



CITY OF CHICAGO
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

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Follow-up to OIG's Evaluation of Fairness and Consistency in the Disciplinary Process for Chicago Police Department Members

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Introduction

The Public Safety section of the City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (OIG) has completed a follow-up to its June 2022 evaluation, Fairness and Consistency in the Disciplinary Process for Chicago Police Department (CPD or the Department) Members.¹ In its 2022 report, OIG evaluated the policies and procedures of CPD's Bureau of Internal Affairs (BIA), the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA), and the Chicago Police Board in recommending and reviewing discipline for sustained allegations of misconduct by CPD members. OIG made recommendations for corrective actions to the evaluated agencies and to the Department of Law (DOL). In this follow-up, OIG assesses the corrective actions taken by the agencies in response to each recommendation.

The disciplinary process for CPD members with sustained allegations of misconduct has distinct phases, including the recommendation, issuance, grievance, and implementation of discipline.² The City of Chicago's process for recommending discipline for sustained misconduct allegations against CPD members is complex.³ It involves multiple City agencies and is guided by Departmental directives and collective bargaining agreements (CBAs). The evaluated entities, BIA, COPA, and the Police Board, play different roles in the disciplinary process. BIA and COPA are the primary investigating entities for allegations of misconduct by CPD members, while the Police Board decides on any non-concurrence on recommended discipline between the CPD Superintendent and COPA and on grievances to issued discipline sought by accused CPD members. If BIA or COPA sustains one or more allegations of misconduct, it recommends an associated disciplinary penalty. This recommended discipline is subject to review and change by the member's chain of command before CPD's Superintendent ultimately decides on and issues discipline to the member.⁴ Pursuant to the Municipal Code of Chicago (MCC), in cases in which the Superintendent disagrees with COPA on its finding or disciplinary recommendation, a single member of the Police Board will decide whether the Superintendent has carried their burden of overcoming COPA's recommendation for discipline.⁵ Once final discipline is issued, the accused member may challenge the penalty through a disciplinary grievance procedure, depending on several factors—including the rank or position of the accused member and the level of discipline recommended.⁶ Two such

¹ City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, "Fairness and Consistency in the Disciplinary Process for Chicago Police Department Members," June 6, 2022, <https://igchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Fairness-and-Consistency-in-the-Disciplinary-Process-for-Chicago-Police-Department-Members.pdf>.

² City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, "CPD Disciplinary Process Overview," <https://igchicago.org/cpd-disciplinary-overview/>.

³ At the conclusion of a misconduct investigation, investigating agencies determine whether each allegation is Unfounded, Exonerated, Not Sustained, or Sustained. An "Unfounded" finding means that the allegation is determined to be false. An "Exonerated" finding means that the incident occurred, but the actions of the accused were determined to be lawful and proper. A "Not Sustained" finding means that there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. A "Sustained" allegation means that the allegation is supported by a preponderance of the evidence. General Order G08-01 Complaint and Disciplinary System," December 29, 2023, accessed July 24, 2025, <http://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6362>.

⁴ For a detailed description of the agencies' jurisdiction and roles in the disciplinary process for CPD members, see OIG's original report, page 9.

City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, "Fairness and Consistency in the Disciplinary Process for Chicago Police Department Members," page 9.

⁵ City of Chicago, Municipal Code, §2-78-120.

⁶ City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, "Review of the Disciplinary Grievance Procedure for Chicago Police Department Members," May 20, 2021, <https://igchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/OIG-Review-of-the-Disciplinary-Grievance-Procedure-for-Chicago-Police-Department-Members.pdf>.

avenues for challenging an issued discipline include arbitration—a resolution to a grievance brought by a sworn member through a third-party arbitrator—or a hearing in front of the Police Board.

A | Recent Changes Regarding Arbitration in CPD Discipline

At the time of OIG’s original report, cases involving severe discipline were required to be adjudicated by the Police Board. That is, the Police Board automatically adjudicated all issued separations for sworn members, suspensions greater than 365 days for sworn, non-exempt members (i.e., members covered by a collective bargaining agreement), and suspensions greater than 30 days for sworn, exempt members. However, in March 2024, Circuit Court of Cook County Judge Michael Mullen ruled, allowing for arbitration in cases of separation or suspensions greater than 365 days for sworn, non-exempt members. Judge Mullen also ruled that those hearings must be open to the public. In April 2024, the Chicago Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), the collective bargaining unit that represents CPD members below the rank of Sergeant, appealed that ruling to the Appellate Court of Illinois for the First District, asking for arbitration hearings to be held in a private forum. On August 8, 2025, the Appellate Court of Illinois for the First District ruled that arbitrations involving serious discipline for police misconduct must be open to the public stating that “closed arbitration hearings for serious police misconduct violates the well-defined and dominant public policies of effective law enforcement, the exposure of crime to protect the citizens of this State, and police accountability and transparency.”⁷ In a separate inquiry published in May 2021, “Review of the Disciplinary Grievance Procedure for Chicago Police Department Members,” OIG found that the arbitration process often lacks transparency, and arbitrators exercise broad discretion in their reviews of grievance cases.⁸ The risks OIG identified with arbitration raise future concerns for the consistency, fairness, and transparency regarding discipline for CPD members.

B | OIG’s Original Inquiry

OIG’s original inquiry found that the existing BIA, COPA, and Police Board policies did not provide clear and actionable guidance to agency personnel to ensure procedural consistency and fairness in disciplinary determinations across misconduct investigations. The absence of sufficiently robust policy guidance risked that the disciplinary process could be unpredictable for involved members and could result in arbitrary disciplinary outcomes. OIG concluded that while the investigating and reviewing agencies must consider different facts in each disciplinary case, they should follow consistent and fair procedures to guide that consideration.

Based on those findings, OIG made four recommendations aimed at improving consistency and fairness in the disciplinary process. First, OIG recommended that COPA should revise its policies to ensure consistency and accuracy across the agency’s Employee Policy Handbook, two Investigations Manuals, and any additional policies it issues. Second, OIG recommended that BIA and COPA revise their policies to require that personnel developing disciplinary recommendations document mitigating and aggravating factors and how they influenced the disciplinary recommendation. Third, OIG recommended that appropriate representatives of BIA, COPA, and the Police Board solicit feedback from one another and the unions representing CPD members, as appropriate and required by law, to develop a standardized list of aggravating and mitigating factors

⁷ *Chicago John Dineen Lodge #7 v. City of Chicago*, 2025 IL App (1st) 240875.

⁸ City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, “Review of the Disciplinary Grievance Procedure for Chicago Police Department Members,” May 20, 2021, <https://igchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/OIG-Review-of-the-Disciplinary-Grievance-Procedure-for-Chicago-Police-Department-Members.pdf>.

to be used as an advisory tool to formulate disciplinary recommendations and review discipline. OIG noted that any resulting list of factors should be made publicly available. Fourth, OIG recommended that DOL provide legal guidance to BIA and COPA to support the development of a single, standardized list of aggravating and mitigating factors that could serve as guidelines to be used in determining disciplinary recommendations for CPD members of any rank or position.

C | OIG's Follow-Up Inquiry

OIG has inquired about the corrective actions taken by CPD, COPA, the Police Board, and DOL in response to the recommendations in its original report. Based on the responses, OIG concludes that CPD and COPA have implemented corrective actions to varying degrees. Further, the Police Board disagreed with OIG's recommendation and has not taken any responsive action, while OIG's recommendation to DOL is not yet applicable. Specifically, COPA has partially implemented OIG's recommendation to revise policies to ensure consistency and accuracy across the agency's Employee Policy Handbook, Investigative Manuals, and other additional policies by drafting a new policy guidance (Recommendation 1). Furthermore, by introducing new relevant forms and templates, COPA has also partially implemented OIG's recommendation to document the consideration of aggravating and mitigating factors in disciplinary review (Recommendation 2). CPD has fully implemented Recommendation 2 by revising an existing directive and integrating the updated policy into training modules.

However, CPD, COPA, and the Police Board have not implemented OIG's recommendation to develop a single, standardized list of aggravating and mitigating factors to be used as an advisory tool for disciplinary recommendations and subsequent review of discipline (Recommendation 3). Similarly, though DOL reported that it continues to provide legal guidance to COPA and BIA in accordance with the consent decree, OIG did not assess DOL's corrective actions because CPD, COPA, and the Police Board have not developed a standardized list of factors used to decide upon disciplinary recommendations (Recommendation 4). The lack of interagency guidance is concerning for ensuring consistency in the disciplinary process, given the absence of a police disciplinary matrix, as OIG discusses below.

D | The City's Police Disciplinary Matrix

OIG's original inquiry reported that both BIA and COPA had ceased use of a disciplinary matrix, referred to as the Complaint Register (CR) Matrix, following the FOP's challenge to its use alleging a violation of the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act.⁹ Introduced in February 2017, the CR Matrix provided a range of discipline for each category of misconduct and rule violation, to be adjusted based on the severity and circumstances of the misconduct. While the FOP challenged CPD's introduction of the CR Matrix, which had not been bargained for, an administrative law judge found that, "Over the years, the Department received complaints and feedback from arbitrators, the court, and the [FOP] that there were no clear guidelines for the penalties the Department recommended. Specifically, the [FOP] complained that officers in different units were not treated consistently with respect to the disciplinary penalties they received."¹⁰ According to the CPD's

⁹ City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, "Fairness and Consistency in the Disciplinary Process for Chicago Police Department Members," p. 22.

State of Illinois Labor Relations Board Local Panel. 2017. "Case No. L-CA-17-034," accessed April 8, 2025, <https://ilrb.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/ilrb/decisions/boarddecisions/documents/l-ca-17-034bd.pdf>.

¹⁰ State of Illinois Labor Relations Board Local Panel. 2017. "Case No. L-CA-17-034."

“Complaint Register Matrix Guidelines,” the goal of the matrix was to aid “in imposing consistent penalties in cases involving similar misconduct.”¹¹ In addition to improving internal consistency of disciplinary penalties issued to CPD members, the administrative law judge noted that CPD had “developed the CR Matrix so that the public would be aware of how the Department perceived the relative seriousness of the violations and the penalties that the Department would impose in response to those violations.”¹² Finally, the CR Matrix was advisory in nature (i.e., non-binding), meaning that an investigating agency could recommend a penalty outside of the ranges established in the matrix, provided that a written explanation was included in the investigative file articulating the factors justifying the penalty.

Following a ruling by an administrative law judge, both CPD and COPA had discontinued use of the CR Matrix in determining recommended disciplinary penalties by June 2018.¹³ In a Decision and Order issued June 5, 2018, the Illinois Labor Relations Board (ILRB) stated that it would hold the case in abeyance so that the parties could “explore avenues for agreement” and directed the parties “to report on the status of their negotiations.”¹⁴ The ILRB most recently issued a decision in April 2025 to continue to hold the case in abeyance until September 1, 2025.¹⁵ In response to OIG’s follow-up inquiry, CPD reported that the CR Matrix remains unused, that it “is awaiting a Memorandum of Understanding with the FOP,” that “[n]o revisions have taken place,” and that “[n]egotiations with the FOP are ongoing.” Although the Illinois Police Benevolent and Protection Association (PBPA), the collective bargaining unit that represents CPD members at the rank of Sergeant and above, was not party to the aforementioned lawsuit or subject to that ruling, per interviews with CPD and COPA, neither agency uses the CR Matrix for PBPA members either. Nearly seven years have passed since CPD and COPA have used a disciplinary matrix to guide and ensure consistency in their disciplinary recommendations for sustained allegations of police misconduct following the challenge by the FOP. Without such a matrix, CPD members are hindered in their ability to understand and anticipate the disciplinary consequences of certain conduct, and the public is unable to ascertain the seriousness to which the Department views different types of conduct or have confidence in the proportionality of the proposed penalty ranges. OIG urges CPD, DOL, the FOP, and other relevant bargaining units to begin progress on a revised disciplinary matrix (see Conclusion). As of July 2025, COPA and CPD have convened a working group “focused on aligning disciplinary recommendations for police misconduct.”¹⁶

In the following section, for each recommendation issued in the original inquiry, OIG summarizes the agencies’ responses to OIG’s follow-up inquiry and any reported corrective actions.

We thank the staff and leadership of CPD, COPA, the Police Board, and DOL for their cooperation during the evaluation and responsiveness to OIG’s follow-up inquiry.

¹¹ Chicago Police Department, “Chicago Police Department Complaint Register Matrix Guidelines,” January 20, 2017.

¹² State of Illinois Labor Relations Board Local Panel. 2017. “Case No. L-CA-17-034.”

¹³ State of Illinois Labor Relations Board Local Panel. 2017. “Case No. L-CA-17-034.”

¹⁴ State of Illinois Labor Relations Board Local Panel. 2017. “Case No. L-CA-17-034.”

¹⁵ State of Illinois Labor Relations Board Local Panel. 2025. “Case No. L-CA-17-034,” accessed May 28, 2025, <https://ilrb.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/ilrb/decisions/boarddecisions/documents/L-CA-17-034%20Final%20bd%20decision%204.16.25.pdf>.

¹⁶ Civilian Office of Police Accountability, “2025 Second Quarter Report,” accessed August 19, 2025, <https://www.chicagocopa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2025-Q2-Report-1.pdf>.

II | Follow-Up Results

OIG has conducted a follow-up inquiry to its June 2022 evaluation of Fairness and Consistency in the Disciplinary Process for CPD Members.¹⁷ The four respondent agencies—CPD, COPA, the Chicago Police Board, and DOL—reported to OIG on corrective actions they have taken and provided supporting documentation with varying levels of detail. Below are summaries of OIG’s original finding, the four associated recommendations, and the status of each agency’s corrective actions as of August 2025.

A | Finding 1: The policies and procedures used by BIA, COPA, and the Police Board for determining discipline are insufficient to ensure consistency and fairness

OIG Recommendation 1 | COPA

COPA should revise its policies to ensure consistency and accuracy across the agency’s Employee Policy Handbook, two Investigations Manuals, and any additional policies that the agency issues.

State of Corrective Action 1 | Partially Implemented

In response to OIG’s original report, COPA agreed to revise its investigative policies. COPA noted that any such policy changes must be approved by the Independent Monitoring Team (IMT) and the Office of the Illinois Attorney General (OAG), as well as by COPA’s Community Policy Review Working Group. As such, COPA stated that “this process inherently must be implemented progressively at the agency level.” Beyond its investigative policies, COPA further added that it was in the process of “standardizing and systematizing” all its policies to increase public accessibility.

In its response to OIG’s follow-up inquiry, COPA reported that it has drafted a “Disciplinary and Remedial Recommendations Policy Guidance” Document. This draft policy guidance is intended to supplement the agency’s existing Disciplinary Recommendations Policy in the COPA Employee Policy Handbook. The existing policy outlines how COPA should arrive at disciplinary recommendations from investigations consistently and fairly. The purpose of the draft policy guidance is to further improve consistency, transparency, and fairness in the disciplinary decision-making process. The draft policy guidance includes a list of aggravating and mitigating factors to consider in penalty recommendations. According to a memo from COPA to the IMT, this list of factors reflects feedback from CPD staff, COPA staff, and the community. The draft policy guidance also contains instructions for using other materials involved in the disciplinary recommendation process. It outlines the order in which different forms should be completed and how they should help inform the determination of penalty recommendations. COPA explained that this draft policy guidance “clearly defines staff roles and the process for making a disciplinary recommendation across all misconduct cases,” and is to be “implemented across all investigatory teams.” Moreover, while it is intended to be a resource for investigators, the guidance notes that it is an “internal, non-mandatory tool” in its disciplinary recommendation process. COPA reported that, as of August 2025, it was awaiting feedback from the IMT before implementing the policy guidance.

¹⁷ City of Chicago Office of Inspector General “Fairness and Consistency in the Disciplinary Process,” Publication Date June 6, 2022, <https://igchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Fairness-and-Consistency-in-the-Disciplinary-Process-for-Chicago-Police-Department-Members.pdf>.

Furthermore, OIG's original report found that COPA's Investigations Manuals contained outdated and no longer practiced guidance. For example, the manuals for COPA's Investigations Section instructed investigators to use either a "Disciplinary Recommendation Form" or a "Disciplinary Recommendation Memorandum," depending on the level of discipline. The manuals also recommended that discipline should be consistent with the CR Matrix. However, OIG found that at that time, neither the Form, the Memorandum, nor the CR Matrix was used in practice. As mentioned, COPA provided OIG its draft "Disciplinary and Remedial Recommendations Policy Guidance," which outlines the disciplinary recommendation process and does not reference outdated forms or the CR Matrix. COPA shared that the draft "Disciplinary and Remedial Recommendations Policy Guidance" will be integrated into COPA's Operations Manual and trainings once finalized.

OIG's original report also concluded that while COPA's Employee Handbook recommended investigators should consistently determine and apply disciplinary penalties, the Handbook did not provide sufficient guidance for making disciplinary recommendations to ensure consistency across recommendations being made. COPA's draft "Disciplinary and Remedial Recommendations Policy Guidance" addresses this, providing specific guidelines to enhance consistency in the determination of disciplinary recommendations.

Finally, OIG's original report determined that COPA updated its Employee Policy Handbook in a piecemeal fashion, revising individual policies and adding them to the handbook without removing rescinded policies. OIG also highlighted that COPA's Handbook was still dated "2018," notwithstanding revisions that had taken place after 2018. As of this follow-up, the Handbook is still dated 2018, and COPA reported that it includes rescinded policies in its Employee Handbook for staff awareness. However, COPA reported that it is developing an updated Employee Handbook that will have a separate archived policy directory. Regarding the accessibility of policies to staff, COPA shared that "COPA policies and guidance are available to staff in a single digital portal." As it continues to standardize its policies, COPA stated that it intends to expand the portal, making it "more accessible to staff" and available to the public.

COPA's draft "Disciplinary and Remedial Recommendations Policy Guidance" shows progress towards ensuring consistency and accuracy across the agency's policies but has not yet been finalized or implemented, as it awaits review by the IMT. Further, COPA has not yet removed rescinded policies from its Employee Handbook nor directly addressed the outdated processes in its Investigations Manuals. At this time, OIG concludes that COPA has partially implemented this recommendation.

OIG Recommendation 2 | CPD, COPA

BIA and COPA should revise their respective policies to require that personnel developing disciplinary recommendations must document that they have considered whether any mitigating and aggravating factors are relevant to the determination of recommended discipline, and if so, they must document what mitigating or aggravating factors were considered and how they influenced the disciplinary recommendation.

State of Corrective Action 2 | Fully Implemented (CPD)

In its original response to OIG's recommendation, CPD stated that it was in the process of revising a number of policies related to the documentation of aggravating and mitigating factors in the

determination of disciplinary recommendations. Specifically, the Department highlighted a then-draft revision to “Special Order S08-01-01: Conducting Log Number Investigations,” which stated:

In sustained cases, for purposes of making discipline recommendations, BIA investigators and accountability sergeants must obtain and consider the accused member’s complimentary and disciplinary history, and this must be documented in the file. Any aggravating or mitigating circumstances pertinent to the sustained violation, or reflected in the history, must be identified and articulated as a basis of the disciplinary recommendation.

In response to OIG’s original report, the Department referred to this language as a revision to “Special Order S08-01-01: Conducting Log Number Investigations.” According to CPD’s Departmental Directive System, the directive has since been reclassified to “Special Order S08-01-05: Conducting Log Number Investigations.”¹⁸ The above policy language can now be found in “Special Order S08-01-09: Requirements of a Complete Log Number Investigative File.”¹⁹ Each directive took effect on December 31, 2022. The Department additionally noted that instructions for the documentation of aggravating and mitigating factors had been added to certain BIA investigator trainings, such as the Findings and Recommendations onboarding module. The Findings and Recommendations onboarding module states, “If the investigator finds any aggravating or mitigating factors that they use when considering the disciplinary decision, these factors must be explicitly identified, consistently applied, and thoroughly documented in the narrative of the closing report.” CPD also reported that this topic has also been addressed in other Department, OAG, and IMT approved trainings, including trainings for BIA investigators and District accountability sergeants. Lastly, CPD highlighted that all BIA investigators and District accountability sergeants have access to a SharePoint site to review the training materials as needed. Based on CPD’s related updated policy and trainings, OIG concludes it has fully implemented this recommendation.

State of Corrective Action 2 | Partially Implemented (COPA)

COPA also agreed with this recommendation in its response to OIG’s original report. At the time, COPA stated that it was in the process of updating guidance for the consideration of mitigating and aggravating factors in Final Summary Reports (FSRs). COPA also responded that it had begun “implementing corrective review measures” to ensure appropriate documentation of these factors.

According to COPA, FSRs are “intended to serve as the written memorialization of COPA’s analysis of the evidence and investigative Findings” for misconduct cases resulting in findings of Sustained, Not Sustained, Exonerated, Unfounded, or “within policy” determinations. COPA’s “Final Summary Report” policy, effective 2021, outlines the required components and the approval process for FSRs.²⁰ In its response to OIG’s follow-up inquiry, COPA additionally reported that it had updated its FSR template and created an accompanying internal guidance, titled “Final Summary Report Closures,” in 2023, which provides practical guidance for staff completing the FSR. The guidance states that the Recommended Discipline section of the FSR should contain “a discussion on mitigating or aggravating factors considered.” Although the “Final Summary Report Closures”

¹⁸ Chicago Police Department, “Special Order S08-01-05: Conducting Log Number Investigations,” December 31, 2022, accessed May 12, 2025, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6857>.

¹⁹ Chicago Police Department, “Special Order S08-01-09: Requirements of a Complete Log Number Investigative File,” Section III.A.10, December 31, 2022, accessed May 12, 2025, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6582>.

²⁰ Civilian Office of Police Accountability, “Final Summary Report,” accessed February 28, 2025, https://www.chicagocopa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/COPA-Policy_Final-Summary-Report_FINAL_2021-07-30.pdf

guidance includes a discussion of aggravating and mitigating factors, COPA's "Final Summary Report" policy does not mandate consideration of these factors. However, COPA's draft "Disciplinary and Remedial Recommendations Policy Guidance" will require investigators to document aggravating and mitigating factors, once in effect.

Specifically, COPA highlighted its draft "Disciplinary and Remedial Recommendations Policy Guidance" as an instructional document on documenting aggravating and mitigating factors in recommending discipline. It also provides staff with descriptions of aggravating and mitigating factors. Similar to its "Final Summary Report Closures" guidance, COPA's draft policy guidance explains how to complete the Recommended Discipline paragraph of the FSR. However, the draft "Disciplinary and Remedial Recommendations Policy Guidance" expands upon the existing guidance for FSR closures. It states that COPA personnel should include in the FSR "the total number of aggravating and mitigating factors and how those factors were used to arrive at a disciplinary recommendation."

Furthermore, COPA's draft "Disciplinary and Remedial Recommendations Policy Guidance" introduces the Aggravating and Mitigating Factors (AMF) Form, a rubric for COPA staff to identify, explain, and document specific aggravating and mitigating factors. The form contains space to document applicable factors in a case, the rationale for inclusion, and the relevant evidence in question. COPA reported that the completed AMF Form will be reviewed by the Supervising Investigator and the Deputy Chief Administrator, in addition to a Quality Management Analyst. As mentioned, COPA reported that the draft policy guidance and the associated AMF Form have not yet been implemented because the draft policy guidance awaits IMT review.

Once implemented, the draft policy guidance and AMF Form would make this recommendation fully implemented. However, as this process has not yet taken effect, OIG concludes that COPA has partially implemented this recommendation.

OIG Recommendation 3 | CPD, COPA, Police Board

Appropriate representatives of BIA, COPA, and the Police Board should solicit feedback from one another and the unions representing CPD members, as appropriate and required by law, to develop a single, standardized list of aggravating and mitigating factors which may be consulted on an advisory basis for the purposes of formulating disciplinary recommendations and subsequent review of discipline. Any resulting list of factors should be made publicly available.

State of Corrective Action 3 | Not Implemented (CPD)

In the absence of a disciplinary matrix, OIG's original report recommended developing a public, standardized list of aggravating and mitigating factors to be considered by investigators. As mentioned, the disciplinary matrix—or the "CR matrix"—previously used by CPD and COPA, has been discontinued as the City and the FOP work towards an agreement in Case No. L-CA-17-034 before the Illinois Labor Relations Board.²¹

In its initial response to OIG's recommendation, CPD stated that it would seek an agreement with the FOP to develop a matrix to use consistently in its disciplinary decision-making. CPD also stated that its Labor Relations Division would solicit feedback from its members' unions regarding any

²¹ State of Illinois Labor Relations Board Local Panel. 2017. "Case No. L-CA-17-034."

standardized list of aggravating and mitigating factors developed by BIA, COPA, and the Police Board.

In its response to OIG's follow-up inquiry, CPD reported that the CR Matrix is not currently in use or available to the public or to CPD members. CPD further reported that it had still not reached an agreement with the FOP regarding the development of a disciplinary matrix to be used in the determination of discipline. CPD also stated that it continues to await a "Memorandum of Understanding" with the FOP on an updated and shared disciplinary matrix and reported that "no revisions have taken place." The Department noted that negotiations with the FOP are ongoing, with the last discussion taking place in June 2024. Relevant to OIG's recommendation to develop a standardized list of factors to be used on an advisory basis when recommending discipline, CPD shared that, as part of its work under the consent decree, a list of aggravating and mitigating factors has been integrated into certain CPD trainings submitted for OAG and IMT review. As mentioned, CPD and COPA convened a working group focused on aligning disciplinary recommendations in July 2025. However, CPD has not created a single, standardized list of aggravating and mitigating factors with COPA, the Police Board, or union representatives.

State of Corrective Action 3 | Not Implemented (COPA)

In its initial response to OIG's recommendation, COPA disagreed with OIG's recommendation. It stated that the City's labor negotiators were "best positioned to engage with the city's police unions." Furthermore, COPA suggested that "a more realistic goal is further [C]ity alignment and consensus related to fulsome documentation of relevant factors, including the degree those factors may influence a recommendation."

COPA referred to its draft "Disciplinary and Remedial Recommendations Policy Guidance" and AMF Form as measures to ensure consistency in disciplinary recommendation processes and to "finalize a standardized list of aggravating and mitigating factors." COPA reported that it intends to update the Police Board and other relevant stakeholders on the development of this work. Additionally, COPA shared that it reached out to DOL in 2022 and 2023 to discuss negotiations with police unions around disciplinary recommendations. COPA stated that DOL provided feedback "on the viability (and labor challenges) of achieving consensus with such a standard 'matrix.'" While COPA has made independent progress on developing a list of aggravating and mitigating factors in its draft policy guidance and forms and convened a working group with CPD in July 2025, it has not developed a single, standardized, publicly available list of aggravating and mitigating factors for consideration in making disciplinary recommendations to be used across agencies.

State of Corrective Action 3 | Not Implemented (Police Board)

In its initial response to OIG's recommendation, the Police Board disagreed with OIG's recommendation. The Police Board explained that in cases of alleged police misconduct, they are to serve as an "impartial decision-maker." The Police Board further expressed its view that involvement in developing a single, standardized list of aggravating and mitigating factors to be consulted in disciplinary recommendation determinations would ultimately "undermine the Board's impartiality." In its response to OIG's follow-up inquiry, the Police Board reported that, for previously expressed reasons, it has not worked with CPD or COPA to develop a standardized list of aggravating or mitigating factors.

OIG Recommendation 4 | DOL

DOL should provide legal guidance to BIA and COPA to support the development of a single, standardized list of aggravating and mitigating factors that could serve as guidelines to be used in misconduct investigations when determining appropriate discipline for CPD members of any rank or position.

State of Corrective Action 4 | Not Assessed

In its initial response to OIG's recommendation, DOL stated that it would continue to provide legal guidance to all its client departments. In reference to disciplinary recommendations specifically, DOL expressed that it would "provide guidance and historical background on similar disciplinary actions for CPD members and will encourage uniformity in disciplinary action." In its response to OIG's follow-up inquiry, DOL reported that it has continued providing legal guidance to COPA and BIA in accordance with the consent decree. DOL stated that this engagement includes reviewing COPA's development of a process for evaluating aggravating and mitigating factors.

Given that CPD, COPA, and the Police Board have not developed or implemented a single, standardized list of aggravating and mitigating factors for the determination of disciplinary recommendations (see Recommendation 3), OIG concludes that this recommendation is not yet applicable to DOL.

III | Conclusion

In its 2022 report, OIG found that BIA, COPA, and the Police Board lacked clear and actionable guidance needed to ensure procedural consistency and fairness in the determination of discipline across police misconduct investigations. In this follow-up inquiry, OIG found that COPA has made efforts to improve the consistency of the disciplinary recommendations it makes, including creating draft policy guidance to instruct staff on how to complete the recommended discipline portion of the FSR, and creating guidance and forms on considering and documenting aggravating and mitigating factors used in the determination of recommended discipline. CPD also reported some progress, requiring in policy that BIA investigators must document aggravating and mitigating factors considered in the basis for the recommended discipline. Complicating the efforts for consistency in police discipline are the still-unresolved negotiations between the City and the FOP around a police disciplinary matrix, with little indication of progress towards a negotiated matrix since the discontinuation of use of the CR Matrix. While CPD and COPA have independently made progress towards the goal of improving internal consistency in disciplinary recommendations since OIG's 2022 report, without formal, cross-agency guidance, such as a disciplinary matrix, the risks of inconsistent discipline identified in OIG's original report remain. Though the investigating and reviewing agencies must consider the unique facts in each disciplinary case, they should follow and demonstrate consistent and fair procedures to guide that consideration. A lack of sufficiently robust guidance for determining recommended disciplinary penalties risks inconsistent or arbitrary disciplinary outcomes for CPD members. Inconsistent outcomes and a lack of clear, publicly available disciplinary guidelines hinder both CPD members and the public in their ability to understand and have confidence in the police accountability system in Chicago.

Accordingly, OIG urges the relevant parties to continue their efforts in pursuit of procedural consistency and fairness in the determination of discipline across police misconduct investigations.

Appendix A | COPA Response



August 22, 2025

Tobara Richardson
Deputy Inspector General
for Public Safety
Office of Inspector General
740 North Sedgwick Street, Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60654

Via Electronic Mail

Re: Draft Follow-Up to OIG's Evaluation of Fairness and Consistency in the Disciplinary Process for Chicago Police Department Members

Dear Deputy Inspector Richardson:

Thank you for providing a draft of the Office of the Inspector General's report titled "Follow-up to OIG's Evaluation of Fairness and Consistency in the Disciplinary Process for Chicago Police Department Members." Through this letter, COPA responds to OIG's recommendations to COPA.

COPA's responses to OIG's recommendations:

Your report makes the following recommendations: (1) "COPA should revise its policies to ensure consistency and accuracy across the agency's Employee Policy Handbook, two Investigations Manuals, and any additional policies that the agency issues"; (2) "COPA should revise [its] policies to require that personnel developing disciplinary recommendations must document that they have considered whether any mitigating and aggravating factors are relevant to the determination of the recommended discipline, and if so, they must document what mitigating or aggravating factors were considered and how they influenced the disciplinary recommendation"; (3) "Appropriate representatives of BIA, COPA, and the Police Board should solicit feedback from one another and the unions representing CPD members, as appropriate and required by law, to develop a single, standardized list of aggravating and mitigating factors which may be consulted on an advisory basis for the purpose of formulating disciplinary recommendations and subsequent review of discipline. Any resulting factors should be made publicly available."

Recommendations #1 and 2:

Since July 2024, COPA has made significant strides towards ensuring consistency and fairness in its disciplinary recommendations. First, COPA has further refined its disciplinary and remedial recommendations guidance following input from key stakeholders. COPA has actively engaged CPD on finalizing the list of aggravating and mitigating factors to be used in determining discipline and expects an agreement will soon be forthcoming. Second, COPA has already begun to implement the guidance and associated forms in its investigations. In the first half of 2025, several COPA investigative teams participated in a pilot program to assess the sufficiency of the aggravating and

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mitigating factors identified in the draft guidance. COPA will be rolling out its draft guidance in the next month to three investigative squads for implementation, and will fully train all teams after COPA's guidance has been approved by the Consent Decree's Independent Monitoring Team. COPA expects that agency-wide implementation of the draft guidance will occur by the end of 2025. Once approved on a final basis, COPA will then make conforming changes to other COPA documents and policies, including COPA's investigator manual.

COPA believes the list of aggravating and mitigating factors represents the best path forward to achieve consistency in recommendations as currently permitted by law.

Recommendation #3

COPA recognizes the importance of collaborating with the unions representing CPD members on the factors to be used in determining disciplinary recommendations. COPA intends to provide officer unions with an opportunity to comment on the list of aggravating and mitigating factors.

Respectfully,



Lakenya White
Interim Chief Administrator
Civilian Office of Police Accountability

cc: Deborah Witzburg (OIG)
Nathaniel Wackman (OIG)
Samuel Chae (OIG)
Angie Snell (COPA)

Appendix B | CPD Response



Brandon Johnson
Mayor

Department of Police · City of Chicago
3510 S. Michigan Avenue · Chicago, Illinois 60653

Larry Snelling
Superintendent of Police

August 22, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Ms. Tobar Richardson (TRichardson@igchicago.org)
Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety
City of Chicago Office of Inspector General
231 South LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Re: Follow-up to OIG's Evaluation of Fairness and Consistency in the Disciplinary Process for Chicago Police Department Members

Dear Public Safety Inspector General Richardson:

The Chicago Police Department ("CPD") appreciated the opportunity to discuss the Public Safety Inspector General's findings concerning its follow-up on the evaluation of fairness and consistency in the disciplinary process for CPD members. The CPD provides the following comments in response to the OIG's proposed findings and recommendations directed toward the CPD in the PSIG's draft report.

OIG Recommendation 2

OIG recommended that BIA and COPA should revise their respective policies to require that personnel developing disciplinary recommendations must document that they have considered whether any mitigating and aggravating factors are relevant to the determination of recommended discipline, and if so, they must document what mitigating or aggravating factors were considered and how they influenced the disciplinary recommendation.

The CPD appreciates the PSIG's acknowledgment that CPD has adopted policies and engaged in training to address this recommendation.

OIG Recommendation 3

Appropriate representatives of BIA, COPA, and the Police Board should solicit feedback from one another and the unions representing CPD members, as appropriate and required by law, to develop a single, standardized list of aggravating and mitigating factors which may be consulted on an advisory basis for the purposes of formulating disciplinary recommendations and subsequent review of discipline. Any resulting list of factors should be made publicly available.

As discussed during the exit conference, both COPA and CPD continue to work collaboratively to identify mitigating and aggravating factors that will be consistently applied and documented, as required by Consent Decree paragraphs 513 and 514. COPA and CPD will also engage with unions representing CPD members on this issue, with the goal of developing a list of these factors that can be publicly shared.

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The CPD appreciates the PSIGs's work on this important issue and appreciates the opportunity to provide this response.

Best regards,



Scott Spears
General Counsel
Chicago Police Department



Ayesha Safdar
Performance Analyst

Dana Westley
Chief Performance Analyst

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For further information about this report, please contact the City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, 231 S LaSalle Street, 12th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604, or visit our website at igchicago.org.

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