



Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: January 17, 2012

Prepared By/Phone Number: Roger Jefferies, County Executive, Justice and Public Safety

Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head: Roger Jefferies, County Exec., Justice and Public Safety

Commissioners Court Sponsor: Sam Biscoe, Travis County Judge

AGENDA LANGUAGE:

RECEIVING BRIEFING ON ACTIVITIES OF THE AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY HATE CRIMES TASK FORCE

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY OF REQUEST AND ATTACHMENTS:

The Austin/Travis County Hate Crimes Task Force was officially launched on December 15th, 2010. Conveners included Austin Anti-Defamation League, Austin City Council members Sheryl Cole, Laura Morrison, and Randi Shade as well as the Community Justice Council led by David Escamilla (Travis County Attorney) and Rosemary Lehmborg (Travis County District Attorney). More than 70 persons representing 40 different organizations/departments participated in that discussion and reached consensus to form a local Hate Crimes Task Force initiative. (See attached.)

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

Staff recommends regular updates to the Commissioners Court on the activities of the Hate Crimes Task Force. And on behalf of the Hate Crimes Task Force invites participation in their work by any elected or appointed officials and Travis County staff.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

This is an opportunity to have input into a forum that fosters open dialogue about hate and discrimination and strengthens the bonds of our community

AGENDA REQUEST DEADLINE: All agenda requests and supporting materials must be submitted as a pdf to Cheryl Aker in the County Judge's office, Cheryl.Aker@co.travis.tx.us by **Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m.** for the next week's meeting.

through prevention, response and restoration. The vision of the Task Force is a respectful community free of hate. The next meeting of the full Hate Crimes Task Force is on January 19, from 3:30 to 5:30 at 811 Barton Springs Road.

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:

No fiscal impact anticipated.

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS:

Rosemary Lehmborg, Travis County District Attorney
David Escamilla, Travis County Attorney
Karen Gross, Austin Anti-Defamation League

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Austin/Travis County Hate Crimes Task Force

Austin/Travis County Hate Crimes Task Force

Vision: A respectful community free of hate.

Mission: To create a forum that fosters open dialogue about hate and discrimination and strengthens the bonds of our community through prevention, response and restoration.

Adopted 04-14-11

History of Austin/Travis County Hate Crimes Task Force:

The Austin/Travis County Hate Crimes Task Force was officially launched on December 15th, 2010 in response to a violent hate crime incident that occurred in downtown Austin in February 2010. Conveners of the task force meeting included Austin Anti-Defamation League, Austin City Council members Sheryl Cole, Laura Morrison, and Randi Shade) as well as the Austin/Travis County Community Justice Council led by David Escamilla (Travis County Attorney) and Rosemary Lehmborg (Travis County District Attorney).

The first meeting was held in December 2010 and more than 70 persons representing 40 different organizations/departments participated in that discussion and reached consensus to form a local Hate Crimes Task Force initiative. A Steering Committee was created of stakeholders to bring back recommendations regarding structure, work processes and scope of work.

The second meeting was held in April 2011 and the Steering Committee brought forward their recommendations to the Task Force on April 14th, 2011 for endorsement including a draft vision and mission statement, recommendations for work processes as well as creation of Work Groups to develop action/work plans for key objectives to help us achieve our vision. The Work Groups also reported out key findings to date that they discovered during the development of their recommendations.

In September 2011, the Steering Committee and Work Groups reported back to the task force their recommended goals and objectives for the work groups, as well as reviewed 2010 hate crimes data for Austin/Travis County, discussed a recent high profile double homicide that was related to hate/bias, and discussed development of an interim community response plan that will help us respond

quickly as a community to any hate or bias/motivated incident. See the last page of this update for the Work Group goals and activities.

The fourth A/TC Hate Crimes Task Force meeting is scheduled for January 19th, 2012. The Steering Committee and Work Groups will be once again updating their activities to date including discussing recommendations about a community education campaign around hate prevention and other community activities around prevention of hate, receiving feedback from a focus group with youth about their experiences around hate/bias motivated incidents as well as discussion and feedback from a restorative process used (Community Circles) with past victims of hate/bias motivated incidents which included other effected communities (advocates, families, etc.).

Timeline of A/TC Hate Crimes Task Force Initiative:

February 20, 2010: Hate incident occurs

March-Nov. 2010: Conveners for a hate crime initiative identified and plans made for first meeting

Dec. 15th, 2010: First A/TC HCTF meeting held

Jan.-Mar. 2011: Steering Committee formed and recommendations developed for work plans, processes, and structure

April 14th, 2011: Second meeting of A/TC HCTF

May-Aug. 2011: Work Groups formed and work plans developed

Sept. 15th, 2011: Third meeting of A/TC HCTF

Oct.11-Jan. 12, 2012: Work Groups began activities

Jan. 19th, 2012: Fourth meeting of A/TC HCTF scheduled

Structure/Work Processes/Roles of A/TC HCTF:

The A/TC Hate Crimes Task Force has a three tiered structure with the Task Force providing policy guidance and consensus recommendations for any activities. The Steering Committee provides day to day oversight of project and includes the chairs of the work groups. The Work Groups is where the activities are occurring and where we encourage all levels of community involvement:

Task Force:

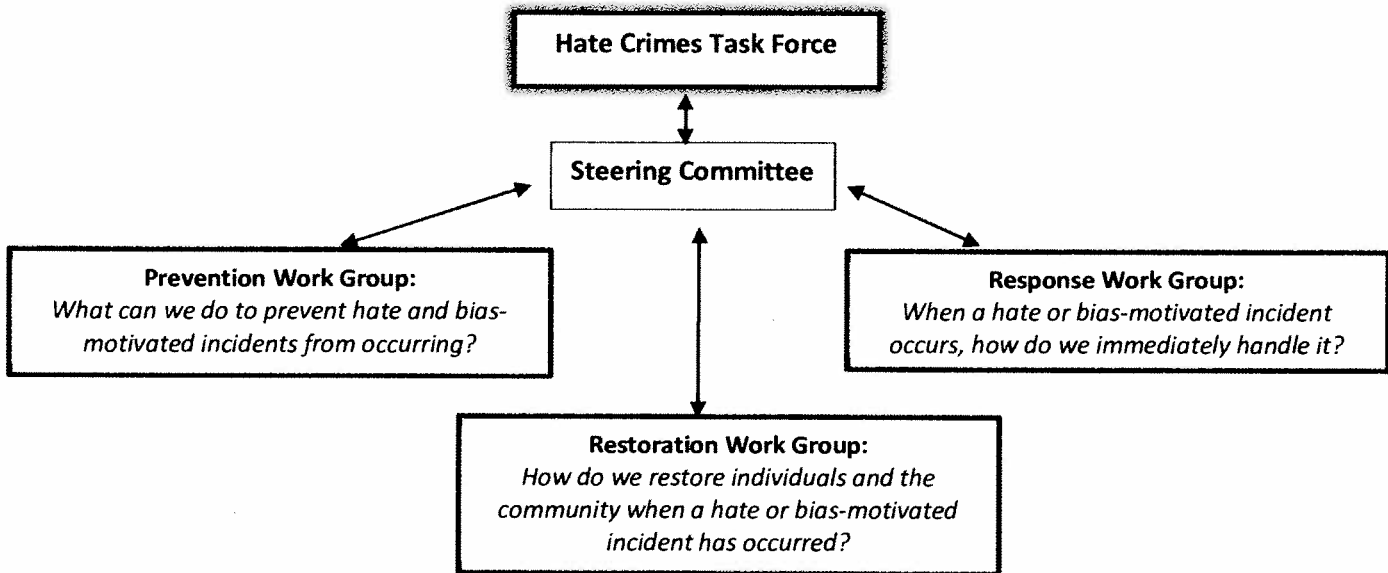
- Comprised of representatives (policy makers or designees) from each organization participating in the Initiative.
- Provides guidance for the project and reaches consensus on recommendations for the project.
- Will meet at least three times a year (and as needed): Jan, Sept and May.

Steering Committee:

- Comprised of members of the Task Force or their designee who have volunteered to participate.
- Provides day-to-day oversight of the project.
- Meets bi-monthly or as needed.

Work Groups:

- Identifies and prioritizes specific strategies and activities for each respective theme.
- Comprised of stakeholders who volunteer to participate (from Task Force or their organizations or any volunteer wanting to work on that item or issue).
- Meets monthly or more depending on their work plan/timeline.



How to Learn More about This Initiative or To Get Involved:

For Overall Initiative Information, Contact:
 Karen Gross Anti-Defamation League kgross@adl.org 512-249-7960 or 512-799-0348

To Join a Work Group:

Prevention Work Group:
 Chairs: **Lisa Scheps** lisa@transtexas.org or **Angela Ward** angela.ward@austinisd.org

Response Work Group:
 Chair: **Chuck Smith** chuck@equalitytexas.org

Restoration Work Group:
 Chairs: **Steven McCormick** steven.mccormick@ci.austin.tx.us or **Tom Spencer** tspencer@interfaithtexas.org

Austin/Travis County Hate Crimes Task Force

Prevention Work Group Goals

(What can we do to prevent hate and bias motivated incidents from occurring?)

A/TC Hate Crimes Task Force Prevention Work Group Goals	
Goal 1:	Enhance the community's understanding of personal bias (power/privilege) so individuals have greater empathy and acceptance with those different from themselves.
Goal 2:	Connect youth with anti-bias education and tools so they are active participants in fostering acceptance and respect.
Goal 3:	Work with Parents, educators (public and private) and the community to identify and mitigate the consequence of bias.
Goal 4:	Increase participation in the prevention work group from a cross-section of our diverse community.

Response Work Group Goals

*(Focused on response that occurs within one week
after a hate or bias motivated incident is reported)*

A/TC Hate Crimes Task Force Response Work Group Goals	
Goal 1:	Enhance the law enforcement response to hate and bias motivated incidents so all relevant information is gathered and victim needs are met.
Goal 2:	Identify victims' immediate needs in hate and bias motivated incidents to address what their safety, security, physical and psychological/emotional health needs are.
Goal 3:	Develop stakeholder response to hate and bias motivated incidents to create a collaborative cross-community response.
Goal 4:	Enhance the prosecutions response to hate and bias motivated incidents to promote a fair and just disposition.
Goal 5:	Improve the data collection of hate and bias motivated incidents to more accurately reflect their nature and frequency, and develop strategies for incident reduction.
Goal 6:	Make recommendations for legislative and/or policy changes.
Goal 7:	Increase participation in the work group from a cross-section of our diverse community.

Restoration Workgroup Goals

*(How do we restore the individuals and the community
when a hate or bias-motivated incident has occurred?)*

A/TC Hate Crimes Task Force Restoration Workgroup Goals	
Goal 1:	Develop a community engagement process that will engage citizens with conversations to help us understand what the community expects for restoration as it relates to hate and bias motivated incidents.
Goal 2:	Develop a restorative toolkit for community stakeholders to help facilitate and promote growth and healing within our community when hate and bias motivated incidents occur.
Goal 3:	Develop a guide to restoration for secondary and higher education schools to help facilitate and promote growth and healing within campuses and districts when hate and bias motivated incidents occur.
Goal 4:	Increase participation from a cross-section of our diverse community.
Goal 5:	Identify what victim's long-term needs are in hate and bias motivated incidents to address their safety, security, physical, psychological and emotional health.

Goals adopted 09-15-11