

Office of Police Oversight Quarterly Newsletter

Winter 2021

FortWorthTexas.gov/OPOM

Building a Stronger Community-Police Relationship Together

SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK ON PROPOSED COMMUNITY POLICY ADVISORY BOARD

On December 31, 2020, a Mutual Accountability Working Group was formed by OPOM to work with FWPD and other City leaders to create a recommendation as a first step to build community oversight of Fort Worth law enforcement. The working group collaborated for eight months to reach consensus on recommendations to enhance police oversight with the creation of a board of appointed community members. Members included:

- Estrus Tucker, Facilitator
- Pastor Dr. Cedric N. Belcher Sr., Grace Temple Seventh Day Adventist Church
- Cristal Hernandez, Hispanic Women's Network of Texas
- Felix Alvarado & Alberto Govea, League of United Latin American Citizens, Fort Worth Council
- Estella Williams, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Fort Worth/Tarrant County Branch
- Felipe Gutierrez, One Safe Place
- Pamela Young, Tarrant County Coalition for Community Oversight
- Fort Worth City Attorney's Office, Police Department, and Office of Police Oversight Monitor

OPOM Director Kim Neal shared the proposal during the September 21, 2021 City Council Work Session to receive their feedback. Since then, five Virtual OPOM Community Conversations were held with neighbors to gain insights and additional feedback from the community. The meetings were also recorded and available for anyone unable to participate live by visiting: www.fortworthtexas.gov/departments/communications/fwtv. Neighbors are strongly encouraged to share their thoughts about the proposed board by completing this short survey: <https://s.surveymonkey.com/e1lbpjeu>. The survey will be open through December 6, 2021.

Results from the survey will be shared with the community, Mayor and City Council in December 2021.

THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

OPOM accepts complaints up to one year from the date of the incident in question. *Pursuant to Tex. Loc. Gov't Code Ann. Chapter 143, any disciplinary action against an officer must be issued within 180 days of the incident.*

The following outlines the OPOM complaint process after a completed complaint form is received by our Office.



Per Tex. Loc. Govt. Code Ann. Chapter 143, in order to have your complaint fully investigated by FWPD, your signature must be provided and verified under oath by an authorized public official. Furthermore, your complaint must be a true and accurate account of the incident to the best of your knowledge.



WHO WE ARE

OPOM STAFF

The office is currently comprised of six full-time staff.



Kim Neal,
Director (Police Monitor)



Catherine Huckaby,
Deputy Director
(Deputy Police Monitor)



Erin Ragsdale,
Senior Management
Analyst



Nathan Benson,
Senior Policy Advisor



Kenneth Smith,
Policy Advisor



Branigan Contreras,
Senior Administrative
Assistant

OPOM INTERNS

Three part-time interns currently work through the OPOM's partnership with Texas A&M School of Law's Externship Program in order to expose students to public policy and legal implications as well as provide research support regarding community oversight of law enforcement. Earlier this year, OPOM was awarded a \$21,600.00 grant from the Fund to Advance Racial Equity at North Texas Community Foundation to employ two of the three part-time interns.

The interns' projects include researching and benchmarking promising policing policies and practices including, community-police engagement, community problem-oriented policing, use of force, pursuits, stops, searches, body worn cameras and other recording/video systems, recruitment and training, as well as researching and drafting a state-of-the-art community-police restorative justice mediation program. Spring 2022 will bring two additional interns to OPOM, through a new partnership with TCU.



Alyssa Flores,
Intern



Kayla Tabuena,
Intern



Tiffany Daniels,
Intern

WHAT WE DO

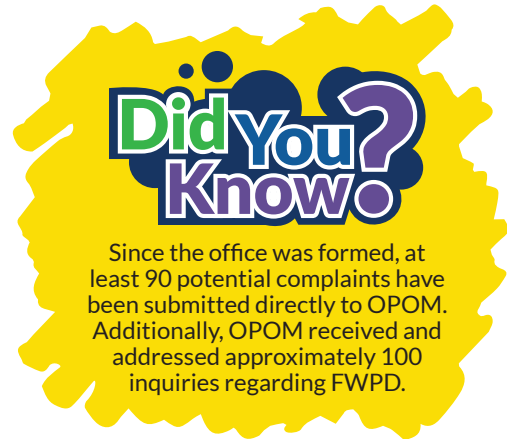
NOTABLE 2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Conducted over 250 virtual and in-person meetings, Lunch & Learns, Collaborative Conversations, and Summer Open Houses.
- Conducted more than 95 community presentations.
- Reviewed more than 1,000 use of force reports to ensure practices are reflective of departmental policies, identify patterns and trends, and to recommend changes to the FWPd General Orders.
- Attended over fifty professional training classes including: Police Ride-Alongs, Internal Affairs Investigations, Use of Force, Use of Force Analyses and Reporting, Procedural Justice, Implicit/Unconscious Bias, Community Oversight of Law Enforcement, Active Bystandership and internal citywide training.
- Facilitated three summer sessions of Real Talk Virtual Conversations with city staff to discuss how to build stronger community-police relationships.

- Attended periodic meetings involving FWPD Executive Team, Internal Affairs, Patrol Action, and monitors FWPD's Use of Force Review Board and the Recruitment Oral Boards.
- Recommended over a dozen changes to FWPD policies and procedures through review and monitoring of FWPD operations, including but not limited to:
 - A formal FWPD documentation process of all complaints
 - Timely notifications to complainants
 - Documentation and diligent investigations of all community members' complaints
 - Inclusion of timeliness of investigations in monthly case audits
 - Revision of de-escalation policy to provide more guidance for officers to make decisions and effective interaction with community members
 - Duty to report added to the duty intervene mandate in the FWPD's General Orders
 - Changes to language in Use of Force General Order to consider officers' duties and responsibilities to community members
 - Revisions to Body Worn Camera General Order to address supervisory review and ensure greater accountability of officers' activation and deactivation of their cameras
 - Revisions to early intervention process
- Conducted research on promising law enforcement practices regarding matters like use of force reviews, complaint mediation processes, pursuits, early intervention, etc.
- Held seven Mutual Accountability Working group meetings to collaborate and reach consensus on a recommendation to enhance community oversight of Fort Worth law enforcement. Their recommendation was presented to the Mayor and City Council during the work session on September 21, 2021.
- Partnered with the Texas A&M Law Externship to expose students to public policy and legal implications regarding community oversight of law enforcement during the fall semester.
- Hired four new staff members including a Policy Analyst, Deputy Director, Senior Management Analyst and a Senior Administrative Assistant.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

- Attends periodic meetings with FWPD's:
 - Executive Team
 - Internal Affairs
 - Patrol Action
- Monitors FWPD's Use of Force Review Board and Recruitment Oral Boards.
- Reviews and monitors inquiries, complaints, commendations, uses of force and FWPD policies, procedures and practices.
- Recommends changes to ensure equity, based on monitoring and reviews.
- Collect complainant and police data to identify trends, patterns and circumstances in order to address root causes and recommend steps.
- Participates in speaking engagements increasing OPOM awareness, policing reform and bias-free policing.



Neighbors or organizations interested in having a member of the OPOM speak at a community event are encouraged to email the office at policeoversight@fortworthtexas.gov.

LOOKING AHEAD

2022 STAFF GOALS

- Implement an automated, interactive complaint form.
- Finalize a formal mandate for access and transparency between the FWPD and OPOM.
- Propose a restorative justice mediation program
- Implementation of a know your rights when encountering police campaign that will involve interactions between community and police through simulated scenarios and related debriefing discussions.
- Publish OPOM's first 2020/21 Annual Report.
- Issue newsletters on a quarterly basis.
- Facilitate quarterly Community Conversations.
- Conduct Real Talk Conversations with city staff
- Create an online dashboard on the OPOM webpage to share the status and progress of OPOM recommendations to FWPD.
- Host the 2022 NACOLE Annual Conference in Fort Worth, September 2022.

THE 28th ANNUAL NACOLE CONFERENCE COMES TO FORT WORTH

OPOM collaborated with Visit Fort Worth to propose Fort Worth as the location for the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement's (NACOLE) 2022 Annual Conference. NACOLE is a non-profit organization that brings together individuals and agencies working to establish or improve accountability and transparency of law enforcement. In August 2021, we received the great news that Fort Worth was ultimately chosen as the host site by NACOLE's Board of Directors. The 28th Annual NACOLE Conference will occur in Fall 2022 in downtown Fort Worth.

Each year, NACOLE brings together the ever-growing community of civilian oversight practitioners, community members, law enforcement officials, academics, journalists, elected officials, students, and others to meet and exchange information and ideas about issues facing civilian oversight and law enforcement. Read NACOLE's most recent publication, "Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement" by visiting [HERE](#).

THIRTEEN PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT

NACOLE established and discusses thirteen key components of successful civilian oversight in their new report, "Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement: Report on the State of the Field and Effective Practices". Principles include:

1. Independence
2. Clearly Defined and Adequate Jurisdiction and Authority
3. Unfettered Access to Records and Facilities
4. Access to Law Enforcement Executives and Internal Affairs Staff
5. Full Cooperation
6. Sustained Stakeholder Support
7. Adequate Funding and Operational Resources
8. Public Reporting and Transparency
9. Policy and Patterns in Practice Analysis
10. Community Outreach
11. Community Involvement
12. Confidentiality, Anonymity, and Protection from Retaliation
13. Procedural Justice and Legitimacy

Principle #1: Independence - One of the most important and defining concepts of civilian oversight of law enforcement is independence. In its broadest sense, it refers to an absence of real or perceived influence from law enforcement, political actors, and other special interests looking to affect the operations of the civilian oversight agency. In order to maintain legitimacy, an agency must be able to demonstrate the extent and impact of its independence from the overseen law enforcement agency - especially in the face of high-profile issues or incidents.

City of Fort Worth's OPOM is an independent agency, reporting directly to the Fort Worth City Manager. The office does not work for the Police Department nor does it report to the same supervisor as the Fort Worth Chief of Police.

Learn More about
NACOLE



OPOM INTERN AWARDED LOCAL SCHOLARSHIP



Tiffany Daniels,
Intern

Third year Texas A&M law student and Office of Police Oversight Monitor (OPOM) intern, Tiffany Daniels was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship September 11, 2021 during the L. Clifford Davis Legal Association's 41st Annual Scholarship & Awards Banquet. Daniels currently serves as a board member of the Black Law Student's Association, student ambassador, Academic Support teaching assistant, and a DEAN CARE research assistant at A&M.

Daniels also works part-time completing policy and program research for OPOM since October 2020. Laying the foundation of a state-of-the-art community-police mediation program is one of many projects she is entrusted to research and outline best practices for future use by OPOM.

According to Daniels, "Before working with OPOM, I did not have many encounters with law enforcement officers where we engaged in real and meaningful conversations. Many of us have made up our minds about people to whom we have never even talked, which can have a detrimental effect on the way we treat each other. The mediation program OPOM is planning to implement next year will help bring both civilians and law enforcement officers to the table to have these same real and meaningful conversations."

Daniels plans to pursue employment in the field of police and prison reform after finishing law school.

More information about the OPOM department may be found at fortworthtexas.gov/OPOM.

OPOM IN THE COMMUNITY

POLICE MONITOR KIM NEAL JOINS MAYOR PARKER'S PODCAST

OPOM Director Kim Neal joined Mayor Mattie Parker to discuss how a passion for compliance and ethics led her to her current role leading the City's Office of the Police Oversight Monitor.

Click here to listen: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/fort-worth-focus-building-police-community-relationships/id1579328171?i=1000536849192>



COMMUNITY FORUM PRESENTED BY COMMUNITY FRONTLINE

On September 28, 2021, Community Frontline leaders Dante Williams and Joshua Rivers hosted a community forum with OPOM.

View a recording of the forum by visiting: facebook.com/communityfrontline/videos/397180928557569

STEERFW'S 2021 CIVIC SUMMIT

OPOM participated in a discussion with SteerFW members on inclusion and procedural justice on September 18, 2021. The session was one of five topics covered throughout the day and moderated by Fernando Peralta.

Learn more about SteerFW by visiting: steerfw.org

If you are a member of an organization interested in hosting a meeting or speaking opportunity with the OPOM, contact the office at: policeoversight@fortworthtexas.gov

THE MISSION

The City of Fort Worth's Office of the Police Oversight Monitor (OPOM) was first established in February 2020 pursuant to Fort Worth City Code Art. 2, § 2-27(1)(a) as a mechanism with which to provide oversight and accountability of the Fort Worth Police Department (FWPD). Kim Neal, was appointed as the City of Fort Worth's first Police Monitor in March 2020. Efforts to build this newly-created Office first began in mid-March 2020. Our vision for the Office is for it to be a proactive leader in law enforcement accountability to the FWPD and the population it serves.

OPOM FUNCTIONS

In order to achieve its mission, the OPOM engages in the following primary functions:

- Oversight and Accountability
- Monitor Contacts and Complaint Investigations
- Review Policies and Procedures
- Auditing
- Mediation
- Community Engagement
- Data Collection and Analysis
- Periodic Reporting

CONTACT US

In Person: City Hall, 200 Texas Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76102

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Office Phone: 817- 392-6535

Website: fortworthtexas.gov/OPOM

Facebook: @FortWorthPoliceOversight

Twitter: @FWPoliceMonitor

Texas Civilian Oversight Panel Discussion

Saturday, Jan. 29, 2022



Anni-Michele Evans,
Policy Compliance
Consultant, Office of Police
Oversight, Austin, Tex.



Crystal Okorafor,
Deputy Inspector General,
Office of Policing Reform
and Accountability,
Houston, Tex.



Kim Neal,
Director/Police Monitor,
Office of Police Monitor,
Fort Worth, Tex.



Tonya McClary,
Director/Police Monitor,
Office of Community Police
Oversight, Dallas, Tex.



Special Guest
Moderator:
Cameron McElhiney,
Director of Training and
Education for NACOLE

Look for more information coming soon!