



## OFFICE OF RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE


Marc Elrich  
County Executive

Tiffany Ward  
Director and Chief Equity Officer

### MEMORANDUM

March 17, 2025

To: Jennifer Bryant, Director  
Office of Management and Budget

From: Tiffany Ward, Director  
Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice 

Re: Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA) for Supplemental Appropriation (SA) #25-44 Bureau of Justice Assistance FY24 Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Program Award

- I. **FINDING:** The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) finds that Supplemental Appropriation #25-44 Bureau of Justice Assistance FY24 Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Program Award has the potential to advance racial equity and social justice. Given the disproportionate impact of hate and bias-related incidents on marginalized racial and religious groups, additional training and investigative capacity within the Montgomery County Police Department can help the County monitor the scope of reported hate and bias incidents as well as more effectively direct resources toward corrective actions. Further analysis of existing hate and bias incident data, ongoing community engagement, and bolstering of existing county resources such as the Committee Against Hate and Violence and Partnership Fund for Victims of Hate/Violence will improve the likelihood that MCPD's increased investigative and staff capacity leads to greater accountability, redress, and a decline in hate and bias-related incidents.
- II. **BACKGROUND:** The purpose of Supplemental Appropriation #25-44 Federal Bureau of Justice Assistance FY24 Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Program Award is to allocate \$2,000,000 in grant funds to Montgomery County Police Department

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Racial Equity and Social Justice

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to support its efforts to identify and investigate instances of hate crimes and bias incidents in the County, including supporting annual training initiatives for police sworn officers and civilian staff. According to the project description in the grant award, the four-year funding will be used to a) hire a hate-crime analyst contractor focused on identifying and investigating instances of hate crimes and bias incidents; b) support annual training initiatives for police staff, including sworn officers; and c) investing in security cameras for religious institutions and other physical locations.

In response to a rise in hate crimes<sup>1</sup> and bias-related incidents<sup>2</sup> both nationally<sup>3</sup> and locally<sup>4</sup>, the County Council passed in July 2023 a resolution establishing an Anti-Hate Taskforce. Between July and November 2023, six identity-specific task force cohorts/groups met to “prioritize policies that promote safety and combat hate crimes. This includes, but isn’t limited to racism, anti-Black hate, anti-AAPI hate, anti-Latino hate, antisemitism, Islamophobia, xenophobia, homophobia, or transphobia. The group is broken up into cohorts that include members from the African American and Black, Latino and Hispanic, Asian American Pacific Islander, LGBTQ+, Jewish and Muslim communities.”<sup>5</sup> Over the course of about four months, there were more than 50 meetings, resulting in a series of recommendations to the County Council. Some of the recommendations most relevant to the activities funded by the BJA grant are below (organized by BJA grant-funded activities)<sup>6</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> Please see “What constitutes a Hate Crime under Maryland Law?” Available at:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/SAO/other/hatecrimes.html>

<sup>2</sup> A bias-related Incident is an incident that may be motivated by race, color, national origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, homelessness or disability but is different than a hate crime because it does not rise to the level of a criminal offense. Please see “What is a Bias-Related Incident in Maryland?” Available at:

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/SAO/other/hatecrimes.html>

<sup>3</sup> Data from January 2023-December 2023 FBI Crime Data Explorer. Available at:

<https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/hate-crime>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2023/20230627/20230627\\_3D.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2023/20230627/20230627_3D.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/resources/antihatetaskforce/index.html>

<sup>6</sup> This information is from the December 5, 2023 County Council Staff Packet and is not an exhaustive examination of the Taskforce’s recommendations ; additional consideration should be given to the full breadth of the Taskforce’s work including context and ongoing dialogue in the formulation of the recommendations.

***Increase investigation capacity within MCPD:***

- Collect and disaggregate data by ethnicity to better understand the unique needs of the community (AAPI Cohort)
- Collect narratives on the different ways that AANHPI targets experience bias (AAPI Cohort)
- Enforce the mandatory reporting requirement of hate/bias incidents by the police. Hold police accountable for failing to comply with the hate/bias reporting requirement (Black/African American Cohort)
- MCPD should significantly increase arrest of white male perpetrators of hate crimes and hate incidents occurring against Black students and people (Black/African American Cohort)
- The Montgomery County District and Circuit Courts in conjunction with State and County Legislators should re-evaluate, update, and increase sentencing guidelines for perpetrators of hate crimes and hate incidents resulting in serious injury or death of the victim (Black/African American Cohort)
- Enforce the mandatory reporting requirement of hate/bias incidents in schools. Hold school administrators accountable for failing to comply with the reporting requirement. (Black/African American Cohort)
- Implement comprehensive tracking and reporting of anti-LGBTQ biases, hate crimes, and anti-BIPOC violence and biases, and reporting on what role intersectionality plays. (LGBTQ+ Cohort)

- Reporting is stymied because many of the incidents do not rise to the level of a violent crime (Muslim Cohort)
- Victims face skepticism or their experiences are devalued -- even when they are violent or when threats of violence are documented (Muslim Cohort)

***Training for police staff and sworn officers***

- Provide cultural competency and hate bias training to increase understanding of AANHPI needs and anti-Asian hate bias (AAPI)
- Hold training on AANHPIs for county officials and staff across the government (AAPI)
- Training for all county employees (Hold anti-bias workshops and specific training for county employees on antisemitism) (Jewish Cohort)
- Require training on hate crimes and extremism for all law enforcement officers and staff (Jewish Cohort)
- Create a hate crimes special liaison branch within MCPD and a hotline (Jewish Cohort)
- Montgomery County Police [create] ERGs or Officer Resource Groups for marginalized communities (LGBTQ+ Cohort)
- Provide cultural competency training to all County agencies on the Latinx community, how to conduct outreach with our community, and how to provide effective and excellent customer

service to Latinx people  
(Latino/Hispanic)

bigotry and demographics on the  
diversity of the Muslim communities in  
the county (Muslim Cohort)

- Include mandatory training on cultural competency that includes anti-Muslim

*Investing in security cameras:*

- Enhance security funding for all religious and nonprofit organizations at risk of hate crimes (Jewish Cohort)

These recommendations and ongoing community engagement (echoed throughout the cohorts' recommendations) can help align BJA-funded activities with the needs of community members who are most impacted by hate crimes and bias-related incidents.

In addition to the Anti-Hate Taskforce, the County took steps in October 2023 to create the Nonprofit Security Grant Program<sup>7</sup> to “bolster security to detect and defend against acts of violence driven by hate and bias”<sup>8</sup>. BJA grant-funded security cameras augment these efforts. At the time of this analysis, criteria for and processes related to site selection and the impact of the program to date were not readily available. ORESJ conducted a racial equity impact assessment (REIA) on Supplemental Appropriation #24-35 Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security Nonprofit Security Grant Program<sup>9</sup> which highlights pertinent considerations related to procedural equity and patterns in the victims, perpetrators, and locations of hate crime incidents. ORESJ has also conducted REIAs<sup>10</sup> related to the disproportionate impacts of recording and surveillance technologies. Research and analysis within these REIAs recognize the County’s public safety responsibilities while encouraging the judicious application of technologies to safeguard against over-policing and discrimination. The findings in these REIAs are relevant to monitoring how the installation of security cameras and related technologies at religious and other physical locations is deterring hate incidents, as well as whether there are any unintended disparate impacts.

Years before the Anti-Hate Taskforce and the non-profit security grant program were created, the County established the Committee Against Hate/Violence (CAHV) “to develop and distribute information about hate/violence, promote educational activities that

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<sup>7</sup> <https://montgomerycountymd.gov/ogm/Resources/Files/FY24-Nonprofit-Security-Grant-NOFO.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Resolution 20-326. Available at:

[https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccllims/DownloadFilePage?FileName=12017\\_1\\_25362\\_Resolution\\_20-326\\_Adopted\\_20231128.pdf](https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccllims/DownloadFilePage?FileName=12017_1_25362_Resolution_20-326_Adopted_20231128.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/Resources/Files/24-35.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> #24-54 Bethesda Parking Security Camera Surveillance System (\$2,008,000) #24-57 Wheaton Parking Security Camera Surveillance System (\$339,000) #24-58 Silver Spring Parking Security Camera Surveillance System (\$2,418,000)

demonstrate the positive value of ethnic and social diversity; advise the County Council, the County Executive, and County agencies about hate/violence in the County, and recommend such policies, programs, legislation, or regulations as it finds necessary to reduce the incidence of acts of hate/violence”<sup>11</sup> It’s not entirely clear to what extent the CAHV was consulted during the development of the Taskforce’s recommendations, though there may have been some overlap between committee members and the Taskforce.

In addition to the CAHV’s education and advisory roles, the County also has a Partnership Fund for Victims of Hate/Violence, which provides partial compensation for property damage to victims of racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, and disability based/hate violence. At the time of this analysis, evaluation of fund utilization was not available, though recommendations from the Anti-Hate Taskforce Black/African American cohort suggested, “County Council should support increase funding levels in the Partnership Fund to more accurately reflect rising costs for relief for victims of hate crimes”<sup>12</sup>. Given its relevance to redressing certain hate/violence-related incidents, it may be beneficial for those reviewing this supplemental appropriation to consider potential points of connection and leverage between existing resources such as the Partnership Fund for Victims of Hate/Violence and the increased investigative capacity and staff knowledge created by the BJA grant.

III. **ANALYSIS:** Below is a summary of pertinent data points to describe the scope and impact of hate crimes and bias-related incidents both nationally and locally.

*National*<sup>13</sup>

According to 2023 FBI Hate Crime Statistics, the number of hate crime incidents, offenses, and victims all increased between 2022 and 2023. There were 11,447 single-bias incidents, impacting 13,857 victims in the US. Biases involving race, ethnicity, or ancestry were the most common motivation and were involved in 52.5% of single-bias incidents. The most common bias type was Anti-Black or African American (26%), followed by Anti-Jewish (16%) and Anti-Gay (male) (9%). Intimidation, along with destruction/damage/vandalism of property, made up 58% of offense types. One in four offenses occurred at a residence or home, 17% occurred on a highway/road/alley/street/sidewalk, and 8% occurred in elementary/secondary school settings. Church/Synagogue/Temple/Mosque made up 4% of the locations where offenses took place. The majority of offenders were White (53%) and 38% were not Hispanic or Latino. The next largest racial and ethnic group was labeled unknown.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/humanrights/outreach/hate-committee.html#Agendas>

<sup>12</sup> Montgomery County Anti-hate taskforce Black and African American Cohort Presentation. Available at; [https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view\\_id=169&clip\\_id=17084&meta\\_id=169054](https://montgomerycountymd.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=169&clip_id=17084&meta_id=169054)

<sup>13</sup> Data from January 2023-December 2023 FBI Crime Data Explorer. Available at: <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/hate-crime>



#### *Local<sup>14</sup>*

The Montgomery County Department of Police 2024 Annual Report on Bias incidents was released on March 12, 2025. ORESJ did not conduct a full review of the report for this REIA, but would like to highlight the following data points:

In 2024 there were 483 total recorded bias incidents in Montgomery County. Overall, 45% of incidents were motivated by race/ethnicity (42%) and ancestry (3%) bias. Of these incidents, 34% were motivated by anti-Black bias. Religion was the second most common source of bias motivation, accounting for 43% of bias motivation, the majority of which was anti-Jewish (39%). Similar to national data, some form of intimidation made up 51% of bias incidents.

There were 192 community-related incidents six of which resulted in legal charges. Individuals were the most common victims of bias incidents (62%), followed by incidents committed against religious institutions (17%). Of the 192 community-related incidents, 49% involved religion (91% of which were anti-Jewish), and 49% involved race (half of which involved the use of a racial slur). There were more White male offenders than any other race/ethnicity.

The profile of victimization in schools is somewhat different than in the community. The majority of incidents were vandalism and verbal intimidation, with almost all incidents motivated by racial or religious bias. Of the incidents where a victim was identified<sup>15</sup>, 43% identified as Black, 21% identified as White, 5% identified as Hispanic, 12% identified as Asian Pacific Islander, and 22% unknown. Most offenders were male and 40% were White.

National and local data suggest that white supremacist ideology is a common factor across most bias and hate incidents in the County. It is also worth noting that the intersection of white supremacy, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, and ableism creates an array of harm not well-captured by quantitative data alone. Further analysis of this data, the methods and channels used for reporting, the ease or difficulty of reporting, and the investigation and verification process could help illuminate gaps in the data as well as the efficacy of existing accountability and redress measures. In particular, prosecution rates for verified hate crimes. And given that bias incidents “do not rise to the level of a criminal offense,” what types of interventions or consequences might an investigation result in? How will data about those interventions be tracked and transparently reported?

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<sup>14</sup> Data from Montgomery County Department of Police 2024 Annual Report on Bias Incidents. March 12, 2025. Available at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pol/Resources/Files/Annual-Reports/BiasIncidents/2024%20Annual%20Bias%20Report%20Final%2003122025.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> The data represented on page 20 of the report contains a slight variance in reported demographic profile.

In addition to further review of local data, CAHV meeting minutes may also be a valuable source of information to help strengthen and build upon BJA grant-funded investments in MCPD investigative capacity. For example, according to December 2024 meeting minutes, “members expressed concern about the language accuracy on some of the reports”<sup>16</sup>. The committee also had questions and suggestions related to proposed hate incident reporting mechanisms.

cc: Marc Yamada, Chief, Montgomery County Police Department  
Tricia Swanson, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Office of the County Executive

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/humanrights/agendas-minutes/cahv/cahv-agendas-minutes.html>