



**BRIAN E. FROSH, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL**

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Office of Attorney General Receives Department of Justice Grant to Address Hate Crimes in Maryland**

**BALTIMORE, MD (November 10, 2021)** – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced that the Office of Attorney General (OAG) has been awarded a Department of Justice (DOJ) grant totaling \$833,334. The grant, issued through DOJ’s Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) will be used to fund a collaborative and comprehensive effort to address hate crimes statewide.

Since 2016, hate crimes and hate bias incidents have risen sharply nationwide. Maryland has seen a significant increase in hate crimes and bias incidents over the past five years, particularly in conduct motivated by bias against a victim’s race/ethnicity/ancestry (R/E/A), religion, and sexual orientation. According to the “State of Maryland 2020 Hate Bias Report,” there were a total of 382 hate bias incidents reported by Maryland law enforcement agencies during the 2020 reporting period. Maryland experienced an average of 381 hate bias incidents each year from 2018 - 2020. There were three fewer total incidents reported in 2020 compared to 2019. However, verified incidents went from 22.3% of the total incidents in 2019 to 29.1% of the total incidents in 2020. In 2020, Race, Ethnicity, Ancestry (R/E/A), as a category, was the most common motivation for all hate bias incidents accounting for 73.3% of all incidents reported. On average, R/E/A accounted for 68.5% of all incidents reported from 2018 – 2020. Despite recent enhancements to the State’s hate crime laws which expand protected categories and prohibited conduct, standardize reporting, and mandate law enforcement training, Maryland continues to face significant challenges in obtaining complete reporting, engaging law enforcement and community-based organizations in areas impacted by hate activity, and in securing justice for victims through prosecution.

“All Maryland citizens and visitors have a right to live without fear that they will be attacked or targeted because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, or gender,” said Attorney General Frosh. “This grant will allow my office to lead a comprehensive effort to train law enforcement agencies and engage partners to identify and respond to hate crimes. We will not allow hate to spread unchecked within our communities.”

Specifically, the DOJ grant will fund a three year, multi-level effort to:

- enhance community-based partnership by creating a Hate Crimes Task Force comprised of law enforcement, civil rights agencies and community-based organizations;
- develop a statewide hate crime web portal;
- conduct regional hate crime summits;

- and train law enforcement and prosecutors.

The grant application was led by Zenita Hurley, Chief Counsel for Civil Rights in the Office of Attorney General. The OAG will hire an Assistant Attorney General and a Program Manager to manage the activities of the Hate Crimes Task Force and oversee the development of the web portal and regional summits. Maryland State Police, working with the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center, will receive a subaward to lead the development of a virtual hate crimes and bias incidents training platform.

In making today's announcement, Attorney General Frosh thanked the following agencies for their assistance and support in submitting the grant application: the Anti-Defamation League – Washington, DC Region; Council on American-Islamic Relations of Maryland; the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services; the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington; Maryland Chiefs of Police Association; Maryland Commission on Civil Rights; Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center; Maryland Sheriff's Association; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – Baltimore Branch; National Alliance of Mental Illness of Maryland; and the Prince George's County Office of Human Rights.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2021/111021.pdf>