this step only taken after due deliberation and preparation. This means you should first have a good sense of the hate group from the online and other research you have done (do they seem eager to engage in violence, do they regularly dox opponents, etc.). We advise anyone thinking about sending someone to monitor a hate group meeting to do so with the utmost caution, and to consult with state or national organizations that do this type of work **BEFOREHAND**, and to think through the safest way to monitor in person. If you decide to send the volunteer, that person should focus on factual information rather than impressions, such as getting a good count of the people in attendance and where did people come from (often learned by looking at the license plates on cars in the parking lot). If the volunteer feels safe enough to go inside, they should take note of what

was said, and if literature is being sold, they should buy it. If there is information about joining mailing lists or subscribing to the group's email list and/or social media accounts, they should gather it (and then later your group should discuss whether it wants to monitor these online accounts, and if so, who should subscribe).

It can't be overemphasized: Credible research is an essential component of the organizing effort. Spend some time on it and make sure it's done right (see more details in the section on opposition [research](#)).

Preliminary thoughts about managing the media, working with journalists

A fuller nuts and bolts [section](#) about media work appears later in this manual, but when you're starting out, here are some important points.

One of the things that some far-right organizations have done in some communities is very effectively managing the media. They have a clear understanding of their message and they engage in behavior that attracts media attention. It is important to understand that these groups seek a certain type of media exposure. They want, and often receive, uncritical exposure. The coverage they seek focuses on what they have to say—without challenge. They really do not want media coverage that examines their core beliefs, their violent rhetoric, or their connections to other far-right movements. This kind of coverage inhibits their ability to recruit and diminishes their support in the community and they know it. Community groups start at a significant disadvantage in attracting media attention because they aren't as outrageous as these hate-animated activists. It doesn't do any good to bemoan this fact; accept it and incorporate it in developing strategy. There are a number of things that will help gain media exposure for a community group countering hate. There are many things a community group can do to attract critical media attention. These are the preliminary goals for your group to consider.

Become experts: Most reporters simply don't have time to do much research on a story.³ The smaller the community, the more true this is. Reporters will often be struggling to put together a story on a tight deadline. A community group can often step in with information and analysis that brings it all together. (Getting something wrong even once does tremendous damage to a group's credibility with the media. Also be aware that being too strident or presenting too much information too fast can create the appearance of paranoia. Remember, some in the media are very low on the learning curve when it comes to the radical right.)

Be the "other side": Most reporters try to achieve "balance" in their stories. This often means that the media see things only in terms of two disagreeing sides. This bipolar approach to reporting is a reality of media handling of controversial issues. But if the media know that a group is there, and that it is opposed to hate group- and far-right activity, they will often call for comment when the hate groups act.

Develop personal relationships: Knowing the reporters who cover hate group stories will help in getting out information. To the extent that a personal rapport can be developed, it will be helpful in getting coverage.

Be critical: Don't be afraid to criticize the media. The media respond to criticism. When they foul up they need to hear about it. But when challenging media about their coverage, it is important to be specific and accurate, and always be respectful. While you're critiquing bad coverage, you can offer reporters ideas for how to be better, such as offering them a copy of the Montana Human Rights Network's guide for reporters, <https://mhrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/MHRNMediaGuideExtremismFinal.pdf>.

Consider: The medium has a lot to do with the message. A sound bite on TV forces more focus than a long interview in a magazine. Spend some time thinking about that.

3. An excellent tool to help you understand how journalists *ought* to write about hate and hate groups is the Bard Center for the Study of Hate's 2021 webinar with veteran reporter Bill Morlin (a month before he died unexpectedly), available here, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJEe561Z-T8I&t=117s>.

Generally it is very important to get the primary theme right up front. In [writing](#) press releases it should be in the first paragraph. Talking informally with a TV reporter before the cameras roll often allows an opportunity to “direct” the interview somewhat.

Some tips for press releases:

- Put your point up front.
- Write so it can be edited from the end.
- Use a lot of short quotes.
- Use “snappy” language.

Some tips for TV:

- Smile.
- Stop talking when you have made your point; wait for the next question.
- If the interview isn’t aired live, stop and answer the same question again if you make a mistake.

People often make far too much of media work because it’s glitzy and exciting, but when all is said and done, community-group activity countering hate groups is news and the media will cover it. When they do, community members do just fine. The group is far better off with a spokesperson who stumbles a bit than they are avoiding the media because they don’t have anyone who they think is good enough to handle it.

Framing the Issues

Of course, the point of all of the above is to get access to the media. Once access is gained it is important to think about the themes the group wants covered and how they are presented. Many hate groups seek to portray themselves as benign community-support entities. They attempt to position themselves in the public eye as the true patriots representing the perspective of “the People” against “them” or, with militia-like groups, against “the Government.”

For example, in dealing with militias there are several ways to cut issues that will damage their credibility while gaining support for a community group.

These include:

- Militias are about violence. Try as they may, militia groups cannot avoid the fact that they run around promoting the use of guns as a political weapon. Everyone knows and understands that. It is a theme that should be reinforced at every opportunity.
- The violence is related to political disagreements. Militias and many other hate groups reject legitimate methods of political activism for guns.
- No matter their claims, militia groups have no constitutional basis. These unregulated and unaccountable bands of armed activists are not the “well-regulated” militia of the Second Amendment, a fact settled in court cases.
- Militias and other far-right groups are antidemocratic. Violence and intimidation are not an acceptable means of resolving our political disagreements.
- They are not credible. The conspiracy theories advanced by those in the far right are frequently so fantastic that they are simply not credible on their face. Go back to research and debunk a few so the reporter can have a ready example. (We understand that the prevalence of conspiracy theories is broader now than decades ago, and that regardless of what is said some people will see only what they already believe. But others will have their minds changed by facts, and the evidence that those who promote hate are distorters.)⁴

4. For some ideas of how to debunk conspiratorial thinking see <https://networkcontagion.us/reports/>. But also see the section of this guide about [disinformation](#).

There are also themes that can be developed from a positive perspective that challenge what these groups have to say. (Likewise, that positive message can counter the agenda of other groups that promote hate—we have examples of these in our “scenarios” [section](#).)

Developing Campaigns

A campaign is a set of planned activities designed to achieve a specified goal over a defined (usually fairly short) period of time. Community groups will often develop campaigns to address specific issues, for example, surrounding militia activity.

Developing a campaign goes like this:

Problem: Militia supporters are aggressive in the community and engaged in some petty criminal activity. Government officials are receiving threats from militia groups. Law enforcement is hesitant to react to militia activity. The local sheriff has said that he agrees with the ideas of militia groups but disagrees with their tactics.

Goal: To create an environment in which law enforcement feels empowered to confront illegal militia activity and which proscribes militia activity.

Themes: Violence and threats are unacceptable. We are a society of law. We are all part of the government and support our elected officials.

Activities:

- Rally for Democracy in the park to be held on the Fourth of July. Invite dignitaries and local officials to make brief statements: governor, attorney general, mayor, etc.
- Full-page endorsement ad in the paper with a statement about democracy with as many signatures as possible (whatever number will be impressive to your local community) to run on the Fourth of July.
- Letter-to-the-editor campaign during the month of June—two letters per week on pro-democratic and anti-hate themes.
- Find a one-sentence slogan that people of goodwill can support, such as (if, for example, a main issue is militia threats against elected officials), “We support our elected officials.” Then make signs and have them displayed in local businesses the last two weeks of June.
- Local petition drive expressing support for local government to be presented at the rally. Goal of whatever number of signatures that will be impressive in your community.
- Radio and TV public-service announcements to run throughout June on themes.
- Local radio and TV talk-show appearances by board members/spokesperson last week of June.

Once the group has established a plan with goals and activities, it is important to delegate tasks to assure that the plan is executed. This is often most effectively done by setting up committees to do specific activities. The committee members can do the planning and execute the activity. This is the group’s opportunity to expand its base of workers and activists. The campaign plan provides tasks that are well defined and have a discrete beginning and end. For example:

Activity: Rally for Democracy in the park to be held on the Fourth of July. Invite dignitaries and local officials to make brief statements.

Tasks: Reserve a park and get a permit; send out invitations to guests; arrange for security; get a public-address system; decorate the area; print up a program; get volunteers for cleanup. If you decide to livestream and/or record the event, make sure the people responsible for this have the requisite skills. There should be a mechanism for

checking to ensure that things are getting done and that people have the help they need to get things completed. This is often done by members of a steering committee or ad hoc committee.

(Planning a campaign is best done by working backward. Take a calendar and mark your target date. Work backward day by day specifying what needs to be done when.)

Warning! Warning! Warning! While this all sounds simple, rest assured that there will be bumps along the way. Plan to be flexible and recognize that some elements of a campaign may have to be dropped because they just aren't getting done or changed because they're not working as planned.

Other Activities: There are a host of activities that a group may want to engage in. Whether lobbying for some specific item with local government or raising public awareness in a community event, the power of citizens coming together is enhanced by the community's recognition that the group is a credible force and accomplishes what it sets out to do. Most people find that the more a group does, the more recognized it is by the community leaders, and the easier it is to maintain the organization.

Conclusion

Many of today's far-right hate groups are a chilling echo of groups like the Silver Shirts and the Christian Front that were active in the 1930s. And before the 1930s, following the Civil War, hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan flourished. Then, as now, such groups preyed on people using bizarre conspiracy theories and sometimes antigovernment and/or antidemocratic sentiment (as we saw during the Capitol Insurrection). Then, as now, violent terrorist acts were planned by these groups as they sought to change the political character of America. We now struggle with these groups just as preceding generations have.

There is a tendency to view extremist activity as a law-enforcement issue. But the law addresses the symptoms and ignores the cure. Law-enforcement agencies confront the illegal acts committed by extremist groups and their members. Throughout history, law-enforcement action has sometimes unintentionally increased public support for these groups by creating martyrs. The law does not, and should not, deal with the ideology that drives these groups.

The lesson that emerges from history is that these groups are hindered more by the attitudes of the community than they are by laws. Fear and silence allow hate groups to flourish. People coming together, organizing and speaking out—saying “Not in my town!”—make the extremists' tasks that much more difficult.



ONLINE VERSUS IN-PERSON ORGANIZING

Online and in-person organizing during and in the aftermath of the Covid pandemic

This pandemic created new challenges, even for established anti-hate groups. For those involved in community organizing, the big question was not only how to respond to the critical and immediate health needs of families, friends, and community members as they navigated the effects of the spread of COVID-19, but also deciding how to push forward existing campaigns, movements, and tactical planning. While groups were accustomed to and perhaps more comfortable with convening meetings in person, the first 6-12 months of the pandemic essentially forced many to work and organize from home, with the challenge of figuring out how to maintain momentum in their work through virtual platforms and engagement. They had to learn new digital technology such as Zoom, Google Meet, or Microsoft Teams; they had to teach and instruct community members in digital literacy, and also help those without stable Wi-Fi gain access to broadband services or hotspots. As we transition into what will likely be a hybrid space of interaction, it's important to consider the advantages and drawbacks of both in-person and online organizing.

Pros of in-person: In-person organizing can be powerful, if done well. For one, it allows you to make and build connections with new or existing community members in dynamic, organic ways, because everyone is coming together in solidarity for a certain issue, event, or policy. Moreover, the more people that show up to a protest, march, sit-in, or town hall, the more impressive and/or intimidating it can be for the targets of the organization or movement. Sometimes the sight of hundreds of people gathered together around an issue, sharing testimony after testimony, is the final push that policy makers need to amend an existing policy or to partner with community leaders in order to draft and promote a new, more equitable series of policies. Also, in-person organizing can be a more accessible or familiar way of mobilizing community members, particularly for members who may not be as tech-savvy.

Cons or things to consider with in-person: Although in-person organizing is accessible, it's not accessible to everyone. When organizing marches, protests, or other kinds of actions, we need to be aware of people who are differently abled and include them in movement and campaigns. Additionally, while having lots of people show up to an action is great and inspiring, it also requires more coordination, safety protocols, and established leadership structures to ensure that all participants are clear on the goals, methods, and intended outcomes for the action. If those leadership structures and protocols are unclear, there's a risk of people taking the action into their own hands and potentially putting members at risk, and/or minimizing the impact of the action. Also, in-person organizing requires that organizers consider potential reprisals or even violence from counterprotestors (and the possibility in some places of police inaction against violence, or even participation in it), which again makes the need for safety and security protocols all the more necessary. Lastly, as noted in the previous section, any in-person action or event should have a clear purpose and goal: the issue, the context, the targets, the asks, the wins. All of these should be considered when deciding how to proceed.

Tips

Pros of Online

Online organizing presents a unique opportunity to reach a larger audience, due to the fact anyone with access to a smart phone, computer, or tablet/iPad and a Wi-Fi connection can access whatever content your organization puts out. Whereas it takes a lot of work—coordination of space, transport, etc.—to host 100 people at an in-person event, online organizing takes away the space limitation and opens up the possibility of convening hundreds of people on a call at the same time. Flyers, petitions, and tactical documents are more readily available for distribution, and instructions on how to move forward can be communicated via meeting minutes or spreadsheets, rather than through word of mouth. Moreover, digital platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet allow for more secure meetings,

since hosts can require passwords for entry into meeting spaces and/or have people first enter a waiting room so that they can be identified before being accepted into the call.⁵ Additionally, organizing through an online platform also allows more time for documents, flyers, and social media posts to be translated into languages that may be represented in the surrounding communities, which provides a more inclusive and welcoming space for people who are impacted by the same issues being addressed by your group, but who may not have the vocabulary in English to advocate for themselves. Lastly, online organizing allows us to target policymakers in a variety of ways, including, but not exclusive to, letter-writing, textbanking, petitions, emails, phone calls, flyering/canvassing, and social media interactions/escalation (i.e., Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok).

Cons of Online

One of the biggest challenges to online organizing is that not everyone has access to consistent Internet or Wi-Fi, nor to technology like smartphones, computers, etc. So while online platforms offer the opportunity for a larger audience, we can't assume that everyone in our group has the means to join us virtually. Moreover, not everyone is tech savvy, so in order for online organizing to be effective we must be sure to train everyone in the basics of platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, etc., so that they can participate in planning meetings, town halls, and actions to the best of their ability. Facilitating online meetings requires a different kind of patience, coordination, and agenda-setting, as you need to factor in the time it takes for members to find the meeting link, access it, and then mute their microphones once they've entered the call. Especially for first-time online organizers, this can be a frustrating transition, as one often needs to pause a discussion or presentation when members are having tech issues. Additionally, it can be much harder to keep energy and motivation high during online organizing calls due to the fatigue and distraction that comes from looking at a screen for a sustained period, so it's important to have icebreakers, energizers, and brief pauses scheduled in the agenda. Therefore, it is important for organizers to be cognizant of these dynamics when creating online meeting agendas.

Data collection can also be a challenge when done through digital means, because community members may not be as apt to fill out online surveys or forms as they would be with a printed copy. And if they're sent one form after the other in quick succession, by multiple organizations, this will also lessen the chance that they'll actually provide their input on issues through this format. Therefore, organizers should try to come up with different methods of acquiring community input, such as through Instagram live videos, GroupMe polls, Google Jamboards, and other interactive activities. And lastly, because we always run the risk of being hacked/infiltrated by outside parties, it is important for organizers to store sensitive information or tactics and strategy documents in secure drives, folders, or outside hard drives, to which only select members within leadership have access.

Organizers who plan on taking actions online should first consider whether this form of organizing will be convenient, tenable, and accessible to the people in their communities, perhaps by conducting community-wide surveys through phone calls, emails, social media, etc.

5. "Zoombombing"—disruption of online meetings—was a problem during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is easy to secure this platform, and there are many resources online showing how to do this, including <https://it.cornell.edu/zoom/zoom-security-features-reduce-odds-zoombombing>

WHAT TO DO NOW THAT YOUR GROUP IS ORGANIZED, ESPECIALLY IN RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT OF HATE

The first steps are:

1. Determine the scale of the incident/threat
2. Set protocols for how to respond
 - a. Who in your group is doing what?
3. Decide how to support community partners or institutions dealing with manifestations of hate

Hate incidents are a traumatic experience for those who experience them, but also for the broader community, especially those who may be part of a particular group that was targeted. While all threats and hate incidents should be taken seriously, it is important to approach each response strategically.

Determining the scale of the incident/threat

Determining the scale of the incident/threat is an extremely important step to take, especially in its immediate aftermath. While all threats and hate incidents should be taken seriously, determining the scale can help you and your group or coalition plan the best course of action to respond. Making a sober assessment of the scale can also help to mitigate feelings of panic or fear in the impacted community. These feelings are natural, and are what the perpetrators want to achieve, so if there is a way to mitigate that, it can direct the power back to the impacted community. For example, swastika-laden hate group flyers found on cars in a parking lot are troubling, but are likely an attention-seeking stunt designed to create media attention in the hope of increasing recruitment to the group and to amplify its message.

With that in mind, here are some questions to consider:

- Was this an isolated incident, or has the individual/group/community been targeted in a similar fashion?
- How specific was the threat; did it include personal information or talk about the individual/group/community in more general terms?
- What is the current political and social climate in regard to the impacted individual/group/community? For example, has an elected official targeted this community recently or has there been a spate of hate incidents involving the same community in your area?
- Did others in your coalition/community receive similar threats or was this something specifically targeting an individual or your organization?

Protocols for how to respond

Your organization, once established, should have a set of basic protocols in place to deploy if a hate incident occurs. Having these in place will limit confusion, and avoid any duplicative and time-wasting community efforts in the immediate aftermath—the time that can be the most critical. Allies and coalition partners should not expect/allow heavy burdens to fall on the individual/group impacted and, while they need to be consulted and kept in the loop, taking any tasks off their plate will likely be welcomed. Within your organization and broader coalition, determine point persons to take the lead in the immediate aftermath of such an incident so that you are prepared to respond quickly.



These include:

- Remember to document the incident/threat if possible, especially if it was a social media post, voicemail, or act of vandalism.
- Determine who will inform other members of the coalition and community.
- Determine, with the victims, who should be informed, such as law enforcement and/or community leadership.
- In many instances, a hate incident will not rise to the level of a hate crime and likely cannot be prosecuted. That being said, making law enforcement and civil rights organizations or hate incident tracking projects (like Stop AAPI Hate, <https://stopaapihate.org/>) aware is encouraged.
- Designate a member of the group or coalition to organize a meeting, virtual or in person, to discuss the incident, what support the victim and broader community needs, and next steps.
- Determine the role you want media to play in your response. It is likely that media will pick up on the incident and it can be important for community spokespersons to set the narrative.
- Anticipate the kinds of support that might be needed and work to figure out where that might come from.
- Include an organizing response.

How to support community partners or institutions dealing with manifestations of hate

Supporting the impacted person or community in the aftermath of a hate incident is hugely important. Not only can it provide moral and emotional support to the victim(s), but it also sends a message to the perpetrators and to the community at large that your coalition is unified and standing against hate. Each situation is different, but there are many different ways groups can show support in addition to meeting with the impacted community and helping them plan out next steps.

These include:

- Start a letter- or email-writing campaign to show support for those impacted by the incident. This can be very personal and shows that the community has their back.
- Utilize social media to show your support. One option could be to select a hashtag and have community members use it with messages of support.
- Leverage media when possible. Media will be looking for spokespersons to show support after a hate incident. Make sure your talking points are in line with the message that leadership of the impacted community wants to get across.
- Holding an in-person or virtual community solidarity event could be another powerful gesture of support.
- Encourage elected officials to speak out to condemn the hateful act and to underscore that everyone is part of the community, and that an attack on any of us is an attack on all of us.
- Offer assistance in seeking out the professional help the community and victim need at this time. Do they need security training? A temporary residence relocation or mental health counseling/guidance? Offer to help them get the assistance they may need.
- Organize a food drive, meal train, or other fundraiser for the impacted community or organization. Oftentimes, members of the public are looking to help in any way they can, and food drives/meal chains or other fundraisers are easy to organize and can lead to a broader response from the community outside of your coalition.
- Are there policy changes (such as enacting hate crime laws or encouraging local police to collect data better or improve their hate crime protocols) that you might organize around?



MESSAGING: RESPONDING TO MESSAGES OF HATE, BIGOTRY, AND EXCLUSION

The fantasy of messaging, driven by a century of advertising and marketing—both commercial and political—is that if you can somehow say something in just the right way, you will be able to sell your product, convince your opponents, change people’s minds. Decades of research have demonstrated this to be a false hope. Particularly when it comes to issues connected to our most deeply held values—for example, ideas about justice, personal liberty, responsibility to one another, loyalty, and belonging—most people judge (or prejudge) based on deep habits of allegiance to both people and a way of looking at the world. This does not mean, however, that there are not better and worse ways to talk or write, Tweet, or TikTok about an issue, idea, or event.

People are complicated and made up of conflicting possibilities. Any one of us can be both judgmental and forgiving, greedy and generous, welcoming and territorial. Much of the appearance of extreme partisanship, of a country divided into camps of “us” and “them,”⁶ is generated by the kinds of arguments that are being made, taught, and amplified. While people may lean one direction or another, most are not committed ideologues. On the one hand, they may hold opinions that defy easy classification into party affiliation, even when both elections and most types of polling force them to make either/or choices.

So where do we start with messaging about claims, actions, and policies that are bigoted, exclusionary, or even violent? What follows are some basic guidelines for responding to messages that promote exclusion, resentment, and anxiety directed at groups of people—what can be called the politics of hate. What follows is not comprehensive, but will provide important guidelines for those faced with the challenge of responding to hate in ways that build community, strengthen democracy, and promote justice. These guidelines are organized around a few broad principals.

Do No Harm

The first, and arguably the most important, principle is to take care that your messaging doesn’t make things worse. This does not mean that a community should avoid taking a strong, clear, and hopefully united position in opposition to bigotry, intimidation, or political violence. Rather, there are several traps that organizers for justice and inclusion can fall into that can undermine effective responses.

One of the easiest traps to fall into is tit-for-tat escalation. So much of our political language is saturated with images of war and militarism, of “war rooms” and “front lines,” of “rallying the troops” and being “in the trenches.” This is the mainstream of our politics, and it makes it difficult to not think of opponents as enemies. It is even harder when we are confronted with bigoted rhetoric that casts whole groups of people, members of our communities, as parasites, traitors, infiltrators, and at times as literal devils. Yet when we imagine a group of people as enemies, we in effect give ourselves permission to treat them as both interchangeable and interchangeably dangerous. It’s saying: not just this person but all who are somehow like them are a threat to me and mine. This is very different than accusing someone of a crime. An accused, even an accused murderer, is not only supposed to be afforded due process of law—their friends and family, much less those of the same race, ethnicity, or religion, are not supposed to be held accountable. Given the history of treating entire groups as suspect—Japanese Americans during World War II, Muslims following the 9/11 attacks, Black folk by some in law enforcement—we do not always live up to these

6. For a brief hate studies-based review of the human capacity to see “us” and “them,” see this chapter from *The Conflict over The Conflict: The Israel/Palestine Campus Debate* (2020), <http://kennethsstern.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/thinking-about-thinking.pdf>.

ideals. For purposes of countering messages of bigotry, exclusion, intimidation, and violence, however, there is no more important starting point than to stay focused on consequences, actions, and ideas.

In simple messaging terms, here are some guidelines for avoiding harm (Don'ts) and alternative framing for responding to and preparing communities to reject bigotry, intimidation, and exclusion (Dos).

- Don't lump every message, action, or person engaged in bigoted politics into the same category. Most often this takes the form of calling them "Nazis." Unless they are actual swastika-wearing, genocide-promoting admirers of Hitler, this amounts to a political slur and anyone who doesn't already agree with you will be alienated. Even if they are actual neo-Nazis—e.g., members of the National Alliance or National Socialist Network—it's almost always better to focus on their published beliefs than to confuse labels with arguments. This applies to any label ("terrorist," "fascist," "extremist," and so on) used as a slur or a shortcut to avoid being specific.
- Do be specific. Name specific groups, focusing on leaders. Reference their own published materials along with expert opinion when referencing their beliefs and their actions. Instead of "the Proud Boys are racists who promote violence," use something like "Proud Boys describe themselves as 'Western chauvinists, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/who-are-proud-boys-11601485755> and in 2020 members of the organization were involved in several violent confrontations, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/08/15/proud-boys-blm-counter-protesters-police-clash-fights/5592437002/> with racial justice protestors."
- Do focus on actions and consequences. "Several members of the Boogaloo faction were arrested with Molotov cocktails, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/all/three-men-connected-boogaloo-movement-tried-provoke-violence-protests-feds-n1224231> at racial justice protests." The Boogaloo is an armed faction that believes another civil war, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sethcohen/2020/06/16/civil-war-20-the-boogaloo-movement-is-a-wake-up-call-for-america/?sh=4088732e71ab> in the United States is inevitable.
- Do provide citations for any claims you make. Where possible use citations from mainstream or scholarly sources. These types of references underscore the credibility of your claims.
- Don't treat bigotry, or even bigoted violence, as irrational, incomprehensible, or pathological. Often in the wake of a violent attack such as those perpetrated against members of the Tree of Life Synagogue in October 2018 or the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in June 2015, the immediate response is to speak of "senseless violence" and from there to speculate about the mental health of the perpetrator. The need to process and to try to explain is understandable, but the "senseless" label underestimates the political motivation of these attacks and alleging the mental illness of a perpetrator only serves to stigmatize those with mental health challenges—the vast majority of whom are not involved in acts of political violence.
- Do respond to violence with statements and acts of solidarity, being mindful of and sensitive to requests of survivors and the communities they come from.
- Don't amplify the messaging of a perpetrator by naming them or quoting from a manifesto on social media or in the press. And don't exaggerate the scale of the threat.
- Do indicate factually established links between organizations or established sets of ideas. "The alleged perpetrator does not seem to have been a formal member of any known group, but his social media repeats false claims that 'globalists elites' are 'bringing in immigrants' to destroy the white race, a classic antisemitic trope and a central component of the Great Replacement myth closely associated with white nationalism."

Know Who You Are Trying to Reach and Why

"Know your audience" is standard advice to any speaker or writer. But when it comes to responding to political violence, bigoted rhetoric, or antidemocracy policies, there might be several audiences and clarifying why you want to reach each of them must shape your message. The "why" might be clear under some circumstances, for example

when a member of an openly racist organization or supporter of anti-Muslim or antisemitic conspiracy theories is running for office or a ballot measure that attacks the rights of women or LGBTQ folk is up for a vote. Often, however, communities face more diffuse actions. A faction of the contemporary Ku Klux Klan is holding a rally. Members of a local militia are protesting with military-style weapons and gear at a state capitol or adjacent to a racial justice event. Someone is posting to a neighborhood-specific online bulletin board that mask requirements during a pandemic are part of a plot to take away personal freedoms.

At least since the Civil Rights era, a very common rhetorical response has been to label racist, misogynist, and conspiracist views as “fringe” or part of a marginal political “extreme.” In more recent times, tens of millions of Americans have self-reported beliefs that the 2020 presidential election was stolen, that COVID-19 vaccinations are more dangerous than the disease, and that there is a plot in place to “replace” the long-dominant white, Christian population with Latinx and Muslim immigrants. These views are not the majority, but the numbers and their support in major media outlets such as Fox News—and even more so by Newsmax and One America News Network—makes it impossible to dismiss them in this way. Moreover, with the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States, racist and anti-immigrant views, misogyny, and calls for pro-regime political violence were normalized from the highest office in the land. If there ever was a time when a dismissal of bigoted views and the acts and policies that flow from them was a useful rhetorical strategy, that time has passed.

When we say, “know your audience” and know “why” you are trying to reach them, we mean that as advocates against hate and for justice, democracy, and inclusion, we need to take the time to understand how various arguments play out at the local level. This is best done through conversation and engagement. This does not mean simply adopting some compromise between those who advocate bigoted conspiracy theories and those who believe in inclusive democracy. It means that local concerns may be reflected in ways that do not match national stereotypes or preoccupations.

Below are some guidelines—again, Dos and Don’ts—for navigating the political waters of opposing the politics of bigotry.

- Don’t expect there to be a “magic bullet” in the form of an association or bigoted quote that will automatically disqualify a particular politician, group, or policy. For example, knowing a public official is a supporter of the paramilitary organizing group the Oath Keepers, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oath_Keepers might not be received as damning in regions where opposition to gun control regulations is a hot button issue. Even openly racist or sexist statements might not be enough to counter a politician or an organizing effort. To an extent these sorts of statement have been normalized in recent years and though pro-justice and democracy organizers will want to do everything they can to reverse this, they should not assume that finding such statements or affiliations will have the desired effect.
- Do find out about the groups and individuals who are making interventions grounded in bigotry and exclusion in your community. Just because there is unlikely to be any one statement or affiliation that guarantees victory, accurate information can help you speak to the likely consequences.
- Don’t rely on jargon—academic or otherwise—to get your message across. Even terms like “white nationalist” and “nativist” that are common in venues like the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* may communicate very little to those not immersed in the liberal bubble.
- Do use language that features consequences. Labels are usually less powerful in moving people toward you—or at least increasing skepticism of baseless claims—than a clear discussion of goals or consequences. Calling someone an “Oath Keeper” is far more obscure than saying they called for mass armed protest at a session of the state legislature. Calling them a white nationalist isn’t going to have the same impact as saying they have argued the United States must maintain a white supermajority even if it means disenfranchising or even expelling most people of color.
- Don’t rely only on the venues and platforms that are most familiar to you. If your audience is people in their 20s and 30s who report getting most of their information via YouTube or Reddit, your outreach can’t stop at the op-ed page of the local paper. This doesn’t mean you should ignore legacy media, but in identifying your audience you need to ask: how can I reach these people? This, then, must be connected to the “why question”—which is usually about what you want them to do.

- Do use direct, one-to-one outreach whenever possible. This is equally true for peer-outreach situations—students reaching out to students, clergy to clergy, or business leader to business leader, and veteran to veteran—for conversations with friends and family, and for reaching political leaders, editors, and influencers.
- Don't fail to do your homework. One-to-one outreach, especially over time, is almost always the most effective way to move people toward anti-hate, pro-justice, pro-democracy politics—or at least to put some distance between them and the politics of hate, bigotry, and exclusion. There are, however, no shortcuts. Most people are not experts and should spend time learning how to talk about what they care about and why they are having the conversation without dismissing the concerns of others (a better investment of time than learning about all the intricacies of QAnon or contemporary white nationalism).
- Do consider the messenger. Peers often do the most effective outreach, particularly when they can get training in effective messaging and what to avoid, and practice engaging with empathy.
- Don't rely on negative messaging. It's fine to denounce acts of political violence, but the emphasis should be on inclusion, outreach, and solidarity. If an act or statement is racist, say so—but beyond putting it in a category, speak to the consequences or potential consequences. A leader who demonizes a group of people is all too likely to inspire fantasies, and sometimes acts, of violence. A political campaign that focuses on “law and order” in a part of town that “just happens to be majority Black” historically leads to more aggressive policing and distracts from economic, healthcare, and educational issues.
- Don't assume that there is only one value in play, or that others prioritize the values in play in the same way you do. Efforts to crack down on “hate speech” often run into righteous claims about “free speech.” Public safety runs up against gun rights. Environmental regulations run up against rights of property. Beware of statements like, “everyone agrees”—they almost never apply in any meaningful way.
- Do clarify how you understand your own values as they relate to issues and actions and find out, to the extent possible, what motivates those who you are trying to reach. Look for where there are values in common—though keep the needs of the most vulnerable in mind (more on this below). Many people do believe in both a right to self-defense and some limits to where and when firearms can be carried. The complaints of authoritarians—who on the one hand would deny the free speech rights of their opponents if they had the power to do so, and on the other hand complain they are being denied their rights—should be viewed with skepticism. Answering calls for debate from those who have been shown to routinely make up “facts” or engage in intimidation tactics is counterproductive. There are, however, situations where argument, even heated argument, is necessary to clarify values and priorities.
- Do know what you want people to do. It may be as clear and limited as attend a rally or vote against a specific ballot measure. But in the longer term, the ask is often that they become informal peer educators, willing to learn and share what they have learned with others in settings where this is appropriate.

Think about the Most Vulnerable

Often disagreements about how to respond to an incident of political violence, the use of armed intimidation, or the spread of bigoted claims happen between people who are not part of the community or communities most directly threatened. Men argue about policies and practices that most directly impact women; cis-gender and straight people argue about how best to talk about issues that most affect transgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer people; white people debate what should be done “about” racism. On the one hand, racism, sexism, heterosexism, and we can add ableism, impact everyone. On the other hand, they do not impact everyone equally. This has given rise to the slogan that became prominent in the 1990s disability rights movement—“nothing about us, without us.” The intent is clear: those most affected should lead the way in formulating responses.

The goal may be laudable—but it can also lead to paralysis. The slogan was never meant to prevent, for example, white people from responding to organized white supremacists or Christians from responding to religious antisemitism (in fact, some have argued that antisemitism is a problem not of Jews, but of non-Jews). Moreover, since people of color, women, LGBTQ people, Jews, Muslims, and the people with disabilities are people, they will not always agree with each other. Most will denounce violence or explicit bigotry directed against their community, but even then, justifiable fear



may limit open statements. When it comes to messaging intended to counter political violence, bigotry, and exclusion, organizers who are not part of the most directly impacted community should start by asking a variety of leaders what they are calling for—but also realize that, for example, Black organizers working for police accountability may not be prioritizing paramilitaries. Or they might. The first step is to approach with humility. Ask what you can do—but don't come empty handed. Be ready to offer something—organizing support in other communities, resources, coalition building, outreach to members. And remember, over the long haul, it is important to build genuine relationships with the diverse groups in your community, all of whom have a stake in combating hate and preserving democracy.

Most crucially, when we move to organize for justice, democracy, and inclusion, and in opposition to bigotry, intimidation, and political violence—the politics of hate—we must be willing to act with transparency. Compromises and backroom deals may be expedient, but they circumvent the very issues that are often being contested, undermine real democracy, and generate justified mistrust.

Here are a few guidelines:

- Don't tokenize. This includes including a few members of the most impacted communities in your organizing or using the words of a single organizer or group as a point of reference.
- Do consult with a variety of groups and leaders, review their statements and calls to action, and consider the recent history of organizing in the most affected communities. Where possible, it's always best to reach out to local chapters or independent local organizations as well as know what the national community groups are saying and calling for.
- Do not take it upon yourself to be a self-appointed negotiator between impacted communities and leaders or organizations advocating bigoted policies or practices. Remember that compromise is a tactic, not a value in itself. It is not the place of allies to insist that compromise is the only way.
- Do organize within your own communities. Train people to carry the message of justice and democracy and to oppose hate, bigotry, and exclusion—understanding that they are speaking for themselves and their values, not on behalf of or for the usual targets of hate.

TRANSPARENCY

NOW



DISINFORMATION, MISINFORMATION, AND DEALING WITH TROLLS

Following the 2016 general election, media were flooded with stories about “Russian disinformation” and “election interference.” There were stories about “troll farms” financed by the Russian Internet Research Agency, where people were paid to pose as US citizens and post messages intended to generate strife, often along racial or “culture war” lines. What, if any, impact this had on election results remains unclear—but it became a kind of case in point for the use of disinformation in the internet age.

Disinformation is a tactic used by intelligence agencies to trick their rivals in other countries into doing or not doing something. For example, agency X might intentionally leak plans to concentrate military forces at a particular place on the border, hoping that their rivals in agency Y will intercept the message and think it is real. This, in turn, might lead to agency Y advising their associated military to preemptively move troops to counter—which might be the intention of agency X. Or, agency Y, knowing that their rivals in agency X will be trying to trick them—and because they don’t want to lose the confidence of government and military leaders—may sit on this intelligence, suspecting it is disinformation. The layers of trick and counter-trick are the stuff of “trade craft” and spy novels—but are all too real.

By analogy, disinformation can also be used by small groups or individuals—anyone who has rivals whom they want to disadvantage and is not concerned by the morality of lying or causing harm or potential blowback. Tom works in an office and is up for a promotion. His major competition for the position is Mary. He sends an email, spoofed to look like it came from scheduling, indicating that an important meeting has been moved an hour later. He hopes she will show up late. She is the victim of disinformation.

But what if Mary talks to another employee, Kevin, who is both slightly disorganized and trusts Mary, knowing her to be reliable. She tells him the meeting is postponed until later. She has no intention of tricking Kevin and has no reason to doubt the scheduling email. She was intentionally tricked by Tom; she has no intent to trick Kevin. She has spread misinformation. Not all situations, however, are so clear. In July 2020, for instance, a dire warning started appearing on social media, shared by many in the racial justice movement. The warning indicated that a prominent Black civil rights organization had received credible information that white supremacist groups were holding initiation rituals that required new members to target Black men and boys for assassination—and that it would happen over the following weekend. This was widely shared on the most popular platforms. The origins remain obscure, but it was distributed in good faith—and kept reappearing over the next few months, long after the supposed source had not only disavowed having anything to do with it, but even posted a disclaimer on their website.

Most people didn’t bother to check.

Was the original poster a racist organizer intent on sowing fear for political reasons—and thus engaged in a disinformation campaign? Or were they a so-called troll—someone stirring up trouble for the fun of it, what has been called “the lulz” in the hacker subculture? The posts and shares provoked outraged, fearful, and no doubt traumatized reactions, and precious movement resources had to be used to debunk the claim. It is worth noting that, whatever the original intention (harm to the movement for racial justice and the Black community, sadistic trolling, or even misunderstanding), the harm was mostly done by people acting in good faith, forwarding a warning that seemed important and that supposedly had its origins with a well-respected organization.

In the mix of disinformation and misinformation, shaping how they are received, are conspiracy theories. A conspiracy theory draws on common stereotypes, entrenched bigotries, and dualistic thinking, and an understandable desire to simplify causality, treating a nameable group of people—for example, liberals, globalists, socialists, coastal elites, the Democratic Party, and most historically and prototypically Jews—as conscious masterminds behind various plots of sabotage and destruction. The white nationalist conspiracy theory referred to as the “Great Replacement” holds that

some group of political and economic elites—often coded as Jews—are using immigration as a tool to destroy white political dominance, white culture, and for some—white people themselves. (This is not a new antisemitic canard—as noted above, antisemitism charges Jews with conspiring to harm non-Jews, and gives an explanation for what goes “wrong in the world.” So while the “Great Replacement” is a new term, white supremacists have long charged Jews with a plot to harm white people through support of affirmative action, immigration, etc.)

In 2017, QAnon emerged as a kind of container for holding various conspiratorial ideas. Democratic politicians and Hollywood personalities were, these adherents claimed, part of a satanic cult that promoted child sexual abuse and cannibalism. Donald Trump was a kind of messianic figure fighting against an entrenched “Deep State” that was protecting the satanists. During the pandemic QAnon believers started to promote COVID-19 myths. Because QAnon incorporates multiple conspiracy theories and builds through the game-like efforts of online influencers and impresarios who offer their views on what Q is really all about, it is hard to measure support. One poll shows about 15% of Americans supported QAnon in March 2021, another indicated only about 4% of registered voters supported it. The exact numbers, however, are less important for our purposes here than understanding that conspiracist beliefs reach millions of people every day, both through social media and in echoes on platforms like Fox News, One America News Network, and Newsmax. The conspiracist ideas become part of the information ecosystem, shaping how information is received, shared, repeated, and transformed. Healthy skepticism about, for example, the altruistic motives of a pharmaceutical company, combined with the sordid and racist history of medical experimentation, can lead to resistance to vaccination. The obvious counterargument—that the rich and powerful are lining up to take the COVID-19 vaccine, or that there is a strong consensus in the scientific community that it is safe and effective—are countered with implausible claims grounded in conspiracy theory: The rich taking the vaccine are faking it. The scientists are (all) owned by big pharma. The government is forcing us to be vaccinated to inculcate habits of absolute obedience. Such claims are shared and forwarded thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of times. People talk about “doing their own research,” when they obviously don’t mean they’ve conducted their own controlled clinical trials. They mean they’ve looked for the opinion of other skeptics online and concluded the large number of anti-vaccine opinions can’t possibly be implausible. And therefore, the scientific consensus and all evidence to the contrary must be fabricated as part of some conspiracy.

It is very important to understand that countering disinformation—mostly by discouraging its more-or-less innocent spread—and defusing the impact of conspiracy theories is not about changing the minds of the convinced. It’s about honoring the skepticism and curiosity of people who are or might be attracted to one or another piece of misinformation or this or that conspiracy claim. It’s about inculcating good information habits and good communication practice. Below are some suggestions for decreasing the vulnerability of groups and communities confronting bigoted, exclusionary, and political violent movements and ideas.

Five Ways to Protect Yourself and Your Communities from Misinformation

1. Hold regular trainings for those active in justice and democracy work. These should specifically address disinformation, misinformation, trolling, conspiracy theories, and how to respond to them.
2. Develop a community-specific prevention strategy that identifies disinformation, misinformation, and elements of conspiracy theories and provides clear, concise countermessaging. It is almost always more effective to communicate that disinformation is likely—such as during a contentious ballot measure campaign—than to try to debunk specific claims that may morph and change under pressure.
3. Create a local or regional hub for “rumor control”—a kind of information hotline where people can go to double check before circulating warnings and reports of outrage and fear-generating incidents. This does not have to be elaborate—just an organizational email monitored by a few people who know where to turn for answers.
4. Train and encourage people to act as democracy defenders not by responding to internet trolls directly or trying to debunk conspiracy theories on their own. Rather prepare them to talk to their peers, their friends, and their families while respecting their concerns, which are often grounded in real issues. If a QAnon supporter is posting in a neighborhood social media group about satanic pedophiles, rather than debate with them, point out that the



content is off topic—and then be prepared to talk to your neighbors about the harm such claims do to community trust.

5. Encourage a conscious “slow down” in responding to outrageous claims. The first instinct is often to explain or express outrage. People using disinformation make their claims to be fact resistant. Trolls intend to provoke outrage. Don’t play into their game.

Some Resources on Disinformation

Disinformation is a vast topic with lots of resources directed to professionals, scholars, and the public. Here is a short list of some you might find helpful.

- Fake News (and How to Fight It), Learning Resources: Miami Dade College, <https://libraryguides.mdc.edu/fakenews>
- Fighting Fake News: Online Resources, University of Exeter LibGuides, <https://libguides.exeter.ac.uk/fakenewschallenge>
- On Rumors: How Falsehoods Spread, Why We Believe Them, What Can Be Done, by Cass Sunstein (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux), 2009
- The Oxygen of Amplification: Better Practices for Reporting on Extremists, Antagonists, and Manipulators, Data & Society, May 22, 2018, <https://datasociety.net/library/oxygen-of-amplification/>
- Reliable Information Resources: Fighting Misinformation—Tips & Tools, Monmouth University, <https://guides.monmouth.edu/Coronavirus/TipsTools>



COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Introduction

Working with the media is important when it comes to combating hate. When you're trying to educate the community about the harm that hate groups are doing in your area, the media can play an essential role in distributing that information.

The media can also:

- Amplify your messages and framing about current issues and policies
- Help drive turnout to events you're organizing
- Contribute to holding public institutions and officials accountable

An example of the last bullet point occurred in Montana in 2021. The Montana Human Rights Network (MHRN) found the state's Department of Justice promoting a "continuing education for law enforcement" event featuring militia icon Richard Mack, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Mack. When MHRN's allies at the state agency weren't able to get the event cancelled, the Network took the story to a local reporter. The ensuing media coverage, <https://dailyinterlake.com/news/2021/jun/26/anti-government-icon-draws-concern-during-kalispel/>, helped get the workshop cancelled.

Communities often try to trick themselves into thinking that, if they ignore hateful activities, the hate will go away. People supporting this line of thinking often believe that they should not respond to hate incidents, because that gives hateful extremists the attention and media coverage they want.

Ignoring hate never works. When white supremacist and other hate groups are active in communities, the media will cover it, and individual extremists may be the only people who are interviewed. It is true that hateful extremists want media attention. However, they only want it when they control it. In other words, they want to use coded language that downplays their hateful beliefs in a space where these sanitized remarks won't be challenged. They'll trot out talking points about "loving my European-American heritage" and asking, "What's wrong with loving my people?" while failing to mention that these are standard white supremacist talking points. Their goal is to get these positive sounding messages printed or broadcast that frame themselves in the best possible light.

There are two reasons that we need to engage the media when hate comes to town. First, we need to provide the full and accurate picture of these far-right hate groups. Unless we highlight and explain what they really believe and their dangerous vision for our communities, their agenda will be normalized, and they will radicalize more people to their cause. Second, we need to provide a message of hope by talking about the values the community actually holds. Telling the story of local people coming together to create a space for acceptance and support for each other is powerful and necessary during these times.

In other words, ignoring the presence of hate groups in your community will not work. It gives them free advertising and the problems they create will fester and appear again, often escalating over time. One strategy to push back against them is making sure that media coverage is accurate. The far right—militias, groups like the Oath Keepers, and the like—will generate coverage by the media, and we have to make sure it contains plenty of context and doesn't let them dictate the terms. Think of it like this: Every day is a good day to speak out against organized hate. Engaging with the media is a key to making that happen.

Understanding the media

Many of the tips for working with the media are the same whether you're talking about newspapers, radio, TV, or online outlets. We'll cover those in this section and address print versus broadcast outlets more in the next sections for more specialized tips.

Whether you're reacting to hate group activity or promoting proactive events, it's always a good idea to write up a document you can release to the media. That can be a press release, <https://www.contentgrip.com/how-to-write-a-press-release-examples/>, as discussed [above](#), but also an event notice, public statement about an incident, etc., depending on the situation. Even a short statement speaking up for the values your community holds dear is helpful. You don't have to have all of the facts about the situation in order to make a statement. A few sentences that reject hate and offer people hope and courage will help provide a positive narrative during a difficult time.⁷

There are both external and internal reasons to publish a statement or press release. First, this gives reporters a document from which they can pull information and quotes for their coverage. Second, it's a good way for you to organize your thoughts and refine your main messages. It also gives you a document to refer back to in order to stay on message if you're interviewed by a reporter.

We recommend sending out the press release or other document as widely as applicable to media outlets. After distributing the document, pick a subset of reporters from the overall list and do follow-up phone calls. While your press release should be concise, you'll want to make your pitch directly to reporters over the phone even shorter and as catchy as possible.

As you do this media work, keep a list of outlets that you frequently use. Spend time updating that list occasionally, as reporters often change employers. Keep an eye out for reporters who regularly cover issues related to the work you're doing and make sure they get added to your list. It's a good idea to cultivate relationships with these journalists. This includes both praising them when they do a good job and being critical when they fall short. Covering extremism is a tough job, and few journalism schools prepare young reporters for the tricks that extremists use to amplify their propaganda. Feel free to share with reporters this quick guide, <https://mhrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/MHRNMediaGuideExtremismFinal.pdf>, that the Montana Human Rights Network developed to help reporters cover extremism better.

If a reporter decides to create a piece based on your press release, they're likely to both pull information from it and want to interview you. Before the interview, take time to think about (or even write down) the main points that you want to convey to the reporter. During the interview, remember that you can always steer the questions asked back to the key points you want to communicate. Repetition of your main points is critical during interviews. Think through how to make the same point in different ways. Try not to go too far into the weeds on the issues you're discussing. Remember that journalists are writing for general audiences.

Also, don't assume reporters have the time to do a bunch of research on their own. You can make their jobs easier, and often get coverage you're happy with, if you can provide additional evidence, information, and documents that they might need.

The goal of working with reporters is to build an honest, responsive relationship so they will consider you a reliable resource and call you right away when something happens. You can foster this connection in many ways, even by pitching story ideas to them that aren't directly related to your work. For instance, staff at the Montana Human Rights Network frequently work with a reporter at the daily newspaper in Helena. After working together on a handful of articles over a six-month period, a Network staffer alerted the reporter to an interesting story about a Chinese headstone being returned to a local cemetery. This tip led to an uplifting article, https://helena.com/news/local/the-long-journey-home-headstone-of-chinese-man-returns-to-helena/article_7bfe0468-3e60-5ea6-bd5b-30a0d125f52e.html that the reporter never would have known about.

7. Consider this post from the Montana Human Rights Network about a "White Lives Matter" rally, <https://mhrn.org/2021/12/21/wlm/>. It was useful both for the press and the larger community. It provided detailed information about this neo-Nazi group, explained that tactically MHRN only issued a public statement AFTER the neo-Nazi's event so as not to give advance publicity for the hate group; why and how the hate group's event was a failure; and described the hate group's recent posting of racist stickers in public places (without actually replicating the stickers themselves, as explained in this section of this [manual](#).)

Once reporters think of you as a source, they may call you for quotes when you haven't issued a release of any kind. Don't pass up the opportunity to get good analysis included on whatever the issue is. However, this can look a few different ways. Ask the reporter for more information about what they're working on and tell them you'll call them back. This gives you time to determine if you or your organization have anything of value to add to the coverage. If you do, repeat the steps above as far as jotting down your main talking points before calling the reporter back. If you and your group determine you're not the best messenger, think if you have allied groups or people who could speak to the issue. Get in touch with them and make sure they're open to talking to the media. When you find another source willing to talk, call the reporter back and make the connection. By doing this, you become even a better source for the reporter—even when it's not "your issue" you've helped them do their job.

When reporters contact you, it's worth spending a little time thinking about the outlet for which they work. There are some right-wing media outlets that don't practice ethical journalism. If a reporter calls you and you don't recognize the outlet they work for, take time to do some online sleuthing to evaluate it. You could easily find that the outlet is legitimate. There are more and more online publications starting up these days, so it can be difficult to tell what kind of media company is calling. However, if it's a right-wing publication or blog, you should proceed with caution. When it comes to blogs, be aware that many are written by people with their own agendas and no journalistic training. This doesn't mean that you shouldn't talk to people working for these types of entities. It just means you should gather enough information to determine if there's an upside to talking to them.

Another issue to consider is "earned" versus "paid" media. Earned media is what we've discussed up to this point. You get coverage based on work you're doing—whether that's issuing a release or because a reporter calls you for comment. Paid media is just how it sounds. You pay a media outlet for an advertisement, to sponsor a segment, or something similar. This is a good route to go in certain situations, such as if you've been collecting signatures in support of a statement, and you want to publish them all. However, earned media is usually best. There's a real legitimacy that comes from being featured in a news article. It positions you as an authority on the topics about which you're commenting.

More Tips for Working with Broadcast Media

When being interviewed by radio or TV, it's important to remember lessons you may have learned in public speaking classes. Your physical presentation and speaking tone become part of how viewers and listeners receive your message. While it's good to be conscious of this, don't let it be intimidating! Also, remember during interviews that aren't aired live, you can always stop and start over. You can do multiple takes until you feel good about your presentation.

TV news reporters often like to shoot what's called B-roll footage. These are video clips somehow related to your interview or the story that can be edited into the final piece. When asked for an interview, it can be helpful to think if there's a location that might add to the story and this kind of footage. For example, if the story is about hate literature being dropped in a neighborhood, is there a location where people in the area tend to gather and could "represent" that part of the community? Perhaps a park or a community center? Don't spend lots of time trying to come up with the "perfect" location, but if you have an idea be sure to share it with the reporter. Another angle for B-roll footage is high-quality video you could provide. For example, if you hold an annual event that's coming up, you could offer to share video from previous years.

Don't underestimate the importance of getting your views on radio stations that carry talk radio. This part of the airwaves in many parts of the country is dominated, http://kennethsstern.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Hate-on-Talk-Radio15122018_3.pdf by the right wing. That makes getting opposing views into these spaces even more important. Deciding when and how to do this involves researching the outlets as we mentioned above. While it might not make sense to appear on a right-wing talk show, you may decide there's value in engaging the news department at the same station.

If you're going to hold a press conference, it's a good idea to spend some time thinking about logistics for TV and radio. For instance, where can you encourage them to set up to get good coverage? How can you make sure their microphones are in a good position to record audio? This will help make sure you get the best coverage possible.

More Tips for Working with Print Media

We've mostly covered the tips for working with print media. Just a couple other things to keep in mind:

- Remember the weekly and specialized newspapers that may exist in your area. Too often people only focus on the daily newspapers. Weeklies and more specialized publications can help you reach an even broader audience. Depending on your area, weeklies may struggle to have enough content. In those instances, they may end up just running the document you release in its entirety.
- Place guest opinions and letters to the editor in print publications. While we've largely discussed getting into news coverage, these are other options to get your points of view out to an audience. Before submitting guest opinions or letters to the editor, check to see if the publication has a word-count limit. If so, make sure you stay under that number before submitting.

What to Do When Media Outlets Go Bad

As we've discussed, there are right-wing media outlets and blogs that may not practice ethical journalism. However, even mainstream outlets sometimes mess up coverage of the racist right, even after the Capitol Insurrection. In some cases, far-right extremists own and direct media outlets. Here are some types of actions you can take when these types of situations occur.

If an article provides a positive or sanitized profile of a hate group or its members, you should contact both the reporter and editor. They need to be told that they are legitimizing hate-inspired activity that harms people in the community—they are doing this by not providing accurate and thorough coverage. As mentioned, feel free to share the quick media guide <https://mhrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/MHRNMediaGuideExtremismFinal.pdf> produced by MHRN with them, and it will help provide some talking points for you to use. Encourage your supporters to also contact the reporter and editor. The volume of contacts can change behavior.

When the local newspaper in Billings, Montana, ran a fluffy profile of a young Nazi, MHRN initially contacted the reporter and editor. It turned out the reporter was also upset, as the content they had included about the violent history of the organization was cut from the published article. The editor, on the other hand, was standing by the article. MHRN sent out an email alert asking supporters to contact the editor. By early afternoon, the editor was apologizing for the article and promising to do better, which they did in future coverage. Mobilizing other people to register their displeasure, in a respectful way, can make a difference for future coverage. If the reporter and/or editor dig in and refuse to accept responsibility for the harm caused by their reporting, the newspaper's publisher can also be contacted.

There are higher-stake actions that can be considered. We've seen communities encourage supporters to cancel subscriptions or boycott certain media outlets. We've also seen community members contact advertisers and encourage them to quit supporting the media outlet in question. These types of actions should always be carefully evaluated, as they set up an antagonistic relationship with the targeted media outlet. Not only can this impact whether the media outlet covers your group's activities, but it's also a dangerous proposition to go to war with somebody who controls the airwaves or the community's perception of your organization.

For broadcast media, it is theoretically possible to go after their license with the Federal Communications Commission. This should only be considered when a far-right extremist owns the station, and no other corrective measures have worked. It involves a long, complicated campaign that likely requires finding legal counsel that knows the federal process well. In the early 2000s, MHRN went this route when the owner of a radio station,



<https://www.mhrn.org/publications/specialresearchreports/SchoolYardBullies.pdf> in the Flathead Valley used his talk-radio show to target specific individuals, in addition to spewing hatred over the airwaves. While MHRN did challenge his license, <https://mhrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Stokes.pdf> with the FCC, the owner's bad fiscal management eventually forced the sale of the station, <https://flatheadbeacon.com/2010/07/21/bankruptcy-deal-turns-kgez-over-to-gardners/>. The point is that such a strategy takes lots of time and resources and won't always be successful. However, the campaign around it can keep the issue front-and-center in people's minds, meaning that it can be a piece of a longer-term organizing campaign.

Conclusion

Working with the media is an integral part of defeating the presence of hate group extremists in any community. However, it shouldn't be a standalone task in and of itself. Instead, it should be integrated with the other work you're doing. While putting together campaign and work plans, think through where it makes sense to engage with and get coverage from the media.

Social Network



SOCIAL MEDIA

How your coalition can use social media to spread your message/analysis

- Any and all statements from your coalition that are released publicly, such as a press release, should also be distributed on social media. This could help to spread your message far beyond your email membership.
- If your coalition does not have a website, posting statements, information, or analysis on a platform such as Medium, <https://medium.com/> could be beneficial, especially so that others can then have a link that they can share.
- In many cases, things like Twitter threads can take the place of traditional press releases, especially if your coalition wants to provide comment and analysis on breaking news items or trends. If you use Twitter threads, be sure to get your most important point across in the first Tweet.
- Many journalists use Twitter to seek out interviewees and your coalition could tag or respond to journalists, especially those working locally, with your analysis when they tweet about subjects that your coalition is interested in. This can help to foster relationships with those covering issue areas that your coalition is focused on.
- Be sure to look out for hashtags on different social media platforms and use those to spread your message to a wider audience, whenever possible.
- Make sure that your coalition members have some best practices in place to help amplify coalition messages on their personal accounts in order to promote further engagement.
- Social media is an excellent medium for storytelling. The video features can allow community members to tell their personal stories about certain topics. This can help to further engage your base and other newer audiences.

Resources

- Working Narratives: storytelling and social change, <https://narrativearts.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/story-guide-second-edition.pdf>
- ReThink Media: Twitter spaces: a guide for advocacy organizations, <https://rethinkmedia.org/blog/twitter-spaces-guide-advocacy-organizations>
- Digital Diplomacy: Handbook for TikTok for nonprofits and digital diplomacy, <https://medium.com/digital-diplomacy/tiktok-handbook-for-non-profits-and-digital-diplomacy-e4cdf929fb5f>

How to use social media to boost your group and be a good community partner

- Spreading the word about events on social media can certainly help to increase attendance and engagement. Be sure to post information about events/campaigns on multiple platforms. Again, this helps to spread your message beyond just your Listserv.
- Social media can be a very quick way to support other coalition partners and community groups by reposting and amplifying their messages on different platforms.
- Coordinating community responses on social media, especially in response to incidents of hate or other moments of crisis, can help the community come together to grieve or find support/inspiration.
- Social media should also be used for things such as fundraising for your group, partners, and/or coalition. Utilize things such as #GivingTuesday and look for times around the year, such as Black History Month, Indigenous People's Day, or LGBTQ+ Pride Month, to use as possible springboards for fundraising campaigns.
- On Twitter, you can use apps such as TweetDeck, <https://tweetdeck.twitter.com/> to schedule tweets ahead of time so that you or other members of your coalition aren't scrambling to post things that you know about well in advance.

Resources

- ReThink Media: case studies guide, <https://rethinkmedia.org/our-work/case-studies>

How to use social media to boost campaigns

- Social media can help boost campaigns your coalition organizes, such as raising awareness about a certain cause or responding to a hate incident targeting your community. Remember that your campaign should put a premium on engagement.
- Quick campaigns such as a Twitter storm can raise awareness to breaking news or amplify social pressure with regards to a policy change your coalition wants to make.
- Alternatively, if hateful groups are using a certain hashtag on social media to promote their bigoted views, your coalition and others could attempt to co-opt it in order to turn the message toward a more positive one.
- For a campaign to be most impactful, it's usually best to stick to one platform and, if possible, look to partner with local businesses and other staples of the community that can help amplify your message.

Resources

- ReThink Media: organizing a tweetstorm to respond to breaking news, <https://rethinkmedia.org/blog/organizing-tweetstorm-respond-breaking-news>
- MPower Change: take action guide, <https://www.mpowerchange.org/campaign>
- Vox: How social justice slideshows took over Instagram, <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/21359098/social-justice-slideshows-instagram-activism>

POLITICAL AND POLICY WORK

Introduction

Part of opposing hate means helping bring about deep, lasting change that dismantles discrimination, bigotry, and hate, including efforts that support opportunity, equality, and safety for everyone. One of the best ways to do that is to build relationships with public officials who pass the laws and policies that govern our communities. Getting to know decision makers on boards and in public offices on every level, from your local school board to your members of Congress, will help you stay informed and influence the kinds of changes you want to see. Here are some tips that will help you make connections and build relationships with people in the policy arena.

Before you dive in and set up meetings with local, state, or federal officials, there are a few restrictions that you should be aware of, depending on the kind of organization for which you work. If you're doing this work on your own time and not being paid, there really aren't many limitations or reporting requirements. However, if you are working for an organization while doing this work, you'll want to make sure you know and follow the rules.

The IRS places certain restrictions on organizations granted 501c3 or 501c4 tax status. It's important to know that 501c3 organizations can engage in some advocacy and lobbying, but **they cannot support or oppose candidates running for office**. You can find some basic guidelines here, <https://bolderadvocacy.org/resource/comparison-of-501c3-and-501c4-permissible-activities/> and an overview of IRS rules, https://www.bolderadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Being_A_Player_paywall.pdf. Bolder Advocacy, <https://bolderadvocacy.org/> is a great resource on these issues and has many materials available. Your state government may also require that organizations report resources expended (staff time, printing, etc.) while engaging in certain types of work directed at policymaking entities, such as the state legislature. You should consult your state agency for guidance. It's important to spend time determining what your organization is allowed to do, and how that should be reported, so you don't have problems later.

The thought of navigating all this bureaucracy might sound daunting, but don't let it scare you off. Spending some time on the front end to gain more confidence with these details is well worth the payout in what you can accomplish by working in political and policy spaces.

Coordinating with Public Officials

As the saying goes, it's not what you know, it's who you know. Having good relationships with public officials who support your position can make your work much easier. If you or your organization don't have these relationships now, it is worth investing time establishing them. If you're not sure what positions officials have on the issues that are important to you, you can search for statements they've made to the media, see what information they post on their official social media pages, look at voting record reports by advocacy groups, and check out their voting history in meeting minutes. Sometimes the best way to discover this information is to find out who has a personal connection with the official and ask them.

Once you've identified officials who seem like potential allies, determine if you have any connections to that officeholder or their inner circle. If you lack those relationships, think about friends and allies who might. Power mapping, <https://www.cnmsocal.org/blog/2021/1/28/introduction-to-power-mapping> is an excellent way to find out how people are connected in your community: it's a process to identify who has power in your community and to figure out who/what will move those people or institutions to do what you want them to do. Based on your situation, you can either call and set up an appointment to talk about the issue at hand or have an ally make an introduction. If you don't have these connections, you can choose a more official route. Set up a meeting with the official to do a formal introduction of you and your organization.

When you go into meetings with public officials, remember that your role is very different from theirs. As a community activist, you are an advocate whose goal is to help communities impacted by hate. The official you're talking to may be supportive; however, your issue is one of many on their plate, and it may not be their top priority. Some officeholders want to appear evenhanded so they're not labeled as a "liberal" or "conservative." In most cases, they haven't developed a lot of expertise on your issues since they're reviewing so many topics. At other times, they may surprise you with information in their background that you weren't aware of! Even if you don't walk away with the sense that an official is an ally, don't be discouraged. Having a personal discussion with local officials usually has payoffs down the road. These officeholders may call you when they need advice or clarification on an issue they're reviewing. As long as they're interested, you can create a relationship that benefits both of you.

When it comes to policymaking spaces, there are two ways to think about relationships with public officials: long-term and short-term. Hopefully, you'll find some who care deeply about social and racial justice issues. With those kinds of officials, you'll want to build long-lasting relationships that let you trade information and strategy plans. However, in the policy arena, sometimes you just need votes to pass or kill a specific bill or proposal. In those instances, you may find yourself trying to convince people who you typically don't work with to vote in your favor. That's fine and often very necessary. However, never allow yourself or allies to conflate this short-term dealmaking with true allied relationships. Short-term dealmaking doesn't require you to support a politician's other projects in the future, and you shouldn't assume that their support will transfer to other situations. Even seasoned activists can fall into the trap of thinking that one-time support creates long-term loyalty. Make sure you're very clearheaded about the relationships you're building and why you're creating them.

Building long-term relationships with public officials takes time, but the outcomes are worth it. As mentioned earlier, most public officials find themselves working on many issues at a time. This allows you to become an expert they consult when it comes to how hate impacts communities and what should be done. You can help officials frame and talk about those issues in the best possible way by providing materials such as talking points, policy memos, and briefing papers. You can also be a resource for drafting policies addressing hate, discrimination, and bigotry in your community.

In other words, consistently engaging with politicians can make you an expert with valuable information and insight that officials can consult when it comes to issues of hate and how to respond to it. However, these relationships aren't just one-way streets. You and your organization benefit from the credibility and legitimacy that comes from public officials endorsing your viewpoints on issues. When a public official uses your talking points, those messages get amplified through media coverage, social media posts, and the official's speaking engagements. People holding office have access to the public microphone and can help spread your talking points to a much wider audience. Ultimately, this can lead to better policies being introduced and passed into law.

When working in politics and policy, think about how you can work with allies, both those already engaging in work with you and those that you can involve. This manual contains information on creating groups and coalitions. Consult [this section](#) and consider how it can be applied to work in policy and political spaces. The more people you have on your side engaging with public officials, the more likely you'll get the outcomes you want to see.

When Public Officials Promote or Give Cover to Hate

Public officials can be extremely effective in efforts to address hate, but they can also amplify dangerous ideology or coded keywords from extremist movements. White nationalist and antigovernment groups intentionally try to work their phrasing and talking points into the political mainstream where people repeat them. Sometimes public officials actively turn dangerous ideas into proposed policy, while other times they may just parrot hateful rhetoric they've heard from colleagues or the media. Other public officials may have been, or still are, members of extremist groups. Whatever the case may be, it's important to take action and hold public officials accountable for promoting or giving cover and legitimacy to groups promoting hate.

The first step is to make sure you have the facts in hand. In political and policy arenas, it's common for rumors to circulate that a public official made offensive and hateful comments. To hold an official accountable, you need to have



proof. That can be a quote from a media article, a social media post, a video recording, or some other type of actual evidence. Once you find this source material, make sure you save a copy (take a screenshot, download the video, save the newspaper article, etc.). Never rely on this source material being available at a later date. Save it as soon as you find it and label it clearly so you can retrieve it easily. For more information on doing this kind of research, see this manual's section on opposition [research](#).

Once you have the source material, you can start planning how to hold the public official accountable. The foundation of this planning should focus on the community that is targeted and harmed by the comment/action. Is the incident in question based on antisemitism, homophobia, misogyny, or racism? Is it targeting the Jewish or Muslim community? These types of questions help you identify who needs to be involved in planning the accountability action.

Make sure you're centering the targeted community in the response. Follow their preferences for how public or behind-the-scenes the response should be. Without these types of crucial considerations, exposing the official's hateful action could cause more harm. In other words, your response should prioritize the harm done to a group of people who already face discrimination and hate, not the outrage of people who object to the comments.

As you and your partners think through a response to an official's hateful action, here are some things to consider incorporating:

- Publicize what the official said or did. This can be done via a press release, press conference, or a detailed social media post or video. In your announcement or release, provide any information necessary for the public to understand why the statement/action is so egregious. In other words, provide clear context and examples. Don't leave it up to reporters or readers to deduce why it's bad. You need to provide the explanation of why it's harmful and the added impact of it coming from a public official.
- Detail any similar hateful comments/actions that the official may have made or done, or connections they have to far-right groups. A couple of examples by the Montana Human Rights Network can be found here, <https://mhrn.org/2019/12/21/sheareport/> and here, <https://mhrn.org/2021/08/11/redpill2021/>. Both are related to state legislators who attended and/or spoke at far-right events.

- Decide what you're calling on the public official to do:
 - Tell them to apologize publicly to the communities targeted or impacted by their statements/actions.
 - Make them explain why their remarks/actions were bad. By doing this, the official can't just say something that boils down to, "I'm sorry you feel the way you do," or, "I'm sorry if anyone was offended." For a genuine apology to occur, the official needs to recognize, acknowledge, and explain that they understand the harm they've caused.
 - Call on them to accept responsibility. This should be included with the previous two bulleted points, otherwise the official can take an insincere action and the issue goes away. For instance, if an official makes an antisemitic statement, encouraging them to visit the local Holocaust Museum could be included in the accountability plan. However, without requiring a public apology and explanation, the official can just do a photo op at the museum and act as though the issue is resolved.

There are other actions that can extend awareness and accountability around the incident. You and your partners could consider:

- Digging into public campaign finance records, contacting important supporters, and asking them to condemn the official's statements/actions.
- Asking the official's colleagues to condemn the statements/actions during their next public meeting.
- Filing an ethics complaint with the applicable office.
- Petitioning a professional association to which the official belongs to have them censured.

For a non-lawmaker example, you can read this article, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-judge-obama-montana/federal-judge-in-montana-criticized-over-racist-obama-joke-idUSTRE82100720120302> about the Montana Human Rights Network calling for a federal judge to resign because of racist comments, which led to an ethics investigation.

In some instances, the public official won't understand what their comments/actions meant, and when they receive more information, they will issue a genuine apology. However, officials often know exactly why their statement was harmful, and they will double down on their comments or deny it. They view apologizing for such hateful actions as appearing weak in front of their supporters, who may hold similar views. In these cases, don't feel defeated if the official doesn't apologize. You have done a service to the community in exposing the hateful comments and actions and opening a public conversation about why they are wrong. That is now part of the official's public record, and it's up to the public to decide whether or not they want to keep that official in power the next time they are up for election or appointment. Raising the alarm and providing the information is the goal. If the official apologizes and takes a genuine repentant action, that's just icing on the cake.

Engaging the Legislature or Other Policymaking Bodies

As mentioned earlier, there are many entities that create and pass policies that impact our daily lives. While many of us focus on what happens nationally in Congress or at state legislative sessions, local government is another place to build relationships and credibility. Institutions such as your local school board, city council, county commission, library board, zoning board, regulatory agencies, etc., all play important roles in the community, and they can be just as important as state or federal institutions when it comes to pushing back against bigotry and hate.

Many of the tactics and strategies used when it comes to engaging public officials are similar to our advice for engaging policymaking bodies. The biggest difference is that your target moves from individual officeholders to mobilizing supporters and the public to make sure local entities are responsive to your community's actual needs.

If you want great outcomes, you need to understand the processes that are used to turn a proposed policy into a law. In most situations, such proposals will face hearings before at least one subcommittee before coming to a vote of the entire body of policymakers. You can mobilize your people to ask officials to vote for/against a proposal before the votes are taken at both levels. To do this, you need to make sure your supporters are educated about the issue and process at hand.

You'll want to provide:

- A brief summary of the proposed policy and why you're taking a certain position.
- Some basic talking points that help frame the issue in your favor.
- Instructions on how to submit comments in person and/or electronically, depending on what options are available.
- Time limitations for in-person comments (2-3 minutes is a common cutoff).
- The deadline for submitting comments.
- Names and contact information for specific policymakers that you want your supporters to contact and/or how to send messages to everyone on the committee.

If you are new to the policymaking arena, you will learn a lot by observing the proceedings of the entity in question, such as understanding the procedure and decorum required. This will help you and your supporters get comfortable with the format, which will make you more effective advocates. For example, it's important for people to know that there is a designated public comment section on the agenda where officials must listen without responding to each person.

Reassure your supporters that they don't need to be experts to make a public comment. Too frequently, community members talk themselves out of commenting by telling themselves they don't know enough about an issue. Good testimony can explain how they feel, and why they feel a certain way about proposed legislation. They don't have to get into the nuts and bolts of the bill. Instead, their remarks can be short and begin with statements like, "I think . . ." "I want . . .," "I believe . . .". It's also good to encourage people to keep their remarks concise.

Outside of mobilizing supporters to contact officials, there are other tactics you can use to support/oppose bills. If you know certain issues will be considered before a policymaking body convenes, you can start talking to officials to find out where they stand. These discussions can give you an idea of what the potential vote count is on your issue. It also helps you determine which public officials are potential allies and opponents, along with which officeholders you might be able to move to your position.

While having more votes on your side is always the best path to success, you can look for other pressure points during the process. Talk with allies like progressive organizations or community leaders to see if there are procedural steps you can use to slow down or speed up the progress of proposed legislation. Sometimes you can ask that a legal review be conducted, that the fiscal impact be determined, that the bill be sent to another committee, etc. By using these types of procedural actions, you can buy time to get more comments submitted in your favor, lobby those legislators in play, and maybe get a bill delayed so it misses a deadline and dies in process. This kind of work requires support and coordination from both allied organizations and lawmakers.

The Power of Engaging Policymakers: Access and Influence

Often in the political and policy worlds, advocates can mistake access for influence. In other words, public officials will meet with community members, politely listen to their concerns, and never take any action to address problems. In these instances, you have access, because you can get meetings with a public official. That's a great first step, but you really need the kind of influence that changes their minds or their actions. As you're building relationships with public officials, always keep that in mind. Keep building to have both access and influence when it comes to those relationships.

It's so important to engage policymaking arenas and keep engaging, even when the going gets tough. When you figure out how policy impacts the work you're trying to do, it's easy to see why you need to show up in those spaces. Never underestimate the power of people coming together to do good work. As you get more supporters engaged in these activities, they will start to understand the power they have to influence institutions, and you can encourage them to run for office and be the decision makers. If we're going to keep pushing hate out of public arenas, we need good people to help do the work.

Understanding the system and taking action are the first steps toward outcomes that support and protect everyone.



LOVE
together
onwards

JUSTICE
FACE
T
E

NOT
G TH

OTHER STEPS TO MOBILIZE YOUR COMMUNITY: BUILDING A MOVEMENT AGAINST HATE

Now that you have some basic knowledge of how to organize a group, and how to work with the media and politicians, let's discuss additional steps that will help your organization to mobilize communities around a commonly felt concern or issue concerning hate; to then create an organized movement/campaign around this issue, with clear policy reform demands; and to enlist the cooperation and support of politicians to ensure that the policy demands are proposed as legislation bills or resolutions at the local, state, and federal levels of government.

Community Listening and Relationship-Building

Take time to build relationships with people in the communities around you, in order to get a sense of the commonly experienced issues throughout the area. People may view hate and discrimination differently, based on their experiences and backgrounds, yet there may also be commonalities in the ways in which diverse communities confront such challenges (as well as related ones, such as gaps, barriers, or total exclusion from needed resources). Therefore, organizers must first get to know and build trust with members in their community, in order to better comprehend the myriad ways in which a particular policy or set of policies (or lack thereof) impacts everyone.

Some variables to be aware of as you are building these relationships:

1. The amount of knowledge, understanding, or interest community members have in the particular policy, issue, or problem; and
2. The degree to which community members feel that they have the power or agency to confront and change the policy; and
3. Other related factors which may be in play, such as the socioeconomic mobility and health of a community or communities.

Building these relationships and having this type of knowledge BEFORE reaching out to politicians, if possible, will make your work more likely to succeed. Politicians are good at counting (potential votes), and thus more likely to be moved by a coalition of voices, rather than single communities.

Research

Once the relationships have been built and the hate-related issue or issues identified, the next step is to conduct community-led research into the following Ws:

1. What is the commonly felt hate-related issue? What are some of its most common outcomes? In what ways does this issue show up or manifest in the community?
2. Who, as in which communities, are most impacted by the issue? And who, as in which parties or groups, are responsible for the implementation or creation of the problem or should be largely or entirely responsible for its solution?
2. Why did this issue come to be? If from a policy or law, what were the intended outcomes of the policy or legislation that created the issue? Why is this problem still impacting communities today?
4. Where is the issue concentrated? In which communities, neighborhoods, cities, or towns is this issue most prevalent?
5. What are the ways politicians can help? What type of legislation or resolution or administrative rule might be helpful? Will the push for these changes give opportunities for you and the politicians to highlight the unfairness of the problem identified, and the wisdom of the proposed remedy?

One of the key elements in this stage of building a movement is the involvement of the community members who feel the impact of the hate-related issue you're researching. If the goal is to provide communities with the tools, skills, and agency necessary to enact change on a specific policy or issue, then part of that process should include outreach to and training of community members to participate in researching and collecting knowledge/data about the specific issue.

A good way to do this is to assess the strengths of people in your group interested in doing research, and then assigning specific tasks such as:

- Interviews with community members, local officials, school board members, etc.
- Historical analyses of the problem, through Google searches, local newspapers, library, etc.
- Policy analyses of any regulation or practice or policy that is causing harm in the community
- Collecting anecdotes of how the hate-related problem or policy has harmed people. When organizing, human stories are more accessible and more easily understood than policy-speak.
- Researching past movements, organizations, and policy advocacy around this issue to see what's been attempted/achieved previously.
- Reaching out to other communities that have dealt with similar issues, and learn from their experiences—what worked and what didn't, including considerations of when politicians are more or less likely to want to work with you to achieve your goals.
- Keep in mind, too, that there may well be organizations within or near your area that are already working on this issue. Therefore, before organizing the community to push for a particular policy or law, it is important for organizers to do their research and get a sense of how this issue has been addressed and confronted in the past, and by whom. You may find an organization that has an ongoing campaign about the problem you want to address, in which case there's no need to reinvent the wheel, but rather you should figure out how to get your community members involved in, or otherwise work to complement, the already-existing initiative.

Organize

After listening to community members' experiences and working with them to research the origins and impact of the problem affecting the community, it is time to organize your community members into a cohesive and sustainable movement. This is a very important step in building a coalition with politicians, who are more likely to recognize the importance of community power and community voices pushing for policy and legislative change to reduce hate and/or discrimination. Ideally, instead of working *for* communities in the traditional top-down fashion, politicians should be encouraged to work *with* communities through collaborative policy advocacy. Indeed, building a strong organized movement of people around a concrete issue is a great way to garner support and gain influence and leverage at the negotiating table with lawmakers. And doing so will demonstrate to politicians working with you that a collaborative approach is not only most likely to bring about the desired results, but will help them document their leadership role for their constituents.

In order to do this, community members must come up with a specific demand or goal to address the problem or policy in question. These questions need to be addressed:

1. What do we want to see changed for the better in our communities?
2. What is the best process through which these changes take place?
3. Which groups and stakeholders should be at the decision-making table for any intervention or policy initiative that takes place?

(The Bard Center for the Study of Hate's *State of Hate Index*, <https://bcsh.bard.edu/files/2021/09/State-of-Hate-Index.pdf>, which lists hate-related problems such as violence and discriminatory laws in all 50 states, is a useful resource for thinking through which policy changes your group may want to promote.)

Once clear on the demand, community leaders must then delegate roles to ensure that the following tasks/responsibilities are fulfilled:

1. *Lead organizers:* Focus is on strategy, tactics, outreach to other organizations, movements, and local and state stakeholders, including the politicians you'll be working with most closely. (Sometimes the most important politician to work with closely is the one who most strongly agrees with your goals. But it might be strategically wise to work most closely with a politician who is slightly less aligned, but whose stature makes it more likely that other politicians will follow their lead).
2. *Research:* Someone or some people in your group should have the responsibility to keep up to date with how other organizations and movements across the country confront and organize around the same issue, in order to further support the strategy and tactics of the lead organizers and to see if there could be potential for collaboration across organizations. Additionally, they should conduct research on politicians who might be possible allies and potentially swayed into giving support (including what arguments would be most likely to impress them). Likewise, it is also important to research who might be staunch opponents, including identifying how they will most likely oppose your goals, and ways to reduce their likelihood of success. For example, if they are close with a particular faith leader, can you get that faith leader to support your efforts?
3. *Marketing and Messaging:* The focus is on identifying the name, brand, or even rallying cry of your anti-hate initiative. It's important to have a consistent, clear, and concise platform or message so the goals and priorities are easily communicated and understood. Using social media platforms, news channels, and well-frequented community spaces is key to ensuring wide exposure and outreach. If a particular piece of legislation is to be promoted, or opposed, it's important to have a very concise description of what the legislation is intended to do, in inspiring language that makes the need for it clear.
4. *Canvassing:* These are the folk who go door to door in the neighborhood, hand out flyers, and make phone calls to community members, in order to garner support.

Tactics and Strategy

Once community members have agreed on a hate-related policy change or need to be addressed, the next step is to identify political stakeholders who have a legislative voting history that is supportive of the types of changes you want to see. Relying on the data collected during the research phase of the organizing process, organizers should reach out to the policy makers who they feel share the similar values, and/or who require support for an ongoing piece of legislation that is at a standstill.

Preliminary outreach to politicians can include:

- a. phone calls to district office
- b. emails to their staff or to their direct email if available
- c. handwritten or typed letters

Of course, if someone in your group has a personal connection to a politician, or someone close to a politician, use that personal connection to request a meeting.

The key is persistence, both in outreach to the politicians and in organizing. By continuing to organize and lobby for policy change, community organizations and campaigns maintain pressure on policy decision-makers, making it clear that it is within the best interests of the politicians to work with community organizations to 1) better their chances of moving a particular bill or resolution through the legislature; and 2) secure more potential votes for the coming election cycle. When the campaign successfully schedules a meeting with the intended politician or policy-makers, the conversations should revolve around the shared views on a particular issue or policy, and the specific community needs and demands that should be prioritized in the policy-level advocacy, both from within and outside of the legislature. Also be ready to share human stories of why the policy change is needed. Stories of people in your



community who have suffered from some manifestation of hate, and how the proposed changes will enhance both their lives and the social fabric of the larger community, are compelling and touch the heart as well as the mind. (See also this [section](#) on the importance of avoiding initiatives that violate free speech norms.)

Useful links from a variety of organizations

Listed below are links to groups that have organizing plans, some of which include outreach to politicians, all of which reflect useful principles to think about as you organize against hate.

- a. School meal plan: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NJPvBS2bGYDKjGoGBE87tcBq5Eky8OREpHs4ZAQfUt8/edit>
- b. Community organizing: <https://communityscience.com/blog/creating-equitable-communities-through-community-organizing/>
- c. ADL Repair plan: <https://www.adl.org/repairplan>
- d. Rethink Media: <https://rethinkmedia.org/our-work>
- e. TIRRC: <https://www.tnimmigrant.org/buildingpower>

THE IMPORTANCE OF OPPOSITION RESEARCH

Bemoaning the hate spouted by an organized group in your community isn't a sufficient strategy, or really any strategy at all. The hate group wants to claim that it reflects community sentiment. Our job is to demonstrate why their goal is actually something else: to demonize and/or dehumanize human beings. One of the best ways to do this is to use the hate group's own words, and to be aware of their organizing strategies. To be effective, you have to try and look at the world like they do, understand it, and then be able to demonstrate why their views and actions are not only detestable, but cannot be ignored.

1. The importance of opposition research/data collection/documentation

- a. Where to look and what to look for
- b. How to collect and preserve manifestations of hate both online and offline
- c. How to document hate incidents in your community and with whom to share it
- d. With whom you can share/should share manifestations of hate

First Steps

When possible, it can be highly beneficial to monitor the activities, both online and offline, of hateful groups. This can help your group get a better understanding of your opposition, their messaging, their recruitment tactics, and their planned actions that may be directed toward you. This monitoring can also document different manifestations of threats directed toward your community group or coalition, such as phone messages, threats on social media, doxing (posting of personal information), and flyers. The monitoring work isn't easy and can be very time-consuming, so it's important to stick to a few general principles to manage your time. There are many national and local organizations that specialize in this type of research/monitoring and, when possible, you should seek to build relationships with these groups so that you can share information and strategies. In fact, one of the best things you could do is make a list of the groups that have information relevant to your work (a good start is the resource [section](#); reach out to those groups, and have phone conversations with appropriate staffers). Building relationships BEFORE you urgently need help is a wise investment of your time.

The documentation of threats, both online and offline, is particularly essential. It can be natural to delete a hateful email or voicemail because of its troubling content, but preserving that information can assist with security, countermessaging, and even a criminal investigation. Online threats such as doxing can easily be deleted or modified by the perpetrator and it is important to capture them before they do. Community groups, watchdog organizations, and law enforcement unfortunately can do little with online threats without the actual evidence. With the evidence, however, these institutions might determine whether the threat is isolated or part of a larger campaign, whether it crosses the threshold of a criminal act, or determine the identity and motives of the group/individual behind the act.

Knowledge is power and all of this information can help better serve your group in determining the scale of the threat and how best to respond.

Where to look and what to look for

The process of monitoring can be daunting, but there are basic steps you can take to make the process smoother and more efficient:

1. What are people saying about you/your community group?

One quick way to not get caught off guard by unwarranted attention by groups politically opposed to you is to be aware of what is being said about your organization and leadership online. You can do this quickly by:

- Setting up a Google Alert so you know when media or blogs are writing about your organization/ leadership. If a right-wing figure with a large following mentions in a news story or blog your organization, leadership, or a campaign you're involved in, it could lead to repercussions. Google Alerts can alert you of these mentions, so that you're able to respond if necessary.
- Using Twitter's search function to search the name of your organization to see who is talking about you and what they're saying.
- Check the comments: take a look at the comments on your organization's social media posts for any hateful remarks or threats.

2. Who is your opposition or possible opposition?

Knowing the groups/key individuals that are likely to be your opposition or have a history of targeting your organization or similar groups in the area can be very useful for monitoring. In many cases, your opposition can be very public about their aims and activities. An example of this is The Church at Planned Parenthood (TCAPP) group that protests on a regular basis at clinics in Spokane, Washington, and elsewhere. Determining who your opponents are can take a bit of time, but it will make the monitoring a smoother process. Some basic steps include:

- Asking your base, coalition groups/partners, local law enforcement, and regional/national watchdog groups for their input/analysis. Your allies and base may have experience dealing with hateful incidents/campaigns and law enforcement can possibly provide you with information, both historical and current, about hate activity in the region. National and local watchdog groups are doing the monitoring work on a daily basis and may be your best source of information and could possibly even provide training on regional groups and the current climate.
- Seeking out local chapters of national groups and where they are located in the state is another good strategy. The Southern Poverty Law Center keeps an annual census of hate and paramilitary groups categorized by city and state that is easily accessible. Many factions have a top-down hierarchy and finding local chapters of national anti-LGBTQ, anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, or paramilitary groups, etc., is important. To use the TCAPP example, the group has chapters in a half dozen locations.
- It can be very helpful to do an online search of the groups/individuals before you begin your monitoring. Some research on these groups/individuals likely exists already, be it from civil rights groups, journalists, or online sleuths. This can be helpful when seeking out who to actively monitor, and any aliases these individuals may use online. This research can be a great jumping off point.

3. Online monitoring tips

Many hate-promoting groups are active online, especially on social media and from this you can glean information about their talking points, mobilizations, and threats. Here are some useful steps you can take once you've identified the key groups/individuals you want to monitor:⁸

- Create a Gmail account to sign up for alerts/newsletters from these groups. The Gmail username selected should not be connected in any way to you or your organization.
- Using TweetDeck, you can set up Twitter searches that flag every mention of a group or individual you're interested in.
- Due to a number of groups being kicked off platforms such as Facebook, many individuals and groups are moving to other, more extreme outlets like 4chan, 8kun, Telegram, Gab, MeWe, and Parler. If it is important to actively seek information on these platforms and other locations where bigots and authoritarians have retreated after being largely banned from the more common social media services, the first rule is safety. The best advice is to work with trusted organizations that do this sort of information gathering regularly and to get some training in how to do it safely. But here are some resources:

8. A useful resource is <https://www.ire.org/product/the-investigative-reporters-handbook-sixth-edition/>.

- Always consider such sites as “hostile territory” that you should not access without using a VPN. A VPN is a service that masks the details of your internet identity, making it much more difficult for people to discover who you are. Here is a recent guide to VPN services. <https://www.consumerreports.org/vpn-services/mullvad-ivpn-mozilla-vpn-top-consumer-reports-vpn-testing-a9588707317/>
- Never use your name, phone number, or email address when logging in to online sites frequented by the sorts of actors we focus on in this report. Best practices for doing this safely require some training and we recommend you seek it out before attempting it.
- At the least, if you want to do this type of research, you should do some background reading on open source intelligence techniques. Useful information can be found at the resources page of the Global Investigative Journalism Network, <https://gijn.org/online-research-tools/>.
- Also know that some might find this type of research stressful. Maintaining your mental well-being should always be a priority.

What to look for when monitoring

It is easy to go down rabbit holes when it comes to monitoring. It can be overwhelming trying to grasp the volume of posts, the conversations these groups/individuals are having with each other, and the issues they are discussing.

With that in mind, it's important to stick to a few core items to look out for:

- What issues are these groups talking about, be it supporting or opposing? If any of those reference issues that you or your base work on, such as immigration, refugee resettlement, gun safety, or LGBTQ rights, then take note of it.
- Are these groups or individuals planning any events, campaigns, or other mobilizations, either online or in person? Keep track of these events, their location, and the reason for them. Events and campaigns can attract more attention and can also directly target groups/organizations, such as an elected official or a Planned Parenthood clinic.
- Are these groups/individuals openly working with, or sharing material from, other groups? If so, note those in case it becomes a trend or a multigroup campaign. We often see cross-pollination between different groups such as the Proud Boys and paramilitary groups or an anti-LGBTQ church and antichoice groups. Cross-pollination can lead to bigger turnouts at in person events, for example.
- Any mentions of your organization, base, leaders in the community, upcoming events you might be having or are involved in, or mentions of other groups in your coalitions? Sometimes, even a mention of your organization can lead to the spotlight being shone and more negative attention being directed toward your group. Flag these mentions and the people who posted them.
- Any threats, direct or indirect, or doxing? Threats and doxing can be extremely troubling and should be taken very seriously. While it is important to take screenshots of the information mentioned in the previous examples, preserving the instances of doxing or threats is critical for alerting those threatened, community leaders, and possibly law enforcement about the incident.

How to document hate incidents/threats and who to share them with

It is important to document online threats or doxing, especially if it's posted on social media, as soon as it is detected. As noted above, social media posts can be edited or deleted, so it's critical to document the evidence in case the perpetrator or perpetrators attempt to scrub the evidence.

There are some simple resources you can use to document threats and doxing posted online:

- If the post is on a social media site like Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram, first take a screenshot of the post for evidence.



- Obtain the unique URL of the post and go to <https://archive.md/> to archive the post so that it will live, unedited, online.
- If the threat or dox came in the form of a video, try and save it. ClipConverter is a great resource for saving videos posted to YouTube, but videos on other platforms can be harder to save.
- If the threat comes in the form of an email, print out a copy of it and do not delete the email from your account.
- If the threats are left in a voicemail message, do not delete them and try to get a recording of it. As most voicemail can now be emailed, it shouldn't be too difficult to obtain a recording of the threatening voicemail.
- If the threat comes in the form of a letter, save the letter, the envelope, and its entire contents in a plastic bag. Also, it's important to limit the number of people who handle the letter, envelope, and contents, in case law enforcement becomes involved and wants to look for physical evidence, such as fingerprints.
- If the threat is spray-painted or written, make sure to take a photo to preserve it in case colleagues, or well-wishing allies, attempt to scrub the hateful message.

WORKING WITH ACADEMICS

We've mentioned national and local groups that might be resources for your anti-hate work. Don't overlook academics, particularly those in your home communities. In addition to being possible members of your group, those who study hate groups, extremist movements, social psychology, political science, and other fields may have some valuable and unexpected insights for you, as well as information to help you in your opposition research.

Thankfully, in the last two decades, the field of "hate studies" has taken off. Hate studies is an interdisciplinary approach to hate. It is defined as **"Inquiries into the human capacity to define, and then dehumanize or demonize, an 'other,' and the processes which inform and give expression to, or can curtail, control, or combat, that capacity."**

There are now multiple hate studies centers in North America and abroad. Take the time to look at <https://bcsh.bard.edu/hate-studies/>, which links to these centers. You'll find material on each of their sites that will help you think through how hate works, and how to oppose it, as well as information about faculty members who may be delighted to brainstorm with you about how the lessons of their research have practical implications for what you do. The hate group in your community might be a new threat to you and your neighbors, but chances are the ideas that propel the hate group are not new at all. Thinking through how those ideas work (on an individual, political, and societal level) with those who have thought deeply about these issues will make your strategic choices wiser.

WORKING WITH SCHOOLS

Because young people between the ages of 12–18 tend to be in a transitional period of identity acquisition, when many search for belonging, they are often the prime targets for white nationalist recruiters and organizers. Teachers, administrators, librarians, and paraprofessionals are important adults who interact with students as they develop and grow in secondary school. Your organization may want to reach out to such school staff to encourage and support strategies on how to help students, especially those who may feel isolated and unheard and those who might be attracted to hateful and dangerous groups. Also, schools have become a focus of hate group organizing, and that's not just right-wing groups seeking out students. There have been protests and threats directed toward school boards, superintendents, and other educators about COVID-19 policies and curriculum (especially a controversy about how to teach American history). This is an additional reason for your coalition to connect and work with local schools.

One excellent resource is the Western State Center's publication about white nationalism in schools, <https://www.westernstatescenter.org/wsctoolkits>. Another is its librarian toolkit, <https://www.westernstatescenter.org/libraries>.

Other resources to be aware of:

- Southern Poverty Law Center's Learning for Justice, <https://www.splcenter.org/learning-for-justice>
- Southern Poverty Law Center's Building Resilience and Confronting Risk, https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/splc_peril_parents_and_caregivers_guide_june_2021_final.pdf
- Local and Regional Government Alliance on Racial Equality's Advancing Racial Equity in Public Libraries, https://www.racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/GARE_LibrariesReport_v8_DigitalScroll_WithHyperlinks.pdf
- American Library Association's Libraries Respond: Black Lives Matter, <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/diversity/librariesrespond/black-lives-matter>
- Multiple resources from Facing History and Ourselves, https://www.facinghistory.org/our-work?utm_term=facing%20history%20and%20ourselves&utm_campaign=Brand+Campaign&utm_source=adwords&utm_medium=ppc&hsa_tgt=kwd-600948010302&hsa_grp=67126586840&hsa_src=g&hsa_net=adwords&hsa_mt=p&hsa_ver=3&hsa_ad=322767115342&hsa_acc=4949854077&hsa_kw=facing%20history%20and%20ourselves&hsa_cam=1668862938&gclid=Cj0KCQiAzMGNBhCyARIsANpUkzNnotFhesC-Wj7c9Dp-KlaAbdLWVAJawqguBFu_PhMj1ihfC2ZoWsaAtKnEALw_wcB



NO HATE NO FEAR MUSLIMS ARE WELCOME

WE ARE IMMIGRA
TRUMP'S INCLU

SOME WORDS ABOUT SPEECH

When hateful actors speak in our regions, especially at organized rallies and marches, we sense an attack not only on the tranquility of our community, but also its basic fabric. Meanwhile the groups directly vilified feel something more—fear.

What do we do? If we have advance notice, our first instinct might be to try and stop the haters from having a platform. But in most instances, such an attempt would be both a legal and tactical mistake. That doesn't mean letting hate go unaddressed. It means knowing that calls for censorship most times backfire. Not only do they usually fail to stop the haters from speaking, they actually help amplify the hateful message and sometimes even make the haters seem sympathetic. What feels good sometimes doesn't do good, and in fact can do harm.

Hateful speech is protected by the United States Constitution, as it should be. Even though we know hateful speech is harmful, it is more dangerous to give government the ability to define which speech is permitted and which isn't. The civil rights battles of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, as well as the movement to end the war in Vietnam, were also free speech fights: the government tried to suppress progressive organizing by blocking or punishing expression. And just look around the world today—journalists and politicians and activists and academics are being fired, jailed, or even killed for telling the truth about government corruption, for fighting for democracy, and just for standing up for basic human rights.

There are, of course, limits on speech. The government can place time, place, and manner restrictions—no one has a right to use a bullhorn protesting in front of your house at 2 am. Governments can also require permits for protests on public spaces, but it can't discriminate based on the group's message. Harassment, intimidation, certain threats, for instance, can be circumscribed, but there usually has to be some immediate danger to prescribe speech. I have the right to say all fill-in-the-blanks should be killed. I likely don't have the right to say that while I'm with a bunch of white supremacist skinheads, holding baseball bats, pointing to a Black person across the street.

Legal approaches: Rarely to be used, but just in case

Our general advice is not to go to court to try and oppose a hate group's right to march or organize. Most likely the hate group will win the case and get free publicity in the process, and your group's focus on the legal strategy will mean other things, likely more effective, will be ignored or used less efficiently while the court process plays out. But even though a legal strategy should not be your first option for organizing, in rare instances it might be considered.

We encourage groups where possible to

- Have legal counsel, or where not possible a volunteer member to provide legal advice, about applicable state and local laws, regulations, and ordinances that might be relevant to a hate group's organizing efforts, and to think through those potential issues in advance.
- Learn, if the hate group is planning a public event, what permit requirements are there, and who are the public officials responsible for making sure the procedures are followed.
 - Is there an ordinance against affixing posters to public property (lampposts, etc.), and how does one make a complaint?
 - Does the hate group leaflet people's homes? If so, do its members trespass or litter?
 - Is it engaged in illegal activity? For example, does it conduct paramilitary training in violation of a state law?
 - Is potential legal action an opportunity to get more information about the hate group through the process of "discovery" (and conversely, if there is litigation, can the hate group use the legal process to attack your group)?
- Have a relationship with relevant local, state, and federal officials so if a legal issue does arise, your organization has a ready-made contact.



The importance of initial assessments. Our instinct is always to confront hate, but it's not always the best strategy. As noted earlier in this manual, hate should never be ignored—our point here is simply to amplify the principle that, first, you should do no harm. A threat assessment has to be conducted. If a hate group announces a rally or march, its goal is likely publicity, and to get a reaction. What if the hate group only has a few members, or was unlikely to show up to the event it announced? Intentionally ignoring the event might be the best approach, denying the hate group the attention it is craving. The assessment isn't done out of thin air—it's a byproduct of the information you have garnered from your [research](#) into local hate groups, and/or from your consultation with organizations that track hate [groups](#), or with other community groups like yours that have had to deal with similar hate groups in their [areas](#). If your initial strategy is not to draw attention to the hate group, you have to continue monitoring social media and other sources of information to see if your strategy continues to make sense, or if things change (such as other groups promoting the event via social media), to recalibrate your plans. You should always have a Plan B, just in case.⁹

9. Similar strategic thoughts, but different legal principles may apply, when the situation involves private businesses, such as when Holocaust-denying or neo-Nazi groups rent private facilities for their events. Private businesses that provide public accommodations (restaurants, hotels, etc.) can't discriminate based on race, religion, and other such factors. However, they are under no obligation to serve people on other bases, such as if the extremist group clearly targets protected classes of people or advocates violent or other illegal activity. Your group may be able to get a business to cancel a hate group gathering in their facilities. Sometimes the hate group may have violated contract terms by failing to be transparent about who they are and what their rental of the facility is for. But be careful if you're going to try and get such a meeting canceled. Check with a lawyer for or in your group, to make sure you don't leave yourself open to a suit for violating the hate group's contract rights.

TURNING FREE SPEECH RIGHTS ON THEIR HEAD

While no one wants a hate group to be active in their community, the goal should be to minimize the oxygen given the group, and to take the hateful presence as an occasion to build a larger anti-hate message and network. The better way to think about hateful speakers is to view them as an organizing opportunity. Of course, we would prefer if the hateful speakers weren't in our community in the first place. But our best answer to their presence is to ask yourself and your allies this question: what opportunity do we now have to build better and more sustainable structures against hate? Your goal is both short-term and long-term. Hate groups are like bullies—the more they get away with, the more emboldened and vicious they can become. So, you want to give them roadblocks and disincentives, all the while building up a stronger community capacity to oppose hate more comprehensively and effectively in the future.

Project Lemonade

Haters have free speech rights, but one of the best strategies is to make their speech anything but free: it is called Project Lemonade and has been used since the mid 1990s. The idea is that people make pledges tied to a metric—usually how long the haters' event lasts. The money is to be donated to organizations or entities the hate group would detest—groups that fight bigotry, or promote antibias education, or support marginalized groups, or support police hate crime training. The hate groups are then effectively raising money for anti-hate activities. It's labor-intensive to create a Project Lemonade campaign¹⁰ but worth it in the long run. In addition to helping build up anti-hate efforts, it makes the groups directly threatened feel supported, and also allows people outside of the community an opportunity to do something helpful.

10. A Lemonade project requires a few weeks of planning. Have your group discuss what local or national organizations or efforts would both benefit from the funds pledged, and also have these be ones that the hate group would be appalled to be raising money for. For instance, if it's an anti-immigrant group, have the pledges go to lawyers for asylum seekers. Then publicize your effort in the media and on social media (for an example, see <https://www.cnn.com/2017/01/13/opinions/kkk-plans-march-on-mlk-day-stern/index.html>) and to your email list (and ask others to promote too*). The most difficult part is the bookkeeping. You have to have a system set up so that people can make conditional pledges, tied to the metric, up to a limit. Then, whatever happens—the haters might, as in Montana, not show up—follow up with those who signed up to support Project Lemonade. They will appreciate your acknowledgment and may continue to support your coalition's work, even from afar.

It's also possible to set up a continuing "Project Lemonade" approach in your community, for example, if white supremacist organizing is a continual problem. An early model of this approach, in Colorado, is here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20040520061440/http://cuah.org/>

A sample email, based on this actual example, is

Dear xxx

I hope you had a wonderful New Year's Day.

Unfortunately, the Jewish community of Whitefish, Montana did not.

Neo-Nazis have threatened them, as well as the human rights community that came to their defense.

And now the neo-Nazis are planning a march in the coming days. They say they are going to bus in skinheads from out of state to Whitefish, and that they will be heavily armed.

You can do something that might stop the march, and give a disincentive for white supremacists who threaten people in Montana, and elsewhere.

As we just wrote in an opinion piece, <https://www.cnn.com/2017/01/13/opinions/kkk-plans-march-on-mlk-day-stern/index.html>, which I hope you'll read, we've been working closely with the Montana Human Rights Network on a simple plan.

We need people to pledge money [insert your link to a pledge page here] tied to how long the white supremacist march lasts [and you can set a maximum donation].

If the march takes place, the white supremacists will effectively be raising money for things they detest: increased security for local Jews and Jewish institutions, new programs to promote human rights and defeat hatred, educational events about the danger of white supremacy, and community and police training on how best to handle a hate incident. The Montana Human Rights Network is well-established organization that is ready to take these pledges and distribute any donations to help the community and to stop the white supremacists.

We are proud to have issued the call for this "Project Lemonade" response to thuggish hatred, and to have made the first pledge. I've made a personal pledge too.

We hope you will join us and make a pledge against hate, and also pass this message along to your friends.

Hate unchecked inevitably spreads. Won't you please help us help let the Jewish and human rights communities in Montana know we stand with them, in a strategy designed to make the haters think twice before threatening anyone.

With best regards,

TRUTH
+
LOVE
=
FREEDOM
&
PEACE



COMMUNITY SYMBOLIC REJECTION OF HATE

In 1993, hate group activity had been picking up in Billings, Montana, when, one night, a cinderblock was thrown through the bedroom window of a young boy whose family was Jewish and celebrating Chanukah. A menorah had been in the boy's window. Spurred on by local religious leaders and the police chief, the local newspaper agreed to print thousands of paper menorahs, and encouraged residents across the city to cut them out of the paper and put them up on their windows. Thousands did so. The visual rejection of hate by this act of solidarity documented the community's denunciation of the hate group and its message.

The role of community leaders, and their buy-in before the project was launched, ensured the success of this program. The Billings police chief, when asked how he persuaded others who might put themselves and their families at risk by putting the menorahs on their windows, said he told them that, yes, there was some risk, but the more people who put up the menorahs, the less risk each person faced.

The young boy, driving around town with his mother, reportedly told her "I didn't know there were so many Jewish people here." She replied, "They're not Jewish. But they are our friends."

Sometimes, community groups will decide to demonstrate the community's stand against hate in other ways, for example by encouraging businesses to shut down along a route where the haters plan to march (thus figuratively turning the community's back on the marchers), or alternatively holding an anti-hate rally elsewhere. Make use of Google and the connections with national groups that you established for your research efforts, and find out examples of what organizing strategy has worked recently, and what hasn't, in communities similar to yours that are facing like challenges. The important thing here is to recognize that while the haters have the right to spew their views, the rest of us have many ways to underscore that an attack on any of us is an attack on all of us.

Adopt a Highway

Many regions have an "adopt a highway" program where a local person or business promises to pick up litter for a few miles, in return for recognition of their contribution on a road sign. Hate groups, from time to time, have coveted this free publicity. And because these are public programs and public highways, government cannot discriminate against otherwise eligible groups. Lawsuits to stop the KKK, for example, from adopting a part of a highway will not succeed. But, prompted by community groups, it is possible to encourage legislators to change the name of a stretch of highway. There's a certain irony in having the KKK pick up litter from the "Rosa Parks Highway," for example.

Conclusion about Free Speech Strategies

None of us wants to be exposed to hate group activities in our community. But in most instances trying to stop otherwise lawful expressions of hate will only allow the haters to depict themselves as "free-speech martyrs." Any counteraction against hateful speech has to be carefully thought through, and where possible with the foundations of already-considered plans in your group's arsenal. Table-top exercises for boards of directors (what do we do if X happens, what do we do if Y happens) are useful so that the fewest decisions have to be made during a crisis. Preplanning will pay dividends.

The key considerations are: 1) do no harm—don't amplify the haters' message because a strong reaction makes us feel good, but may not help us achieve our goals; 2) use the hate group's disruption as an opportunity to build stronger coalitions and programs and structures to oppose hate, 3) don't fall into a free speech fight; rather turn the hater's free speech rights on their head by imposing a cost whenever you can.

HOW TO DEAL WITH, AND REPORT, A HATE CRIME OR HATE INCIDENT

Initial response and action—information you can share to help victims of hate crimes

If you are victim of a hate crime, even if you or your property are not severely injured or damaged, you will feel shocked and violated. Who would not be if they were attacked because of who they are or are perceived to be? The message haters send to you—and others like you—is that you are outside the social fabric, that you don't belong.

Because you are being targeted because of who you are, others in your community will feel threatened too. And those who commit hate crimes—particularly those following hateful ideologies—are like bullies. If they believe they can get away with such an attack, they'll likely be tempted to go after others too.

So, the first thing you should do is make sure you aren't destroying any evidence. The temptation is to remove flyers or paint over graffiti, but DON'T. Preserve all the evidence you can, including videos from security cameras. There may be clues as to who was responsible, if they are part of any group, etc.

Second, assuming you are in a safe place physically (if not, find one—a friend's house for instance—and go there), CALL THE AUTHORITIES. There may on occasion be reasons not to do so, but it is important that the police know. There are programs to support victims, and police reporting of hate crimes is critical. And if the police in your community are not as responsive to hate crimes as they should be, your report is urgent for another reason: it will be part of documenting inadequate police responses. No department should be let off the hook by claiming, accurately, it didn't know of a hate crime because it wasn't reported.

Third, if possible gather more evidence. Have you or others been threatened in recent weeks, and if so, is any evidence of this online (tweets, posts, doxing, etc.)? If so, take screen shots. Are there racist flyers that have appeared in your neighborhood in recent weeks? Take photos. Make sure you store any digital evidence—make a backup on an additional drive. This type of evidence will be useful for the police, but also for local groups monitoring and countering hate activity in your community. In addition to reporting to the police, consider reaching out to local nonprofits or advocacy agencies who have a credible history of reporting and responding to instances of hate, as well as those who provide legal and social-emotional resources to witnesses and survivors of hate crimes.

Such organizations include:

- a. Anti-Defamation League, https://www.adl.org/reportincident?gclid=Cj0KCQjw-4SLBhCVARIsACrhWLVXVZkNBns0rQcbdIO6iXkTNE7-3PXTYhcNQVcQtFzNFqGE6iUfdfiUaAjl-EALw_wcB#form
- b. Montana Human Rights Network, <http://www.mhrn.org/>
- c. Southern Poverty Law Center, <https://www.splcenter.org/>

Outreach, Support, and Finding Community

Once you've made the report, don't stop there. Find local groups, organizations, or agencies that have an interest in expelling hate from your local area, whether they be nonprofits, institutions of faith, support groups, etc.

Even if you haven't made a report, is it important to find these groups and connect with them. Recall that not every hate incident is criminal. Not every hateful social media post constitutes a threat, hateful flyers are generally protected speech, rallies by neo-Nazis, while disturbing and requiring broad condemnation, are protected by the

First Amendment. But these hateful incidents, even when not appropriate for reporting to the police, should be documented, and the community groups monitoring hateful organizing need to know.

Surrounding yourself with people who have the same desire as you to protect the physical and emotional safety of community members is key, as it simply is not possible to do all this work by oneself. Working with others in the community also expands your potential impact and outreach: perhaps with enough support and interest, community groups and organizations could come together to create a local anti-hate campaign, in order to pressure local leaders to pass resolutions or legislation that reject hate, fight discrimination, and underscore that everyone in the community is equally valued, and that an attack on one is an attack on us all.

Hate crime resources

The best easy-to-understand model is one from the Montana Human Rights Network: MHRN's reporting resource guide, <https://www.mhrn.org/publications/fact%20sheets%20and%20advisories/HateIncidentRapid-ResponseGuide.pdf>.

Other valuable resources are:

- a. ADL form https://www.adl.org/reportincident?gclid=Cj0KCQjw-4SLBhCVARIsACrhWLXVZkNBns0rQcbdIO6iXktNE7-3PXTYhcNQvcQtFzNFqGE6iUdfiUaAjJ-EALw_wcB#form
- b. SPLC <https://www.splcenter.org/20170814/ten-ways-fight-hate-community-response-guide#support>
- c. Muslim Advocates https://muslimadvocates.org/action/report-discrimination/?gclid=CjwKCAjwh5qLBhALEiwAioods5Wy4cuPM16KH5PfoeGmaD3OmcCGAQnNmcd3kek4j3Wq3nKk4otiRoCSmQQAvD_BwE
- d. SAALT <https://saalt.org/>
- e. ADL https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resource-knowledge-base/adl-tracker-of-antisemitic-incidents?field_incident_location_state_target_id=All&page=1
- f. STOP AAPI Hate <https://stopaapihate.org/>
- g. APIAHF <https://www.apiahf.org/hate-crime-resources/>
- h. James Byrd Jr. Center to Stop Hate <https://www.lawyerscommittee.org/project/stop-hate-project/>
- i. Michigan Department of Civil Rights/Michigan Alliance Against Hate Crimes <https://web.archive.org/web/20210622110514/https://www.michigan.gov/mdcr/0,4613,7-138-47780---,00.html>
- j. Illinois Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/cdhc/Pages/Report-A-Crime.aspx>
- k. Montana Human Rights Network's Form to Report Incidents of Discrimination, Harassment, and Violence <https://mhrn.org/reportingform/>

K(no)w Justice
K(no)w Peace
#BLM
Mina Sordani



SECURITY

Organization and event security

As mentioned in the group-and-coalition-building section of this manual, [security](#) is important for any organization directly involved in community organizing, especially in the current political climate. Regardless of whether your coalition is organizing your meetings and special events in-person or online, make room for a discussion about security when you are in the planning phase. Security is an evolving process. Make sure to include a section in your event debriefs and other meetings, as appropriate, for a discussion about security and what might be improved, if anything, ahead of your next gathering.

While there are many guides/tools below about different aspects of security, communication issues are critical to consider. Encrypted communications, such as email and instant messaging, are a best practice that should be considered. ProtonMail, <https://protonmail.com/pricing> is an encrypted email service that could be useful for your group or coalition, but it does cost money. Signal, <https://signal.org/en/> is an encrypted messaging system used by journalists and activists that can be very useful for communicating with your coalition in real-time.

Personal Security

Personal security is critical for your coalition leaders and spokespeople, for your regular staff, and for your volunteers/fellows. White nationalist and other hateful groups do not only focus on leadership when targeting civil rights and civic institutions. Establishing some best practices for personal security can not only provide some solace for your team, but also minimize attempts by these groups to compromise your coalition/institution. Personal security can also help to reduce the chance that some groups or anonymous figures online will have personal information about members of your group that they might use for doxing.

Many people associate personal security with securing your online footprint, but your best practices should include real-life considerations too. Remember to save/document all threats directed toward you or members of the coalition, not only online ones but also threatening voicemail, phone calls, and letters. Protests outside of workplaces and homes have become much more common in recent years. Have a plan prepared if such events target you or a member of your group.

Resources

- ADL: Protecting Your Jewish Institution: <https://web.archive.org/web/20201120080746/https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/Protecting-Your-Jewish-Institution-2015-Edition-Final-docx.pdf> (can be used for multiple institutions)
- Secure Community Network: <https://www.securecommunitynetwork.org/>
- Jews for Racial and Economic Justice: community safety pledge: <https://jfrej-web-assets.nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/Community-Safety-Pledge.pdf>

Online/Digital Security

Securing what personal information about you and your family is available online is paramount, especially considering that much of this information is available after just the simplest of searches. Locking down your social media accounts so that only friends/family can access them is very important, but, as mentioned, a lot more



personal information such as addresses, phone numbers, etc., can be accessed. Doxing is a tactic that white nationalist and antidemocracy groups and figures use in order to intimidate, threaten, and attempt to silence activists. These tactics can have a chilling effect on democratic practice and can damage not only the well-being of those directly targeted, but your group or coalition as a whole. Erasing your digital footprint can be hard, and oftentimes individuals/groups only begin to act after personal information has been revealed. That said, thankfully there are a number of resources and organizations such as Equality Labs that specialize in this space.

Resources

- Equality Labs, a guide to digital security, <https://www.equalitylabs.org/digitalsecurityresource#digital-security>
- Panda Security, steps to limit Zoom bombing, <https://www.pandasecurity.com/en/mediacenter/panda-security/zoom-bombing/>
- Front Line Defender, digital security resource page, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/en/digital-security-resources>
- Delete Me, <https://joindeleteme.com/>, a tool (payment required) to help erase personal info, such as addresses from Google searches
- ADL, considerations for digital and online security, <https://www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/combating-hate/Considerations-for-Digital-and-Online-Security-at-Jewish-Institutions.pdf>
- Secure Communities Network, institutional security guides, <https://securecommunitynetwork.org/institutional-security>
- Equality Labs, anti-doxing guide for activists facing attacks, <https://equalitylabs.medium.com/anti-doxing-guide-for-activists-facing-attacks-from-the-alt-right-ec6c290f543c>

SCENARIOS FOR ACTION

While it is important to recognize that there is no perfect solution when responding to hate, it is essential to think through likely scenarios BEFORE they happen. Many manifestations of hate are not unique, and communities across the country have experience dealing with hate incidents or organizing in a way that not only empowers the targeted community/institution, but seeks to marginalize the perpetrators. These scenarios can also help you and your group/community to be proactive, especially when planning a campaign or event that might lead to a response by hate-promoting groups. They can serve as a good brainstorming tool for you and your organization/coalition when thinking through possible negative responses/backlash to your organizing perpetrated by those at odds with your goals/beliefs.

Hate incidents and mobilizations such as rallies are often intended to instill fear in marginalized communities with the goal of having a chilling effect. There can be a tendency for impacted communities to freeze up. Often the first question asked by the victims of hate is, “what do we do now?” With that in mind, the scenarios highlighted in this section include some basic steps, amplifying the principles and details in the sections above, that the impacted community and allies can take in order to respond. Coalition partner and ally support for targeted communities is essential, especially after a hate incident, but there are also times when some responses, while well intentioned, may do more harm than good. These potential pitfalls and how to avoid them are also examined in this section.¹¹

Hate-promoting groups have seen their attempts to spread fear, disunity, and marginalization backfire spectacularly on countless occasions due to incredible and innovative responses by community groups that incorporate art, culture, social media, and dozens of other tools to turn an ugly incident into a robust community response. These projects not only empower the impacted community and serve to build and strengthen cross-community coalitions, but they also send a warning to the haters that their tactics are futile. This section also profiles some of the most powerful examples of community responses to hate that could serve as a model for your coalition.

SCENARIO 1

A community leader or member receives multiple threats, both online and in person, over the span of a few days following the publishing of their name/organization by a right-wing media outlet

The scenario/incident

A community leader or member receives multiple threats, both online and in person, over the span of a few days following the publishing of their name/organization by a right-wing media outlet. The threats include people asking for others to dox (publish personal information such as someone’s address/phone number) the leader, while others use racial slurs and threats of violence. The in-person threats came by way of phone calls to the leader’s organization, while the vast majority of the threats were posted on social media.

Why this was chosen—examples of how this type of incident is common in our current climate

Over the past decade, a new crop of right-wing and far-right media outlets have formed and now enjoy a large audience, especially as the majority of Americans now get their news from social media. These outlets have a long history of targeting educators, civil rights activists, and other community leaders, especially if they speak out on topics such as systemic racism or supporting the movement for Black lives. In many cases, this targeting can be very abrupt, with minimal warning. Within a few hours of an article being posted and shared on social media, thousands of people in online echo chambers can amplify the message, prompting threats, doxing, and other unsavory responses.

11. We are not providing a scenario on how to respond when a hate group announces a rally, as that challenge was discussed in depth in the “Some Words About [Speech](#)” section of this manual.

Possible next steps (while noting that not every similar example is one-size-fits-all)

Immediate first steps

- If the leader hasn't already, they should lock down their social media accounts, making them private, so that people cannot gain unwarranted access to past photos, comments, etc., that could be used to further dox the leader and their friends/relatives.
- Determining the origin of the attacks can be important, especially if it is an outlet or individual with a history of publishing conspiracies and/or false information.
- It is also important to try to gather and preserve the threats received, especially the ones that contain racist slurs, threats of violence, or personal information (doxing). Those should be preserved and, if necessary, forwarded to law enforcement.
- If useful, the targeted individual could reach out to Equality Labs, <https://www.equalitylabs.org/>, which can provide trainings on digital security in order to protect the individual from similar targeting in the future.

Next steps

- Statements of support from community organizations and coalition partners are essential, especially in the aftermath of a "troll storm" targeting a community leader.
- It is important to communicate to the victim that they are not alone, have community support, and should recognize that this is not an isolated incident and that many other activists have had to deal with similar targeting.
- In some cases, trauma counseling should be considered/offered, depending on the severity of the targeting. The trauma that victims endure is a seldom-talked-about impact of this type of incident.
- There are many activists who have had to deal with these campaigns, especially in recent years, and seeking those people out to build a support structure for the victim can be extremely beneficial.
- If the information published that leads to the targeting was false, slanderous, or libelous, the victim may want to investigate legal responses. Figures such as Alex Jones have faced legal consequences for publishing false and/or misleading information that has caused harm to those targeted. Likewise, a Jewish woman targeted in Montana won a \$14-million suit against Andrew Anglin (see <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2019/08/08/judge-neo-nazi-must-pay-more-14-million-jewish-woman-targeted-harassment-campaign>).
- It may also be useful to gather information on the outlet or individual responsible for the troll storm. Many of these outlets and individuals have long histories of using these tactics and solid evidence of this may help to quell any long-term impacts of this.

Possible pitfalls

One possible pitfall can be getting drawn into altercations online with the trolls who are targeting the victim. These trolls could focus their efforts on you, with similar outcomes of threats, doxing, etc.

- It is very important that the burden of the response to these incidents must not fall solely on the victims themselves after incidents like this. Other community leaders and allies must step up to take some of the pressure off the victims.
- Media responses to campaigns like this can be very effective, but there are possible pitfalls that should be taken into account if a media response is an option for your group. See the communications strategies section of this [guide](#) for more helpful information.

Some positive campaigns/Project Lemonade

- Community support campaigns are always a good way of making a positive out of a negative smear campaign such as this. Campaigns that uplift the messages that the victim is best known for, to show that these attacks will not silence those voices can also be powerful. Social media campaigns that elevate these talking points can be a good way to get many people involved.

SCENARIO 2

A community group/center is targeted by a white nationalist group with flyers

The scenario/incident

A community group/center is targeted by a white nationalist group with flyers. The flyers were placed on the doors of the office of the center overnight and were discovered by staff the next morning. The flyers did not have a particular message directed at the center, but rather were generic flyers with the logo and a common slogan used by this particular white nationalist group. Similar flyers have appeared in the city previously, but this is the first time they've been placed somewhere other than a public location such as a park, lamppost, or underpass.

Why this was chosen—examples of how this type of incident is common in our current climate

Flying (or sticking) is a very common tactic used by a number of far-right and other hate-promoting groups. There are different motivations for a flyer campaign depending on the group; some use it as a recruiting tool or a publicity campaign, especially if media report on it, while others use it as an intimidation tactic in order to instill a sense of fear in communities about a viable white nationalist presence. While smaller groups like the certain Klan factions or the New Jersey European Heritage Association use flyers from time to time, Patriot Front is the most prolific, with its activists dropping flyers in hundreds of cities each year. If white nationalist flyers are reported in your community, there's a good chance that Patriot Front is the culprit. In some cases, Patriot Front flyers can be very targeted, such as when activists posted flyers in the Chinatown neighborhood in Seattle at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, but oftentimes the flyers are generic.

Possible next steps (while noting that not every similar example is one-size-fits-all)

With a flyer incident, there are many different approaches groups can take, but here are a few important tips:

First steps

- First, be sure to take photos of the flyers before they are taken down/removed/destroyed (but if you can preserve the flyers, do so—by putting them in a plastic bag). The photo, especially if it contains an image or slogan or has a website, will help to identify which group was behind it.
- You may want to contact local law enforcement so that they are aware of the incident. Groups such as the Anti-Defamation League and Southern Poverty Law Center document flyer incidents on a yearly basis, so reaching out to these institutions would be appreciated.
- If your building or a nearby storefront has security cameras, you might be able to capture still photos or video of those responsible. In many cases the same individual(s) are involved in multiple flyer drops, so this helps identify those involved.
- Inform staff and community leaders and provide trauma/crisis assistance/counseling if it is needed.
- Do not share photos of the flyers on social media, as you don't want to give the hate literature more exposure. Instead describe the type of flyer or sticker found.

Possible campaign responses

There are certainly pros and cons of organizing a public response to a flyer incident like this, but if a decision is made to go public, there are a lot of different options:

- A virtual or in-person community event to counter white nationalism could be a powerful response, especially if local elected officials and community leaders are able to participate.
- A fundraiser for the impacted community organization opens the door for folk outside of your city to participate.

Possible pitfalls

One possible pitfall is that publicizing the incident could result in unearned/unwarranted publicity for the group that spread the flyers, especially if the media writes a story.



- Groups like Patriot Front publish many of its activities on social media platforms such as Telegram, but media attention is seen as an added bonus of free publicity for the group.
- Because distributing flyers is a relatively easy thing to plan and execute, attention could spur those responsible to plan other flyer campaigns in the area, but it's difficult to predict if this will in fact happen.

Some positive campaigns/Project Lemonade

- One possible campaign could be to convene local artists to design a poster/yard sign with an inclusive or anti-bigotry message that community members could print out or purchase and put in their homes/businesses in show of solidarity following the incident.

SCENARIO 3

A nationally-recognized speaker with a long history of anti-Muslim animus has been invited by a church in your town to speak about the “dangers of Islam”

The scenario/incident

A nationally-recognized speaker with a long history of anti-Muslim animus has been invited by a church in your town to speak about the “dangers of Islam.” The church and a local anti-Muslim group are sponsoring the event and promoting it on social media. The speaker is a regular on the anti-Muslim speaking circuit and travels the country speaking at churches and at larger conferences. They have spoken in your town previously, but there was no planned response.

Why this was chosen—examples of how this type of incident is common in our current climate

Anti-Muslim animus continues to be rampant in far-right circles and in many cases it is something that bridges the gap between different segments of the movement such as white nationalists and paramilitaries. Anti-Muslim speakers have built a cottage industry over the past two decades that is not only lucrative to them, but can be highly impactful in other areas. Anti-Muslim activists routinely train law enforcement and are called upon by elected officials to promote anti-Muslim legislation at the state and local level and both raise major concerns about bias.

We know that hateful speech can lead to hate crime, and the invitation of an anti-Muslim speaker can increase in the further vilification in your locale of Muslims or those perceived to be. In many cases, we've seen elected and other community leaders attend these events, providing further credibility and legitimacy to the speaker and their bigoted views.

Possible next steps (while noting that not every similar example is one-size-fits-all)

There are many different approaches you and your coalition can take when a situation like this arises, but here are some basic steps to take before, during, and after the event.

Before the event

- One of the first things your organization/coalition should do is inform members of the local Muslim community of the event and get their feedback about possible responses, if any.
- Your coalition should do some background research on the speaker and see if they have ties/strong allies in the region. Groups such as the SPLC, WSC, and ADL may have info on the speaker, and groups like Muslim Advocates and your local Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) chapter may be able to give your coalition more information regarding the speakers' past activities and how influential/problematic they are.
- Look to see if any community leaders are planning to attend the event or are promoting it. Also look into the host venue (the church)—does it have a history of inviting problematic speakers or is this a first?
- This research will help your coalition determine whether a response, if any, is warranted.

Possible campaign responses

- If the church doesn't have a history of anti-Muslim animus or inviting bigoted speakers, a conversation between coalition leaders, other faith leaders, and the church might be a good first step. Create a one-page fact sheet about the speaker, with background information and some of his most egregious quotes.
- If there are elected officials or other community leaders attending, your coalition could also engage with them to ask why they are lending legitimacy to such a problematic speaker.
- If your coalition/group decides to conduct a campaign to publicize the event and why it is problematic, groups such as your local CAIR chapter, Muslim Advocates, and MPOWER Change would be good to contact for guidance/support. While pressuring venues that host bigoted speakers is not always an effective tactic, in 2018 an anti-Muslim activist had his five-city Midwest speaking tour cancelled after one night following pressure by local groups who contacted venues to ask why they were hosting the events. Each case is different, but a dialogue with the host venue could be [impactful](#).
- Both an in-person and/or virtual counterevent can also be an effective response to an incident such as this. An interfaith celebration or one that highlights American Muslims in your town could be a very powerful counterweight.
- Having a social and traditional media strategy is also crucial. Journalists may not be aware of the event and having a diverse range of voices to convey that the speaker does not represent the values of your city can help to marginalize them and their supporters.

During the event

- Encouraging community members not to attend the event, but rather to attend your in-person or virtual counter event (if you choose to have one) is a logical step.
- If you inform media, they may attend the anti-Muslim event for their story, but your coalition should press them to make sure they include your voice/talking points.
- If someone in your coalition is comfortable attending the anti-Muslim event, they might be able to gather useful information such as literature, a list of prominent attendees at the event, and the most egregious quote from the speaker(s). Information regarding anti-Muslim organizing in your area might also be discussed. There are obvious safety concerns about taking this step, as discussed earlier in this [manual](#), so the decision shouldn't be taken lightly. One could also see if the event is streaming online and download the video of the stream.



After the event

- Take stock of the community response to the anti-Muslim event. Were there any letters to the editor in the local papers? What, if anything, did residents say on social media about the event?
- Determine the impact of the event on your local Muslim, Arab, and South Asian (MASA) community. Did the speaker's comments get publicized; are there other anti-Muslim activities planned? Talk to MASA leaders to get their sense.
- Plan an in-person or virtual meeting to discuss the campaign with your coalition partners and determine what went well, and what could've been better. It is better to meet as soon as possible after the event, so if your next scheduled coalition meeting is not for an extended period, organize a special meeting devoted to this debrief.

Possible pitfalls

As with many events, attempts to publicize it and criticize those attending could result in the event garnering more attention and increasing attendance, but that should only be one factor in your response-planning process.

- The media response could be favorable toward the speaker/event. Sometimes, the coverage of such events won't be as critical as your coalition would like. If that is the case, you should discuss responses in your debrief, such as a letter to the editor or something similar.

Some positive campaigns/Project Lemonade

- Aside from the campaigns proposed earlier in this document, a fundraiser campaign for local MASA groups could be a good option.
- Continued dialogue with the MASA community post-event will be key. If MASA groups/leaders are not a part of your coalition already, invite them to join!
- A poster campaign is another community-oriented drive that can have a positive impact and send a message that anti-Muslim bigotry isn't welcome. This type of campaign can also connect you with local artists, a partner that might not be utilized by your coalition to date.

SCENARIO 4

LGBTQ groups and a local library are targeted due to a drag queen story hour event that is set to take place at the library in the coming weeks

The scenario/incident

LGBTQ groups and a local library are targeted due to a drag queen story hour event that is set to take place at the library in the coming weeks. A coalition of anti-LGBTQ and other activists are planning a counterprotest and have started a campaign against the library for hosting the event. The library has received dozens of complaints.

Why this was chosen—examples of how this type of incident is common in our current climate

Drag queen story hours are a relatively new effort to teach children about gender fluidity and provide them with queer role models. Local drag queens have teamed up with libraries, bookstores, schools, and other public places to read stories and interact with children. Some of these events in different parts of the country have promoted negative responses from a small, but vocal coalition of anti-LGBTQ groups and others. As public, nonpartisan spaces, libraries have had a long history of confrontations over hosting events from across the political spectrum, but anti-LGBTQ groups have, in some cases, successfully and rapidly organized campaigns in an attempt to stop these events from taking place. (Reasonable people can disagree about issues of child development and at what age children should engage gender identity issues. Reasonable people—sometimes influenced by their religious beliefs—can decide they don't want their own children to attend such events. But it is problematic—and antidemocratic—when they insist that public institutions only reflect THEIR point of view, let alone refuse to hold such events for those who want their children to attend.)

Possible next steps (while noting that not every similar example is one-size-fits-all)

Before the event

- Community groups should contact the library to ask what support its staff needs ahead of the event. If staff do not have protocols in place for venue security and protocols for responding to threats, work with the library to provide suggestions and assistance.
- Librarians can also consult a new toolkit, <https://www.westernstatescenter.org/wsctoolkits>, written by their colleagues in Seattle, that breaks down common flashpoints and how to respond to them.
- The objecting group's main goal will be to make conditions so toxic that the event itself is cancelled. This has happened in some instances due to security concerns, with alternative venues used instead. A backup/contingency plan for an escalation in threats should be brainstormed.
- The library and its coalition partners should also have a media strategy, including a statement for press that shows broad support for the library and the story hour event. It is likely that media outlets vehemently opposed to the story hour will seek comment from the library staff. This response should also be factored in.

During the event

- It is likely that the counter demonstration will be taking place outside of the library and attendees will want to engage with staff, parents, and sometimes even children. Protocol for limiting these interactions should be a priority. This should also be the case for after the event, when people leave.
- A plan should also be in place if any protesters attempt to disrupt the event.

Post event

- If media attend the event, they will likely seek comment from organizers afterwards. Talking points should be prepared ahead of time.
- Support for the library such as a pledge to host further events at that branch can be very empowering, especially in response to attempts to shut down and silence these gatherings.
- It is always important to hold a debrief, either in person or virtually, in the aftermath of the event, so that community members can discuss the pros and cons and solidify plans for continued dialogue and suggesting possible future gatherings.

Possible pitfalls

- Don't underestimate the possible backlash/counter demonstration that could be organized in response to the drag queen story hour event. Groups opposed to these events are extremely active and can mobilize quickly. Monitoring social media for mentions of the drag queen story hour can help gauge the level of engagement around the event.

Some positive campaigns/Project Lemonade

- In the aftermath of the story hour, one important commitment your coalition can make to the library is a pledge to hold X number of events at the library over the next year. One goal of the opposing groups is to hollow-out civic institutions like libraries; a commitment to host further events and encouraging others to do so not only establishes the library as a vibrant community space, but strengthens it.
- A classic Project Lemonade [fundraiser](#) that could be used in this situation is to get community groups to pledge a monetary amount for each protester that shows up to the library for the drag queen story hour event.



SCENARIO 5

Local law enforcement officers are cooperating or coordinating with paramilitary groups in response to civil rights demonstrations organized by groups such as Black Lives Matter or Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ).

The scenario/incident

Local law enforcement officers are cooperating or coordinating with paramilitary groups in response to civil rights demonstrations organized by groups such as Black Lives Matter or Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ). The paramilitary group(s) in question posted photos on social media boasting that they assisted law enforcement by providing security and sharing intelligence. Though law enforcement did not acknowledge the assistance from paramilitaries, the posts on social media show clear coordination between them.

Why this was chosen—examples of how this type of incident is common in our current climate

Mobilizations by paramilitary groups around the country have increased dramatically in recent years. Paramilitary groups have coordinated with far-right and other groups at events like the COVID-19 “reopen” protests, the “stop the steal” rallies post-election, and most prominently, in response to the wave of protests against police violence following the murder of George Floyd. With an increase in paramilitary mobilizations came a significant uptick in the number of examples of apparent coordination between local law enforcement and these groups. Paramilitary groups actively recruit active-duty law enforcement and many of these groups, such as the Oath Keepers, boast of military and law enforcement in their ranks. While by no means is this type of coordination a norm, in some places it is happening. Where it does, this coordination raises major concerns for town or city officials, civil rights groups, and community members. Much more needs to be done to address the nexus between law enforcement and these groups, including increased enforcement of antimilitia laws (which is happening to a degree).

Possible next steps (while noting that not every similar example is one-size-fits-all)

- Document any and all examples of coordination between these groups and local law enforcement in your area. These will most likely be in the form of social media posts, but firsthand accounts and documentation from journalists on the ground covering protests where this might be occurring will also be good to obtain.

- Any examples of lack of impartiality by law enforcement when responding to civil rights protests versus far-right protests in your city/area would also be very useful, especially if there is a history of law enforcement not dealing with these protests in an evenhanded manner.
- If your group has a close/working relationship with law enforcement, a first step might be to bring forth this evidence to your law enforcement contact to voice your concerns.
- Your coalition should consider issuing a public statement about these coordinations, especially if they are well-documented and if your overtures to law enforcement about this problem have been ignored or rebuffed. The statement should call on local elected officials to investigate the evidence and also ask for an explanation from the police leadership.
- Consider asking local officials, or allies in law enforcement, to make preemptive public statements denouncing the paramilitary groups, making clear that these groups have no legitimate authority. To help persuade these officials, you can point out that paramilitary groups routinely claim to be working with the local police department, or at the behest of local officials, even when it's not true. The best way to avoid bad public relations and/or potential legal problems (for example, if the paramilitary groups harm someone) is to be proactive in making it crystal clear there is no collusion or delegation of power to the extremist groups.
- Depending on the responses from law enforcement and your city council, a media campaign to draw attention to this issue might be necessary. If you do not have a relationship with local journalists, search for articles published locally that have focused on police accountability/impartiality and seek out those journalists.
- If your city/locale has a police oversight board, a meeting with that board about your concerns is another possible option.

Possible pitfalls

- Your coalition must be willing to invest time and effort to promote reform. The coalition must not get frustrated in the likely scenario that the issue takes some time to be addressed.

Some positive campaigns/Project Lemonade

- Your coalition should look to other cities as to how they have dealt with similar issues. Putting pressure on law enforcement not to coordinate with these types of groups can be very powerful and effective. In some cases, the coordination may have involved a few officers and is not an agency-wide issue.
- Your coalition could team up with police accountability groups on a more long-term campaign of establishing a police review/accountability board, if your city does not have one in place already. This could take some time and effort to do, but it could be an ongoing campaign by your coalition kick-started by this incident.
- If this coordination is longstanding and is part of a pattern, your coalition could consider teaming up with groups such as the ACLU to push for federal investigations into police misconduct. This again is a long-term process, but could provide the accountability needed to address the longstanding issues.

SCENARIO 6

A Black, Indigenous, and People of Color-, or BIPOC-, owned restaurant, whose owners are outspoken social justice allies, is vandalized

The scenario/incident

A Black, Indigenous, and People of Color-, or BIPOC-, owned restaurant, whose owners are outspoken social justice allies, is vandalized. The vandalization took place on the same day that racist groups gathered in the city to hold a demonstration. While it is unclear who is responsible for the vandalization, it did include racist symbols/rhetoric.

Why this was chosen—examples of how this type of incident is common in our current climate

In some communities many businesses work with social justice organizations and support progressive causes. They can be a key ally for local coalitions in the fight to shrink space for hateful and other far-right organizing. Businesses around the country are visible supporters of causes such as the Movement for Black Lives and resettling refugees. In response, some of

these businesses, including some that are BIPOC-owned, have been targeted by hate-promoting groups. In Salem, Oregon, a BIPOC-owned business had a “hate has no place here” message on its window covered up by spray paint in 2020.

Possible first steps to take immediately after the vandalism is discovered (that your group may help facilitate and/or do)

- There are many possible things business owners can do after an incident like this, but, if they are willing to make the attack public, this could provide a big opportunity for the community at large to show its support.
- Law enforcement should be made aware of the event in order to open an investigation and possibly prosecute the vandal(s).
- Photos of the vandalism should be taken and the owners should fully document the damage in writing.
- Security cameras at the business or at nearby buildings could help identify the culprits, especially if a vehicle was used and a license plate is visible. This has been used to determine the identity of vandals in similar incidents in recent years.
- In some cases, hate groups actually boast about/take credit for acts of vandalism. Over the past year, the white nationalist group Patriot Front has posted numerous photos of its members vandalizing George Floyd murals in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and elsewhere. A social media search for the name of the business could reveal posts from activists boasting about the vandalism.

Possible next steps (while noting that not every similar example is one-size-fits-all)

- The vandalism provides an opportunity for like-minded businesses in the area/city to sign on to a pledge condemning white nationalism and such hate crimes.
- Businesses can also develop a network or join an already-established coalition that meets on a regular basis to discuss things like info sharing, security tips, and planning ahead of organized hate-promoting gatherings.
- Asks can and should be made of law enforcement and local elected officials regarding what they are doing to combat incidents like this, especially because these incidents are part of a national trend.
- Sometimes a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible can be a valuable tool. It may prompt someone to provide crucial information, and also helps underscore how unacceptable this type of hate crime is in your community. Businesses may help underwrite such a reward.

Possible pitfalls

Be mindful of the language used in public statements in response to the incident. Big tent (widely inclusive) responses and actions will be most effective and will show the culprits that their attempts to silence or instill a sense of fear or a chilling effect on the business failed.

Some positive campaigns/Project Lemonade

- A large response, such as a community event, could be a great solution here. An event at the impacted businesses that brings together community leaders such as elected officials and business and religious leaders, and which media can attend, could be a great launch for a campaign. This could include a sign-on by business leaders denouncing political violence.
- If the damage is more than minimal, the business itself could hold a fundraiser, but other businesses could pledge to donate a portion of their proceeds from a given day/week to the impacted business.
- Community groups could also pledge to hold some future events/meetings at the impacted business in order to generate revenue for it, assuming it's a place that's appropriate for events. Alternatively (or additionally) if it is a retail store, groups could organize a day of mass buying.
- Be creative! If you believe you can create a sufficient turnout that will be seen as a success (don't risk failure here), hold an event at the business where other businesses and community members can create anti-hate signs to hang in their storefronts or homes.
- If you can, help the targeted business reach out to other businesses around the country that have been impacted in the same way. Network with them and ask for advice/guidance on what they did to respond to such an incident.



SCENARIO 7

Local groups with agendas promoting discrimination or hate against members of our community (simply based on who they are or who they love) announce their intention to testify in opposition to a piece of progressive legislation at a city council or committee hearing at the state legislature.

The scenario/incident

Local groups with agendas promoting discrimination or hate against members of our community (simply based on who they are or who they love) announce their intention to testify in opposition to a piece of progressive legislation at a city council or committee hearing at the state legislature. The groups are encouraging activists to show up to testify and have provided sample testimony in postings online. The sample testimony seems to be provided by national groups tied to their agenda.

Why this was chosen—examples of how this type of incident is common in our current climate

Some groups opposed to equal rights for all attempt to use democratic institutions when convenient in order to advance their cause or to stem progressive gains. Sometimes, despite their history of antigovernment rhetoric and continued targeting of elected officials, some of these groups also seek to build bridges with like-minded or sympathetic elected officials whenever possible. There are many issues that these groups have mobilized around in the recent past, such as environmental protections, LGBTQ rights, voting rights, immigration, and gun control. Oftentimes, national organizations and lobbies are in direct coordination with local chapters or likeminded organizations, and they work in tandem to drum up opposition to the legislation and those who introduced it. State legislatures have been one of the epicenters of this type of organizing, with protests, walkouts, and even acts of violence committed at these institutions in recent years.

Possible next steps (while noting that not every similar example is one-size-fits-all)

- Do your research on the groups that are going to be testifying and the national groups aiding them. This information can be useful when talking to media. Being able to succinctly address why these groups are problematic, while also pointing to the fact that groups outside of the state are assisting, can be a powerful narrative.

- Organize yourselves! Make sure your coalition has a wide range of people willing to attend the in-person or virtual committee hearing in order to testify in favor of the legislation.
- Numbers are important. Aside from a diverse range of voices, your coalition should be looking to maximize the number of people it can bring out to testify in favor of the legislation.
- If possible, look to obtain the sample talking points these groups are circulating and prepare points that address and debunk their arguments. And don't reinvent the wheel. It's likely there's similar legislation being offered, and opposed, elsewhere. Connect with groups similar to yours in those states, and SHARE INFORMATION.
- Make sure everyone is prepared with sample talking points and stays on message if possible. Hold mock sessions so people feel better prepared and more comfortable delivering their remarks.
- Prepare your coalition to respond to and deal with intimidation tactics used by the hate-promoting groups, before, during, and after the hearing, especially if it is in person. Have a safety plan and make sure that members coming to testify are OK with dealing with intimidation factors such as hate-promoting activists with firearms or menacing signs outside the legislative building.
- Anti-LGBTQ folk often stray far off the bill's topic and engage in flat-out attacks on the community. Prep committee allies to call for points of order/personal privilege and ask the chair to make people testifying stay on the bill. Even if the chair doesn't shut the testifier down, it's a way to show solidarity with the community, literally interrupt anti-LGBTQ diatribes, and often fluster the testifier. It's great if there are a few allied committee members that can take turns doing this. In the best scenario, the chair will tell testifiers to stick to the bill and/or make them sit down. (This strategy should also be considered in other scenarios where other types of hate groups testify on other issues before government committees and city councils.)

Next steps post-committee hearing

- Regardless of how the committee votes, your coalition should hold a debriefing session soon after to discuss what went well, what could've been better, and to continue the dialogue between this hearing and the next.
- Be prepared for the hate-promoting groups not to be deterred by the advance of the progressive legislation, and continue to monitor their public statements for information regarding future protests or mobilizations in response to this legislation.
- Remember the groups in other states who emailed you their talking points and research about their similar experiences? Memorialize your efforts—what worked and didn't and thoughts as to why—so that you can share whatever wisdom you acquired with others facing similar challenges elsewhere in the future (and also so you have a reference point for your own organization if, five or 10 years on, your group—with new members—has a similar situation).

Possible pitfalls

- Be careful not to get lured into responding directly to white nationalist and other hate-promoting talking points in the testimony; that will likely only serve to reemphasize the points these groups are making. For example, responding to far-right statistics about alleged immigrant crime can unintentionally reinforce the criminal immigrant stereotype that anti-immigrant groups want to perpetuate.
- At the same time, even though your job is not to respond to whatever the haters say (that sounds defensive, and your job is to set out your own case), if there's an opportunity to debunk and expose an argument, and doing so will help your case, go for it.

Some positive campaigns/Project Lemonade

- The committee hearings themselves can be an opportunity to strengthen community bonds. Plan to host an event after the committee hearing where those who provided testimony can unwind and continue to network. Testifying when far-right and other groups with hateful agendas are mobilized in opposition can be stressful and having a space for people to gather can help ease this.

SCENARIO 8

After an incident involving an alleged undocumented immigrant, anti-immigrant groups and elected officials host a nativist event in your area

The scenario/incident

After an incident involving an alleged undocumented immigrant, anti-immigrant groups and elected officials host a nativist¹² event in your area. The event brings together both national and local anti-immigrant groups as well as elected officials in your area that have a history of anti-immigrant rhetoric and/or introducing anti-immigrant legislation. The event is billed as a memorial/fundraiser for the person/family impacted, but the event results in a spike in anti-immigrant rhetoric locally, much to the alarm of people of color in the area.

Why this was chosen—examples of how this type of incident is common in our current climate

Anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim groups, collectively known as nativist groups, seek to divide communities by creating a climate of fear and animosity directed toward immigrants, whenever possible. Some anti-immigrant groups produce a litany of literature blaming immigrants for America's ills while elected officials at the state and federal level have introduced several harsh anti-immigrant bills. A common and highly problematic tactic of these groups is highlighting crimes committed by alleged immigrants or undocumented immigrants, taking single incidents out of context to paint entire communities as responsible for crime, and thus to dehumanize them. In places such as Iowa and San Francisco anti-immigrant groups have organized events in the wake of these tragedies, looking to exploit a killing or other crime, even when the family of the victim has asked to not politicize their loved one's memory.

Possible next steps (while noting that not every similar example is one-size-fits-all)

- One of the goals of anti-immigrant groups is to whip up a frenzy of anti-immigrant hysteria by using the media to their advantage and to paint immigrants as criminals. With that in mind, a robust media strategy is critical for your organization/coalition. Op-eds, a press conference, and other press interviews should stress solidarity. Please see our messaging [section](#) of the manual, but also see here for an additional resource on combatting anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim messaging from ReThink Media, <https://rethinkmedia.org/our-work/case-studies>.
- One strategy is to humanize immigrants, show they are part of the social fabric, and recall that with the exception of American Indians and slaves, our ancestors were all immigrants. Years ago the American Jewish Committee organized many naturalization services. People may hate immigrants abstractly, but love new citizens holding flags.
- In this moment, reaching out to national experts on anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim groups such as Muslim Advocates, the Anti-Defamation League, Southern Poverty Law Center, and Political Research Associates could be useful to equip community leaders and spokespeople with talking points about how these type of events are a longstanding anti-immigrant tactic. These groups could help provide language for a community statement condemning this tactic, for example.
- In the buildup to and in the days after the event, the potential for bias and hate incidents should be taken into account, and community leaders should encourage safety and vigilance while also stressing that any incidents be reported and documented.
- Another critical decision will be to decide whether or not to hold an event as a counterbalance to the anti-immigrant gathering. There are certainly pros and cons for each. One possibility is to hold a community event in the days after the anti-immigrant one. If you know the event is happening and have a little lead time, you could also think about holding your event before the anti-immigrant one. It allows you the first shot at setting the narrative. Any counterbalancing event might help to ease the tensions in the community.

12. "Nativist" means "a person who supports the idea . . . that people who were born in a country are more important than people who have come to the country from somewhere else . . ." <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/nativist>



- If your coalition does choose to host a community event, a multifaith multiethnic gathering will be key. The goal of such an event should be community unity and a rejection of attempts to divide the community by those looking to profit and exploit hate.
- If you have connections with political leaders, encourage them to write op-eds and otherwise speak out against this type of hate. After all, to extrapolate from a single horrid incident to negatively characterize a whole community makes no more sense than vilifying all Americans for the actions of any of us.

Possible pitfalls

- One common anti-immigrant and white nationalist talking point is linking immigrants to crime and using bogus and/or out-of-context statistics in an attempt to argue that immigrants are more likely to commit crimes. Though these arguments are demonstrably false, you and your coalition may not want to get into a debate on a topic such as this, for fear of perpetuating and inadvertently reinforcing this stereotype. On the other hand, if you are well-prepared, and feel confident that you can debunk and expose the distortions (remember those academics you reached out to—maybe one of them can take the lead on such an effort), do so.
- Nativist groups use these incidents to attempt to push legislation at the state and local level that could prolong the toxic anti-immigrant climate. Your coalition should be wary of these prolonged campaigns organized with the help of local and national groups as well as elected officials and keep an eye out for legislation and other initiatives organized by these figures in the months following the anti-immigrant event. If there is a local ACLU chapter, it may monitor such legislation.

Some positive campaigns/Project Lemonade

- Traditional Project Lemonade campaigns may not be the best choice in response to a situation like this, especially as it could be construed as capitalizing on a tragedy. With that said, if the event specifically targets immigrant rights leaders or organizations, there is an opportunity to organize a support event and/or fundraiser to show solidarity in the wake of anti-immigrant targeting. It is also important to reach out to the victims if possible, privately. They might have some things they want done that your organization can support—and you'd have more credibility if you said it was done in consultation with the family, etc.

- As previously mentioned, these anti-immigrant events are designed to demonize immigrants and divide communities. Creative responses to show community unity in the face of these divisive tactics can be a great tool. Social media campaigns, as well as those that tap into art and culture such as signs that residents and businesses can use or the creation of a mural, are all examples of rejecting hate.

SCENARIO 9

Local houses of worship are targeted for their pro-immigrant and/or pro-refugee stances

The scenario/incident

Local houses of worship are targeted for their pro-immigrant and/or pro-refugee stances. The houses of worship are Jewish and Catholic and have been victimized by a rash of threatening phone calls, emails, and messages on their social media channels due to their inclusionary stance on immigrants and work to help settle refugees in the area.

Why this was chosen—examples of how this type of incident is common in our current climate

Anti-immigrant, but especially anti-refugee groups, have attempted to politicize America's long history of refugee resettlement. One tactic is to publicly highlight the organizations and religious institutions working to resettle refugees. Groups such as Refugee Resettlement Watch (RRW) encourage activists to form "pockets of resistance" to do whatever necessary to stop the resettlement of refugees in their locales. The book, *Refugee Resettlement and the Hijra to America*, written by the founder of RRW and published by an influential anti-Muslim think tank, provides a blueprint for activists to engage in anti-refugee organizing at the local level and specifically names charities with a long history of helping to resettle refugees. In small towns such as Aberdeen, South Dakota, and Lewiston, Maine, these activists have helped to create a toxic climate of anti-refugee fervor.

Detail possible next steps (while noting that not every similar example is one-size-fits-all)

- Encourage the religious institutions to document any and all examples of targeting via email, phone call, or online. If the targeting contains threats or personal information of employees/religious leaders (doxing), be sure that they flag this for local law enforcement, if they feel comfortable. Preserve any physical evidence (including digital evidence).
- Anti-refugee activism in this form is a relatively new phenomenon, according to interviews with those working to resettle refugees. With that in mind, institutional and staff security for the employees of the religious institutions is an important step. Groups such as the Anti-Defamation League have resources on this subject, and if religious leaders or staff are specifically targeted, Equality Labs offers digital security on an individual basis. Local law enforcement will likely be willing to do a free security check.
- One of the goals of RRW's "pockets of resistance" is to make it appear that the community is overwhelmingly opposed to the relocation of refugees to the area. In the past, this community activism has been successful in redirecting relocation to other areas. With that in mind, a powerful way to dispel the myth that these groups are trying to portray can be a media strategy that focuses on how these threats are part of a broader national campaign to demonize refugees and demonstrating, if possible, that many of the threats actually came from outside the community.
- Groups that track hate-promoting and other nativist groups can educate your coalition on anti-refugee tactics and reaching out to these groups such as Western States Center, Political Research Associates, and the Montana Human Rights Network can help educate your coalition and equip them with the tools to respond effectively.
- Work with local refugee groups to put forth humanizing stories of how the community helped people; that's the value that should be emphasized, our goodness helping other human beings, rather than defining a dangerous "other." Refugees are not simply immigrants, they are fleeing danger and persecution. (Reach out to national organizations that work with refugees—in particular HIAS, <https://www.hias.org/>).
- The spokespeople for the targeted religious institutions could provide media some details of the threats to show that they are hateful and threatening, demonstrating again that these threats do not speak for the community at large.

- Refugee resettlement agencies have a long history of organizing fantastic and vibrant community events that bring together religious institutions, elected officials, refugees, and community members. Events like this, either in person or virtually, can help to ease community tensions, empowering refugees and the religious institutions helping them and showing that your community is welcoming.
- Your coalition should continue dialogue with those targeted institutions, because in some cases, the targeting can continue over some months, especially if the right-wing media echo chamber picks up and amplifies the efforts of anti-refugee activists locally or names and shames those religious institutions working to resettle refugees. Plus, even if the threats subside, the victimized groups will appreciate your continuing concern, and you'll keep the lines of communication open so if another incident happens, you'll be able to help quickly.

Possible pitfalls

- Many of these movements seek to tie immigrants and refugees to crime and terrorism and will use these talking points ad nauseam. During the height of the civil war in Syria, when thousands of refugees in that country were fleeing violence, these groups attempted to claim that Syrian refugees could be ISIS sleeper agents. With that in mind, when your coalition or religious leaders are talking to media, have talking points prepared that do not unwittingly perpetuate and reinforce these claims. A good example of an inclusive message that underscores the danger of scapegoating people is the speech of New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQsHc1EHgQY>, when some were saying that Muslims shouldn't be able to have a mosque near the World Trade Center because of the 9/11 attacks.

Some positive campaigns/Project Lemonade

- A simple Project Lemonade example can be getting community members to pledge a monetary sum for every disparaging letter/email/phone call received by the religious institutions working to help resettle refugees. The money could be earmarked for these institutions' refugee resettlement work.
- There are many different options for in-person or virtual events that your coalition/community can organize in response to these incidents. World Refugee Day is on June 20 each year, but there are many other dates you can use, including religious holidays or national holidays/festivals that refugees in your area celebrate in their home countries. This can be a great education cross-community engagement opportunity that could also take place in schools.

SCENARIO 10

Elected officials are meeting with or coordinating with local antidemocratic groups in your area

Explain the scenario/incident

Elected officials are meeting with or coordinating with local antidemocratic groups in your area. The meetings were not advertised by the elected official(s), but rather the antidemocratic groups themselves. A video of the meeting, which included a question and answer session, was posted online and shows a warm reception between the elected officials, who indicated that they were aware of the group and endorsed their antidemocratic activities.

Explain why this was chosen—examples of how this type of incident is common in our current climate

While elected officials are being targeted by the paramilitary and white nationalist groups at alarming levels, at the same time, these groups are also attempting to make inroads with elected officials they feel share their values. A lot of these officials are not "antigovernment" but rather anti-*this* government. Ties to elected officials, such as these figures speaking at an event or rally, helps to legitimize these groups, especially as they want to appear more mainstream and build more credibility at the local level.

Detail possible next steps (while noting that not every similar example is one-size-fits-all)

- As always, make sure that the evidence of the elected officials speaking at the event is documented and look out for any subsequent posts, either from the group or elected official, that reveal further levels of communication/support.

REJECT

HATE.

- Because the elected officials knew of the group and were aware of their activities, gathering materials to show the officials and their staff why this group is problematic might not be the most impactful move, but it still should be considered by your coalition.
- If your coalition is not knowledgeable about the group in particular, contact civil rights groups doing monitoring in your area, such as Western States Center, Political Research Associates, Montana Human Rights Network, Southern Poverty Law Center, or the Anti-Defamation League. These groups can help give your coalition the background information that you need to help build a campaign.
- If the elected official is not receptive to having a conversation about why the group they met with is problematic, informing media might be a useful next step. Political reporters or reporters who have covered white nationalist and/or paramilitary groups either locally or regionally might be good contacts to reach out to.
- If the official is a member of a county or city council, a possible longer-term response could be seeking to get the council to pass a resolution condemning white nationalism and/or political violence. Such a resolution could send a powerful message.

Explain possible pitfalls (and give real-life examples of these, if possible)

- Speaking out directly against the antidemocratic group could lead to targeting of your coalition by this group and others. In the current climate, political violence and threats directed against civil rights groups and elected officials continues to be very high. Make sure that your spokespeople are prepared to respond to threats, etc.
- Be sure when speaking to media to have examples of why the group(s) that the elected official is meeting/coordinating with are problematic. The stronger case you build, the more likely media are going to report on it.

Propose some positive campaigns/Project Lemonade

- A campaign such as a letter condemning white nationalist and paramilitary groups and expressing how these groups are a threat to our democracy is something your coalition could launch and encourage other elected officials to sign. The letter would not need to directly name the elected official or group in question, but rather take a broader approach.

SCENARIO 11

An elected official posts hateful speech on their personal social media accounts

Explain the scenario/incident

An elected official posts hateful speech on their personal social media accounts. The rhetoric was disparaging toward people of color and was posted on the elected official's personal account and not their campaign or official elected representative accounts.

Explain why this was chosen—examples of how this type of incident is common in our current climate

Though elected officials are mandated to represent all of the people in their constituency, not just the people who voted for them, that unfortunately is not the case and not the political climate we find ourselves in today. From the federal level down to the hyper-local, a small segment of elected officials has a history of espousing bigoted rhetoric or associating with far-right or paramilitary groups. In the current political climate, the consequences for elected officials espousing this rhetoric and engaging in these associations are diminishing. Some particularly egregious cases at the federal and local level have found officials being censured for their actions, but on a whole, the emphasis is on community groups and constituents to hold their elected officials accountable for this sort of behavior, should it arise.

Detail possible next steps (while noting that not every similar example is one-size-fits-all)

- Make sure that the offensive post(s) in question are preserved, via screenshots, etc., in case the elected official or someone running their account attempts to scrub the evidence.

- Your coalition should have a list of demands, depending on the nature of the bigoted remark. These could range from things like an apology from the elected official, a meeting with your coalition including an educational session for the elected official and their staff about the bigotry in question, or censures and recall efforts if the remarks are part of a pattern of bias, etc.
- You should anticipate that media will pick up on the offensive post due to the sheer volume of internet sleuths and those observing elected officials' conduct on social media and elsewhere. With that in mind, your coalition/group could opt to be proactive and issue a statement condemning the bigoted remarks. This could result in further media opportunities for your groups/coalition to get your talking points across. If your coalition seeks national attention, find a national reporter who covers such stories (as of the publication of this manual, CNN reporter Andrew Kaczynski is one such journalist, with a long history of reporting on similar stories).
- If the bigoted language was targeting a particular community, your coalition may choose to put representatives from that community as the spokespersons for your coalition. You should also seek to bring in external voices from the community, if need be.
- In many cases, these incidents can be teachable moments for elected officials and can serve as an opportunity for your coalition to establish or solidify a relationship with the official and their staff. However, if the elected official is unremorseful for the remarks, your coalition may need to look for other avenues.
- If the elected official is not open to dialogue with your group/coalition, another option is to reach out to elected officials who are their colleagues on committees or boards that they serve on or certain caucus blocs such as the Black Caucus, etc., if applicable. These elected officials might be able to make headway with their colleague.

Explain possible pitfalls (and give real-life examples of these, if possible)

- Each elected official is different and looking at past behavior/associations of this official might help your group/coalition figure out the best plan of action in terms of a response, instead of assuming that the official will be willing to enter into dialogue.
- Be prepared for far-right and conspiratorial media outlets to possibly defend the remarks, depending on their nature. These media outlets could target those who speak out against the elected official.

Propose some positive campaigns/Project Lemonade

- If the elected official did indeed use bigoted language directed toward a certain community, your coalition could organize or help to organize a lobbying day to highlight legislation/initiatives that are important to the community.
- If the official is not open to a dialogue regarding the offensive remarks, your coalition could organize a letter writing/phone/social media campaign directed toward the official's constituents, emphasizing that the official was elected to represent their entire community, and is failing in that basic responsibility.

SCENARIO 12

A religious institution in your community is vandalized in a likely hate incident

Explain the scenario/incident

A religious institution in your community is vandalized in a likely hate incident. Members of the congregation found racist/bigoted images on the institution's property, in what appears to be a clear act of vandalism.

Explain why this was chosen—examples of how this type of incident is common in our current climate

Religious institutions such as synagogues, mosques, and Black churches around the country have been the targets of vandalism and hate violence from time to time, going back decades. More recently, houses of worship that are open and affirming to immigrants and to the LGBTQ community have been targeted too. These acts are some of the most visceral examples of hate activity and can be very damaging for the impacted community. Acts of vandalism against religious institutions are rarely openly endorsed by established white nationalist or far-right groups, but threats against these



institutions and their leaders are a far too common occurrence. Hate rhetoric is not cost free and can often lead to hate violence, and religious institutions are a very public and visible target. (To view a Bard Center for the Study of Hate webinar about an attack on a Spokane synagogue in 2021, click here, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Om7ngl8yVw.)

Detail possible next steps (while noting that not every similar example is one-size-fits-all)

- In the immediate aftermath of incidents like this, your coalition should be ready to help respond and provide whatever support the institution needs.
- Your coalition should look to draft statements of support for the impacted institution/community that can be shared on social media and other channels. There are many good example of press releases and other statements of support that can be found here, <https://www.ktvb.com/article/news/crime/anti-semitic-posters-found-in-boise-neighborhoods/277-c8b07d48-cec4-4c50-b96b-0e90a50ca7aa> and here, <https://web.archive.org/web/20210422031557/https://www.westernstatescenter.org/pressreleasearchive/2020/5/16/6qei9k0bggsl2a9jjxg6zjor52w6ar-kb9ll>.
- If members of your coalition find examples of individuals celebrating or endorsing the vandalism, document those and pass them along to the impacted institution and/or law enforcement.
- The coalition, with guidance from leadership from the impacted community/institution, should seek to organize events, either online or in person, that show support for those impacted. Political, business, and other community leaders should be involved in this operation.
- Your coalition should also have talking points prepared for media who will be covering both the vandalism and the subsequent community response. It will be important to have a multifaith show of support for the impacted community.

Explain possible pitfalls (and give real-life examples of these, if possible)

- Be sure to take cues from the impacted community/institution before responding to the event and especially before organizing an event/campaign. In some cases, the community will not want a very public response to the incident, and your coalition should abide by the wishes of the impacted community.

Propose some positive campaigns/Project Lemonade

- Social media and community-based campaigns such as signs of support that can be put up in store/office/home windows are a common project in which the entire community can be involved.
- If your coalition wasn't in regular contact with the impacted institution/community beforehand, use this as an opportunity for outreach.
- In a sign of support, look to use the institution as a space to hold an upcoming coalition meeting or other event, if possible/permissible.

SCENARIO 13**A local Planned Parenthood clinic is dealing with a weekly far-right mobilization couched as a church sermon/protest outside of its building organized by an antichoice group that attracts other far-right groups****Explain the scenario/incident**

A local Planned Parenthood clinic is dealing with a weekly far-right mobilization couched as a church sermon/protest outside of its building organized by an antichoice group that attracts other far-right groups. The events are part of a broader movement to target Planned Parenthood clinics around the country. As far-right and antidemocratic groups continue to coalesce, these events attract not only antiabortion activists, but groups such as Proud Boys and other antidemocratic actors.

Explain why this was chosen—examples of how this type of incident is common in our current climate

White nationalist and antidemocratic groups continue to mobilize in opposition to women's rights, including antiabortion activism. For decades, abortion clinics and those working in the reproductive health field have been the targets of threats and extreme political violence. In recent years, an antidemocratic group, The Church at Planned Parenthood (TCAPP), along with many other groups have organized routine protests outside of Planned Parenthood clinics around the country. These events, billed as religious gatherings, serve as a magnet for a plethora of regional actors to mobilize. Oftentimes, prominent activists or antichoice elected officials are invited to speak at these gatherings.

Detail possible next steps (while noting that not every similar example is one-size-fits-all)

- If your coalition doesn't have a formal relationship with your local Planned Parenthood, reach out to provide support, especially if your local clinic is targeted by antichoice groups such as The Church at Planned Parenthood.
- Defer to the clinic in regards to safety/security measures on days that TCAPP or any other groups are planning to protest outside of the clinic. Oftentimes the clinic asks for volunteers to chaperone patients and that could be a great support opportunity for your coalition.
- If any of your coalition members come across threats directed toward the clinic or calls to mobilize, make sure to document those and pass them along to the clinic whenever possible.
- If your local Planned Parenthood clinic is not a member of your coalition or a group that you are regularly in contact with, use this as an opportunity to foster a relationship.

Explain possible pitfalls (and give real-life examples of these, if possible)

- The clinic leadership will know best regarding counterdemonstrations or other displays of support in response to the protests. Do not plan any counter events without first talking with the clinic. An escalation could lead to further protests or targeting of clinic workers.

Propose some positive campaigns/Project Lemonade

- Your coalition could take the lead on helping to gather volunteers for the clinic.
- On the same day as the protest, your coalition could hold a fundraiser event such as a bake sale or a concert to raise money for the clinic.

CONCLUSION

All of us involved in writing this manual work in different parts of the country, but we share a similar lament—that when hate scars a community outside of our organization's geographic area or outside of our program capabilities, too often the story goes something like this:

- Someone paints a hateful symbol (a swastika perhaps) on someone's home.
- The family and community are shocked, and people are inspired to "do something."
- Some community members or leaders speak out rejecting hate, perhaps when they are interviewed by local media.
- Someone asks, perhaps on social media, what are we going to do?
- Various ideas appear—some useful perhaps, some not.
- No clear plan emerges.
- Time goes by.
- All those eager to "do something" are now focused on other things. The hate crime is old news, largely forgotten.
- Months later, another incident happens. The same "what should we do?" questions get asked.
- Time goes by again.

As we said in the preface, the purpose of this manual is to provide those who want to "do something" the something they can do, step by step, not only for the immediate aftermath but for years to come to improve their community and reject hate.

We hope we have succeeded providing that blueprint for community action.

We all also remain your partners, and are ready to help. If you have questions about how to build the organizations and coalitions outlined in this manual, please feel free to reach out to us:

Bard Center for the Study of Hate, <https://bcsh.bard.edu/contact-us/>

Western States Center, <https://www.westernstatescenter.org/contact-us>

Montana Human Rights Network, <https://mhrn.org/#contact-section>

SAY NO
TO HATE!
CRIME!

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

Finally, below you will find a list of resources including, but also beyond, those already mentioned in the text, which will be useful for you as you and your organization organize against hate in your communities.

1. What communications groups provide effective countermessaging?

Western States Center: <https://www.westernstatescenter.org/>

Southern Poverty Law Center: <https://www.splcenter.org/>

ADL: www.adl.org and https://www.adl.org/reportincident?gclid=CjwKCAjwh5qLbHAEiwaioods9kd9JKgje_BhlG4gd1UBwdi40zWd2HpsLO1_W6yAfNaROtrCodLYhoCFfkQAvD_BwE

2. How can I find messaging specific to my community?

Rethink media: <https://rethinkmedia.org/our-work>

America's voice: <https://americasvoice.org/>

American Immigration Council: https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/?gclid=CjwKCAjwh5qLbHAEiwaioods0DxwSAq_H1B0gKynpoHb8SVR47kMSCgpy7WQcFOJ5uP7CPmAOQtBoCtmAQAvD_BwE

BLM: <https://blacklivesmatter.com/>

NAACP: <https://naacp.org/>

STOP AAPI Hate: <https://stopaapihate.org/>

3. What local groups are monitoring hate crimes/activity in my region

WSC: <https://www.westernstatescenter.org/>

MHRN: <https://mhrn.org/>

TIRRC: <https://www.tnimmigrant.org/>

PRA: <https://www.politicalresearch.org/>

Equality Labs: <https://www.equalitylabs.org/>

ADL: https://www.adl.org/who-we-are/our-organization/regional-offices?gclid=Cj0KCQjwwYLBhD6ARiACvT72O__aRo3x2ix6OurTnw9KAAyuvM9TpLIFMjzYJ5WRxynfYgO3YxbQlaAtPVEALw_wcB

STOP AAPI Hate: <https://stopaapihate.org/>

NAACP: <https://naacp.org/>

4. What national groups are monitoring hate activity?

WSC: <https://www.westernstatescenter.org/>

Political Research Associates: <https://www.politicalresearch.org/>

Leadership Conference Education Fund: <https://civilrights.org/edfund/againstthate/>

SPLC: <https://www.splcenter.org/reporhate> and <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files>

ADL: <https://www.adl.org/>

5. Who do I report a hate incident to?

Muslim Advocates: https://muslimadvocates.org/action/report-discrimination/?gclid=CjwKCAjwh5qLbHAEiwaioods5WY4cuPM16KH5PfoeGmaD3OmcCGAQnNmcd3kek4j3Wq3nKk4ot-iRoCSmQQAvD_BwE

SAALT: <https://saalt.org/>

ADL: https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resource-knowledge-base/adl-tracker-of-antisemitic-incidents?field_incident_location_state_target_id=All&page=1

STOP AAPI Hate: <https://stopaapihate.org/>

APIAHF: <https://www.apiahf.org/hate-crime-resources/>

James Byrd Jr. Center to Stop Hate: <https://www.lawyerscommittee.org/project/stop-hate-project/>

Michigan Department of Civil Rights/Michigan Alliance Against Hate Crimes: <https://web.archive.org/web/20210622110514/https://www.michigan.gov/mdcr/0,4613,7-138-47780---,00.html>

Sikh Coalition: <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/our-work/preventing-hate-and-discrimination/hate-crime-tracking-and-prevention/>

Illinois Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/cdhc/Pages/Report-A-Crime.aspx>

(for LGBTQ) GLAD: <https://www.glad.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Anti-LGBT-Harassment-Violence.pdf>

(for Transgender) National Center for Transgender Equality: <https://transequality.org/issues/resources/responding-hate-crimes-community-resource-manual>

Montana Human Rights Network: <https://www.mhrn.org/publications/fact%20sheets%20and%20advisories/HateIncidentRapid-ResponseGuide.pdf>

Spokane County Human Rights Task Force: <https://www.spokanecountyhumanrightstaskforce.org/hate-report>

6. What organizations provide security training for individuals and groups?

ADL: www.adl.org

Equality Labs: <https://www.equalitylabs.org/>

Research for Progress: <https://www.researchforprogress.us/topic/resource/progressive-movement-building/progressive-movement-security-self-defense/>

Feminist Frequency: <https://onlinesafety.feministfrequency.com/en/>

Secure Community Network: <https://www.securecommunitynetwork.org/>

7. Someone in my group needs to relocate due to doxing, are there groups that provide assistance?

Equality Labs: <https://www.equalitylabs.org/>

It's Going Down: <https://itsgoingdown.org/time-beef-defense-against-far-right-doxing/>

Urgent Action Fund: <https://urgentactionfund.org/apply-for-a-grant/>

Feminist Frequency: <https://onlinesafety.feministfrequency.com/en/>

8. What national groups provide legal assistance to those who want to respond to hate through legal process?

Crime Justice Corps: <https://www.equaljusticeworks.org/become-a-fellow/fellowship-program/crime-victims-justice-corps/>

Equality Michigan: <https://web.archive.org/web/20211125000927/https://equalitymi.org/victim-services/>

Lambda Legal: <https://www.lambdalegal.org/helpdesk>

National Asian Pacific American Bar Association: <https://www.napaba.org/page/HateCrimeResources>

Institution for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection: <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/icap/>

Integrity First for America: <https://www.integrityfirstforamerica.org/>

9. What organizations provide mental health support to those impacted by hate?

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

SPLC: <https://www.splcenter.org/20170814/ten-ways-fight-hate-community-response-guide#support>

Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes (NYC): <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/stophate/resources/victim-support.page>

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (EU): <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/0/5/463011.pdf>

Counseling Services for Victims of Hate Crimes (Germany): https://www.equalrightstrust.org/ertdocumentbank/2016_RAA_Saxony-Hate_Crime_Victim_Support_2016_Vers.final_.pdf

10. What organizations provide coalition-building training?

SOUL School of Unity and Liberation: <https://www.schoolofunityandliberation.org/>

National Coalition Building Institute: <https://ncbi.org/>

Organizing for Power, Organizing for Change: <https://organizingforpower.wordpress.com/organizing/>

11. What academic centers have information about hate?

Bard Center for the Study of Hate: <https://bcsh.bard.edu/>

The Gonzaga Institute for Hate Studies: <https://www.gonzaga.edu/academics/centers-institutes/institute-for-hate-studies>

California State University at San Bernardino Center for The Study of Hate and Extremism: <https://www.csusb.edu/hate-and-extremism-center>

The International Network for Hate Studies: <https://internationalhatestudies.com/>

Centre on Hate, Bias and Extremism (at University of Ontario Institute of Technology): <https://socialscienceandhumanities.ontariotechu.ca/centre-on-hate-bias-and-extremism/>

The Centre for Hate Studies (at University of Leister, England): <https://le.ac.uk/hate-studies>

European Centre for the Study of Hate (University of Limerick): <https://www.ul.ie/ecsh/welcome-european-centre-study-hate>

Collaboratory Against Hate (University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon University): <https://www.collabagainsthate.org/>

See also Journal of Hate Studies: <https://www.gonzaga.edu/academics/centers-institutes/institute-for-hate-studies/journal-of-hate-studies>

12. What organizations provide spokesperson training?

ReThink Media: <https://rethinkmedia.org/training>

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For over a year this manual was discussed, and drafted, by an amazing team. Stephen Piggott of the Western States Center first reached out to community groups around the country to find out whether this project would be helpful to them, and if so, what it should contain. Stephen coordinated much of the process, and wrote substantial parts. His Western States Center colleagues Lindsay Schubiner and Eric Ward were also instrumental. Stephen gives special thanks to the following people who took the time to provide invaluable insight during the early planning phase of this toolkit, helping him and the team figure out how to make it most useful: Heidi Beirich, Chief Strategy Officer, Global Project Against Hate and Extremism; Arjun Singh Sethi, human rights lawyer and author of *American Hate: Survivors Speak Out*; Rabbi Bonnie Margulis, Executive Director, Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice; Emily Baird-Chrisohon, Narrative and Engagement Manager, Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC); Tara Wolfson and Christina Bruce-Bennion, Idaho Office for Refugees; Madihha Ahussain, Former Special Counsel for Anti-Muslim Bigotry, Muslim Advocates; Brian Levin, Director, Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism, California State University, San Bernardino; and Becky Monroe, Former Director, Fighting Hate and Bias Project, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

Stephen and I also want to thank our team members, Travis McAdam and Rachel Carroll Rivas from the Montana Human Rights Network, who contributed to and/or helped guide the thinking and research behind this project. And a big thank you to Steven Gardiner of Political Research Associates, whose smart contributions are also represented in this manual.

We are all thankful to Bard colleagues Leslie Coons Bostian, Karen Spencer, and Kevin Trabucco, who helped turn a Word document into something not only beautiful, but exceptionally user-friendly, to Publications Office Director Mary Smith, who made this large project a priority for her office, and to Associate Vice President for Communications Mark Primoff and his team for their work publicizing this manual, helping make sure it is widely available to the groups and people it was designed to help.

Kenneth S. Stern
Director, Bard Center for the Study of Hate

Photos from Shutterstock: Cover: Halfpoint; inside front cover: Thomas Eddy; page 6: Mark Reinstein; page 8: Rawpixel.com; page 13: Monkey Business; page 16: Ringo Chiu; page 20: Aaron of L.A. Photography; page 26: Yalcin Sonat; page 30: Kim Kelley-Wagner; page 32: jose_xeraco86; page 37: alexstlee; page 38: Rena Schild; page 41: GaudiLab; page 42: wellphoto; page 47: Sheila Fitzgerald; page 48: leedsn; page 53: Mike Albright Photography; page 56: Drazen Zigic; page 60: Sheila Fitzgerald; page 64: Ajdin Kamber; page 66: KelseyJ; page 68: Koca Vehbi; page 70: Andrea C. Miller; page 74: Aaron of L.A. Photography; page 76: Rawpixelcom; page 80: Photointoto; page 85: VDB Photos; page 88: Timothy R. Nichols; page 91: Jacob Lund; page 94: grandbrothers; page 97: betto rodrigues; back cover: Kim Kelley-Wagner; Photos on page 82: Ted Eytan, CC BY-SA 2.0; page 100: Mike Gifford, CC BY-NC 2.0

LOVE THY

Black Jewish Gay
White Latino Straight
Christian Muslim

...NEIGHBOR.