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Letter from the Board Chair

Greetings,

Welcome to the Denver Citizen Oversight Board’s Annual Report for 2023 and thank you for your interest in improving Denver’s public safety systems.

I’m proud to highlight what the Board accomplished this year. Our first action was appointing local defense attorney Lisabeth Pérez Castle to serve as Independent Monitor. It’s a tough job with a steep learning curve, and we’re eager to build on the progress she’s made this year.

In the Spring, the Board finalized its 2023-2024 Strategic Plan (Appendix A to this report) and was able to work with City Council and Mayor Hancock to make several changes to the Board’s governing ordinance language, with the result of making Board membership more accessible to our community. Around the same time, both the Denver Police Department and Denver Sheriff Department implemented our recommendation that they change their body worn camera settings so that the cameras now include audio in the 30-second buffer recording prior to the camera’s activation.

Over the Summer, the Board recognized the 20th anniversary of Paul Childs’ death, which served as the catalyst for creating both the Board and the Office of the Independent Monitor. In addition, we welcomed and met with our new Mayor and six new members of City Council, created a series of short videos explaining our role and the importance of independent oversight of law enforcement, and updated our bylaws.

Towards the end of the year, the Board sent three letters with specific requests. The first letter was to Executive Director of Public Safety Armando Saldate stating our position about a police shooting incident from late 2020 for which he was about to make a final disciplinary decision. The second was to Chief of Police Ron Thomas, following up with specific details about a recommendation we made in our 2022 Annual Report that he provide additional and more consistent information in letters closing complaints against uniformed law enforcement personnel. The third was an open letter to City leaders stating our desire to enhance oversight of the City’s compliance with non-monetary terms of legal settlements involving law enforcement conduct.

Over the course of 2023, we also welcomed three new community members to the Board: David Martinez in January, Tymesha Watkins in April, and Alfredo Reyes in November. Denver’s public safety systems are complex and take time to understand, and I look forward to continuing to work with our new members as they continue to grow in confidence and help the Board reach its full potential. Another three members were re-appointed to the Board, bringing some much-needed continuity.

There is so much more that happened in our City’s public safety ecosystem in 2023, both positive and concerning, and I hope you’ll take the time to read our report in its entirety.

Sincerely,
Julia Richman, Chair
1 Introduction

Denver’s Citizen Oversight Board (COB or Board) was created in 2004 and consists of nine community members who are broadly tasked with assessing the effectiveness of the Denver Department of Public Safety’s (DOS) hiring, training, and disciplinary processes and making recommendations as appropriate. To do so, the Board is granted regular access to public safety department leaders as well as confidential records. The Board is also responsible for appointing the Independent Monitor, by and with the consent of the City Council, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Board. The Independent Monitor leads the Office of the Independent Monitor (OIM), the overall performance of which the Board is also responsible for evaluating. Board members serve four-year terms and appointments are split between the Mayor and City Council, with one joint appointee. By ordinance, the Board is required to annually report on its activities, findings, and recommendations. This Annual Report covers the period from January 1 through December 31, 2023.

1.1 Board Mission

The duties and authorities of the COB are established in of the City and County of Denver Charter, as follows:

**Denver Charter § 12.1.1**

(B) *The citizen oversight board.* There is hereby created the citizen oversight board, the size, qualifications, composition and appointment of which shall be as provided by ordinance. The functions of the board shall be to:

i. Assess the effectiveness of the monitor's office;
ii. Make policy-level recommendations regarding discipline, use of force, and other policies; rules; hiring; training; community relations; and the complaint process;
iii. Address any other issues of concern to the community, members of the board, the monitor, the manager of safety, the chief of police, the sheriff, or the fire chief;
iv. Make recommendations as to specific cases as may be prescribed in ordinance;
v. Exercise such other powers and duties as may be provided by ordinance; and
vi. In addition to executing the powers and duties assigned to the citizen oversight board, the citizen oversight board shall appoint, by and with the consent of city council, the monitor or any appointee who will serve as monitor in the interim. The monitor shall serve at the pleasure of the citizen oversight board.

Both the Board and the OIM were created in 2004. Over the past few years, the Board and its responsibilities have been modified in significant ways.

In a February 2019 ordinance change, the City expanded the Board from seven members to nine, staggered the terms of its members, split appointment authority evenly between the Mayor and City
Council, and created an independent Nominating Committee. (Previously, the Mayor selected all members subject to City Council confirmation.)

That ordinance also strengthened the authority of the OIM. It explicitly confirmed the OIM’s ability to oversee investigations of Denver’s Sheriff and Chief of Police, its ability to review any other method of closing discipline cases, and its ability to publish as many reports as it sees fit. It also prohibited retaliation against anyone who reported to or worked with the OIM.

In November 2021, 70.25% of Denver voters approved Referred Question 2G, which amended Denver’s Charter to give the Board the authority to appoint the Independent Monitor with the consent of the City Council. It also gave employment protections to OIM employees. Finally, it allowed the OIM to hire their own outside legal counsel if necessary.

In a March 2023 ordinance change, the City dissolved the Board’s Nominating Committee, modified the stipend structure for Board members, and made a variety of minor clarifying changes to the Board’s ordinances.

### Complaints and Commendations

The COB can receive complaints against, and commendations of, uniformed law enforcement officers. Complaints and commendations may be submitted by email, mail, over the phone, or through the OIM’s online complaint and commendation form. Complaints and commendations received by the COB are forwarded to the OIM, which then refers them to the relevant agency and monitors how they handle them. The COB has no investigative authority.

![Figure 2: Complaints and Commendations](image)

#### 1.2 Overview of Denver’s Law Enforcement Discipline System

The DOS is headed by the Executive Director of Public Safety (EDOS) and staffed with civilians. The EDOS is a Mayoral appointee and is responsible for, among other things, managerial oversight of Denver Police Department (DPD), Denver Sheriff Department (DSD), the Denver Fire Department (DFD), the 911 Emergency Communications Division, and a variety of safety programs. The Mayor also appoints the heads of the DPD, DSD, and DFD.

Public safety employees can be categorized in several different ways. There are two completely separate personnel systems: career service and civil service. Deputy sheriffs and most civilian employees are part of the career service system, while police officers and firefighters are part of the civil service system. More practically, however, there are employees who are authorized to carry badges and guns, and those who are not. The City currently employs approximately 1,533 police officers, 583 sheriff deputies, and 11 fire investigators authorized to carry badges and guns, who for the purposes of this report will be collectively described as “uniformed personnel.” These uniformed personnel are subject to a more rigorous disciplinary process than other employees, as will be described below.
1.2.1 Complaints

Any member of the community can file a complaint against any uniformed personnel that they believe may have acted improperly. Complaints can be filed anonymously and can be made by anyone, including witnesses or those who heard about an incident from someone else. Complaint topics can include disrespectful treatment, improper use of force, or any other allegation against specific uniformed personnel, regardless of whether the complainant knows their name(s), badge number(s), or specific policies that may have been violated. Complaints can be provided to the COB, the OIM, or directly to the applicable department’s internal investigative office. The easiest way to file a complaint or commendation related to the DPD or DSD is through the OIM’s online form. The DFD hosts its own online form for complaints or commendations related to its personnel.

Historically, the DPD, DFD, and the DSD all had their own offices that were responsible for investigating allegations of misconduct concerning uniformed personnel and recommending appropriate discipline. This is still the case for the DPD and DFD, which have both an Internal Affairs Bureau (IAB) responsible for initial screening of complaints, gathering evidence, and conducting interviews as well as a Conduct Review Bureau (CRB, sometimes also referred to as the Conduct Review Office or CRO) responsible for evaluating the evidence and making initial disciplinary recommendations. However, the DSD’s internal affairs division was replaced in 2019 by a Public Integrity Division (PID) within the DOS. The PID consists of an Administrative Investigations Unit (AIU) and a Conduct Review Unit (CRU), which have responsibilities similar to their DPD counterparts. While complaints can be made through many channels, complaints about DSD uniformed personnel are first evaluated by AIU, with the results of any formal investigation then going to CRU, which recommends specific outcomes. Similarly, complaints about DPD or DFD uniformed personnel are first evaluated by their respective IAB, with the results of any formal investigations then going to their CRB, which recommend specific outcomes. While department heads can issue reprimands, if they wish to impose more severe discipline, they must propose it to the EDOS, who is responsible for the final decision on any discipline for uniformed personnel more severe than a reprimand. This process is the same regardless of whether a complaint is initially submitted to the Board, the OIM, the DSD’s Grievance and Incident Review Team (GIRT), or directly to the internal affairs units.

After the EDOS makes the department’s final discipline decision (in cases more severe than a reprimand), police officers and firefighters can appeal their discipline to the Civil Service Commission, where a hearing officer is assigned to decide the appeal. The hearing officer’s decision can be further appealed to the full Commission or to the Denver District Court. Sheriff deputies can follow a similar appeal process with the Career Service Board. All uniformed personnel can also appeal decisions through the court system if they believe their discipline violated state or federal laws.

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1 OIM’s online form.
2 DFD’s online form.
3 The Sheriff is also able to issue formal notices of improvement.
4 The GIRT is a non-disciplinary unit in the DSD that reviews use of force incidents and inmate grievances. Grievances alleging deputy misconduct and potentially inappropriate uses of force are forwarded to the AIU for independent investigation.
1.2.2 Oversight
The OIM and the COB were created in 2004 as part of the reforms that were demanded in the wake of the fatal 2003 police shooting of Paul Childs, a developmentally disabled teenager. They replaced the Public Safety Review Commission, which was perceived to be ineffective at overseeing internal misconduct investigations of uniformed personnel.

The OIM is responsible for monitoring all aspects of the investigatory and disciplinary process for uniformed personnel and typically does so by reviewing records and making recommendations during investigations and after each stage of the process is completed. This includes reviewing cases that the law enforcement review units wish to close after an initial screening. If the OIM so chooses, they can also “actively monitor” a case. When the OIM actively monitors a case, its staff works closely with law enforcement internal investigators—including attending relevant interviews—and can provide feedback and recommendations in real-time. If the investigating unit declines the OIM’s recommendations, the OIM has the authority to conduct its own supplemental investigation. The OIM is also tasked with reporting on overall trends in complaints and discipline, which can inform policy recommendations.

In summary, this oversight system is intended to ensure that complaints will be handled properly, that any resulting investigation will be thorough, and that public safety leaders will hear an external perspective before they make any disciplinary decisions.

The Board is not directly involved in each step of the investigatory and disciplinary process like the OIM but is able to review confidential records and provide recommendations for both specific cases and general policies as it sees fit. The Board is also tasked with appointing the head of the OIM (with the consent of the City Council), removing them (after consulting with the City Council), and independently evaluating the effectiveness of the office.

2 Board Activities in 2023
2.1 Board Meetings
City ordinance requires that the Board meet with the Independent Monitor at least bi-monthly, meet with the EDOS, the Sheriff, and the Chief of Police at least once each quarter, and meet for public comment at least three times each year. The Board met each of these requirements in 2023.

The Board regularly meets for working sessions at 10 a.m. on the first and third Fridays of each month. These meetings are open to the public, apart from executive sessions held to discuss ongoing investigations and other privileged matters. The Board works closely with the OIM to stay informed about noteworthy misconduct cases, and an OIM representative attends most Board meetings.

In 2023, the Board met 22 times, including 13 meetings with public safety officials and three meetings with the community. All meetings with public safety officials were recorded, published on the Board’s YouTube Channel, and provided to Channel 8 for rebroadcasting.5

5 COB YouTube Channel
In addition, in 2023 Board members participated in community events like the Juneteenth Music Festival and visited public safety facilities including the Assessment-Intake-Diversion Center, the 911 Call Center, and the County Jail.

2.2 Board Statements and Letters

In July, the Board issued a public statement recognizing the 20th anniversary of Paul Childs’ death. His death served as the catalyst for the creation of a new system of law enforcement oversight in Denver.

Also in July, the Board released a series of short promotional videos that explain the importance of citizen oversight of public safety departments as well as the specific missions of the Board and the OIM.

In August, the Board sent a letter to EDOS Armando Saldate sharing our concerns about a pending DPD discipline case. In September, Director Saldate’s office issued a final departmental order of discipline in that case finding that two DPD officers violated policy when they discharged their firearms at a subject across a busy street and struck unrelated vehicles traveling both in front and behind the subject. In early November, the Board sent DPD Chief Ron Thomas a letter following up on a recommendation in the Board’s 2022 Annual Report with specific suggestions for the content of letters that close complaints against DPD officers.

In late November, the Board sent an open letter to City leaders requesting a high-level stakeholder meeting to discuss the need for additional transparency and oversight of legal settlements involving law enforcement conduct. The letter focuses on non-financial settlements terms such as changes to practices or policies and the creation and publication of specific reports. The non-monetary terms of settlements are rarely made public, but the letter included several examples from high-profile cases with published terms in which the City may have failed to comply with either the letter or the spirit of such provisions.

2.3 Other Board Activities

2.3.1 2024 Budget

In November, City Council approved the final COB budget for 2024, which includes a $13,820 expansion of the Board’s baseline operations budget.

Most of the new funds—$10,800—will go towards increased stipend payments for Board members, pursuant to a March 2023 ordinance change. The remainder—$3,020—will help finance the Board’s participation in more community events and festivals, in furtherance of the Board’s 2023-2024 Strategic Plan.

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7 Main Video; Vignette 1 – Importance of Oversight; Vignette 2 – COB; Vignette 3 – OIM.

8 Citizen Oversight Board, Open Letter to City leaders about Settlement Oversight, November 24, 2023.

9 Bill# 23-0114.
2.3.2 Conference Attendance

In November, three Board members and the Board’s administrator traveled to Chicago, Illinois, to attend the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement’s (NACOLE) annual conference. The conference provides an opportunity to connect with and learn from civilian oversight practitioners around the country. The conference featured four programming tracks with sessions focused on national best practices in civilian oversight, prison and jail oversight, strengthening oversight institutions, and working with the community.

3 Year in Review

In 2023, the City spent more than $17.6 million to settle at least 38 lawsuits and pay two judgments related to the conduct of public safety departments.\(^{10}\) That number constitutes almost half of the $39.5 million that Denver has paid out (including for non-safety departments) between 2017 and 2023.\(^ {11}\) The vast majority of last year’s costs were related to the DPD, with only $265,000 paid for two settlements related to the DSD and $52,000 paid for two settlements related to the DFD. The City continues to pay the price for the DPD’s conduct during the 2020 George Floyd protests, with almost $10 million of last year’s settlement funds going towards related cases. Total settlement costs related to the DPD’s mishandling of those protests now exceed $11.5 million, not including the $14 million verdict in 2022 relating to DPD actions during the protests that the City is appealing.

In 2023, the City dramatically expanded its use of public-facing data dashboards. This year the DPD created seven dashboards, featuring data on theft, bias motivated crime, critical incidents, internal affairs complaints, response times, uses of force, and community engagement events. The DOS created dashboards with information about 911 calls and dispatching, as well as complaints against DSD deputies. The DSD added public dashboards for both inmate assaults and deputy uses of force, as well as staff demographics.

In January, City Council appointed Lisabeth Perez Castle to the position of Independent Monitor, following two years of interim leadership by Gregg Crittenden who then reassumed the position of Senior Deputy Monitor.

In January, Denver decriminalized jaywalking.\(^ {12}\) While jaywalking remains illegal at the state level, City Council also directed the DPD to deprioritize enforcement of that law.

In 2023, at least eight DPD officers were arrested and charged with a variety of criminal offenses, including assault, domestic violence, sexual assault, driving under the influence, indecent exposure, assault, theft, and reckless endangerment. Of the eight officers, four faced charges as a result of conduct while on duty or during authorized secondary employment (including assault, theft, and indecent exposure), and the other four faced charges related to off-duty conduct (domestic violence or driving

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\(^{10}\) Settlements under $5,000 do not require approval from City Council (DRMC Section 20-1(d)) and are not included in this data.

\(^{11}\) Joe Rubino, “Vast majority of Denver’s $40 million in legal settlements over last 7 years due to law enforcement misconduct,” The Denver Post, February 11, 2024.

under the influence). Charges were dropped in at least two of the eight cases. The highest profile case was that of officer Brandon Ramos, who was indicted by a grand jury in January for his role in the July 2022 police shooting near the intersection of 20th and Larimer Streets that injured the subject as well as six bystanders.\textsuperscript{13}

In February, the DOS hosted a grand opening for its Assessment-Intake-Diversion (AID) Center.\textsuperscript{14} The AID Center serves as a hub for community members to get connected with a wide variety of city, state, and non-profit services. In total, it has served over 1000 individuals and hosted several events in cooperation with other entities, including two “Fresh Start” warrant clearing events.

In March, the DSD began providing electronic tablets to all inmates. While a premium version is available for a fee, all tablets contain thousands of books and resources on recovery and re-entry, podcasts and religious teachings, and the ability to file electronic grievances. All tablets can also be used to make phone calls or send text-based messages, although those services are not free.\textsuperscript{15} The number of phone calls from the jails increased after the tablets were introduced as inmates no longer need to use shared kiosks to make calls.\textsuperscript{16} This has allowed inmates to be more connected with the outside world.

Early in 2023, the DPD and DSD changed their body worn camera settings so that the cameras now include audio in the 30-second buffer recording prior to the camera’s activation. This change came after the Board asked EDOS Saldate, Chief Thomas, and former Chief Paul Pazen a variety of questions related to this subject over the course of 2022 and early 2023.

Also in early 2023, Denver 911 began allowing callers to request a “STAR-only” response. The Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) program sends an emergency medical technician and a mental health clinician to certain low-risk 911 calls instead of police officers. Provided that the call was STAR-eligible, this gave 911 dispatchers the ability to honor a caller’s request to not dispatch anyone other than STAR, even if STAR was not available. Prior to confirming a STAR-only response, callers are informed that depending on STAR availability, this option has the potential to result in no response at all.

In July, Mike Johnston was inaugurated as Denver’s new Mayor alongside six new members of City Council.

\textsuperscript{13} In January 2024, Ramos pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor assault charge and was sentenced to 18 months of probation and also disqualified from serving as a police officer in Colorado. See: Olivia Prentzel, “\textit{Denver police officer pleads guilty to third-degree assault in 2022 shooting that injured 6},” \textit{Colorado Sun}, January 23, 2024; Beth McCann, “\textit{Denver Police Officer Indicted and Charged in LoDo Shooting Incident},” January 4, 2023.

\textsuperscript{14} The AID Center is intended to serve as a trauma-informed, one-stop shop to help community members access a wide range of services. It is open to all but is focused on serving individuals with active low-level warrants and those experiencing persistent challenges accessing services and stable housing. In certain circumstances, police officers are authorized to offer people transportation to the AID Center instead of arresting them. See also: \textit{Presentation to City Council Safety, Housing, Education & Homelessness Committee}, January 25, 2023.

\textsuperscript{15} Per \textit{the contract with Securus}, it costs 29 cents (not including any applicable taxes or fees) to send a photo, text-only message, or eCard from the tablet. Phone calls cost \textit{8.6 cents per minute}.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{COB Meeting with Sheriff Diggins}, May 19, 2023. (meeting minutes)
In November, the Colorado Jail Standards Commission issued its final report containing a comprehensive list of baseline standards for jail operations and conditions of confinement.¹⁷ The General Assembly will consider follow up legislation on the subject in its 2024 legislative session.

Also in November, City Council approved the City’s budget for 2024. Numerous changes were related to public safety, but three specific changes are highlighted here:

1. The STAR program received an approximately $114,000 net budget expansion, with a roughly $375,000 increase from the General Fund offset by a reduction in grant funding, bringing its total budget for 2024 to slightly over $6.2 million.
2. The City will spend $3 million in new funds to open a 90-bed halfway house. By the end of 2024, the City anticipates having capacity for 483 individuals in halfway houses, still short of the target level of 550 beds, and even further behind the 748 beds available in 2019.¹⁸ In the absence of halfway house capacity, eligible individuals are instead housed in Denver jails or state-run Department of Corrections facilities.
3. DPD received $2.7 million for an additional academy class in 2024, with the goal of hiring a total of 147 officers, taking them from 95% to 100% of authorized staffing levels for uniformed DPD personnel, including estimated turnover.

In late 2023, Denver 911 graduated a mega-academy for call-takers and dispatchers, bringing the call center to nearly 100% of their authorized strength. Average wait times for calls to 911 fell from over 50 seconds prior to the graduation to just under 9 seconds at the start of 2024.¹⁹ Increased staffing levels have also allowed for the end of mandatory overtime for dispatchers and call takers, which had been in place for years. In addition to staff growth, Denver 911 has introduced multiple new technologies to improve service. Callers are now able to stream live video to the call center and receive automated updates about the response after the call is finished. That same automated messaging technology also provides callers with the ability to quickly obtain police report numbers and share feedback about their experience both with Denver 911 and first responders.

From July 18 to December 30, 2023, the City was able to move 1,034 unhoused individuals into non-congregate shelter, the vast majority of whom were moved into converted hotel rooms. The City spent roughly $45 million on this effort.²⁰

4 Evaluation of OIM’s Effectiveness

The COB uses a four-pronged approach to evaluate the OIM: 1) a series of quantitative workload and performance measures; 2) an anonymous survey of OIM staff; 3) feedback from DOS leaders; and 4) an assessment from COB members on several specific OIM responsibilities.

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¹⁸ DOS Presentation to City Council’s Safety, Housing, Education & Homelessness Committee, August 30, 2023.
¹⁹ Per email from Director Dameron to Board Administrator Daniel Van Schooten on November 7, 2023.
²⁰ Alliyah Sims, “Denver opens first micro-community as mayor touts successful House1000 project,” Fox31 KDVR, January 1, 2024; City and County of Denver, “House1000 Progress Dashboards: House1000 Site Map.”
Deputy Director Gregg Crittenden served as interim Independent Monitor for the first week of 2023. This evaluation focuses on the leadership of Lisabeth Pérez Castle, who began serving as the Independent Monitor on January 6.

4.1 Workload and Performance Data

The OIM’s complaint-driven workload increased significantly over the past several years. The growth in 2023 was fueled in large part by a major increase in complaints related to the DSD’s body worn camera policies. Complaints, actively monitored investigations, the review of completed investigations or declines, and the review of disciplinary recommendations are all above pre-COVID levels for OIM.

Mediations in 2023 were slightly above 50% of pre-COVID levels, although it should be noted that the OIM does not have direct control over the number of mediations that occur. Only certain types of complaints are eligible for mediation and all of the involved parties must agree to mediation for it to proceed. Satisfaction with the mediation process remained high in 2023, with 80% of officers and 86% of community members expressing satisfaction with the process in an optional follow-up survey.

The OIM engaged in extensive outreach activities in 2023, as the Independent Monitor worked to introduce herself to a wide variety of stakeholders. As part of that effort, Monitor Castle and her team have attended numerous community meetings to help ensure people understand the OIM’s role in the disciplinary process.

The OIM provides more details about each critical incident (officer involved shootings and deaths in custody or during law enforcement contact) in their annual and semi-annual reports.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workload Data</th>
<th>Police</th>
<th>Sheriff</th>
<th>2023 Total</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Complaint Monitoring Workload</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community + Internal Complaints</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>1063</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>656</td>
<td>804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorded</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigations Reviewed</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively Monitored Investigations</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplinary Cases Reviewed</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Mediations</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Critical Incidents Monitored*       |        |         |            |      |      |      |
| Officer-Involved Shootings          | 10     | 0       | 10         | 8    | 7    | 11   |
| In-Custody/In-Contact Deaths        | 9      | 7       | 16         | 10   | 10   | 2    |

*This data does not include deaths due to chronic medical conditions or when officers fire at animals.*

21 OIM Reports Page.
22 Note: The OIM changed how it counts complaints beginning in the 2022 Annual Report. Complaints that were not administratively linked to specific uniformed personnel (even if unidentified) were previously excluded but are now included.
Table 2: OIM Performance Measures, 2020 – 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator Category</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Percentage of DPD IAB Investigations (full formal investigations and declines) reviewed by OIM prior to case closure.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Percentage of DOS AIU Investigations (full formal investigations and declines) reviewed by OIM prior to case closure.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Percentage of DPD disciplinary decisions of IAB cases reviewed by the OIM prior to case closure.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Percentage of DSD disciplinary decisions of AIU cases reviewed by the OIM prior to case closure.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Number of community outreach events held/attended by the OIM in a calendar year.</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Number of officer/deputy outreach events held/attended by the OIM in a calendar year.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Number of complaint/commendation form distribution sites.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Percentage of community complaints referred to DPD IAB within three business days (for complaints filed through the OIM).</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Percentage of community complaints referred to DOS AIU within three business days (for complaints filed through the OIM).</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Percentage of DPD citizen complaints mediated.</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 OIM Staff Survey

In January 2024, the COB asked the OIM staff to give their perceptions of the performance of the Office’s leadership and the culture of the office as a whole. 11 out of 14 staff members responded to the survey using a 1-5 scale, and the responses were generally quite positive, with average scores all between 4 and 5. The full list of survey questions and their average scores is included below.

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Note: As mentioned in our 2021 annual report, the Board did not previously track OIM performance measures related to investigations and discipline for the DSD. As a result, data prior to 2022 for these categories is not readily available. Additionally, sometimes special circumstances apply to cases, and the OIM may have reviewed or been involved in aspects of cases before the cases evolve into something outside the scope of the OIM’s responsibilities.
Table 3: OIM Staff Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Questions</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I believe the OIM is viable and doing important work.</td>
<td>4.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am able to see how my own responsibilities and efforts—directly or indirectly—support the vision and contribute to achieving the mission of the OIM.</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I am clear about the vision and the overall strategy for accomplishing the mission of the OIM.</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am sufficiently confident in my knowledge of my job to effectively execute assignments and carry out responsibilities.</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The OIM provides appropriate and necessary training for me to be successful.</td>
<td>4.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Expectations for my performance are adjusted appropriately as changes occur within the OIM or externally.</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The Independent Monitor (or interim) is fair and balanced in holding all staff accountable for productive and positive functioning of the Office.</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The Independent Monitor (or interim) models a high standard of performance for the OIM.</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I receive fair, clear, and timely feedback about my performance.</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The Independent Monitor communicates clear expectations for productive and positive functioning of the OIM.</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The OIM has well established processes for dealing with community members.</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The Independent Monitor (or interim) encourages collaborative working relationships with stakeholders in the Safety Department.</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Communication mechanisms in the OIM are effective in helping me and others understand how we are meeting the overall goals of the organization and in keeping us advised on significant developments.</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I receive assistance with my work when I need and request it.</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. There are processes in place that allow staff to provide input on how to improve the performance of the OIM.</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I experience authentic receptivity to my input; my ideas/concerns are welcome, and as possible, acted upon.</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I experience positive work relationships across the OIM organization.</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Morale in the Office of the Independent Monitor is generally high.</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. There is a high level of trust within and across the OIM organization.</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Public Safety Feedback

The Board provided the Sheriff, Chief of Police, and EDOS with the opportunity to share their feedback on the OIM’s performance in 2023. The Sheriff and Chief of Police responded and shared that in their interactions with the Monitor and her staff, the OIM was competent, professional, and responsive. They did not share any specific concerns about the OIM’s performance.
4.4 Board Assessment

Board members were asked to evaluate the Independent Monitor’s performance across ten key areas. The following entries reflect the consensus of the Board.

1. Communication with the COB:

Given the complexity, size, and scope of the issues the OIM oversees, the Independent Monitor did an excellent job of keeping the Board apprised of significant incidents, investigations, and disciplinary issues. The OIM promptly responded to Board requests for information and provided updates on continuing issues.

2. Monitoring of Investigations:

The OIM provided thorough and well executed oversight of misconduct investigations, providing recommendations for additional work when appropriate. The OIM regularly returns investigations to public safety investigators for additional work. Additionally, as highlighted in Table 1, the OIM’s workload increased significantly in 2023, which it continues to manage with success.

3. Monitoring of Discipline:

The OIM is willing to make disciplinary recommendations that differ from those of the DPD, DSD, or DOS. They do a commendable job of expressing and following up on those recommendations while maintaining professional relationships with their counterparts, but differences can remain. The EDOS makes the final disciplinary decisions. While the OIM is required to comply with the City’s deliberative process privilege as it relates to disciplinary recommendations, we encourage the OIM to track and publicly share aggregated data about the extent to which such recommendations are made.

4. Monitoring Critical Incidents:

It is our understanding that an OIM staff member is always on call to respond to critical incidents, and once notified, the office responds appropriately. In 2023, the OIM’s ability to monitor critical incidents was improved by DPD’s prompt provision of direct access to footage from those incidents.

5. Production of Reports:

The OIM published its annual and semi-annual reports as required. However, the Board feels that there is an opportunity for the OIM to increase public communication about its high-level concerns and experiences within the disciplinary systems. This could also include aggregate data about the extent to which the OIM returns investigations for additional work or provides different recommendations for discipline. The Board also understands that a great deal of the work of the OIM is covered by deliberative privilege and care must be taken in public communications.
6. **Production of Policy, Practice, and Training Recommendations:**

   In addition to recommendations in its published reports, the OIM makes policy, practice, and training recommendations directly to the DPD, DSD, and DOS. We encourage the OIM to track and publicly share additional data about the policy work they perform each year, to include any relevant outcomes. We understand that in 2023 the OIM began to put systems and plans in place for doing this and it will take a multi-year effort.

7. **Outreach to complaint process stakeholders:**

   There can never be too much community engagement and communication from OIM. As highlighted above in Table 2, the OIM significantly increased its outreach activities in 2023. The Board feels that these outreach activities must continue at a high level in order to enhance the visibility of the OIM and its work. The OIM should also consider beginning to include their perspective or position on the ultimate outcome of closed cases in closure letters the OIM sends.

8. **Oversee Mediation program:**

   As highlighted above in Table 1, mediations of complaints increased slightly from pandemic lows. While the OIM is unable to control the number of cases that proceed to mediation, the Board feels it is important that OIM commit to working with contracted mediators and other stakeholders to enhance the mediation program’s visibility and perceived legitimacy.

9. **Management of OIM:**

   As highlighted in Table 3 above, OIM staff gave very positive responses to a survey seeking their perceptions of the performance of the Office’s leadership and culture. OIM functioned as a team and was well managed under the leadership of the interim Independent Monitor, and effective management continued in 2023 under the direction of the new Independent Monitor. The Board is pleased that the OIM continues to function at a high level and offers its full support to the Independent Monitor as she works to enhance the visibility and role of the office.

10. **Overall:**

   The work of the OIM is challenging, comprehensive, and important for the City. The Board is grateful to OIM leadership and staff for engaging in the critical and courageous work of public safety oversight and reform.
5 Assessment of DOS Disciplinary Processes

As detailed near the beginning of this report, the disciplinary process for uniformed personnel in Denver is complex. By ordinance, the Board is mandated to report on its assessment of the disciplinary process.24 This section contains descriptions of the Board’s concerns related to the discipline processes, as well as progress made in relation to those concerns.

5.1 DPD

5.1.1 Police Use of Force Review Board

The DPD’s Use of Force Review Board is responsible for reviewing all officer uses of force that involve death, serious bodily injury, or officers discharging their firearm.25 The review board is composed of five voting members: two DPD Commanders (Major Crimes + Rotation), two Denver community members, and one member from another Colorado law enforcement agency. The DPD selects and trains the community member participants, and the Chief of Police selects the partnering law enforcement agency. The two community members currently on the review board have served on that board for many years.

The OIM attends all of the review board’s meetings and can typically provide comments or ask questions but does not have a defined role in the proceedings.

In last year’s annual report, the Board highlighted its concerns about review board’s lack of independence and transparency. In December 2023, Chief Thomas began a new process for selecting community members to serve on the review board. New review board members will be nominated by City Council members and then interviewed by the DPD and OIM before being selected and completing a variety of trainings.

The COB believes that this new selection process will allow the review board to better understand and incorporate the community’s expectations for internal review of police officer conduct involving use of force. The COB will report to the community on the progress and effectiveness of this new approach.

5.1.2 DPD Complaint Closure Letters

In last year’s Annual Report, the Board highlighted a discipline case in which a community member’s death was not properly investigated by the DPD. One of the community member’s family members filed a complaint with the DPD which resulted in sustained policy violations by an officer and a detective. At the conclusion of the investigation, the complainant was only notified about one of the sustained policy violations, revealing a process failure in the notification process.

Whenever the DPD closes a complaint—regardless of the case’s outcome—it writes a disposition letter to the complainant notifying them of the outcome. Unfortunately, the DPD’s disposition letters for cases that they decline prior to a formal investigation contain significantly more information than the letters they write when a complaint leads to a sustained policy violation. This leads to an information gap in cases that include reprimands and creates the opportunity for different letters to be sent at different times and with different amounts of information. In cases where a sustained policy violation leads to

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24 DRMC Section 2-384(a).
25 DPD Operations Manual Section 105.05.
discipline greater than a reprimand, complainants should also receive a copy of the formal Departmental Order of Discipline from the DOS, which goes into greater detail about the case findings.

The DPD’s disposition letters in cases with sustained policy violations are barebones, passively voiced form letters with no case-specific details beyond the case number. The most informative lines consist of: “it was determined there was a preponderance of evidence to show a violation of [DPD] policy had occurred. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken...” There is no departmental apology and no way for complainants to know if every part of their complaint was adequately addressed.

Additionally, it is our understanding that the DPD typically prepares these “sustained” closure letters at the same time that they send proposed discipline to the EDOS for review and a final decision. Should the EDOS not sustain the proposed disciplinary order, there is no clear process for a new closure letter to be drafted and sent to the complainant. The Board is aware of at least one case from 2023 in which this dynamic has led to an extensive and ongoing delay in communication with the complainant.

In last year’s Annual Report, the Board recommended that the DPD review its case closure letters to ensure that they are consistently informed about the outcome for each component of their complaint. In October 2023, the Board supplemented their previous recommendation with a letter requesting that all closure letter templates be updated to include the following four specific items:

1. A summary of the complainant’s allegations and the corresponding policies that were examined for each involved officer.
2. A summary of the actions taken by the IAB to investigate the complaint(s).
3. The finding for each potential policy violation examined and if any were sustained, the associated discipline and a departmental apology for falling short of their standards.
4. A note of appreciation for taking the time to inform the department of a potential issue.

Chief Thomas acknowledged the Board’s October letter and discussed potential changes during the Board’s December 15 meeting. No changes to the closure letters were made in 2023.

5.1.3 DPD Body Worn Camera Footage Sharing

In last year’s report, the Board highlighted concerns about the DPD’s inconsistent practices related to when they would provide the OIM with direct access to video footage from critical incidents. These concerns have been appropriately addressed in practice in 2023. However, the current approach relies on good will and collaboration, and the Board continues to desire an institutionalized and technology-driven approach to allow the OIM to directly access the vast majority of body worn camera footage.

In addition, the DPD has instituted a new practice of proactively sharing representative footage of critical incidents with members of the media ahead of follow up briefings, allowing the media to ask more informed questions about what happened and why, as well as include the video contents in media coverage immediately following the briefing.
5.2 DSD

5.2.1 DSD Body-Worn Camera Program
In accordance with SB20-217, the DSD began distributing body worn cameras to its uniformed personnel in 2021. It completed the roll-out of the cameras approximately two years later in the summer of 2023. Despite that very gradual process and the Sheriff’s public support for the program, the roll-out has not gone smoothly.

Complaints alleging violations of the body-worn camera policy by DSD deputies have abounded. Almost 39% of all potential DSD policy violations in the first half of 2023 were related to DSD deputies’ alleged failure to adhere to the BWC policy. In comparison, those 216 alleged violations equal approximately 97% and 71% of all alleged policy violations in the DSD from the first halves of 2021 and 2022, respectively. 26

On November 1, the DOS effectively granted disciplinary amnesty for all DSD deputies who had violated BWC policy prior to that date. The amnesty does not include any cases where the deputy may have intentionally failed to activate their camera or tampered with the footage.

Widespread use of body-worn cameras and easy access to relevant footage allows the community to have confidence not only in the likelihood that law enforcement will be able to hold its employees accountable should they violate policy, but that the evidence exists and can be obtained by community members.

5.2.2 DSD Overturning Discipline
In the Board’s August 25 meeting, Sheriff Diggins acknowledged that the DSD has, in multiple cases across many years, utilized an internal grievance process that exists in Career Service Rule 18 to reverse written reprimands for DSD deputies. This was done without the involvement of the OIM, PID, or EDOS and is a different process than the standard appeal options described at the beginning of this report (see p. 6).

Written reprimands are a formal disciplinary action and are issued by the Sheriff after a case goes through a clearly established process of investigation and review by the PID. That process is monitored by the OIM. In these cases, the Sheriff chose to proceed through an unreviewable and opaque internal process to reverse discipline.

Although there were likely fewer than a dozen of these reversals since 2019, the mere existence of reversals of this type lacks accountability, fairness, and transparency. It also significantly degrades our trust in DSD’s commitment to consistent and neutral disciplinary standards and independent oversight.

Sheriff Diggins has expressed a willingness to include the OIM in this internal appeal process moving forward.27

26 OIM 2023 Semi-Annual, p. 15.
27 The DSD’s Discipline Manual (Section 30.3) addressing this issue was revised in February, and now requires the Sheriff to notify the OIM upon receipt of this type of appeal, provide a written explanation for his decision, and allow the OIM to provide an independent recommendation prior to the decision being finalized.
5.3 DOS

5.3.1 AIU Complaint Triage Practices
In last year’s Annual Report, the Board highlighted concerns about the AIU’s practice of referring certain complaints back to the DSD for investigation rather than open an investigation themselves. In a December 2022 Board meeting, EDOS Saldate agreed that the triage process had problems, and on May 9, 2023, he issued a directive to the AIU with detailed instructions on how to handle complaint intake and initial processing. Among other things, the directive requires the AIU to assign an investigator to the Downtown Detention Center to be able to quickly follow up on inmate complaints, negating any need to refer cases back to the DSD.28 Since the spring of 2023, AIU has experienced several leadership transitions. The Board is hopeful that new and stable leadership will be found and prove able to address these quality control issues.

5.3.2 Administrative Timeliness
In a highly unusual circumstance (the first instance that the Board is aware of), a disciplinary case was closed without a formal finding in 2023. The case involved an allegation of misconduct that was closed simply because the office of the EDOS failed to “approve, modify or disapprove the written order” from the Chief of Police within the 15 days provided by City Charter § 9.4.14(B). The Board is very limited in what it can share about this case but found the circumstances of this case’s closure disturbing.

6 General Concerns

By Charter, the Citizen Oversight Board is responsible for “Address[ing] any other issues of concern to the community, members of the board, the monitor, the manager of safety, the chief of police, the sheriff, or the fire chief.”29 This section describes a variety of such concerns.

6.1 DSD Enforcement Authority

In the summer of 2023, Sheriff Diggins signed a new policy authorizing a “Bike Patrol Unit” within the DSD. That policy contained unclear language in it that may have allowed DSD deputies to perform police-related functions such as responding for calls to service and potentially engaging in Driving Under the Influence (DUI) enforcement in an undefined assigned area. Per existing rules, the DSD is currently prohibited from performing general patrol or investigative functions unless it receives a specific delegation of enforcement authority from the EDOS. The Board was concerned that a Bike Patrol Unit, given the policy language, had the potential to exceed the DSD’s limited enforcement authority.

When viewed in conjunction with a draft policy for the DSD’s Criminal Investigations Unit (CIU, formerly known as the Criminal Charges Filing Team), it appeared likely that the assigned jurisdiction would include not just the Denver Justice Center, but the City and County Building and Civic Center Park. This would significantly increase the possibility of jurisdictional conflicts with Denver Park Rangers, DPD, and Colorado State Patrol’s Executive Security Branch.

In an August meeting with the Board, Sheriff Diggins stated that the intention behind the Bike Patrol Unit policy was not to expand the authority of deputies, but to simply give them a new tool in performing their existing functions. He rescinded the policy shortly after it was issued and before any deputies had been assigned to the Bike Patrol Unit. No new policy relating to a Bike Patrol Unit has been implemented since then, and the bikes purchased for the unit remain unridden and stored in the Lindsay-Flanigan Courthouse.

In contrast to the Bike Patrol Unit, which briefly had a final policy but no assigned deputies, the Board also had concerns in 2023 about the DSD’s CIU, which had up to eight assigned staff, but no final policy. The unit was specifically designed as an expansion of the DSD’s authority and was intended to allow the DSD to have a mini-police force on staff to conduct criminal investigations and file charges without having to call the DPD to the jails. As such, it would clearly require a specific delegation of authority from the EDOS to implement. In the absence of that delegation, the unit was limited to participating in trainings and supporting the authorized enforcement duties of others. In the absence of training or supporting work, the deputies returned to their previous responsibilities.30

After an incident in October 2023 that remains under an administrative investigation, all deputies assigned to the CIU were re-assigned back to their normal posts.

Although the Bike Patrol Unit and the CIU are not currently active, the DSD has long desired to expand the scope of its authority and jurisdiction, and we anticipate this subject will return in 2024 and beyond. As Sheriff Diggins told the Board in August 2023 about the DSD’s ability to investigate and file criminal charges, “This is something that we’ve been looking forward to since the history of the Denver Sheriff

29 Denver Charter § 12.1.1(B)(iii).
Department. I mean, it’s been 120 years since we got to this point.” This corresponds with a finding from the comprehensive report on DSD reform issued in 2015, which called attention to “the perception among DSD deputies that they are not recognized as ‘real police’ by the public and the DPD.”

Relatedly, at a community forum in October 2023, Sheriff Diggins highlighted the possibility of expanding the roles and jurisdiction of DSD deputies to include the 16th Street Mall, the airport, and other City buildings. Figure 4 is a slide from the presentation he made during that community forum.

![Figure 4: DSD Expansion Plan Slide](image)

Based on our February 18, 2022 and August 25, 2023, meetings with the Sheriff, the Board understands that there are two reasons commonly provided for pursuing expanded DSD enforcement authority. The first is one of efficiency. By taking on certain enforcement duties, the DSD believes it can reduce the need for the DPD to take officers off the street in order to respond to incidents in the jails and increase the attention given to these incidents. As was written in a comprehensive 2015 report on the DSD, there has been a belief in the DSD that the DPD “does not respond appropriately, with DPD officers simply issuing citations instead of seeking felony charges when criminal allegations are reported against deputies.” According to the DPD, they responded to the jails an average of 26-27 times each month in 2021 and 2022.

The second reason is that by providing deputies with the opportunity for different and expanded law enforcement experiences, the DSD hopes to make joining and staying with the department more attractive for both current and future DSD staff. “These are all dreams, hopes that we have as a department, that I have as the Sheriff, about how do we attract folks to come to do this work,” Diggins

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31 COB Meeting with Sheriff Diggins, August 25, 2023, at 27:01.
34 COB Meeting with Chief Thomas, September 15, 2023. (see also: meeting minutes)
told the Board in August. “The generation that we're hiring now, they want to have a diverse career. And it also helps as you do this work for 30, 35 years to be able to have those various opportunities.”

The Board has concerns about the effectiveness, value, and legality of DSD expanding its law enforcement authority. First, while having a dedicated team of criminal investigators on staff could somewhat shorten the processing of certain cases, it is not clear to the Board that there is sufficient demand for these services to justify the extensive costs of standing up a CIU or Bike Patrol unit. Such costs would include Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certification, training, gaining access to the court’s filing systems, and more. As we witness in oversight of the DPD, policing is hard work to consistently get right, and creating a small, relatively inexperienced law-enforcement group seems ripe for mistakes and potential liability.

Second, the department is already seriously understaffed, and taking deputies away from their current duties risks increasing burnout and eroding morale for everyone else. Furthermore, the Board is also concerned about the DSD’s ability to retain deputies should they become part-time police officers. The plan, as understood by the Board, risks creating a career pipeline for deputies to move out of the DSD. If policing work is more attractive than corrections for those individuals, it will be difficult to retain them as part-time police when the DPD and neighboring jurisdictions are very actively recruiting full-time police. As a result, the program could be counterproductive in terms of staff retention.

Third, it’s not clear to the Board that any plan to provide DSD deputies with the authority to enforce state laws would be allowable under City Charter. Even expanding their authority to enforce city ordinance would likely face significant legal challenges, not to mention the logistical and operational challenges of coordinating with other law enforcement entities and integrating into the broader criminal justice and court systems. It could also make it harder for the community to trust the City’s law enforcement more generally if there are multiple enforcement entities with different polices, priorities, leadership, and disciplinary standards.

6.2 Correctional Health Care

The Board continues to have concerns about the relationship between the DSD and the Denver Health and Hospital Authority (Denver Health) and issues arising from Denver Health’s correctional health care.

In early 2022, Leroy Taylor died while in DSD custody after being denied care by Denver Health personnel. According to a lawsuit filed by Taylor’s family in September 2023, although DSD deputies took him to the medical ward several times in the days leading up to his death, Denver Health did not provide him with medical care.

DSD staff are not medical professionals, but their hands are not completely tied in these circumstances. Pursuant to paragraph 16 of protocols agreed upon in connection with a 2008 settlement with the family of Emily Rice, who died from untreated internal bleeding in 2006 while in custody in the Denver jail, deputy concerns about inadequate medical care can be escalated to the Division Chief level and result in calling 911 to transport an inmate to an area hospital.

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36 Emily’s Protocols.
The determination to transport any individual to an area hospital from the jails without specific instructions by medical staff is reserved to Sergeants and higher ranks. Accordingly, department orders shall provide that all corrections staff be trained that they must alert a supervisor if they believe from a lay person’s perspective that an inmate requires additional medical attention from the jail medical staff. If supervisors believe that an inmate requires additional medical attention, they are to take reasonable steps to resolve conflicts with medical concerns, including making direct calls to the on-call physician and/or utilizing 911 services to transport persons to area hospitals. If supervisory staff continue to believe that an inmate requires additional medical attention for a serious medical need, supervisory staff must alert a Division Chief.

An administrative investigation into potential policy violations did not find any such violations in connection with Mr. Taylor’s death.

Shortly after Taylor’s death, the Board was assured by public safety leaders that in addition to a criminal investigation by DPD and the aforementioned administrative investigation, Denver Health was conducting its own investigation into the conduct of its employees. In the Board’s 2022 annual report, we expressed our skepticism of the quality and thoroughness of Denver Health’s internal investigations. Those concerns were validated in early 2023 when EDOS Saldate confirmed that Denver Health had not created any written report of their “investigation” and would not be providing any report examining the incident to the City. Similarly, all complaints from inmates or community members about medical care are simply forwarded to Denver Health and then closed by public safety investigators. Denver Health does not generally provide any follow up information.

Our recommendations from last year’s annual report—that Denver Health be contractually required to document the steps it takes in response to complaints against their employees and provide those reports to the City for review—remain unaddressed in Denver Health’s contract for 2024.

The City’s 2023 contract with Denver Health provided for the creation of a DSD medical administrator position, which is responsible for evaluating Denver Health’s performance of its contractual duties in the jail context. That position was filled in October 2023, and Board members met with the new administrator on December 1. It remains to be seen if the administrator will make changes that are responsive to the recommendations related to correctional health care in the Board’s Annual Reports.

On a more positive note, the DSD hopes to transition from paper medical records to an electronic system by the end of 2024. A digital system should provide greater efficiencies for both Denver Health and the DSD, which we hope will also be reflected in better health care for those in custody. Additionally, electronic medical records will be easier to share with outside medical providers once an individual has been released from custody.

6.3 Continued DSD Understaffing

Not including contracted or on-call workers, the DSD is authorized to employ 875 full-time uniformed personnel and 254 full-time civilians (internally known as professional staff). It began the year with 570 uniformed employees and ended it with 589, an increase of 19 individuals (to 67.3% capacity). While modest, that gain represents a significant change in trajectory when compared to a net loss of 66 uniformed personnel in 2022. The DSD also improved its civilian staffing in 2023. It began the year with
177 civilian personnel and ended it with 197, an increase of 20 staff (to 77.5% capacity), following a net increase of just three employees in 2022.\(^{37}\)

Although the trajectory of staffing levels has significantly improved, the DSD remains critically understaffed. By policy, all deputies are required to work 24 hours of pre-scheduled mandatory overtime each month, but many are required to work significantly more than that in unscheduled mandatory overtime. Deputies continue to frequently work 14 and 16-hour shifts, which have significant negative impacts on both employees and those in their custody.

For employees, this can result in decreased physical and mental health, poor morale, and limit their capacity to de-escalate tense situations.\(^{38}\) Inmates may receive less time out of their cells, fewer showers, and fewer opportunities to participate in self-improvement options such as continuing education, job training, or recovery programs.

The Board continues to believe that Sheriff Diggins is taking the staffing challenge seriously. The change in trajectory this year is encouraging, but the DSD and the City as a whole must continue to pay close attention to this serious issue.

6.4 Support Team Assisted Response (STAR) Program

Denver’s STAR program is an alternative-response model in which a van with a paramedic and a mental health specialist is dispatched to certain 911 calls instead of DPD officers. DPD officers can also request that STAR assume responsibility for calls that they respond to initially. The STAR program is managed by the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE), which works closely with Denver 911 to implement the program. DDPHE contracts with WellPower (formerly called the Mental Health Center of Denver) to provide the necessary mental health professionals and with Denver Health to provide paramedics.

In the Board’s previous annual report, we highlighted concerns about the tense relationship between DDPHE and the STAR Community Advisory Committee (SCAC), which culminated in a breakdown in communications and an indefinite pause on the committee’s meetings in the fall of 2022. In March of 2023, DDPHE restarted the community committee’s monthly meetings. In the following months, they hired a mediator to help address the relational tensions, opened applications for vacant committee seats, and began the process of formalizing certain parts of the committee’s operations. Progress on these issues has been slow.

The committee has also highlighted operational concerns about the STAR program, specifically highlighting instances in which police officers are responding alongside or instead of STAR to calls where STAR has been specifically requested. According to data provided by Denver 911, STAR and DPD showed up to the same service call on average about twice a day in the first three quarters of 2023, over 10% of the 19 calls STAR responds to on an average day.\(^{39}\) This co-response of both DPD and STAR can happen for both appropriate and inappropriate reasons, making it difficult to know how concerned we should

\(^{37}\) Starting and ending staff numbers provided by the DSD are accurate as of 12/23/22 and 12/6/23, respectively.


\(^{39}\) STAR response data per Computer-Aided Dispatch Dashboard, slide 5; Co-response data per email from 911 Director Andrew Dameron to Board Administrator Daniel Van Schooten on November 7, 2023.
be without more details. For example, after arriving at a call for service, DPD officers may decide to hand the call over to STAR instead or STAR might call for DPD support if the scene is not safe for them to work.

However, there are also inappropriate reasons why this co-response might occur, most of which have to do with the dispatching process. As 911 Director Andrew Dameron acknowledged in an October Board meeting, some dispatchers have had trouble making the mental adjustment to dispatching a non-public safety response to calls for service. Some dispatchers, for a variety of reasons, have intentionally dispatched both police and STAR to the same calls. This issue was exacerbated by extensive turnover in the 911 Call Center over the course of 2021 and 2022, which made it very difficult to schedule trainings on how to properly dispatch STAR-eligible calls. A recent influx of new call takers and dispatchers in late 2023 has created new capacity for in-service training, which will hopefully address this issue.

Because STAR does not yet have its own dispatching channel equivalent to Police, Fire, or Emergency Medical Services (EMS), it is routed as a distinct subset in the police system. This has enabled DPD officers not only to see calls dispatched to STAR but also unilaterally claim them, overriding the initial dispatching decision. While this does not happen frequently, it can undermine the caller’s trust in the STAR program. This issue could be resolved by the 911 Call Center creating a standalone dispatching channel for the STAR program, a capability they began working towards in 2023.

Two factors indicate that there is substantial unmet demand for the program. Alongside these concerns, it is worth highlighting that in 2023, STAR was able to respond to approximately 47% of the calls it was eligible to respond to. It is also likely that the eligibility criteria for STAR could be expanded.

The STAR program is one of the most prominent alternative response models in the nation, and a 2022 study found that when STAR responds to a 911 call, it costs approximately one-quarter of a police response and may prevent additional low-level crimes from occurring. As such, we are disappointed to see that STAR’s budget for 2024 will only be $114,000 larger than it was in 2023.

Almost all these funds go directly to contracted service providers, as the City has dedicated only two full-time positions to the STAR program, one within DDPHE and the other inside 911 under the DOS. Sadly, for most of the last two months of 2023, the STAR program had diminished support from the City as the

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40 See: COB Meeting with Director Dameron, October 20, 2023 (meeting minutes); The Policing Project at New York University School of Law, “Assessing Risk Dispatch, Call Taking, and Decision Making,” YouTube, June 20, 2023, with relevant comments by Andrew Dameron starting at 41:45; and Jessica Gillooly et al., “Transforming Denver’s First Response Model: Lessons in Multi-level Systems Change,” Policing Project at New York University School of Law, December 2023, p. 28 – 32 (Note: this report is based on interviews with Denver 911 dispatchers from December 2021).

41 See: COB Meeting with Director Dameron, October 20, 2023 (meeting minutes); A personal story shared during STAR Community Advisory Committee meeting, July 26, 2023, starting at 0:56:50.

42 Per email from 911 Director Andrew Dameron to Daniel Van Schooten on January 12, 2024.

911 position was vacated and the individual within DDPHE was re-assigned to perform outreach for the Mayor’s House1000 initiative.\footnote{The individual in the DDPHE position completed their re-assignment on January 31, 2024. During the re-assignment, a DDPHE supervisor assumed additional duties to help support the program. As of March 1, 2024, the 911 position remained vacant.}

6.5 Settlement Compliance and Oversight

In addition to the financial costs of lawsuits against the City highlighted in Section 3 of this report, such settlements can also include non-monetary terms such as changes to policies or practices, investigations, studies, reports, or other deliverables. Typically, these conditions are related to the perceived root causes of the misconduct being alleged, and their inclusion in a legal settlement document can catalyze major structural changes.

Unfortunately, the existence of such non-monetary terms is not normally disclosed to the public when settlements are approved by City Council. This limits the available data to very high-profile cases that are discussed publicly with the media. In reviewing those few cases, the Board found examples where the City appears to have failed to comply with the letter or the spirit of such a term.

Furthermore, the Board is concerned about the underlying causes of that apparent noncompliance, which likely include a lack of centralized recordkeeping and clear continuity of responsibilities when staff turn over.

We believe that if the City were to proactively publish both the relevant terms and completed deliverables for public safety settlements, it would meaningfully contribute to both better operational outcomes and a greater degree of community trust in public safety institutions. To ensure that the community can trust the information that is shared, it should also be subject to some form of verification from an entity outside the DOS or CAO.

To that end, the Board sent an open letter to City leaders in November 2023 requesting a high-level stakeholder meeting to discuss how to best move forward and implement a practical solution. Following the publication of the Board’s letter, all relevant City leaders expressed a willingness to meet with the Board. In addition, Councilwoman Sarah Parady, as chair of City Council’s Safety, Housing, Education, and Homelessness Committee, has also offered her assistance in collecting information and connecting with other community stakeholders.

The Board is hopeful that progress can be made on this issue in 2024.
7  Recommendations
Per City Charter, the Board is tasked with making “policy-level recommendations regarding discipline, use of force, and other policies; rules; hiring; training; community relations; and the complaint process.”

7.1  Follow-up on Prior Recommendations
As much of the Board’s work relates to system-level changes that can take years to fully address, comments on recommendations from prior reports are included below.

7.1.1  2021 Recommendations
2021.1: The Board recommended that the DOS promptly implement and then regularly review operational policies for their Public Integrity Division.
   - These policies were implemented in June 2022 and updated via EDOS directive in May 2023.

2021.2 (see also 2022.6): The Board recommended that the DOS provide the OIM with direct access to the vast majority of footage available on evidence.com.
   - Using evidence.com, the DSD has provided additional access to the OIM for Use of Force incidents, and the DPD has promptly provided direct access footage of critical incidents with the OIM.
   - The OIM still does not have the degree of access that the Board recommended.

2021.3: The Board recommended that official working groups be created for each public safety agency to identify ways to increase morale, quality of life, and retention.
   - Public Safety agencies have either created groups for this purpose or utilized existing groups to address issues of morale and retention. Due to these actions and a variety of other factors, staffing and retention levels have improved across the DOS.

2021.4: The Board recommended that the DPD prioritize resolving the any misconduct cases that were still open related to the 2020 George Floyd Protests and then publish summary data about their dispositions.
   - The DPD has not published any aggregated or summary information about the outcomes of complaints related to the George Floyd protests. All such internal investigations have been completed, with the exception of a small number of new cases that have been opened as a result of recently filed lawsuits.
   - The primary form of accountability for DPD’s conduct during the 2020 George Floyd Protests has occurred at the institutional level through lawsuits against the City and DPD as a whole, rather than administrative investigations into the conduct of individual officers.

2021.5-7 (see also 2022.4): The Board recommended that DSD make several changes to its contract with Denver Health, to require additional transparency, additional coordination with an inmate’s outside healthcare provider prior to changing an inmate’s pre-existing treatment plan, and consideration of the
impact of destabilization of an inmate’s medical condition that can arise from Denver Health’s treatment plans.

- No changes have been made to the City’s contract with Denver Health that mandate modifications to Denver Health’s policies or practices in the jails. Beginning in the 2023 contract, the contract allows for the addition of a DSD administrator position which may contribute to some of these goals. That position was filled in October 2023, and it remains to be seen if the administrator will make changes that are responsive to these recommendations or the related recommendations from the Board’s 2022 Annual Report.

7.1.2 2022 Recommendations

2022.1a-c: The Board recommended that the DPD review the structure of its Use of Force Review Board and especially the process by which community members are selected to serve on the Review Board.

- In September 2023, DPD Chief Ron Thomas told the Board that he was planning to ask City Council members to nominate engaged community members to serve on the Review Board. A pool of nominees would be interviewed by the DPD and OIM, and then participate in training on DPD policies prior to joining a rotation for serving on the Review Board.

2022.2: The Board recommended that the DPD better publicize its existing community engagement efforts.

- In the Fall, the DPD created an online dashboard featuring selected community engagement events. Selection criteria are unclear and appear to be primarily district-level. Events involving departmental leadership, such as Community Homicide Reviews, Community Crime Prevention Coalition meetings, and community forums do not appear to be included in the calendar.

2022.3a-c: The Board recommended that DSD continue to make every effort to increase recruitment and retention rates among both uniformed and civilian personnel.

- Between January and December 2023, the DSD began to reverse the trend of declining staff by adding on net 19 sworn deputies and 20 professional staff.
- The DSD has also created a public dashboard that allows the public to see up-to-date data on the department’s staffing levels.

2022.4a-c: The Board recommended that DSD exercise increased oversight over Denver Health and the process by which complaints related to medical staff and services are handled.

- No changes have been made to the City’s contract with Denver Health that mandate modifications to Denver Health’s policies or practices in the jails. Beginning in the 2023 contract, the contract allows for the addition of a DSD administrator position which may contribute to some of these goals. That position was filled in October 2023, and it remains to be seen if the

45 DPD Community Engagement Web Page
The administrator will make changes that are responsive to these recommendations or the related recommendations from the Board’s 2021 Annual Report (see 2021.5-7).

2022.5a-b: The Board recommended that the DOS and DPD acquire a public-facing portal for their complaint and investigation databases, and also update closure letters for community members who file complaints against the DPD or DSD.

- In September, EDOS Saldate informed the Board that due to funding constraints, the DOS had not moved forward with the acquisition of the public-facing portal for the IAPro\textsuperscript{46} complaint and discipline databases.
- In November, the Board sent a follow up letter to Chief Thomas with specific recommendations for changes to closure letters. In December, the Board spoke with Chief Thomas about potential changes. No changes to closure letters were finalized in 2023.

2022.6a-c: The Board recommended that the OIM be given increased access to evidence.com, that DPD more quickly share footage of critical incidents with OIM, that the DPD review its policies and practices around public critical incident briefings.

- The OIM still does not have unfettered or broad access to either the DPD or DSD versions of the evidence.com database for body-worn camera footage. The OIM’s access is limited to the specific files and folders in evidence.com that have been shared by DPD or DSD.
- Throughout 2023, the DSD has provided the OIM with direct access to footage in evidence.com from use of force incidents. This is not limited to use of force incidents in which a policy violation has already been alleged. This practice has significantly increased the OIM’s visibility into these incidents.
- Throughout 2023, the DPD has also promptly provided the OIM with specific access to footage in evidence.com from critical incidents.\textsuperscript{47} This represents an improvement over prior practice, which was marked by inconsistent timing—sometimes sharing access to the footage promptly and sometimes waiting for months until the criminal investigation was complete. (The OIM has always been able to view at least some body-worn camera footage by physically sitting beside Internal Affairs investigators during the initial response to a critical incident.)
- The DPD has modified its practices around public critical incident briefings. The DPD now regularly proactively releases representative bodycam footage to members of the media prior to the media briefing. This enables media representatives to ask informed questions during the briefings, which are typically between 1 – 2 weeks after the critical incident—well ahead of the timeline required by Colorado law. We appreciate the steps the DPD has taken to modify its critical incident briefings and believe they are and will continue to help build the department’s credibility with the community.

\footnote{IAPro is the database system that the DPD and DOS use to track and manage complaints, investigations, and discipline for uniformed personnel.}

\footnote{A "Critical Incident" is defined as any time an officer or deputy discharges their firearm and any time an individual either in the custody of or in contact with uniformed personnel dies or receives life-threatening injuries. See: DPD Operations Manual \textit{Section 301.13}.}
The DPD currently uses unlisted YouTube links for the release of body camera footage. This practice makes it difficult for interested members of the public to find and personally review the footage unless it is reproduced by the media.

2022.7a-e: The Board recommended that various City agencies work to decrease the inmate population in the City’s jails.

- Direct deflections of arrest from the DPD to the AID Center have not been as high as hoped for, and the success of indirect referrals have not been accurately tracked.
- The Crime Prevention and Control Commission (CPCC) awarded several new contracts in 2023, after a significant portion of their funding was freed up by City agencies taking financial ownership of successful CPCC programs.
- The AID Center hosted two warrant clearing events that assisted almost 150 individuals with local warrants.

7.2 2023 Recommendations:
Based on the Board’s assessments and concerns as detailed in this and prior Annual Reports, we believe that implementing the following recommendations would improve both public safety generally and the community’s relationship with public safety institutions specifically.

DPD:

1. The DPD should work expeditiously to complete the selection and training process for new community members on their Use of Force Review Board.
2. The DPD should implement the Board’s suggested changes for all complaint disposition letters.
3. In the spirit of working towards the OIM’s ability to directly access the vast majority of body-worn camera footage (see: Recommendations 2022.6a and 2021.2), the DPD should follow the DSD’s lead in proactively providing the OIM with direct access to footage of all use of force incidents via evidence.com.

DSD:

4. The DSD should continue to make every effort to improve both financial and non-financial retention initiatives.
5. In the absence of changes to the City’s contract with Denver Health that would mandate modifications to Denver Health’s policies or practices in the jails, the DSD should improve transparency around the performance of Denver Health’s services in the jails, to include the data below in a public facing dashboard and have regular meetings with Denver Health about interventions necessary to address identified trends:
   a. Actual vs. authorized staffing levels for medical personnel.
   b. The timeliness of prescription verification and provision of prescribed medication.
   c. The timeliness of optometrist screenings when requested and the provision of eyeglasses when appropriate.
d. Number of requests for medical care received and timeliness of responses.

e. Number of medical complaints received, the associated outcomes, and the timeliness of those outcomes.

6. The DSD should implement the Board’s prior recommendations (2022.4a-c) related to increased oversight of how Denver Health handles inmate complaints about medical care.

7. The DSD should implement the Board’s prior recommendations (2021.5-7) related to improvements in Denver Health’s treatment care process, especially for inmates with pre-existing prescriptions and treatment plans from outside providers.

DOS:

8. The DOS should implement the Board’s prior recommendation (2022.5a) to acquire and implement a public-facing module for the IAPro database, allowing members of the public to easily submit and check the status of their complaints.

9. The DOS should work to create a publicly accessible database of disciplinary orders for uniformed personnel.

10. The DOS should continue to explore and prioritize additional options for expanding the City’s halfway house capacity, with the goal of reaching 550 beds in 2025.

11. The City should work to maximize the impact of the AID Center, by:
   a. Prioritizing the expansion of operating hours into the evening.
   b. Addressing any barriers to DPD’s ability to deflect potential arrests to the AID Center.
   c. Continuing to partner with the judiciary and the Denver District Attorney to host warrant clearing events, outreach court, and similar programming.

12. The City should better amplify and support the work of the Crime Prevention and Control Commission and ensure that it remains dynamic and has the necessary funding to incubate new and innovative programs.

Multiple/Other Departments:

13. The DDPHE should create a clear strategic roadmap for the growth of the STAR program to include the funding, time, and staff capacity necessary to reach various milestones such as being able to respond to at least 90% of STAR-eligible calls or providing 24/7 service. The roadmap should also explore potential areas of growth for the program, such as expanding the list of eligible call types, inter-departmental partnerships, and cross-jurisdictional partnerships.
   a. Denver 911 should share a clear timeline and roadmap for the creation of a separate 911 dispatching channel for STAR, including the provision of Mobile Data Terminals for the STAR vans.
   b. Mayor Johnston and City Council should work together to fund an expansion of the STAR program’s budget in 2025.

14. Per the Board’s November 2024 letter to City leaders, the City should create an ongoing, transparent process for demonstrating to the public their compliance with any policy or practice related to settlement terms involving law enforcement conduct.
## Appendix A: COB Strategic Plan Overview

### Strategic Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adequate Funding and Operational Resources</th>
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<th>Unfettered Access to Records and Facilities; Public Reporting and Transparency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hire and supervise new monitor</td>
<td>• Engage and catalyze community to raise visibility of</td>
<td>• Issue more data analysis, reports, and recommendations than in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increase monitor and staff salaries, staffing, and bandwidth for effective oversight</td>
<td>Citizen Oversight Board and Office of the Independent Monitor, prioritizing strong, open relationships and working together to reform the oversight system</td>
<td>previous years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make board membership more accessible to community members</td>
<td>• Publish more resources for the public</td>
<td>• Develop an approach to enable the OIM to drop-in on public safety departments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•Amend board bylaws</td>
<td>• Prepare for new mayor and council members in 2023</td>
<td>• Increase independence and transparency of use of force review boards at DPD</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Clarify roles and standardize training for board members</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Enhance transparency of process governing misconduct and policy complaints</td>
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<td>• Enhance oversight and transparency of Denver Health’s performance in providing medical care to incarcerated persons</td>
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### Objectives

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<td>• Prepare community engagement plan with calendar of events</td>
<td>• Pursue outstanding data requests to agencies</td>
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<td>• Write performance plan for monitor position</td>
<td>• Participate in community-hosted events</td>
<td>• Develop strategy, templates, and checklists for reports and public statements</td>
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<td>• Assist Monitor in setting strategic direction of OIM</td>
<td>• Publish and update web page with history of the Citizen Oversight Board and Office of the Independent Monitor</td>
<td>• Develop research priorities and partnerships</td>
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<td>Participation at events</td>
<td>Reporting</td>
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<td>Public awareness</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
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Appendix B: Board Membership

Julia Richman, Chair, currently serves as the Senior Vice Chancellor for Operations and Strategy Implementation, where she aligns DU’s leadership model with proven best practices to support the institution’s strategic vision. Julia has experience overseeing large institutions as they optimize operations excellence. She was named Outstanding Woman in Business by the Denver Business Journal in 2022, was a Colorado Governors fellow and graduate of Leadership Denver. Previously, Julia served as Deputy Executive Director of the Colorado Governor’s Office of Information Technology, Chief Innovation and Technology Officer for the City of Boulder and a Senior Manager with Deloitte Consulting. Richman was born and raised in Colorado’s metro area. She also sits on the boards for the Colfax Marathon and her Registered Neighborhood Organization (RNO). She received her MPP from the University of Chicago and AB from Dartmouth College.

Nick Webber, Vice Chair, is a supervising attorney at the Denver Trial Office of the Colorado State Public Defender, where he has worked since 2014. As a Deputy Public Defender, Nicholas works to protect the constitutional rights, liberties and dignity of indigent people accused of committing crimes. Nicholas has worked on all types of cases in his tenure at the public defender’s office, from misdemeanor traffic offenses to homicides and violent crimes. Nicholas is a Denver native, but left Colorado to obtain his bachelor’s degree from Boston University. After college, he worked with low-income families at a Jesuit school in Ecuador before earning his law degree from Santa Clara University. Prior to becoming a public defender, Nicholas worked at the Watsonville Law Center Legal Aid Clinic in California, as an Equal Justice Works Fellow advocating for migrant worker rights. He also interned with the Santa Cruz California Public Defender’s Office and served as a board member for the Pajaro Valley Women’s Shelter.

Karen Collier retired from public service in 2009, having worked in the Denver District Court as a court stenographer for 32 years. Since then, she has worked as an Alpine Ski Instructor in Winter Park and Granby, instructing differently-abled and abled-bodied youth and adults in Alpine skiing and as a tennis instructor with Denver Citywide Sports. In addition to the appointment to the Citizens Oversight Board, she sits on the Board of The Center for Trauma and Resilience and is a co-chair of Park Hill Congregational UCC’s partnership with the Women’s Homelessness Initiative, a program of the Capital Hill United Ministries, providing daily shelter to women who are homeless in Colorado.
Larry Martinez is a proud native-born Coloradan, raised in the inner city of Denver. He has been an active community member all his life. As a youth Larry performed anti-drug theater with the West Side Drug-Free Youth Team and worked with several community groups on cultural awareness and professional development. Larry has worked with Denver Inner City Parish (a secular human services organization, known as DICP) for 20 years. During that time, he directed youth out-of-school time programs, food pantries, senior-citizens’ programs, community dinners, gift distributions, and sober living facilities. Larry is currently Executive Director of DICP and a former director of DICP at College View, a Denver Parks and Rec center operated by DICP for 9 years. Larry also serves on the board of NEWSED CDC. He is married and a proud father of four wonderful children.

David Martinez is a first-generation college graduate. He attended Colorado State University where he majored in Political Science. He is a proud Chicano organizer who grew up in the Westside of Denver. David has participated in, and has been critical of, our legal and political institutions in meeting the material and spiritual needs of communities. Currently, David is a research and program manager at Ednium: The Alumni Collective. Ednium's mission is to mobilize public school alumni as a powerful force to change the way cities educate and reinvest in its homegrown talent. During his organizing work, David has helped organize brown and black folks who maneuver our differing institutions in their path for liberation in genuine manners. He helped organize and facilitate the first Colorado Latino Political forum for U.S Congressional District 8. He also worked with the UCLA Latino Public Policy Institute to create a Latino lens for Proposition FF (Healthy School Meals For All).

Alfredo Reyes is the proud son of Mexican immigrants and a proud Denverite born-and-raised on the Westside. Alfredo is currently the Executive Director of the Latino Cultural Arts Center (LCAC), a project he helped conceptualize that integrates social impact with economic empowerment to the benefit of artists, educators, youth, and families. He also presently serves as the Co-Chair of the Commission of Cultural Affairs at Denver Arts and Venues. His expertise spans fundraising, pedagogy, politics, real estate activation, youth development and community-building, among others. He is a graduate of Denver Public Schools and the recipient of the prestigious Gates Millennium Scholarship, which funded 10 years of undergraduate and graduate studies. Alfredo earned a B.A. from The Colorado College in Political Science and Spanish. He received a professional certificate in Mediation at the University of Denver before achieving an M.A. in Educational Foundations, Policy and Practice from CU Boulder, School of Education, and then spending three years in a doctoral program at UC Santa Cruz in Education Research. With his free time, Alfredo loves to ride his Bianchi road bike, travel (to over 15 countries so far!), cook, create art, and spend time with his loved ones.
Stefan Stein is the Chief Executive Officer of Sherman & Howard, Denver’s oldest law firm. He represents clients in complex litigation, internal investigations, and government investigations and enforcement matters. Stefan previously served as Deputy General Counsel and Chief Ethics & Compliance Officer of Qwest Communications. He also served as a federal prosecutor in Los Angeles for seven years where he was the Deputy Chief of the Public Corruption & Government Fraud unit. Stefan has been actively involved in community service throughout his legal career. Stefan formerly served as a Board member and Vice Chair of the Colorado Nonprofit Development Center which is a fiscal sponsor for over 60 charitable organizations in Colorado. In addition, Stefan previously served as a Board member and Chair of the Governance Committee of the Jewish Community Center of Denver. He was also a longtime Board member as well as the Interim CEO of Urban Peak, which provides a convergence of services to homeless youth and youth at risk of becoming homeless. Stefan holds a Bachelor’s degree in Economics from Stanford University and a law degree from the University of Michigan.

Tymesha Watkins is a native of Denver and an accredited software engineer and activist. She is passionate about working with our youth and providing opportunities for them to explore STEM fields. She has served as the Engineer in the Classroom Lead. She is an advocate for racial equality and developing platforms that normalize diverse and inclusive environments. With that focus in mind, she led a strategic planning group to develop and maintain diversity-centric hiring pipelines at her previous organization. She is a current commissioner on Denver African American Commission. She holds a Master of Science Cyber Technologies from University of Maryland University College and a Bachelor of Science in Aviation Management Technologies from Metropolitan State University of Denver.
Staff

Daniel Van Schooten joined the Board as its administrator in September 2021. In that capacity, he broadly supports the Board as it interfaces with the city and community. He manages administration, logistics, and finances on the Board’s behalf, as well as coordinating the training and onboarding of new members. Previously, he worked for the Project On Government Oversight, a nonpartisan, nonprofit federal government watchdog group. His responsibilities there included investigating whistleblower claims of systemic problems within the federal government and coordinating the organization’s oversight training program for congressional staff. He holds Bachelor’s degrees in Economics and International Relations from Wheaton College.

Former Board Members
The Board extends its gratitude to Ana Thallas and Terrance Carroll, who have moved on from their service on the Board. They made significant and sacrificial investments of their personal time and energy in order to further the mission and effectiveness of the Board. We thank them for their service to our community.
Appendix C: Contact Information

The Board looks forward to working with both the community and the Department of Public Safety over the next year. Members of the public are always welcome to join the Board’s twice-monthly meetings and various special events or provide their thoughts to the Board through one of the options below. The Board’s 2024 meeting schedule is available on our website, as are copies of recent reports, meeting minutes, and meeting recordings. Older records are available upon request.

The Board regularly shares updates via the following channels:

- Website: [www.denvergov.org/COB](http://www.denvergov.org/COB)
- Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/DenverCOB/](https://www.facebook.com/DenverCOB/)
- Twitter: [https://twitter.com/denver_cob](https://twitter.com/denver_cob)
- YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/@Denver_COB](https://www.youtube.com/@Denver_COB)
- Email List: [https://eepurl.com/dnUb9D](https://eepurl.com/dnUb9D)
- Linktree: [https://linktr.ee/DenverCOB](https://linktr.ee/DenverCOB)

You can contact the Board in any of the following ways:

- Email: [COB@DenverGov.org](mailto:COB@DenverGov.org)
- Leave a voicemail at: (720) 913-3150
- Social Media (listed above)
- Mailing Address:
  Citizen Oversight Board
  Denver Post Building
  101 W. Colfax Ave., Suite 100
  Denver, CO 80202