



## Hate Crimes Fact Sheet

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### What is a hate crime?

A hate crime is an offense where a person or a group of people is targeted because of their actual or perceived identity. Illinois hate crimes laws protect people who are targeted based on characteristics like race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, immigration or citizenship status, or physical or mental disability.

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### What are some examples of hate crimes?

Under Illinois law, any of the following may be a hate crime if motivated by someone's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, creed, religion, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, immigration or citizenship status, physical or mental disability:

- Assault or battery
  - Theft
  - Intimidation (threats)
  - Stalking or cyberstalking
  - Harassment by telephone, email, or social media, or sending obscene messages by phone
  - Trespassing or damaging property
  - Disorderly conduct or mob action
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### Who can I contact if I believe I have experienced or witnessed (seen) a hate crime?

#### Law enforcement:

- Contact 911 or your local police department and file a police report.
- Tell them specifically that you think this was a hate crime. If you can, tell them what led you to believe it was hate-motivated.
- Some law enforcement agencies have special units to investigate hate crimes, like:
  - Cook County Sheriff's Discrimination Hotline (call 773-674-HELP)

#### Illinois Attorney General:

- The Illinois Attorney General may bring a civil lawsuit, on behalf of the State, against a person who committed a hate crime.
  - To report hate-motivated incidents or discrimination, contact the Illinois Attorney General's Civil Rights Hotline at 877-581-3692. Translation services are available.
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## What help is available for someone who has experienced a hate-motivated crime?

### Services for hate crime victims:

- Chicago residents can call the City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations (CCHR) - Hate Crime Victim Assistance number at 312-744-4874.

CCHR offers help, support, and referrals for hate crime victims, including assistance reporting to police and accompaniment to court hearings.

- The Illinois Attorney General's Office's Crime Victims Compensation program can provide financial assistance to some victims of crimes, including hate crimes.

You can apply for financial assistance by calling the helpline 800-228-3368 or access the online form at

<https://agforms.ilag.gov/Forms/CrimeVictimsCompensation>

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## Is there legal assistance for a person who may have been targeted for a hate crime?

### Individual legal help:

- If you were victimized by a hate crime, you have the right to file a civil lawsuit against the person(s) who committed the crime.
- You can find a lawyer through the Illinois State Bar Association by calling 1-800-922-8757 or visiting <https://www.isba.org/public/illinoislawyerfinder>
- If you can't afford a lawyer, you can find some legal aid resources on the Attorney General's website at: <https://www.illinoislegalaid.org/get-legal-help>

For more information contact the Illinois Attorney General's Civil Rights Bureau at 877-581-3692. Translation services are available. Individuals with hearing or speech disabilities can reach us by using the 7-1-1 relay service.

### Illinois Attorney General

**Chicago**  
312-814-3000

**Springfield**  
217-782-1090

**Carbondale**  
618-529-6400

[www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov](http://www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov)