



Seattle Office of
Police Accountability



"Police & Community Working
Together for a Better Seattle"
By E.Fernandez., Age 17

2024 Annual Report

Office of Police Accountability

Interim Director, Bonnie Glenn | June 2025

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Letter from the Interim Director

Greetings,

In December of 2024, I was honored to be appointed as Interim Director of Seattle's Office of Police Accountability (OPA). I served as OPA Deputy Director in 2024, and am delighted to present our 2024 Annual Report. OPA is committed to our mission of conducting thorough, objective, and timely investigations, recommending improvements to policies and training, and engaging in collaborative initiatives that promote systemic advancements at the Seattle Police Department.



In 2024, OPA was chosen by the National Association for Civilian Oversight (NACOLE) for the Achievement in Oversight Award. NACOLE recognized OPA's prioritization of community engagement and transparency in areas to include – the Complainant Impact Statement Initiative, comprehensive community-focused surveys, and doubled community outreach efforts. Special acknowledgment goes to OPA staff members Geneva Taylor, Troy Chen, Amanda DeFisher, and Jessica Schreindl. These staff members, along with the entire OPA team, worked hard and share in this special recognition.

From left to right: NOBLE President Rodney Bryant and Ret. Atlanta Police Chief, OPA Interim Director, Bonnie Glenn, and NACOLE President, Anthony Finnell.

OPA continues to make significant strides in aligning our performance with the requirements outlined in the Accountability Ordinance. A few notable highlights include:

- OPA convened a meeting with the Office of Independent Investigations (OII), accountability partners, SPD and others to learn more about OII and their important work.
- Continued expansion of the Complainant Navigator role to follow up with Complainants after classification of their complaint.
- The development of a mediation video began to assist with increasing public awareness of this opportunity for qualifying minor misconduct.
- In December of 2024, OPA moved its office to the Seattle Municipal Tower (SMT). OPA is now in the same building as our accountability partners and is easier to find and access.
- OIG found that OPA conducted thorough, objective, and timely investigations in over 95% of cases OIG certified in 2024, compared to 92% in 2023.

OPA continues to look at ways to evaluate our processes, learn and improve, and seek out ways to collaborate with accountability partners, the community, and SPD in this important work.

Bonnie J. Glenn, J.D. 
Interim Director | Seattle Office of Police Accountability

Overview

Data for 2024 report was reviewed from OPA's records management database: IAPro. The data for this report is current as of the date it was reviewed: March 30, 2025. Since OPA uses live databases, the presented allegation, finding, and case disposition numbers are subject to change. Likewise, historical data may vary slightly from figures presented in previous OPA reports due to changes in processes and reporting.

2024 Facts-at-a-Glance

- 3,496 complaint contacts were received.
- 466 cases were opened.
- 52% of complaints went to a full investigation.
- 70% of investigations were initiated by community members.
- Force allegations went down 16.5% (121) compared to 2023 (145).
- 115 hours (6,883 minutes) of Named and Witness Employee interviews were transcribed.



About OPA

The Office of Police Accountability (OPA) processes allegations of misconduct against both police officers and civilian employees of the Seattle Police Department (SPD). OPA works independently from SPD, which means it has its own office outside of SPD facilities. It is also civilian-led by a director who does not report to the Chief of Police. OPA remains administratively connected to ensure fast and complete access to SPD data, evidence, and personnel. This structure helps OPA handle complaints and to access SPD data quickly to ensure investigations are objective, thorough, and timely.

Who We Are

OPA's team is made up of thirty-one staff members, including twenty-two civilian employees and nine SPD sergeants. The director, deputy director, assistant directors, general counsel, and supervisors must be civilians.¹ In 2024, OPA's hybrid investigations team included nine SPD sergeants and two civilian investigators. Led by two civilian investigator supervisors and a civilian assistant director, this structure brings different perspectives, and helps to build trust in OPA's objectiveness and fairness. OPA also has a community engagement team, including a complaint navigator, who helps Seattle residents understand the complaint process, and supports them throughout. The community engagement manager and restorative justice specialist handles mediations and restorative justice efforts. This team also connects with SPD officers through outreach and presentations.

What We Do

OPA's core functions include a number of tasks that contribute to the police accountability system, such as:

- Reviewing, classifying, and investigating allegations of SPD employee misconduct.
- Helping the community to understand our police accountability processes and OPA services.
- Raising public awareness about OPA through education.
- Identifying SPD policy gaps and providing effective solutions and training recommendations through Management Actions Recommendations (MARs).
- Assisting with improvements in SPD employee conduct and promoting positive interactions.

In addition to investigative duties and public awareness, OPA is dedicated to ongoing training and professional development for its staff. Each year, OPA employees participate in conferences and training sessions to stay up to date on best practices and police accountability standards.

(1) Per City of Seattle [Police Accountability Ordinance 3.29.140](#)

Vision

To safeguard a culture of accountability within the Seattle Police Department (SPD).

Mission

To ensure SPD employees' actions comply with law and policy by conducting thorough, objective, and timely investigations, recommending improvements to policies and training, and engaging in collaborative initiatives that promote systemic advancements.

Values

These values guide employee conduct and organizational culture in pursuing OPA's mission:

Independence

- Making decisions based on consistent application of facts, policies, and laws.
- Maintaining neutrality and exercising impartial judgment.
- Ensuring all viewpoints are heard and respected.

Transparency

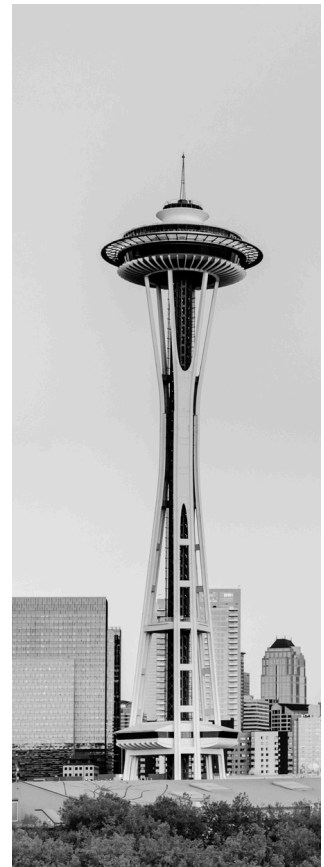
- Maintaining honest and open communication with all stakeholders.
- Communicating process, reasoning, and conclusions.
- Remaining accountable to vision, mission, and values, both internally and externally.

Collaboration

- Building meaningful and cooperative working relationships.
- Soliciting and valuing the community's perspective and expertise.
- Working with system partners to advance accountability and improve SPD policies and training.

Innovation

- Setting the national standard for police oversight agencies.
- Exploring ways to improve processes and services.
- Using data and research to drive decision-making.



Seattle's Police Accountability System

On June 1, 2017, Seattle City Council passed [Ordinance 125315](#) to overhaul Seattle's police accountability system. The legislation implemented a three-pronged oversight system for police oversight:

- The Office of Police Accountability (OPA)
- The Community Police Commission (CPC) ²
- The Office of Inspector General (OIG) ³

Seattle Police Accountability Partners



OIG and CPC are entirely staffed by civilians. These groups work together with OPA in various ways to build public trust in SPD and ensure accountability. As an independent civilian agency, OIG also reviews OPA's work to ensure complaints are handled objectively, thoroughly, and timely.

(2) For more information about CPC, visit www.seattle.gov/community-police-commission

(3) For more information about OIG, visit www.seattle.gov/oig

Complaints

OPA handles misconduct complaints against SPD employees. Complaints can range from unprofessional behavior to biased policing and excessive force. To determine if a violation has occurred, OPA investigators review SPD's many policies, which change and evolve regularly.

Who can file a Complaint?

Anyone can file a complaint, even without giving their name.⁴ To help OPA investigate, all complaints should include as many details as possible. This can include things such as who, what, where, the alleged complaint, and any related evidence (text messages, photos, videos, social media posts, etc.)

There are five ways community members can file a complaint with OPA:

1. The [complaint form](#) on OPA's website.
2. In-person during OPA office hours (Monday through Thursday, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm).
3. Via email (opa@seattle.gov).
4. Calling OPA at (206) 684-8797.
5. Sending postal mail (P.O. Box 34986, Seattle, WA 98124-4986).

OPA also accept complaints from witnesses and other outside agencies. Community members may choose to send their concerns to SPD, a city Councilmember, or through the Office of the Inspector General. Each of these entities will forward complaints and concerns to OPA.

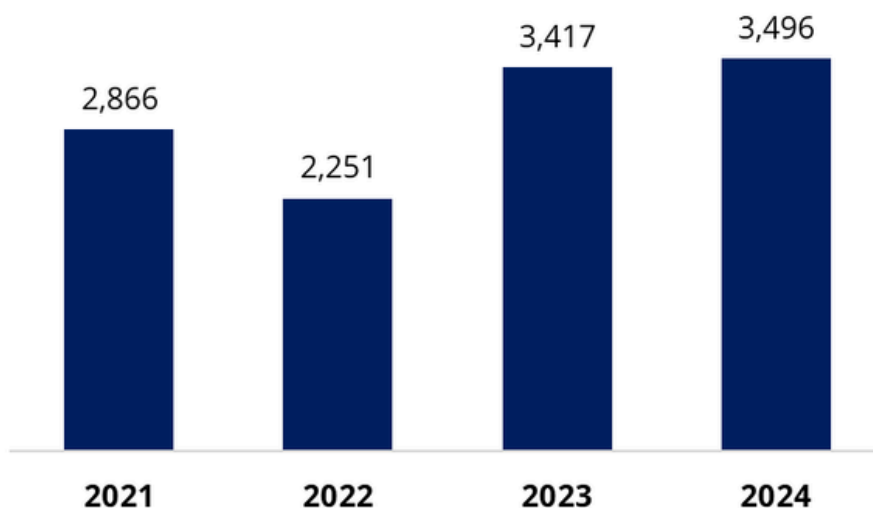


(4) All complaints are subject to public disclosure laws

What happens when you reach out to OPA

Each business day, OPA records all the contacts it receives. If the person includes their contact information, OPA sends them a confirmation message to let them know their complaint was received. Every email, phone call, online form, letter, in-person visit, or forwarded message is counted as a “contact.” That’s because not all messages are actual complaints about Seattle police officers or employees. Some might be reports of crime in a neighborhood, messages from people in crisis, public records requests, or concerns about 911 dispatch or other police departments outside Seattle. These types of contacts fall outside of OPA’s jurisdiction. In 2024, OPA received 3,496 contacts.

Number of OPA Contacts per Year (2021-2024)

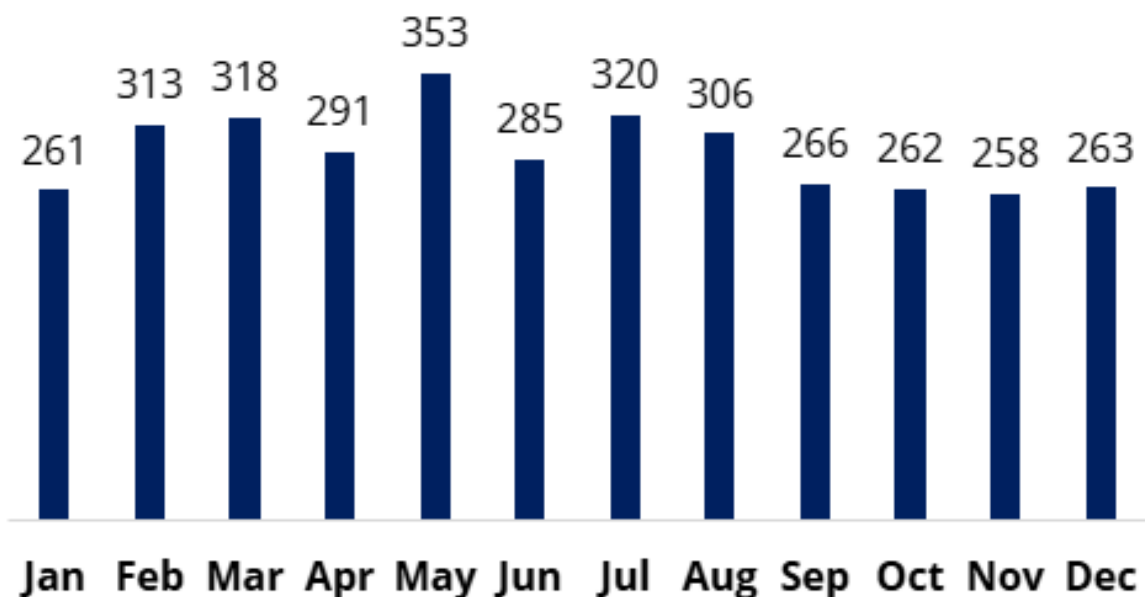


15% of the Contacts OPA received in 2024 were unrelated to SPD misconduct allegations

Contacts received in 2024 that were unrelated to SPD misconduct included:

- 404 were logged as crime reporting for incidents such as neighbor noise complaints, stolen items, or something similar.
- 45 in total were sent to SPD and OPA public disclosure units.
- 45 were referred to CARE/911 Dispatch.
- 19 were referred to the Crisis Response Team (CRT).
- 12 were positive recognitions for Seattle Police Officers.
- 6 were referred to King County’s [Office of Law Enforcement Oversight](#) (OLEO).

Number of OPA Contacts per Month (2024)



If the initial review (which sometimes includes a recorded interview with the complainant) shows that the complaint isn't about an SPD employee, OPA logs it in the system as a contact log and then closes the case. From there, it is forwarded to the appropriate agency, such as the King County Jail, the Sheriff's Office, 911 Dispatch/CARES Unit, or another city's internal affairs department.

A case may also be closed as a contact log for several reasons, including: ⁵

- There was no SPD policy violation.
- Implausible claims were made.
- OPA received insufficient information to proceed with the investigation.
- The complaint was already investigated by OPA or OIG.

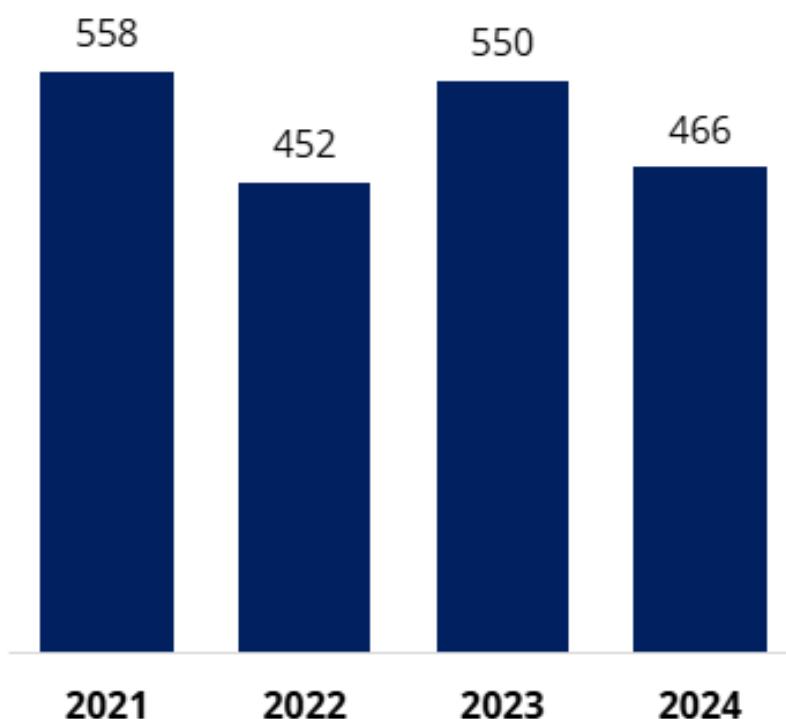
If OPA determines that an investigation is necessary, investigators collect preliminary evidence by reviewing documents and videos and interviewing the complainant when possible. An intake investigation and classification of the complaint will be completed within the first 30 days after it is received.

(5) [See OPA Manual Section 5.4 - Classification \(B\)\(i\).](#)

Cases

In 2024, OPA opened 466 cases. This is a 15.27% decrease from 2023. This decrease is in line with OPA case data from 2022. Possible explanations for the caseload reduction include OPA continuing to optimize administrative processes and procedures, fewer serious misconduct reports, and enhanced contact screenings.

Number of Cases Opened each Year (2021-2024)



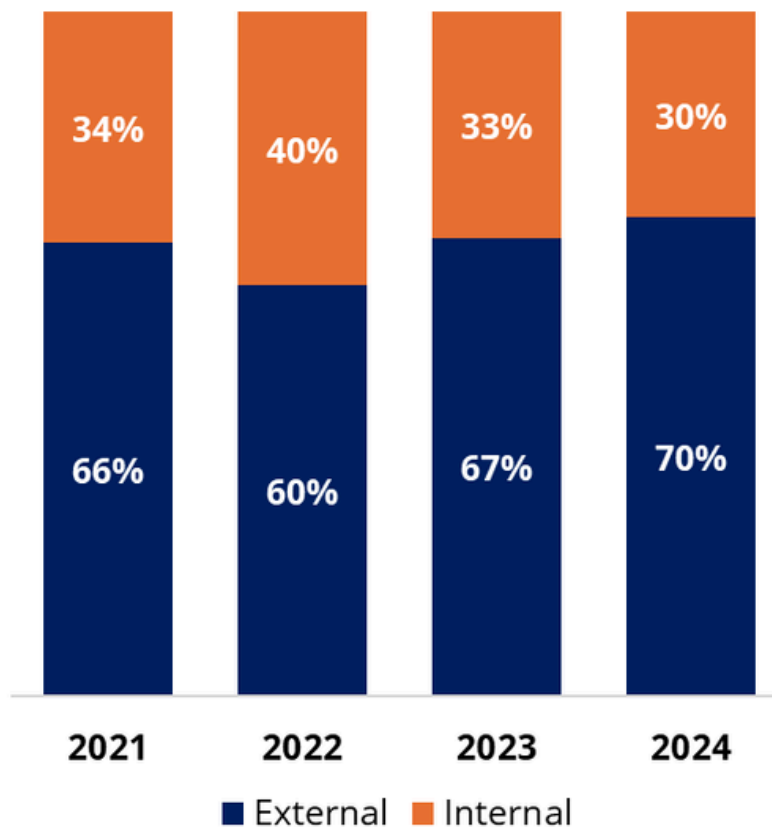
**In 2024, OPA opened 466 cases,
this is a 15.27% decrease from 2023**

Most complaints OPA receives come directly from the public or through another agency. These are called external complaints. Other complaints come from Seattle Police Department (SPD) employees, the City of Seattle, or are passed along by them on behalf of someone in the community—these are internal complaints.



More than half of OPA cases in 2024 resulted from external complaints by community members

Source of Complaints Investigated (From 2021-2024)



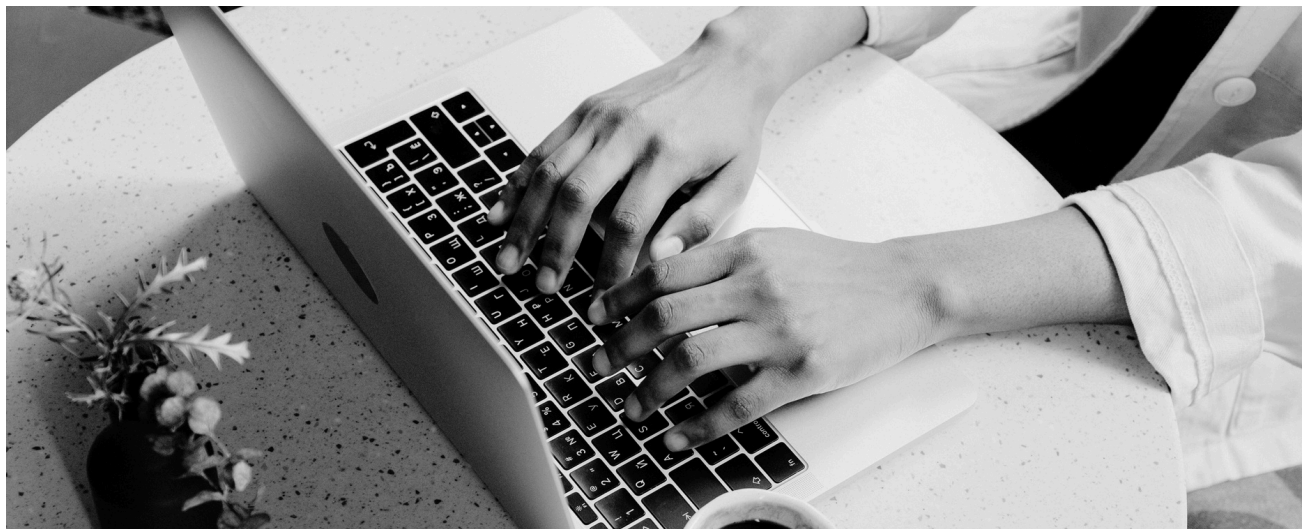
Source of Complaints

Out of the 466 cases opened by OPA in 2024, 70% (325) came from members of the public, while 30% (141) were submitted by SPD or other City of Seattle employees. About half of the external complaints were submitted through OPA's online complaint form.

Complaint Source for Cases Opened (2024)

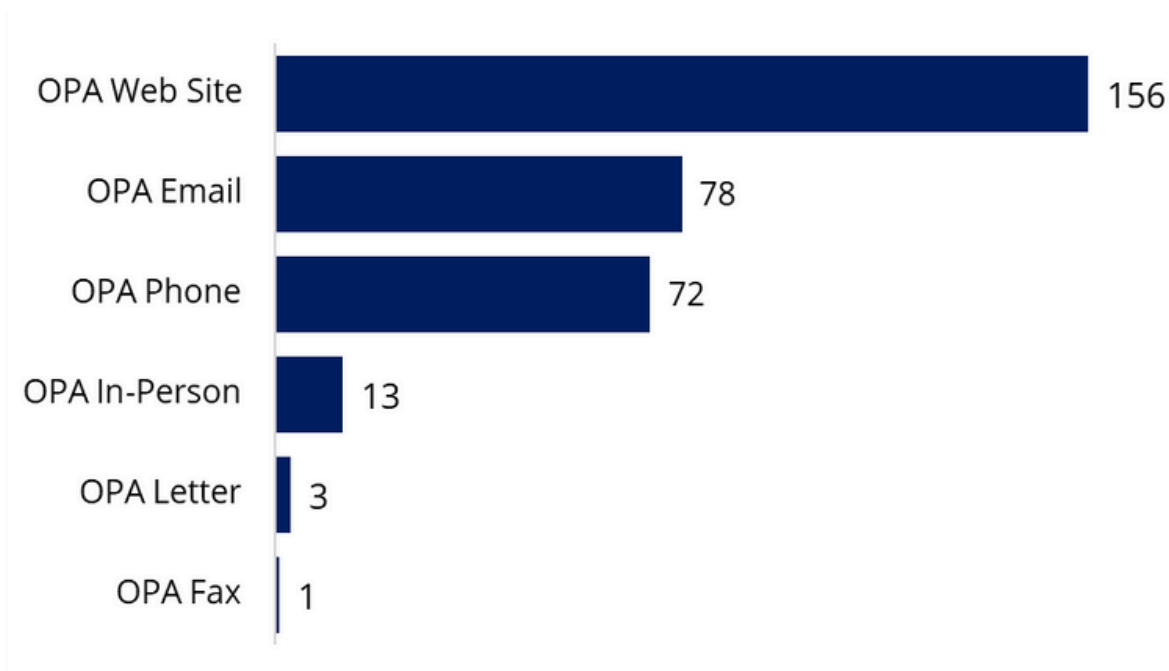
Source	Total
City Litigation	1
City Claims	6
Community Members	308
Customer Service Bureau	1
Mayor's Office	3
Third Party (Advocate, hospital, nonprofit)	13
SPD Forwarded (Blue Team/internal)	35
SPD Initiated (on behalf of a complainant)	96
Source Information not provided	3
Grand Total	466





Most external complaints were submitted through OPA's online web complaint form in 2024

Filing Methods for Cases Opened (2024)



Complainant Demographics

OPA reviews complainant demographics to track police accountability trends and ensure complaints are processed thoroughly, fairly, and on time. Individuals filing a complaint, either in person or online, have the option to self-identify their race and gender, but they are never asked about their immigration status.*

Complainant Race (From 2021-2024)

Race	2021	2022	2023	2024
White	55%	47%	52%	52%
Black	27%	34%	29%	27%
Asian	5%	6%	8%	8%
2 or More Races	8%	5%	4%	6%
Hispanic/Latino	4%	5%	3%	6%
Native American	1%	2%	2%	0%
Other	0%	0%	2%	2%

*See [OPA Manual](#), Section C (II), Personally Identifiable Information

If an SPD employee files a complaint on behalf of a community member, they may include the complainant's demographic information. Additionally, during the intake investigation, OPA investigators ask whether complainants would like to disclose their race and preferred gender pronouns. Providing this information is always voluntary.

Complainant Gender (2024)

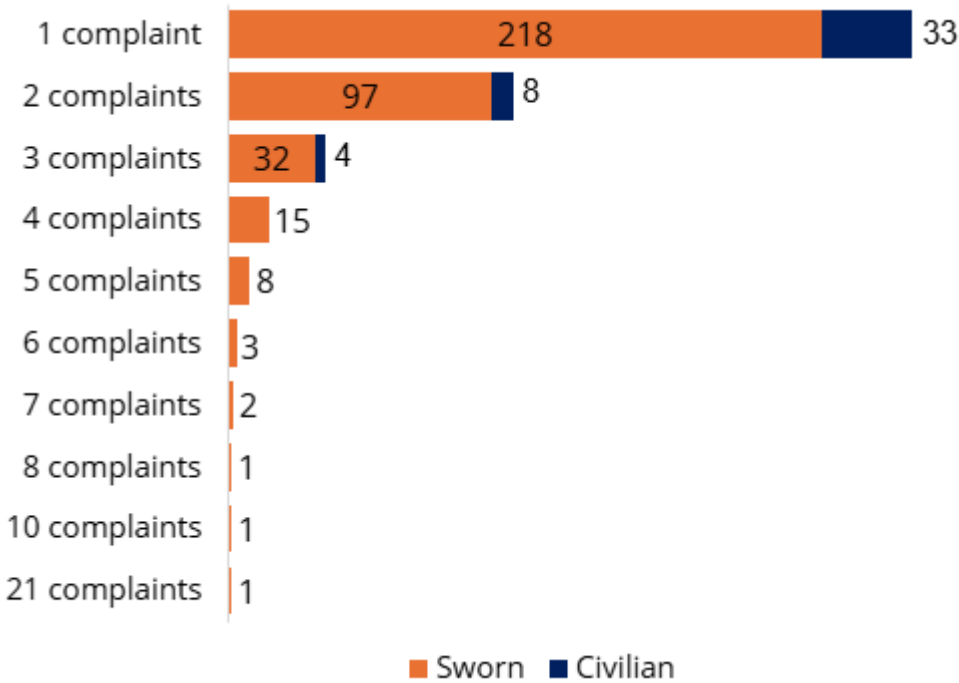
Gender	Total
Male	127
Unknown	123
Female	91
Other**	7
Grand Total	348

** To protect personally identifiable information and maintain confidentiality, "other" represents data that has been aggregated, and includes Non-binary, Transgender Female and undisclosed gender. This standard ensures that individuals cannot be identified, directly or indirectly, through small data segments when cross-referenced with other publicly available information.

Demographics of SPD Employees Named in Complaints

In 2024, a total of 423 SPD employees had at least one complaint filed against them. The majority—89% (378)—were SPD officers. The remaining 45 employees were civilians; 160 of those employees were named in more than one complaint.

Complaints Received by SPD Employee (2024)



Race of SPD Employees Who Received Complaints (Years 2021-2024)

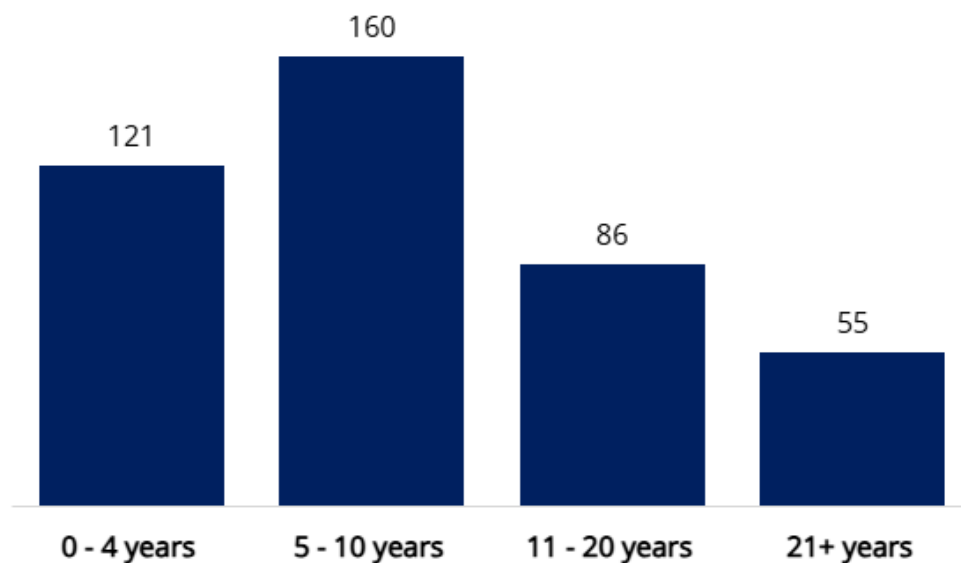
Race	2021	2023	2024
White	62%	61%	60%
Black/African American	9%	9%	9%
2 or More Races	8%	8%	9%
Asian	6%	6%	9%
Hispanic/Latino	9%	9%	8%
Not Specified	5%	6%	4%
Native American	1%	1%	1%

Gender of SPD Employees Who Received Complaints (2024)

Gender	Total
Female	76
Male	346
Grand Total	422

The ratio of SPD Employee complaints based on gender in 2024 is consistent with previous years at 82% male and 18% female

Complaints Received by Number of Years Employed at SPD (2024)



Employees with 10+ years of policing experience generally receive fewer complaints

Incident Locations

OPA is also able to track complaints by SPD precinct. Most complaints of alleged misconduct come from the West Precinct, which includes Downtown, South Lake Union, Queen Anne, and Magnolia. This trend aligns with historical data, as the West Precinct consistently receives the highest number of complaints.

Incident Locations Resulting in Complaints by SPD Precinct (2024)

Location	Total
West	84
North	78
South	53
East	44
Southwest	24
Outside of Seattle	7
Grand Total	290

SPD Precinct Map



Allegations

Nearly all plausible allegations of misconduct by an SPD employee move forward for classification. OPA supervisors determine which SPD policy may have been violated based on the complaint. Over the last three years, Professionalism, Bias-free Policing and Force-Use have remained the top three allegations. One case may have multiple allegations of misconduct.

Allegations by Type (2024)

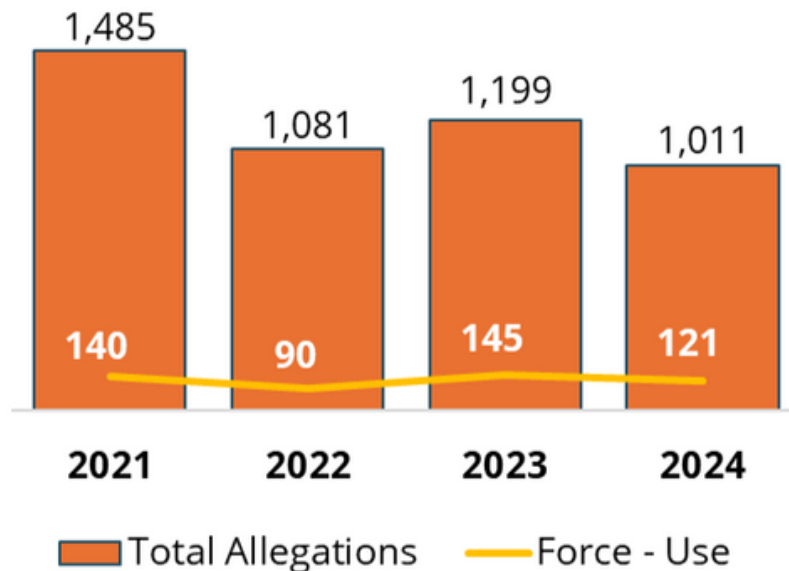


For example, SPD's policy for unprofessionalism includes behavior that undermines public trust, including using profanity as an insult. Bias-free policing complaints usually involve claims that an officer mistreated someone based on any discernible, personal, recognizable characteristics. Allegations that fall under the "Investigations and Reports" category often involve claims that an SPD employee didn't complete a required report or didn't do a proper job investigating a case.

* "All Other Allegations" encompasses a wide range of allegations, including: Supervisory Responsibility, Equipment and Uniform, Training, Qualification and Certification, Timekeeping and Payroll, Tickets and Traffic Contact Reports, Bias (Investigation and Reporting), Obedience to Orders, Information and Communications Systems, Secondary Employment, Crisis Intervention, Duty to Provide Identification, Social Media, Service Quality, Self-reporting Obligations, Professionalism (Policy 5.001), Courtesy and Demeanor, and Confidentiality.

There were 185 Professionalism allegations made in 2024, which is about 18% of all allegations (1,011)

Use of Force Allegations by Year (2021-2024)



There were 121 Use of Force allegations in 2024, which is about 12% of all allegations, and a 16.5% decrease compared to 2023

Classifications

After completing the initial intake investigation, OPA civilian supervisors decide whether the allegations—if proven true—would violate any laws, SPD policies, or training standards, such that the case needs additional investigation. The case is then assigned a classification type, which explains how it will be handled.⁶

Contact Log

- It does not involve a possible policy violation by an SPD employee.
- There is not enough information to continue investigating.
- The complaint is “time-barred,” which means it is past the deadline set by the contractual statute of limitations.
- OPA or the Office of Inspector General (OIG) has already reviewed or made a decision on the complaint.
- The complaint describes events that are clearly implausible (unrealistic or impossible), with no signs of other potential misconduct.

Supervisor Action

If a complaint generally involves a minor policy violation or performance issue, OPA can determine it is best handled by the employee’s supervisor through training, coaching, or communication. In these cases, OPA sends a memo requiring the supervisor to take specific actions. The supervisor has 15 days to complete the steps with the employee and report back to OPA. Supervisors may request an extension if needed. It is important to note that certain allegations, such as use of force, biased policing, or criminal violations are not handled this way.

Investigation

If a complaint involves a potential violation of SPD policy or another issue that OPA is legally or policy-bound to investigate, OPA conducts a full investigation. This process may include collecting additional evidence, reviewing body-worn video (if available), interviewing those involved and any witnesses, and ultimately issuing recommended findings to the Chief of Police. These investigations can lead to formal discipline.

Expedited Investigation

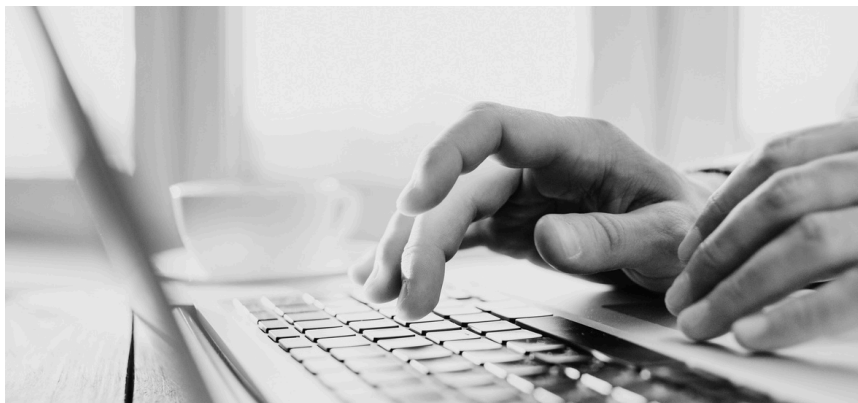
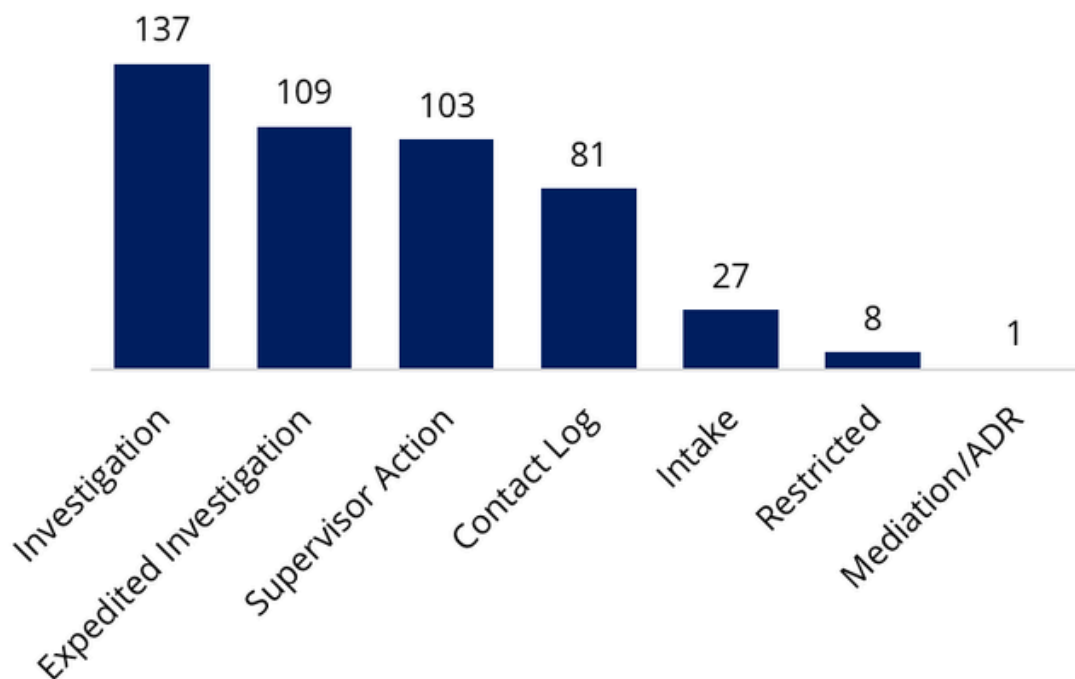
With approval from the Office of Inspector General (OIG), OPA can make a decision based on the initial investigation, without conducting a full investigation. These are referred to as “expedited” cases. Expedited cases do not have sustained findings. In most of these cases, OPA does not interview the employee named in the complaint, though witnesses and complainants may still be interviewed. This approach might be used if the evidence shows that no misconduct occurred, but the allegation is one that OPA is legally or policy-bound to investigate. OPA may also use this approach in specific circumstances where additional training or policy changes are a more appropriate response than discipline.

(6) [See OPA Manual Section 5.4 - Classification \(B\)-\(i\).](#)

Cases by Classification Type

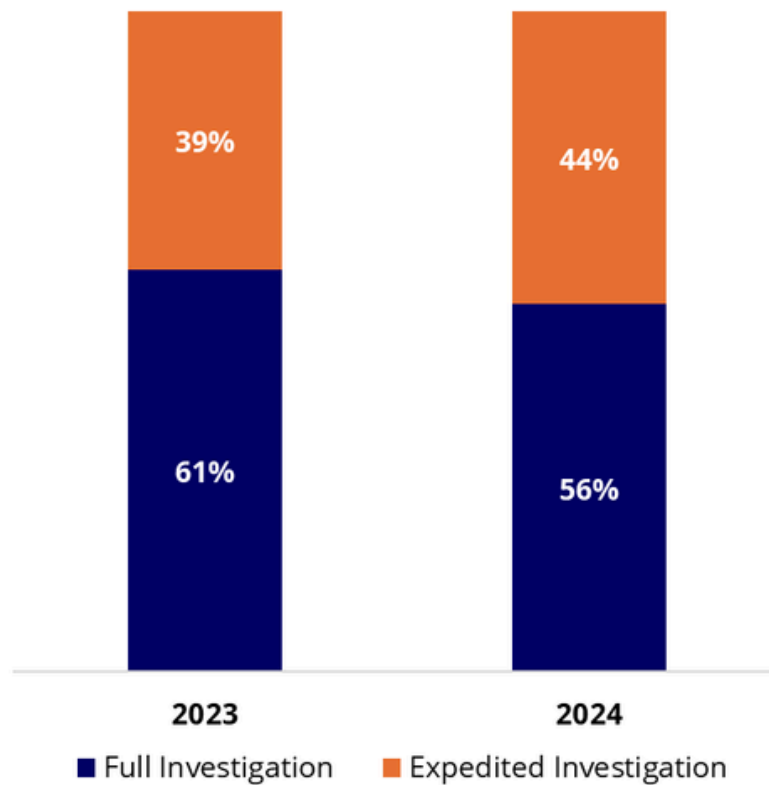
The graph below shows the number of OPA cases by classification type. It is important to note that they include complaints involving the Chief of Police, which impacts the overall numbers. Cases marked as “Restricted” indicate criminal referrals. Additionally, there were three mediation cases in 2024, one of which was fully completed and represented as well.

Number of Cases by Classification Type (2024)



52% of complaints went to investigation (Expedited or Full)

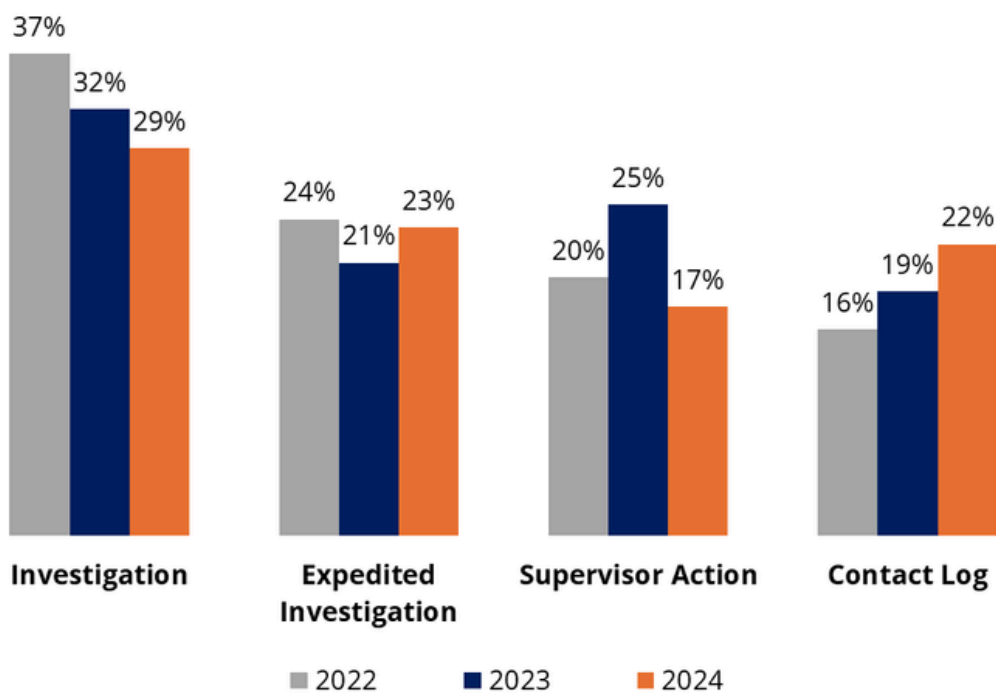
Full vs. Expedited Investigations by Year (2023-2024)



Investigations

If OPA classifies a complaint for a full investigation, an investigator is assigned to look into it further. Whenever possible, OPA assigns it to the same investigator who handled the initial review. The investigation usually includes gathering more evidence and interviewing the employee named in the complaint, as well as any witnesses. OPA aims to complete these investigations within 120 days of receiving the complaint.

Investigation Classification Types by Year comparison (2022-2024)



Timeliness

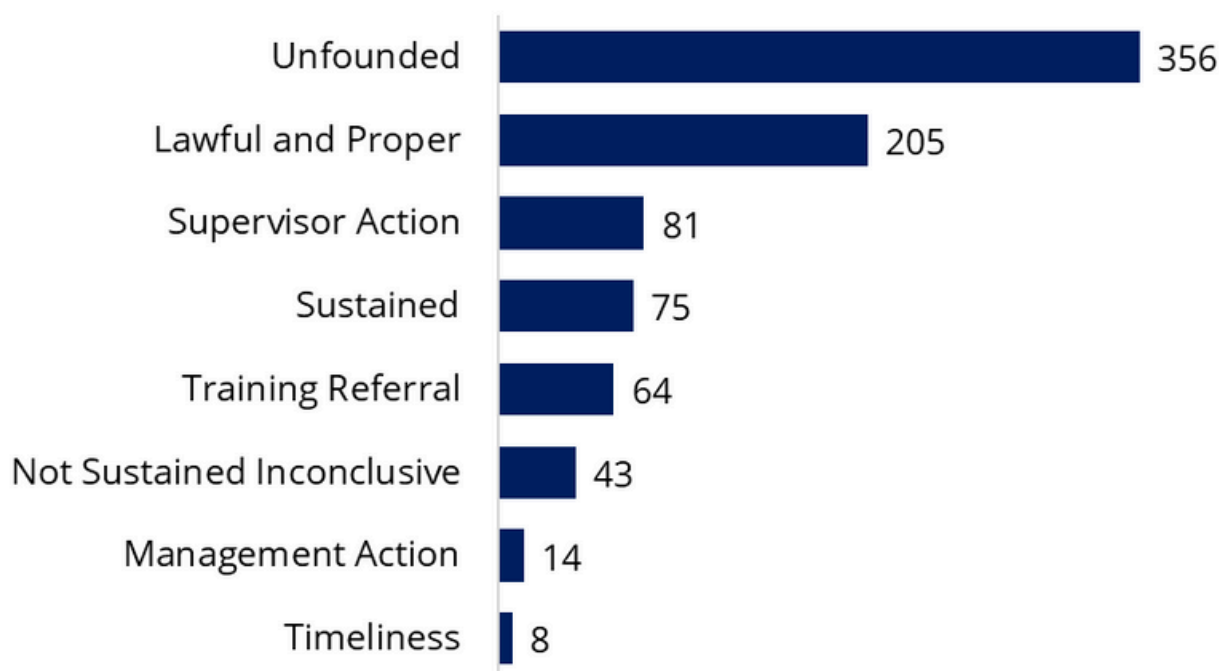
Under the Seattle Police Officers Guild (SPOG) and Seattle Police Management Association (SPMA) collective bargaining agreements, OPA must generally complete investigations within 180 days from when OPA initiates or receives a complaint.⁷ To ensure a timely investigation, OPA may calculate the 180-day investigation period from the date of the incident, even if the complaint is received later. In 2024, OIG found that OPA conducted thorough, objective, and timely investigations in over 95% of cases in 2024, compared to 92% in 2023. As a result, OIG partially certified 14 investigations, finding 10 untimely.

(7) For more information about Timeliness, see SPOG collective bargaining agreement section 3.6 (B) and SPMA collective bargaining agreement section 16.4 (C) at www.seattle.gov/opa/policy/guiding-documents

Findings

For every investigation, OPA's director — or designee — reviews the case files and sends the named employee's chain of command a memorandum detailing OPA's investigative steps and legal analysis concerning each allegation. Generally, a preponderance of the evidence standard applies, meaning the evidence must establish that the named employee, more likely than not, violated SPD's policy or training to sustain the allegation. If the evidence shows an SPD policy violation, the OPA director may recommend a sustained finding.

Allegation Findings by Type (2024)



*Timeliness represents allegations that were not sustained due to timeliness.

While OPA recommends findings and discipline for sustained findings, the Chief of Police makes the final decision

Definition of Findings

If the evidence shows misconduct did not occur, the director will likely recommend a not sustained finding, accompanied by one of the following explanations:

- **Unfounded:** The evidence indicates the alleged policy violation did not occur as reported or did not occur at all.
- **Lawful and Proper:** The evidence indicates the alleged conduct did occur but was justified and consistent with policy.
- **Inconclusive:** The evidence neither supports nor refutes the allegation of misconduct.
- **Training Referral:** There was a potential, but not willful, violation of policy that does not amount to serious misconduct. The employee's chain of command will provide appropriate training and counseling.
- **Management Action:** The evidence indicates the employee may have acted contrary to policy. However, due to a potential deficiency in policy or training, OPA issues SPD a policy recommendation to clarify or revise the policy or training.

In 2024, OPA issued 847 total findings issued across 256 cases (compared to 999 findings across 290 cases in 2023)

There were 3 cases where one or more findings were overturned by the Interim Chief of Police in 2024 (compared to zero in 2023)



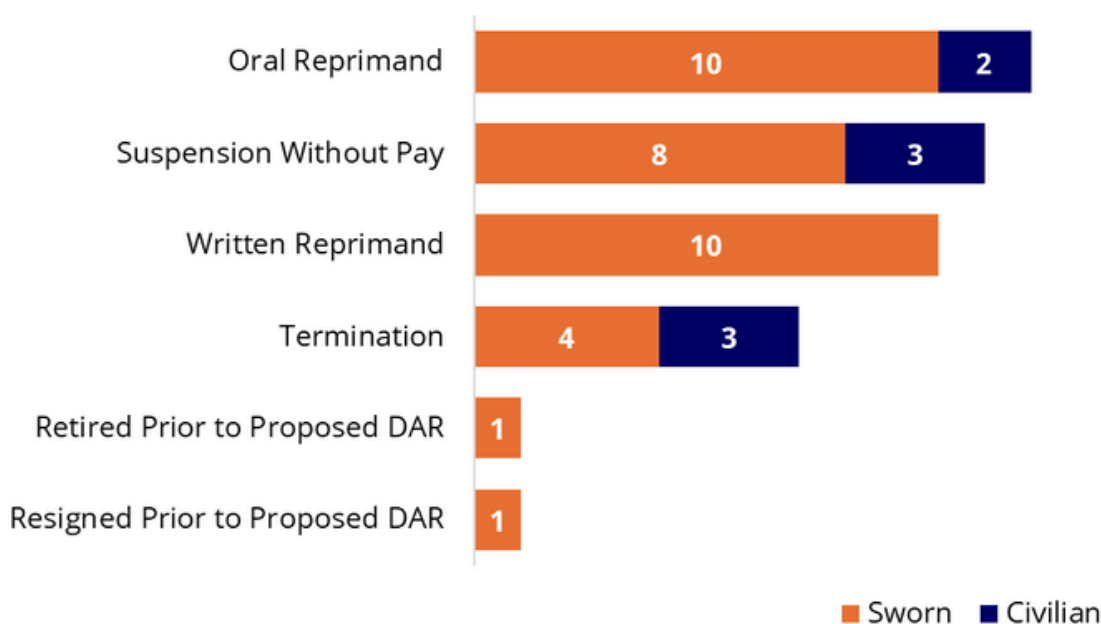
Discipline

Discipline Imposed

If the OPA director recommends sustaining one or more allegations, the following steps take place:

1. OPA shares its findings with the named employee's chain of command, and a discipline meeting is held between the parties. During this meeting, OPA and the chain of command may disagree on OPA's findings or recommended discipline, but the Chief of Police makes the final decision.
2. The named employee and their union are then notified through a document called the Proposed Disciplinary Action Report (DAR), which is issued by the SPD HR director. This document outlines the proposed findings and the discipline committee's recommended disciplinary range.
3. If the discipline is limited to an oral or written reprimand and no further action is recommended, the reprimand is issued, and the discipline is delivered by the employee's chain of command.
4. If the recommended discipline is more severe than a reprimand, the named employee can request a Loudermill hearing, which is a meeting with the Chief of Police to respond to the proposed discipline.
5. The final disciplinary action is then carried out.

Discipline Imposed (2024)



Discipline Types/Definitions

For each sustained finding, the chief has the following options: ⁸

No Discipline

No formal discipline is imposed. The employee receives a closing letter.

Oral Reprimand

A reprimand is administered by the employee's chain of command to explain how their conduct violated a policy. As with all discipline, the goal is to correct the behavior and ensure it does not reoccur.

Written Reprimand

Written reprimands are generally imposed for higher levels of misconduct or when aggravating factors make an oral reprimand inappropriate. This is the final corrective step before a higher level of discipline.

Suspension

The employee is required to forgo work and pay. Suspensions are generally imposed when the misconduct is severe enough that an oral or written reprimand would be too lenient to ensure the behavior will be corrected. Suspensions are given in 9-hour increments up to 270 hours.

Termination

An employee is dismissed from their employment.

Other

Includes demotions, reassignments, training, or other disciplinary actions not otherwise noted.



(8) Some employees resign or retire before discipline is imposed

Appeals

Sworn employees who are disciplined due to an OPA investigation may have the right to appeal. The right to appeal is determined by collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) and City of Seattle personnel rules. Employees with union representation can appeal disciplinary actions such as suspension, demotion, or termination to the Public Safety Civil Service Commission (PSCSC) or through arbitration, as outlined in their CBA. The PSCSC is a three-member appointed body that hears appeals and issues decisions within 90 days of a public hearing. Conversely, arbitration hearings are closed to the public, and decisions are issued within 30 days of a hearing.

OPA's website lists information on appeals filed from 2016 to the present.⁹ An employee's discipline starts when the Chief of Police imposes it. The Chief of Police does not have to wait until the appeal is decided.

In 2024, seven appeals were filed

Three officers appealed termination, two officers appealed suspension without pay, one appealed written reprimand, and one appealed oral reprimand. Three of these appeals were filed through arbitration, while the other four were appealed through the Public Safety Civil Service Commission (PSCSC).

Additionally, two appeals were closed. The first was appealed in 2024 through PSCSC for termination and was dismissed. The second was originally appealed in 2023 through PSCSC for suspension without pay and was also dismissed.

There are one-hundred-fifteen (115) appeals currently open, ninety-three (93) of which are pending arbitration. Seventy-five percent of appeals filed between 2017 and 2024 were filed through arbitration.

Appeals are subject to change. This data was effective as of March 31, 2025.



(9) To review disciplinary appeals, visit www.seattle.gov/opa/case-data/disciplinary-appeals

Chief of Police Complaints

In 2022, Seattle's City Council passed an ordinance (local law) outlining how complaints against the Chief of Police would be investigated. Cases involving the chief follow a different process and do not have to be completed within the usual 180-day timeframe imposed on other investigations.

In 2024, OPA received complaints of alleged misconduct for both the Chief of Police and the Interim Chief of Police that followed. The Chief received 20 complaints, and the Interim Chief received 10 complaints.

**In 2024, the Chief of Police received 20 complaints,
and the Interim Chief of Police received 10 complaints**



Policy & Programs

Alternatives to Investigation

When applicable, complaints may be handled through an alternative dispute resolution method, such as an Unsubstantiated Misconduct Screening (UMS), Mediation, or Rapid Adjudication.

UMS

The Unsubstantiated Misconduct Screening (UMS) program allows SPD supervisors to investigate, document, and review misconduct allegations with OPA. As part of this process, the OPA director or their designee looks over the SPD supervisor's analysis and relevant video to decide if the case should be referred to OPA for a formal complaint. The UMS program started in 2018 to improve employee morale and OPA operations by filtering out false claims disproved by clear evidence, like body-worn camera footage. In 2024, there were 107 UMS Screenings.

Mediation

Mediation is a voluntary process where SPD employees and community members can discuss a conflict with the help of a neutral, third-party mediator.¹⁰ OPA selects complaints for mediation based on national best practices, taking into account the type and seriousness of the issue, as well as the likelihood of reaching a resolution. OPA had three referrals for mediation in 2024 and completed one. Mediation only happens if both parties voluntarily agree to it; otherwise, the case will follow the usual investigative process. In 2024, one complainant declined mediation, and the other did not show up for their mediation.

Rapid Adjudication

Rapid Adjudication promotes faster case resolutions for complaints involving minor to moderate policy violations. In addition, it reduces appeals and delays and allows OPA to focus on more serious cases. To use this process, the OPA director must first determine whether the Rapid Adjudication request by the employee meets the criteria. Then, the SPD employee must admit their actions violated SPD policy and accept a pre-determined discipline instead of going through a full investigation.¹¹ The Office of Inspector General (OIG) must agree with OPA's Rapid Adjudication classification. In 2024, OPA had one Rapid Adjudication, which was denied.

(10) For more information, visit www.seattle.gov/opa/programs/mediation-program

(11) For more information, visit www.seattle.gov/opa/programs/rapid-adjudication

Bias Reviews

When there are allegations of biased policing, SPD officers must call a supervisor to the scene. The supervisor conducts a Bias Review, which is a preliminary investigation into the claim. The supervisor must try to interview the person making the complaint, any witnesses, and review body-worn and in-car videos. If the community member doesn't want to file a complaint with OPA and the supervisor finds no misconduct, the supervisor writes up their findings in a Bias Review report. This report is reviewed by their chain of command and then sent to OPA for a final decision. OPA's director or their designee carefully looks over the report to decide if the allegation should be investigated by OPA. If not, the Bias Review is closed. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) audits OPA's Bias Review decisions. In 2024, OIG reviewed 89 Bias reviews. OIG found no issues with SPD handling of Bias Reviews.

Reviewing SPD Policy

OPA collaborates closely with SPD command staff to strengthen departmental policies and practices. This includes:

- Supporting annual policy reviews required under the consent decree ¹²
- Recommending changes based on trends or patterns identified through investigations

Ultimately, OPA's input ensures that clear and robust policies guide and empower SPD employees to work efficiently and effectively while preserving police accountability.

Management Action Recommendations (MARs)

During an investigation, the Office of Police Accountability (OPA) may identify systemic concerns with SPD policies or training and then issue a Management Action Recommendation (MAR). These recommendations are meant to improve policies, promote best practices, prevent future misconduct, and reduce the chances that investigation results get overturned because of unclear policies, procedures, or training.

A MAR is considered complete once OPA receives a formal response letter from SPD. While SPD is not obligated to implement OPA's recommendations, the collaborative process has proven effective—historically, approximately 65% of OPA's MARs have been either partially or fully implemented.¹³ In 2024, OPA issued nine MARs, and SPD approved four (44%): one was partially implemented, two are in development, and two were declined for implementation. OPA posts all MARs and SPD responses on its website, regularly updating their status.

(12) The 2012 Consent Decree between Seattle and the DOJ requires SPD to submit policies and training materials for DOJ and Monitor review before implementation, with follow-up reviews within 180 days and annually thereafter.

(13) See Appendix A for 2024 Management Action Recommendations and definitions of implementation

(14) See MAR statuses at www.seattle.gov/opa/policy/policy-recommendations

Other OPA Functions

Monitoring Serious Incidents

The SPD Manual requires officers' use of force to be documented and investigated. SPD's Force Investigation Team (FIT) investigates the most serious force applications. OPA observes FIT investigations involving Type III uses of force, including officer-involved shootings.¹⁵

When these incidents happen, OPA goes to the scene to observe how the situation is handled and how the administrative investigation is done. This type of investigation looks into whether the officer followed Seattle Police Department policy and training. If OPA identifies a possible policy violation, it can initiate a complaint at any time. These types of incidents, called FIT callouts, take more time and resources to handle.

In 2024 OPA responded to 11 FIT callouts compared to 10 in 2023, and 9 in 2022

OPA aims to attend all FIT callouts to increase procedural justice by fortifying civilian oversight, accountability, and transparency for force investigations. In 2024, OPA made 100% of the FIT callouts.

Legislative Reviews

During the 2024 state legislative session, OPA collaborated with the Seattle Office of Intergovernmental Relations (OIR) to provide feedback on various bills concerning policing and police accountability.

SPD Employee Engagement

Each year, OPA engages with SPD employees in several capacities, including roll call visits, presentations for sergeants and recruits, Field Training Office training, precinct visits, and Force Review Board training. OPA also participated monthly in SPD's "Before the Badge" program. These presentations explain OPA's function and operations and outlined expectations for recruits and community service officers.

(15) A Type III use of force causes, or is reasonably expected to cause, great bodily harm, substantial bodily harm, loss of consciousness, or death. See bit.ly/3LgWjD.15 to review SPD's policy

Community Engagement

Through its Community Engagement Program, OPA builds relationships with community members, increases public awareness about OPA and Seattle's police accountability system, and assists community members in navigating complaints. In 2024, OPA's community engagement team actively worked to strengthen connections with the public by attending, presenting, and hosting information tables at numerous events.

The primary focus has been to increase awareness and understanding of Seattle's police accountability system, particularly within marginalized communities. Through these efforts, OPA aimed to build trust, encourage dialogue, and ensure that all residents have access to information about the complaint process. In 2024, OPA participated in 37 events despite a vacancy on the community engagement team!

Lunar New Year 2024



Administrative Specialist II, Janet Wong; Assistant Director of Operations, Katie Maier, Complaint Navigation & Community Outreach Specialist, Troy Chen, and Community Engagement Manager & Restorative Justice Specialist, Geneva Taylor

Judge Charles V. Johnson Youth and Law Forum



Interim Director Bonnie Glenn; Community Engagement Manager & Restorative Justice Specialist, Geneva Taylor; Anthony L. Ray, better known by his stage name Sir Mix-a-Lot, and SPD Detective, Denise 'Cookie' Bouldin

Community Engagement Manager & Restorative Justice Specialist, Geneva Taylor, discussing OPA's work at the Judge Charles V. Johnson Youth and Law Forum

Know Your Rights



Complaint Navigation & Community Outreach Specialist, Troy Chen, and Sergeant Investigator, Will Dausner, giving a 'Know Your Rights' presentation at a local high school

OPA Youth Art Contest

In the spring of 2025, OPA accepted art submissions from youth ages 18 and under who attended school in Seattle, to have their art featured on the cover of OPA's 2024 Annual Report. This year's theme was Police and community working together to create a better Seattle. The winner, E. Fernandez, age 17, is a talented artist from Franklin High School, whose submission is featured on the cover of this Annual Report.

"Police & Community Working Together for a Better Seattle"



Art Contest Winner, E.Fernandez with OPA Interim Director, Bonnie Glenn, holding their winning cover design

APPENDIX A

MANAGEMENT ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Topic (Linked)	OPA Recommendation	SPD Action	Status (Linked)
3rd Avenue Corridor	Work with Seattle's Dept. of Transportation and other City offices and officials to accommodate SPD officers patrolling the 3rd Ave. corridor	Identified emergency response vehicles that require access to 3rd Ave. corridor, and provided a list of these plates so they will not be cited for driving on 3rd	Fully Implemented
Spit Sock Usage	Consider providing policy, training, or guidance to officers for failed spit sock applications, encourage critical thinking and identify improvised shields	SPD will remind officers to utilize personal protective equipment and reassess if the issue is more widespread	Fully Implemented
Releasing Evidence	Clarify which policy applies to the release of property held as evidence, consider requiring verified notice for vehicles or high value items, and consider notifying the property owner's family if the owner is unavailable to retrieve them	SPD will attempt to contact identified next of kin when an individual is incarcerated or incapacitated, but in some instances, identifying next of kin may require publication of record	Partially Implemented
De Minimis Force on Restrained Persons	Modify policy to include the word "reportable" before "use of force on restrained persons" when applicable, or add de minimis force as an exception, when reporting, if used to control or guide a restrained person	Modified policy to explain employees will not use "reportable" force on restrained persons except where reasonable, necessary, and proportional only to protect a sworn employee, subject or member of the public from physical injury, prevent detainee escape, or remove a subject in or out of a vehicle after attempts have	Fully Implemented

Topic (Linked)	OPA Recommendation	SPD Action	Status (Linked)
Pursuing Alternative Transportation	Continue searching for best practices for police pursuing alternative transportation and appropriate pursuit ending tactics	Revised policy by adding section titled "Fleeing subject on Alternative Transportation," included considerations for officers when pursuing alternative forms, and require termination of bicycle pursuits when the risks outweigh the need to stop the vehicle	Fully Implemented
Off-Duty Employment	SPD should provide a definition or list of considerations to use when determining whether off-duty employment is "law enforcement related." Alternatively SPD could modify existing policy to regulate all secondary employment regardless of whether it is related to law enforcement.	SPD plans to clarify "Law enforcement related" in policy as "An off-duty job in which a sworn employee is serving in a commissioned capacity (i.e. in uniform, with the authority to exercise law enforcement authority or where having a commission is a requirement of the job"	In Development
Employee Timekeeping	Consider developing an overtime tracking system to accurately monitor hours worked and better enforce 90-hour work week maximum policy, or include a supervisor counseling process to better monitor overtime	Operational issues with workday mean it is not feasible to implement a new overtime tracking system at this time, but SPD is considering alternative time reporting systems	Declined Action

Topic (Linked)	OPA Recommendation	SPD Action	Status (Linked)
Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Complaints and Investigations	Consider extending confidentiality obligation concerning EEO complaints, investigations, and potential complaints to nonsupervisory employees, and rather than referencing the EEOC, consider adding a line in policy about striving to create an environment where employees feel comfortable and confident concerns will be taken seriously	SPD will be reviewing and updating EEO policy and make a clear statement regarding employee duties and EEO cases	In Development
Standards and Duties - Employee Reporting of Suspected Criminal Activity	Clearly articulate circumstances under which employees may be required to provide information to other law enforcement entities and provide specific examples to illustrate the department's expectations for avoiding appearance of impropriety	Did not create specific language or guidance regarding the appearance of impropriety due to concern of interfering with freedoms, privacy, and liberties of employees	Declined Action

Additional Information

A “fully implemented” status means SPD implemented all proposed recommendations. “Partially implemented” means SPD implemented one or more recommendations and provided a rationale for non-implemented recommendations. “Declined action” means SPD did not act on the recommendations but indicated why.

For a more detailed explanation and current status of policy recommendations for SPD please visit OPA's website which addresses policy recommendations:

www.seattle.gov/opa/policy/policy-recommendations.