



Orange County Human Relations Commission July 2016 – June 2017 Annual Report





MISSION

The Human Relations Commission was founded in 1971 as an official governmental commission by the Board of Supervisors with the purpose of seeking out tension and conflict, discrimination and intolerance, and attempt to eliminate those causes.

The Commission's role is to respond to contentious issues relating to discrimination, intolerance and prejudice in the community. Most importantly, the Commission has a large focus on prevention and awareness efforts to promote understanding and respect so we may celebrate Orange County's rich diverse culture.



LISTENING SESSIONS

In response to the highly polemical rhetoric during the presidential campaign, the Commission held a series of listening sessions with the transgender community and ethnic studies advocates. Additionally, the Commission endorsed and participated in the OC Interfaith Network speaker series "The More You Know, The Less You Hate" focused on strengthening communities against hate and bigotry.

Orange County's Human Relations Commission endorsed the launch of the "#HateFreeOC" Campaign in partnership with the nonprofit OC Human Relations Council with the goals of creating a hate-free environment in Orange County, bringing diverse communities together, and promoting a peaceful and inclusive community where everyone can thrive.

POLICE & COMMUNITY TRAININGS

Research shows that residing deep in our subconscious are attitudes and stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, whether favorable or unfavorable, activate involuntarily and mostly without intentional control. The Commission firmly believes that by raising awareness of the impacts of biases and building the capacity within community leaders for cultural sensitivity is one of the many ways in which we will build mutual understanding in Orange County.

This year the Commission:

- Delivered **six Police Academy Trainings** on cultural sensitivity to **308 new police recruits** at the OC Sheriff's Basic Training Academy
- Trained more than **300 County, nonprofit, and education professionals** on the topic of Implicit Bias

After the Implicit Bias training, the OC Child Support Services Executive Director stated:

"We were afraid of how our staff would react to the Implicit Bias training, but with your expertise you were able to earn their trust quickly. I'm amazed that every single person in the room was engaged and participated, which is a first. Thank you for such a powerful training."



POLICE - COMMUNITY RELATIONS

This past year the Commission facilitated discussions between Orange County’s Sheriff Sandra Hutchens and diverse faith communities. The Sheriff’s Interfaith Council hosted up to **30 interfaith leaders** who addressed issues of immigration, OC jail conditions, law enforcement body cams, hate crime, and more. In collaboration with COR AME Church and Orange County Solidarity, the Commission hosted a Solidarity Summit Reconvening where 65 community leaders and officers from OC Sheriff’s, Garden Grove, and Irvine Police Departments identified the following areas of priority: citizen trainings at churches/schools, community-oriented & relationship-based policing, media accountability, and cultural sensitivity training for officers.

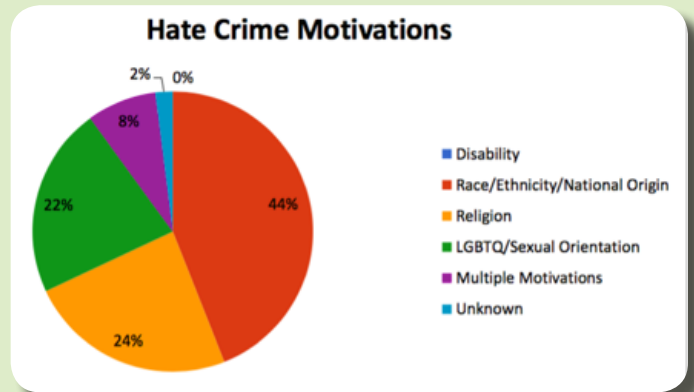
HATE CRIMES REPORT

The 2016 Orange County Hate Crime Report shows that “hate crimes” increased in 2016. The Commission documented **50 hate crimes** an increase from 40 hate crimes reported last year. The most frequently targeted were African Americans, the LGBT community, and Latinos. They make up the top three groups. **However, the most dramatic increase was seen in the number of hate incidents, which in 2016 totaled 72 compared to the 43 reported in 2015. The 2016 reported hate incidents primarily targeted the Muslim community.**

“When there is hatred, it needs to be called out as such and responded to with a loud voice that is unequivocal. That is what our Commission does and should continue doing,” expressed OC Human Relations Commission Vice - Chair, Rabbi Rick Steinberg.

Examples of hate crimes:

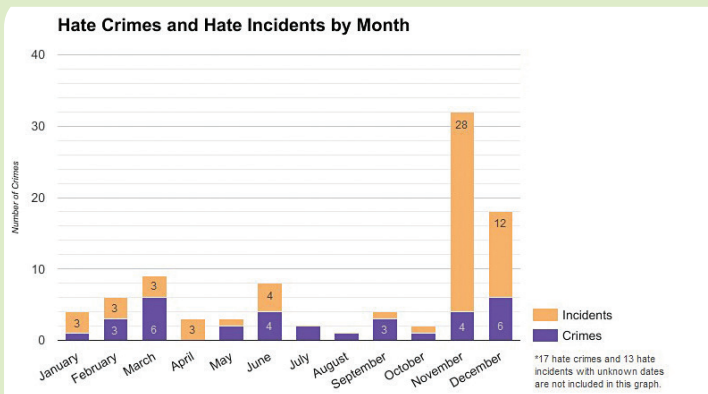
- High school students vandalized the house of a fellow student by throwing a watermelon – which is associated with racist imagery – and harassed residents with racial epithets.
- The outside of a gated community was graffitied with racial and anti-LGBT slurs.
- A Latino man was struck in the face in a downtown area; the perpetrator yelled white supremacist remarks before the attack.
- A Muslim woman was attacked, her eyes were pepper sprayed and her hijab yanked off her head.



Examples of hate incidents:

- A Latino gardener was harassed by his client’s neighbor, who told him to go back to his country.
- A Muslim community organization received harassing and threatening phone calls that featured xenophobic and Islamophobic language.
- An Indian woman was harassed with derogatory remarks towards her race and skin color while picking up her daughter from school.

In the wake of hate activity in Orange County, the Commission participated in law enforcement, interfaith, and community forums to find ways to support hate crime victims and targeted communities.



POLICE COMPLAINTS

A total of **29 police complaint cases** were conciliated through the Commission’s Police Reconciliation Program. Among the successfully conciliated cases, a low-income resident was able to get a significant reduction in accumulated dog license fines and a resident who perceived to have been mistreated by law enforcement had the opportunity to have respectful dialogue with officer. Both parties walked away with a better understanding about their roles in the community and the importance of respecting a person’s dignity.



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 July 2016 - June 2017**

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