

ADDRESSING ANTI-ASIAN HATE

A guide for journalists and AAPI communities



The Center for
Public Integrity

About this guide

Hate is a sensitive and complex topic to talk about as we acknowledge as a society how communities of color are subjected to racism, discrimination, violence and hate speech. During the pandemic, hundreds and possibly thousands of hate-crime incidents were reported across the United States against Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

America has a long track record of scapegoating marginalized communities. And throughout our history, hate crime incidents have come in waves after news events or political statements directed at specific groups. But anti-Asian racism in the U.S. stretches back to Chinese immigrants' experience in the nineteenth century, including the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The absence of reliable data tracking hate has been an impediment to tackling modern-day variations on this problem in meaningful ways with policies and solutions.

Forty-six states and the District of

Columbia have enacted hate-crime laws, but the standards vary.

This guide is designed to help journalists covering anti-Asian bias and violence, as well as residents and community leaders grappling with the problem. You'll find information about these issues, story ideas, how to find data and ways to approach solutions journalism.

About us: The Center for Public Integrity is a Pulitzer Prize-winning nonprofit news organization dedicated to investigating inequality in our country.

During our 35-year history, we have often partnered with other newsrooms and put together toolkits, like this one, to help local news organizations report deeply on topics that affect their communities.

We hope this guide will set the foundation for journalists and non-journalists alike to dig into these important issues and drive change.

If you want to contact us for any information or tips, send an email to apihatecrimes@gmail.com.

Credits

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Historical context

The increase in anti-AAPI violence during the COVID-19 pandemic stands as part of a long history of discrimination, harassment and scapegoating.

In the 1880s, resentment of the laborers coming from China — described with the racist term “yellow peril” — led to the [Chinese Exclusion Act](#) that banned new immigrants and existing residents from becoming U.S. citizens. This resentment also turned violent. In October 1871, a mob [lynched](#) 18 Chinese Americans in Los Angeles. In September 1885, a mob of white coal miners [attacked](#) their Chinese co-workers in Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory, killing 28 and wounding 15. In May 1887, more than 30 Chinese laborers were mining gold in northeast Oregon when the entire group was [gunned down](#) by white horse thieves.

When the bubonic plague hit Honolulu and San Francisco, officials [scapegoated](#) Asian immigrants and implemented policies like controlled burns and quarantines of Chinatowns in the cities, which greatly harmed community residents. In 1906, a rise in Indian immigration sparked what became known as “dusky peril,” a fear of what a Washington state newspaper then [described](#) as “Hindu hordes invading the state.” By

Anti-AAPI violence and bias has risen with geopolitical events and economic issues for more than 100 years in the U.S.

1917, the Asiatic Barred Zone Act put a halt to most Asian immigration until the Immigration Act of 1965 removed those race-specific barriers.

The attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on Dec. 7, 1941, launched a rise in fears about national security, especially on the West Coast. Two months later, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order that sent more than 120,000 Japanese Americans into internment camps. Editors at newspapers including the Los Angeles Times [voiced support](#) for the policy.

In 1982, Chinese-American Vincent Chin was [beaten to death](#) by two white men a few days before his wedding. The men, who misidentified him as being Japanese, were angry about Japan’s auto industry at a time when America was losing man-

ufacturing jobs.

In Galveston, Texas, white fishermen called on armed Texas Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in 1981 to patrol waters and [terrorize](#) Vietnamese fishermen.

After 9/11, Muslims, including South Asian Muslims, experienced a 1,600% [rise in hate](#) crimes, [according to FBI data](#). Sikhs, who are mostly South Asian, were also targeted and mistaken for Muslim. In the first month after 9/11, the Sikh Coalition [documented more than 300 cases](#)



Lily Chin, mother of Vincent Chin, is supported as she leaves Detroit’s City-County Building. Her son was killed by two white men who were angry about Japan’s auto industry. (Getty Images)

[of violence and discrimination](#) against Sikh Americans in the U.S.

Anti-AAPI violence and bias has risen with geopolitical events and economic issues for more than 100 years in the U.S. It is important historical context that journalists need to know in order to provide in-depth coverage of present-day hate and discrimination. Patterns of state-sanctioned discrimination, lack of accountability for those who inflict violence based on race and the role of rhetoric used by politicians and other public figures in increased violence are

important to recognize while covering hate.

This section was produced by Maya Srikrishnan. Srikrishnan is a veteran Californian-based journalist who joined Public Integrity as a reporter in March 2022. Previously, she was associate editor for civic education at the Voice of San Diego and led the organization’s diversity, equity and inclusion work. In her six years at Voice of San Diego, she covered housing, land use and U.S.-Mexico border and immigration issues.

The data problem

There is a lack of comprehensive data on the frequency and severity of hate crimes against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the U.S. Studies show hate crime victims are less likely to report incidents due to fear of retaliation, concerns that justice would not be served and distrust in the criminal justice system, according to a [2023 report by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights](#). The Commission also found that Asian Americans in particular may be even less likely than other victims to report discriminatory behavior when it occurs.

But the limited data available can provide leads and context for reporters covering anti-AAPI hate crimes. Here are some places to start. And look to the appendix for sample public records requests.

The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program

The most widely used data on hate crimes nationally comes from the Federal

Bureau of Investigation's [Uniform Crime Reporting \(UCR\) Program](#), which includes data on hate crimes. The data is available online and includes crimes motivated by the offender's bias against a given race/ethnicity/ancestry, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender and gender identity, following the definition established by the [Hate Crime Statistics Act \(28 U.S.C. § 534\)](#). Data also shows where the offense happened, including schools, homes or places of worship.

Law enforcement agencies report a hate crime to the FBI UCR Program only if an investigation finds objective facts to show the crime was bias-motivated. Law enforcement agencies use a two-tiered decision-making process. The first-level, or responding, officer identifies if there may be an indication of bias and a second-level officer decides whether to report the incident as a hate crime.

The [Commission on Civil Rights](#) found that all race-based hate crimes rose 30% in fiscal year 2020 and that anti-Asian hate crimes spiked more than 70% that year. The latest UCR data shows anti-Asian hate crimes more than doubled from 333 in 2020 to 753 in 2021. Anti-Asian hate-crimes for fiscal year 2022 dropped significantly to 499 but [were still higher than any other year since 1991](#).

Anti-Hawaiian and Pacific Islander hate crimes also more than doubled in the first

year of the pandemic, from 20 in 2020 to 50 in 2021. The latest data shows 26 reported hate crimes in 2022, which is higher than any other year since 2013, FBI data shows.

Although widely used, FBI data is often incomplete because local law enforcement agencies are not required to report hate crimes to the FBI. In 2020, about 12,000 — or 3 out of 4 — law enforcement agencies that submitted [data to the FBI](#) reported zero hate crimes. This included over 40 agencies with populations over 100,000 people, according to a [2022 U.S. Department of Justice report](#).

Program Bureau of Justice Statistics National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)

The Bureau of Justice Statistics [National](#)

[Crime Victimization Survey \(NCVS\)](#) is another widely used measure of hate crimes across the U.S. Each year about 240,000 people in 150,000 households participate in the survey, which collects data on nonfatal personal crimes and household property crimes — including those not reported to police.

The NCVS asks victims if they have any reason to believe that the victimization was a “hate crime or crime of prejudice or bigotry.” Victimitizations are only categorized as hate crimes if the victim can provide [certain types of evidence](#) to support an affirmative response, such as the offender using hate language, or hate signs or symbols at the scene. Additionally, the NCVS asks hate crime victims about the types of bias they suspect motivated the crime.

Much like the FBI data, the survey re-



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lies on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias and underreporting. NCVS estimates exclude children under 12 and do not measure crimes against people who are homeless, who live in institutional settings or who live on military bases.

NCVS data shows Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders went from being the most likely to tell police about a violent crime committed against them to being the least likely during the first two years of the pandemic. In 2020, 63% of AAPI victims surveyed [contacted police](#) to report a violent crime. The rate [dropped](#) to 40% in 2021. The latest data shows 34% of AAPI [victims of violent crime](#) reported to the police in 2022, compared to 42% of white, 46% of Black and 46% of Hispanic respondents.

Federal Justice Statistics Program (FJSP)

The Bureau of Justice Statistics also analyzes data on criminal prosecutions of hate crimes through the Federal Justice Statistics Program. The FJSP includes data from the Executive Office for U.S. Attorneys' Legal Information Office Network System and the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts.

The U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division has a table online of the [statutes used in hate crime prosecutions](#). The office defines hate crimes as "acts of violence or threats of violence motivated by bias based on statutorily-protected characteristics. This includes acts of physical harm and specific criminal threats motivated by animus based on

race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability."

Between 2005 and 2019, 1,864 hate crime suspects were referred for prosecution to U.S. attorneys from federal judicial districts in all 50 states, according to the latest FJPS [Federal Hate Crime Prosecutions](#) reports. [Supplemental reports](#) break up the number of hate crime suspects referred to U.S. attorneys and hate crime defendants convicted in U.S. district court by federal judicial district and by state. But this data is not disaggregated by race. And as of early 2024, there were no reports published with data after 2019.

Filling the data gaps

To fill data gaps, reporters and researchers can request data at the federal, state and local level. Here are some approaches we recommend.

Data from law enforcement agencies

1. Before filing requests, understand how hate crimes are reported, investigated and tracked by agencies. You can do this by surveying or requesting to talk with officials on background about the forms and systems they use to log and track these types of cases and about the reporting process. [This flowchart](#) published by the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General could be a starting point.
2. Request data from local law enforcement for hate crimes commit-

ted in their jurisdiction. Remember each state has its own hate crime definitions and thresholds, so make sure to cite the correct statute or law. The Anti-Defamation League has [a table with each state's hate crime laws and statutory provisions](#).

TIP: Ask for data that includes case numbers, locations and bias type or description, but avoid asking for identifying information of victims or offenders that would allow law enforcement agencies to easily reject your request. After you receive this initial data, you can request public versions of each case file using the case numbers.

[Here is a sample FOIA](#) used by Public Integrity to request data from law enforcement.

Data from prosecutors

You can also continue following a hate crime through the criminal justice system. After law enforcement investigates a hate crime, the case is transferred to prosecutors, usually a district attorney (DA). Local DAs usually keep public records showing hate crime case volume and outcomes. You can find a [sample FOIA used by Public Integrity here](#) to request this data.

TIP: Some prosecutor's offices may be more forthcoming with data than others. It can help you to negotiate for records with one agency if a peer agency has already provided you with records. That's why we're sharing a [sample of the data we obtained from the DA's office in Harris County, Texas](#), using the records request

above. Be specific and tell the records custodian that other agencies have determined these documents can be disclosed to the public.

Data on K-12 schools

The number of reported hate crimes in schools and colleges [nearly doubled](#) from 700 in 2018 to 1,300 in 2022, according to [FBI data](#). Hate crimes on school property impact AAPI people specifically – a pattern that began well before the pandemic. Nearly one of 10 hate crimes against AAPI people nationwide have happened at K-12 schools since 1991, according to FBI data.

FBI data can be a good place to start when covering anti-AAPI violence and bias in schools, because it contains fields about the location where a crime occurred and the law enforcement agencies investigating or reporting the crime. Those cookie crumbs can lead you to specific school systems where you might conduct deeper reporting.

But obtaining additional data on students is more difficult and requires additional caution. These cases often involve minors, and due to privacy laws like the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, it is easy for law enforcement and

school administrators to deny your requests if you ask for identifying information. In addition, data collection practices may differ across school systems.

That’s why we recommend reaching out to school district officials to understand school policies on the reporting, investigating and tracking of bullying, harassment and hate crimes before filing a formal records request. You can find a sample of the survey [here](#).

What if you’re unable to reach school district officials? Policy manuals and forms used to report harassment or bullying are usually available on a school district’s website.

The number of reported hate crimes in schools and colleges nearly doubled from 700 in 2018 to 1,300 in 2022, according to FBI data.

These documents often provide details about the investigation and retention of complaints. School districts with civil rights compliance offices will sometimes also publish reports

on race-based harassment and bullying complaints.

The last step is requesting the records. You can use the answers to your survey and the documents you’ve gleaned from the school district’s website to craft a targeted records request that’s more likely to succeed in getting the information you need to report your story. In the appendix, we provide two templates to get you started.

And if it turns out school districts in your

area aren’t collecting data regarding hate crimes or racially motivated bullying and harassment — that could be a story, too. If there’s evidence that hate and harassment occurs but goes undocumented, publishing a story about the lack of transparency in local schools could encourage administrators to improve data collection practices.

Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC)

Every year the U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights conducts the [Civil Rights Data Collection](#) (CRDC) survey of all public schools and school districts in every state, Washington, D.C., and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The CRDC “gathers information about student access to educational programs, activities and staff as well as school climate factors, such as student discipline and harassment or bullying incidents.” The [mandatory survey](#) covers public schools serving students in preschool through 12th grade.

The [data available online](#) includes a count of the male and female students who reported being harassed or bullied based on race at a given school. The data is also disaggregated by the race of the students reported harassed or bullied. Race and ethnicity categories include Asian and Pacific Islander or Hawaiian students.

TIP: We reached out to an Education Department spokesperson to learn more about how the CRDC was affected by the pandemic. A spokesperson said in a statement that the Office for Civil Rights “cautions readers and data users to consider the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on students and on educational conditions when comparing the 2020-21 CRDC to CRDCs from previous years.”

Connecting the dots between school and crime data

To help connect the dots between data from CRDC, local law enforcement and the FBI, Public Integrity drafted two records requests. The [first request is for school district data](#) on complaints referred to local law enforcement. The [second seeks documents from the local law enforcement agencies](#) that received those referrals.

TIP: Some school districts have their own police department. Even though harassment and bullying complaints are investigated simultaneously by school administrators and school police, they are separate departments and do not always link their reports. In these cases, make sure to send both of these requests to the corresponding department within the district.

Nearly one of 10 hate crimes against AAPI people nationwide have happened at K-12 schools since 1991, according to FBI data.

Office of Civil Rights complaint database

The U.S. Department of Education's [Office of Civil Rights](#) (OCR) investigates civil rights violations and discrimination involving education agencies such as schools, libraries and museums that receive federal financial assistance.

A [complaint of discrimination](#) can be filed by anyone who believes that an education institution has discriminated against someone on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age. Complaints can be filed on behalf of another person or group targeted by the alleged discrimination.

The OCR has two searchable databases: one showing [open complaints](#) filed with the office and another with [resolved cases](#).

Both databases have limitations. The first is that neither provides a way to filter only to bullying or harassment incidents that impacted students of a given race or ethnicity. The second is that the case documents included in these databases are heavily redacted.

TIP: Consider combining this database with CRDC data to understand more about the federal response to allegations of racist harassment in schools. How does the number of cases opened by OCR compare to the number of students reported harassed or bullied in a state or school district you cover?

Other data sources

We came across a few other data sources

worth putting on your radar.

The [Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism](#) (CSHE) at California State University, San Bernardino is widely cited for the data it compiles on hate crimes.

Using data reported to police in the 16 largest U.S. cities, the [CSHE found overall hate crimes fell 6% in 2020 but anti-Asian hate crimes soared 145%](#). The first spike of anti-Asian hate crimes "occurred in March and April 2020 concurrently with a rise in COVID-19 cases and negative stereotyping of Asians related to the pandemic."

The National Center for Education Statistics' [School Survey on Crime and Safety](#) presents data on the number of violent and nonviolent incidents recorded by U.S. public schools. The agency publishes a crosstab summarizing the offenses by incident type (physical attack, possession of alcohol, etc.), school type (charter or traditional; elementary, middle or high school) and other factors.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [National Violent Death Reporting System](#) "collects facts from death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports, law enforcement reports, and toxicology reports into one anonymous database." NVDRS also tracks whether homicides are associated with a hate crime.

[AAPI Data](#) has an array of disaggregated AAPI demographic data, surveys and reports about various topics impacting Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the

United States.

Advocacy groups, nonprofits and coalitions

A number of advocacy groups, nonprofits and other organizations play a role in tracking, monitoring and preventing hate crimes, bullying or harassment. Here are a few organizations where you might find helpful resources for identifying and interpreting data on these subjects.

- [The National Asian Pacific American Bar Association](#)
- [Asian American Psychological Association \(AAPA\)](#)
- [Council of Korean Americans](#)
- [Sikh Coalition](#)
- [Bystander Revolution](#)
- [Council on American-Islamic Relations \(CAIR\)](#)
- [GLSEN \(formerly the Gay, Lesbian, & Straight Education Network\)](#)
- [Hindu American Foundation \(HAF\)](#)
- [Human Rights Campaign \(HRC\)](#)
- [Islamic Networks Group \(ING\)](#)
- [PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center](#)
- [Stop AAPI Hate](#)
- [StopBullying.gov](#)
- [Suicide Awareness Voices of Education \(SAVE\)](#)
- [Act To Change](#)
- [Resources to fight anti-East, Southeast Asian & Pacific Islander racism via NüVoices](#)

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Pratheek Rebala joined Public Integrity's data team in 2017. Rebala previously spent three and a half years as an interactive graphics intern in the D.C. bureau of Time magazine. He graduated from Elliott School of International Affairs at George Washington University in 2017.

What happens in the courts

One May evening in 2022, two Filipino women — mother and daughter — went to pick up snacks at a McDonald's drive-thru in North Hollywood when a white man allegedly rear-ended their car, drove alongside them and began to

[shout racial slurs](#), threatening to kill them. Nerissa Roque, the mother, called the police and husband Gabriel Roque, who showed up before officers did. As daughter Patricia recorded on her cell phone, the attacker tried to open her



Supporters of the Justice for the Roques campaign, a community campaign formed in support of the Roque family after the May 2022 attack. (Courtesy of John Haas)

locked door, the [video showed](#), pushed Gabriel Roque to the ground — breaking his rib — and [grabbed](#) Nerissa Roque by her throat. A bystander intervened and stopped the assault, according to news reports.

Police did not arrest the man, Nicholas Weber. He instead received a citation to appear in court and later was charged with two felony batteries with hate crime enhancements. But a year later, the judge dropped the hate crime enhancements and charged Weber with two felony assaults and driving under the influence.

The family was stunned.

"I went there with the hope that the court would shed more light to what happened to us," Gabriel Roque said at a July 2023 [community panel](#) on stopping Asian hate. "Instead of getting the truth out, the truth was twisted; therefore, justice was not served."

The Roques' violent experience follows a national trend stoked in part by anti-Asian rhetoric amid the COVID-19 pandemic. But prosecuting hate crimes successfully is rare, leaving victims disappointed.

To convict someone of a hate crime, the offense must be motivated by a person's prejudice against an individual's "race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender or gender identity," according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In the Roques' case, the court [concluded](#) the evidence was insufficient for a hate crime charge due to the defendant's actions toward a non-Asian bystander and the fact that the racial slurs took place approximately 10-15 minutes before the physical attack. The non-Asian by-

stander left the scene, and it's not clear if police ever identified and questioned the witness about the incident.

Experts estimate an average of 250,000 hate crimes were committed in the United States each year between 2004 and 2015, [according to the U.S. Department of Justice](#). But the lack of reporting is common and problematic — the National Crime Victimization Survey found that about half of hate crimes are never [reported to police](#).

Michael Lieberman, a senior policy counsel for the Southern Poverty Law Center, said there are many obstacles to prosecuting a hate crime case and that often starts from the very beginning. Based in Montgomery, Alabama, SPLC is a nonprofit that specializes in civil rights and public interest litigation.

"There's a gap in reporting," said Lieberman, who has spent three decades working on hate crime issues, including testifying before Congress, writing and advocating for hate crime legislation. "If you don't have accurate data, you cannot effectively address the problem. And we do not have accurate data. The FBI has been trying to collect this data since 1991."

In Texas, for example, only eight cases ended in convictions from the nearly 1,000 hate crimes reported from 2010 to 2015, [according to an analysis by ProPublica](#). Nationwide, prosecutors pursue charges for traditional criminal offenses — if anything — when evidence like [hate speech is absent](#), hampering their ability to show bias after an attack takes place on [people from marginalized communities](#).

[The Washington Post](#) summed it up

this way: “Researchers, advocates and law enforcement officials have described a breakdown at nearly every step of the justice system leading to a disturbing conclusion: Hate crimes go unpunished.”

For victims, the lack of culpability is compounded by the absence of institutional support. A 2022 [U.S. survey](#) of crime survivors found that only 20% received any aid from the criminal justice system, with the majority of victims



After a judge dropped the hate crime enhancement on a felony assault that left him with a broken rib, Gabriel Roque said justice was not served. (Courtesy of John Haas)

finding support in their community or the health care system. More obstacles appear for undocumented victims.

Yet these cracks in the handling of hate crimes also reveal critical reporting opportunities. Media coverage, along

with pressure from advocacy groups, [can increase the visibility](#) of hate crimes and potentially keep cases from falling off the radar. For journalists seeking to investigate cases in their own community, here’s an overview of the systemic barriers facing hate crime survivors.

Lack of reporting and convictions: ‘systemic neglect’

Before a hate crime case can enter the criminal justice system, victims must acknowledge what they’ve experienced was a hate crime and report it to law enforcement.

“A major factor in under-reporting is distrust and lack of confidence in the police, especially for historically marginalized victims,” [writes](#) Brendan Lantz, an associate professor at Florida State University who studies hate crime victimization.

Lantz and his colleagues [found](#) that hate crime victims don’t report the crimes not because they thought “the police couldn’t do something” but because they thought “the police wouldn’t do something.”

Undocumented survivors are also wary of revealing their status to police. According to a 2015 report by the Center for Migration Studies and the Migration Policy Institute, [1 out of every 7 Asian immigrants](#) is undocumented.

When survivors do come forward to law enforcement, officers must correctly identify and acknowledge the bias motivation related to the incident in order to proceed with hate crime charges. But law enforcement often [lacks the appropriate training and resources](#) for investigation. Hate crime legislation is not uniform across the U.S., and [a handful of states](#), including Arkansas, South Carolina and Wyoming, don’t have hate crime laws at all.

“One of the most important things about hate crime laws is just to be able to call a crime what it is,” Lieberman said.

“It’s just validating for the community.”

But one of the biggest problems in documenting hate crimes is lack of accountability when law enforcement agencies don’t collect this information. In 2019, [86% of such agencies](#) reported zero hate crimes in their jurisdiction.

While that may be accurate for some jurisdictions, Lantz said, it’s statistically unlikely for the majority. Investigating this data and whether any hate crimes did in fact occur in these areas could potentially reveal “systemic neglect,” he said.

As a starting point, ProPublica developed a [“reporting recipe”](#) for journalists on how to request hate crime data from their local police departments. Some of those tips included:

- File a public records request to law enforcement agencies for records of bias-motivated crimes reported to or investigated by the agency. Here’s some guidance to write the request.
- Compare the number of bias-motivated crimes publicly reported by your local agency to what it reported to the FBI. Consider also comparing the numbers with reports from cities with similar population sizes.
- If any discrepancies or differences are found, look into the processes officers use to report hate crimes. For example, are hate crimes designated with a checkbox on reporting forms? Are any additional reviews for determining hate crimes in place?

It’s possible future policy changes could ensure more cases are reported. Journalists can write solutions stories looking into approaches that could potentially improve hate crime reporting, such as police training programs or systems outside the U.S.

In a [2020 study](#), Lantz and colleagues found that in the U.K., which has reporting policies that are more victim-centric, hate crime reporting has steadily increased while reporting in the U.S.

decreased over the same period.

A high bar

Once a hate crime case does enter the criminal justice system, the biggest barrier to conviction lies with the evidence at hand and the prosecution’s willingness to go to trial.

Research articles and news reports reveal a chorus of prosecutors who say that hate crimes are extremely difficult to prove in court in order to obtain a conviction.

There are various reasons why so few hate crimes are convicted in court, according to a [ProPublica investigation](#) that included interviews with advocates, lawmakers and 15 prosecutors in Texas. Among the problems: difficulty proving intent, lack of will among prosecutors to pursue hate crime enhancements and lack of training for police about the necessary steps to investigate such cases.

Police training is really important, Lieberman said. For example, if there was a cross burning on a Black family’s lawn and police interpreted that as trespassing without any aspect of hate or bias, they’re missing something. “You have to have law enforcement officials that are willing and able to identify it and report it.”

Another issue is police officers, victims’ liaisons and prosecutors believing that hate crimes have a higher burden of proof than what the law requires, according to a [study](#) by Ryan D. King of the Ohio State University and Besiki L. Kutateladze at Florida International University.

But the key disconnect lies in a common assumption in law enforcement that hatred must be the sole motivation for a crime. Many state laws are written more broadly, stating that prejudice or bias against a protected class must be a motivator. And states like California even explicitly include language clarifying that hate crimes may be [“committed in whole or in part”](#) because of bias.

For anti-Asian hate crimes in particular, [experts say that](#) the lack of known racist symbolism, compared with objects like nooses in regards to anti-Black crimes, makes it more challenging to win a conviction in court. Other experts point to



Nerissa Roque (left) and her daughter Patricia (right) at a community rally in June 2022 after a court hearing at the Van Nuys Courthouse in California. (Courtesy of John Haas)

potential [racial bias at every level of the justice system](#) from law enforcement to prosecutors to judges that may affect case outcomes.

But there is some good news. Media coverage has the potential to impact hate crime outcomes. When King and Kutateladze interviewed prosecutors for their study, they found that attention from media and advocacy groups can keep cases on officials' radar. In some instances, local reporting has a direct impact on cases, such as an [investigative](#) story by the Oregonian that led to officials reopening and

re-examining multiple hate crime cases.

Still, survivors can wait months or years to have their day in court. The Roques, for example, waited nearly a year — the norm in many states — before a preliminary hearing date was held.

Weber, the man ultimately charged for attacking the Roques, took a plea deal and was convicted on three counts: two felony assaults and a misdemeanor DUI.

"The criminal justice process, including the gathering of evidence and the decision to prosecute, often works against those with less power and against minority groups," King and Kutateladze wrote in their study.

"The law is a blunt instrument," said Lieberman, and suggests that the more effective route for addressing hate crimes is prevention. He encouraged local journalists to ask law enforcement and government officials directly what they're doing to prevent these crimes from happening.

Barriers to supporting survivors

Victims' services programs are typically administered at the state level with the help of district attorneys' offices. These programs offer trauma counseling and funds for relocation, wage loss and medical care. Yet vanishingly few crime survivors seem to be accessing these services.

A large [national survey](#) of crime survivors reported that 74% did not receive mental health counseling, a particular concern for Asian American and Pacific Islander communities, as this population rates among the [lowest](#) when it comes to receiving mental health services generally.

Ninety-six percent of crime victims did not receive any victim compensation to help recover from their experience, the survey showed. These statistics reveal a breakdown between victims and governmental resources, which as of February 2024 total over [\\$1.2 billion](#) in the federal Crime Victims Fund.

In early 2024, the Justice Depart-

ment [proposed reforms](#) to address the subjective nature of evaluating victim compensation after an [AP investigation exposed racial disparities](#) in the system. The news organization's reporting showed that Black victims were disproportionately denied in many states, often due to factors stemming from implicit bias.

While the proposals are still pending, the AP's investigation could serve as a roadmap for reporting on bias that may affect other groups, such as the Asian American and Pacific Islander community or undocumented immigrants.

What happens to survivors ripples through communities. Many Asian Americans shared in a 2021 [poll](#) that racial bias and violence impacts their mental health.

"Hate crimes are unique as a crime in that they do reverberate through the community in a way that other crimes don't," said Lantz, the Florida State University professor. He points out that people in the Asian diaspora may experience their own feelings of distress and lack of safety when hearing about hate crimes that could have happened to them.

"That's something that our criminal justice system and law enforcers don't always take into account on the same level," he said. "Bringing that extra hate crime charge has meaning even if you could have gotten a punishment another way."

This section was produced by Tiên Nguyễn, an award-winning journalist, independent filmmaker and reformed PhD chemist. Her work spans history, science and human rights with a focus on uplifting historically oppressed communities. Her stories have covered death, drugs, dino poop and more for outlets including Chemical & Engineering News, Nature, PBS, Scientific American and VICE News. Born in Vietnam and raised in North Carolina, she's now based in Los Angeles.

For anti-Asian hate crimes in particular, experts say that the lack of known racist symbolism makes it more challenging to win a conviction in court.

The impact of state policies

Forty-six states and the District of Columbia have enacted hate crime laws, but the standards are different in each of these states. Arkansas, South Carolina, Indiana and Wyoming don't have hate crime laws, according to the [Anti-Defamation League](#).

States can tap tools beyond the criminal justice system to address violence and racism. California is an example.

In 2021, the state passed [the Asian and Pacific Islander Equity budget](#). It's a three-year investment of \$166.5 million that will fund resources to respond to anti-AAPI bias and address longstanding racial inequities. A large chunk of the money is flowing to community organizations to help victims of hate crimes and provide hate crime prevention services, but portions of the investment will go toward data collection, ethnic media and restorative justice programs.

A statewide coalition, [California is No Place for Hate](#), targets street harassment and works to shift the burden of reporting, responding to and preventing this harassment from the people experiencing it to public agencies. California has passed transit laws addressing the issue that the coalition supported.

The first, from 2022, created a community survey tool in multiple languages to help transit agencies and the public understand how hate and harassment affect riders. Another law passed that year



Social activists gather for a march from San Gabriel City Hall to Alhambra City Hall in California on March 26, 2021, during a rally against anti-Asian hate. (Frederic J. Brown/AFP via Getty Images)

directs the California Civil Rights Department to create a pilot program incentivizing businesses to build a harassment-free environment for customers. Another state bill approved in 2023 requires California's 10 largest transit agencies to collect data on hate and harassment.

Finally, California's Civil Rights Department [launched a statewide hotline](#) for people to report hate incidents and connect with support services such as mental health counseling after they experience hate.

But some state actions increase discrimination and violence against Asian American residents.

Nearly half of states have proposed or enacted policies that prohibit ownership of land or businesses by foreign entities. Committee of 100, an organization that promotes participation of Chinese Americans in business, government, academia and the arts, said these policies can "legitimize harmful and xenophobic claims about immigrants that would exacerbate rising anti-Asian violence that has negatively affected U.S. citizens and non-citizens alike." The organization [tracks](#) these bills across the country, so you can see if

there is one in your state.

Elected officials supporting these measures have in some cases used language about threats and dangers that echo the "yellow peril" era. Florida, meanwhile, has imposed stiff penalties, including prison time, for Chinese immigrants and property sellers who violate the state's new [land ban law](#). The American Civil Liberties Union is among those [challenging](#) the law.

This section was produced by Maya Srikrishnan.

Misinformation and harmful rhetoric

Misinformation and political rhetoric play a large part in the waves of anti-AAPI violence and racism. It's important that journalists recognize when this rhetoric is used and explain how it's problematic if quoting officials, politicians or other prominent figures who use inflammatory language or spread misinformation.

Such language during the COVID-19 pandemic sparked an increase in anti-AAPI violence and discrimination. For example, then-President Donald Trump frequently blamed the virus on China, tweeting messages like "Chinese Virus," which studies now show [helped feed anti-Asian racism](#).

There are plenty more current examples of this rhetoric. In March 2024 Fox News aired a [conspiracy theory](#) from U.S. Sen. Roger Marshall, a Kansas Republican, about massage parlors with Chinese-American owners.

Journalists should be careful covering these incidents to prevent the promotion of such ideas without challenging their validity.

During elections, it's especially important that journalists be watchful for harmful rhetoric and misinformation. Republican debates for the 2024 presidential election

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included harmful [anti-China rhetoric](#). Trump used his social media platform to [mock](#) Nikki Haley's birth name. But it's not just Republicans. Robert F. Kennedy Jr., running for president first as a Democrat and then as an independent candidate, also publicly discussed a problematic [conspiracy theory](#) about COVID-19 and Chinese people.

The [Committee of 100](#), an organization that promotes participation of Chinese Americans in business, government, academia and the arts and aims "to encourage constructive relations between the peoples of the United States and Greater China," has a [glossary of anti-Asian terms and tropes](#) for journalists wanting to learn how to better identify harmful rhetoric.

Candice Cho, managing director of policy and counsel at [Stop AAPI Hate](#), said there is a notable increase in anti-AAPI bias around elections and in relation to geopolitical events. Rhetoric and misinformation from politicians and other prominent figures during these times often drives increases in discrimination, harassment and violence against AAPI communities.

This section was produced by Maya Srikrishnan.

Investigating solutions

A [2023 survey](#) conducted by Stop AAPI Hate found that two-thirds of respondents want more civil rights protections. That's not always about more law enforcement.

In a [2022 survey](#) by the same group that asked respondents to rank solutions, law enforcement involvement came in fourth. Stop AAPI Hate notes that solely focusing on violent hate crimes ignores a larger problem that includes street harassment, discrimination and more. In the [2022 survey](#), non-criminal incidents comprise the vast majority of the harmful acts that AAPI community members experience. Two-thirds of nearly 11,500 incidents from March 2020 to March 2022 involved harassment, such as verbal or written hate speech or inappropriate gestures.

Cho from Stop AAPI Hate said that hate crimes are often viewed by the media and public as interpersonal conflicts, rather than a systemic issue that should be addressed as such.

Cho said it would be helpful to amend Title II of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include grocery stores and other retail stores, where violence, harassment and discrimination happen frequently. Such businesses were left out of the law. Stop AAPI Hate also supports efforts to codify access in various languages at federal agencies.

California is an example of a state that has tried to address anti-AAPI racism in a more holistic way, from a reporting hotline to more data collection. See the state policies section of this guide for more details.

This section was produced by Maya Srikrishnan.

The impact on adoptees



Lian Parsons-Thomason at age 6 in 2001, writing under a tree beside Boston's Charles River. (Courtesy of Lian Parsons-Thomason)

China's [one-child policy](#) was implemented in 1980, restricting families to one child per couple in an effort to curb the country's population growth rate.

Until it officially ended on Jan. 1, 2016, this policy was [enforced](#) at the provincial level through a variety of measures, including contraception, fines, sanctions, intimidation and coercion, and abortion and sterilization — consensual or otherwise. Additionally, if parents did not comply with the policy, additional children were [prevented from being registered](#) in the national household system, excluding them from legal

documentation and social services.

Throughout China's history, families have [privileged male children](#) due to cultural and social conventions and expectations. These traditions included sons inheriting their family name and property, and providing for their aging parents, whereas daughters were expected to leave their family homes upon marriage. This was further exacerbated [during the 1980s](#) when [birth planning restrictions](#) were on the rise and the growing retiree population strained collective welfare.

In 1991, the central Chinese govern-

ment issued the [Adoption Law of the People's Republic of China](#). This law raised penalties on households that had an "unauthorized" child, including Chinese children adopted by Chinese families who went unreported in census and surveys. China subsequently opened the country to international adoption. Up until this time, adoptive parents in China were not penalized for violating the birth quota.

After this loophole closed, abandonment peaked and resulted in around 2 million Chinese children — primarily girls — whose biological families deserted them.

According to the [U.S. Department of State](#), American parents adopted 78,257 children from China between 1999 and 2016. More than 60% of adoptees were girls, according to the [Pew Research Center](#).

I was one of them.

In 1996, an American couple from Boston longing for a child adopted me. The orphanage told them I was abandoned outside a post office in Wuhan, less than 48 hours after I was born.

My childhood was a happy one, full of dance classes, birthday parties and making my mom play Barbies with me. I lived in Boston's West End neighborhood, sandwiched between the Charles River and the city's historic Beacon Hill.

The majority of parents who adopt children internationally were like mine: [white, wealthy and over the age of 35](#). Many Chinese adoptees are raised in communities drastically different from those they would have experienced with their biological families.

Though Boston was [considerably](#)

[diverse](#) by that time, I was among just a handful of Asian students in my first elementary school and the only one in my grade.

My parents did their best to explain adoption and what it meant for our family. By the time I learned to talk, I already knew key phrases like "birth family" and "adoption agency," and could recite the city and province where I was born (but of which I had no memory).

I had stacks of picture books on the topics, owned movies like "Big Bird Goes to China" and even attended Chinese culture class for a year, where I sang songs and played games with a class full of other Chinese American adoptees.

When my parents and I were out in public together, we'd be subjected to stares of curiosity, confusion and sometimes downright hostility.

When I transferred to a public school located in close proximity to Boston's Chinatown, many of my classmates were children of Chinese immigrants and lived in [lower-income households](#). Many of them spoke English as a second language or [spoke exclusively Mandarin or Cantonese](#) at home. We had trouble understanding each others' lived experiences. As children, we did not have the sophisticated communication skills and social awareness to bridge the numerous gaps.

Because of this divide, I struggled to connect and find community with my fellow Chinese American classmates. Instead, I gravitated toward other children with whom I shared a similar background and life experiences. Many of my childhood friends were from white,

upper-middle-class families like mine.

As I continued to grow up, I was rarely in a social or professional situation where most of the other people were also Asian. I felt isolated and untethered wherever I went, estranged from my own identity, with no blueprint to follow.

This experience is [by no means unique](#) for Chinese American adoptees. Because of the disconnect between Chinese adoptees, their American families and the wider Chinese American community, it is difficult for many of us to engage with and embrace the culture we left behind as young children.

No connection to the past

Many of us will never find our biological families. Because child [abandonment is illegal](#) in China and subject to strict criminal punishment, no documentation connects parents to abandoned babies.

Meanwhile, many children were abducted and [trafficked](#) rather than abandoned. Domestic adoption was prohibitively expensive for average Chinese families, while international adoption was lucrative, and this [created a market for kidnappers](#) to bring babies to orphanages.

Fabricated “[finding ads](#)” in newspapers that included false information about children in orphanages further obfuscates the process if adoptees or their biological

families are searching for one another.

As adoptees, our pasts prior to being adopted are utterly obscured. In most cases, we do not speak our birth country’s language, practice its customs or

celebrate its holidays.

We do not have family or members within our community to help us understand expectations, familial roles and personal history across generations.

But one thing we do share — with each other and with other

members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community — is the effects of racism.

I was born in the same city where COVID-19 originated. The first time I saw Wuhan covered by American media was when news of the emerging pandemic reached the U.S. This was my first connection to my birth city since I was taken from it, not knowing whether my biological family still lived there or if the virus had killed them. All around me, discussions of “wet markets,” tropes and stereotypes of Chinese people eating bats and dogs, and other unfounded speculations ran rampant.

There was also a rise in violence and racism toward Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. According to [Stop AAPI Hate](#), one in five respondents to a survey conducted from mid-March 2020 through September 2021 reported experiencing a “hate act,” including ha-

rassment, shunning and physical assault.

Additionally, the way that former President Donald Trump referred to COVID-19, using terms like “Chinese virus,” “Wuhan virus” and “kung flu,” stigmatized Asian Americans, experts say.

Just because we are adoptees does not mean we are exempt from the harm of these events. People who commit violent acts, use inflammatory rhetoric and exclude us from their communities do not see the difference, either.

I have done — and continue to do — comprehensive exploration of myself, my fellow Chinese adoptees and the AAPI communities as a whole. I now understand concepts like generational trauma, internalized racism and institutional oppression. While this journey will be a lifelong one, being a part of these communities is one of my greatest joys; I have finally learned how to be “Asian enough,” without shame and with great honor.

Chinese American adoptees are just one facet of the AAPI community, with tens of thousands of individual stories among us. Each and every one is worth telling.

This section was produced by Lian Parsons-Thomason, a Boston-based writer and journalist. She has served as New England chapter president for the Asian American Journalists Association since 2022. Her bylines can be found in Boston Art Review, the Harvard Gazette, Technical.ly Media, iPondr and more. She currently works at Harvard’s Division of Continuing Education as a digital content producer.

Many Chinese adoptees are raised in communities drastically different from those they would have experienced with their biological families.

Resources/Reading List

- [One Child Nation documentary \(2019\)](#)
- [China’s Children International Organization](#)
- [International Child Search Alliance](#)
- [InterCountry Adoptee Voices](#)
- [Somewhere Between](#) podcast
- [Adoptee/adoptive families Facebook group](#)
- [Sisters of China](#)
- [Finding biological families](#)
- [The impact on China of the one-child policy](#)

Lessons from past reporting

Example: In 2022, The Guardian published a [story](#) about a Stop AAPI Hate survey detailing anti-Asian incidents against Asian Americans. The survey showed a “persistent rise in harassment, verbal abuse and hate speech that have plagued Asian communities since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.” More than 9,000 anti-Asian incidents were identified during the first year of the pandemic.

Lesson: Journalists can use surveys published by interest groups to learn more about this issue and also to look for similar trends locally. Some journalists might find surveys to be boring, but they are full of nuggets you can use to localize a story.

Example: In 2016 the Columbia Missourian, a college student publication and training ground for journalism students at the University of Missouri, [documented](#) incidents of discrimination and racism directed at students from Asia and of Asian descent. The story showed how reluctant this population was to report anti-Asian incidents.

Lesson: The absence of data should not be an impediment to tell a story. Journalists can use the power of storytelling to shed light on these issues, even when data is not available.

Example: In 2023, The [Oregonian](#) showed how local police and prosecutors had failed to investigate and prosecute hate crime cases, leaving victims disappointed and traumatized. “Individual prosecutors must interpret the finer, sometimes confounding points of the law and often do in different ways – more so than with many other, more clear-cut offenses such as robbery, kidnapping, assault, car theft and drunken driving,” the paper reported. At the same time, Oregon was among the first states to create a hotline system where people can log hate crime complaints.

[Another story](#) published by The Oregonian shows that the standard sentence for most hate crimes in the state is probation. The reporter reviewed hundreds of hate crime cases from the past decade to conclude that most defendants didn’t receive any jail time – “even in some extreme encounters where defendants beat victims, chased them with knives, metal pipes, crowbars, and sticks or threatened to shoot them with guns.” Some victims had to move because they were so afraid for the safety of their families.

Lesson: Journalists should not shy away from writing about the complexities of hate crimes. It is a delicate subject

that requires patience and ability to take a deep dive to expose the problems. This type of reporting helps show whether the criminal justice system is doing its part.

Story ideas:

- The experiences of Chinese immigrants can be very different to those of Chinese adoptees. How is this playing out in your region? How are adoptees marginalized within coverage of AAPI issues?
- The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act of 2021 mandates that police departments collect data on hate incidents and develop better practices to prevent and respond to hate crimes. What are your local law enforcement agencies doing to meet the requirements?
- Language barriers and accessibility problems impede people’s ability to report incidents they experience, according to a [2023 report](#) from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. Are your local law enforcement agencies hiring staff with language skills so they can communicate with AAPI communities after incidents take place? If not, how are they trying to bridge communications gaps? (Are they?)
- The 2024 presidential election has increased anti-China rhetoric. How is this impacting Chinese American communities in the places you cover?
- Legislators are proposing and

passing a wave of policies banning land ownership by certain groups of people. If your state is among those discussing these policies, how is that impacting local immigrant communities?

- Advocates say that members of the AAPI community prefer ways to address anti-Asian bias that don’t involve law enforcement. What solutions are people trying? How effective are they? Is it a struggle to get funding and support?
- California [launched a hotline](#) for victims of anti-Asian racism and bias in its Civil Rights Department in 2023. Reporters may be able to request some data about the types of calls the hotline has been receiving and what resources the state is offering to callers. What patterns can you glean from this information?
- California now also requires the largest 10 transit agencies to collect better data on violence and harassment on public transit. Keep an eye on when that data will be available. What do the numbers show in and across systems?
- If you decide to pursue a story about anti-Asian violence or racism in your community, be sure to refer to the Asian American Journalists Association [Guidance on Covering Anti-Asian Violence](#).

This section was produced by Mc Nelly Torres and Maya Srikrishnan.

Conclusion

In 2023, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released a [report](#): The Federal Response to Anti-Asian Racism in the United States. It examined national trends regarding the rise of hate incidents and crimes targeting Asian communities; local and state law enforcements' prevention and reporting practices; and the federal efforts encouraging more participation in reporting crime.

The underreporting of hate crimes against AAPI communities has been an impediment as data could help people assess and combat hate crimes in effective ways. But a host of other issues have also contributed to this problem. Journalists' work here is crucial because it can help provide context, useful information and accountability, such as when reporters ask tough questions about lack of enforcement.

The media must provide local com-

munities with coverage that is sensitive, fair and solutions-oriented. Journalists should have deep discussions about how they are framing stories and devote time for investigative reports.

Violent hate crimes often get the most attention, but AAPI communities experience racism in a multitude of ways: discrimination, harassment on the street or in public transit, etc. We encourage journalists to cover patterns of hate both in and outside the criminal justice system context. Anti-Asian bias is too often covered as one-off, interpersonal events, but it is often systemic and should be covered as a systemic issue.

Michael Lieberman, a senior policy counsel for the Southern Poverty Law Center, said prevention should be at the center of every effort to reduce this problem. Often, there are warning signs of a situation that could escalate to hate crimes.

"The vast majority of hate crimes are not committed by hardcore white supremacists. ... They are committed by people who are trying to get attention," Lieberman said. "We need to have communities that are aware and really thinking about these incidents."

Media coverage of these issues has been shown to improve outcomes and increase the number of people willing to report their experiences to police. There will always be waves of anti-Asian sentiment to cover, even as pandemic-related bias wanes, so stay alert.

And remember that the emotional harm from hate crimes in this country of immigrants can ripple for generations. What happened in the past affects the present. What happens today alters the future.

This toolkit was managed and edited by

Mc Nelly Torres and Jamie Smith Hopkins, editors at Public Integrity.

Torres is an award-winning investigative journalist and editor who has covered the criminal justice system, education, government, natural disasters and consumer issues among other topics.. In 2010, Torres co-founded the Florida Center for Investigative Reporting (FCIR.org). She was a recipient of the [Gwen Ifill Award](#) in 2022.

Hopkins is an editor and senior reporter at Public Integrity. Her work includes investigations into the country's racial wealth gap, its fossil fuel expert boom and its failure to stop a decades-long string of deaths from a widely available consumer product. She was the host of the second season of The Heist podcast in 2022.

Appendix

Sample FOIA: School Districts

[date]

[name of FOIA officer, if known]
FOIA officer [or more specific title]
[name of agency]
[address]

Dear [name]:

This is a request under the [full name of state public information or open records law].

On behalf of the Center for Public Integrity and myself, jointly, I request that you provide us copies of the records identified and described below – or of records containing the information identified and described below:

A list of bullying or harassment complaints [cite system/form used to log complaints] referred to local law enforcement from [date range]. Please provide all applicable fields/factors tracked as part of processing these cases, including but not limited to the following information for each case.

- Effective Date
- Allegation number
- Incident category [add categories if included in the form, such as race, color, national origin and disability]
- Incident location/campus
- Alleged bully: student/non-student
- Alleged bully: grade
- Alleged bully: age
- Alleged bully: race/ethnicity
- Student reported as harassed/bullied: student/non-student
- Student reported as harassed/bullied: grade
- Student reported as harassed/bullied: age
- Student reported as harassed/bullied: race/ethnicity
- Date referred to local law enforcement
- Law enforcement agency name
- Complaint status (ex: inactive, open, cleared)
- Clear date
- Clear reason

Format: we prefer to receive records in the following formats, listed in order of preference:

1. a spreadsheet format such as an Excel file, tab-delimited file or similar;
2. word processing file, text-based PDF, or similar;
3. other non-proprietary electronic format;
4. paper copies.

Please also provide any and all documentation related to such electronic records, including but not limited to data dictionaries, database documentation, record layouts, code sheets, data entry instructions, index and similar printed or electronic documentation materials.

We specifically request all portions of any record responsive to the description above; in a database or spreadsheet, we request all data fields associated with responsive records. If you withhold any record or any portion of a record as exempt, we specifically request the release of all segregable non-exempt portions.

If you withhold any record or portion of a record, please specify which statutory exemptions are claimed for each withholding. Please separately state how disclosure would harm an interest protected by the cited exemption. Please describe each record withheld, including its date and size (e.g., number of pages or number of database entries).

Please respond within [days in state filed] working days, as the Act provides, or notify me if “unusual” or “exceptional” circumstances apply (as the Act uses those terms).

Request for fee reduction as a representative of the news media

The Center for Public Integrity is a news media organization, and therefore this request should be exempt from all fees for search and review. This request is being made in connection with Public Integrity’s newsgathering functions and not for any other commercial purpose. Public Integrity intends to produce one or more original investigative reports based on analysis of the requested information. Public Integrity’s work has won the Pulitzer Prize in 2014 and 2017 and numerous other journalism awards (see <http://www.publicintegrity.org/about/our-work/awards>).

The only federal court to consider the issue has held that Public Integrity “is entitled to treatment as a representative of the news media for purposes of FOIA.” Center for Public Integrity v. HHS, Civil Case No. 06-1818, 2007 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 56172 (D.D.C. Aug.

3, 2007), https://ecf.dcd.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/show_public_doc?2006cv1818-15. In addition, our reporters covering Congress and congressional committees are credentialed by the Standing Committee of Correspondents of the Congressional Daily Press Gallery.

We expect that duplication fees for producing electronic records will be minimal. If there are processing fees greater than \$25, inform me before you fill the request, and I will provide additional information in support of a public interest fee waiver.

Please feel free to contact me about any aspect of this request. In principle, Public Integrity is willing to consider ways in which the request might reasonably be narrowed.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

[Name]
Center for Public Integrity
910 17th Street N.W., Suite 1030
Washington, DC 20006-2606
[telephone]
[email]

Sample FOIA: Law Enforcement

[date]

[name of FOIA officer, if known]
FOIA officer [or more specific title]
[name of agency]
[address]

Dear [name]:

This is a request under the [full name of state public information or open records law].

On behalf of the Center for Public Integrity and myself, jointly, I request that you provide us copies of the records identified and described below – or of records containing the information identified and described below:

A list of cases referred to [law enforcement agency] by K-12 schools or school districts from [date range]. Please provide all applicable fields/factors tracked as part of processing these cases, including but not limited to the following information for each case.

- case/incident number
- incident begin date
- case status (ex: inactive, open, cleared)
- clear date
- clear reason
- premise/location (ex: school, home, park)
- premise/location address
- reportee/complainant name
- reportee/complainant address
- offense type/description
- bias type/description (ex: Anti-Asian, Anti-Hawaiian or Pacific Islander)
- total victim count
- each victim's sex

- each victim's race
- each victim's ethnicity
- each victim's age
- total offender count
- each offender's sex
- each offender's race
- each offender's ethnicity
- each offender's age

Format: we prefer to receive records in the following formats, listed in order of preference:

a spreadsheet format such as an Excel file, tab-delimited file or similar;
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Please feel free to contact me about any aspect of this request. In principle, Public Integrity is willing to consider ways in which the request might reasonably be narrowed.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

[Name]
Center for Public Integrity
910 17th Street N.W., Suite 1030
Washington, DC 20006-2606
[telephone]
[email]