



Hate Crimes and Bias Incidents Hotline Advisory Committee

MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY 8/12/2025

10:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Welcome

The Advisory Committee did introductions, reviewed the purpose of the day's meeting, and received a reminder from AGO staff on the Open Public Meetings Act and the Public Records Act. The Advisory Committee also received a reminder of the purpose of the committee.

Presentation from Illinois Help Stop Hate Hotline

Illinois hotline presented the structure, launch process, and lessons learned from their "Help Stop Hate" Helpline, which is housed under the Illinois Department of Human Rights rather than the Attorney General's Office

Launch & Structure

- Illinois began with a soft launch in April 2024, followed by a full public launch in October 2024 at a press conference with Governor Pritzker, the Lieutenant Governor, and Commission members.
- The helpline operates under the branding of "Help Stop Hate", and includes both an online reporting portal and a call center.
- Reports can be submitted 24/7 online, while the helpline phone support is available Mon–Fri, 12–9pm.
- The state decided not to record calls or take voicemail to protect privacy and build trust.

Technology & Data Systems

- Online intake is powered by Adobe Experience Manager, with back-end data processed using Microsoft Lists and Power BI.
- The system was built using low-code/no-code tools to allow for flexibility during the pilot phase and affordability.
- Plans are underway to transition to Dataverse and PowerApps for the next phase, with ongoing support from internal tech teams and contractors.

Language Access

- The helpline website uses Weglot, enabling translation into the 7 most spoken languages in Illinois based on census data.
- Live phone interpreters are available through a state contract.
- Staff are equipped to respond to online reports submitted in languages other than English with written translation support.

Outreach Strategy

- Illinois conducted a major media campaign (April–June 2024) in partnership with a media firm and university consultant.
- The campaign included:
 - Billboards, radio, and TV ads

- Materials distributed to libraries statewide
- Focus on trusted intermediaries (e.g., clergy, librarians) for outreach
- Public awareness efforts emphasized anonymity and non-enforcement, reinforcing the program’s victim-centered approach.

Call Center & Referrals

- Call center staff received a two-week intensive training developed by the Department’s Training Institute.
- Illinois created their own referral directory, starting with federal agencies and narrowing down to state and local resources.
- Plans to outsource directory management due to its resource-intensive nature.

Operational Notes

- About 70% of reports are online, and 30% by phone.
- Half of the reporters choose to remain anonymous.
- The helpline supports any Illinois resident, even if their issue is not strictly a hate incident, recognizing that early interventions may prevent future harm.
- The top bias motivations reported are consistent with DOJ data: Race, Sexuality, Gender, and Religion.

Q & A Highlights

Commission Role & Political Support

- The Illinois Commission on Discrimination and Hate Crimes is statutorily established and Governor-appointed.
- No significant political backlash against the program’s victim-centered approach.

Threats & False Reports

- The helpline faced a denial-of-service attack post-launch (14,000 circular submissions in hours).
- No “swatting” incidents reported, but manual review and tagging systems are in place to flag habitual or political abuse.

Data & Geographic Reach

- Data collection is zip-code based. Of 102 counties, 90% of reports come from just 45, reflecting the state’s dense population distribution.
- Campaigns are tailored to this geographic reality.

Victim-Centered Values

- Helpline does not collect perpetrator information, focusing instead on support, anonymity, and trust.
- Illinois has commissioned an 18-month hate incident study with the University of Illinois to supplement hotline data and evaluate broader trends.

Public Comment Period

There was one registered verbal public comment made at this meeting.

Approve Minutes and Agenda

- Adopt agenda
 - First: Gabriel Neuman
 - Second: Jeremiah Miller
- Vote to approve minutes from June
 - First: Hershel Meyer Zellman
 - Second: Gabriel Neuman

<p>Hotline Updates: Intakes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Phone call reports/Webform reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hotline launched July 1, 2025 with 24/7 voicemail and online reporting. ● As of August 4, 2025: ● 177 total reports (84 via phone, 93 online). ● ~33% requested follow-up. ● Interpretation available in 240+ languages through LanguageLink. ● Emphasis on anonymous reporting and 2–3 business day follow-up if contact info is left. ○ Q&A
<p>Charter Adjustment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Future meetings will now occur quarterly, not bimonthly. ● Based on a vote, meetings will move to the second Wednesday of the month (instead of Tuesday).
<p>Next Steps & Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Next meeting: November 12, 2025, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM PT.

Advisory Committee Member Attendance and Vote

Name	Organization	Attendance
Alex Buijs	Criminal Justice Training Commission	Present
Aya Samman (proxying for Sabrene Odeh)	Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR)	Present
Catalina Velasquez	Washington Immigrant Solidarity Network	Present
Ed Prince	Commission on African American Affairs (CAAA)	Did not attend
Emily Irwin	Refugee and Immigrant Connections Spokane	Did not attend
Floribert Mubalama	Congolese Integration Network	Did not attend
Gabriel Neuman	GSBA, Washington’s LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce	Present
Gabriela Ewing	Pasitos Gigantes (Hispanic Disability Support SWWA)	Present
Hannah Stearn	Spokane County PAO	Present
Hend Alhinnawi	Humanitarian Tracker	Did not attend
Hershel Meyer Zellman	Human Rights Spokane	Present
Jasmit Singh	Khalsa Gurmat Center	Present

Draft pending approval of Advisory Committee

Jeremiah Miller	Fair Work Center	Present
Kiana McKenna	Pacific Islander Community Association of Washington (PICA)	Present
Lalita Uppala	Indian American Community Services WA	Did not attend
Marcos Martinez	El Centro de la Raza	Present
Maxima Patashnik	Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle	Present
Miri Cypers	Anti-Defamation League Pacific Northwest (ADL)	Present
Nina Martinez	Latino Civic Alliance	Did not attend
Pa Ousman Joof	Washington West African Center	Did not attend
Patricia D. Castaneda	Manzanita House	Present
Shomya Tripathy	Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS)	Present
KJ January	Spectrum Center	Present
Meera Forespring	The United Indians of All Tribes Foundation	Present
Soumyo Lahiri-Gupta	OneAmerica	Did not attend
Evelyn Tuiaana	Hawaiians, Asians, & Pacific Islanders Promoting an Empowerment Network (HAPPEN)	Did not attend