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Grande Prairie country road at sunset
Source: Photograph by Jaynes Gallery / DanitaDelimont



STOP ANTI-HATE OUTREACH PROJECT HATE THE GRAND PRAIRIE REPORT

The **StopHateAB** Anti-Hate Outreach Project examines the impact of hate in smaller Alberta communities beyond Edmonton and Calgary. This report provides the foundation for regional coalitions to address and reduce hate.

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STOPHATEAB ANTI-HATE OUTREACH PROJECT

StopHateAB (formerly known as Alberta Hate Crimes Committee) is a non-profit organization comprised of government, law enforcement and community partners who work together to raise awareness and education related to hate crimes and incidents in Alberta.

In 2001, shortly after the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City, Alberta-based representatives from the justice sector, government, law enforcement, human rights institutions and community organizations concerned with hate and bias motivated violence formed what would become StopHateAB.

The initial aim of the committee was to develop a province-wide framework to encourage a collaborative, integrated approach between law enforcement, the courts, and the community in preventing and responding to hate and bias motivated crime and incidents as well as advocating for the reform of hate crime laws. The mission of StopHateAB is to provide comprehensive insight into hate-motivated crime and incidents by raising community awareness through education, information, outreach, research, advocacy, and StopHateAB's online reporting tool. The vision of the StopHateAB is to ensure that all Albertans are living in a safe, caring, and respectful community where crimes and incidents of hate are not acceptable values of a democratic and pluralistic society.

THE GRANDE PRAIRIE REPORT

Land Acknowledgement

StopHateAB recognizes that the community of Grande Prairie is located on the traditional and ancestral lands of the Treaty 8 First Nations, including the Cree, Dene, and Dane-zaa (Beaver) peoples, whose presence and stewardship of this territory long predates settlement. We also recognize the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 6, whose history, culture, and communities are deeply rooted in this region.

In acknowledging these lands, we honour the enduring knowledge, resilience, and leadership of First Nations and Métis peoples. We recognize that reconciliation requires more than words; it calls for reflection, accountability, and meaningful action.

As this report addresses the impacts of hate and discrimination, we affirm our responsibility to stand against hate in all its forms and to support relationships grounded in respect, dignity, and justice for Indigenous peoples and for all communities who call this place home.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The StopHateAB Anti-Hate Outreach Project seeks to enhance awareness and strengthen an understanding of the impact of hate crimes and incidents in smaller communities across Alberta. Four regions outside of the major centres of Edmonton and Calgary were selected based on criteria informed by available local information, previous research, and data from the StopHateAB reporting tool. In each region, the project began by connecting with community members, non-profit organizations, and local institutions to gather information about where hate is occurring, who is being affected, and what strategies may help counteract it. The publishing of this report will serve as the foundation for establishing an anti-hate coalition equipped to address and reduce hate in each of the regions.

The purpose of this report is to document and analyze the nature and impact of hate incidences and hate crimes occurring in Grande Prairie based on 17 virtual interviews with non-profit organizations, public institutions and community representatives. The primary guiding questions during the conversations were - “How is hate affecting Grande Prairie?”, “What demographics are being targeted by hate crimes and incidents?”, “What supports and mechanisms are currently in place to report a crime or incident?” and “What anti-hate work is needed in Grande Prairie?”.

By amplifying the experiences, stories and perspectives of those working directly with impacted communities, the report will:

- Increase understanding of the patterns, contexts, and impacts of hate
- Inform education and advocacy efforts aimed at preventing and combatting hate
- Serve as a foundation for collective action in the community and guide policymakers and support organizations towards effective anti-hate strategies and approaches

Most importantly, the report is intended as a community resource—a tool to raise awareness, promote dialogue, and support evidence-informed strategies to combat hate and build a more informed and equitable city. It will serve as a valuable resource for those who want to stand up against hate and join the Grande Prairie StopHateAB Anti-Hate Coalition - a locally informed anti-hate collaborative that will bring to life awareness, advocacy initiatives, education, and resources for a safer more inclusive community in Grande Prairie.

KEY FINDINGS

The following key findings summarize the themes that emerged from the interviews. They reflect the perspectives, experiences, and priorities shared by participants. The interviews also highlight the patterns and trends that shape these findings. Provincial and national trends identified and reported by Statistics Canada, the Organization for the Prevention of Violence and other sources including StopHateAB’s research projects also reflect these trends.

- **Hate crimes and hate incidents are underreported.** Many individuals, including youth, choose not to report incidents. This is due to fear of retaliation, distrust of police, worry they will not be believed or that they will have a negative experience when engaging with authorities. This pattern of underreporting was noted across multiple communities engaged in this project.
- **Normalization of hate.** Hate is increasingly visible and normalized in both public and online spaces, particularly targeting the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, immigrants, the racialized community, Indigenous people, and the unhoused. The frequent and open use of hateful language contributes to environments where members of these communities feel unwelcome, targeted, or unsafe.
- **Online hate is prevalent.** Online platforms and local social media forums were consistently identified as key spaces where hateful rhetoric targeting marginalized groups is shared and amplified. This online discourse has also been shown to translate into offline actions that impact marginalized groups.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the report and the local context, there are several recommendations that would support the community in combatting hate. These are preliminary recommendations that could be made possible through

advocacy initiatives and with the creation of a coordinated coalition to stop hate in Grande Prairie. More details on these recommendations are offered in the 'Recommendations' section of the report.

These include:

- Creating a coordinated coalition to address hate.
- Building a collaborative, community-based anti-hate strategy.
- Prioritizing initiatives that bring anti-hate work to children and youth.
- Strengthening partnerships and engagement between marginalized groups, municipal leaders, and police services.
- Improving awareness of reporting mechanisms and available supports.

THE GRANDE PRAIRIE REGION

Grande Prairie was selected for this research because data from sources such as StopHateAB and Statistics Canada indicate a pattern of ongoing hate-motivated activity in the region, reinforcing the need for deeper examination. As a medium-sized city, it offers an important context for understanding how hate manifests in communities that are large enough to experience diverse forms of hate and discrimination, but with less resources and community supports than major centres.

Grande Prairie and the surrounding region have experienced several recent incidences of hate, discrimination, and hostility toward marginalized communities, particularly the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Pride flags and pride sidewalks are subject to repeated vandalization and in January 2023, a Drag Story Time event at the Grande Prairie Public Library was disrupted by protesters. The situation was further exacerbated when an individual pulled the building's fire alarm, forcing the event to be evacuated and temporarily stopped.

In 2016, an incident occurred at the Grande Prairie hospital in which a surgeon hung a rope tied in the shape of a noose on the door of an operating room. Some interpreted the display as a racist symbol, given the noose's historical association with the lynching of Black people. A subsequent disciplinary hearing found the physician guilty of unprofessional conduct but concluded there was insufficient evidence to determine that the act was motivated by racism.

In 2019, controversy arose when it was reported that a local chapter of the far-right group Soldiers of Odin had organized an event at the Grande Prairie branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. The national leadership of the Legion publicly condemned the association and later issued directives to prevent similar events in the future. The incident generated public concern about the presence and normalization of groups linked to extremist or anti-immigrant ideologies within community institutions.

In September 2023, a local demonstration connected to the "1 Million March 4 Children" took place in Grande Prairie as part of a coordinated series of protests across Canada opposing sexual orientation and gender identity policies in schools. Participants protested SOGI-related education and gender-inclusive practices, while counter-protesters gathered in support of 2SLGBTQIA+ students and inclusive education. The rhetoric opposing SOGI-inclusive education contributes to stigma toward the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and can contribute to the spread of harmful misinformation.

Recent tragic events in Grande Prairie and the broader Peace Region have also influenced local discourse and the spread of harmful stereotypes about transgender people. A mass shooting in Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia, and a separate case involving a transgender parent who stabbed two children in Grande Prairie, received significant media coverage and local attention. In the aftermath, commentary on social media and community forums frequently focused on the perpetrator’s gender identity, alongside broader hateful and stigmatizing remarks about the transgender community.

Certain attitudes within the community, including more traditional or socially conservative perspectives and concerns about globalization, can influence how issues related to immigration, diversity, and social change are discussed in Grande Prairie. These viewpoints can contribute to resistance toward demographic and cultural changes occurring in the community.

Broader economic pressures are also shaping community sentiment. The rising costs of living, challenges in the housing and job market, and financial strain are contributing to frustration in the community, and this frustration can manifest as scapegoating and hateful attitudes that impact marginalized communities.

Global conflicts, political polarization, and the rapid spread of misinformation and disinformation increasingly shape local attitudes and tensions, reminding us that hate is rarely confined by geography. World events, both present and historical, continue to reverberate within communities like Grande Prairie, influencing how fear, blame, and division take root.

STATISTICS & DEMOGRAPHICS

Grande Prairie is the seventh-largest city in Alberta, with a 2021 population of 64,141, and a population in 2025 estimated to be 71,160. The city has experienced modest growth of approximately 9% over the past decade.

There has been significant growth in the number of visible minorities in Grande Prairie between 2011 and 2021 – doubling from 7.8% in 2011 to 15.8% in 2021. The most significant growth has been in the Filipino, South Asian, and Black communities.

The immigrant population saw growth of 2.5% between 2016 and 2021 and continued to show growth into 2025. Recent changes to federal immigration are expected to soften this growth moving forward.

The below chart is based off the 2021 Census - the most recent comprehensive demographic data available:

2021 Census	Alberta	Grande Prairie
Population	4,262,635	64,141
Non-Visible Minorities	72.2%	84.2%
Visible Minority	27.8%	15.8%
Filipino	5.2%	6.9%
Black	4.3%	2.2%
South Asian	7.1%	2.9%
Indigenous	6.8%	11.7%
First Nation	3.4%	6.1%
Metis	3.1%	6.2%
Immigrants	23.2%	13.2%

The unhoused population in Grande Prairie has increased significantly in recent years. According to the community's Point-in-Time (PiT) counts, the number of people experiencing homelessness rose from 228 individuals in 2018 to 387 individuals in 2024, representing approximately 70% growth over that period. This increase reflects broader pressures related to housing affordability, economic instability, and substance use.

Housing affordability and access to suitable housing are significant concerns in Grande Prairie, as in many cities across Canada. These conditions further intensify the challenges experienced by marginalized members of the community.

Food insecurity is a growing concern for many households in the region. In 2024, approximately 19% of Grande Prairie households reported regularly having trouble affording food. As a result, many residents rely on emergency food supports, with roughly 19% of households accessing food bank services to meet basic needs.

Indigenous peoples are disproportionately represented among the unhoused in Grande Prairie. In 2022, Indigenous individuals were identified as making up approximately 61% of the unhoused population, despite representing only about 11.7% percent of the city's overall population. This disparity reflects broader systemic and historical factors that continue to affect housing stability and access to resources for Indigenous communities.

It is also worth noting that Grande Prairie is currently transitioning from RCMP to a municipal police service, a transition that will be completed in October 2026.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT APPROACH

Qualitative data was collected through interviews with community support organizations—primarily non-profits—and key institutional partners including police services, educational institutions, and municipal representatives. Data gathered covered the following areas in its exploration:

How is hate affecting Grande Prairie? This served as the primary focus of the conversations. This question was designed to encourage participants to share their perspectives on hate incidents, hate crimes, and hate in general. It allowed individuals to guide the conversation in the most relevant direction to their experiences. Participants often spoke about their own encounters with hate, the impacts on their clients or customers, and any recent incidents they felt were significant. Follow-up questions were asked when needed, either to clarify specific examples raised or to explore whether participants were aware of other hate-related incidents that had not surfaced naturally.

What demographics are being targeted by hate crimes and incidents? This helped deepen understanding of which groups may be most affected. Although participants frequently addressed this topic in their initial responses, this direct check-in provided a clearer sense of perceived vulnerabilities within the community.

What supports and mechanisms are currently in place to report a crime or incident? This allowed for an exploration of the community's existing supports. Participants discussed the resources they were aware of and highlighted concerns related to accessibility, effectiveness, and perceived outcomes of reporting. This input provides valuable context for understanding both current gaps and potential opportunities to strengthen local response systems.

What anti-hate work is needed in Grande Prairie? This shifted the conversation towards solution-oriented insights. Participants were invited to reflect on actions that could reduce or prevent the hate described earlier and share examples of initiatives they had participated in or observed. Their insights will help guide the StopHateAB Grande Prairie Anti-Hate Coalition as it plans future efforts following this report.

Would your organization consider joining the StopHateAB Anti-Hate Coalition? This ask was non-binding for participants but ensured the project had an indication of where there was interest in participating in the coalition, which represents the next phase of the project.

Are there any other organizations we should contact that could be of benefit to this project? The data gathered here helped ensure connections were made with organizations that would be supportive during this data gathering phase. Many participants have connections within the community that StopHateAB may not have been able to easily approach or been aware of. The responses also helped ensure we connected with as many potential partners as possible.

A review was also conducted to understand what other organizations have reported about hate crimes and incidents across Canada and in Alberta. A list of resources can be found in the 'References' section.

Limitations

Despite efforts to gather a broad range of insights, there are several limitations. The sample size is shaped by the organizations who agreed to participate. Underreporting within communities—due to stigma, fear of being outed or targeted, or distrust of authorities—means the data may not fully capture the extent of hate incidents occurring in the community. Additionally, the perspectives collected are influenced by biases inherent to the people and organizations interviewed, as well as the absence of voices from groups or organizations that did not respond or could not be reached. It should also be noted that in this report, there is little data on the disabled community or faith and religious groups. StopHateAB hopes to address these gaps as the project continues.

LEARNINGS

Drawing from the inquiries identified above, the following is a detailed summary of what was shared in the interviews.

How is hate affecting Grande Prairie?

Several overarching themes were identified across groups, as well as distinct issues unique to particular marginalized populations. In the next section, a more detailed breakdown of each of the targeted groups is provided.

Online Platforms Provide an Outlet for Hateful Rhetoric

Online social media platforms were widely identified as key spaces where hateful rhetoric is shared and amplified. Posts and comments, often made from anonymous accounts, frequently include racist, xenophobic, anti-2SLGBTQIA+, and anti-unhoused language. These platforms also circulate harmful myths and misinformation, including claims that immigrants are “taking over” or are responsible for social and economic challenges in the community. Such narratives reinforce negative stereotypes and deepen stigma toward already marginalized groups.

At the same time, online platforms serve as important spaces of connection, particularly for marginalized groups who may feel isolated locally, including members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. The visibility and intensity of hateful rhetoric in these spaces can have direct and deeply personal impacts, exposing individuals to harassment, threats, and ongoing hostility in the very platforms they also rely on for support and community.

Anti-Immigrant Sentiment

A 2023 survey of immigrants in Grande Prairie, Building Belonging, [NS1.1] found that 33% reported experiencing discrimination. The most common incidents occurred in workplaces, retail settings, and during the job search process. Respondents also reported discrimination while using public spaces and attending community events, as well as in interactions with public institutions, including schools and the RCMP.

Anti-immigrant sentiment appears to be growing in the community. Immigrants are increasingly blamed for pressures related to the housing market, healthcare access, and employment shortages, reflecting broader provincial and national narratives. Political rhetoric and online commentary have contributed to the spread of these views. During a 2025 mayoral debate in Grande Prairie, a candidate referenced deporting undocumented immigrants to free up jobs, reinforcing the narrative that immigrants are responsible for local economic and social challenges.

Hate Escalates When Visibility Increases

Hostility toward marginalized groups often intensifies during periods of heightened public visibility. Pride Month and Pride events, for example, were identified as times when anti-2SLGBTQIA+ rhetoric tends to spike, both online and in public spaces. Similarly, public discussions about immigration, employment, or homelessness can trigger surges in negative commentary directed at racialized communities and people experiencing homelessness. The significant rise in the unhoused population in Grande Prairie has also drawn increased negative attention and hostility toward this community.

Hate Often Goes Unchallenged

Bystanders rarely speak up when they witness incidents of hate or discrimination. Fear of retaliation was identified as a key barrier, along with a perception that few systems exist to support those who do intervene.

A lack of knowledge about how to respond was also noted. Many individuals may recognize that something harmful is occurring but feel uncertain about what to say or do in the moment. As a result, incidents of hate often go unchallenged, allowing harmful behaviour and language to persist in public and community spaces.

Marginalized Youth are Targets of Hate

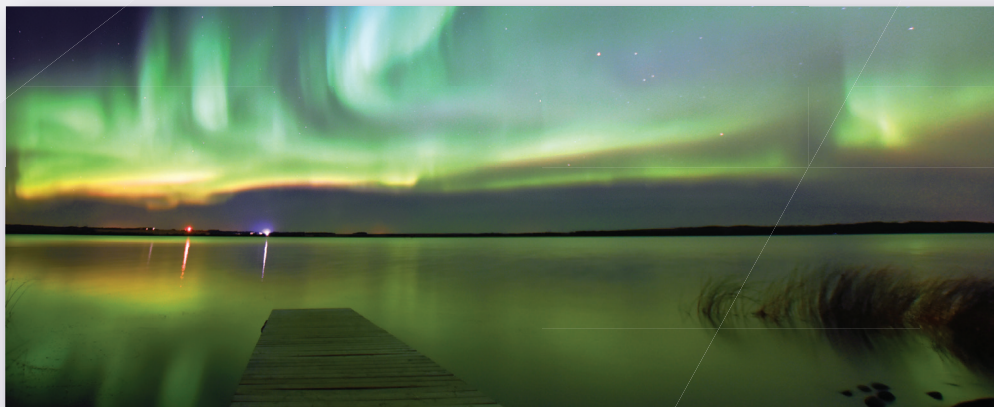
Marginalized youth, particularly those who are members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, are frequently targeted by peers in school environments. Incidents range from slurs and derogatory comments to physical intimidation, including youth being pushed in hallways, having tomatoes thrown at them, and being barked at by other students. Racialized and Indigenous youth were also identified as frequent targets of hate.

These experiences contribute to a climate where marginalized youth come to expect hate as part of their daily lives, and the majority do not report incidents to school authorities or police — often because it had become normalized. This pattern of entrenched hate shapes how young people experience school and community spaces from an early age and is a contributing factor to negative mental health outcomes for youth.

What demographics are being targeted by hate crimes and incidents?

A breakdown of marginalized / vulnerable groups targeted by hate in Grande Prairie:

The Indigenous Community



It was shared that harmful stereotypes about Indigenous people are common, particularly as it relates to those that are unhoused. By some, being unhoused is framed as an “Indigenous problem,” reinforcing narratives that place blame on Indigenous individuals rather than recognizing the broader systemic and historical factors that contribute to their circumstances. These views are often accompanied by negative stereotypes, including comments suggesting that Indigenous people are lazy or that “all they do is drink,” which further perpetuate stigma and discrimination. It was also shared that Indigenous youth frequently encounter these attitudes in their daily lives, including exposure to racial slurs.

Racialized Community (visible minorities, excluding Indigenous)

Hate and discriminatory attitudes toward racialized residents in Grande Prairie are increasingly visible in both online and everyday community spaces. Local online forums and community Facebook pages frequently contain negative commentary about immigrants and racialized community members. While some pages are well moderated, others allow harmful narratives to persist unchecked. Comments claiming immigrants are “stealing our jobs” or that newcomers must assimilate to be accepted are common. Social media has also become a space for more overt dehumanization — including a recent meme of a woman with a hijab portraying white people as having been made extinct by racialized immigrants. This type of content perpetuates dangerous myths and fuels fear and resentment.

It was also shared that misinformation about government financial support for immigrants is widespread. Many people falsely believe that newcomers receive significant government handouts, when in reality, many immigrants struggle to pay rent just like other community members amid the current cost of living challenges.

It was noted that racial slurs and verbal assaults are frequent. In one example, a food delivery driver was followed by someone who shouted racial slurs at him after a minor traffic mistake. In another instance, a restaurant customer was overheard saying, in the presence of a racialized worker, that “immigrants can’t do anything right.”

It was also expressed that scapegoating is common, and that the cumulative weight of these interactions takes a significant toll. Members of the South Asian community, for example, experience being blamed for taking jobs from white residents. It was also shared that discrimination has become so frequent that “it gets to the point where you don’t even see it anymore”. This normalization is itself cause for concern. It was expressed that these attitudes also

manifest in structural barriers, including challenges in accessing housing, where immigrants face additional scrutiny or reluctance from landlords. In schools, it was shared that bullying includes racialized jokes, racial slurs, and sometimes physical confrontations, reflecting how these attitudes are being passed down and replicated among younger generations.

The 2SLGBTQIA+ Community

Members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community in Grande Prairie experience a significant amount of hate in both public and online spaces and it was specifically noted that gender diverse people are seeking more support than in the past. Visible symbols of Pride are frequently targeted. The community's rainbow sidewalk has been vandalized repeatedly through vehicle burnouts, to the extent that it is repainted annually. In response, a second rainbow sidewalk was added this year in a location designed to make it more difficult for vehicles to gain enough speed to perform burnouts. In another incident, a swastika was painted on a Pride flag.

Hateful comments and slurs were described as common experiences for many members of the community, particularly during public events and periods of increased visibility. During events such as the Pride Family Carnival, slurs have been shouted at participants, and each year during Pride Month hostility in both online and public spaces significantly increases. In one incident, it was shared that a resident received multiple death threats after hosting a queer-friendly event. It was also shared that people often hear that 2SLGBTQIA+ residents "shouldn't live here" and should instead move to larger cities. Over time, repeated exposure to these comments has led many community members to describe this hostility as something they have come to expect.

Transgender individuals were identified as facing particularly intense hostility. Online spaces frequently contain hateful and threatening messages, including comments stating that "trans people should kill themselves" or that transgender identity is a mental illness. Discrimination has also been reported in workplaces, where employers have expressed reluctance to hire transgender individuals due to perceptions that doing so would create "too many complications." In public settings, transgender individuals also encounter direct hostility with one example shared that a group of people at a bar spoke loudly about "trans deceivers" while directing angry and disgusted looks toward a nearby transgender person.

It was shared that online rhetoric intensifies following events involving transgender issues. Following the tragedy in Tumbler Ridge, for example, social media discussions were filled with anti-trans rhetoric, including false claims that large numbers of mass shooters are transgender, despite available data showing this to be extremely rare. Similarly, when flags were lowered to half-mast following the Tumbler Ridge tragedy, comment sections quickly filled with remarks suggesting that rainbow flags should also be removed permanently.

2SLGBTQIA+ youth were also identified as experiencing frequent and persistent harassment. It was shared that slurs directed at youth in schools were common, and that many young people have come to expect harassment as part of daily life. One example shared was a youth who said, "we live in Grande Prairie, so we expect it." It was also shared that some youth have experienced physical aggression, including incidents where tomatoes were thrown at them.

Despite these experiences, it was shared that very few incidents are reported to police. Survey data referenced during one interview also indicated that increasing numbers of 2SLGBTQIA+ youth report feeling unsafe, worried that hostility may escalate, and that they are feeling increasingly targeted. It was shared that between 40% and 60% of youth accessing shelters and youth services identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, highlighting the broader impacts of exclusion, discrimination, and intersectionality.

The Unhoused

Negative attitudes towards the unhoused were described as widespread and openly expressed in the community. It

was shared that in public spaces people often complain about the presence of unhoused individuals, including comments about their smell or frustration that individuals carry their belongings with them. Discomfort when passing unhoused individuals in public spaces was also noted. It was also shared that there have been several incidents where individuals filmed members of the unhoused community and then posted them online.

In general, there was shared sentiment that it is socially acceptable to express dislike towards the unhoused in Grande Prairie and that it is commonplace to hear that the unhoused are responsible for their circumstances or that they have “done it to themselves”.

Numbers have risen quite substantially, with 127 reported in 2016 and 387 in 2024. The circumstances of the unhoused have also become more complex in recent years. It was shared that substance use among the unhoused has increased significantly, rising from approximately 25% of individuals before 2020, to more than 80% today. It was also noted that a growing number of newcomers, immigrants, and refugees are unhoused, while Indigenous people remain disproportionately represented. The ongoing housing crisis has further exacerbated the situation, making it more difficult for individuals to access stable housing.

The unhoused are often blamed for crime in the community, with it being shared that when thefts occur, there is a common assumption that the person responsible is unhoused. In some cases, these tensions have escalated into confrontational situations, including a 2019 incident in which an individual drove to the shelter with a machete after believing it was an unhoused person that had stolen from him.

Disabled Community

Limited information was gathered specifically regarding the experiences of people with disabilities. However, it was shared that recent changes to provincial funding programs have created heightened fear and anxiety within the community. This uncertainty can contribute to a climate in which people with disabilities feel increasingly vulnerable, particularly when accompanied by narratives suggesting that individuals are not worthy of support. Such comments like this were observed in online spaces and such sentiment can contribute to negative mental health outcomes for the community.

StopHateAB hopes to further the inquiry pertaining to this community as the project continues.

Faith and Religious Communities

There is no data on faith and religious communities. StopHateAB hopes to further the inquiry pertaining to this community as the project continues.

Intersectionality and Increased Vulnerability

The experiences of marginalized individuals are inherently layered and shaped by intersecting identities and perceptions. This is also known as the cumulative risk of hate crime victimization. Several interviewees emphasized that people with multiple marginalized identities face heightened risk (e.g. The unhoused, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+ and racialized) and experience compounded levels of hate and harassment. Increased visibility because of being unhoused makes them especially vulnerable to discrimination, bias, and hate related crimes and incidents.

Assumptions are often made that a person's skin colour, particularly Black, signifies recent immigrant status. In a context of rising anti-immigrant sentiment, such assumptions can intensify and compound the lived experiences of racialized individuals.

What support and mechanisms are currently in place to report a crime or incident?

Several formal avenues exist in Grande Prairie for reporting hate crimes or incidents and in accessing support. Individuals can report incidents to the RCMP or through victims' services. It was also shared that community support organizations also provide resources to individuals by providing guidance and connections to appropriate services.

At the same time, it was shared that the strong majority of incidents are not formally reported anywhere and that safe pathways to reporting are not widely understood or known.

Opportunities for Anti-Hate Work in Grande Prairie

It was shared that creating space for meaningful conversations across communities is an important opportunity for addressing hate in Grande Prairie. Bringing people together, particularly those from both marginalized and majority communities, can help build empathy and understanding by allowing individuals to hear different perspectives and connect through personal experiences. It was noted that in many cases hostility stems from a lack of knowledge or exposure, with some individuals reacting negatively to ideas or communities they do not fully understand.

Education was also identified as a key opportunity, particularly for young people. Schools were highlighted as an important place to begin building empathy, respect, and awareness early on. It was also shared that broader public education efforts are needed to address misinformation and harmful narratives circulating in the community, particularly around topics such as gender identity, sexuality, and immigration. Providing accurate information and sharing positive humanizing stories about community members was seen as an important way to counter stereotypes and shift public narratives.

Strengthening relationships and trust within the community was also emphasized. It was shared that efforts to build bridges between institutions, including police, and marginalized communities could help foster greater trust and support. More preventative supports, including expanded mental health programming and initiatives that strengthen social cohesion, were also identified as opportunities. Overall, it was suggested that building a community where people feel safe requires not only addressing incidents of hate, but also fostering connection, compassion, and a stronger sense of belonging among residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the information gathered through this project and based on previous research conducted, including "Victimized Community Perceptions About Hate Crimes and Incidents in Alberta: A 2019-2022 Analysis", the following recommendations are offered:

Create a Coordinated Coalition to Address Hate

Establish a cross-sector collaborative that provides sustained advocacy, shared leadership, and ongoing support for marginalized individuals and communities experiencing hate. The coalition will offer a coordinated, community-driven approach to anti-hate initiatives. It will bring together community organizations, institutions, and passionate community members to strengthen collaboration and allyship, improve awareness and education, and support a clearer pathway for reporting. It will also provide an opportunity to build trust between marginalized groups and law enforcement, engage marginalized groups in decision-making, and enable more agile and tailored responses to hate incidents in the community.

Building a Collaborative, Community-Based Anti-Hate Strategy

Grande Prairie would benefit from a formal, community-based anti-hate strategy that reflects the experiences and priorities of local residents. This strategy could be developed collaboratively with community organizations, marginalized groups, municipal leaders, and institutional partners. A coordinated plan could include public education and awareness initiatives, efforts to address misinformation, improved reporting pathways, and opportunities for community dialogue. Highlighting the experiences and contributions of diverse community members through education campaigns and storytelling can help challenge harmful stereotypes and foster greater empathy and understanding.

This approach would also seek to reduce hate by increasing understanding, strengthening social connections, and fostering empathy through regular, visible, and accessible community engagement and events. It also emphasizes restoring confidence in systems, empowering communities to respond effectively, and ensuring that anti-hate efforts result in tangible action rather than silence or inaction.

Prioritizing Initiatives That Bring Anti-Hate Work to Children and Youth

Efforts should prioritize children and youth, as schools and youth spaces are key environments where attitudes toward diversity are shaped. Educational initiatives that promote empathy, respect, and inclusion can help address harmful stereotypes and misinformation before they become entrenched. This may include school-based programs, youth leadership initiatives, and partnerships with educators and youth-serving organizations. Investing in early education and awareness can play a critical role in reducing bullying, harassment, and hate directed at marginalized youth.

Strengthening Partnerships Between Marginalized Communities, Municipal Leaders, and Police Services

Building trust and collaboration between marginalized communities, municipal leaders, and police services is essential for effectively addressing hate and improving community safety. Ongoing engagement and dialogue can help ensure that concerns are heard, relationships are strengthened, and responses to hate incidents are informed by the lived experiences of those most affected. Opportunities for collaboration may include regular community forums, advisory groups, and joint initiatives focused on prevention, reporting, and victim support. Strengthening these relationships can help foster greater trust and ensure that community members feel supported when incidents occur. The transition to a community-based police force provides a significant opportunity for Grande Prairie in 2026.

Improving Awareness of Reporting Mechanisms and Available Supports

Since hate incidents and crimes are significantly underreported in Grande Prairie, increasing awareness of how and where to report incidents is an important step in addressing this gap. Public education efforts could provide clearer information about reporting options through police, the Alberta Human Rights Commission, Victims Services, and community support organizations. Promoting awareness of services may also help individuals feel safe and more confident seeking support after experiencing hate or discrimination.

CONCLUSION

Hate crimes and incidents have been impacting the Grande Prairie community, and global conflicts, political polarization, and rapidly circulating misinformation/disinformation increasingly shape local experiences of fear and division across Canada and the province of Alberta. Grande Prairie has the opportunity to respond with intention,

collaboration, and a shared commitment to building safer and more inclusive communities – especially given the transition to a local, community-based police service in the latter part of 2026.

This transition presents a unique opportunity to build a police service that is deeply integrated into the fabric of the community from the ground up, one that prioritizes relationship-building with residents, deploys school and community resource officers, develops strong cross-cultural understanding, and maintains a visible and welcoming presence at local cultural events. A renewed approach to hate incident and crime tracking and reporting can also ensure that community experiences are heard, documented, and responded to meaningfully. StopHateAB looks forward to partnering in this work within Grande Prairie.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

StopHateAB would like to thank the Department of Canadian Heritage who funded this project through the Anti-Hate grant. We would also like to thank all the participants who shared their stories and acknowledge the tremendous bravery it takes to disclose lived experiences of hate. We would also like to thank the organizations that have shown interest in developing an anti-hate coalition in Grande Prairie and look forward to continuing to work together to eliminate hate across Alberta.



RESOURCES

Canadian Race Relations Foundation. (2022, August 2). *Victims of hate require better support across Canada: New report [Research report]. Canadian Race Relations Foundation.*

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