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Multnomah County DA urges Asian Americans to call cops if they're targeted with bias crimes during COVID-19 pandemic

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People believe they are victims of bias crimes should call police. (The Oregonian/File photo)

By [Aimee Green](#) | [The Oregonian/OregonLive](#)

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office on Monday launched a "We Need to Know" social media campaign to encourage people of Asian ethnicity to call police if they believe they've been the [victims of hate crimes](#) prompted by the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).

Multnomah County prosecutors also are urging victims of [any protected class](#) to call police if they've been targeted with bias crimes for any reason. Prosecuting people who victimize others because of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or national origin has been a priority of the DA's Office, according to prosecutors.

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Prosecutors are particularly concerned that bias crimes against Asian Americans could increase as Oregon continues to reopen, people increasingly interact and some individuals might place blame on people of Asian ethnicity because the novel coronavirus first surfaced in China.

"We need to know about bias crimes in our community so law enforcement can investigate these matters and if appropriate, refer them to our office for prosecution," District Attorney Rod Underhill said in a news release.

"Nationally, we have seen headlines about Asian Americans being discriminated against," Underhill said, referring to the novel coronavirus pandemic. "We will not tolerate that kind of hate against any race, ethnicity or protected class in our community. Multnomah County prides itself on being open and inclusive to all individuals."

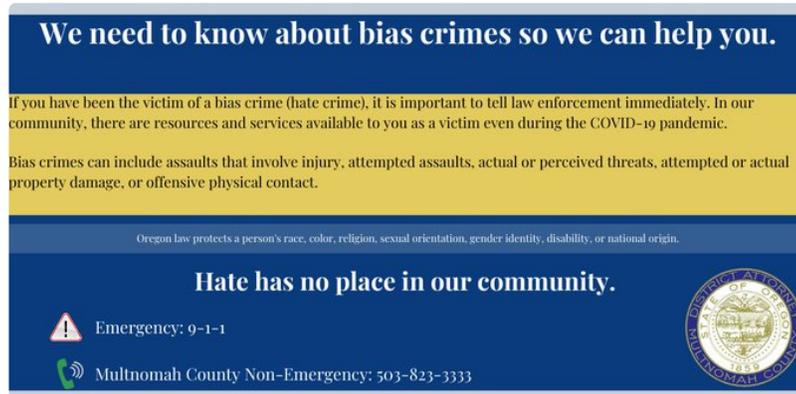


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Multnomah County District Attorney's Office releases "We Need to Know" campaign to encourage bias crime reporting.

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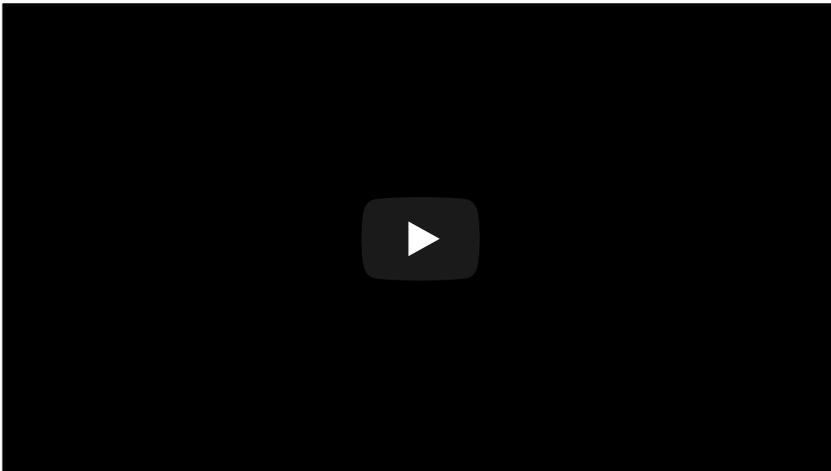
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The DA's Office is using Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to get the word out. Social media posts have been translated into simplified and traditional Chinese, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Tagalog, Thai and Vietnamese, according to the DA's Office. Links to the campaign in all of those languages can be found [here](#).

Authorities said people should call 911 if they're the victim of a bias crime in progress or witness such a crime in progress. If the bias crime is no longer happening or the suspect is gone, people should call Multnomah County's non-emergency line at 503-823-3333.

The city of Hillsboro also has launched a similar campaign urging people to report hate crimes and Monday posted a video on YouTube titled "Together, We Can Stop Coronavirus Discrimination."



"Health officials have made clear there is no link between coronavirus and a person's race or national origin — anyone can get the virus, and anyone can spread it," wrote the Hillsboro City Council, in a public statement. "Yet, misinformation is leading to discrimination due to the false association between race and coronavirus. This scapegoating has led to derogatory name-calling, verbal harassment, denial of entry and service, and even physical violence."

The statement continues: "For Asian-owned businesses, the loss of customers has been especially drastic due to coronavirus misinformation, making a challenging situation even more difficult. Racist misinformation impacts livelihoods and lives. This is unacceptable, and serves as a direct call to action."

Hillsboro is urging residents to call 911 or Washington County's non-emergency line at 503-629-0111.

Oregonians from any county can report bias crimes by calling 911 or their local non-emergency number. The Oregon Department of Justice also takes reports at its website: <https://justice.oregon.gov/CrimeReporting/BiasCrime>.

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