“Justice consists not in being neutral between right and wrong, but in finding out the right and upholding it, wherever found, against the wrong.”

Theodore Roosevelt
10 Years of serving the Citizens and Officers of Atlanta

Ms. Kathryn Johnston
Killed by APD officers in 2006

First African American Atlanta Police Officers – 1948
Artist Flournoy Hooks Jr.
Dear Stakeholders:

This year’s annual report for 2017 is a moment of celebration and somber reminder of the work that is still to be done. We celebrate the tenth anniversary of the creation of independent, investigative civilian oversight of Atlanta police and corrections officers. We also celebrate the beginning of the ACRB mediation program. While we celebrate those successes, we recognize that our ultimate success is tied to improving the relationships between citizens and officers and effective advocacy for officer accountability that focuses on fairness, dignity, and integrity for all.

The ACRB is empowered to receive, mediate, investigate, hear, make findings and recommend action on complaints against Atlanta Police officers and Atlanta Corrections officers. We value your concerns. Formed in 2007, because of the tragic death of Ms. Kathryn Johnston in 2006, we realize that for many citizens, the ACRB may be the only way their complaints will be taken seriously.

During 2017, our board and staff have been busy with work that is designed to allow us to better serve you. That work includes:

- providing an opportunity for aggrieved citizens to discuss their complaints with subject officers face-to-face in a supportive environment;
- increasing the number of cases reviewed;
- conducting meetings away from City Hall in your communities;
- providing presentations and Q&A sessions to nearly 80% of the APD sworn officers as a part of the ACRB mediation roll out;
- having the Police Chief Erica Shields attend two of our monthly meetings;
- ongoing efforts to close the enormous gap between the ACRB sustained complaints and the APD’s response to those sustained complaints;
- increasing community awareness and engagement as ACRB continues to educate the community on citizen interaction with police officers through workshops, at libraries, churches, community centers and other local venues;
- forming a street team of committed individuals to assist with our outreach efforts; and
- implementing a mediation program

I encourage you to read and share the information contained in this annual report. Please feel free to share your questions and concerns.

The ACRB Board and staff are dedicated and fully committed to working with and serving all citizens of Atlanta. And, on behalf of our tireless Board and staff, I want to thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Sherry B. Williams

Board Chair
Executive Summary

2017 was an exciting year for the Atlanta Citizen Review Board (ACRB). The agency began the operation of its mediation program and continued its engagement with citizens through its community outreach and education activities. We reached out to thousands of Atlanta residents and visitors and learned from each opportunity. We held our third Art and Essay Contest with overwhelming support from the community. The contest is providing space for important conversations on policing and perspective-sharing for citizens.

The ACRB received 161 complaints of which 30% were assigned for a full investigation. The investigative timeline average was 178 days. The investigative staff completed 54 investigations, while the Board adjudicated 55 complaints, sustaining 34.5%.

One of the most important data points for citizens is the Atlanta Police Chief’s action on ACRB sustained complaints. At the end of 2017, the chief of police rendered a decision on 39 of the 55 complaints adjudicated by the board, agreeing on the Board’s sustained complaints 26% of the time. Eleven sustained complaints were still pending at the end of the year.

The mediation program started in March 2017. The staff presented the benefits of the program throughout the city. In collaboration with the APD, ACRB staff made mediation presentations to nearly 85% of the patrol officers. By the end of the year, four complaints were successfully mediated.

As in previous years, complaints involving officers from the Atlanta Corrections Department were very low. In 2017, the agency received three complaints involving officers from the Atlanta Corrections Department; one was assigned for investigation.
Mission

Our mission is to provide the citizens of Atlanta credible, fair, and independent investigations and recommendations on Atlanta police and corrections officer misconduct complaints. Our work provides opportunities for both departments to consider policy change recommendations and correct officer behavior to promote the highest standards of conduct.

Vision

• To be known for integrity, competence, and results.
• To be recognized as national experts in improving community/police relationships.
• To provide the best citizen oversight of a local enforcement agency in the nation and be recognized as the experts in civilian oversight.

Goal

Our aim is to lessen the possibility of urban unrest and promote public confidence in the Atlanta police and corrections departments.

Values

Integrity ● Credibility ● Fairness ● Commitment Excellence ● Justice ● Accountability ● Results Driven ● Teamwork ● Service ● Objectivity

2017 Board Members

Sherry Williams
Chairperson
M. Gino Brogdon, Jr.
Vice Chairperson
Paul Bartels
Secretary
Bill Bozarth
Harold Hardnett
William Harrison
Michael Hopkins
Cecilia Houston-Torrence
Tracee McDaniel
Tamara Orange
Shuntay Pitre
Gerald Souder

2017 Staff

Samuel L. Reid II
Executive Director
Kabral Brathwaite
Investigator Senior
Charles Curry
Public Information Officer
Brian Fleming
Investigator Senior
Lynn Garrett
Executive Assistant
Robin Lolar
Investigator Senior
Melisa Reese
Administrative Assistant
Sheena Robertson
Investigation Manager
Myola Smith
Project Manager
Keleema Al-Nur
Investigator (Contract)
The Atlanta Citizen Review Board (ACRB) is an independent investigative agency of the City of Atlanta. It is authorized to receive, investigate, mediate, and adjudicate citizen complaints against Atlanta Police and Corrections officers independently of the police and corrections departments involvement. The agency is also committed to community outreach and engagement.

The ACRB has a citizen Board that directs its activities and renders the official decisions of the agency. The Board has thirteen members who represent the diversity of the city and is supported by city employees who manage and carry out the day-to-day operations.

The ACRB accepts complaints in the following categories: abuse of authority, abusive language, anonymous complaints, officer conduct, a wide range of discrimination, discriminatory references, failure to provide identification, false arrest, false imprisonment, harassment, retaliation, use of excessive force, serious bodily injury, or death that is alleged to be the result of the actions of a sworn employee of the Atlanta Police Department (APD) or the Atlanta Department of Corrections (ADC), and violations of APD and ADC Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Once a complaint is received, selected for investigation, and investigated, it is presented to the Board for an adjudication. After the Board’s adjudication, the complaint is sent to the police or corrections departments for a disciplinary decision. Based on the allegations, some complaints may be selected for mediation.

The Board has a monthly meeting on the second Thursday of every month. The meetings are open to the public which allows citizens to observe the Board’s actions on citizens’ complaints and learn about policing issues that face citizens. The public meetings provide the rare opportunity for citizens to witness police officer accountability in action.

The Board’s commitment to transparency of its operation and decisions related to complaints received by the ACRB is demonstrated through its monthly meetings, public communications, and constant updates to its website and social media.
Board/Personnel

The ACRB is authorized to have 13 Board members, representing various entities within the city of Atlanta. The Board is a dedicated group of individuals that commit between 8-10 hours a month preparing for case reviews, Board and community meetings, and community outreach and training.

The agency is responsible for potentially investigating the actions of approximately 2,500 police and corrections officers with two investigators and an investigations manager. If we were able to count the investigations manager as a full investigator the ratio of investigators to officers would be approximately 833 officers per ACRB investigator. With such a high investigator to officer ratio, the ACRB is vulnerable to service slowdowns.

Budget

The ACRB received $790,242 for the FY 2018 to cover personnel and operating costs. With each year, the operating budget for the agency increased. In 2017, the Board continued to meet the needs of the community with our awareness and education activities; however, we know from being in the community that there is a demand for an even greater presence.

In 2017, the Board was fortunate to be able to supplement our budget by leveraging community members’ skills and talents to extend our reach into the community. While we are grateful for our IST and COVAP members work, we understand that there are limits to leveraging resources.

Personnel Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>APD/ACD</th>
<th>ACRB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2015</td>
<td>2417</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2016</td>
<td>2518</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2017</td>
<td>2490</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Intake Disposition** (see Analysis, p. 16)

When a complaint is filed with the ACRB, the staff conducts a preliminary investigation, and the complaint is presented to the Board with a recommendation for a decision to dismiss or investigate.

The ACRB received 12.5% fewer complaints in 2017, as compared to 2016. The percentage of complaints assigned to investigation was 30.4%, which is less than the 40.2% for 2016.

**Dismissals** (see Analysis, p. 17)

As the bottom table to the right shows, complaints are dismissed for various reasons. In 2017, complaints involving officers outside of the Board’s jurisdiction and failure to provide a signed complaint accounted for 61.7% of the dismissed complaints, which increased slightly from 2016. The number of time-barred complaints tripled from 2016 to 2017. Lack of cooperation complaints continued to decrease as a result of the agency’s decision to continue to investigate a complaint if the complainant provided enough details to conduct a thorough investigation, regardless of whether the complainant continued with the process. This change is especially beneficial for the homeless community.
Completed Investigations

ACRB complaint investigations are conducted independently of the APD and ACD. The investigative staff gathers all evidence and conducts interviews. The investigator analyzes the evidence and completes a detailed written report along with a recommendation to the Board. Fifty-eight percent of the closed investigations contained multiple allegations. The most investigated allegations were appropriate action required, excessive force, and conduct.

Investigative Timeline (see Analysis, p. 17)

Full investigations averaged 178 days, which is within the 180-day limit that APD must complete their complaint investigations. The average number of investigative days increased by 32.8% from 2016 to 2017. The agency had several investigations that involved excessive force and false arrests, which contributed to the increase in the average number of investigation days.

Because the ACRB only has two full-time investigators and an investigation manager, the timeliness of ACRB investigations are extremely sensitive to employee circumstances and the nature, number and complexity of reported complaints. During 2017, the investigative team was down one investigator for seven months.
**Intake/Assigned Allegations**

**Received**

**Intake**

The most commonly filed complaint allegation in 2017 was appropriate action required, followed by conduct and excessive force. Appropriate action required accounted for 38.4% of the complaints filed.

Appropriate action required allegations include officers’ disregard for citizens’ rights, feelings, and interests and failing to notify supervisors as needed. It also includes failing to perform official acts in a lawful, restrained, dignified, impartial, and reasonable manner. At times, the agency uses this allegation to classify false arrest allegations.

**Assigned**

The most common complaint allegations assigned to investigations were appropriate action required, excessive force and conduct. Appropriate action required accounted for 40% of the allegations assigned to investigations, followed by excessive force with 24%.

However, as the bottom table to the right shows, less than 50% of the appropriate action required allegations were assigned to investigations because many of those allegations involved officers outside the ACRB’s jurisdiction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017 Intake Allegations</th>
<th>229</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abusive Language</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse of Authority</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discriminatory References</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive Force</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Arrest</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Imprisonment</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Action Required</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retaliation</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation of Standard Operating Procedures</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Bodily Injury</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017 Assigned Complaint Allegations</th>
<th>107</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abusive Language</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abuse of Authority</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discriminatory References</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive Force</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Arrest</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Imprisonment</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Action Required</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retaliation</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation of Standard Operating Procedures</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Bodily Injury</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Allegations by APD Zone

Officers from APD Zone 3 received the most complaints in 2017, a significant increase from the number of complaints for Zone 3 in 2016. APD Zone 2 officers recognized a significant decrease in the number of complaints received. See Appendix B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zones Assigned Complaints</th>
<th>Total Allegations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CID/Homicide</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CID/Zone 5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOS/Motors Unit</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOS/Traffic Unit</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIT/Zone 5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES/APEX Unit</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES/Narcs Unit</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>107</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Allegations by Council District

Officers working in City Council District 12 received the most complaints in 2017, which was a significant increase for the district in 2016. See Appendix C.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council District Assigned Complaints</th>
<th>Total Allegations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airport</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>107</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Citizen/Officer Encounters

As the table below shows, most complaints assigned for investigation stemmed from police action that involved traffic stops and 911/dispute calls. This is consistent with the origin of complaints in 2016. A few years ago, the ACRB started tracking origination of citizen/police encounters as a separate data point. Our data shows, that officer actions during traffic stops consistently generates the most complaints.

ACRB Complainants (see Analysis, p. 19)

As the table below shows, African Americans filed the most complaints in 2017, which is consistent with the previous years’ data. In 2017, African Americans filed 76% of ACRB complaints.

It should be noted that African American police officers received 54% of the complaints filed in 2017.

### Reason for Encounter Assigned Complaints 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Encounter</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traffic Stop</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedestrian Stop</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>911/Dispute Call</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>911 Call/Accident</td>
<td>03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>911 Call/Criminal Trespass</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>911 Call/Larceny</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>911 Call/Missing Person</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspicious Person</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intoxicated Person</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fight in Progress</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Drugs</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted Person</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reckless Driving</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen Initiated Contact</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown¹</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Race of Complainants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race of Complainants</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Race of Officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race of Officers</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Details of the incident(s) are still unknown at this time.
Sustained Complaints (see Not Sustained Analysis, p. 18)

The Board increased its adjudicated complaints by 37.5%, handling 55 complaints during 2017, which is the most complaints the Board has heard since its inception. The Board sustained or partially sustained 19 complaints, which is 34.5% of its adjudicated complaints. It is important to note that not sustained means that the available evidence did not allow the Board to prove or disprove the complainant’s allegations. Often, in complaints that the Board could not sustain, there are no witnesses or recordings to support the complainant’s allegations. To address this issue, the ACRB communicates with the community about tips for filing a police misconduct complaint. We encourage citizens to make note of the officer’s physical description, actions, and comments, potential witness contact information, obtaining medical attention as needed, and filing complaints soon after the incident, among other tips.

Sustained or partially sustained complaints are those complaints where the Board believed enough evidence existed to established that the alleged acts occurred. The most common complaints sustained in 2017 contained allegations involving appropriate action required, false arrest, false imprisonment and various standard operating procedure violations.
**APD Responses** (see Analysis, p. 20)

The chart and table below provide a visual understanding of the concern that many citizens have expressed over the years about the APD’s response to ACRB complaints, particularly the ACRB sustained complaints and allegations. Of the 19 sustained complaints, containing 37 sustained allegations\(^2\), the APD chief agreed with five, representing 26.3%. At the end of the year, the APD had 21 sustained allegations pending a decision.

---

**Disposal of Sustained Complaint Allegations**

- **All ACRB Complaint Allegations**
- **ACRB Sustained Allegations**
- **APD Response to ACRB Sustained Allegations**
- **ACRB Sustained Allegations Awaiting Chief’s Decision**

\(^2\) Complaints can have multiple allegations.
Complaints Filed

Total complaints received in 2017 decreased by 12.5% from those filed in 2016. When comparing the 2015 and 2017 data, we noticed that the complaints received for those years are similar, while 2016 appears to be an outlier, with an increase of approximately 17% over the 2015 and 2017 complaints filed. In 2016, reports of excessive force and demonstrations dominated the news, nationally and locally. The ACRB also had a wider media presence while making changes to the ACRB ordinance. With the level of outreach remaining the same for the years 2015-2017, there appears to be a correlation between the news and social media reports of police misconduct, either nationally or locally, and the number of misconduct complaints filed against police officers. In 2017, with fewer news media reports on police misconduct and demonstrations dominating the news, the number of complaints received in 2017 went back to 2015 levels. This information is valuable because it appears that the greatest awareness builder of the ACRB and civilian oversight in general occurs when misconduct is reported in the news and social media and communities bring awareness of police accountability concerns through demonstrations. The challenge for the ACRB is to be flexible enough to make the most out of news reports and social media through increased outreach activities during those times. The ACRB has an affirmative duty through its mission to address police misconduct concerns and that is best accomplished through a robust community awareness program that is flexible enough to respond to news reports and community conversations on officer accountability.

Complaint Dismissals

As indicated earlier, there was a significant change in the lack of cooperation dismissals. Important aspects of civilian oversight are an accessible process, accessible people, and accessible information. The ACRB is constantly working to increase citizen accessibility to the agency and its process. In 2017, we changed how we handled complaints formerly classified as lack of cooperation. The reality is that the agency may only have one contact with some citizens, depending on their circumstances, and that contact may be a letter, an email, or a complaint. If the communication provides enough information to conduct a thorough investigation, the investigators will continue to investigate a complaint. This change allows the ACRB to ensure that potential officer misconduct does not fail to get addressed because the citizen was unable to maintain contact with the agency.
Out-of-Jurisdiction Officers

As noted in many of our past reports, significant investigator resources are consumed with preliminary investigations that involve officers outside of the ACRB jurisdiction. Persons living outside of the Atlanta city limits look to the ACRB to file complaints against their local officers and other law enforcement officers. The number of complaints against officers outside of the ACRB’s jurisdiction remained constant over the past three years. While the agency cannot investigate these complaints, the investigative staff does commit resources to those complaints, especially when a citizen makes a report, but is unable to determine if the officer was an APD officer or is unaware of our jurisdiction limitations. Our data shows that individuals have concerns about officers from many jurisdictions around the Atlanta metropolitan area. The data collected over the years is a clear indication that independent civilian oversight of law enforcement is a benefit that many citizens outside of the city of Atlanta desire.

Investigative Timeline

As mentioned in the budget, personnel and investigative timeline sections (page 8 and page 10 respectively), the ACRB has a high level of exposure to increased investigative timelines because its investigative resources can be significantly reduced by staff life events. This is a critical issue for the agency because citizens and officers desire quick resolutions to complaints. Long investigations are subject to witness and complainant disappearances and an officer’s lack of memory of events. We noticed this in 2017 when the investigative team experienced long term medical absences and retirement. With only two investigators, it is difficult to absorb extended investigator absences and vacancies. To relieve the pressure on the investigative team, the agency hired a part-time investigator to assist with complaint investigations. The agency will need to pursue a third investigator to not only reduce the ratio of investigators to officers, but also ensure that the agency does not begin to experience investigation backlogs and reduce or maintain the average investigative timeline.
Community Outreach

Community outreach is an ongoing activity that requires consistent engagement with the residents of Atlanta. For the ACRB to meet the needs of the community, outreach is a necessary activity that must be actively pursued. Outreach through awareness building and community education is an investment in building stronger bonds of trust with the community so that when a need arises citizens can trust that the city, through the ACRB, is prepared to independently and objectively review, investigate and adjudicate the actions of an officer to ensure the public that police misconduct will be handled. We are constantly challenged to increase our visibility throughout the city of Atlanta. Community activism and news media reports help build awareness of the agency by pushing the concerns about police misconduct beyond the communities that most often experience it and most likely encourages individuals do their part to correct police misconduct by reporting their concerns to the agency. Currently, the ACRB is using all the traditional methods of community outreach and working hard to improve its use of social media. Traditional methods of mass media are at times cost prohibitive and is not sustainable for an ongoing outreach effort. One issue that we hope to resolve is moving from the use of personal vehicles for conducting outreach to city vehicles that would not only serve as transportation, but also as community messaging that builds awareness and increases visibility and neighborhood accessibility. To address this challenge the ACRB will need to pursue and secure at least two agency vehicles to effectively address the above concerns.

Not-Sustained Complaints

Some citizens express concern with the high percentage of not sustained complaints, and question if the filing of a complaint is worth the effort if the Board is going to render a not sustained decision on their complaint. In 2017, 48% of the complaints were not sustained. As mentioned on page 14, not sustained complaints are not determinations that there was no officer wrongdoing, it is usually a decision that there was not enough evidence to support that the officer engaged in wrongful actions. One should not be discouraged from filing a complaint because of the not sustained percentage. Filing a complaint is direct action to confront potential officer misconduct in a way that is recorded, assessed, examined, and communicated to the elected officials and the public. It creates an official record of officers’ actions. It is an effective method to bring attention to officers who are displaying conduct that potentially needs to be addressed and places the law enforcement
departments on notice about an officer’s actions. As more body-worn camera footage becomes available there may be a shift in the percentages of the categories of complaint decisions. We anticipate that the footage may allow more definitive decisions as to what did or what did not occur during a citizen officer interaction.

**Complainant’s Race**

Historically, African Americans have filed the majority of complaints with the ACRB. In 2017, African Americans filed 76% of assigned complaints against the city’s law enforcement officers, while the majority of officers receiving complaints are African American. These yearly high percentages have caused the agency to question and examine why this is the case year after year. One could conclude that race is not the only factor that contributes to the disproportionate percentage of African Americans filing complaints and African Americans officers receiving the majority of complaints. Methods of policing, officer assignments, lack of understanding and sensitivity of community norms, types of crimes, access to other avenues to resolve complaints against officers, officer perspectives of the different communities, administration response to misconduct, and the community’s response to law enforcement, are among other factors that need to be examined. The agency will examine the concerns that some citizens have expressed that policing is different in certain parts of the city. We may need to consider how community perspectives on policing and the response of officers to different communities impact those who choose to file or not file complaints. We may also need to consider the different communities’ access and availability of other methods used to resolve citizen concerns before official complaints are filed. For example, does the community have a positive relationship with the local precinct; are there intermediaries within the community to help with the local officers when concerns arise; how intimately involved, as opposed to superficially involved, are the officers in daily community interactions.

Clearly, embarking on a deeper examination of the intersection of race, class, geographic location, departmental culture, and police misconduct complaints will be a major undertaking and may lead to uncomfortable truths. Nevertheless, an objective and thorough examination is necessary to better understand what is needed to lower the percentage of African Americans filing complaints. This examination will be broader than merely placing blame on the community or police officers. The challenge of conducting such an examination involves gathering comments and perspectives of
citizens and officers in a manner that promotes trust and free expression by creating a safe space for open and honest dialogue with the agency. Consequently, this type of examination would require the cooperation of APD officers and community members.

**APD Sustained Complaints**

From the citizen perspective, APD responses to ACRB sustained complaints is one of the most important statistics that the agency provides to the public. APD responses to ACRB sustained complaints for year-end reports have been in the low 20% range for several years. The ACRB and the APD have not completely identified the issues that contribute to these low percentages. Since the 2016 ordinance changes, we have collected nearly a year and half of APD responses on ACRB sustained complaints to start an examination of the APD decisions and the rationales for the decisions made. An examination of this documentation should place the ACRB and APD in a better position to begin addressing the low percentage of agreement on ACRB sustained complaints. Chief Erika Shields, in addressing the Board, said she would look into the disparity in sustained complaints.

Another concern that the ACRB will need to monitor closely are the pending decisions on ACRB sustained complaints. Despite the ACRB conducting the complaint investigation within 180 days, APD decisions on ACRB sustained complaints that take many months to complete or communicate to the ACRB can give the appearance that the ACRB is not responsive to citizens. The ordinance provision that requires the APD and ACD to provide status letters every 45 days was added to the ordinance to serve as a reminder that a citizen is awaiting a decision on a complaint and to provide the ACRB with current information to advise citizens of the status of their complaints.
The ACRB has jurisdiction to receive and investigate citizen complaints against Atlanta Corrections Department (ACD) officers. Historically, the ACRB has received very few complaints against ACD officers. In 2017, the agency received three complaints involving officers from the ACD; one was assigned for investigation.

The ACRB has maintained a presence at the city jail for several years. The agency is listed on the inmate contact list and is included as a streamer on the corrections tv monitor. However, the agency has been challenged to identify a way to make the agency brochure available to the inmates.

Over the years, the ACRB and ACD have maintained a positive working relationship. Last year, ACD provided the ACRB members and staff a tour of the jail. The ACD has always provided timely responses to ACRB complaints. In 2018, the ACRB anticipates having training with ACD OPS investigators on the policies and procedures for corrections.
Mediation

The ACRB Mediation Program provides an opportunity for citizens and officers to meet face-to-face to discuss their complaints for possible resolutions with the assistance of third-party mediators. Citizens and officers can share their perspectives of incidents in a supportive environment. If a complaint meets the criteria for mediation, the ACRB investigator may present mediation as an option for the parties to resolve the complaint.

The mediation program became operational in September 2017. Seven complaints were referred to mediation of which four mediations were held. All four were successfully mediated. The mediated complaints averaged 48 days to resolution. Feedback from citizen and officer participants indicate that mediation was a positive and rewarding experience. Moreover, officers have stated that they would like to have the mediation program expanded to include citizen complaints filed with APD.

We are excited about the potential that this program can have in increasing the dialogue and shared understanding between citizens and officers with the goal of respectful conflict resolution.
The Board’s commitment to community outreach and engagement extends well beyond its public meetings that occur on the second Thursday of every month in City Hall. From marches to festivals and community education activities, the ACRB participated in over 100 events during 2017, reaching thousands of city residents and visitors. The agency was fortunate to have several celebrities/local activists to assist the agency with its mediation outreach campaign. Actress Jasmine Guy promoted anonymous complaint filings. Actors Cree Davis and Joel Rush provided Public Service Announcements for the mediation program. We greatly appreciate their interest in the ACRB and their support of the agency.

The agency partnered and worked with many organizations and entities to conduct community outreach. Many thanks to the Atlanta Fulton Public Library System, Azalea City (GA) Chapter of the Links Incorporated, Dick Blick Art Materials, and Atlanta University Center’s Communiversity to mention a few.

The ACRB also made mediation presentations to nearly 85% of the APD patrol officers. Those presentations proved to be invaluable opportunities to hear from the officers, answer their questions, address their concerns, and explain the ACRB’s work.
The ACRB continued to utilize the Community Outreach Volunteer Ambassador Program (COVAP) members to assist with our outreach effort. We created an Integrity Street Team (IST) to assist with intensive community outreach that involved greater interaction with the public.

The agency also continued to use radio and television exposure to spread the ACRB message.

Additionally, the ACRB conducted its ongoing Know Your Rights trainings before various groups and organizations throughout the year. We structure every training to the audience to ensure that we address the concerns that related mostly to what they might be encountering during interactions with law enforcement. Trainings are offered to everyone, from students to homeless individuals.

A full list of our outreach activities can be found in the appendix. For a list of Community Outreach activities, see p. 26.
2018 is the 10th anniversary of when the ACRB opened its doors to serve the residents and visitors of Atlanta. The agency has come a long way in those ten years, but there is still much work to be done.

In 2018, the ACRB will continue to work with the APD to reduce the difference between the ACRB sustained complaints and the chief of police decisions on those types of complaints. This is an issue that has plagued the ACRB for years. We are hopeful that with the review and discussion of the recent Chief’s response letters on ACRB sustained complaints we will begin to make progress on bringing the ACRB and APD into closer alignment on sustained ACRB complaints. Now that nearly all officers have body-worn cameras, we will close watch how the use of the cameras affects the filing and investigation of citizen complaints. Lastly, we anticipate continuing the success of our mediation program.

The ACRB is committed to community engagement. We will continue to increase our presence in the community in 2018. Our goal for 2018 is to receive greater feedback on how we can increase our service level to the community. We plan to conduct surveys and focus groups to obtain this feedback.

Thank you for taking the time to read the ACRB 2017 Annual Report.
2017 OUTREACH EVENTS
Agencies, Groups & People with Whom ACRB Collaborated

January
Breakfast Meeting of the Concerned Black Clergy of Metropolitan Atlanta (Each Month)- 40 people each month
The MLK Parade and March to the MLK Center- 20 participants
Meeting of the Georgia Coalition for the People’s Agenda (Each Month)- 15 people each month
Entertainer, Local Activist Jasmine Guy Shoots Anonymous Complaint P.S.A.- 1 person
Entertainer, Local Activist Joel Rush Shoots Mediation P.S.A.- 1 person
Entertainer, Local Activist Cree Davis Shoots Mediation P.S.A.- 1 person
Auburn Avenue Research Library for African American Culture and History KNOW YOUR RIGHTS Meeting- 1 person

February
SW Branch of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System, Storytime Reading Event- 25 kids and parents
Martin Luther King Jr. Branch of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System Storytime Reading Event- 40 kids and parents

March
CBS46 Weekend News Anchor Megan Packer Interviews Lee Reid- tens of thousands
Azalea City (GA) Chapter the Links Incorporated Sponsors a Leadership Event- 12 members
Leadership Event at Covenant House- 50 young adults

April
Lakewood Christian Manor Senior Center’s Annual Revival Event- 100 residents
SW Branch of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System Summer Reading Kickoff- 40 kids and parents
Trans Housing Atlanta Event- 200 attendees
Atlanta University Center’s Communiversity Event- 300 students

May
Entertainer, Local Activist N. Kozmo Miller Interview- 1 person
The Original Sweet Auburn Springfest- 5,000 attendees
Local Activist and Board Member Tamara Orange Meeting- 1 person

June
Captain Integrity Visits the Hapeville Branch of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System- 20 kids
Juneteenth Atlanta Parade & Music Festival (THE FIRST Integrity Street Team Event, June 16-17, 2017), Morris Brown College, 643 Martin Luther King Jr Dr NW, Atlanta, GA 30314
Outdoor Summer Reading Event at the Buckhead Branch of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System- 700 patrons
Stand Down Day for Veterans at the Reverend James Orange Park- 200 attendees
Entertainment Producer Leslie Topps- 1 person
Atlanta’s Thomasville Heights Outdoor Community Event- 50 participants
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS TRAINING WORKSHOP at the South Fulton Branch of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System- 30 kids
Screening of Ava Duvernay’s Film The 13th and panel discussion featuring Lee Reid at the Auburn Avenue Research Library Branch of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System- 50 attendees
2017 OUTREACH EVENTS (Continued)

July
American Medical Response (AMR) Annual Safety Event- 200 attendees
Fulton Atlanta Community Action Authority (FACAA) Meeting with Sharon Quinn, Assistant Vice President, Programming Services (and two associates) - 3 people
NPU M Meeting on ACRB Mediation at the MLK Recreation Center- 5 people
Burgers & Backpacks Event Sponsored by the Greater Vine City Opportunities Program, Inc.- 250 residents
English Avenue Neighborhood Association, Inc.
The Vertical Church – Atlanta
Lakewood Amphitheatre PRAISE IN THE PARK Event- 5,000 attendees
PRAISE 102.5 FM Radio- tens of thousands

August
City of Miami Community Advisory Board Member Meeting- 1 person
ACRB Community Board Meeting at the Rosel Fann Recreation Center- 30 attendees
Super Hero Captain Integrity Visits the MLK Library Branch of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System- 75 youngsters, parents and teachers

September
2017 Family Life Conference at the Calvary Temple Baptist Church, 700 Cooper Street Atlanta, GA 30315- 300 participants
Super Hero Captain Integrity Visits the Hapeville Branch of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library System- 100 youngsters
The Rally for Prevention and Recovery Outdoor Event Sponsored by the Street Smart Youth Project, Inc.- 1000 participants
Community Accessibility Education Forum w/Councilperson Julian Bond, ACRB Board Member Tracee McDaniel and ACRB PIO Charles Curry at the Rosel Fann Recreation Center – 30 participants

October
A KNOW YOUR RIGHTS Presentation Covenant House Georgia, 1559 Johnson Rd NW, Atlanta, GA 30318- 40 residents
Lee Reid Speaks Before the GA Coalition for the People’s Agenda at the Wheat Street Baptist Church- 50 members
Fulton County Sheriff’s Office 8th Annual Youth Conference entitled, H.Y.P.E. 2017 - 1500 participants
9th Annual Festival of Lights Parade & Outdoor Celebration Sponsored by the Historic Westside Cultural Arts Council- 2000 residents

November
WCLK JAZZ 91.9 Radio, Clark Atlanta University- tens of thousands
Community ACRB Meeting at the MLK Recreation Center- 12 attendees
City of Atlanta Youth Advisory Board- 25 young adults
ACRB & Santa’s Arrival at Greenbriar Mall- hundreds of patrons

December
2018 Art and Essay Contest Kick Off
The Atlanta Citizen Review Board is a proud agency of the City of Atlanta.

Atlanta Citizen Review Board (ACRB)
CITY OF ATLANTA
City Hall Tower, Suite 9100
55 Trinity Avenue, SW
Atlanta, GA 30303

Phone: (404) 865-8622
Fax: (404) 546-8401

E-mail: acrb@atlantaga.gov [www.acrbgov.org](http://www.acrbgov.org)

LIKE US!
[www.facebook.com/AtlantaCitizenReviewBoard](http://www.facebook.com/AtlantaCitizenReviewBoard)