



## OPA Annual Report

Last week, OPA released its [2019 Annual Report](#). The report includes analysis on complaints received, investigations, findings, and additional 2019 data. It also discusses OPA's other functions, including community engagement and program development. Below are a few sections of the report in which you may be interested. If you have questions about the data, please feel free to ask. OPA appreciates the continued collaboration from all SPD employees on police accountability.

### Employees Receiving Complaints (page 9)

A total of 1,088 employees were named in OPA complaints in 2019. This number represents non-unique employees, with 256 employees receiving more than one complaint. Six-hundred and sixty unique employees received at least one complaint. Of these, 563 (85%) were sworn employees and 97 were civilian personnel. The gender breakdown was 80% male and 20% female. Forty percent of all sworn employees and 30% of all SPD employees received at least one complaint in 2019. More than two-thirds of the 660 employees who received one or more complaints in 2019 held the rank of police officer in a non-detective assignment.

### Allegations (page 11-12)

OPA recorded 1,191 total allegations against SPD employees in 2019, a 52% decrease over 2018. Complaints of excessive force—previously the most common allegation, making up 18% of all allegations in 2018—decreased to 11% of all allegations received in 2019. Instead, Professionalism became the most common allegation, comprising 20% of all allegations received in 2019. The year-to-year change is partially attributed to the Unsubstantiated Misconduct Screening Program. Nearly eight of every 10 incidents screened through the program in 2019 involved excessive force complaints that were conclusively disproved by body-worn and in-car video.

Another reason for the decrease was a conscious effort by OPA to identify the overarching policy or procedure alleged to have been violated, rather than include each subsection within that policy as a separate allegation. This resulted in fewer allegations, particularly duplicative ones, being added.

In addition, collective bargaining agreements no longer require that each policy subsection be identified in order for the underlying behavior implicating that policy to be investigated. OPA is now only required to provide notice of the policy title and section, which also contributes to the reduction by eliminating the need to include every relevant policy subsection.

## **Number & Types of Complaints Classified (page 13)**

OPA classified 36% of complaints for Investigation in 2019, down from 44% in 2018. The percent of complaints sent back to SPD supervisors as Supervisor Actions increased slightly from 17% in 2018 to 19% in 2019. An additional 44% percent of complaints were closed as Contact Logs, a minor increase over the 38% of complaints that were classified as Contact Logs in 2018. Of the 13 cases handled via one of OPA's alternative dispute resolution types, seven went through Mediation and six were resolved through Rapid Adjudication.

## **Expedited Investigations (page 15)**

Over half (56%) of complaints classified for Investigation were handled as Expedited Investigations. An Expedited Investigation is a sub-classification of an OPA Investigation where the OPA Director issues findings based on the preliminary 30-day investigation. In all 185 Expedited Investigations conducted in 2019, OPA based its findings on the preliminary investigation and did not interview the named employee(s). OPA expedites investigations when an objective review of the evidence, typically in-car and body-worn video, is sufficient to reach findings without further investigation or conducting interviews.

Per collective bargaining agreements, if OPA does not interview a named employee, allegations against that individual cannot be sustained. For this reason, Expedited Investigations are often used to resolve allegations OPA is required to investigate—such as force, bias, and violations of law—while attempting to minimize impact on named employees and preserving the resources of OPA and SPD.

The legal and policy analysis and opinions herein are OPA's own and do not state the positions of the Chief of Police or the Department. SPD employees should continue to seek the formal advice of SPD Legal, Precinct Liaisons, and the City Attorney's Office when legal questions arise in the field.

If you have questions, feedback, content requests, or to add/remove your name from this distribution list, please contact Anne Bettesworth, OPA Deputy Director of Public Affairs, at [anne.bettesworth@seattle.gov](mailto:anne.bettesworth@seattle.gov).