

Albany Citizens' Police Review Board (CPRB) Accomplishments 2000 - Present

Since its inception, the Board has accomplished the following:

Operates as an independent mechanism that not only reviews the investigation of complaints by the OPS, but sheds sunlight and ensures transparency about the types of complaints lodged against members of the APD, and the findings regarding the investigation of those complaints. The CPRB also provides a public forum for concerned members of the community to speak openly and candidly about their interactions with the police department. The CPRB has influenced the development and implementation of better APD policies.

- Created a complaint form in English and Spanish;
- Created and launched its own fully transparent website;
- Designed & distributed brochures about the complaint process in English and Spanish to the public, organizations, community groups, churches & libraries;
- Secured the cooperation and participation of community groups, churches and schools where complaint forms are made available to the public and where members of the public can go for assistance in completing the forms;
- Participates in ongoing outreach meetings including: the Center for Law Justice; NAACP; Capital District Gay and Lesbian Community Council; Personal Safety and Off Campus Affairs Division of SUNY Albany; Council of Albany Neighborhood Associations; Capital District Chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU); State University of New York at Albany, School of Criminal Justice;
- Participated in two (2) informational meetings with international visitors from Brazil and Trinidad who were interested in learning more about Albany's model;
- Held and participated in 112 Board meetings for business purposes;
- Held and participated in two (2) Executive Session meetings;
- Held and participated in over 100 committee and task force meetings;

- Out of the 483 complaints filed, the Board reviewed and closed 395 complaints;
- Out of the 483 complaints filed; the Board assigned monitors to investigate 264 complaints;
- Continuing to work diligently with the APD (both management and rank and file), the Union and community mediators regarding the implementation of the mediation program;
- Continuing to work with APD management on the implementation of an effective early warning system;
- Worked with the APD to develop a grievance form process to ensure that all citizens who have a grievance are made aware of the complaint review process;
- Spearheaded efforts with the APD for cameras in patrol cars; *and*
- Each Board member volunteers approximately 5 - 19 hours per month on the CPRB. As a whole, the total amount of time volunteered by the CPRB is approximately 45 – 171 hours per month. Over the course of the last ten years this is about 5,400 – 20,520 hours of service to the people of the City of Albany. This time does not include continuing education training or attendance at the NACOLE conference.

Policy Recommendations/Actions Submitted to the Albany Police Department (APD):

- adopted Resolution 1 of 2001 recommending that steps be taken to eliminate the potential for bias-based policing in the City of Albany [APD changed their protocols as a result, by implementing a series of changes to the policy, which included adding a separate section under "Officer Responsibility and Authority," immediately following the Department's "Code of Ethics," further emphasizing the Department's prohibition against bias-based policing];
- recommended that the Albany Police Department implement a policy aimed at eliminating police department action in retrieving rental property involved in a landlord-tenant dispute, and that officer(s) be trained with respect to this policy [OPS now requires that Albany City Police officers are provided with informational materials regarding Landlord/Tenant disputes];

- recommended that a policy be implemented and training be given to officers regarding contact with plaintiffs who have lawsuits or claims against a police officer or the City [Commissioner Nielsen responded that such actions are neither condoned by the Albany Police Department nor will they be tolerated];
- recommended that a firm policy be implemented by the police department regarding strip searches and requested that the Board be informed of such policy and notified of when it takes effect [The Albany City Police Department provided its written strip search policy and procedures and has made physical changes to the strip-search area to ensure privacy and safety. The physical changes include: removing plumbing from the strip-search area to prevent the destruction of possible evidence, searching prisoners in a private cell, out of the viewing area of other prisoners and ensuring that no cameras are placed within the strip-search area];
- recommended that the Commissioner review the police department's policies and procedures with respect to the handcuffing of minors during the execution of a search warrant [the APD reviewed the Board's recommendation and determined that for safety and preservation of evidence reasons, there will be no exception to the current policy for minors];
- recommended that a non-confidential copy of the APD's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) be made accessible to the public [it is now on reserve at the Government Law Center of Albany Law School];
- recommended training and strengthening of the APD's Policies and Practices in an effort to improve community-police relations; [the APD has an annual in-service training program for all officers, which includes components in interpersonal communications; police ethics; police-citizen encounters; community-oriented problem solving; and mutual respect (diversity), and provided the Board with copies of the Department's training materials].
- recommended that all Albany police officers receive additional interview training when dealing with individuals who are irrational, belligerent, hostile, or confrontational. The CPRB believes that Albany police officers could benefit from training in methods and techniques to better equip themselves to divert and de-escalate these types of situations; *and*
- recommended that the Albany Police Department review and/or revise its SOP based on the case where an officer used a knife to cut a complainant's clothes to obtain evidence. The CPRB also recommended that all Albany police officers receive additional training in how to better handle this type of situation. The CPRB believes that Albany police

officers could benefit from training in methods and techniques to better equip themselves to prevent an avoidable dangerous situation from occurring.