



# HATE CRIMES

2019-a

Suffolk County Police Department

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30 Yaphank Avenue, Yaphank, New York 11980  
Prepared by the Office of the Police Commissioner

**SCPD Hate Crimes Report for 2019**

“Hate crimes do more than threaten the safety and welfare of all citizens. They inflict on victims incalculable physical and emotional damage and tear at the very fabric of free society.

Hate crimes can and do intimidate and disrupt entire communities and vitiate the civility that is essential to healthy democratic processes. In a democratic society, citizens cannot be required to approve of the beliefs and practices of others, but must never commit criminal acts on account of them.”

Legislative findings, NY PENAL LAW §485.00<sup>1</sup>

## **The SCPD Hate Crimes Unit:**

The Suffolk County Police Department places the highest priority on preventing, detecting, solving and prosecuting Hate Crimes. The Hate Crimes Unit (HCU) is tasked with investigating all incidents involving a possible hate motive throughout the police district. Incidents involving death or other special circumstances are also investigated by other units, such as the Homicide and Arson Sections, but the HCU retains responsibility for any hate elements within those investigations. In addition to these responsibilities, the HCU also analyzes patterns and trends of hate incidents and crimes throughout the County. To aid in this analysis the HCU maintains an interactive mapping database that contains the following types of incidents:

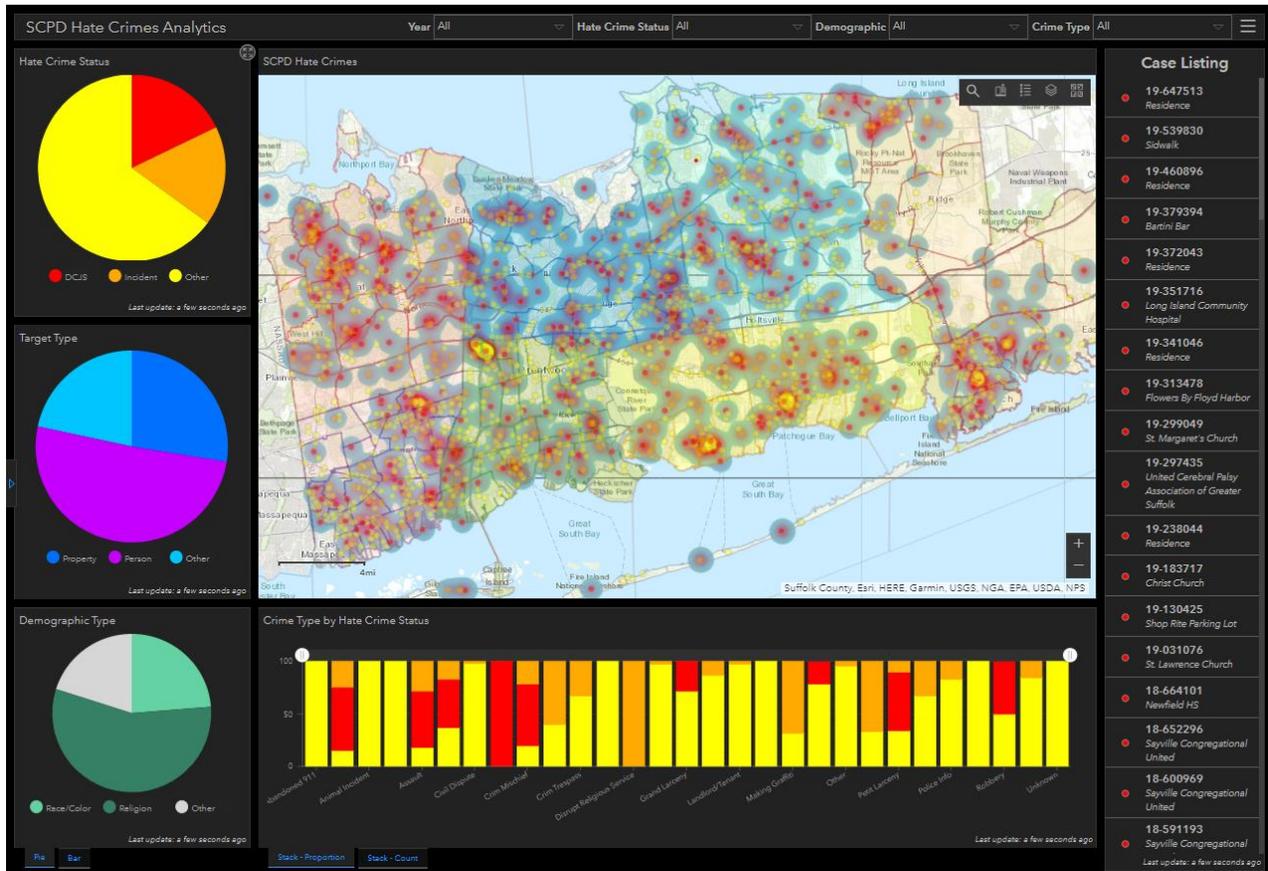
- New York State Department of Criminal Justice Service (DCJS) Designated Hate Crimes, which are offenses specifically enumerated in §485.05 of the Penal Law.
- Non-Specified Hate Incidents, which are offenses not included on the §485.05 list, but which appear to be based on a belief that the victim is a member of a protected class.
- Possible Hate Offenses, are other offenses screened by HCU detectives for any elements of hate and to ensure proper classification.

Data collected from reviewing records such as 911 logs, Precinct Tour Reports, and the Incident Reporting System is entered into the HCU mapping database. Cases ultimately classified as

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<sup>1</sup> New York State’s Hate Crimes law is codified in Article 485 of the Penal Law. The statute creates no new crimes, but instead provides a mechanism to enhance penalties for existing crimes when the offender selects a victim because of their race, color, national origin, ancestry, gender, religion, religious practice, age, disability or sexual orientation.

neither Hate Crimes, nor Hate Incidents are mapped as “Other”.<sup>2</sup> The mapped data is then analyzed to detect possible patterns and trends across types of incident, geographic locations, time-frame, and demographic characteristics of both the offenders and the victims. The database’s ‘dashboard’ interface provides an exceptional level of functionality.



The Commanding Officer of the Major Case Section conducts a quarterly audit of all Hate Crimes and Incidents which is then reviewed by the Commanding Officer of the Major Crimes Bureau. The audit is conducted to ensure that performance standards are met in every case.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to its investigative, analytic and quality control responsibilities, the HCU provides on-site instruction to Department personnel at the Police Academy in the Recruit Training, Criminal Investigations and Supervision courses. HCU detectives also consult with the Academy staff responsible for delivering the annual Hate Crimes training to In-Service

<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that this classification system is unique to the SCPD and should not be confused with terminology used by other agencies. National statistics compiled by the USDOJ often refer to Hate Crimes as “incidents”. The term “Hate Incident” is applied by SCPD to crimes which DO NOT qualify as Hate Crimes under the New York law.

<sup>3</sup> Rules and Procedures Chapter 24, §6 (VI)(D)

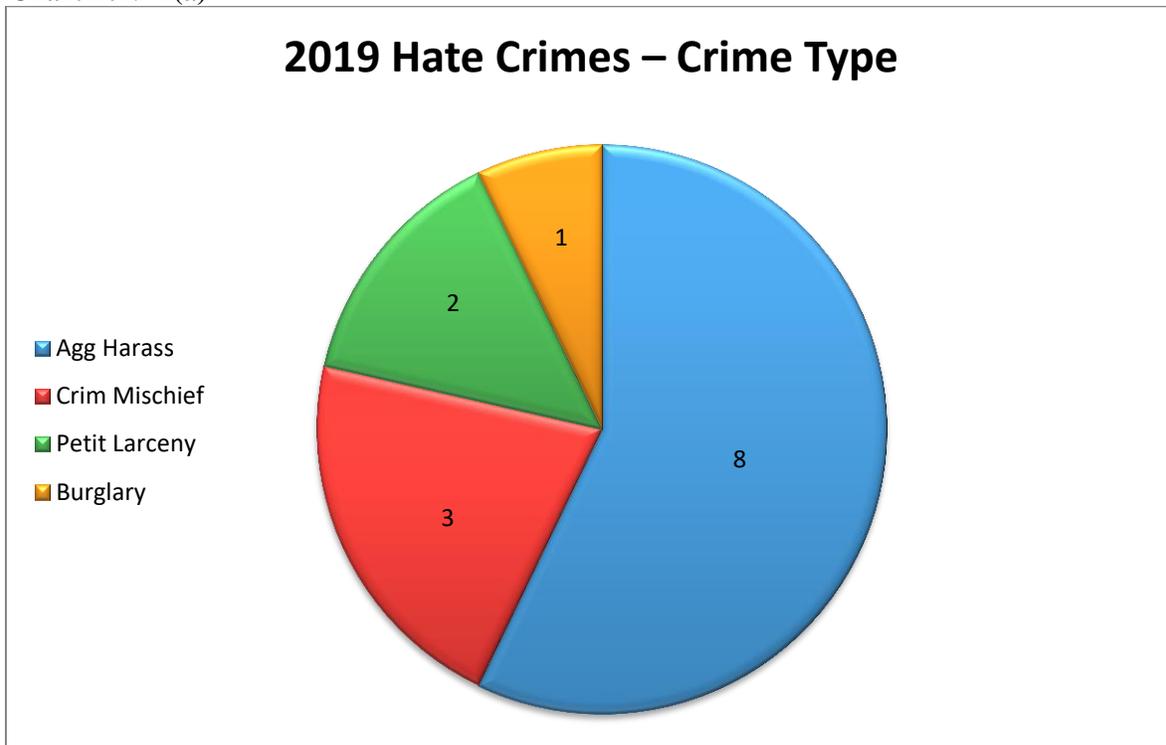
personnel. The central theme of this training is the need for all members of the Department to report all incidents that appear to contain the slightest “hate element”, and to notify the HCU in all circumstances. Members of the HCU also provide training outside the Department at a host of community events and programs and stress that timely reporting of incidents is essential to the preservation of evidence and identification of witnesses.

## 2019 Hate Crimes Data and Visualizations:

A total of 352 incidents were reviewed by the HCU in 2019. Seventy-three (73) of those were investigated as cases, and 14 of those were ultimately classified as DCJS Specified Hate Crimes.

The DCJS Specified Hate Crimes were somewhat evenly distributed across Penal Law offenses, with Aggravated Harassment being the most common underlying offense and Burglary the least. (Chart 2019-1(a))

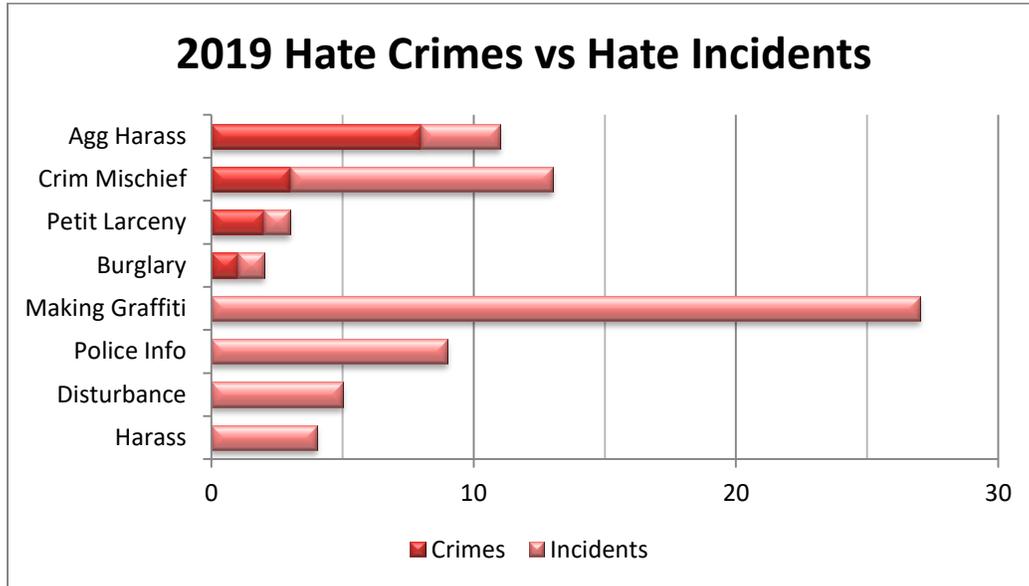
Chart 2019-1(a)<sup>4</sup>



<sup>4</sup> Previous report contained a graph which represented 2018 and 2019 Hate Crimes. This updated graph represents only the 14 Hate Crimes reported in 2019.

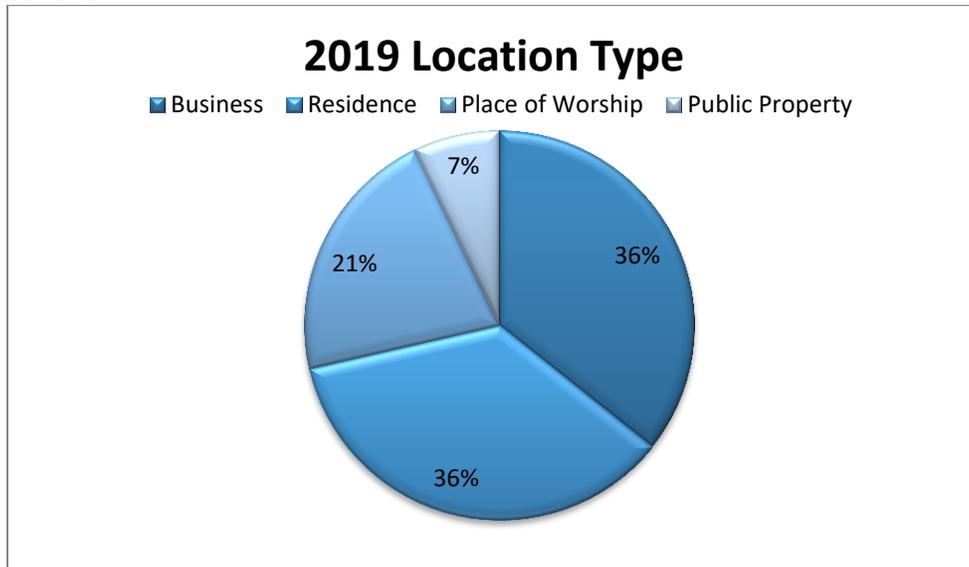
Hate Incidents, those that do not meet the technical criteria on the Hate Crimes Law, had a much greater distribution across Pena Law offenses and included a large number of charges for Making Graffiti<sup>5</sup>, one of the offense which does not appear in Penal Law §485.05 as a designated Hate Crime, even though hate symbols are often the subject of the graffiti.. (Chart 2019-2)

**Chart 2019-2**



The two most common locations in which Hate Crimes were reported in 2019 were Businesses and Residences, which shared an equal percentage of occurrence (Chart 2019-3). This marks a significant increase in Business locations accompanied by an even more steep decrease in Places of Worship.

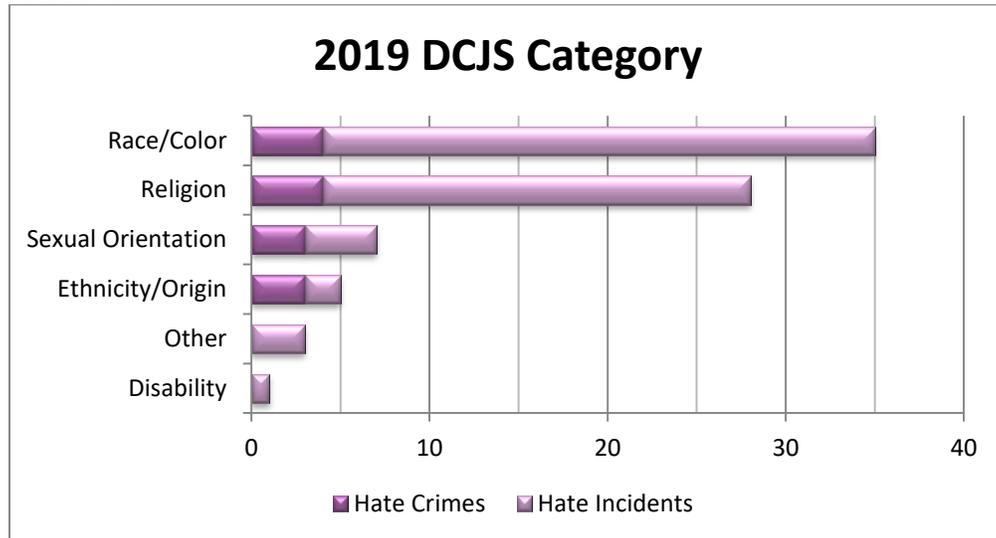
**Chart 2019-3**



<sup>5</sup> NEW YORK PENAL LAW §145.60

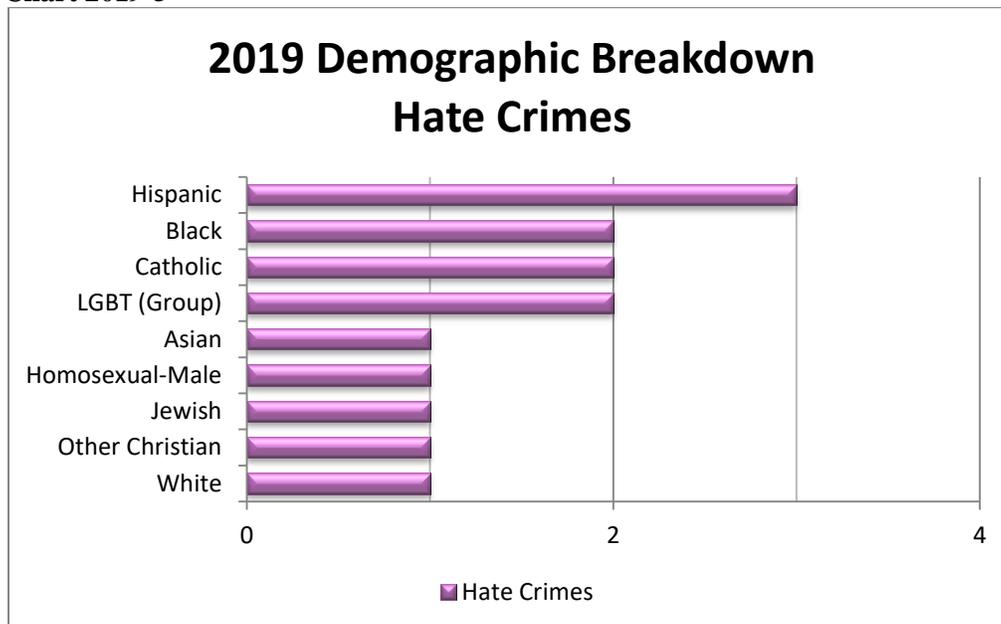
The most frequently targeted demographics for Hate Crimes in 2019 were Race/Color and Religion with 4 designated crimes each. (Chart 2019-4) This is a marked departure from 2018 when Sexual Orientation was most the targeted demographic by a significant margin.<sup>6</sup> When the larger pool of Hate Incidents is considered, Race/Color accounts for about 10% more than Religion and was the most targeted demographic overall.

**Chart 2019-4**



When these categories are broken down into individual demographics Hispanic was the most common Ethnicity and Black the most common Race/Color for victims of Hate Crimes.

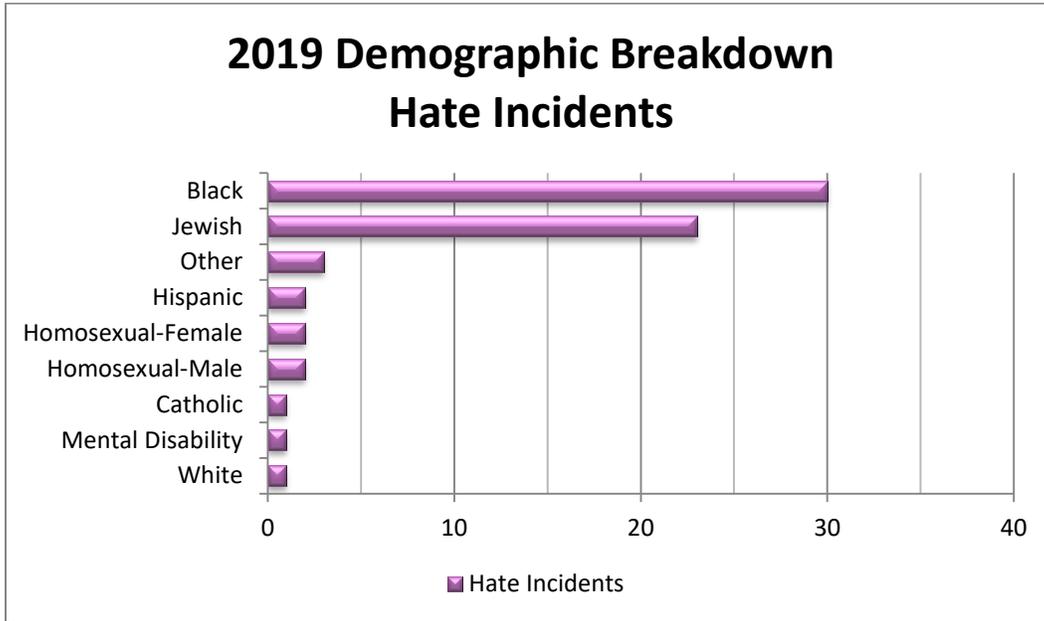
**Chart 2019-5**



<sup>6</sup> Sexual Orientation accounted for almost half of all targeted demographics in 2018..

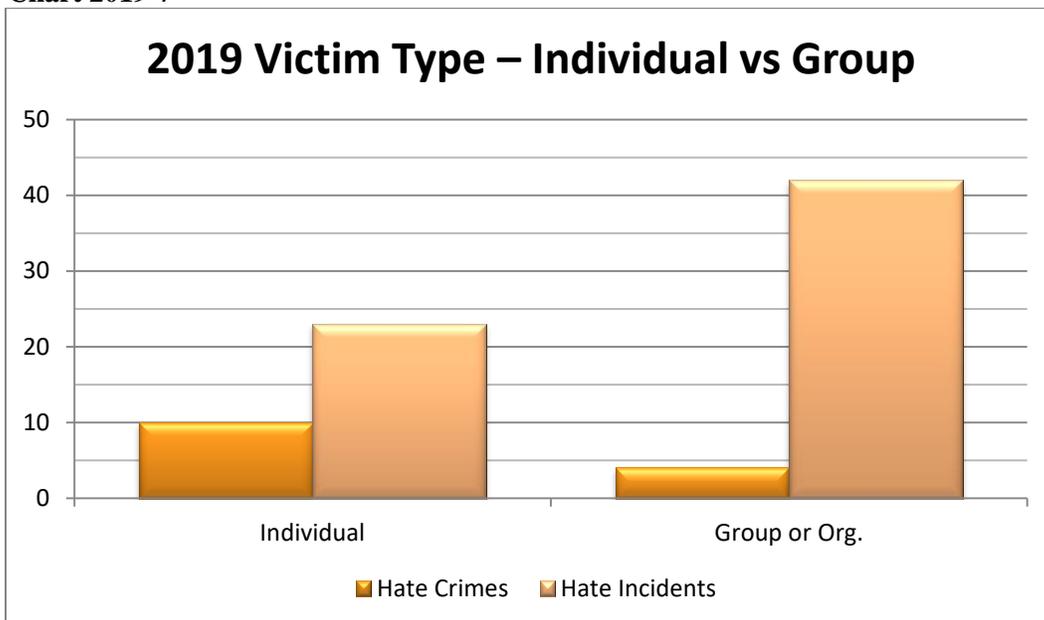
When Hate Incidents are included, Black remains the most victimized Race/Color and Jewish the most targeted religion.

**Chart 2019-6**



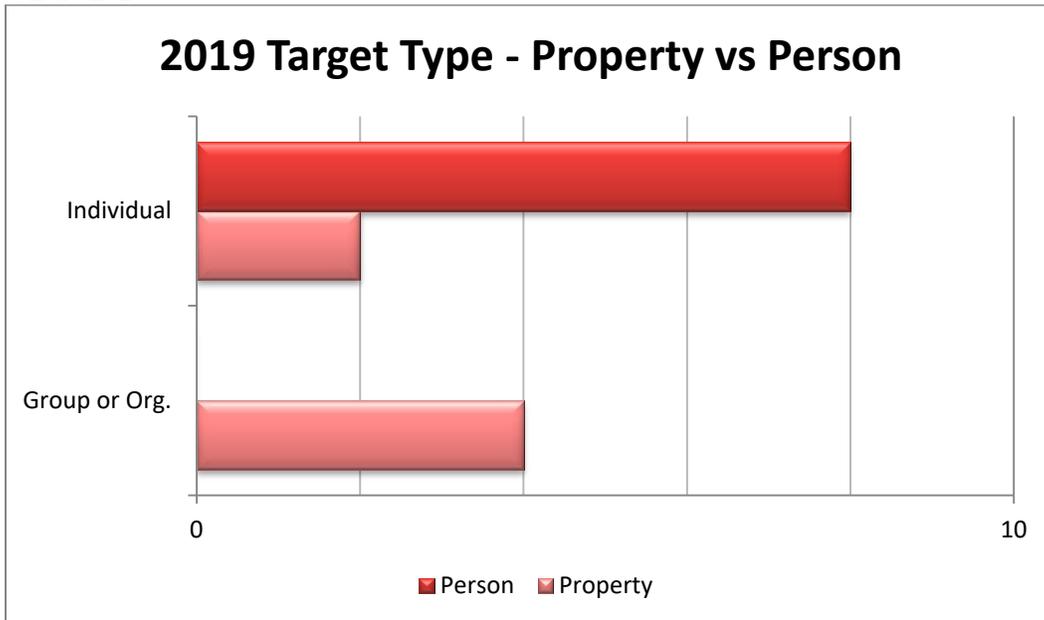
Individuals were more likely to be targeted than Groups when considering DCJS Hate Crimes. However, when Hate Incidents are included, Group targets were far more common. As in 2018, this dichotomy is again driven by the large number of Making Graffiti incidents.

**Chart 2019-7**



In 2019, when Individuals were the targets of DCJS Hate Crime, the underlying offense was typically a crime against the person. In contrast, when Groups were the targets, the only underlying offenses were crimes against property.

Chart 2019-8



## Comparisons by Year

The Department began publishing its annual Hate Crimes Report in 2014. The original reports were largely raw data, as the number of designated Hate Crimes was exceedingly low in relation to other crimes in the Police District. Statistical analysis of victim type and underlying crimes began in 2016 and additional metrics have been added each year since.

As time has passed and more cases have been catalogued, some trends have materialized which may be worth noting:

While Criminal Mischief remains a leading underlying offense overall, the number of DCJS Designated Hate Crimes involving Criminal Mischief have declined steadily from 2016 to present;<sup>7</sup>

The settings in which Hate Crimes are committed vary from year to year, but Residential locations are consistently in the top two most prevalent;

<sup>7</sup> 2016 – 18; 2017 – 21; 2018 – 6; 2019 – 3

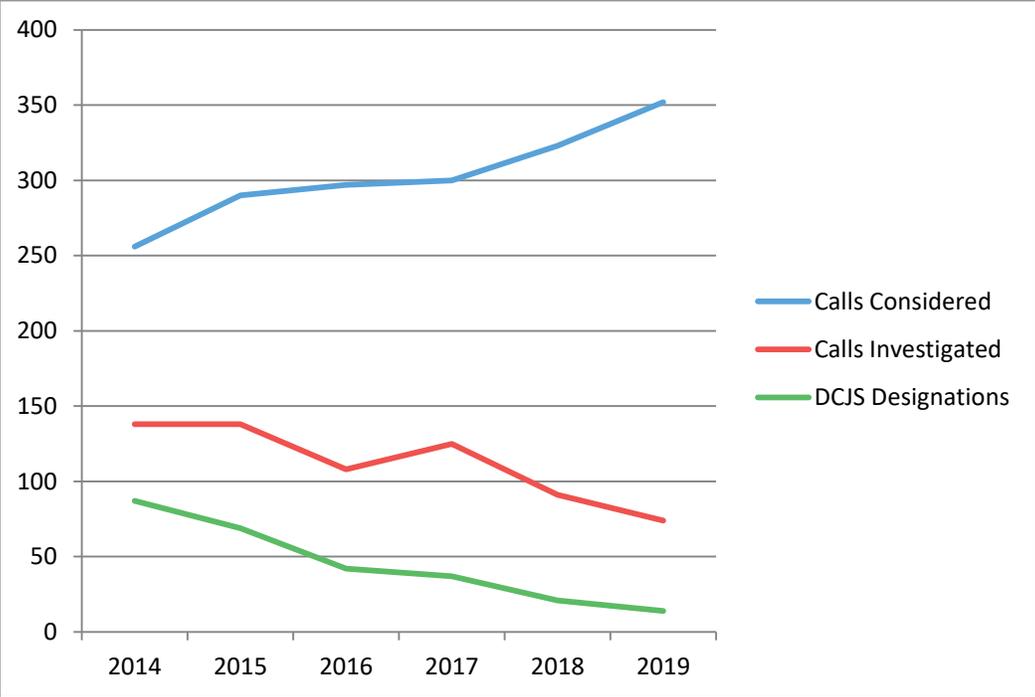
The most targeted demographic also fluctuates significantly, but anti-Jewish Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents remain the most prevalent year-to-year.<sup>8</sup>

Overall, the aggregate number of DCJS Designated Hate Crimes has declined precipitously over the past five years.

Hate Incidents<sup>9</sup> have also declined, but at a slower rate over the same term.

The Hate Crimes Unit has considered an increased number of cases each year since reporting began.

**Chart 2019-9**



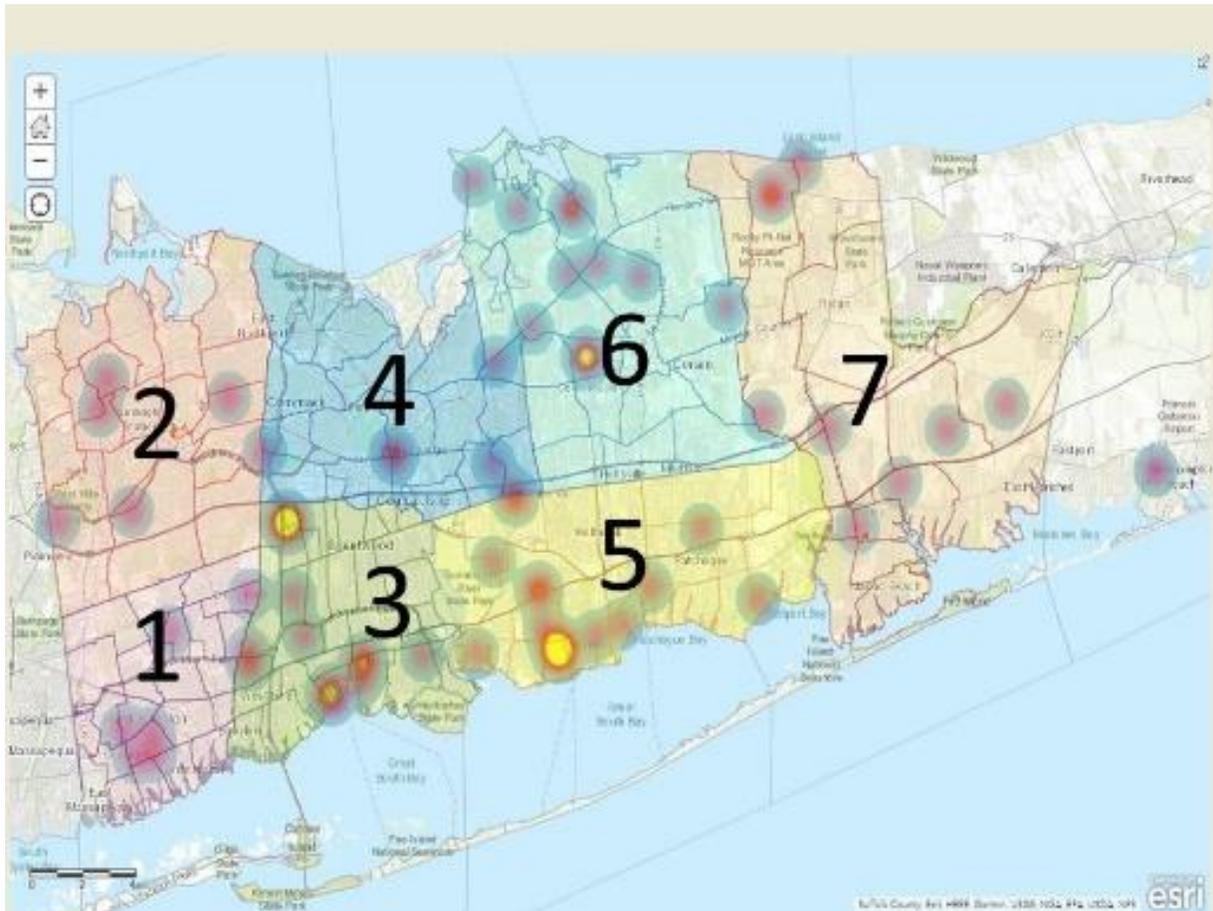
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Calls Considered	256	290	297	300	323	352
Calls Investigated	138	138	108	125	91	74
DCJS Designations	87	69	42	37	21	14
% Cases as DCJS	63.0%	50.0%	38.9%	29.6%	23.1%	18.9%

<sup>8</sup> Due to DCJS categorization, incidents involving swastikas or similar Nazi symbolism are categorized as anti-Jewish unless facts support the conclusion that another demographic was the intended target.

<sup>9</sup> Labeled "Cases Considered" in Chart 2019-10

## Comparisons by Precinct

No valuable geographic trends are identifiable. Types of offenses and targeted demographic vary widely and point to no concentration of one type of target in any particular area or a pervasive hate motivation across all areas. The only pattern discernable from year to year is the ongoing thefts of Gay Pride flags from a residence in the 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct which have occurred five times since 2017 and are being investigated by both the 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct and the Hate Crimes Unit.



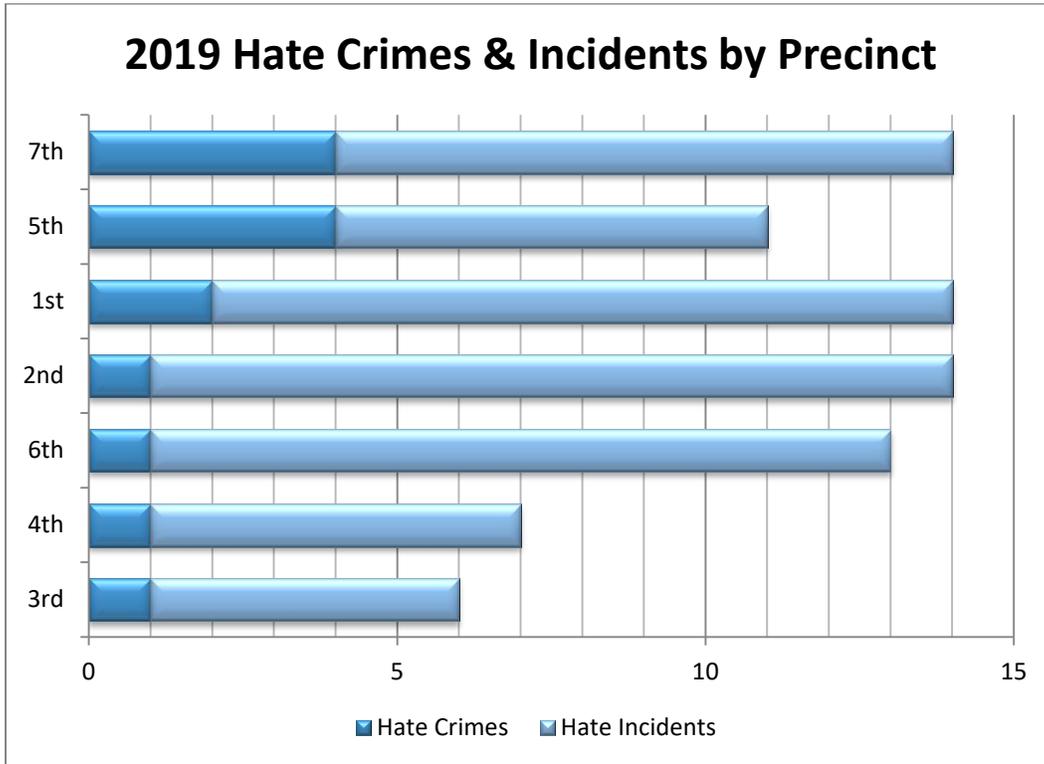
A pin-point view of the heat mapping software can imply patterns exist when in fact none do. For example, the hot spot visible above in the south-western portion of the 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct represents three incidents of Making Graffiti, occurring at separate, unrelated locations<sup>10</sup>, one theft of a Gay Pride flag and one Criminal Mischief to a nativity display. Similarly, the hot spot in the north-west corner of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Precinct represents two occasions occurring six months apart in which swastikas were found drawn in restrooms at the community college. The smaller hot spot in the center of the 6<sup>th</sup> Precinct represents two Making Graffiti offenses at unrelated premises,<sup>11</sup> one Criminal Mischief to a vehicle in a third location<sup>12</sup>, and one Criminal Mischief to a religious statue at a church.

<sup>10</sup> 2 involved anti-Black language and 1 anti-Semitic

<sup>11</sup> One anti-Semitic and one anti-Black

<sup>12</sup> Anti-White

Chart 2019-10



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