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The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Chief Administrative Officer
Report: 2026-INFO-001
Date: January 9, 2026

Subject:

Update on Community Based Hate Reporting Program

Recommendation:

Receive for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Regional Council on the progress of the Community Based Hate Reporting (CBHR) program. Approved on June 25, 2025, the program aims to establish an accessible and community-based mechanism for reporting hate activity that advances community safety and sense of inclusion.

2. Background

2.1 At the February 12th 2025 Durham Regional Committee of the Whole meeting, regional staff were [directed](#) to explore the possibility of establishing a protocol or policy to notify various human rights organizations when hate-motivated acts are identified by regional staff but may not reach the threshold of criminality.

2.2 In response, regional staff researched effective community-informed approaches to addressing hate activity and consulted with human rights and religious organizations and local service providers. At the June 10th COW meeting, staff tabled a [report](#) recommending partial funding for a two-year CBHR project in partnership with Victim Services of Durham Region. The project was formally approved by Regional Council on June 25th, 2025.

- 2.3 The CBHR program enables victims of hate who may be unwilling or unable to report directly to police to report hate-motivated incidents anonymously and receive trauma-informed support from trained counsellors.

3. Community Based Hate Reporting Program Development Progress

- 3.1 **Program and Technical Development** – Members of VSDR and the Region’s Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team collaborated throughout summer and fall 2025 to co-develop program elements and mitigate program risks. Once the program framework was established, VSDR led the development of a CBHR Portal as well as necessary upgrades to their database to ensure it is able meet program needs and support future program evaluation. The portal has been designed to be user-friendly, accessible, and responsive to the needs of all Durham residents.
- 3.2 **Service Provider Consultations** – On Thursday October 23rd, regional staff and VSDR hosted a service provider consultation to obtain feedback from collaborators on program design and implementation. Durham Regional Police Service, religious organizations, and human-rights organizations were represented at this session as were library leads from across Durham Region and equity-focused staff from local area municipalities. Feedback obtained was summarized and shared with all attendees and used to inform program elements. Collaborators were also provided with a link to a beta version of the CBHR portal for their review. Feedback has been fully adopted by the VSDR team.
- 3.3 **Resident Engagement** – The project team administered an online survey to Durham Region residents using the Region’s ‘Your Voice’ platform. The aim was to obtain information on resident perceptions, preferences, and recommendations to improve community-based hate reporting in Durham Region. There were 272 survey completions and findings were assessed to adjust and confirm programmatic elements. The survey findings are currently being analyzed to derive insights into prevailing mindsets and sentiments regarding hate activity among Durham residents. This analysis is being conducted by Dr. Barbara Perry’s team at Ontario Tech University’s Centre on Hate, Bias and Extremism. The resulting report will be shared with all collaborators, including DRPS, when complete.
- 3.4 **Alignment with Durham Regional Police Service** – On November 17th, regional staff and VSDR met with DRPS’ Hate Crime Unit to share information on hate-related initiatives across all three organizations and obtain additional feedback on the CBHR program design. A formal walk-through of the CBHR portal was conducted and the group discussed opportunities for future collaboration.
- 3.5 **Training** – The VSDR team has been engaged in a series of specialized trainings to ensure staff are equipped to provide culturally responsive, trauma-informed support to those impacted by hate motivated incidents. These trainings, delivered by human rights organizations such as B’nai Brith Canada and Sakeenah Canada, and with an upcoming session led by Ifarada Centre for Excellence, have been instrumental in deepening the understanding of the barriers that marginalized

groups often encounter, such as fear of retaliation, mistrust of systems, and stigma. Staff were also instructed on strategies to address these concerns with sensitivity and care.

- 3.6 **Program Launch January 29th, 2026** – The CBHR program development has been completed on budget and on schedule. The program will be formally deployed via a media launch scheduled to take place at Regional Headquarters on January 29th. This event will provide an opportunity to generate public awareness through media coverage and also provide an opportunity to thank collaborators for their contributions to the program development. Invitations will be extended to media representatives, all partners, and members of Regional Council.

4. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 4.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following Strategic Directions and Pathways in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:

a. Connected and Vibrant Communities

- C7. Create accessible, lively, and culturally welcoming public spaces, including opportunities to access nature.

b. Healthy People, Caring Communities

- H1. Implement preventive strategies to support community health, including food security.
- H2. Collaborate with partners to respond to complex social issues that improve community safety and well-being, including mental health and addictions.

c. Strong Relationships

- S1. Enhance inclusive opportunities for community engagement and meaningful collaboration.
- S2. Build and strengthen respectful relationships with First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and urban Indigenous communities.
- S3. Collaborate across local area municipalities, with agencies, non-profits, and community partners to deliver co-ordinated and efficient services.
- S4. Advocate to the federal and provincial government and agencies to advance regional priorities.
- S5. Ensure accountable and transparent decision-making to serve community needs, while responsibly managing available resources.

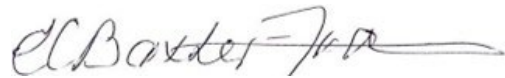
5. Conclusion

- 5.1 While CBHR has been proven effective in the United Kingdom and other parts of Ontario, Durham's program represents a first-of-its-kind initiative in the Greater

Toronto Area. We are proud to provide residents with access to this important resource. The implementation will be closely monitored to assess its effectiveness and guide future enhancements.

- 5.2 Durham Region remains steadfast in its commitment to collaborating with partners to foster a region where diversity and inclusion are embraced and we stand firmly against hate in all its forms.
- 5.3 For additional information, contact: Allison Hector-Alexander, Director Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at 905-668-7711, extension 3893.

Respectfully submitted,



Elaine C. Baxter-Trahair
Chief Administrative Officer