

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF LANE COUNTY, OREGON

ORDER NO: 23-07-11-05

In the Matter of Establishing a Board  
Response to Incidents of Hate, Bias or  
Violence and Providing the Board Chair with  
Approval Authority

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners is committed to providing a safe, welcoming and respectful environment for all who reside in, visit, and pass through our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners identified strategic areas of focus within the Strategic Plan that include Safe and Healthy County and Vibrant Communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners is resolved in its commitment to the values of integrity, respect, openness and accountability, public engagement, the pursuit of excellence, diversity, stewardship and empathy.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the Board of County Commissioners of Lane County **ORDERS** as follows:

1. Adopt the framework for the Board of County Commissioners to respond to incidents of hate, bias and violence in a timely manner as outlined in Attachment A.
2. The Board Chair, with the Vice Chair as an alternate, is granted authority to approve response statements on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners as outlined in Attachment A until such time as the Board of County Commissioners rescinds that authority through a vote.

**ADOPTED** this 11 day of July, 2023.



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Pat Farr, Chair  
Lane County Board of Commissioners

# *Communication Response Plan for Incidents of Violence, Hate or Bias*

## **Purpose:**

To determine whether a formal response to an incident of violence, hate or bias is appropriate either to staff from the County Administrator or to the greater community from the Board of County Commissioners.

## **Values:**

In Lane County, we are committed to creating a community that is safe and welcoming for everyone. We will not tolerate hate or discrimination in any form. We encourage all members of our community to join us in speaking out against hate whenever and wherever they see it.

The Board of County Commissioners has pledged its commitment to providing safe, welcoming and respectful communities.

## **Criteria:**

An incident of violence, hate or bias will be considered for a formal response if it meets the following criteria:

- *Proximity* – Did the incident occur within Lane County, a neighboring community or Oregon? An incident occurring outside Lane County should rarely qualify for a formal response and should reflect the incident's unusual or exceedingly severe effect.
- *Severity* – How many people are affected and in what way? This is the most difficult criteria to define and should be considered alongside proximity. An event such as the George Floyd tragedy would not be considered proximate to Lane County; however, its affect on communities across the country was unprecedented. Severity will be evaluated among the Equity Manager, County Administrator, and Public Information Officer.
- *Intersection* – Does the incident relate to services provided by Lane County? If an incident is directly connected to Lane County services the need for a formal response increases. If an incident is not connected to a type of service that Lane County offers a formal response may not be needed unless proximity and severity are significant.
- *Repetition* – Is this an incident that has occurred multiple times? For example, one incident of hate flyers distributed in a limited area may not warrant a response, but two incidents may.
- *Confirmation* – Has the incident been verified by a trustworthy source? Is there documentation or evidence of the incident? If an incident cannot be reasonably confirmed a statement should at minimum be delayed.

## **Internal vs. External Response:**

If an incident meets the intersection and proximity criteria, but doesn't meet the severity criterion, it may be most appropriate for an internal response from the County Administrator to staff.

An incident that includes high degrees of proximity, severity and intersection will likely require an external response for the Board of County Commissioners rather than – or in addition to – a response to staff.

Each incident is different and discussion of internal versus external response may include consideration of factors not included in this document.

## **General Format of External Response:**

Elements of an external response, in the format of a letter from the Board of County Commissioners, will include:

- clear identification of the incident to which the letter is responding.
- clear language denouncing the incident and its effect on victims and larger community.
- acknowledgement that other communities face similar discrimination and bias, if appropriate based on the type of incident.
- reference to the Board's [2016 resolution](#) reaffirming Lane County values of integrity, respect, openness and accountability, public engagement, the pursuit of excellence, diversity, stewardship, and empathy.
- information related to any efforts Lane County may be taking to directly counter incidents of violence, hate or bias in the community.

## **Review Process:**

If a formal response is warranted, the draft response should be reviewed and approved by:

- County Administrator or designee
- County Counsel
- Public Information Officer
- Equity Manager

If an incident involves law enforcement, the Sheriff should also participate in the review process.

Any response *should not compromise the privacy, safety or dignity of victims or others affected by the incident.* Nor should a response in any way compromise a lawful investigation or potential prosecution.

**Internal Communication Process:**

1. Establish that the incident meets the above criteria and warrants an internal communication.
2. Determine who is most appropriate to draft the communication on behalf of the County Administrator.
3. Send the draft through the review process above.
4. County Administrator sends the final communication to all staff via email.
5. Communication should be sent within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident.

**Board Letter Process:**

1. Establish that the incident meets the above criteria and warrants an external response.
2. Determine who is most appropriate to draft the communication on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners.
3. Send the draft through the review process above.
4. Send the approved draft to the Board Chair (or Vice Chair if the Chair is not available) for final approval.<sup>1</sup>
5. Release the letter on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners. Share with staff via email, post on the Lane County website, and share on Lane County social media channels.
6. The response should be sent within 24 hours of becoming aware of the incident.

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<sup>1</sup> This process will require Board approval to designate review and approval authority to the Board Chair so that delay in response can be avoided.

## *Communication Response Plan Checklist*

Check all that apply:

- ☐ The event occurred within Lane County.
- ☐ The event was severe and affected many people or affected people in a significant way.
- ☐ The event relates to services provided by Lane County.
- ☐ The event is part of a series of repeated events.
- ☐ The details of the event have been confirmed with an appropriate source.

If three or more boxes have been checked, including the final box, review the Plan and determine what level of response is most appropriate.

Remember that any response *should not compromise the privacy, safety or dignity of victims* or others affected by the incident. Nor should a response in any way compromise a lawful investigation or potential prosecution.

## *Check Your Biases*

Everyone has biases, and it's important to be aware of them. Reflect on your own beliefs, experiences, and potential areas that might affect your judgment. Review personal experiences: Recognize that individuals' personal experiences and histories can shape their perceptions of an incident. Be mindful that what may appear insignificant to one person might hold significant emotional weight for another due to past traumas or sensitivities and vice versa.

# Sample Response

Dear Lane County,

We are writing to denounce the recent acts of antisemitism that have taken place in our community. We stand in solidarity with all those who have been affected by these hateful actions and want to make it clear that there is no place for white nationalism, hate, or bias speech in our society.

The history of antisemitism is long and painful. Throughout the centuries, the Jewish community has been the target of discrimination, persecution, and violence. From the Middle Ages to the Holocaust, antisemitism has taken many forms and caused immeasurable suffering.

It is important to acknowledge this history and to remember that antisemitism is not a thing of the past. Even today, the Jewish community faces prejudice and discrimination in many parts of the world, including our own. We must all do our part to combat antisemitism and to build a more just and inclusive society.

We must also recognize that antisemitism is not an isolated phenomenon. It is part of a larger pattern of hate and bias speech that affects many different communities. We must stand together against all forms of hate and bigotry, whether they target Jews, Muslims, immigrants, people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, or any other group.

In Lane County, we are committed to creating a community that is safe and welcoming for everyone. We will not tolerate hate or discrimination in any form. We encourage all members of our community to join us in this effort and to speak out against hate whenever and wherever they see it.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



**AMADO Latiffe**

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- clear identification of the incident to which the letter is responding.



**AMADO Latiffe**

- clear language denouncing the incident and its effect on victims and larger community.



**AMADO Latiffe**

- acknowledgement that other communities face similar discrimination and bias, if appropriate based on the type of incident



**AMADO Latiffe**

- reference to the Board's [2016 resolution](#) reaffirming Lane County values of integrity, respect, openness and accountability, public engagement, the pursuit of excellence, diversity, stewardship, and empathy



**AMADO Latiffe**

- information related to any efforts Lane County may be taking to directly counter incidents of violence, hate or bias in the community