



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 26, 2025

ODPA STATEMENT ON CITY COUNCIL HIRING FREEZE AND IMPACT ON INVESTIGATIVE OPERATIONS

The Office of the Director of Police Accountability (ODPA), established by Measure II, which was approved by 84.65% of Berkeley voters in November 2020 ([Alameda County Registrar of Voters - Election Results](#)), affirms its unwavering commitment to the people of Berkeley and to the values of transparent, independent civilian oversight of law enforcement. In light of the Berkeley City Council's June 24, 2025 decision to freeze two key ODPAs positions, we must share an update regarding the impact on our operations and our ability to meet statutory and ethical obligations.

Immediate Operational Impact

Due to this hiring freeze, the ODPAs will recommend the administrative closure of ten (10) active personnel misconduct complaints at the next Police Accountability Board (PAB) meeting on Tuesday, July 9, 2025. These recommendations are based on criteria outlined in the [Interim Regulations for Handling Complaints Against Sworn Officers of the Police Department Approved by the City Council October 5, 2021](#), including Section II.D.1.a.vi, which permits administrative closure when *“Failure of ODPAs staff to timely complete its investigation, as set forth in Section II.C.1.”*

In addition, the ODPAs will recommend that the Board suspend further action on ten (10) active policy review matters, as the Office lacks the staffing capacity to support these reviews in a timely, objective, and thorough manner. While policy reviews are not subject to the administrative closure procedures set forth in the Interim Regulations, this pause reflects the ODPAs's inability to fully assist the Board in carrying out the duties prescribed by [Berkeley City Charter Section 125\(1\)](#) and the directive that *“the Director of Police Accountability shall carry out the work of the Board as described”* in [Charter Section 125\(14\)\(b\)](#).

While these proposed closures are not yet final, community members should be aware of the real and immediate consequences that the hiring freeze will have on our ability to deliver effective oversight. As defined by the [National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement \(NACOLE\)](#), effective oversight must be independent, adequately resourced, and transparent. The current resourcing constraints undermine these core principles.

Alternate Complaint Pathways and Community Rights

Even in the face of operational limitations, we will continue to receive complaints, respond to community concerns, and advocate for transparency and accountability in policing. However, limited staffing will require resource triage, potentially affecting the timing, depth, or prioritization of some matters.

Community members may still submit complaints directly to the ODPa through our secure online portal:

 <https://berkeleyca.siviltech.com/>

If community members wish to file complaints outside of the ODPa or [Berkeley Police Department \(BPD\) Internal Affairs Bureau](#), an alternative is available through the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Public Complaint Intake process, an external mechanism that can receive misconduct allegations:

 <https://post.ca.gov/public-complaints>

Additionally, under [Berkeley City Charter Section 125\(19\)\(e\)](#), when the ODPa is unable to investigate and a complaint is instead investigated by the BPD's Internal Affairs Bureau, community members retain the right to contest the Chief of Police's determination. Specifically, if the Chief's finding is "not sustained," "unfounded," or "exonerated," the complainant has twenty (20) days after notification to contest the decision to the Director of Police Accountability.

Timeline of Recent Budget-Related Council Actions Impacting ODPa

- **May 20, 2025** – Council directs the City Manager to work with Charter Officers to develop a hiring freeze plan and address vacant positions.
- **May 21, 2025** – ODPa submits a legal and operational memo to Council, recommending either a full exemption or authority to apply the City Manager's exemption criteria to critical roles.
- **June 12, 2025** – ODPa presents budget realities to the Council's Budget & Finance Committee.
- **June 23, 2025** – The authoring Councilmember sends a courtesy notice of intent to propose a hiring freeze, but no language is shared.
- **June 24, 2025** – Supplemental budget item posted publicly for Council vote and subsequently adopted.

For reference, key documents have been made available in the ODPa's "Hiring Freeze Timeline and Documents" compilation:

 <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ODPA%20Hiring%20Freeze%20Timeline%20and%20DocumentsFinal.pdf>

Ethical and Procedural Obligations

As a NACOLE member agency, the ODPa upholds both the [13 Core Principles of Civilian Oversight](#) and [NACOLE's Code of Ethics](#). These frameworks call upon oversight professionals to:

- Uphold the independence and integrity of the oversight process
- Ensure community engagement and responsiveness
- Communicate with transparency and professionalism

- Advocate for adequate resources to meet statutory and moral obligations

Next Steps

We will return to the Police Accountability Board meeting on Tuesday, July 9, 2025, to formally present these administrative closure recommendations and propose necessary operational adjustments. Community input remains vital to our work, and we encourage public participation:

Meeting Details

 Tuesday, July 9, 2025

 6:30 PM via In-Person or Zoom

1900 Addison Street, 3rd Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704

 <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89174589069>

 Dial-in: 1 (669) 900-6833 | Meeting ID: 891 7458 9069

We understand that these changes may cause frustration, concern, or distress, especially for complainants and impacted community members. Please know that our office continues to navigate this environment with transparency, resolve, and deep respect for those we serve.

About the Police Accountability Board (PAB):

The purpose of the Police Accountability Board is to promote public trust through independent, objective, civilian oversight of the Berkeley Police Department, provide community participation in setting and reviewing Police Department policies, practices, and procedures, and provide a means for prompt, impartial and fair investigation of complaints brought by members of the public against sworn employees of the Berkeley Police Department.

About the Office of the Director of Police Accountability (ODPA):

The purpose of the Director of Police Accountability is to investigate complaints filed against sworn employees of the Berkeley Police Department, to reach an independent finding as to the facts, and to recommend corrective action where warranted. The Director of Police Accountability may also serve as the Secretary to the Police Accountability Board and assist the Board in carrying out the duties prescribed herein.

For further information or inquiries, please contact:

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