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OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

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Review of the Chicago Police Department's Implementation of Immediate Recommendations to Improve Its Homicide Investigations

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Acronyms

ASA	Assistant State's Attorney
ATC	Area Technology Center
BJA	Bureau of Justice Assistance
BOD	Bureau of Detectives
BPD	Boston Police Department
CAPS	Community Alternative Policing Strategy
CCSAO	Cook County State's Attorney's Office
CPD	Chicago Police Department
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FLO	Family Liaison Officer
IMT	Independent Monitoring Team
JRSA	Justice Research and Statistics Association
NIBRS	National Incident Based Reporting System
OIG	City of Chicago Office of Inspector General
PERF	Police Executive Research Forum
PES	Performance Evaluations System
PRS	Performance Recognition System
RD	Records Division
RMS	Records management system
RPD	Rochester Police Department
SDSC	Strategic Decision Support Centers
SOP	Standard operating procedure
UCR	Uniform Crime Reporting

I | Executive Summary

The Public Safety section of the City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (OIG) has completed an inquiry into the Chicago Police Department's (CPD or the Department) implementation of recommendations made by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) regarding homicide investigations. In 2018, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and PERF published a report on strengthening homicide investigations and improving clearance rates.¹ Thereafter, CPD's then-Superintendent Eddie Johnson asked BJA and PERF to conduct a related review, specific to CPD and the City of Chicago, and offer observations and recommendations, "identify[ing] factors that could account for increases in homicide rates."²

Following a series of site visits, interviews, and document reviews, PERF found that, at the time of its review, CPD's policies and procedures governing homicide investigations did not provide adequate guidance or accountability. Further, PERF found that CPD lacked formal supervisory review of homicide investigations, which hindered supervisors' ability to oversee how different investigations were being conducted and documented, as well as their ability to effectively evaluate Detectives on their investigative performance.³ PERF also found that CPD had challenges in communicating, sharing information, and coordinating with intra- and interagency stakeholders, from support units within the Department to the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO).⁴

BJA and PERF published their report, "Review of Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," in October 2019.⁵ In it, PERF reviewed CPD's homicide investigation process and identified 89 recommendations for how the Department could improve its homicide investigation policies and processes. PERF noted that "[m]any of the recommendations included in [their] report will require long-term planning, funding, and implementation," and provided CPD with nine recommendations that it could implement in the short-term "to address the most significant observations and immediately strengthen its homicide investigation processes."⁶

To improve homicide investigations immediately, PERF recommended that CPD:⁷

1. "Revise the SOPs (standard operating procedures) governing homicide investigations to include standard policies and protocols that personnel must follow, including a standard investigative checklist, investigative plan, and supervisory case review process."
2. "Create a homicide investigations team to provide input on policy development, share ideas for implementing these recommendations, and discuss strategies and next steps. Members of the team should include leaders from other CPD units that are involved in homicide investigations (e.g., Detective Area Commanders, Division of Forensic Services), as well as representatives from the Cook County State's Attorney's Office."

¹ Bureau of Justice Assistance, "Promising Strategies for Strengthening Homicide Investigations," October 2018, accessed February 16, 2024, <https://bja.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh186/files/Publications/promising-strategies-for-strengthening-homicide-investigations.pdf>.

² Police Executive Research Forum, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 2, October 2019, accessed February 15, 2024, <https://home.chicagopolice.org/homicideclearancereport2019/>.

³ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 59-60.

⁴ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 87-96.

⁵ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process."

⁶ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 106-107.

⁷ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 107-109.

3. “Develop a formal case planning and review process and hold supervisors accountable for performing supervisory case reviews. In addition, for CPD to update its SOPs to reflect promising investigative practices and require thorough investigative plans and supervisory case reviews.”
4. “Develop a case file index and standard forms to include in the homicide case file, including an investigative plan and a case checklist. The Bureau of Detectives should also consider developing a case file organization guide to provide uniformity within the unit.”
5. “[D]evelop an evaluation system that specifically assesses each [D]etective’s performance in conducting homicide investigations. The BOD should develop a similar form to assess each Sergeant’s performance.”
6. “[E]nsure that units responsible for investigating ... nonfatal shootings have the staffing, training, and equipment necessary to respond to and thoroughly investigate each incident. Detectives should coordinate with the appropriate SDSC and District Intelligence Officer as part of their investigation. The CPD should also work with the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office and U.S. Attorney’s Office to develop a strategy to ensure that gun offenders are consistently prosecuted for violations.”
7. “[D]evelop clear policies and procedures to help guide investigators. Homicide [D]etectives should receive training to understand the legal and technical issues surrounding collection, extraction, and analysis of digital evidence, notably the recovery and analysis of cell phone and video evidence.”
8. “[E]xplore strategies for improving collaboration between the two organizations (BOD and CCSAO), especially regarding the felony review process. For example, prosecutors should become involved in the case at the beginning of the investigation. Both agencies can provide cross-training for [D]etectives and prosecutors and should meet weekly to promote a positive relationship, facilitate information-sharing, and discuss ongoing cases.”
9. “[W]ork with the Chicago Survivors to train [D]etectives on how to effectively interact with victims’ families and members of the community. Detectives should meet with victims’ families monthly for the first year of an investigation.”⁸

In an October 2019 press release, then-Superintendent Johnson and then-Mayor Lori Lightfoot expressed a commitment to implementing PERF’s recommendations. Lightfoot stated that the City would use the report “to ensure that [P]olice [O]fficers and [D]etectives have the systems of support that are required not only for solving crimes—but for preventing them from occurring in the first place.”⁹

In April 2025, CPD released a report on its response to all 89 recommendations from PERF’s 2019 study. CPD’s report provided a broad account of the Department’s actions, including changes related to nonfatal shootings, cold case investigations, and logistical improvements (see page 21 for additional information).

⁸ Chicago Survivors is a non-profit organization whose mission is to offer crisis intervention, supportive counseling, and comprehensive referral services to surviving family members of Chicago homicide victims. For more information, see PERF Recommendation 9.

⁹ Chicago Police Department, “CPD Adopts Recommendations by National Police Research Experts and Department of Justice to Improve Homicide Clearance Rate,” October 30, 2019, accessed February 16, 2024, <https://home.chicagopolice.org/cpd-adopts-recommendations-by-national-police-research-experts-and-department-of-justice-to-improve-homicide-clearance-rate/>.

OIG's inquiry focused specifically on the status of any actions taken by CPD since 2019 related to the immediately actionable recommendations listed above regarding the homicide investigation process. OIG's site visits and interviews were largely completed between December 2022 and January 2024; in April 2025, OIG interviewed the current Chief of the Bureau of Detectives (BOD). OIG requested and reviewed CPD policies, trainings, procedures, and meetings through May 2025, and again in November 2025. OIG identified one immediate recommendation regarding CPD's response to nonfatal shootings as outside the scope of this inquiry (PERF Recommendation 6), as OIG's inquiry focuses solely on homicide- and homicide investigation-related recommendations. Based on responses to that inquiry, OIG concludes that the status of CPD's implementation efforts varies across recommendations.

CPD has worked to establish uniform guidance on conducting homicide investigations by revising and standardizing SOPs, policies, and forms for BOD and developing a consistent means of case file organization. However, CPD has not implemented measures to ensure that such uniform guidance is operationalized. The Department's policies and SOPs do not define how supervisors are held accountable for performing supervisory case reviews, nor does the Department have a system for specifically assessing Detectives' performance in conducting homicide investigations.

CPD has taken steps to encourage more open and frequent collaboration with all personnel—from across and external to the Department—who are involved in homicide investigations, including holding recurring meetings with representatives from the Office of Public Safety Administration and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. However, attendees can vary by meeting, and the content of such meetings are not always focused on homicide investigation policies and practices. Finally, although the Department improved its capabilities for outreach to victims' families and digital evidence collection and analysis, this work is generally performed by small, embedded specialists and not necessarily by all Homicide Detectives.

While CPD has taken some meaningful steps to address the shortcomings identified by PERF, further opportunities remain unrealized. Given the tremendous scale of human impact in the quality of CPD's homicide investigations and the investment of CPD's time and resources in commissioning PERF's review and the City's public commitment to making good on its outcome, CPD must sustain its commitment to continual process improvement as it refines its implementation of all its updated and new homicide policies, procedures, and tools.

II | Background

Investigating and solving homicides is a core function of policing; Chicagoans depend on the Chicago Police Department (CPD or the Department) to conduct thorough, effective homicide investigations that lead to meaningful outcomes for those impacted—victims’ families, community members, and others. CPD’s ability to effectively investigate homicides impacts the trust communities place in law enforcement and the broader effort to reduce violent crime and enhance public safety. In recent years, CPD has taken some steps to strengthen investigative processes, provide better guidance to Detectives, and improve coordination within the Department and with external stakeholders. These changes are intended to enhance the quality and consistency of investigations, support investigative personnel, and ultimately improve case outcomes and homicide clearance rates.

CPD’s efforts to improve homicide investigations have come about within a broader historical context of fluctuating homicide trends in Chicago. Specifically, there have been three distinct trends concerning Chicago’s homicide rate over the previous three decades: 1) a gradual decline from the high murder rates of the early 1990s until 2004; 2) minor fluctuations between 2004 and 2014; and 3) a period of pronounced fluctuation between 2014 and the present (see Figure 1). The City recorded a 50-year low of 415 homicides in 2014.¹⁰ There were 768 homicides in 2016, a nearly 60% increase from the 481 homicides recorded in 2015.¹¹ Three straight years of decline followed, until the City recorded 771 homicides in 2020, a 56% increase from the 495 homicides recorded in 2019.¹² In 2021, the City recorded its highest homicide total since 1995, before declining again in 2022.¹³

¹⁰ Todd Feurer, “McCarthy: Murders in Chicago at Lowest Level in Nearly 50 Years.” *CBS2*, October 1, 2014, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/chicago/news/mccarthy-murders-in-chicago-at-lowest-level-in-nearly-50-years/>.

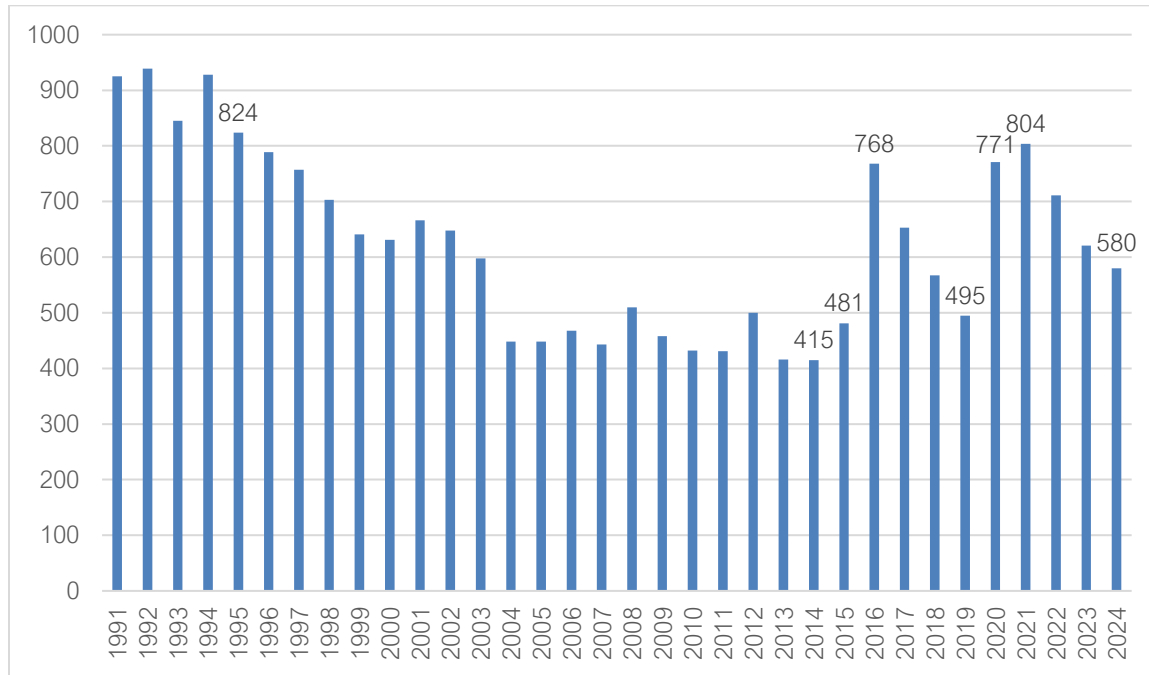
¹¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Crime Data Explorer,” accessed December 21, 2023, <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/crime-trend>.

¹² Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Crime Data Explorer.”

¹³ Chicago Police Department, “2021 Annual Report,” accessed August 14, 2025, <https://www.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/2021-Annual-Report.pdf>.

Chicago Police Department, “2022 Annual Report,” accessed February 8, 2024, <https://home.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-Annual-Report-FOR-PUBLICATION.pdf>.

Figure 1: Total Homicides from 1991 to 2024



Source: OIG analysis.¹⁴

Homicide figures reported by CPD may vary depending on source. In response to an OIG request for homicide clearance rates from 1991-2021, CPD reported 801 total homicides in 2021 (see Appendix A). By contrast, for 2021, CPD’s 2021 Annual Report listed 800 homicides, the 2021 year-end CompStat report listed 797 homicides, and the 2022 Annual Report reported that 804 homicides occurred in 2021.¹⁵ For 2022, CPD’s 2022 Annual Report listed 699 homicides, the 2022 year-end CompStat report listed 695 homicides, and CPD’s 2023 Annual Report stated that

¹⁴ Figures for 1991 to 2020 come from FBI data, which is generated from agency-reported statistics to the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program. That data can be accessed through the FBI’s “Crime Data Explorer,” found at <https://cde.ucr.cjis.gov/LATEST/webapp/#/pages/explorer/crime/crime-trend>. The UCR Program used the hierarchy rule when counting crimes, meaning that in the event that there were multiple offenses in one incident—for example, a homicide that takes place during a burglary—UCR counted only the most serious offense towards the crime. In 2021, the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) replaced the UCR Program. NIBRS counts each offense occurring in one incident. For example, if an aggravated assault takes place during a robbery, both the assault and the robbery would be counted for the one incident. For more detail, see the Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, “Effects of NIBRS on Crime Statistics” at <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/encs.pdf>. As a result of the transition from UCR to NIBRS, the data presented on the FBI’s Crime Data Explorer webpage for 2021 and beyond is incomplete as of January 2024. The figures for 2021, 2022, and 2023 come from CPD’s 2022, 2023, and 2024 Annual Reports, respectively. The figure for 2024 comes from CPD’s 2024 Annual Report. For more detail, see <https://home.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-Annual-Report-FOR-PUBLICATION.pdf>, <https://www.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-Annual-Report.pdf>, and <https://www.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/2024-CPD-Annual-Report-Final-For-Publishing.pdf>.

The total number of homicides reported per year varies by source. Homicide figures from news outlets such as the *Chicago Sun-Times* and *NBC Chicago* may differ from Department-reported numbers because news outlets use some combination of data from CPD and information from the Cook County Medical Examiner’s Office to calculate total homicides.

¹⁵ For more detail, see <https://www.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/2021-Annual-Report.pdf> and <https://www.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/CompStat-Public-2021-Year-End.pdf>.

711 total homicides took place in 2022.¹⁶ Such variance may be attributed to delayed deaths and different sources being published at different times.¹⁷

A | Who Investigates Homicides?

CPD’s BOD is responsible for investigating selected felonies and misdemeanors.¹⁸ Detectives are assigned to one of five geographically defined Areas across the city.¹⁹ Each Area has three investigative sections: Homicide, Property Crimes, and Violent Crimes.²⁰ CPD members apply to become an Area Homicide Team Member through a Notice of Job Opportunity. Candidates are selected based on their demonstration of competency in documenting the crime scene and the ensuing investigation; following basic investigative steps and performing follow-up on investigative leads; and organizing the case file and all associated supplemental reports and files.

The following table shows the total number of Detectives per Area and the number of Detectives specifically assigned to each Area’s Homicide Section as of May 2025.²¹

Figure 2: CPD Detective Assignments by Area, May 2025

Area	Total Detectives ²²	Detectives Assigned to Homicide	Supervisors Assigned to Homicide
1	305	53	6
2	257	42	6
3	208	23	3
4	231	44	6
5	190	18	3

Source: CPD data and OIG analysis.

In December 2023, Chicago’s City Council voted to ratify the terms of an extension to the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between the City of Chicago and the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP),

¹⁶ For more detail, see <https://www.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/2022-Annual-Report-FOR-PUBLICATION.pdf>, <https://www.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/CompStat-Public-2022-Year-End-1.pdf>, and <https://www.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/2023-Annual-Report.pdf>.

¹⁷ A delayed death refers to a death that does not happen immediately after an assault. For example, the victim of an aggravated assault may not die from their initial injuries, but they may die a few days later. In this example, this incident would initially be counted only as a violent crime statistic but following the victim’s death, the incident would also be counted as a homicide statistic. Because different sources publish at different intervals—for example, CompStat reports are published weekly while an annual report is published once a year—some sources may capture delayed deaths while others are not, contributing to the variance in reporting.

¹⁸ Chicago Police Department, “General Order G01-02-05: Organization and Functions of the Bureau of Detectives,” May 11, 2023, accessed July 8, 2024, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6504>.

¹⁹ An “Area” is a geographical grouping of five contiguous police districts. To see maps of CPD Districts and Areas & Beats, see <https://chicagopd.hub.arcgis.com/documents/ChicagoPD::area-district-beat-11x17-1/explore>. OIG’s “City Services by Address” dashboard can be used to find the police Area, District, and Beat for any City address. City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, “City Services by Address,” accessed July 5, 2024, <https://igchicago.org/information-portal/data-dashboards/city-services-by-address/>.

²⁰ Chicago Police Department, “Organization for Command,” May 11, 2023, accessed July 8, 2024, <https://home.chicagopolice.org/about/organization-for-command/>.

²¹ In response to an inquiry from OIG, CPD sent a roster of all sworn CPD members assigned to an Area Homicide Section as of May 2025.

²² City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, Sworn CPD Member Demographics and Staffing dashboard, filtered for May 2025, accessed July 24, 2025, <https://igchicago.org/information-portal/data-dashboards/sworn-cpd-member-demographics-and-staffing/>.

the union which represents all sworn, non-supervisory CPD members.²³ As part of the renewed agreement, CPD rolled out the “Homicide Teams Pilot Program.” This new scheduling rotation has one homicide team spending one week on-call to receive new cases, and then five weeks doing investigative work on those cases before being on-call to receive new cases again.²⁴ This scheduling allows for greater continuity in case assignments, meaning that the Homicide Detectives who respond to the initial crime scene will also be able to do the investigative and follow-up work, and it also gives Detectives the opportunity to focus on working their assigned cases without new cases being continually added to their caseload.²⁵ The Homicide Teams Pilot Program began citywide on January 1, 2024.²⁶ In an interview with OIG in April 2025, CPD’s Chief of the Bureau of Detectives (BOD) stated that the Department issued a survey to all Homicide Detectives to evaluate the program’s first year of implementation at the end of 2024. About 85% of Detectives responded to the survey, and some of the responses stated that the program improved their work-life balance as well as their ability to focus on investigations without “constantly getting pulled into new ones.” The BOD Chief further stated that the pilot program gives Detectives the ability to have more frequent case reviews and helps strengthen relationships between Detectives and their supervisors. The survey responses echo the sentiments of a Homicide Detective who reported to the *Chicago Tribune* in June 2024 that the changes have made the homicide teams “more efficient and collaborative.”²⁷ The BOD Chief reported to OIG that the Department intends to keep the program “well-staffed and well resourced.”

Before implementation of the Homicide Teams Pilot Program, CPD Detectives would work a 4-2 schedule, which had Detectives working for four days with two rotating days off.²⁸ During their four days working, Detectives were continually assigned new cases while they were also scheduling and performing follow-up investigative work on previously assigned cases. Homicide Detectives, then, were continually being assigned new cases while they performed follow-up work for ongoing

²³ City of Chicago, “Agreement Between the City of Chicago and the Fraternal Order of Police Chicago Lodge No. 7 Effective July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2027,” Section 23.11, accessed December 8, 2025, <https://www.chicagofop.org/images/Collective-Bargaining-Agreement-Ordinance.pdf>.

City of Chicago Mayor’s Press Office, “The City of Chicago Announces Arbitration and Agreement with Fraternal Order of Police,” October 20, 2023, accessed July 9, 2024, https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/Press%20Room/Press%20Releases/2023/October/FRATERNAL_ORDERPOLICE.pdf.

²⁴ Sam Charles, “Pilot program would give CPD detectives ownership of cases, may radically change how police handle homicide investigations,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 29, 2023, accessed January 23, 2024, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/criminal-justice/ct-cpd-homicide-teams-20231029-camxb4jamvcohf2f3bzqo5d7se-story.html>.

OIG’s use of “on-call” differs from the use of “on-duty” in the preceding paragraph. OIG uses “on-duty” to mean that a CPD member is present for duty. OIG uses “on-call” to describe a member’s availability to be assigned new homicide cases for investigation. The Homicide Teams Pilot Program designates homicide teams to be “on-call” on a rotating schedule. In other words, a CPD member can be “on-duty” but not “on-call” for new case assignments.

²⁵ In its 2019 report reviewing CPD’s homicide investigation processes, the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) raised concerns about how cases are assigned to Detectives and case continuity, and suggested that CPD adopt an “on-call” rotation schedule. For more on PERF and its 2019 report, see page 17.

²⁶ City of Chicago, “Agreement Between the City of Chicago and the Fraternal Order of Police Chicago Lodge No. 7 Effective July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2027,” Section 23.11.

²⁷ Sam Charles, “CPD pushes to boost its ‘clearance’ rate in homicide cases, with some success,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 24, 2024, accessed July 3, 2024, <https://www.chicagotribune.com/2024/06/24/cpd-pushes-to-boost-its-clearance-rate-in-homicide-cases-with-some-success/>.

²⁸ City of Chicago, “Agreement Between the City of Chicago and the Fraternal Order of Police Chicago Lodge No. 7 Effective July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2012,” “Memorandum of Understanding for Work Day Schedules,” accessed July 9, 2024, https://igchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Combined-2021-Redline-FOP-Contract-Amendments_2012-2017-Contract.pdf.

investigations, and they did not necessarily investigate cases from beginning to end. As noted above, the structure and scheduling of the Area Homicide Teams allows Detectives more investigative continuity on their assigned cases and helps minimize new cases from piling up while they work on existing assignments.

B | How Are Homicides Investigated and Closed?

Clearance rates are commonly used as a metric to determine police effectiveness, though, as argued by some scholars, they are not always a clear or appropriate way to measure police success at solving homicides.²⁹

1. How Clearance Rates Are Calculated

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Detectives can close or “clear” their cases “in one of two ways: by arrest or by exceptional means.”³⁰ Three conditions must be met in order for a case to be closed by arrest:

- “At least one person has been arrested, and
- Charged with the commission of the offense, and
- Turned over to the court for prosecution.”³¹

For a case to be exceptionally cleared, the FBI Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) User Manual mandates that a law enforcement agency must have,

- “identified the offender,
- gathered enough evidence to support an arrest, make a charge, and turn over the offender to the court for prosecution,
- identified the offender’s exact location so that the suspect could be taken into custody immediately, [and]
- encountered a circumstance outside the control of law enforcement that prohibits the agency from arresting, charging, and prosecuting the offender.”³²

The BOD Chief confirmed in an interview with OIG that CPD follows the FBI’s standard for calculating clearance rates. The FBI states that clearance rates are calculated by the number of crimes cleared in a calendar year divided by the total number of crimes committed within that calendar year. The denominator of this formula only counts crimes committed in one calendar year. However, the numerator can include both crimes committed and cleared in that calendar year **and** those that were cleared in that calendar year but committed in any previous year.³³

Figure 3: Homicide Clearance Rate Formula

²⁹ Shima Baughman, “How Effective Are Police? The Problem of Clearance Rates and Criminal Accountability,” *Alabama Law Review*, 2020, accessed September 20, 2024, <https://www.law.ua.edu/lawreview/files/2020/12/2-BaughmanArticle-47-112.pdf>.

³⁰ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Offenses Cleared,” 2020, accessed January 23, 2024, <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/clearances.pdf>.

³¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Offenses Cleared.”

³² Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Offenses Cleared.”

³³ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “FBI—Clearances,” 2020, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/clearances>.

Homicides Committed & Cleared in Year XXXX + Homicides Cleared in Year XXXX that were
Committed in Any Year Preceding Year XXXX

Homicides Committed in Year XXXX

Source: OIG analysis.

For example, a clearance rate for the year 2019 may include the clearance of crimes committed and cleared in 2019, as well as crimes committed in 2003 and 2013 but cleared in 2019. Including prior year(s) data in the calculation of a current year's clearance rate may lead to confusion in understanding clearance rates. For instance, at the Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability's public hearing on January 30, 2024, Superintendent Larry Snelling stated that the Department had cleared 19 of 25 murders "this year."³⁴ A day later, Snelling misstated the same metric during a speech at an Economic Club of Chicago event, stating that CPD had solved 20 of 26 murders that had occurred in the past 30 days.³⁵ Shortly after these public comments, CPD released a statement clarifying that only three homicides committed in 2024 had been cleared; another 16 cleared cases had been homicides committed in previous years.³⁶ In this case, the homicides committed in previous years that were cleared in January 2024 were correctly included in the calculation of the 2024 homicide clearance rate to-date, but the communication about the rate itself was imprecise and potentially misleading.

The Police Executive Research Forum's (PERF) 2019 report reviewing CPD's homicide investigation process noted that while Chicago's total homicides were rising, CPD's homicide clearance rate was declining, dropping below the national average.³⁷ In 2019, CPD reported a homicide clearance rate of 53%, lower than the national average of 61.4%.³⁸

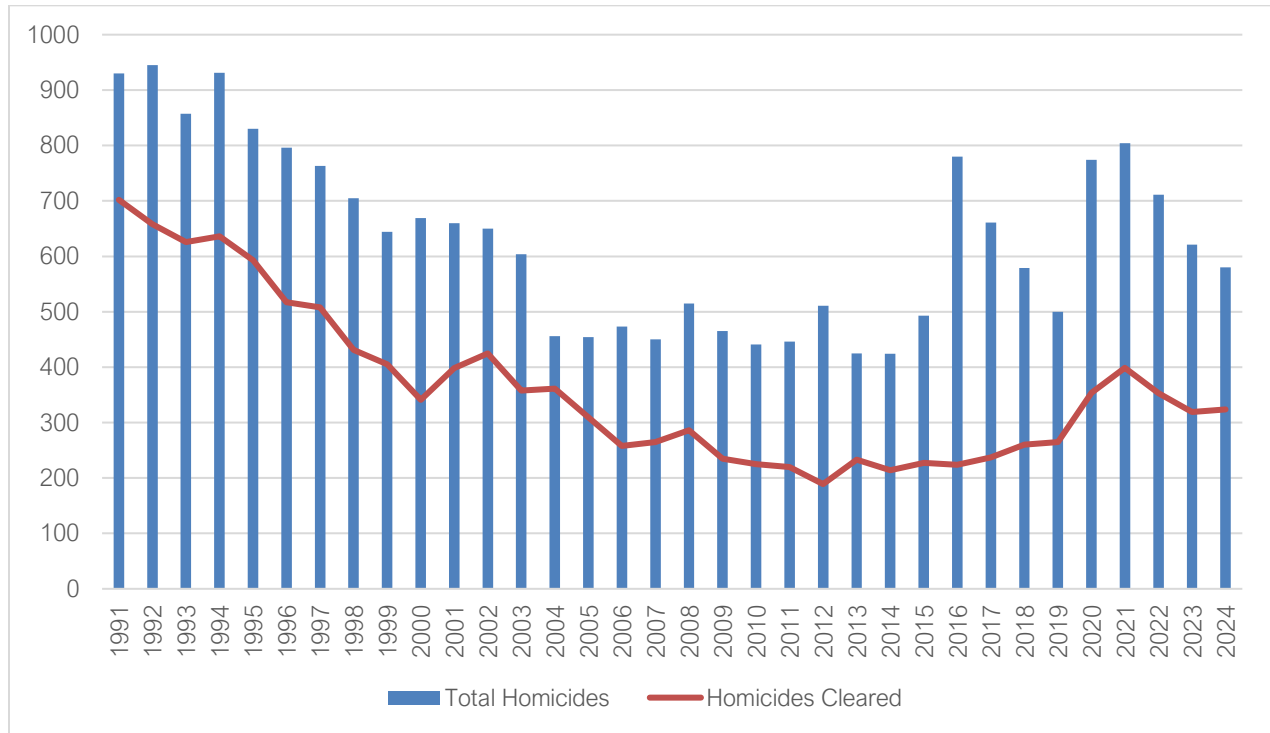
³⁴ Cindy Hernandez, "CPD Supt. Larry Snelling addresses public safety concerns at West Side meeting of oversight panel," *Chicago Sun-Times*, January 31, 2024, accessed February 22, 2024, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/news/2024/1/31/24056463/cpd-supt-larry-snelling-addresses-public-safety-concerns-at-west-side-meeting-of-oversight-panel>.

³⁵ Chicago Sun-Times staff, "Chicago's top cop admits he mistakenly touted wrong murder clearance rate for this year," *Chicago Sun-Times*, February 11, 2024, accessed February 22, 2024, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/crime/2024/2/11/24068065/police-cpd-superintendent-larry-snelling-murder-homicide-clearance-rate>.

³⁶ Chicago Sun-Times staff, "Chicago's top cop admits he mistakenly touted wrong murder clearance rate for this year."
³⁷ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 2-3, October 2019, accessed December 18, 2023, <https://home.chicagopolice.org/homicideclearancereport2019/>.

³⁸ Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Table 25 – Percent of Offenses Cleared by Arrest or Exceptional Means," 2020, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/topic-pages/tables/table-25>.

Figure 4: CPD’s Total Homicides Cleared from 1991 to 2024



Source: CPD data and OIG analysis.

2. Complexities of Clearance Rate Measurements

Clearance rates are often discussed and compared as annual measurements. That is, clearance rates are typically discussed in the context of a specific year, as in the example above of Superintendent Snelling touting CPD’s 2024 clearance rate. The formula outlined in Figure 3 shows that clearance rates account for both crimes committed and cleared in the calendar year for which the rate is being calculated **and** crimes cleared in that same year but committed in any previous year.³⁹ While it is a national standard for measurement, this clearance rate formula may obscure an assessment of a law enforcement agency’s true effectiveness in a specific year.

When viewing clearance rate as an annual measurement of successful investigations, counting exceptional clearances—such as murder-suicides and cases of self-defense—and cleared cases committed in a previous year towards the current year’s calculation may inflate the clearance rate. Calculating clearances in this way risks distorting perceptions of an agency’s effectiveness and efficiency at solving homicides in a given year.⁴⁰ It may also bias agency motivations and resource allocation: the desire to boost clearance rates could incentivize law enforcement agencies to strategically focus on clearing those homicides they perceive to be most easily closed, and not necessarily those occurring in a current year or those involving the greatest threat to public safety.⁴¹

³⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, “FBI—Clearances.”

⁴⁰ For more information on CPD’s clearance rates from 1991-2021 including, where available, data broken out into clearance by arrest and exceptional clearance, see Appendix A.

⁴¹ Baughman, “How Effective Are Police? The Problem of Clearance Rates and Criminal Accountability.”

Beyond the technical aspects of calculating clearance rates, these metrics influence how the public perceives law enforcement's ability to address violent crime. A high clearance rate can create the impression of effective investigative practice, but it does not necessarily reflect the quality or thoroughness of investigations, whether the underlying factors contributing to homicides are being addressed, or—as in instances of cases closed by exception, where an offender is identified but not arrested—whether justice has been served. Reliance on clearance rates as a primary indicator of success oversimplifies the complexity of solving homicides and meeting the needs of affected families and communities.

Moreover, the focus on in-year clearance rates could risk framing effectiveness as a matter of timeliness rather than a commitment to resolving cases thoroughly, regardless of how long they take. Solving a case from a previous year is no less valuable than solving a recent one, particularly for families awaiting answers or communities seeking accountability. The potential prioritization of current-year cases over older ones could unintentionally diminish the importance of long-term investigative work in favor of meeting short-term performance goals.

Ultimately, while clearance rates serve as a convenient and widely recognized benchmark, they capture only a narrow slice of what it means to investigate homicides effectively. Relying too heavily on these rates can mask critical questions about the equitable distribution of investigative resources, the factors driving violence, and the true impact of these efforts on public safety and community trust.

3. Investigative Practices and Clearance Rates

In 1999, the Justice Research and Statistics Association (JRSA) conducted a comparative study to determine what factors impacted police officers' ability to clear homicide cases.⁴² This landmark study—the first systematic study of determinants of clearance rates for any type of crime—examined nearly 800 homicides that occurred during 1994 and 1995 in four large U.S. cities and found that clearance rate determinants generally fell into two categories: 1) characteristics associated with the homicide event, and 2) characteristics associated with investigative practices and procedures.⁴³ The first category describes factors that are not within police control. These variables include victim characteristics, weapons used, and other general circumstance variables; for example, homicides that occur in a private location are more likely to be solved than those that occur in a public location.⁴⁴ Homicides that involve a conflict over money or property are more likely to be solved than homicides that involve a conflict over drugs.⁴⁵

The second category of clearance rate determinants identified by JSRA includes factors that *are* within police control. These are variables that can be adjusted or improved by law enforcement agencies, and which may contribute to more effective investigations and increased homicide clearances. For example, cases with three to four Detectives assigned to them are more likely to be

⁴² The Justice Research and Statistics Association was renamed the Justice Information Resource Network (JIRN) in 2023. JIRN is a national non-profit and resource center that has been conducting justice research at the state and federal levels since 1968. For more information, see jirn.org.

⁴³ Charles Wellford and James Cronin, "Analysis of Variables Affecting the Clearance of Homicides: A Multisite Study," *National Criminal Justice Reference Service*, February 1999, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/181356.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Wellford and Cronin, "Analysis of Variables Affecting the Clearance of Homicides: A Multisite Study," pg. 22.

⁴⁵ Wellford and Cronin, "Analysis of Variables Affecting the Clearance of Homicides: A Multisite Study," pg. 23.

closed than cases with only one assigned Detective.⁴⁶ Additionally, if an investigating Detective arrives at a crime scene within 30 minutes of the homicide, the case is more likely to be solved than if it takes longer for a Detective to arrive.⁴⁷

Since the 1999 JRSA study, further research has added greater nuance to the two broad categories of clearance rate determinants JRSA identified. Researchers with the FBI identified five more precise determinants associated with solving homicides: 1) staffing and management of homicide investigative units in law enforcement agencies; 2) investigative procedures used; 3) analytical processes employed; 4) the demographics of incidents and communities in which they occur; and 5) the degree of political influences that may foster or hinder the clearance of homicides.⁴⁸

FBI researchers conducted a survey of 55 law enforcement agencies responsible for investigating an average of 25 or more homicides per year between 2000 and 2004 and that also reported to the FBI's UCR Program. The survey asked agencies to describe their Detective selection processes, investigative procedures, witness processing, management of case assignments, resource use, and other practices around homicide investigations. The survey also asked agencies to provide data on their total number of homicides and homicide clearance rates for that period, which the researchers corroborated using data reported to the FBI UCR Program. The FBI found that formal training of Homicide Detectives and the use of analytical tools—"such as blood spatter, statement analysis, criminal investigative analysis, and voice stress analysis in interviews"—yielded increased homicide clearance rates. The study additionally found that management oversight yielded generally positive effects on improving clearance rates, but cautioned that police departments must strike a balance between holding Detectives accountable through regularly scheduled reviews and avoiding hindering them through micromanagement and requiring "constant case reviews," which potentially hinder an agency's ability to close cases.⁴⁹

The average national homicide clearance rate has remained relatively stable since the 1990s despite significant fluctuation in the total number of homicides per year.⁵⁰ According to *Police Quarterly*, this relative stability might lead to the perception that police practices may not influence the homicide clearance rate. In 2019, researchers from the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland and the Department of Criminology, Law and Society at George Mason University examined the long-term clearance rate trends of police agencies from 92 large American cities. This study was among the first to observe the relationship between advances in investigative practices and clearance rates for individual law enforcement agencies as

⁴⁶ Wellford and Cronin, "Analysis of Variables Affecting the Clearance of Homicides: A Multisite Study," pg. 23.

⁴⁷ Wellford and Cronin, "Analysis of Variables Affecting the Clearance of Homicides: A Multisite Study," pg. 23.

⁴⁸ Timothy G. Keel, John P. Jarvis, Yvonne E. Muirhead, "An Exploratory Analysis of Factors Affecting Homicide Investigations: Examining the Dynamics of Murder Clearance Rates," *Homicide Studies*, February 2009, accessed December 21, 2023,

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249715219_An_Exploratory_Analysis_of_Factors_Affecting_Homicide_InvestigationsExamining_the_Dynamics_of_Murder_Clearance_Rates.

⁴⁹ The researchers determined causation by running a multivariate linear regression model on homicide clearance rates. They found that the use of analytical tools and processes had a positive coefficient of 1.943: "...agencies that use analytical tools and processes in support of their investigations were shown to increase homicide clearances by almost the same magnitude (B = 1.943)." Keel, Jarvis, and Muirhead, "An Exploratory Analysis of Factors Affecting Homicide Investigations: Examining the Dynamics of Murder Clearance Rates."

⁵⁰ For more information on national homicide and clearance rates, see Appendix B. Murder Accountability Project, "Uniform Crime Report for Homicides: 1965-2020," 2019, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://www.murderdata.org/p/blog-page.html>.

compared to the national average clearance rate. The researchers found that, during the period from 1981 to 2013, around 40% of the police agencies in their sample increased their homicide clearance rate while 60% saw their average homicide clearance rate decrease. Although the study did not examine the effectiveness of specific investigative or organizational improvements, its findings did suggest that some police departments were able to actively improve their homicide clearance rate, whether as a result of altering organizational structure (e.g., number of officers, allotted budget) or investigative processes (e.g., collaboration between investigative and patrol units, how criminal investigations are structured).⁵¹

Studies performed by criminology and criminal justice researchers with Arizona State University, Ohio State University, and Northeastern University identified the Rochester Police Department (RPD) in New York and Boston Police Department (BPD) in Massachusetts as two examples of law enforcement agencies which have implemented changes in investigative practices and have seen statistically significant increases in their respective homicide clearance rates. In 2012, RPD implemented a suite of changes to its investigative protocols, which included,

- expanding its Homicide Squad;
- adding regularly scheduled case progress meetings; and
- investing in a mobile command vehicle to be driven to every homicide scene, allowing investigators on-scene access to a conference room, video, Wi-Fi, and a white board.⁵²

After these interventions, RPD saw its homicide clearance rate increase while its days-to-clearance—that is, the time it took to clear a homicide—decreased.⁵³

Also in 2012, BPD acted on its commitment to improving its low homicide clearance rates by,

- expanding its homicide unit;
- standardizing investigative protocols;
- convening monthly peer review sessions for all open cases;
- hiring a civilian crime analyst specializing in computerized databases;
- strengthening its homicide unit's connections to victim service organizations; and
- increasing unit-wide training on “cutting-edge investigative techniques,” such as 3D shooting incident reconstruction technology.⁵⁴

Researchers found that BPD's homicide process interventions were “associated with a statistically-significant 43.4% increase in the odds that a homicide case was cleared.”⁵⁵

⁵¹ *Police Quarterly* is a peer-reviewed academic journal that publishes empirical research on issues related to policing. Thomas L. Scott, Charles Wellford, Cynthia Lum, and Heather Vovak, “Variability of Crime Clearance Among Police Agencies,” *Police Quarterly*, March 2019, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/1098611118796597>.

⁵² Jesenia M. Pizarro, William Terrill, and Charles A. LoFaso, “The Impact of Investigation Strategies and Tactics on Homicide Clearance,” *Homicide Studies*, pg. 9-10, February 2020, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1088767918816741>.

⁵³ Pizarro, Terrill, and LoFaso, “The Impact of Investigation Strategies and Tactics on Homicide Clearance,” pg. 14-15.

⁵⁴ Anthony A. Braga and Desiree Dusseault, “Can Police Improve Homicide Clearance Rates?,” *Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston Policy Briefs*, pg. 4-5, November 2017, accessed December 21, 2023, https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/rappaport/files/braga_homicideclearance%20v7.pdf.

⁵⁵ The researchers reported the impact of BPD interventions on whether Boston homicide cases were cleared as an odds ratio coefficient. This coefficient is meant to be interpreted as “the odds of a homicide case being cleared relative to the odds of a case not being cleared.” For more, see Braga and Dusseault, “Can Police Improve Homicide Clearance Rates?,” pg. 8.

While these evaluations of RPD's and BPD's interventions were not designed to measure the precise statistical impact of each intervention's individual components on case closure, they do demonstrate that improvements or adjustments to police investigative practices may be associated with improved clearance rates.

C | PERF's 2019 "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process" Report

PERF is an independent research organization that "focuses on critical issues in policing (...) and [identifying] best practices on fundamental issues such as (...) developing community policing and problem-oriented policing (...) and evaluating crime reduction strategies."⁵⁶ As part of its work for the Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) Homicide Investigations Enhancement Training and Technical Assistance Project, PERF is responsible for "conducting comprehensive assessments of homicide investigation policies and practices" for multiple police departments across the country.⁵⁷

In 2018, CPD requested that PERF conduct an assessment of its homicide investigation policies and practices.⁵⁸ PERF began its assessment of CPD in December 2018, which included a series of interviews, two site visits in December 2018 and January 2019, and a review of documents. Documents reviewed included written directives, homicide logs, and sample intelligence reports.⁵⁹

In October 2019, PERF published its report, entitled "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process" (PERF report).⁶⁰ In its review, PERF found that CPD did not have a comprehensive set of policies and procedures governing homicide investigations. Instead, the Department had a series of General and Special Orders that governed discrete components of investigations, such as who is responsible for making death notifications. CPD's directives did not offer step-by-step guidance on how to conduct a homicide investigation, from the investigation itself to how it should be documented to how Detectives should perform follow-up work. PERF found that any existing investigative guidelines were very general and did not include specific instructions for homicide investigations. Interviewees reported to PERF that Homicide Detectives within the same Area unit as well as different Areas were conducting homicide investigations in their own individualized ways.⁶¹

Additionally, PERF found that CPD lacked formal supervisory review of homicide investigations. Homicide sergeants had informal discussions about cases with Detectives under their command, but did not document these conversations.⁶² PERF reported that this lack of a formal review process may have hindered the ability of CPD supervisors to oversee how different investigations were being conducted and documented, as well as their ability to effectively evaluate Detectives on investigative performance. Interviewees reported to PERF that underperforming Detectives were rarely disciplined or removed from investigative duties.⁶³

⁵⁶ Police Executive Research Forum, "About PERF," accessed February 8, 2024, <https://www.policeforum.org/about-us>.

⁵⁷ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 2.

⁵⁸ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 2.

⁵⁹ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 4.

⁶⁰ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process."

⁶¹ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 30.

⁶² PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 60.

⁶³ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 59-60.

PERF also found that CPD had challenges in communicating, sharing information, and coordinating with internal and external stakeholders.⁶⁴ For example, PERF found that not all CPD Detectives were aware of the capabilities and resources of specialty and support units within the Department, such as the Strategic Decision Support Centers (SDSC) and Area Technology Centers (ATC).⁶⁵ PERF referred to BJA's guide on best practices for homicide investigations, which stated that homicide units should build strong working relationships with other units involved in homicide investigations, including patrol officers and forensic analysts.⁶⁶ PERF noted that building a strong working relationship between investigators and prosecutors may help improve homicide investigations and may positively impact homicide clearance rates.⁶⁷ PERF found that there was often tension between Homicide Detectives and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office (CCSAO), the agency primarily responsible for prosecuting criminal cases arising from CPD investigations. Interviewees reported to PERF that Detectives and prosecutors "often" disagreed on the amount of evidence that must be collected in order to secure an arrest warrant.⁶⁸

In general, PERF found inconsistent investigative and documentation practices across Areas and even across different units in the same Area, and a lack of formal review processes which might have helped supervisors identify and address underperforming Detectives. PERF's review resulted in 89 recommendations across the following 13 topics:

1. Agency Organization
2. Staffing and Caseload Management
3. Written Policies and Procedures
4. Nonfatal Shooting Investigations
5. Cold Case Investigations
6. Detective and Supervisor Selection
7. Investigations Training
8. Supervision, Accountability, and Oversight
9. Case Documentation and Records Management⁶⁹
10. Equipment and Technology
11. Evidence Collection and Analysis
12. Internal Coordination
13. External Coordination⁷⁰

⁶⁴ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 87-96.

⁶⁵ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 89-91.

⁶⁶ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 87.

⁶⁷ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 96.

⁶⁸ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 96.

⁶⁹ OIG discusses aspects of BOD's records management in its report, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Management and Production of Records." The report states, "the procedures described by administrative personnel [in the Bureau of Detectives] to determine whether an investigative file is complete vary, are often idiosyncratic and ad hoc, and generally are insufficient to ensure completeness (i.e., that all relevant records are identified and included in the case file). One administrative member stated that they would attempt to communicate with Detectives directly, but they were often unsuccessful in doing so; the member believed this may have been due to Detectives' workload. Another administrative member stated that they do not have time to contact Detectives. To determine if an investigative file was complete, one administrative member stated that they would assess a file's physical thickness. If a file was thin, the member searched [the Criminal History Records Information System] to find any missing records." City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Management and Production of Records," June 10, 2020, pg. 24, <https://igchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/OIG-Review-of-CPDs-Management-and-Production-of-Records.pdf>.

⁷⁰ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process."

1. PERF Recommendations

Many of PERF's recommendations had to do with the structure of investigative Areas and teams, and to develop written policies and procedures tailored to homicide investigations. For example, PERF's first recommendation listed under Topic 5, "Cold Case Investigations," is that "The CPD should establish a centralized Cold Case Unit," and the second recommendation is that "The Bureau of Detectives should develop uniform written policies and protocols for the Cold Case Unit."⁷¹ In Topic 8, "Supervision, Accountability, and Oversight," four of the nine recommendations are about creating specific policies.⁷²

PERF recognized that "[m]any of the recommendations included in this report will require long-term planning, funding, and implementation."⁷³ The report noted, however, that "there are steps that the CPD can take now to address the most significant observations and immediately strengthen its homicide investigation processes."⁷⁴ From its larger list of 89 recommendations, PERF identified nine recommendations that CPD could implement immediately to strengthen its processes and improve the Department's homicide clearance rates. These nine recommendations are as follows:⁷⁵

1. "Revise the SOPs (standard operating procedures) governing homicide investigations to include standard policies and protocols that personnel must follow, including a standard investigative checklist, investigative plan, and supervisory case review process."
2. "Create a homicide investigations team to provide input on policy development, share ideas for implementing these recommendations, and discuss strategies and next steps. Members of the team should include leaders from other CPD units that are involved in homicide investigations (e.g., Detective Area commanders, Division of Forensic Services), as well as representatives from the Cook County State's Attorney's Office."
3. "Develop a formal case planning and review process and hold supervisors accountable for performing supervisory case reviews. Update the SOPs to reflect promising investigative practices and require thorough investigative plans and supervisory case reviews."
4. "Develop a case file index and standard forms to include in the homicide case file, including an investigative plan and a case checklist. The Bureau of Detectives should also consider developing a case file organization guide to provide uniformity within the unit."
5. "The Bureau of Detectives should develop an evaluation system that specifically assesses each [D]etective's performance in conducting homicide investigations. The Bureau of Detectives should develop a similar form to assess each sergeant's performance."
6. "Thoroughly investigating nonfatal shootings may help to prevent the next homicide or retaliatory shooting. The CPD must ensure that units responsible for investigating homicides and nonfatal shootings have the staffing, training, and equipment necessary to respond to and thoroughly investigate each incident. Detectives should coordinate with the appropriate SDSC and District Intelligence Officer as part of their investigation. The CPD should also work with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office and U.S.

⁷¹ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 41.

⁷² PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 62-65.

⁷³ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 106.

⁷⁴ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 106-107.

⁷⁵ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 107-109.

- Attorney's Office to develop a strategy to ensure that gun offenders are consistently prosecuted for violations."
7. "Homicide [D]etectives are increasingly relying on digital evidence as part of their investigations. With several different units and organizations responsible for the recovery and analysis of digital evidence, the CPD must develop clear policies and procedures to help guide investigators. Homicide [D]etectives should receive training to understand the legal and technical issues surrounding collection, extraction, and analysis of digital evidence, notably the recovery and analysis of cell phone and video evidence."
 8. "Leaders from the Bureau of Detectives and the Cook County State's Attorney's Office should explore strategies for improving collaboration between the two organizations, especially regarding the felony review process. For example, prosecutors should become involved in the case at the beginning of the investigation. Both agencies can provide cross-training for [D]etectives and prosecutors and should meet weekly to promote a positive relationship, facilitate information-sharing, and discuss ongoing cases."⁷⁶
 9. "The CPD should work with the Chicago Survivors to train [D]etectives on how to effectively interact with victims' families and members of the community. Detectives should meet with victims' families monthly for the first year of an investigation."

2. CPD Adoption of PERF Recommendations

Following the PERF report's release, then-Superintendent Eddie Johnson and then-Mayor Lori Lightfoot issued an October 2019 press release entitled "CPD Adopts Recommendations by National Police Research Experts and Department of Justice to Improve Homicide Clearance Rate," in which they expressed a commitment to implementing PERF's recommendations. The press release stated, in part:

"The critical findings in this report demonstrate what the Chicago Police Department must do to live up to this City's promise to ensure that those who have lost a loved one to the scourge of violence get the answers they deserve," said Mayor Lightfoot. "With these findings in hand, the City of Chicago is acting today to ensure that police officers and [D]etectives have the systems of support that are required not only for solving crimes – but for preventing them from occurring in the first place."

In response to the report, CPD is establishing a new team of [D]etectives to help manage and implement the recommended reforms, including developing an enhanced case-tracking and data collection system, increasing training and development opportunities for [H]omicide [D]etectives, creating strategies to increase staffing levels in the bureau and publishing a department-wide manual of written policies for all [D]etectives. To ensure the new team is adequately supported throughout this process, the team will utilize the Department's new analytics, auditing and project management teams that were recently established as part of the consent decree.

"I welcome the external perspective and support that will help us continue improving our city's homicide clearance rate," said Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie T.

⁷⁶ Felony review refers to the process where CPD reviews potential felony cases in collaboration with CCSAO, wherein prosecutors review the evidence presented by CPD and decide whether to approve felony charges against the suspect.

Johnson. “The recommendations contained in the report will serve as a roadmap taking us closer toward becoming the best police department in the world.”⁷⁷

The press release also noted that some recommendations were in the process of being implemented or had already been implemented.⁷⁸ For example, CPD had already announced the reopening of previously closed Areas, and Superintendent Johnson reported that all Detectives had Department-issued cellphones.⁷⁹ At a related news conference, Superintendent Johnson stated that “it’s only by evaluating these criticisms and making improvements that our Department will be able to improve.”⁸⁰ At the same news conference, Mayor Lightfoot stated, “There are [D]etectives out there every single day working their butts off, working hard, long hours, doing everything that they can with the tools that they have. We need to do better for them. And this report, I think, gives us a roadmap to do that.”⁸¹

On April 24, 2025, CPD published a review of its response to the observations and recommendations made by PERF in its 2019 report.⁸² CPD’s report highlights work the Department has done to address all 89 recommendations, including information on improving the Department’s nonfatal shooting and cold case investigations, particularly through its implementation of the Crime Gun Intelligence Center, the DNA Processing Unit, and Cold Case teams. CPD’s report also includes detail on logistical changes the Department has undertaken, from its personnel (e.g., restructured BOD, promoted more Detectives, budgeted for more Evidence Technician positions) to its equipment (e.g., procured more vehicles, laptops, and encrypted radios for Detectives).

⁷⁷ Chicago Police Department, “CPD Adopts Recommendations by National Police Research Experts and Department of Justice to Improve Homicide Clearance Rate,” October 30, 2019, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://home.chicagopolice.org/cpd-adopts-recommendations-by-national-police-research-experts-and-department-of-justice-to-improve-homicide-clearance-rate/>.

⁷⁸ Chicago Police Department, “CPD Adopts Recommendations by National Police Research Experts and Department of Justice to Improve Homicide Clearance Rate.”

⁷⁹ Feurer, “Report Recommends Sweeping Changes to CPD Homicide Investigations to Boost ‘Dismal’ Murder Clearance Rate.”

⁸⁰ Mitchell, “Here’s Why Chicago Police Solve So Few Of The City’s Murders.”

⁸¹ Mitchell, “Here’s Why Chicago Police Solve So Few Of The City’s Murders.”

⁸² Chicago Police Department, “Strengthening Homicide Investigations in the Chicago Police Department: A Review of CPD’s Response to Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) Observations and Recommendations,” April 24, 2025, accessed August 20, 2025, <https://www.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/Strengthening-Homicide-Investigations-in-the-Chicago-Police-Department-2.pdf>.

III | Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

A | Objectives

The objective of this inquiry was to determine what progress CPD had made to implement eight of the nine recommendations PERF specified for immediate implementation in its 2019 report. PERF defines an “immediate” recommendation as one that would not require “long-term planning, funding, and implementation.”⁸³ OIG has identified one recommendation regarding the response to nonfatal shootings as outside the scope of this inquiry, which focuses solely on homicide- and homicide investigation-related recommendations.

Through the Homicide Investigations Enhancement Training and Technical Assistance Project funded by BJA, PERF performs assessments of homicide investigation policies and procedures and provides technical assistance to law enforcement agencies that request such assistance.⁸⁴ In an interview with OIG, PERF’s Executive Director stated that PERF does not formally audit agency compliance with its recommendations. PERF’s Executive Director also stated that any evaluation of CPD’s work on implementing homicide investigation process improvements should consider whether CPD’s actions address the goals underlying PERF’s guidance, and not necessarily whether each specific recommendation has been implemented.

OIG’s inquiry did not observe or test implementation of any new procedures. Therefore, OIG does not draw any conclusions as to the effectiveness of such procedures or PERF’s recommendations.

B | Scope

The scope of this inquiry included CPD policies, procedures, processes, trainings, and meetings created, amended, or completed after the publication of the PERF report in October 2019 through November 2022. In April, May, and November 2025, OIG requested and received updated CPD policies, trainings, meetings, and tools created, amended, or completed since November 2022. From December 2022 through January 2023, OIG completed site visits to each CPD Detective Area to review closed case files. From March 2023 through January 2024, OIG completed interviews with Homicide Detectives, supervisors, and community-based organization Chicago Survivors. Additionally, OIG completed an interview with the Chief of Detectives in April 2025.⁸⁵

C | Methodology

To assess whether CPD’s actions corresponded with the goals underlying PERF’s recommendations, OIG requested CPD provide responses to a form, listing each PERF recommendation, with a description of relevant actions taken (complete or in progress) and all related supporting documentation.

⁸³ PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process.”

⁸⁴ US Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs, “Homicide Investigations Enhancement Training & Technical Assistance Project,” September 3, 2014, accessed January 21, 2025, <https://bja.ojp.gov/funding/awards/2014-dg-bx-k012>.

⁸⁵ As is its usual practice, OIG provided a draft of this report to CPD for comment and response. In this publication, OIG has made revisions reflecting the additional information provided by CPD on its efforts since OIG’s primary period of analysis. See Appendix A.

Specifically, OIG,

- interviewed a former Chief of BOD in October 2021;
- interviewed the current Chief BOD in April 2025;
- interviewed a Director of Project Management in charge of BOD’s implementation of the PERF report’s recommendations;
- interviewed Chicago Survivors’ Executive Director;
- interviewed
 - 10 homicide Detectives across five Areas;
 - 2 homicide supervisors from two different Areas;⁸⁶
 - 2 Family Liaison Officers;⁸⁷
- visited two Area Technology Centers in two different Areas;
- reviewed 32 closed homicide case files across five Areas that met the following criteria:⁸⁸
 - Closed between January 1, 2016, and February 28, 2022, or
 - Closed on or after March 1, 2022; and
- reviewed the following resources and policies provided by CPD:
 - “Bureau of Detectives Homicide Investigation Manual” (October 2020);
 - “Bureau of Detectives Investigative Manual Reference Guide 2022” (March 2022);
 - “Bureau of Detectives Operations Manual Reference Guide 2023”;
 - “Bureau of Detectives Policy and Procedures Review Section: Standard Operating Procedures”;
 - “Bureau of Detectives Special Order 20-01: Use of Technology to Aid Investigations”;
 - “Department Notice D21-09: Performance Evaluations System – Pilot Program”;
 - “Employee Resource E05-01: Performance Evaluations of All Sworn Department Members Below the Rank of Superintendent”;
 - “Bureau of Detectives Special Order BDSO 15-26: Investigative Files”;
 - “Bureau of Detectives Special Order BDSO 16-01: Homicide Victims – Family Reinterviews”;
 - “Bureau of Detectives Special Order BDSO 21-04: Family Liaison Officer”;
 - “General Order G01-02-05: Organization and Functions of the Bureau of Detectives”;
 - “Bureau of Detectives Homicide Unit Proposal” (February 2022);
 - “CPD-23.406: Homicide Case Folder” form;
 - “CPD-23.170: Homicide Investigation Reassignment Report” form;
 - “CPD-23.169: “Homicide File Transfer Cover Sheet” form;
 - “CPD-23.124: Investigative File Control” form;
 - “CPD-23.122: General Progress Report” form;

⁸⁶ OIG selected 12 sworn CPD members for interviews using a stratified random sampling method. CPD provided a roster to OIG of members assigned to an Area Homicide Section. OIG divided the list by supervisory status, and then used Area to separate Detectives into sampling groups. Two Detectives were randomly selected from each Area. Two supervisors across all Areas were also randomly selected.

⁸⁷ OIG selected two sworn CPD members assigned as Family Liaison Officers for interviews. One Detective was selected from a CPD provided list of Family Liaison Officers, and the other was identified by CPD as someone OIG may want to interview based on their knowledge of the Family Liaison Program.

⁸⁸ OIG recognizes that the sample size of case files is small and susceptible to selection bias. The case files OIG reviewed were not random; instead, OIG shared the criteria discussed above, and the CPD members tasked with coordinating case files presented OIG with case files selected based on such criteria. The review of case files is not meant to support statistical analysis.

- “CPD-23.122: General Progress Report – Head Diagram” form;
- “CPD-23.122: General Progress Report – Adult Diagram” form;
- “CPD-23.122: General Progress Report – Adult Profile” form;
- “CPD-23.122: General Progress Report – Child Diagram” form;
- “CPD-23.300: Information Notice – Bureau of Detectives (English language)” form;
- “CPD-23.274: Digital Evidence Submission” form;
- “CPD-23.219: Digital Evidence Recovery Report” form;
- “CPD-23.273: Digital Evidence Processing” form;
- PowerPoint slides for the “Courtroom Preparation” training given by the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office’s Felony Trial Division and Juvenile Justice Bureau;
- Training materials for the “Courtroom Prep, Trial, and Testimony” training presented by the Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office’s Felony Review Unit (Felony Review) (October 2021);
- Excel sheet of Family Liaison Outreach Activity from April 2021 through March 2022;
- Weekly BOD Check-In Meeting notes and PowerPoint slides from December 10, 2020, through February 8, 2023;
- Attendance rolls for CCSAO, Digital Technology, ATC, and Chicago Survivor trainings since February 2019;
- PowerPoint slides for the “Trauma-Informed Interviewing” training given by a Detective to CCSAO (April 2024);
- PowerPoint slides for “District Technology Officer Training Day 1” and “District Technology Officer Training Day 2,” given by ATC members;
- PowerPoint slides for 2019 in-service supervisor trainings provided by the National Alliance on Mental Illness -Chicago and Chicago Commission on Human Relations;
- PowerPoint slides for annual in-service supervisor trainings (2021-2025);
- Screenshots of the Homicide Investigation Task Management Tool;
- Notice of Job Opportunity for Detective, Area Homicide Team;
- Homicide Task Dashboard – Documentation.

D | Standards

OIG conducted this review in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections, Evaluations, and Reviews by Offices of Inspector General found in the Association of Inspectors General’s *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General* (i.e., “The Green Book”).

E | Authority and Role

The authority to perform this inquiry is established in the City of Chicago Municipal Code §§ 2-56-030 and -230, which confer on OIG the power and duty to review the programs of City government in order to identify any inefficiencies, waste, and potential for misconduct, and to promote economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity in the administration of City programs and operations, and, specifically, to review the operations of CPD and Chicago’s police accountability agencies. The role of OIG is to review City operations and make recommendations for improvement. City management is responsible for establishing and maintaining processes to ensure that City programs operate economically, efficiently, effectively, and with integrity.

IV | Findings

OIG has inquired about any actions CPD has taken following the release of the PERF report in 2019. Unlike CPD's recent report, OIG's inquiry focused on the recommendations that PERF identified as ones the Department could implement immediately. OIG further omitted any analysis of actions responsive to the recommendation regarding CPD's response to nonfatal shootings (PERF Recommendation 6) to focus the scope of this inquiry solely on homicide- and homicide investigation-related recommendations.

Regarding the immediate recommendations identified by PERF, OIG's inquiry found that CPD provided multiple administrative resources for standardizing homicide investigations across teams and Areas. The Department has implemented oversight measures—such as the Homicide Investigation Task Management Tool—to better assess the timeliness and completeness of investigative steps.

Specifically, CPD has regularly convened collaborators to discuss homicide policy development and implementation, with different stakeholders being invited based on meeting subject matter. CPD has also written and revised policies and developed resources to guide homicide investigations and the supervision of such investigations. The Department has not, however, operationalized measures to ensure that Detectives are adhering to these guidelines or that supervisors are ensuring or evaluating the adherence to guidelines of Detectives under their command. Despite its creation of standard investigative forms and guidance on case file organization, CPD has not implemented the use of formal investigative plans that definitively document what investigative steps have been taken, what steps remain, and what evidence has been collected.

CPD has created separate and specialized roles to address the technical and victim assistance and outreach aspects of an investigation. However, the Department has not necessarily cultivated and improved technical expertise and victim assistance capabilities in the Homicide Detectives who do investigative work. Further, CPD has not developed a performance evaluation specific to Detectives and their investigative performance, which may hinder the Department's ability to identify underperforming Detectives, or those who may require further training on different skills. This section describes CPD's actions undertaken since 2019 and assesses whether they correspond with the goals underlying PERF's immediate recommendations.

PERF Recommendation #1: CPD should revise the SOPs governing homicide investigations to include standard policies and protocols that personnel must follow, including a standard investigative checklist, investigative plan, and supervisory case review process.⁸⁹

While reviewing CPD policies and procedures related to homicide investigations, PERF observed that CPD did not have any directives that “specifically and comprehensively cover[ed] death investigation procedures.”⁹⁰ Ultimately, PERF found that this “lack of guidance [contributed] to inconsistencies in the way that homicide cases [were] investigated” across CPD Areas.⁹¹ PERF also observed that CPD had no formal supervisory review of homicide investigations, and that any conversations about cases between supervisors and Homicide Detectives were informal and undocumented. As such, PERF wrote that CPD should establish uniform guidance on conducting homicide investigations and uniformly apply that guidance across the Department to improve the quality of investigations.⁹²

In response to OIG’s inquiry, CPD stated that in early 2020, BOD created a BOD Policy and Procedures Review Section (Section) responsible for writing and revising policy. As of July 2025, the Section had created or revised 27 BOD Special Orders and 37 BOD Reports since 2020.

In addition, the Section cited its publication of the BOD Investigative Manual Reference Guide (Reference Guide) in March 2022 as its biggest achievement. The Reference Guide replaced the Homicide Investigation Manual, published in October 2020. The Reference Guide expanded on the Homicide Investigation Manual’s broad guidance by providing more specific and sequential instruction for each phase of a homicide investigation. The Reference Guide also considers different or additional responsibilities required for a Detective during an investigation. For example, regarding what actions a Detective might take upon arrival to a homicide scene, the Homicide Investigation Manual listed three bullet points on protecting the scene and reviewing it to determine the motive. The Reference Guide provides more specific guidance, including considerations for restricting access to the scene and setting the site’s parameters. The Reference Guide also advises Detectives to determine whether an offender has or has not been arrested, and what notifications or considerations should be made in either case. Additionally, the Reference Guide considers that there may be multiple victims either on-scene or in additional locations.

⁸⁹ PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 107.

⁹⁰ PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 30.

⁹¹ PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 30.

⁹² PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 30.

Whereas the Homicide Investigation Manual was intended to guide only homicide investigations, the Reference Guide applies as a reference for all of BOD's investigative work, including investigations of homicides, kidnappings, robberies, and sexual assaults. A centralized source of investigative guidance with more specific considerations based on different types of investigations as applicable helps to standardize practices across the Department, allowing Detectives across different teams and different Areas to perform investigations more uniformly.⁹³

Detectives interviewed by OIG reported that they refer to the Reference Guide when they are stalled in an investigation, need new ideas to help move the investigation, or to ensure that they have not missed any steps in their investigation. Those Detectives stated that the Reference Guide is useful and instructive for new Detectives. Additionally, Detectives stated that they relied on their prior experience as investigators, as well as the experience of their partners and supervisors.

It was reported that the Reference Guide is understood to be a resource and not a standard procedure that Detectives were required to follow. This understanding comports with the Reference Guide's own introduction, which states that the document "should be used as a guideline and a training tool and is not intended to impose substantive requirements on Detectives or supervisors." However, this discretionary use of the Reference Guide contradicts PERF's recommendation that "CPD should revise the SOPs governing homicide investigations to include standard policies and protocols that personnel must follow...." (emphasis added).⁹⁴

Regarding supervisory case review, PERF found that "there [was] no significant supervision or formal review of homicide investigations."⁹⁵ In response to OIG's inquiry, CPD reported that BOD added one additional Lieutenant per Area to assist in supervising investigations of property crimes, violent crimes, and homicides. Additionally, CPD's resources offer more guidance on supervisory tasks. The Reference Guide contains a Homicide Sergeant File Review section within its Homicide chapter, which lists specific tasks and documentation supervisors ought to ensure are accounted for in each investigation and case file. For example, the Homicide Sergeant File Review instructs Sergeants to "ensure the file provides a clear understanding of the events, reads like a novel, and provides a chronological guide through the investigative process."⁹⁶ It also instructs Sergeants to "ensure the file contains all efforts detectives made in locating potential witnesses, such as conducting background checks, interviewing family members and known associates."⁹⁷

In 2023, BOD published its Operations Manual Reference Guide (Operations Manual). The Operations Manual builds on the responsibilities laid out for Homicide Sergeants in the Reference Guide and additionally addresses Homicide Lieutenant responsibilities. The Operations Manual builds on the Reference Guide's guidance for Homicide Sergeants by enumerating daily tasks, not just those associated with file reviews. For example, the Operations Manual instructs Homicide Sergeants to inquire about the status of follow-up investigations during roll call and for 2nd watch Detective Sergeants to schedule a daily call with a Detective from Public Safety Headquarters to provide updates on the progress of recent, in-custody, and "newsworthy" homicide investigations.⁹⁸ However, there are no provisions within the Reference Guide or the Operations Manual that

⁹³ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 30.

⁹⁴ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 107.

⁹⁵ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 60.

⁹⁶ Chicago Police Department, "Investigative Manual Reference Guide 2022," March 23, 2022.

⁹⁷ Chicago Police Department, "Investigative Manual Reference Guide 2022."

⁹⁸ Chicago Police Department, "Operations Manual Reference Guide 2023."

specifically establish a supervisory case review process, distinct from the Homicide Sergeant File Review lists.

Both Homicide Detectives and their supervisors told OIG that case reviews function more as informal investigation progress check-in meetings. They also reported to OIG that CPD does not require them to document their informal case planning or case review sessions. Homicide Detectives stated that they may include notes regarding these sessions in General Progress Reports, but that it is not required.⁹⁹ Such usage is in line with how the Reference Guide and Operations Manual instruct Detectives to use General Progress Reports, “for note taking,” rather than “as a substitute for a supplementary report.”¹⁰⁰ Although there is no formal supervisory case review process, in an April 2025 interview with OIG, the BOD Chief stated that the team structure and scheduling of the “Homicide Teams Pilot Program” allows Detectives and their supervisors to meet more frequently to discuss cases and build stronger relationships.

Neither CPD’s Reference Guide nor its Operations Manual provide explicit guidance for reviewing ongoing cases. In response to OIG’s inquiry, CPD stated that it had submitted a request for proposals for a new Department-wide records management system (RMS) that would “ensure supervisory action for the 30, 60, 90-day review process.” The BOD Chief further reported to OIG that the request for proposals is in its final evaluation phase as of July 2025. They stated that they hope the new RMS can be an expansion of the BOD’s Homicide Investigation Task Management Tool, which was launched at the beginning of 2025. The tool lists investigative tasks and their associated expected timelines for completion. For more information on the Homicide Investigative Task Management Tool and its use in case planning and review, see PERF Recommendation 3.

While the Reference Guide, Operations Manual, and Homicide Investigation Task Management Tool give more detailed guidance on what to look for during homicide file reviews and when investigative tasks should be completed, CPD did not provide further information or documentation detailing what actions are required of supervisors at each distinct review interval (i.e., at 30, 60, and 90 days) to help advance a stalled investigation or to ensure that an investigation stays on track.

Regarding an investigative checklist, neither CPD’s Operations Manual nor Reference Guide includes an investigative checklist, nor did CPD provide documentation of having or utilizing an investigative checklist. In response to OIG’s request for such a document, CPD stated that its Reference Guide, as a multipurpose document, “serves as a checklist for [D]etectives’ cases.”

Partially consistent with PERF’s recommendation to establish uniform guidance on conducting homicide investigations, CPD has revised its standard homicide investigation policies and protocols. In doing so, CPD has created the Reference Guide, which establishes common investigative guidelines for all types of investigations conducted by BOD. Detectives interviewed by OIG are generally aware of the resource, and some reported using it as a reference as they plan and carry out investigations. However, no members reported consistently using the Reference Guide, nor is there a Department mandate to adhere to its guidance. Additionally, although CPD’s updated policies and procedures address supervisory actions and responsibilities during homicide

⁹⁹ A General Progress Report is a form used by any personnel assigned to BOD to write notes during investigations. Examples of such notes include notes taken during an on-scene canvass or notes taken during a suspect interview. These notes can then be used to prepare official case reports. For more, see <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-23.122.pdf>.

¹⁰⁰ Chicago Police Department, “Investigative Manual Reference Guide 2022.”

investigations, none of them provide requirements on whether or how supervisors are held accountable for performing supervisory case reviews. CPD reported to OIG that the proposed RMS would ensure that case reviews are conducted on a standardized timeline. However, as of July 2025 the RMS is not yet in place, and CPD policy does not address how supervisory case review is to be operationalized, such as by describing what supervisory responsibilities are required at each review interval. For more information on CPD's efforts to create and establish an investigative plan, see PERF Recommendation 3.

PERF Recommendation #2: CPD should create a homicide investigations team to provide input on policy development, share ideas for implementing these recommendations, and discuss strategies and next steps.¹⁰¹

PERF observed that homicide investigations frequently involve personnel from across and external to the Department—from the technicians who collect evidence on-scene to Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office (CCSAO) prosecutors who bring charges against offenders—and as such, efforts to develop and revise policies should be collaborative with these involved actors. PERF wrote that the Department should create a team dedicated to providing input on homicide investigation-related policy development, sharing ideas for implementing these policies, and discussing strategies and next steps.¹⁰²

In response to OIG’s inquiry, CPD stated that BOD holds weekly check-in meetings with the Project Management section, BOD administrative staff, and two BOD Commanders to discuss homicide investigation best practices, policy, and recommendations.¹⁰³

In an interview with OIG, CPD’s Director of Project Management stated that BOD discusses various sections of the PERF report in the weekly check-in meetings. CPD provided documentation (e.g., calendar invites, agendas, and meeting notes) for regular BOD weekly check-in meetings that occurred between December 2020 and February 2023. The notes for these meetings indicate that discussions included various subject matter, such as the Family Liaison Officer program, how new Detectives are to be cycled through the different investigative sections (e.g., Homicide, Violent Crimes), updates on equipment (e.g., laptops), and how BOD may collaborate with CCSAO.¹⁰⁴

In addition to the weekly check-in meeting’s regular attendees, CPD also reported visiting participants are invited to attend meetings dependent on the subject matter. Visiting participants may be external to both BOD and CPD. For example, representatives from the City’s Office of Public Safety Administration may be invited to a meeting covering hiring and budget, and representatives from CPD’s Labor Affairs Division may be invited to meetings regarding collective bargaining agreements.

¹⁰¹ PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 107.

¹⁰² PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 32.

¹⁰³ According to “General Order G01-02-01: Organization and Functions of the Office of the Superintendent,” the Project Management Section coordinates the execution of strategic projects across the Department as determined by the Chief of Staff. “General Order G01-02-01: Organization and Functions of the Office of the Superintendent,” May 11, 2023, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6611>.

¹⁰⁴ The Family Liaison Program was created in 2021 to establish roles specifically tasked with providing case updates and support and assistance resources to homicide victims’ families. For more information, see PERF Recommendation 9.

Notably, OIG found that BOD did not include CCSAO representatives as standing attendees to the weekly check-in meetings. CPD's Director of Project Management told OIG in May 2022 that the BOD Chief at the time had a "really good working relationship" with CCSAO and met regularly with the Felony Review Unit separate from BOD's weekly check-in meetings.¹⁰⁵ The current BOD Chief stated in an April 2025 interview with OIG that they have continued this relationship, meeting with the head of Felony Review roughly every six weeks. Documentation provided by CPD in November 2025 lists approximately monthly executive-level meetings between BOD and CCSAO. CCSAO plays a critical role in prosecuting homicide cases, making its consistent involvement in policy discussions essential for ensuring investigative practices align with legal standards and prosecutorial needs. Similarly, agencies like the Medical Examiner's Office, which also did not have a regular presence at the meetings, provide crucial forensic insights that can inform investigative strategies and case determinations. Regular participation from these entities would strengthen interagency coordination, improve case outcomes, and help ensure that policy decisions reflect the full scope of the homicide investigation process.

It appears that, in response to PERF's recommendation, CPD has created a team that assists with general BOD operations; however, it is unclear whether this team predominantly and consistently "provide[s] input on [homicide] policy development, share[s] ideas for implementing [those policies], and discuss[es] strategies and next steps." Given that such meetings do not always include leaders from all units and agencies that may be involved in homicide investigations and that the content of such meetings seems to go beyond homicide investigation policy, CPD may need to adjust their approach to better align with PERF's recommendation.

¹⁰⁵ According to CCSAO's website, attorneys in the Felony Review Unit "operat[e] 24/7, 365 days a year to make critical charging decisions and ensure the appropriate cases are brought to trial." Cook County State's Attorney's Office, "Criminal Prosecutions Bureau," accessed March 28, 2024, <https://www.cookcountystatesattorney.org/criminal-prosecutions-bureau>.

PERF Recommendation #3: CPD should develop a formal case planning and review process and hold supervisors accountable for performing supervisory case reviews. CPD should update its SOPs to reflect promising investigative practices and require thorough investigative plans and supervisory case reviews.¹⁰⁶

PERF found that CPD had “no formal case planning or review system to ensure cases are being thoroughly and effectively investigated.”¹⁰⁷ In addition, PERF observed that Detectives “do not routinely develop a formal investigative plan when beginning a homicide case.”¹⁰⁸ PERF stated, “as soon as possible after a [D]etective receives a new homicide case, the [D]etective should work with his or her supervisor to develop an investigative plan.” As such, PERF wrote that the Department should institute a formal case review system to ensure that Detectives are being properly supervised and there is adequate and formal oversight of how cases are documented and investigated.¹⁰⁹

CPD’s Reference Guide does not describe or guide a case planning process that Detectives must abide by or use. In interviews with OIG, Homicide Detectives stated that it is difficult to standardize a formal case planning process because case planning is dependent on the circumstances of each specific case. These Detectives stated that expecting Detectives to follow a formal, standard planning procedure for each case is unrealistic. For example, the evidence initially discovered on-scene may dictate the next steps of an investigation; a Detective who learns that a car has been used by an unknown offender in a homicide has a different case planning process than a Detective whose case involves a known offender who is apprehended on-scene.

In December 2022 and January 2023, OIG visited each Area and reviewed a small, non-random sample of 32 total closed case files. OIG requested to view closed case files from each Area that met the following criteria: homicide cases that closed between January 1, 2016, and February 28, 2022—or, a period of time that predated the publication of BOD’s Investigative Manual Reference Guide; and homicide cases that were closed on or after March 1, 2022, after the Reference Guide

¹⁰⁶ PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 107.

¹⁰⁷ PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 107.

¹⁰⁸ PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 107.

¹⁰⁹ PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 60.

was published.¹¹⁰ OIG compared case files that were closed before and after the publication of the Reference Guide to observe whether there was any change in the approach to investigative planning. In its review of closed case files across all five Areas, OIG found no documentation of or reference to investigative plans.

CPD's Operations Manual—published later in 2023—directs CPD Area Detective Sergeants to monitor the progress of cases assigned to their supervisees and to “frequently review case status to keep Detective assignments current and to avoid delinquencies in reporting.”¹¹¹ The Operations Manual also instructs Detective Sergeants to ensure that Detectives take steps to ensure that different types of evidence (e.g., fingerprints, POD camera footage, 911 tapes) are collected as early as possible in the investigation. The Operations Manual further tasks Sergeants with reviewing Supplementary Reports and investigative files for completeness, particularly to ensure that they reflect “all efforts [D]etectives made” to follow investigative leads and reconcile evidence. The Operations Manual is written like the Reference Guide; it reads like an informal checklist of reminders on how to approach investigations and gives no instruction for the development of a formal investigative plan at the beginning of each new case assignment.

The BOD Chief reported to OIG in April 2025 that BOD launched the Homicide Investigation Task Management Tool at the beginning of 2025 that allows supervisors to track all active cases assigned to their detectives and “the basic things [...] that need to get done in any homicide investigation,” with their associated expected timelines, which are due dates generated based on the date of homicide occurrence. The task types are as follows: Scene Report, Family 30 Day, Family 180 Day, Family 360 Day, Ballistics, DNA, Other, In-Car Camera, POD Video, and OEMC Data Request. The tool uses a task status and color coding to indicate tasks that have not yet been completed—the task is emphasized with green brackets and the “INCOMPLETE” status is displayed in red text. The color coding allows supervisors to immediately identify which cases and which tasks are overdue or approaching overdue status, and the tool allows cases to be sorted by the ones with the most pressing task due dates.

Although the Operations Manual and the Homicide Investigation Task Management Tool list possible investigative tasks and allow for supervisory tracking of such tasks in real time, respectively, neither tool establishes guidelines or requirements for Sergeants and Detectives to operationalize supervisory case review and formally develop a tailored investigative plan for each new homicide case. PERF notes that developing a formal investigative plan as soon as possible after a Detective receives a new case allows for the establishment of a case-specific to-do list for investigative steps and a rough timeline for completion. According to PERF, this component informs and improves the formal case review process.¹¹² Improving case reviews may in turn improve case closure rates and help supervisors better evaluate Detectives' investigative performance (see PERF Recommendation 5). Contrary to PERF's recommendation, the Department has not operationalized a formal case planning and review process.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ OIG recognizes that the sample size of case files is small and susceptible to selection bias. The case files the OIG reviewed were not random; rather, CPD members tasked with organizing case files presented OIG with case files they selected based on OIG's criteria. The review of case files is not meant to support statistical analysis.

¹¹¹ Chicago Police Department, “Bureau of Detectives Operations Manual Reference Guide 2023.”

¹¹² PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 60.

¹¹³ More information on CPD's efforts to hold supervisors accountable can be found in Recommendation 1.

Regarding PERF's recommendation that the Department update its SOPs to reflect promising investigative practices, CPD originally responded that the BOD Chief at the time was in "constant contact" with PERF, a relationship which allowed the Department to access the latest policies from police departments across the country. In an April 2025 interview with OIG, the current BOD Chief stated that the Superintendent's Office maintains a relationship with PERF, and that BOD had also been in touch as the Department prepared its response to PERF's 2019 report. CPD also noted that the BOD Policy and Procedures Review Section's SOP specifically tasks the Section with examining existing policies and emerging research when revising and creating policies and SOPs.¹¹⁴ As of July 2025, the Section had created or revised 27 BOD Special Orders and 37 BOD Reports since 2020. Many of these revised and newly created policies and forms pertain to digital evidence recovery and analysis, an emergent and evolving investigative field (see PERF Recommendation 7).

Consistent with PERF's recommendation, CPD has continually updated its SOPs to reflect promising investigative practices. PERF's recommendation further calls for the development of formal case planning and review processes, which supervisors are to be held accountable for performing. While CPD has developed and implemented multiple tools and resources to better guide supervisory review of case files, the Department does not have a formal process for developing a case plan at the beginning of each new case or guidance for specific supervisory actions at prescribed case review intervals.

¹¹⁴ Chicago Police Department, "Bureau of Detectives Policy and Procedures Review Section: Standard Operating Procedures," March 2022.

PERF Recommendation #4: CPD should develop a case file index and standard forms, including an investigative plan and a case checklist, to include in each homicide case file. The BOD should also consider developing a case file organization guide to provide uniformity within the unit.¹¹⁵

PERF observed that CPD's case files were not well organized, and that in some instances, documentation was incomplete or missing. PERF also observed that Homicide Detectives did not receive substantive directions on properly documenting their investigative work and organizing their files. As such, PERF recommended that CPD create a resource that would direct Detectives on which documents should be included in a case file, and the order in which they should be kept.¹¹⁶

In response to OIG's inquiry, CPD stated that the "CPD-23.406: Homicide Case Folder" form ("Homicide Case Folder") is included in the front of each physical homicide case file. The "Homicide Case Folder" form contains case identifying information, including the case's victim(s), date and location of the homicide, and the assigned Detective and Sergeant. The form has a table of contents that lists where case information (e.g., information on the victims, suspects, and witnesses) and forms (e.g., Crime Scene Processing Reports, relevant warrants) can be found within the case folder.¹¹⁷

Instructions for homicide investigative file documentation and management can be found in the Homicide chapter of the Reference Guide. Examples of such instructions include how case files should be physically assembled, how sections of the file should be separated, and how different forms and reports should be formatted and labeled.

OIG visited each Area and reviewed a small, non-random sample of 32 total closed case files. Per the instructions for file maintenance listed in the Reference Guide, all the case files OIG reviewed were compiled either in a white plastic three ring binder or in a "flat-back" blue binder. Each file OIG reviewed was labeled with a printed sticker that displayed the case's unique Records Division (RD) number (i.e., a number used to identify and track a case throughout the investigation), the name of the victim, the date and time of the incident, the location where the homicide occurred (e.g., private residence, driveway, etc.), and the responding unit's Beat number.

¹¹⁵ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 107.

¹¹⁶ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 66, 68.

¹¹⁷ Chicago Police Department, "CPD-23.406: Homicide Case Folder," June 2017, accessed January 4, 2024, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-23.406.pdf>.

OIG found that a “Homicide Case Folder” form was included in the front of each physical homicide case file it reviewed. Most of the files OIG reviewed followed the form’s organizational structure, with each section of the file separated by numbered and tabbed sheets according to the form’s 21 “Table of Contents” items. Organizing case files in accordance with the “Homicide Case Folder” form may contribute to case file uniformity both within and across Areas. Further, most of the files OIG reviewed included the “CPD23.124: Investigative File Control” and “CPD23.121: Investigative File Inventory” forms in front of the file. These forms track the physical custody of files (i.e., who has removed a file from the Commander’s file cabinet and when) and briefly describe each document included in the file, respectively.

In response to OIG’s inquiry, CPD listed several standard forms it had developed for inclusion in homicide case files, including:

- “CPD23.122: General Progress Reports”¹¹⁸
- “CPD23.124: Investigative File Control”¹¹⁹
- “CPD23.121: File Inventory”¹²⁰
- “CPD23.122: Adult Diagram”¹²¹
- “CPD23.122: Child Diagram”¹²²
- “CPD23.122: Adult Profile”¹²³
- “CPD23.122: Head Diagram”¹²⁴

During OIG’s review of the homicide case files, the project team observed the use, as applicable, of the forms listed above.

OIG learned that although the lead Detectives complete the forms and notes included in the case files, another separate Detective is designated to compile, organize, and store each case file.

¹¹⁸ A General Progress Report is a form used by any personnel assigned to BOD to write notes during the course of their investigations. Examples of such notes include notes taken during an on-scene canvas or notes taken during a suspect interview. These notes can then be used to prepare official case reports. See <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-23.122.pdf>.

¹¹⁹ The Investigative File Control form documents the physical movement of an investigative file. Case files are stored in a filing cabinet in the watch Commander’s office. Every time a member removes the file from the filing cabinet, they must record their name and star number, and the date and time that they have checked the file out and back into the filing cabinet. See <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-23.124.pdf>.

¹²⁰ The Investigative File Inventory lists all the documents in a case file, including a brief description of each document, the name of the member who has entered a document into the case file, and the date of entry. See <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-23.121.pdf>.

¹²¹ The Adult Diagram form is a type of General Progress Report. The form features a diagram of the front and back of an adult victim, upon which Detectives are meant to make notations that indicate the type of injury an adult has sustained and the approximate location on their body of such injury. See <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-23.122-A.pdf>.

¹²² The Child Diagram form is a type of General Progress Report. The form features a diagram of the front and back of a child victim, upon which Detectives are meant to make notations that indicate the type of injury a child has sustained and the approximate location on their body of such injury. See <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-23.122-C.pdf>.

¹²³ The Adult Profile form is a type of General Progress Report. The form features a diagram of the side profiles of an adult victim, upon which Detectives are meant to make notations that indicate the type of injury an adult has sustained and the approximate location on their body of such injury. See <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-23.122-B.pdf>.

¹²⁴ The Head Diagram is a type of General Progress Report. The form features a diagram of the front, back, and side profiles of an adult victim’s head, upon which Detectives are meant to make notations that indicate the type of injury an adult has sustained to their head and the approximate location of such injury. See <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-23.122-D.pdf>.

Designating one Detective per Area to be responsible for file organization and maintenance may contribute to case file uniformity.

In its response to OIG's inquiry, CPD stated, "When a [D]etective leaves the unit, gets promoted, or retires, their cases are reassigned in a timely manner," and cited the use of "two new reports" to guide these reassignments. The two new reports are "CPD23.169: Homicide File Transfer Cover Sheet" (transfer form)—used to move a case from one Area to another—and "CPD23.170: Homicide Investigation Reassignment Report" (reassignment form)—used to reassign a case from one Detective to another Detective in the same unit.

However, during its review of a sample of case files, OIG was unable to verify the use of those forms.¹²⁵ The Homicide Detectives responsible for coordinating case files in each Area confirmed to OIG that they had neither seen nor used the transfer and reassignment forms. Investigating Detectives interviewed by OIG stated that they did not complete formal reports or memoranda when cases were reassigned or transferred. Instead, they relied on informal conversations with the Detective from whom they were receiving a case. The lack of formal documentation that records an investigation's progress to date—including, for example, what evidence has been recovered and what investigative steps have been taken—poses a risk that important case information may be lost when cases are reassigned or transferred. A miscommunication about or omission of case information may in turn hinder investigative progress. Information about investigative steps taken, what resulted from them, and what steps a Detective might take next may also be recorded in a formal investigative plan. OIG did not see documentation of any investigative plans in its review of closed case files.

Consistent with PERF's recommendation, CPD has developed standard forms to include in a homicide case file, including the "Homicide Case Folder" form, which guides the structure and organization of case files. Organizing files according to this form and designating responsibility to one Detective for consolidating and maintaining case files may contribute to case file uniformity within and across Areas. While these administrative changes may positively impact how cases are documented, they do not necessarily standardize or improve how investigations are conducted in practice. Using formal investigative plans that establish a list of planned investigative steps, and a summary of investigative leads and evidence collected, may provide substantive improvements to homicide investigations; however, OIG observed no evidence of any such plans being used or contemplated by the Department.

¹²⁵ OIG observed a mostly blank reassignment form for one case file out of 32 case files reviewed.

PERF Recommendation #5: To improve homicide investigations immediately, the Bureau of Detectives should develop an evaluation system that specifically assesses each Detective's performance in conducting homicide investigations. The Bureau of Detectives should develop a similar form to assess each sergeant's performance.¹²⁶

PERF observed that CPD's annual performance evaluation system did not have effective measures to evaluate Homicide Detectives specifically on their investigative performance, and thus, could not identify poorly performing Detectives. As such, PERF recommended that CPD implement an evaluation system that specifically assessed Detectives' performance in conducting homicide investigations.¹²⁷

In response to OIG's inquiry, CPD stated that BOD currently uses the Department-wide Performance Recognition System (PRS). The PRS evaluates all sworn Department members below the rank of Superintendent, meaning it does not have any deliberately separate or differentiated methods of assessing CPD members based on their specific role (e.g., supervisor, Homicide Detective, Patrol Officer).

According to CPD directive "Employee Resource E05-01: Performance Evaluations of All Sworn Department Members Below the Rank of Superintendent," all members are evaluated based on five broad performance dimensions: Accountability/Dependability, Problem Solving/Decision Making, Adaptability/Responsiveness, Communication, and Job Knowledge/Professional Development.¹²⁸

In an interview with OIG, CPD's Director of Project Management explained that each member's supervisor is expected to apply the broad performance dimensions at their discretion. They stated that supervisors are meant to tailor their evaluations to the specific role and skills of each assessed member. For example, one homicide supervisor told OIG how they tailor the PRS' broad dimensions to the specific Homicide Detective by taking into consideration certain factors such as how a Detective speaks to uncooperative witnesses, or how a Detective works as a member of a team. That supervisor stated that a Homicide Detective's work is very different from other Police Officers'

¹²⁶ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 108.

¹²⁷ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 107-108.

¹²⁸ Chicago Police Department, "Employee Resource E05-01: Performance Evaluations of All Sworn Department Members Below the Rank of Superintendent," July 20, 2018, accessed January 4, 2024, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6100>.

and Detectives' work. They believed that it would be appropriate to develop homicide investigation-specific evaluation criteria for assessing Homicide Detectives.

In December 2021, CPD also piloted the Performance Evaluations System (PES), a performance management system for sworn members assigned to District 006 in the Bureau of Patrol. According to "Department Notice D21-09: Performance Evaluations System – Pilot Program," PES introduced updated performance dimensions (Conduct and Professionalism, Respect for People and Public Trust, Adaptability and Situational Skills, Problem Solving, Job Knowledge and Professional Development), and includes in-depth descriptions of each.¹²⁹ The Independent Monitoring Team (IMT), the entity charged with assessing CPD's compliance with the consent decree entered in *Illinois v. Chicago*, found that the PES required supervisors to evaluate member performance under these performance dimensions according to their specific duties and responsibilities.¹³⁰ The IMT further found that the PES required supervisors to use the evaluation to identify members who "perform poorly, engage in inappropriate conduct, or in conduct that otherwise undermines member, public safety, or community trust."¹³¹

In an April 2025 interview with OIG, the BOD Chief added that resources like the Operations Manual and Reference Guide help Detectives understand expectations of their performance, with particular emphasis on evaluation dimensions such as timeliness and report writing. Outside of the annual Department-wide evaluation, the Chief highlighted two other tools that help supervisors monitor Detective performance. The first is the Homicide Investigation Task Management Tool, which allows both the Detective and their supervisor to see investigative tasks and their associated timelines for completion, which are color-coded to show progress. The Chief explained that this tool allows both Detectives and supervisors to "see performance in real time" and not just during the annual evaluation period. They stated that while "big picture" evaluations that show whether Detectives are meeting or exceeding expectations are helpful, they are more concerned with making sure that Detectives are receiving regular feedback and guidance from their supervisor. The BOD Chief stated that the Homicide Teams Pilot Program has been another helpful tool that facilitates active monitoring and guidance. The post-pilot program implementation survey of Detectives showed that Detectives were feeling more supported by their supervisors.

In its response to OIG's inquiry, CPD shared that the PES will be rolled out in the first quarter of 2026. In November 2025, CPD shared its training for supervisors on using the PES. The training covers the purpose and importance of performance evaluations, how to set performance goals, how to evaluate member performance based on the Department's performance dimensions, how to address employee performance issues, and the actual mechanics of using the system. The PES requires supervisors to enter at least one portfolio note each quarter for each member under their command. Portfolio notes may recognize commendable performance and behaviors, or they may identify areas of improvement. Supervisors are also instructed to set performance goals in collaboration with those under their command. According to the training, members must submit a minimum of two job-related goals that "reflect their routine duties." The training also notes that if no specific goals are chosen, then the "default goal will be to continue to meet the expectations and

¹²⁹ Chicago Police Department, "Department Notice D21-09: Performance Evaluations System – Pilot Program," December 31, 2021, accessed January 24, 2024, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6886>.

¹³⁰ Consent Decree, *State of Illinois v. City of Chicago*, No. 17-cv-6260 (N.D. Ill., Jan. 31, 2019).

¹³¹ Independent Monitoring Team, "Eighth Semi-Annual Independent Monitoring Report and Comprehensive Assessment Part I, Appendix 7: Supervision," November 1, 2023, accessed July 5, 2024, <https://cpdmonitoringteam.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/IMR8-Appendix-7-Supervision-2023.11.01.pdf>.

duties of a CPD member.” Department supervisors have also received other, more generalized training on elements of performance evaluations. For example, CPD provided documentation of its 2021 and 2022 Annual In-Service supervisor trainings which included instruction on having “difficult conversations” about a subordinate’s performance and identifying employees who might need behavioral intervention (e.g., Traumatic Incident Stress Management Program, Personnel Concerns Program).

CPD is rolling out PES, with updated performance dimensions which requires supervisors to evaluate member performance in accordance with their specific duties and responsibilities, but it does not have separate evaluations for Homicide Detectives and supervisors that use performance dimensions specifically related to investigation performance, as recommended by PERF. Further, although supervisors and those under their command are instructed to set job-related performance goals as part of their evaluation, the system allows for a “default goal” which broadly measures whether members are “[continuing] to meet the expectations and duties of a CPD member.” Although some homicide supervisors told OIG that they tailored the broad performance dimensions specifically to the roles and personal characteristics of the members that report to them, using the same evaluation for all CPD members may not account for the wide-ranging roles and responsibilities within the Department. Additionally, the reliance on supervisors to tailor evaluations for each of their reports requires that all supervisors have been instructed to perform evaluations in that way and that all supervisors have the capacity to do so. Outside of the broad annual evaluation, CPD has created additional opportunities for supervisors to do more informal real-time performance monitoring. The Homicide Investigation Task Management Tool allows both supervisors and Detectives to monitor real-time progress on investigative steps, while the Homicide Teams Pilot Program’s rotation scheduling has allowed for increased homicide team collaboration and regular feedback from supervisors.

PERF Recommendation #7: To improve homicide investigations immediately, Homicide Detectives should receive training to understand the legal and technical issues surrounding collection, extraction, and analysis of digital evidence, notably the recovery and analysis of cell phone and video evidence.¹³²

PERF observed that although CPD had invested in many new digital evidence technologies and specialized units dedicated to digital evidence collection and analysis, it lacked substantive policies and procedures to guide Detectives on how to incorporate these capabilities into their homicide investigations.¹³³ As such, PERF recommended that CPD develop clear policies and procedures governing the use of such technologies. Additionally, because “nearly every type of crime ... can have digital components,” PERF recommended that CPD ensure that every Detective receives training on what resources are available for digital evidence collection, recovery, and analysis, and how to use them, as well as the legal standards for searching and seizing evidence from electronic devices.¹³⁴

In response to OIG’s inquiry, CPD stated that it created Area Technology Centers (ATCs) in February 2019. Each Area’s ATC consists of a Sergeant, Detectives, and Police Officers who are trained to collect and process digital evidence to aid in investigations. In an interview with OIG, a Director of Management and Technical Assistance at PERF stated that, in lieu of all Homicide Detectives receiving specialized technological training, detective units should have “experts” who can understand and stay up-to-date on the “always changing” field of digital evidence. CPD reported to OIG that its ATC members serve as subject matter experts on digital evidence for BOD. An ATC Sergeant reported to OIG during an ATC site visit that ATC members are embedded in each Area so Homicide Detectives can easily access them and their assistance.

BOD’s Reference Guide instructs Detectives, upon arrival to the homicide scene, to verify that an ATC has been notified. The Reference Guide tasks ATC personnel with examining the scene for potential sources of digital or video evidence. CPD directive “Bureau of Detectives Special Order BDSO 20-01: Use of Technology to Aid Investigations” establishes how Department members may request ATC assistance and defines the procedures and responsibilities of ATC members in

¹³² PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 108.

¹³³ PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 82.

¹³⁴ PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 83.

retrieving, processing, reporting, and retaining digital video, mobile, and vehicle telematics data.¹³⁵ “BDSO 20-01” also introduces several reports used to document relevant information regarding the recovery of digital evidence, including the identity of private citizens or businesses who have provided access to the digital evidence, and which video or image processing techniques have been used to process evidence.¹³⁶

Many of the Homicide Detectives interviewed by OIG credited ATCs with improving their homicide investigations. They stated that ATC members’ technical expertise in extracting and analyzing data (e.g., video footage, cellphone call logs) cuts down on overall analysis time and frees up Homicide Detectives to perform other investigative tasks.

CPD also reported to OIG that newly promoted Detectives receive an 8-hour course instructed by ATC members on the importance of digital evidence in investigations during their pre-service training. This course includes instruction on extracting and processing digital multimedia evidence (e.g., closed circuit television camera system) and cell phone data, as well as instruction on preparing search warrants for electronic evidence (i.e., any evidentiary information that is stored or transmitted in digital form, such as email or web browsing history) and proper documentation and chain of custody of digital evidence. CPD additionally reported that newly promoted Detectives receive an 8-hour course instructed by CCSAO on legal issues around obtaining digital evidence and how it should be secured in inventory. Detectives enrolled in the Lead Homicide Investigator Course also receive in-service training on cellphone investigations, provided by Professional Law Enforcement Training.

In response to OIG’s inquiry, CPD provided documentation of the Department’s 40-hour pre-service training for ATC members, including introductory trainings on using different technical programs (e.g., facial recognition, video surveillance, open-source intelligence). CPD further stated that members of ATC teams attend vendor and subject matter expert trainings, related to digital evidence collection and processing, on a continual basis. For example, ATC members attended trainings on cellphone data extraction and analysis tools, including a Cellebrite Certified Operator/Certified Physical Analyst training and GeoTime Level 1 & Level 2 trainings. CPD stated that as of April 2022, 80 ATC members have been certified by Cellebrite, and over 20 ATC members have been certified by the Secret Service’s National Computer Forensics Institute. CPD additionally reported to OIG that ATC members will continue to seek training and certification on other forms of digital evidence, including video forensics and vehicle infotainment forensics.

Although Homicide Detectives do not directly receive digital evidence certification, Detectives receive pre-service digital evidence training from ATC members as well as cellphone investigation training during the Lead Homicide Investigator Course. CPD has also implemented digital evidence processing procedures and standard reports for its ATC teams. These specially trained ATC teams are embedded in each Area, allowing Detectives easy access to ATCs’ expertise and digital evidence extraction and analysis tools.

¹³⁵ Chicago Police Department, “Bureau of Detectives Special Order BDSO 20-01: Use of Technology to Aid Investigations,” August 30, 2021.

¹³⁶ For examples of reports, see “CPD-23.219 Digital Evidence Recovery Report” (<https://directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-23.219.pdf>), “CPD-23.273 Digital Evidence Processing” form (<https://directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-23.273.pdf>), and “CPD-23.274 Digital Evidence Submission” form (<https://directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-23.274.pdf>).

PERF Recommendation #8: To improve homicide investigations immediately, leaders from the Bureau of Detectives should work with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office to explore strategies for improving collaboration between the two organizations, especially regarding the felony review process.¹³⁷

PERF observed that there was often tension between Homicide Detectives and CCSAO, particularly regarding differences in opinion over how much evidence a Detective must collect in order for an Assistant State's Attorney (ASA) to authorize an arrest warrant for a suspect.¹³⁸ As such, PERF recommended that CPD and CCSAO explore strategies that would encourage more open and frequent communication and coordination on homicide investigations.

In response to OIG's inquiry, CPD stated that the BOD Chief has a recurring meeting with the head of CCSAO's Felony Review. This is a regular meeting that also took place under the previous BOD Chief; CPD provided documentation of recurring calendar invites for these meetings occurring between April 2021 and March 2022.

CPD also reported that ASAs from CCSAO hold monthly meetings with Homicide Detectives in each Area to discuss cases. Homicide Detectives and supervisors told OIG that these monthly meetings were informal opportunities for Detectives to receive input from CCSAO on whether additional investigative work is necessary to successfully bring charges against an offender. They stated that participation in these monthly meetings is voluntary. Detectives also reported that their communications with CCSAO are not limited to these designated meetings. Detectives are able to reach out to CCSAO whenever their cases are ready for charging.

Additionally, in its response to OIG's inquiry, CPD stated it has hired a former ASA to act as a liaison between BOD and CCSAO. This liaison is CPD's Deputy Director of Prosecutorial Strategies, and they are tasked with reviewing homicide cases and providing advice to Detectives on how to build stronger cases prior to bringing charges to Felony Review. CPD also stated that as of April 2022, CCSAO was reviewing the Department's proposal to enact vertical prosecution more systematically by embedding ASAs in each Area.¹³⁹ In an interview with OIG in April 2025, the BOD

¹³⁷ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 108.

¹³⁸ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 96.

¹³⁹ "Vertical prosecution" is an arrangement in which one ASA stays with a case from start to finish.

Chief stated that CPD is working with the new Cook County State's Attorney to determine their vision for vertical prosecution and how Assistant State's Attorneys would work with Detectives.¹⁴⁰

Lastly, in January 2023, CPD stated that CCSAO had developed a training curriculum for Detectives on how to build stronger cases and how to interact with Felony Review. CPD reported that it offers this "Felony Review/Court Room Trial Prep" training to all Detectives but requires it only for newly promoted Detectives. Detectives and supervisors interviewed by OIG in March and April 2023 reported that they had not received such training. Documentation shared by CPD in July 2025 showed that pre-service Felony Review trainings were offered in March 2020, October 2021, November 2021, August 2022, March 2022, November 2022, May 2023, March 2024, and November 2024. The documentation shared by CPD also showed that an in-service Felony Review training was offered in October 2021. In an April 2025 interview with OIG, the BOD Chief stated that in these trainings, CCSAO instructs Detectives on how to meaningfully present the facts of a case to bring charges against a defendant and how to give effective testimony in the courtroom. CPD also stated that CPD provided a trauma-based interviewing course to CCSAO in April 2024, and that CCSAO investigators have attended the Department's pre-service Detective trainings on trauma-based interviewing.

¹⁴⁰ Cook County State's Attorney Eileen O'Neill Burke was sworn in on December 1, 2024.

PERF Recommendation #9: To improve homicide investigations immediately, CPD should work with the Chicago Survivors to train Detectives on how to effectively interact with victims' families and members of the community. Detectives should meet with victims' families monthly for the first year of an investigation.¹⁴¹

PERF observed that CPD did not have resources or protocols for protecting crime witnesses who had been threatened for their cooperation with police. PERF also noted that victim and witness assistance resources were insufficient, and that the lack of such resources discouraged witnesses and victims from cooperating with Detectives and prosecutors.¹⁴² Such cooperation is needed to successfully clear homicides; accordingly PERF recommended that CPD develop witness and victim support and protection resources, with the help of organizations that specialize in helping survivors of violent crime.¹⁴³

In response to OIG's inquiry, CPD stated that BOD held meetings with Chicago Survivors to discuss communicating with victims' families. Chicago Survivors is a non-profit organization whose mission is to offer crisis intervention, supportive counseling, and comprehensive referral services to surviving family members of Chicago homicide victims.¹⁴⁴ In an interview with OIG, Chicago Survivors' Executive Director stated that Chicago Survivors and CPD attend weekly meetings hosted by City Hall involving various public safety stakeholders in the City, and that the two groups meet quarterly to discuss cold cases. The Executive Director also stated that Chicago Survivors and CPD often collaborate on and attend each other's community engagement events, including wellness fairs, prayer vigils, and a gun lock giveaway event.

The Executive Director reported that the organization's relationship with CPD is codified in "Special Order S12-08: Crisis Response and Recovery Program," which directs CPD's Crime Prevention Information Center to notify Chicago Survivors of all murder incidents so that they may respond and meet with victims' families.¹⁴⁵ They also reported to OIG that Chicago Survivors has provided trainings to new Detectives and recruits. Such trainings include working with youth, working with

¹⁴¹ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 109.

¹⁴² PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 99-100.

¹⁴³ PERF, "Review of the Chicago Police Department's Homicide Investigation Process," pg. 100-101.

¹⁴⁴ For more information on Chicago Survivors, see <https://chicagosurvivors.org/>.

¹⁴⁵ Chicago Police Department, "Special Order S12-08: Crisis Response and Recovery Program," September 24, 2015, accessed January 30, 2024, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/#directive/public/6178>.

families directly impacted by homicide, best practices on trauma-informed communication with survivors and victims' families, and the best ways CPD can utilize Chicago Survivors' resources. Some Homicide Detectives interviewed by OIG stated that they had received training on how to interact with victims' families while in the Academy but not on a recurring basis (i.e., not as an in-service training). The BOD Chief reported to OIG that CPD has a "very close relationship" with Chicago Survivors and that they have worked to ensure that their relationship extends beyond just training purposes. They stated that, in particular, CPD has worked to support Chicago Survivors' Unsolved Case Meeting Program, which helps victims' families seeking investigative updates on unsolved cases. Through this program, CPD's Family Liaison Office (see following paragraph) and Chicago Survivors coordinate meetings with families to provide case updates away from CPD facilities. The BOD Chief reported that families often feel more comfortable sitting down with Chicago Survivors before they connect directly with Detectives since they may have more developed relationships with Chicago Survivors staff.

CPD's response included information on the creation of the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) Program in late 2021. CPD directive "Bureau of Detectives Special Order BDSO 21-04: Family Liaison Officer" guides the program.¹⁴⁶ In May 2025, CPD reported to OIG that its Family Liaison Office is staffed by 4 Detectives and 11 Officers who serve as direct points of contact for family members of homicide victims. Each Area has designated FLOs whose responsibilities include, but are not limited to, contacting victims' families and providing status updates about active or ongoing cases. FLOs also provide information about other services needed by the families, such as counselling or financial hardship services to assist with burials.¹⁴⁷

Although FLOs interviewed by OIG in March and May 2023 stated that they had not received any specialized training relevant to their role or its associated responsibilities, the BOD Chief stated to OIG in an April 2025 interview that CPD is "working on a few different initiatives, including training." As part of that effort, on January 14, 2025, FLOs attended a one-day training on engaging with families of homicide victims, led by Dr. Kathryn Bocanegra of the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois-Chicago.¹⁴⁸ Dr. Bocanegra was involved with the initial FLO trainings when the program was started in 2021. The BOD Chief reported to OIG that Dr. Bocanegra provided updated information on support service resources to FLOs and stressed that refresher trainings for FLOs are required beyond just their initial training so that they can provide up-to-date resources to families beyond simply giving a family member a contact phone number. Dr. Bocanegra gave a one-day training in May 2025 on the importance of trauma-informed and family-centered family and community engagement and how such engagement can impact a homicide investigation. The BOD Chief additionally reported to OIG that Dr. Bocanegra's one-day training was incorporated into the Lead Homicide Investigator training for Detectives—one of which was given in September 2025, and that they have been meeting regularly with Dr. Bocanegra since becoming Chief in March 2023.

¹⁴⁶ Chicago Police Department, "Bureau of Detectives Special Order BDSO 21-04: Family Liaison Officer," August 26, 2021.

¹⁴⁷ Charles, "CPD pushes to boost its 'clearance rate' in homicide cases, with some success."

¹⁴⁸ For more information, see Chicago Police Department, "CPD's Family Liaison Office receives training as it expands support for loved ones of homicide victims," January 17, 2025, accessed March 6, 2025, <https://www.chicagopolice.org/stories/cpds-family-liaison-office-receives-training-as-it-expands-support-for-loved-ones-of-homicide-victims/>.

In April 2022, CPD provided a spreadsheet FLOs use to track all contact with victims' families and any services they offer or provide. In November 2025, CPD sent OIG a spreadsheet listing the total number of contacts FLOs had with victims' families for 2023, 2024, and 2025, noting the list represented "over 11,000 phone calls and emails." CPD reported to OIG that FLOs have bi-weekly meetings to discuss how to aid victims' families with a BOD Lieutenant, who is head of the FLO program, and representatives from CCSAO's Victim Services Division.

In May 2022, CPD's then-Director of Project Management told OIG that Homicide Detectives have contact with victims' families, while FLOs are "more like community policing liaisons" who serve to connect victims' families to necessary resources and to each other. In addition, CPD stated that "all [D]etectives have access to and are to provide" an information notice to victims' families. The notice—which is offered in five languages—is not an official police report, but is intended to provide victims' families with pertinent information to assist in their cases and with getting in contact with the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office.¹⁴⁹ CPD stated that "Bureau of Detectives Special Order BDSO 16-01: Homicide Victims-Family Reinterviews" also outlines how Detectives maintain communication with victims' families, instructing Detectives to reinterview the families of homicide victims at one month, six months, and one year after the date of occurrence of the homicide. Further, although CPD later reported to OIG that the interviews required by "BDSO 16-01" are not the only contacts Detectives have with victims' families, it is the only written guidance the Department provided.¹⁵⁰

CPD has created a program comprised of liaisons who are specifically tasked with interacting with victims' families and members of the community. The Family Liaison program was modeled after Chicago Survivors' family support, criminal justice advocacy, and crisis response work, and CPD has continued its collaboration with the organization through both homicide investigations and community outreach events. CPD has also partnered with an expert in complex trauma and working with survivors of violent crime to provide training to FLOs. Such training has even been incorporated into Lead Homicide Investigator training for Detectives. However, contrary to PERF's recommendation for monthly meetings with victims' families for the first year of an investigation, CPD's guidance for Homicide Detectives requires only three interviews with a victim's immediate family within one year of the occurrence of the homicide.

¹⁴⁹ Chicago Police Department, "CPD-23.300: Information Notice – Bureau of Detectives," May 2023, accessed July 15, 2024, <https://directives.chicagopolice.org/forms/CPD-23.300.pdf>.

¹⁵⁰ Chicago Police Department, "Bureau of Detectives Special Order BDSO 16-01: Homicide Victims – Family Reinterviews," February 1, 2016.

V | Conclusion

According to its mission statement, CPD “is committed to protect the lives, property, and rights of all people, to maintain order, and to enforce the law impartially.”¹⁵¹ As noted by PERF, “the core of [CPD’s] mission is the idea that protecting human life is paramount.”¹⁵² This endeavor resonates not only with the agencies directly involved in public safety operations, but also profoundly impacts the lives of Chicagoans, who rely on law enforcement to serve and protect their communities.

Homicide investigation policies and processes that provide meaningful guidance, accountability, and structure can directly benefit CPD members. Improved processes and policies can provide law enforcement with the tools and systems necessary to investigate homicide cases thoroughly and effectively. Having robust, standard processes and policies can align CPD’s homicide investigative practices with industry standards that can better equip the Department with the infrastructure needed to achieve its mission, solve, and reduce crime.

CPD’s efforts to implement PERF’s recommendations have begun “to demonstrate to the community that preventing and solving homicides are top priorities for the department.”¹⁵³ While the Department has made progress in implementing PERF’s recommendations, its homicide investigation policies and practices can be further enhanced to better support its personnel, provide clear guidance, establish accountability measures for following such guidance, promote collaboration, and ensure updated resources.

In CPD’s April 2025 follow-up report, the Department stated its “unyielding commitment” to implementing PERF’s best practices. Since 2019, CPD has demonstrated such commitment through policy and resource development, increased investment in technical expertise and victim assistance resources, and intentional collaboration with partners such as CCSAO. The Department’s commitment to improvement must be sustained over the long term and CPD must continue to take a structured approach to measuring progress in order to ensure that changes are durable and effective. The significance of these investments in homicide investigations extends beyond administrative and procedural improvements. The way CPD investigates homicides directly affects victims’ families and the broader community. Productive relationships between CPD and the communities it serves can improve interactions with victims’ families, foster trust, and provide a greater sense of security, which are crucial elements for the healing and well-being of those directly affected by crime, and for all Chicagoans.

¹⁵¹ City of Chicago, Chicago Police Department, “Mission Statement” accessed February 29, 2024, https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/cpd/auto_generated/cpd_mission.html.

¹⁵² PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 104.

¹⁵³ PERF, “Review of the Chicago Police Department’s Homicide Investigation Process,” pg. 109.

Appendix A | Chicago Police Department Response



Brandon Johnson
Mayor

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

Larry Snelling
Superintendent of Police

January 26, 2026

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Ms. Tobara 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: *Review of the Chicago Police Department's Implementation of Recommendations to Improve Its Homicide Investigations*

Dear Public Safety Inspector General Richardson:

The Chicago Police Department ("CPD") appreciated the opportunity to discuss the Office of Inspector General's ("OIG") proposed findings contained in the above-named report ("Report") during the exit conference. In that meeting, CPD identified inaccuracies throughout the draft. CPD recommended that OIG conduct additional interviews of relevant personnel, which OIG did not do. CPD also made a subsequent production of materials that addressed the inaccuracies that CPD identified during the exit conference. OIG sent CPD an updated draft Report on January 6, 2026. While CPD appreciates that OIG made some corrections in this draft, the Report, in its present form, contains inaccuracies and unfairly portrays of CPD's implementation of the Police Executive Research Forum's ("PERF") recommendations. CPD recommends that OIG review the additional materials that CPD provided in November 2025, conduct interviews as CPD recommended in the exit conference, and make further revisions to the Report before publication. Below is a summary of issues that CPD has identified with the current draft that warrant OIG's attention. CPD welcomes the opportunity to further discuss these issues.

CPD's Comments on the Report's Executive Summary

CPD disagrees with OIG's decision to omit PERF's recommendations concerning non-fatal shootings. OIG's scope for this review is an evaluation of CPD's implementation of the PERF report's immediately actionable recommendations. OIG omitted the non-fatal shooting recommendations from its review because its inquiry "focuses solely on homicide- and homicide-investigation-related recommendations." However, every recommendation in the PERF report is related to homicide investigations. OIG's omission of CPD's implementation of the PERF report's recommendations concerning non-fatal shootings fails to consider the complexity of homicide investigations. This includes improving processes for the investigation of non-fatal shootings, which often include the perpetrators of homicides.

On page 6, OIG concludes that "the status of CPD's implementation efforts varies across recommendations." However, the Report does not identify a methodology for evaluating CPD's efforts. As such, it is inappropriate to include opinions on the perceived range of variance in CPD's efforts. Further, inclusion of the qualifying adjective "significantly" suggests to readers that some recommendations were more important to CPD than others, and it is unclear how the Report arrives at this conclusion.

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The Report acknowledges CPD's work to revise and standardize SOPs, policies, and forms to establish uniform guidance for conducting homicide investigations but then concludes that "CPD has not implemented measures to ensure that such uniform guidance is followed in practice." Again, the Report does not identify a methodology for drawing this conclusion, but as noted in the exit conference, this analysis needs to be current and rely on more than what is identified in the scope of its inquiry on page 22. CPD has implemented policies and trainings in furtherance of PERF's recommendations, evidenced by the many policies and training modules that CPD provided to the OIG. This includes additional materials provided in November 2025 because of recommendations from CPD to OIG during the exit conference. These policies and trainings are clear measures that CPD has taken to ensure that its members are adhering to the PERF Report's recommendations. CPD again recommends that OIG conduct further review to provide a fair analysis of whether CPD has implemented these recommendations.

The Report acknowledges that CPD has taken steps to encourage more frequent collaboration between stakeholders who are involved in homicide investigations, both within and outside of CPD. However, the Report criticizes CPD because attendees can vary by meeting and the meetings are not always focused on homicide investigation policies and procedures. By limiting its scope to only what it describes as homicide-related topics, the Report dismisses the complexity of homicide investigations and the many parts that make up such investigations. All stakeholders do not need to be present for every discussion. CPD agrees that stakeholders should be briefed and given the opportunity to provide feedback. Additional OIG interviews toward this end would help determine if the appropriate stakeholders were afforded the opportunity to provide feedback and whether the meetings were productive in advancing the homicide investigation process.

The Report criticizes CPD for not having "a system for specifically assessing Detectives' performance in conducting homicide investigations." However, CPD provided OIG with information on the Performance Evaluation System ("PES") that is being implemented Department-wide. Under the PES, Detectives will have a distinct performance evaluation - something that the Report did not acknowledge.

CPD's Comments on the Report's Background

At page 10, the Report discusses the Homicide Team Pilot Program ("Program"), and how "some" Detectives responded to a CPD survey on the Program stating that it improved their work-life balance. This understates this aspect of the Program. As was discussed at the exit conference, 95% of survey respondents answered that the Program improved their work-life balance, and, additionally, 20% of survey respondents included additional comments about how the Program has improved their work-life balance.

The Report opines that "[i]ncluding prior year(s) data in the calculation of a current year's clearance rate may lead to confusion in understanding clearance rates." As was explained during the exit conference, CPD's calculation of clearance rates is a national standard established by the FBI. Any purported confusion in understanding the calculation of clearance rates stems from sources that introduce alternative interpretations of these clearance rates. This section introduces a subjective interpretation about clearance rate measurements and deviates from the Report's stated focus, which is to evaluate the CPD's efforts to implement reforms to the homicide investigation process. Moreover, referencing statements made by the Superintendent at public events regarding clearance rates suggests that a reported misunderstanding was an intentional act to deceive, which it was not. Including this in the Report creates distrust in the CPD. CPD adheres to national standards that all reporting law enforcement agencies (including CPD) follow and about which CPD has been transparent.

CPD's Comments on the Report's Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

As was discussed at the exit conference, the Report's scope and methodology were both far too limited to provide an accurate assessment of CPD's progress on the PERF reports recommendations. The scope and methodology

sections also contain inaccuracies, such as stating that interviews ended in January 2024 when the Chief of Detectives was interviewed in April 2025. These sections should be updated to accurately reflect that inquiries continued into 2025.

Not included in the scope is that the Homicide Team Pilot Program was launched in January 2024 and the Crime Gun Intelligence Center was launched in April 2024. Interviews with CPD members preceding these developments do not reflect the current state of CPD's implementation of the PERF recommendations.

The scope omits the first-ever written procedures, defined processes, and training for every forensic lab discipline, a total of 25 documents. These are accreditation-compliant documents, which were facilitated by the Bureau of Detectives policy team and are integral to effective homicide investigations. Understanding these important reforms to CPD's forensics lab is critical to understanding reforms in the homicide investigation process.

The scope also does not include any evaluation of Family Liaison Outreach ("FLO") activity after March 2022. As such, the Report does not address the tracker developed in 2022 for the FLO. From 2023-2025 there were a total of 11,769 FLO contacts, including outreach by telephone, e-mail, and in-person to offer resources, explain the investigative process, and invite survivors to various engagements to promote healing and empowerment.

The scope references trainings conducted between 2021-2025. However, the Report does not include a review of relevant training modules highlighting the CPD's efforts to ensure detectives receive training on technology and victim support. Likewise, the Digital Technology Officer training materials that OIG reviewed do not reflect all of the training that these officers receive. For example, an outside vendor provides two days of instruction on the use of cell phones in investigations.

Finally, CPD launched an 8-hour training scenario in collaboration with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office ("CCSAO") and retired Cook County judges. Participants receive preparation and are led through testimony by a member of the CCSAO in a courtroom and in front of a judge, with other members of the CCSAO acting as defense attorneys and evaluators. The training concludes with CPD members being debriefed by a judge and members of the CCSAO.

CPD encourages the OIG to make corrections to this section of the Report, and to broaden the scope and methodology to include these, and other additional trainings to help better inform the Report.

CPD's Comments on the Report's Findings

At page 25, the Report states that CPD "has not implemented accountability or oversight measures to ensure standardization of investigations, or to assess the completeness of such investigations." CPD does not agree with this conclusion. The development of manuals, policies and forms is a clear step towards promoting accountability, standardization, and completeness of homicide investigations. Moreover, CPD provided information about the Homicide Investigation Task Management Tool, which is a key resource for case management and supervisor oversight.

When homicide Detectives log into this tool, they are immediately presented with an intuitive overview of all of their active cases. Each case is listed with its most pressing due date prominently displayed in a dedicated column. This ensures that the most time-sensitive tasks are always prioritized, eliminating the need for manual sorting or filtering. By streamlining this information, the system ensures that Detectives can appropriately focus on the needs of a case.

For supervisors, the system provides an equally powerful tool by allowing them to view the due dates of all the members of their team. This feature ensures that supervisory oversight is streamlined and efficient, enabling

them to identify bottlenecks or overdue tasks across the entire team. With a bird's-eye view of all active cases and tasks, supervisors can offer targeted support where it is needed most, helping to maintain overall productivity and accountability.

Additional features such as email alerts further enhance the system's utility. When a due date is approaching, the system automatically sends an alert to the assigned detective. If the task remains unaddressed, a second alert escalates the issue to the supervisor, ensuring that no deadline is missed without warning. This layered notification process reinforces accountability while minimizing the need for constant manual checks.

The system's integration with CPD's Data Warehouse system adds another layer of efficiency. By polling Data Warehouse, the dashboard automatically pulls in the appropriate cases by UCR code, eliminating the need for Detectives or supervisors to manually input case details.

This automation ensures that all active cases are up-to-date and accurately reflected in the system, saving valuable time and reducing the risk of errors. Together, these features make the system an indispensable tool for both Detectives and supervisors. By prioritizing clarity, automation, and proactive communication, the system not only simplifies case management but also fosters a culture of accountability and collaboration across the team.

With respect to the policies and resources that CPD has developed to guide homicide investigations and the supervision of those investigations, the Report states that "[t]he Department has not, however, implemented measures to ensure that Detectives are adhering to these guidelines or that supervisors are ensuring or evaluating the adherence to guidelines of Detectives under their command." CPD has taken steps to implement policy and training in furtherance of PERF's recommendations, which CPD provided to the OIG. These are clear measures designed to ensure Detectives and their supervisors are adhering to the guidelines. To properly analyze CPD's progress, OIG needs to expand the scope of its review. CPD once again invites OIG to conduct additional interviews and review additional materials to help inform OIG's analysis.

With respect to addressing technical and victim assistance and outreach aspects of an investigation, the Report concludes, "[h]owever, CPD has not necessarily cultivated and improved technical expertise and victim assistance capabilities in the Homicide Detectives who do investigative work." CPD has made available for OIG review the guest presenter summary sheets and training schedules that show the addition of a 2-hour course on grief and trauma literacy, a 3-hour course on best practices in family and community engagement for safety planning, and the 1-hour Chicago Survivors module providing an overview on its program and family systems to Detectives. This is almost a full day of training towards supporting Detectives in assisting victims. However, these six hours of training are still not the totality of instruction provided to Detectives regarding trauma-informed interactions with victims and survivors, as it does not account for other modules, such as drug-induced homicide investigations, where families provide testimonials to Detectives to reinforce the victim experience of working with Detectives after the death of a loved one. Detectives also receive two days of instruction by an outside vendor on the use of cell phones in investigations in addition to 5 hours of training on investigative technology, amounting to approximately 2.5 days of training towards technical proficiency. CPD once again invites the OIG to conduct additional interviews and review additional materials to help inform OIG's analysis.

The Report also states that "CPD has not developed a performance evaluation specific to Detectives and their investigative performance, which may hinder the Department's ability to identify underperforming Detectives, or those who may require further training on different skills." As OIG is aware, the implementation of the PES is a Consent Decree requirement for the Department and is in the process of being implemented. The Report should provide context to its readers on the Consent Decree and how implementation of certain PERF report recommendations needs to conform with Consent Decree requirements. Implementation of certain recommendations, such as the PES, is not independently within the discretion of the Bureau of Detectives.

As noted above, CPD provided OIG with a timeline for the implementation of the PES, started in December 2025 with the Department-wide rollout of an eLearning. Unit specific evaluations will begin in Phase 2 (Q2-3 2026) and will include the Bureau of Detectives as a unit with specialized evaluations for Detectives. In the interim, Homicide Unit supervisors quarterly document in the Performance Recognition System (PRS) the performance of homicide Detectives under their command.

CPD's Comments on the OIG's Findings for PERF Recommendation #1

PERF recommendation #1 pertains to revision of SOPs governing homicide investigations to include standard policies and protocols that personnel must follow, including a standard investigative checklist, investigate plan, and supervisory review process. CPD does not agree with OIG's findings. As noted above, and in the materials that CPD provided to OIG, CPD has substantially fulfilled this recommendation. CPD noted at the exit conference that it recommended that OIG revisit the Detective Areas and meet with Detectives and Supervisors to further explore CPD's response to this recommendation, particularly since OIG's scope only includes interviews conducted before implementation of the Homicide Team Pilot Program. The OIG did not accept CPD's recommendation. CPD renews this recommendation to better inform the Report's analysis.

CPD's Comments on the OIG's Findings for PERF Recommendation #2

PERF recommendation #2 pertains to the creation of a homicide investigations team to provide input on policy development, share ideas for implementing the PERF recommendations, and discuss strategies and next steps. CPD does not agree with OIG's findings. The Report does not acknowledge the materials that CPD provided documenting meetings and engagements with internal and external stakeholders, including the CCSAO. OIG also incorrectly insists that these meetings and efforts must stay singularly focused on homicide policy development and implementation without grasping the larger context in which changes must take place, as CPD explained to OIG during the exit conference. CPD renews its recommendation that OIG broaden the scope of its review to include a deeper analysis of this issue.

CPD's Comments on the OIG's Findings for PERF Recommendation #3

PERF recommendation #3 pertains to developing a formal case planning and review process and holding supervisors accountable for performing case reviews. CPD appreciates that OIG included additional information about the Homicide Investigation Task Management Tool in the current version of the Report. However, OIG's analysis remains fixated on discrete details that are not material to the overall effectiveness of this tool. CPD renews its recommendation that OIG broaden the scope of its review to include a deeper analysis of this issue.

CPD's Comments on the OIG's Findings for PERF Recommendation #4

PERF recommendation #4 pertains to developing a case file index and standard forms, including an investigative plan and a case checklist to be included in each homicide case file. OIG's findings are based on reviews of closed case files from 2022-2023 and therefore do not reflect current practices. CPD provided OIG with materials documenting current practices, including meeting materials demonstrating the Bureau of Detectives' leadership's review and evaluation of Homicide Investigation Reassignment Reports. CPD also explained current practices during the exit conference. Notwithstanding, OIG based its findings solely on its review of closed case files from 2022-2023. CPD renews its recommendation that OIG broaden the scope of its review to include a deeper analysis of this issue.

CPD's Comments on the OIG's Findings for PERF Recommendation #5

PERF Recommendation #5 pertains to developing an evaluation system that specifically assesses each Detective's, and each Sergeant's, performance in conducting homicide investigations. As was explained above,

through the Consent Decree process, CPD is implementing the PES Department-wide. OIG incorrectly states that CPD did not offer information on the PES's progress. This information was included in the materials that CPD provided to OIG. Contained in the materials that CPD provide is this schedule for implementation of the PES:

Phase 1

Q4 2025

- IMT/OAG approval of department eLearning

Q1 2026

- Rollout of PES
- Set up voluntary trainings for department members with questions
- Spot fixes of system

Phase 2

Q2-3 2026

- Talks with Benchmark on PES integration with other applications
- Inclusion of additional unit specific evaluations
- Updating portfolio notes section

Phase 3

Q4 2026

- Review of the new PES

CPD recommends that OIG conduct further review of the materials provided concerning the PES to help inform its findings in this section.

CPD's Comments on the OIG's Findings for PERF Recommendation #8¹

PERF Recommendation #8 pertains to leaders from the Bureau of Detectives working with the CCSAO to explore strategies for collaboration between the two organizations, especially regarding the felony review process. CPD notes two issues with OIG's findings, both on page 44. First, during the Chief of Detectives' April 2025 interview she described the CCSAO's training curriculum for newly promoted detectives. In the same paragraph, OIG appears to be attempting to impeach the Chief by stating that in interviews conducted in March and April 2023, detectives and supervisors said that they had not received this training. The Report did not explain whether the CCSAO training at issue even existed in 2023; instead the Report attempts to draw a negative inference by using an interview from 2023 to call into question statements in the Chief's interview from 2025. It is unfair that the Report uses interviews from 2023 as commentary on the state of training in 2025. Second, and adding to the confusion, the Report omits the words "does not" from the sentence beginning "CPD reported," which should read, "CPD reported that it does not offers this 'Felony Review/Court Room Trial Prep' training to all Detectives, but requires it only for newly promoted Detectives..." CPD requests that these issues be addressed before OIG publishes this report.

CPD's Comments on the OIG's Findings for PERF Recommendation #9

PERF Recommendation #9 pertains to working with Chicago Survivors to train Detectives on how to effectively interact with victims' families and members of the community. On page 47, the Report mischaracterizes the Bureau of Detectives' "Homicide Victims - Family Reinterviews" directive and schedule as the only contact

¹ The Report omits any findings on PERF Recommendation #6 and CPD has no comments on OIG's findings for PERF Recommendation #7.

Detectives have with families within the first year after a homicide. While the hope is that regular contact with the family throughout the year, and beyond, would facilitate the type of investigative disclosure from the immediate family, the directive provides a schedule to ensure that Detectives make a specific inquiry into whether additional investigative leads have emerged. Making this specific inquiry during every single interaction with the family would work against efforts to build rapport and might harm the relationship. CPD recommends that OIG rewrite this section to reflect that homicide Detectives do not only contact families at the intervals identified in the directive.

CPD's Comments on the Report's Title

The Report's title is misleading as to the actual scope of OIG's review. PERF made 89 recommendations to improve homicide investigations. OIG's review encompassed eight of nine subject areas, which cover only 21 of the 89 recommendations. OIG's review is only of those subject areas identified by PERF that could be quickly implemented. The reader may be confused by the title and believe that the Report covers all the PERF recommendations. CPD recommends that OIG revise the Report's title to more clearly reflect the narrow scope of this review.

On page 22 of the Report, OIG acknowledged that PERF's Executive Director advised, "that any evaluation of CPD's work on implementing homicide investigation process improvements should consider whether CPD's actions address the goals underlying PERF's guidance, and not necessarily whether each specific recommendation has been implemented." CPD and the Bureau of Detectives have made substantial progress with implementing PERF's recommendations, as documented in the report issued in April 2025 and available at <https://www.chicagopolice.org/news/perf-2025-update/>. The PERF report has served as the basis for improvements in how the Bureau of Detectives investigates homicides, and reflects the hard work of CPD members, law enforcement partners, and the community. CPD continues to build upon the PERF report's recommendations.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide written feedback on the draft Report.

Best regards,



Scott Spears
General Counsel
Chicago Police Department

Appendix B | CPD Homicide Clearance Rates (1991 – 2021)

CPD provided the following homicide clearance rate data from 1991 to 2021 in response to OIG's inquiry regarding the Department's clearance rate statistics, with "Exceptional Clearances" noted where data was available.

Year of Date Cleared	Homicide Total	Cleared Status	Cleared Total	Clearance Rate
1991	930	CLEARED Total	702 702	75.48%
1992	945	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	657 88 658	69.52% 9.31% 69.63%
1993	857	CLEARED Total	626 626	73.05%
1994	931	CLEARED Total	636 636	68.31%
1995	830	CLEARED Total	593 593	71.45%
1996	796	CLEARED Total	517 517	64.95%
1997	763	CLEARED Total	508 508	66.58%
1998	705	CLEARED Total	431 431	61.13%
1999	644	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	312 93 405	48.45% 14.44% 62.89%
2000	669	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	259 82 341	38.71% 12.26% 50.97%
2001	660	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	338 60 398	51.21% 9.09% 60.30%
2002	650	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	309 116 425	47.54% 17.85% 65.38%
2003	604	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	250 108 358	41.39% 17.88% 59.27%

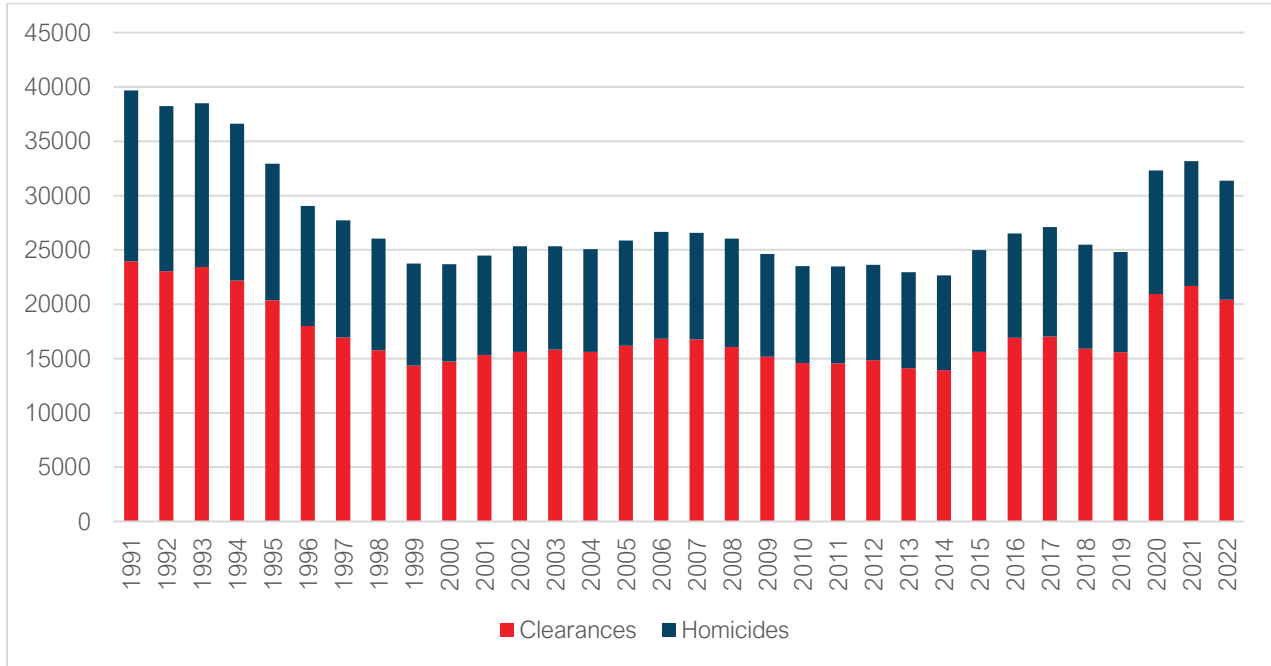
2004	456	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	254 107 361	55.70% 23.46% 79.17%
2005	454	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	216 93 309	47.58% 20.48% 68.06%
2006	473	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	193 65 258	40.80% 13.74% 54.55%
2007	450	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	197 68 265	43.78% 15.11% 58.89%
2008	515	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	204 82 286	39.61% 15.92% 55.53%
2009	465	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	178 57 235	38.28% 12.26% 50.54%
2010	441	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	146 79 225	33.11% 17.91% 51.02%
2011	446	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	172 48 220	38.57% 10.76% 49.33%
2012	511	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	146 43 189	28.57% 8.41% 36.99%
2013	425	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	166 67 233	39.06% 15.76% 54.82%
2014	424	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	173 41 214	40.80% 9.67% 50.47%
2015	493	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	157 70 227	31.85% 14.20% 46.04%
2016	780	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	185 39 224	23.72% 5.00% 28.72%
2017	661	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	150 87 237	22.69% 13.16% 35.85%
2018	579	CLEARED EX CLEARED Total	149 111 260	25.73% 19.17% 44.91%

2019	500	CLEARED	114	22.80%
		EX CLEARED	151	30.20%
		Total	265	53.00%
2020	774	CLEARED	209	27.00%
		EX CLEARED	145	18.73%
		Total	354	45.74%
2021	801	CLEARED	195	24.34%
		EX CLEARED	204	25.47%
		Total	399	49.81%

Source: CPD data.

Appendix C | National Homicide Clearance Rates (1991 – 2022)

The Murder Accountability Project is a nonprofit group dedicated to “[educating] Americans on the importance of accurately accounting for unsolved homicides within the United States.”¹⁵⁴ The group aggregates and presents data from publicly available data sources, including the FBI’s Uniform Crime Report. The data below displays the total number of homicides in all U.S. states and the national clearance rate from 1991 to 2022.



Source: Murder Accountability Project.¹⁵⁵

Year	Homicides	Clearances	Clearance Rate
1991	23,961	15,722	65.61%
1992	23,024	15,203	66.03%
1993	23,424	15,084	64.40%
1994	22,189	14,417	64.97%
1995	20,362	12,583	61.80%
1996	17,987	11,048	61.42%
1997	16,932	10,794	63.75%
1998	15,756	10,297	65.35%
1999	14,358	9,396	65.44%
2000	14,733	8,939	60.67%
2001	15,322	9,144	59.68%

¹⁵⁴ Murder Accountability Project, “Why We Exist,” 2019, accessed July 31, 2024, <https://www.murderdata.org/p/about.html>.

¹⁵⁵ Murder Accountability Project, “Clearance Rates,” accessed July 31, 2024, <https://www.murderdata.org/p/blog-page.html>.

2002	15,620	9,717	62.21%
2003	15,819	9,519	60.17%
2004	15,612	9,444	60.49%
2005	16,177	9,681	59.84%
2006	16,828	9,833	58.43%
2007	16,769	9,813	58.52%
2008	16,063	9,979	62.12%
2009	15,168	9,457	62.35%
2010	14,584	8,931	61.24%
2011	14,561	8,911	61.20%
2012	14,832	8,800	59.33%
2013	14,111	8,847	62.70%
2014	13,933	8,724	62.61%
2015	15,606	9,368	60.03%
2016	16,904	9,606	56.83%
2017	17,012	10,087	59.29%
2018	15,893	9,600	60.40%
2019	15,571	9,224	59.24%
2020	20,952	11,363	54.23%
2021	21,683	11,494	53.01%
2022	20,418	10,946	53.61%

Source: Murder Accountability Project.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Murder Accountability Project, "Clearance Rates."



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