

vision, scope and principles

Our Vision and Expectation

The Hate Crimes Community Working Group believes that implementing this strategy and action plan will create **a province that is proactive, inclusive, innovative and effective in its response to hate crimes and hate incidents and in its support for victims of hate.** We envisage strong partnerships and trusting relationships among and between government agencies and vulnerable communities which will be committed to the public campaign against hate crime and hate incidents. The Working Group expects that those who are responsible for implementing this strategy will be led and supported by the Ontario Government. They will include several government ministries, the broader public sector, the non-profit sector, organizations and groups, and corporations and businesses in the private sector.

Scope of the Strategy

Based on the extensive experience of its members, the Working Group came to an early decision that the scope of the strategy must include not only hate crimes (*Criminal Code* offences) but also hate incidents. These include human rights violations and other acts of bigotry and discrimination that contribute to the environment in which hate crimes are committed. On the basis of recent data and expressed community needs, we agreed to focus the strategy on individuals, groups and communities within the main victimized groups. These are Aboriginal peoples and those targeted because of race, religion, ethnicity, ancestry and sexual orientation, with attention paid to the intersections with gender and disability.

Hate and hate crimes may be perpetrated by complete strangers or individuals well known to the victim within community, family or service relationships. Perpetrators may include individuals, groups, organizations, and even agents of government and other public institutions. Thus the scope of the strategy is broad, comprehensive and integrated. It will include criminal, administrative and civil remedies within the justice system, as well as preventive measures that demonstrate a commitment to victim protection for individuals, groups and communities. It will also provide sustainable long-term resources for community capacity building and to facilitate community and individual empowerment to combat hate crime and hate activity.

Guiding Principles

Throughout our deliberations, the Working Group kept in mind, at all times, our stated vision and scope as well as the following guiding principles:

Effective response to hate and hate crime is **victim-centred**, emphasizing the victim's perspective as opposed to being system-oriented.

Preventing and countering hate and hate crime requires a **systemic orientation** that addresses systemic issues giving rise to and facilitating hate activity, as well as individual acts of hate that occur within this context.

Understanding the victim and community impact of hate and hate crime means acknowledging the **differential experience and impact** of hate crimes and incidents on different vulnerable groups, with particular attention to the unique circumstances and perspectives of Aboriginal Peoples.

An effective strategy must be **multi-sectoral**, involving all pertinent sectors, including the justice system (both civil and criminal), human rights, education, human and social services, immigration and settlement services, and community-based services, with an emphasis on relationship building and partnerships.

A **holistic approach** will maximize the likelihood of effective prevention, response and services, observing interconnections among issues, sectors and remedies (i.e. the intersection of multiple oppressions in hate crimes and incidents, as well as devising a response that seeks to improve the situation on multiple fronts simultaneously).

Recommendations that take a **problem-solving approach**, with measurable outcomes, will comprise a strategy based on innovative, situation-specific and needs-driven responses and interventions.

Proposals that are **evidence-based** will underpin an effective and credible strategy, building on promising practices from sound research, community and institutional experience, victims' voices and cultural knowledge.

Support that is **sufficient and sustainable** is essential to ensure that programs and services are viable through long-term commitment by government and its partners, thereby enhancing programs and services on a permanent basis and increasing the likelihood of systemic change.

Effective implementation of the strategy and recommendations must involve public **transparency and accountability** from all parties with responsibility for countering, responding to and preventing hate incidents and hate crime, with ongoing oversight and evaluation mechanisms that are themselves sustainable, credible and inclusive of community in a meaningful way.

The Working Group wishes to stress that our proposed strategy, recommendations and action plan reflect these guiding principles that must characterize any successful attempt at dealing with hate crime and hate incidents.

Plan of the Report

The **Background** section provides a brief overview of the literature and summary of information on existing programs and services that formed the rationale for our community and stakeholder engagement strategy.

The **Method** section describes the outreach initiatives to gather a sample of the most current and relevant data as the foundation for the Priorities for Action.

The **Summary of Findings** presents a distillation of the empirical basis for the Working Group's approach, that is, an overview of what members and staff heard, read and learned through their engagement with members of affected communities, with experts, with representatives of law enforcement agencies, and with government officials.

The **Strategy and Recommendations** section is organized into the eight thematic areas that, in the Working Group's judgment, require coordinated attention in reducing and redressing hate activity in Ontario. As a result of our findings and deliberations, the Hate Crimes Community Working Group identified eight key components of the strategy as follows:

1. Definitions
2. Aboriginal Peoples
3. Communities
4. Education and Training
5. Victim Services
6. Justice System
7. Public Awareness and Social Marketing
8. Implementation and Accountability

A **Summary of Recommendations** is included so that the proposed action plan may be viewed and implemented in a holistic, multi-disciplinary and comprehensive way, in keeping with our vision, scope and guiding principles. The strategy should not be viewed or implemented in a piecemeal manner.

Finally, the **Implementation Plan** specifies the order and timeframes within which this strategy's recommendations should be implemented, in keeping with the Working Group's mandate to provide a high-level Implementation Plan. This section outlines priorities for action to enhance current victim-based and related justice sector programming, as well as to strengthen the quality of government-funded hate crime programs and initiatives to reduce hate crime victimization.