



ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

SHERIFF-CORONER DON BARNES

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

August 20, 2025


Honorable Maria Hernandez, Presiding Judge
Orange County Superior Court
Central Justice Center
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

RE: Response to 2024-25 Orange County Grand Jury report, *"Hate: What is Orange County Doing About It?"*

Dear Presiding Judge Hernandez:

In accordance with Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, enclosed please find my response to the 2024-25 Orange County Grand Jury report, *"Hate: What is Orange County Doing About It?"*.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Don Barnes
Sheriff-Coroner

cc: Grand Jury Foreperson
Members, Orange County Board of Supervisors
Michelle Aguirre, County Executive Office

Orange County Sheriff's Department
Response to Findings
2024-2025 Orange County Grand Jury Report
"Hate: What is Orange County Doing About It?"

FINDINGS

F7.

Local law enforcement agencies have undergone required Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) hate crime and incident training, updated their policies, and implemented standardized support for victims to align with AB449. However, the impact of these changes will take years to fully materialize.

Response: *Partially disagrees with finding.*

The Sheriff's Department has implemented required POST training, updated policies and standardized support for victims. The benefits have immediately and positively impacted victims of hate, any time estimates or metrics in this statement is subjective.

F8.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department's outreach to the faith-based community through its Interfaith Council has fostered a more inclusive and respectful environment in the county. However, there are still several faith-based organizations that are unaware of or not included in the Interfaith Council.

Response: *Partially agrees with finding.*

This finding suggests a misunderstanding of the intent and structure of the Sheriff's Interfaith Council. The purpose of the Interfaith Council is to provide the Sheriff's Department with perspective from houses of worship, communicate best safety practices from law enforcement to the faith community, and foster better understanding and collaboration. Due to the vast number of faith-based organizations in Orange County it would not be practical to include every faith-based organization on the Sheriff's Department Interfaith Council, however the current Council provides a breadth of representation that meets the intended purpose. It is important to note that the department continues to add new Council members and welcomes congregations seeking to join the Council.

F9.

Many Orange County residents are hesitant to report hate crimes and incidents due to distrust of law enforcement, fear of retaliation, immigration status concerns, language barriers, cultural stigma, and lack of awareness, resulting in incomplete data.

Response: *Partially disagrees with finding.*

While there may be residents hesitant to report hate crimes and incidents, there is insufficient data available to validate the magnitude of this statement.

F10.

Although hate crimes and incidents can be reported through various platforms—including community organizations and online portals—not all these channels transmit reports to law enforcement, leading to gaps in official tracking, investigation, and response.

Response: *Agrees with finding.*

If a community organization does not transmit hate incident or hate crime related information to law enforcement there would be a gap in official tracking, investigation and response.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R6.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) and local police departments should establish formal collaborations with Black- and Jewish-led organizations. Such partnerships would enable law enforcement to focus more effectively on the needs of these communities and enhance their efforts in combating hate crimes and incidents in these populations.

Response: *This recommendation has been implemented.*

The Sheriff's Department collaborates with Black and Jewish-led organizations through a variety of partnerships. Enhancing those partnerships, in addition to a directed focus of inclusivity for all Orange County community members, is a Sheriff's Department priority in combating hate crimes and incidents.

R8.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department should expand representation within each faith, including multiple congregations, to ensure a broader and more inclusive interfaith collaborative. This should be done by December 31, 2025.

Response: *This recommendation will not be implemented as it is not warranted or reasonable.*

This recommendation suggests a misunderstanding of the intent and structure of the Sheriff's Interfaith Council. The purpose of the Interfaith Council is to provide the Sheriff's Department with perspective from houses of worship, communicate best safety practices from law enforcement to the faith community, and foster better understanding and collaboration. Due to the vast number of faith-based organizations in Orange County it would not be practical to include every faith-based organization on the Sheriff's Department Interfaith Council, however the current Council provides a breadth of representation that meets the intended purpose. It is important to note that

the department continues to add new Council members and welcomes congregations seeking to join the Council.

R9.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department should collaborate with local police departments to increase outreach efforts that encourage the public to report hate crimes and incidents, even if the reports are anonymous. Anonymous reports should be tabulated separately. This should be done by December 31, 2025.

Response: *This recommendation requires further analysis.*

The Orange County Sheriff's Department continues to encourage the reporting of hate incidents and hate crimes. There may be value in a broad outreach campaign coordinated among Orange County law enforcement, however city-specific efforts can also be effective.

R10.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department should collaborate with local law enforcement agencies and non-profit organizations that receive reports of hate crimes and incidents to develop a centralized portal or reporting mechanism. This would streamline the process, improve data capture, and make it easier to track and address hate crimes and incidents. This should be done by December 31, 2025.

Response: *This recommendation requires further analysis.*

There is value to having standardized data tracking of hate crimes. Further analysis, in conjunction with the Office of the District Attorney, is in progress with the ultimate goal of collaboration amongst all Orange County law enforcement agencies, community groups and criminal justice partners.