

# Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission

*Independent | Credible | Respectful | Neutral*

## 2022 Annual Report



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## Contents

Introduction.....	2
Foreword from Commission Leadership .....	2
Board of Supervisors.....	3
A Year in Review .....	4
The Commission .....	5
Commission Members .....	5
Mission and Values .....	5
Structure .....	5
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion .....	6
Review and Actions.....	6
Deputy Gangs .....	6
Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department Jails .....	7
Sheriff’s Department Budget .....	9
Street Takeover .....	9
Resolutions .....	9
Additional Areas of Discussion.....	10
Community Engagement and Outreach.....	13
Looking forward.....	16
Acknowledgements .....	16



## Introduction

### **Foreword from Commission Leadership**

“We must adjust to changing times and still hold to unchanging principles,” said former president Jimmy Carter. This year has seen a tremendous amount of change in our society, yet we still grapple with many of the same issues and concerns that have vexed us for years. As such, the Commission has made every effort to address these age-old issues and anticipate new issues while holding true to our mission.

As we reflect on 2022, the Commission was able to refine our strategic plans to strive to keep our communities safe and law enforcement accountable. We were able to again host in person Commission meetings and elevate community voices. Hearing public feedback highlights areas that need our attention, and these voices drive the work of the Commission. We continue to uplift the community’s concerns to help improve police-community relations by engaging with the Sheriff’s Department, community partners, and other stakeholders.

The Commission hosted eight regular Commission meetings and seven Special Hearings specifically regarding the investigation into deputy gangs within the Sheriff’s Department. Dedicated to continuing to educate our community, the Commission hosted two community conferences to discuss the Sheriff’s Department Budget Priorities and the impact of street takeovers on our communities. Commission staff also hosted informational tables at community events during the Juneteenth celebration, the Taste of Soul festival, and several resource fairs, including one at the Inmate Reception Center. Striving to continue training with other oversight practitioners, the Commission hosted five sessions at the annual National Association for the Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) conference. We’ve also surpassed more than 4,000 followers on social media.

The investigation of deputy gangs took a central role in Commission activities as we concurrently approved resolutions condemning the Sheriff’s Department’s search warrants on its critics and supporting a County Charter Amendment for the removal of a Sheriff for cause. The Commission also sent a letter to the Board of Supervisors regarding the Sheriff’s Department budget priorities and unmet needs. In response to public concerns, staff continues to monitor conditions in the jails, the Family Assistance Program, Mental Evaluation Teams, Measure R, immigration policy adherence, and body worn cameras.

I would like to thank the Executive Office, the Office of Inspector General, and the Sheriff’s Department for their cooperation as we work toward making the Sheriff’s Department the model for 21st century policing. I would like to recognize the dedicated Commission staff – Starlet Atkins, Frederick Chung, Daniel Delgadillo, Tracy Jordan, Erick Montalbán-Lara, Nune Petrosyan, Jennifer Wicks, and Ingrid Williams. And I must extend our deepest appreciation to each person who reached out to the Commission. Thank you for trusting the Commission to hear your troubles and for allowing us to be your voice.

The Commission renews its unwavering commitment to protect civil rights and create safer communities. I believe that we agree on more things than we disagree. We can work together to find solutions to bring hope and change.



Executive Director Brian K. Williams, Esq.

*Photo right: Executive Director Brian Williams speaks at the NACOLE Conference on September 14, 2022.*



## **Board of Supervisors**

The Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission (Commission) was implemented by the Board of Supervisors (Board) on January 12, 2016. Even before the Commission's inception, the Board was an advocate of transparency and accountability with respect to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (Sheriff's Department). The Board took action to ensure public safety and provide resources to the community, including incarcerated people, through several motions:

- Promoting Accountability and Community Safety Through Checks and Balances of the LA County Sheriff (Motion by Supervisors Mitchell and Solis, July 12, 2022)
- Improving School Climate and Safety (Motion by Supervisor Mitchell, June 14, 2022, Revision June 28, 2022)
- Ensuring Proper Oversight of the Sheriff's Department's Participation within the Joint Regional Intelligence Center (Revised motion by Supervisors Mitchell and Solis, April 19, 2022)
- Friendly Amendment to Item 80-A (Motion by Supervisor Solis, April 19, 2022)
- Permanent Funding and Implementation of the Family Assistance Program (Motion by Supervisors Solis and Mitchell, April 19, 2022)
- Ensuring Proper Oversight of the Joint Regional Intelligence Center (Motion by Supervisors Mitchell and Solis, March 15, 2022)



*Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. Left to right: Lindsey Horvath, Kathryn Barger, Janice Hahn, Holly Mitchell, and Hilda L. Solis.*



## **A Year in Review**

The Commission discussed and made recommendations regarding deputy gangs, conditions of confinement, the Sheriff's Department's budget, and more. Below is a brief overview of the Commission's work this year.

### **2022 by the Numbers**

#### *Commission Meetings*

- 8 meetings
- 685 attendees at the Commission meetings
- 140 public comments made at Commission meetings

#### *Special Hearings on Deputy Gangs*

- 7 Special Hearings on Deputy Gangs
- 1,000 attendees at Special Hearings
- 105 public comments made at Special Hearings

#### *Conferences, Community Listening Sessions, and Town Hall meetings*

- 2 Conferences  
*Topics:*
  - Street Takeovers: Impacting Public Safety
  - Sheriff's Department Budget: Priorities and Unmet Needs
- 184 attendees at the Conferences

#### *Additional Community Engagement*

- 5 sessions hosted at NACOLE conference
- 4,000+ followers on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube
- 4 Resource Fairs: Commission staff hosted information booths at the Juneteenth celebration, Taste of Soul, and two resource fairs, including one at the Inmate Reception Center

#### *Action Areas*

3 resolutions or letters regarding:

- Sheriff's Departments search warrants served on its critics
- County Charter Amendment (Removal of Sheriff for Cause, Measure A)
- Sheriff's Department Budget Priorities

### **Additional topic areas regularly monitored by staff**

- Conditions in the Sheriff's Department Jails
- Mental Health Crisis Response Alternatives and Mental Evaluation Teams
- Body Worn Cameras
- Street Takeovers
- Immigration policy adherence
- Family Assistance Program
- Consent decrees
- Litigation costs
- Internal Administrative Investigations
- Measure R



*Photo right: September 23 Special  
Hearing on Deputy Gangs.*

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## The Commission

### Commission Members

The Commission is composed of nine members who are appointed by the Board. Five members are direct Board appointments, one from each Supervisorial District, and four members are nominated by the Commission for Board approval. The members' diverse backgrounds include a nonprofit executive, a retired law enforcement professional, mental health advocates, a former federal judge, and attorneys with a broad range of experiences, including former prosecutors, public defenders, and law professors.

Commissioners during 2022:

- Sean Kennedy – Chair, Executive Director of Center for Juvenile Law and Policy at Loyola Law School
- Jamon R. Hicks – Vice Chair, Partner at Douglas/Hicks Law, appointed 2-15-2022
- Robert C. Bonner – attorney and former U.S. Attorney and DEA Administrator
- Patti Giggans – Peace Over Violence Executive Director
- James P. Harris – former Sheriff's Department lieutenant
- Priscilla Ocen – Loyola Law School Associate Professor, end of term 1-21-2022
- Lael Rubin – former Deputy District Attorney
- Irma Hagans Cooper – U.S. Army Reserve Retired Colonel, Army Nurse Corp, appointed 5-3-2022
- Luis S. Garcia – Registered associate clinical social worker, appointed 5-3-2022
- Hans Johnson – Progressive Victory President, appointed 9-27-2022

### Mission and Values

#### Mission

The Commission works to facilitate public transparency and accountability with respect to the Sheriff's Department and provides ongoing review, analysis, and oversight of the Sheriff's Department's policies, practices, and procedures. The Commission strives to build bridges between the Sheriff's Department and the public by making recommendations to the Sheriff's Department and the Board. The Commission's work cannot be completed without the public's involvement, which is why the Commission provides several opportunities for robust community engagement.

### Duties and Responsibilities

- Boost transparency and reclaim accountability
- Discover gaps and patterns of misconduct
- Recommend solutions for real change
- Build bridges among various stakeholders
- Give the community a stronger voice

### Values

**Independent:** Housed under the Executive Office of the Board, the civilian volunteers are positioned to remain autonomous and independent in their oversight efforts.

**Credible:** The Commission works to remain respectful, knowledgeable, and transparent while striving to perform duties in a thorough, honest manner.

**Respectful:** Every voice is valuable to the Commission. The commission aims to treat all stakeholders with deference regardless of their ethnicity, identity, or physical condition.

**Neutral:** The Commission promotes fairness, justice, and equity and creates opportunities for community members from diverse backgrounds to voice their thoughts.

### Structure

Commission staff provide support to Commissioners and the Board by coordinating meetings with the Office of Inspector General (OIG), the Sheriff's Department, and other public and community agencies. Staff also create opportunities for community engagement through Commission meetings, conferences, town halls, and social media. After reviewing the Sheriff's Department policies and practices, listening to community feedback, and conducting research, staff works with Commissioners to prepare reports with recommendations. Once approved by the full Commission, the reports are delivered to the Sheriff's Department, the Board, and other relevant departments.

The Commission's authority is granted by Chapter 3.79 of the L.A. County Code. The Board approved the ordinance that created the Commission on September 27, 2016.

### Jurisdiction

The Commission provides oversight of the nation's largest sheriff's department with nearly 18,000 employees. The Sheriff's Department provides service to 42 incorporated cities, 141 unincorporated communities, courthouse

security for the L.A. County Superior Court, and houses and transports incarcerated people within the county jails.

L.A. County is the nation's largest county by population. A subdivision of the State of California, the County of Los Angeles is charged with providing numerous services that affect the lives of 10 million residents who live throughout a sprawling 4,084 square miles of land.

### **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Effective oversight begins with listening to the community and understanding their expectations of local law enforcement, especially in a County with such diverse populations and vast geographic area. As we continue to support public safety in our neighborhoods, we strive to balance that with protecting the civil rights of the most vulnerable populations. Our staff, work plans, and Commission reflect the splendor of this diversity.

Both staff and Commissioners embrace the many ethnic differences in the County because we understand that diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace and community promotes innovation and effective problem solving, which are essential components of effective oversight.

As the Commission works to boost transparency and accountability, community input drives our ongoing analysis of the Sheriff's Department policies, practices, and procedures. The Commission employs its platform to highlight and provide a voice to marginalized groups and makes policy recommendations that support equity.

The Commission strives to be accessible to all communities by holding meetings in various geographical areas throughout the County, offering Spanish language assistance and now expanding virtual community engagement opportunities.



*Photo above: October 14 Special Hearing on Deputy Gangs.*

## **Review and Actions**

### **Deputy Gangs**

There is more than 50 years of documented history on the issue of deputy gangs in the Sheriff's Department. Deputy gangs have been described as law enforcement officers who join or associate with a station subgroup that identifies by a name, has a group symbol (often tattooed on each member), and engage in behavior like a street gang. On March 24, Chair Kennedy [announced](#) the launch of the Commission's investigation into deputy gangs. The investigation focused on their continued existence; the impact they have on the community and the Sheriff's Department; and the steps needed to eradicate them.

The first special hearing on deputy gangs was held May 24. Special counsel to the Commission, Bert Deixler, lead his team of volunteer lawyers in the investigation of deputy gangs. Mr. Deixler and his team sought to determine why, how, and to what end deputies join these groups. The Commission held seven special hearings on deputy gangs in 2022. Several witnesses were selected to testify because of their knowledge of the existence of deputy gangs, their experiences dealing with deputy gangs, and/or their affiliation with deputy gangs, including several current or former members of the Sheriff's Department.

Moreover, subject matter experts testified about law enforcement best practices and where the Sheriff's Department may have failed, allowing deputy gangs to flourish. There were also several witnesses that agreed to testify, some even anonymously and with voice distortion,

*Photo left: September 23 Special Hearing on Deputy Gangs.*





that later reconsidered testifying out of fear of retaliation both physically and professionally.

The witness testimony at the special hearings revealed that tattooed deputy subgroups exist, which meet the definition of "law enforcement gang" and continue to operate within the Sheriff's Department with impunity. Witness testimony also revealed that the Villanueva administration attempted to hide the existence of deputy gangs from oversight officials and other agencies. Scheduling the Commission's special hearings was made more difficult by the Sheriff's Department's culture of retaliation, as well as Sheriff Villanueva's repeated attacks and attempts to discredit the Commission's special hearings.

Special Counsel's report and recommendations to eliminate deputy gangs is expected to be released in 2023.



*Photo above: September 23 Special Hearing on Deputy Gangs.*

## **Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Jails**

### **Conditions of Confinement**

The Sheriff's Department is responsible for the care, custody, and security of incarcerated people, including the condition incarcerated people live in while housed in jail. The Commission receives reports and information regarding conditions of confinement from the OIG, the Los Angeles County Sybil Brand Commission for Institutional

Inspections (Sybil Brand Commission), the public, and community organizations.

At the January 20 public meeting, the Sybil Brand Commission advised that Black women were not given access to education-based incarceration programs at the same rate as other incarcerated women. It was also reported that there are multiple complaints about racially disparate treatment against Black women by Sheriff's Department deputies and custody personnel. A New Way of Life also expressed concerns over the disproportionate number of Black women lacking access to early release programs and advised that the data reflects the inequities.

At the April 21 public meeting, the Commission discussed [in-custody deaths](#). Sheriff's Department officials advised that at the time, 34% of in-custody deaths were a result of Fentanyl overdoses and 44% of the jail population has mental health issues. Los Angeles County Department of Health Services Correctional Health Services officials provided in-custody death statistics, including data on COVID-19, suicides, and overdoses. They witnessed an increase in overdoses at Men's Central Jail and noted that Narcan has been made readily available throughout the facility. OIG advised that the jails were grossly overcrowded and systemic issues in the jails allow overdoses to occur despite preventive measures to help reduce the problem.

The [OIG's April to June 2022 quarterly report](#) described significant overcrowding at the Inmate Reception Center. According to the report, there were people with mental illness chained to benches for long periods of time with sporadic bathroom breaks and people waiting for days to be processed and classified for placement in housing. The [OIG's July to September 2022 quarterly report](#) noted that jail overcrowding continues to jeopardize the Sheriff's Department's ability to provide humane conditions of confinement.

At the November 17 public meeting, Sheriff's Department officials reported that Fentanyl continues to enter the jails and easy access to Narcan throughout the facilities has contributed to saving lives. Correctional Health Services noted that from January to November, 33 people died in custody and that the death rate is consistent with that of the Los Angeles County population. Of the in-custody deaths, 42% were Hispanic and 27% were Black. The



American Civil Liberties Union reported that the Sheriff's Department has been the subject of several Department of Justice consent decrees and lawsuits related to conditions of confinement.

To address all issues pertaining to conditions of confinement, the Commission created a new ad hoc committee that will focus on improving many aspects of incarceration. The Commission will continue to collaborate with the Sheriff's Department, Correctional Health Services, and the Sybil Brand Commission to better incarcerated people's daily life while in custody.

### Treatment of Pregnant People in Custody

At the January 20 public meeting, the Sybil Brand Commission reported their observations and discussions with pregnant people in jail. They advised that pregnant incarcerated people were being shackled to one another while transported; they lack access to sufficient bottled water; the food they received was not consistent with a prenatal diet; they were not given adequate exercise time; and education related to pregnancy and birthing was insufficient. Correctional Health Services officials advised they can make recommendations, but the Sheriff's Department custody personnel determine the diet. They also discussed the medical treatment of pregnant people at the Century Regional Detention Facility.

At the November 17 public meeting, Correctional Health Services officials reported that there were 22 pregnant people currently in custody and eight babies were delivered in 2022.

### Sybil Brand Commission Collaboration

In November 2021, the Board adopted a [motion instructing the Sybil Brand Commission](#) in collaboration with the Commission to conduct a survey of incarcerated individuals about the type of programming and services needed to assist in preparation for release and reentry into the community.

At the June 16 public meeting, the Commission adopted a [motion requesting the Sybil Brand Commission frequent the County jails](#) as often as reasonably necessary to complete the Board-mandated survey. The motion was necessary because the Sybil Brand Commission's ordinance only permits two inspections per commissioner per month. With a goal to survey 1,900 incarcerated

people, at two inspections per month, completion of the survey would have taken longer than desired.

On September 22, the Sybil Brand Commission and several Commission staff participated in administering the survey at Men's Central Jail. For the next several months, surveys were conducted at Men's Central Jail, Twin Towers, Century Regional Detention Facility, and North County Correctional Facility. The Sybil Brand Commission is analyzing the data collected in preparation for their report detailing their findings.

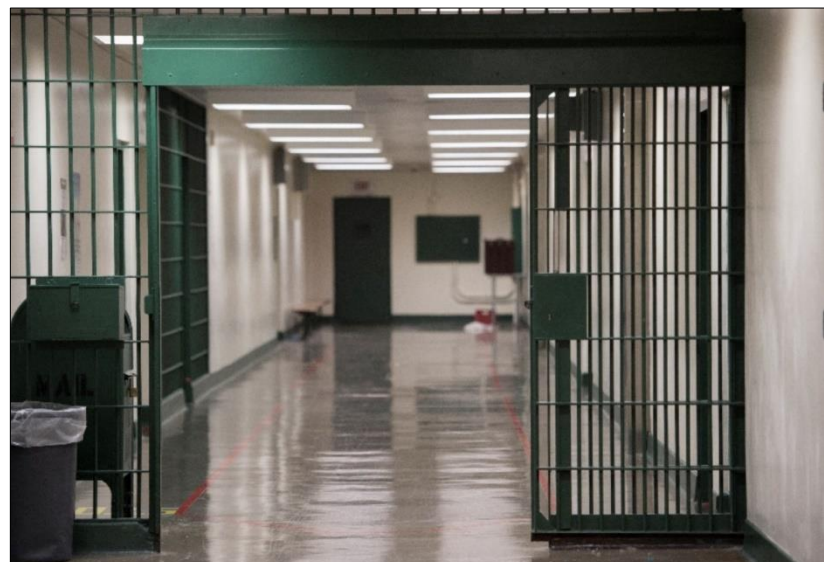
### Communicable Disease in the Jails

#### *COVID-19 and mpox (formerly known as monkeypox)*

At the January 20 public meeting, several subject matter experts discussed the management of COVID-19 in the jails. Sheriff's Department officials advised that at the time, the jail population was down from 17,404 to 13,000 and that masking is required for Sheriff's Department personnel. They also advised that N95 or surgical masks were being ordered to distribute to anyone interested and noted that fully vaccinated individuals can appear in court.

Correctional Health Services reported on the number of COVID-19 positive cases in the jails, the number of people quarantined, and the number of in-custody deaths. They further reported that 15,000 incarcerated people had been vaccinated and 3,000 booster shots have been given.

At the November 17 public meeting, it was reported that Correctional Health Services was administering vaccine boosters for the new COVID-19 variant, and that they have vaccinated more than 600 people at risk for mpox. They also reported that there were 65 suspected cases of mpox in the jails, but only six resulted in a positive test result.



*Photo right: Men's Central Jail.*

## Prison Rape Elimination Act

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Implementation and Compliance Team continues to work toward full compliance with the requirements. PREA is a federal act that was created to implement national standards to address sexual abuse and harassment in detention facilities.

While discussing jail conditions at the March 17 public meeting, the Commission heard from subject matter experts on the lack of programming services incarcerated people receive at Century Regional Detention Facility. The Commission inquired if PREA information is posted at the jail facilities. Sheriff's Department officials advised that they take PREA seriously and that signage is posted and routinely updated to attract attention.

## Sheriff's Department Budget

This year brought many economic challenges to all county departments, including the ongoing costs associated with COVID-19. The County of Los Angeles, however, was able to recover fiscally and adopted a final budget totaling \$44.6 billion for fiscal year (FY) 2022-23. The adopted budget provides financial support to more than 35 county departments, including the Sheriff's Department.

At the March 17 public meeting, the Commission discussed the Sheriff's Department Budget Priorities for FY2022-23. The [staff report](#) included recommendations to the Sheriff's Department that they maintain a transparent budget process by submitting:

1. A budget mitigation plan or budget status report.
2. A report on Provisional Financing Uses, spending plans and reporting funds spent.

At the March 24 budget conference, the CEO's office reported that the Sheriff's Department's final adopted FY2022-23 Budget totaled \$3.8 billion, which included \$2.68 million to enhance illegal drug detection in the jails; \$500,000 to review the antiquated Countywide Warrant System; and provisions for 17,442 budgeted positions.

At the June 16 public hearing, OIG expressed concerns about the Sheriff's Department Computer Aided Dispatch system. The Commission adopted a motion to send a letter of support to the CEO recommending that the Board fund the Computer Aided Dispatch System Replacement Project (Unmet Needs Item #5).

## Street Takeovers

Local streets continue to be taken over by individuals driving vehicles in circles at high rates of speeds at intersections while hundreds of spectators encircle them and cheer them on. These events, commonly referred to as street takeovers, are extremely dangerous. Occasionally, both participants and spectators have been injured or killed. The Commission held a community conference on September 7, joining law enforcement officers, community-based organizations, and the public in discussion.

At the November 17 public meeting, the Commission continued the [street takeovers discussion](#). Several subject matter experts, including law enforcement officials, discussed the measures currently taken and the obstacles they face trying to eliminate street takeovers.

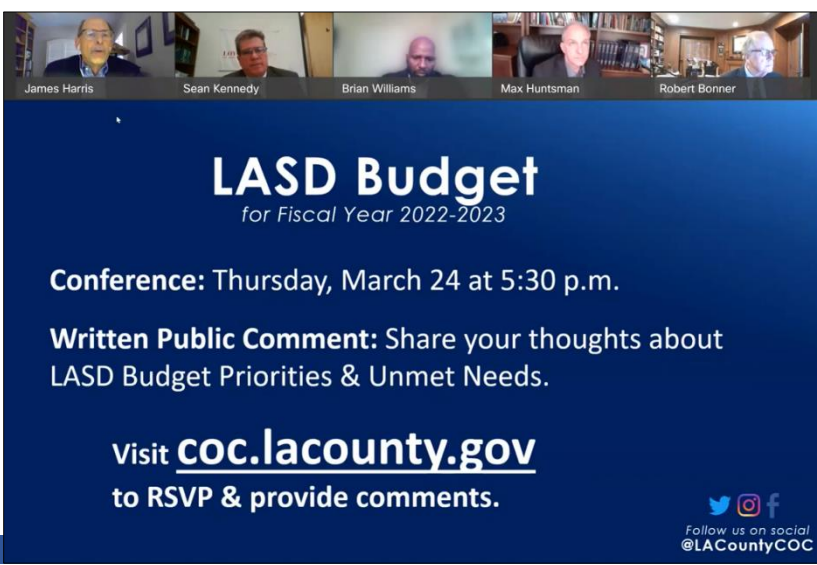
Commission staff continues to monitor this issue and will report back to the Commission as needed.

## Resolutions

The Commission issued two resolutions this year: one supporting a charter amendment to remove the sheriff from office for cause and another condemning the Sheriff's Department for serving search warrants on its critics.

## Support of Los Angeles County Charter Amendment

Since its inception in 1850, the Sheriff's Department's has not had the advantage of a civilian oversight commission. This has led to a perceived lack of accountability and transparency by many members of the public. This has been exacerbated by the unfortunate history of elected



James Harris Sean Kennedy Brian Williams Max Huntsman Robert Bonner

# LASD Budget

for Fiscal Year 2022-2023

**Conference:** Thursday, March 24 at 5:30 p.m.

**Written Public Comment:** Share your thoughts about LASD Budget Priorities & Unmet Needs.

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sheriffs within our community who have not always acted in accordance with the law. To address this issue and enhance the public trust in the Sheriff's Department, the Commission adopted a [resolution in support of a Los Angeles County Charter amendment](#). The resolution urged the Board to place a charter amendment on the ballot to amend the Los Angeles County Charter to:

1. Create a procedure that will allow the Board to impeach and remove the sheriff by a four-fifths vote for serious violations of the public trust, including, but not limited to, serious crime, unconstitutional conduct, and abuse of power;
2. Incorporate the Commission and OIG into the County Charter, including the power to subpoena records and testimony to fulfill their duty; and
3. Authorize the Board to oversee and set policies for the Sheriff's Department, if they do not interfere with the statutory authority of the sheriff or otherwise conflict with state law, and create a mandatory process for the Commission to recommend policies to the Sheriff's Department, and for the Board to deliberate on these policies, proceed with any actions necessary, and approve final policies.

Los Angeles County Measure A passed with nearly 72% of the vote on the November 8 ballot; however, Measure A only incorporated one of the Commission's three resolutions (amendment to remove an elected sheriff).

### **Condemning Search Warrants**

On September 14, the Sheriff's Department served multiple search warrants that appear to have been served to harass the Sheriff's Department's critics, chill others from criticism, or for political gain. At the September 23 public meeting, the Commission adopted a [resolution condemning the actions of the Sheriff's Department and Sheriff Villanueva](#) in executing the warrants before the press, especially when there are means of carrying out warrants on public figures that are not on display.

The resolution urged the Sheriff's Department to disband the public corruption unit, which has been referred to as the *secret police*, and return to the traditional practice of allowing outside investigative agencies, without a conflict of interest, to conduct investigations of public figures. Staff will continue to monitor this issue.



*Photo above: Executive Director Brian K. Williams reads the Resolution Expressing Grave Concern Regarding the Sheriff's Department at the September 23 Special Hearing.*

### **Additional Areas of Discussion**

#### **Deputies in County Health Facilities**

The Commission first discussed the Sheriff's Department hospital security services in County health facilities at the June 2021 public meeting. The Sheriff's Department discussed the scope of duties, policies, and training for deputies in care settings. After hearing the public's concern, Commission staff gathered more information.

At the January 20 public meeting, the Commission discussed the [presence of Sheriff's Department personnel in County health facilities](#). Los Angeles County Department of Health Services Harbor-UCLA Medical Center officials described the policies and procedures involving deputies in the healthcare setting. A UCLA law professor shared privacy rights concerns and discussed the potential for harm.

The Sheriff's Department provided recommendations for improving hospital security operations that included issuing body worn cameras to the County Services Bureau and upgrading the camera surveillance system at all hospitals and clinics. Commission Staff will continue to monitor this issue.



Photo above: Family Assistance Program Proposed Design Priorities presented at the March 17 Commission meeting.

### Family Assistance Program

The Commission continued collaborating with County partners to ensure the progress of the Family Assistance Program, designed to provide trauma-informed support to families whose loved ones were killed by or died in the custody of Sheriff’s Department personnel. OIG provided a [report to the Board on February 22](#) that included an implementation plan, budget, and timeline for the permanent program.

During the March 17 public meeting, the Commission and the Department of Public Health’s Office of Violence Prevention presented the program’s [proposed design priorities](#). On April 19, the [Board approved permanent funding for the Family Assistance Program](#) and directed implementation of the plan.

The CEO reported that \$1.53 million was allocated for program services, including reimbursement of burial costs and staffing to assist families in navigating County services, such as mental health resources. \$375,000 of the total budget is available for burial expenses. In November, the CEO met with County stakeholders to discuss the program’s funding and staffing needs.

County stakeholders continue to meet and work toward implementation of the permanent program. Commission Staff will continue to monitor the program’s progress.

### Deputy Presence in Schools

The presence of deputies in schools has been an ongoing area of concern. At the June 16 public meeting, OIG discussed their [report on Allegations of Racial Disparities](#)

in contacts with high school students by the Sheriff’s Lancaster Station. Among their findings, Black students in Lancaster are disproportionately contacted by deputies and punished for school discipline issues.

On June 28, the Board approved the revised motion, [Improving School Climate and Safety](#). One of its directives instructed the OIG, in consultation with others, to analyze School Resource Deputy contacts for all school districts contracting with the Sheriff’s Department for the 2021-2022 school year to determine if similar disparities exist with Black students at other schools.

OIG’s report is projected to be released in 2023, and the findings will be discussed at a Commission meeting.

### Measure R

In 2020, voters passed Measure R, which required the Commission to develop a Comprehensive Public Safety Reinvestment Plan and Feasibility Study. The Commission established an ad hoc committee to examine the issues regarding depopulation of the jails, diversion, and nonpunitive approaches to mental illness and substance use disorder. However, the ad hoc committee cannot complete the enormous requirements of Measure R without resources.

The Commission sent a [letter to the Board](#) in 2021 acknowledging the Board’s substantial investment to reform the criminal justice system and sought funds to hire a consultant to assist with the requirements of Measure R. The ad hoc committee also met with each supervisorial district’s justice deputies to express the urgent need for resources. Despite these efforts, the funds necessary to hire a consultant have not yet been approved. Commission staff continue to seek funding and attend the Board’s justice reinvestment meetings to monitor its progress toward criminal justice reform and achieve the mandates of Measure R.



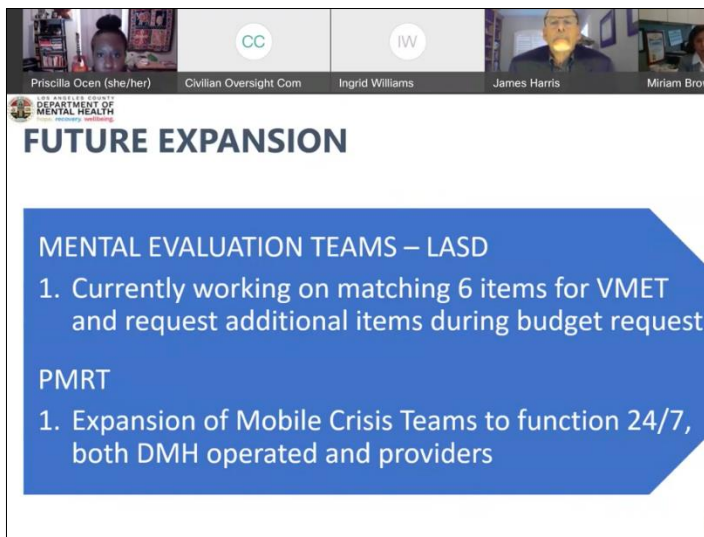
Photo right: June 16 Commission meeting.



## Body Worn Cameras Implementation Progress

Commission staff continue to monitor the body worn cameras deployment and policy. The OIG's September 2022 [Report on Implementing Body Worn Cameras](#) noted the Sheriff's Department has deployed 3,786 cameras. Although deployment of some body worn cameras was delayed due to supply chain issues, the Sheriff's Department reported it was still within budget and working to complete the planned implementation.

Additionally, the Sheriff's Department is inspecting the jail infrastructure and reviewing associated costs to consider the possibility of issuing body worn cameras to custody personnel and updating facility cameras. The Commission continues to monitor body worn cameras policy revisions.



*Photo above: The expansion of crisis response was discussed at the January 20 Commission meeting.*

## Mental Evaluation Teams and Mental Health Crisis Response Alternatives

Mental Evaluation Teams (MET) consist of a deputy sheriff and a licensed mental health clinician who are dispatched to provide crisis assessment, intervention, and target case management services to diffuse potentially violent situations. After the Board's [January 2017 directive](#), the [Commission recommended](#) that the Sheriff's Department increase the number of MET teams.

At the January 20 public meeting, the Commission [inquired why the Sheriff's Department](#) does not have 60 METs operating as recommended by the Commission in February 2018. Department of Mental Health officials

[reported](#) that there are 33 METs, 36 Psychiatric Mobile Response Teams, and 120 Law Enforcement Teams. The Department of Mental Health is working to increase mobile response teams services to 24 hours a day.

Commission staff continue to monitor MET and Mental Health Crisis Response Alternatives.

## Immigration Policy Adherence

The Commission adopted [twelve policy recommendations on May 21, 2019](#), and staff routinely consults with the Sheriff's Department and OIG regarding implementation of the recommendations.

The Sheriff's Department continues to receive U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detainers for people incarcerated in the jails. As of September, the Sheriff's Department did not [transfer any incarcerated people to ICE](#), down from 457 in 2019. The Sheriff's Department reported that ICE submitted only 24 criminal warrants to transfer incarcerated people from January 1, 2020, to November 8, 2022.

Certain undocumented crime victims who help law enforcement investigate and prosecute the perpetrator of the crime are eligible to apply for a U nonimmigrant status visa (U visa). The Sheriff's Department confirmed that more than 440 U visas were certified in 2022, and 63 were denied as non-qualified. The U visa allows eligible victims to live and work in the U.S. for up to four years with the possibility of obtaining permanent resident status.

Staff continue to monitor this issue.

## Community Engagement and Outreach

### Commission Meetings

Commission meetings provide an opportunity for the public to comment on items before the Commission or within the Commission's jurisdiction. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, most Commission meetings were held virtually through the Webex virtual platform, and staff refined the process to allow for live public comment and guest presentations. Special hearings were held in person, and all meetings continued to be streamed on Facebook Live and available to listen through a phone line.

Commission meetings are publicized through email notifications, social media posts, and on the Commission's website. The public is encouraged to attend Commission meetings and can sign up to receive meeting notification emails at [coc.lacounty.gov](https://coc.lacounty.gov). To boost transparency and accountability, community input is vital to the ongoing analysis of the Sheriff's Department policies, practices, and procedures. Community feedback may provide direction on additional issues the Commission evaluates.

Regular Commission meetings for 2023 will be held on the third Thursday of each month from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., except for August. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, meetings may continue to be held virtually.



*Photo above: Street Takeovers Conference on September 7.*

### Conferences, Town Halls, and Other Outreach

Conferences and town halls were held to educate the public and to ensure that Commissioners hear directly from the community. Town halls provide a public forum where residents are encouraged to take the microphone to address Commissioners and local leaders. The public is encouraged to share their experiences, thoughts, concerns, compliments, and solutions.

Just as with in person town halls, the focus of virtual town halls is to hear from members of the public on a particular subject. Two virtual conferences were held in 2022.

#### *Street Takeovers Conference*

On September 7, the Commission hosted a [virtual conference on Street Takeovers](#) to discuss measures to manage and eliminate street takeovers. The Commission accepted [written public comments](#) and took live questions. More than 125 people attended the conference and dozens more called in or watched the livestream.

Panelists discussed the impact that street racing and takeovers has on Los Angeles County, including:

- More than 3,000 calls for service associated with street takeovers in less than two years,
- Limitations in addressing street takeovers,
- The toll it takes on family members who have lost loved ones during street takeovers,
- Efforts to address street takeovers such as impounding vehicles and making arrests; and
- Legislation aimed to eliminate street takeovers with [Assembly Bill 2546](#) and [Senate Bill 1472](#).





Executive Director Brian Williams provided opening remarks, and the event was moderated by Commissioner Irma Hagans Cooper. Speakers included California Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian, Sheriff's Department Sergeant Michael Downing, California Highway Patrol Officer Chris Baldonado and Street Racing Kills Executive Director Lili Trujillo.



*Photo above: March 24 Budget Conference.*

#### [L.A. County Sheriff's Department Budget Conference](#)

On March 24, the Commission hosted a [conference](#) to discuss the Sheriff's Department's budget. County leaders, law enforcement professionals, and community partners discussed the County's budget process and the Sheriff's Department budget priorities and unmet needs for Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

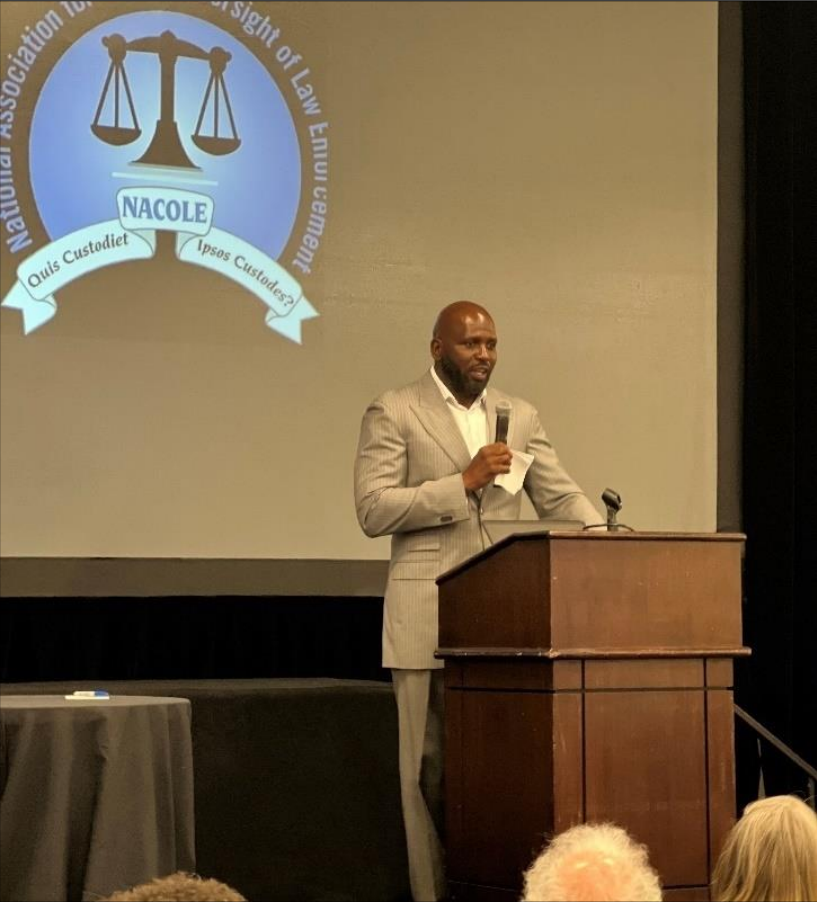
Commission Chair Sean Kennedy provided opening remarks, and the event was moderated by Commissioner James Harris. Speakers included CEO Senior Manager Sheila Williams, who explained the County's Budget Cycle; Sheriff's Department Administration Services Bureau Division Director Conrad Meredith discussed the Department's budget challenges; and Dignity and Power Now's Policy Advocacy Director Ivette Alé highlighted AB 109, Sheriff's Department public relations, and electronic monitoring.

#### Other Engagement

The Commission also participated in several additional events including Supervisor Holly Mitchell's Juneteenth celebration, the annual Taste of Soul festival and Supervisor Hilda Solis' resource fair next to the Inmate Reception Center.



*Photo above: Staff Tracy Jordan at the informational table at the Taste of Soul on October 19.*



*Photo above: Executive Director Brian Williams welcomes the NACOLE Conference keynote speaker on September 13.*

## NACOLE Conference

The 28<sup>th</sup> annual National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement ([NACOLE](#)) conference brought together civilian oversight practitioners, community members, law enforcement professionals, academics, journalists, and others to exchange information and ideas about issues facing civilian oversight and law enforcement. Over the past several years, the Commission has participated in the conference by attending as participants and hosting sessions.

*Photo below: NACOLE Conference session on September 12.*



The Commission developed and presented five sessions that provided a space for oversight professionals and other stakeholders to discuss:

- Addressing White Supremacy and Extremism in Law Enforcement
- Leadership Roundtable: Looking at the Issues Facing Civilian Oversight Executives
- Maximizing your Agency's Potential Through Media Relations
- The Challenge of Prosecuting Police
- The Cost of Police Misconduct

Four Commission staff and three Commissioners attended the five-day conference in September at the Worthington Renaissance Hotel in Fort Worth, Texas.

## Complaints and Commendations

Members of the public make complaints concerning the Sheriff's Department to the Commission via email, telephone, in person, or by mail. The Commission also hears complaints and commendations during public meetings and town halls.

Complaints received by the Commission are forwarded to the OIG, who then forwards them to the Sheriff's Department for investigation.

The OIG can investigate specific instances only in special circumstances, and they have the authority to undertake an inquiry and audit or monitor the investigation. Anonymous complaints are more difficult to investigate, however, they are treated with the same importance.



## Looking forward

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission continued to host primarily virtual meetings throughout the year. As we move into 2023, the Commission continues to focus on improving transparency and accountability within the Sheriff's Department. The Commission has restructured its ad hoc committees to focus on the Sheriff's Department budget, jail conditions, deputy gangs, the disciplinary process, quality of life issues, subpoenas and resolutions, technology, and use of force. The ad hoc committees receive public feedback and conduct research to prepare reports with recommendations to the Sheriff's Department, the Board, and the public. Commission staff monitor the Sheriff's Department's progress in implementing the Commission's recommendations.

We look forward to working with the Sheriff's Department administration and to help build bridges to increase engagement. The values and needs of the public are at the core of effective oversight, and the Commission will continue to offer community engagement opportunities through meetings, conferences, and town halls.

## Acknowledgements

As we work to bring effective oversight to the Sheriff's Department, none of this would be possible without the continued engagement from the dedicated residents of Los Angeles County. We appreciate the calls, emails, one-on-one meetings, and comments at public meetings. We are thankful for the support of the Board of Supervisors, the Executive Office, and many County departments.

Moreover, I want to thank each member of the Commission for your dedication, hard work, and constant desire to simply *do the right thing*. Collectively, we continue to work toward reforming the Sheriff's Department. I believe we can and will make a difference!

A special thank you to Los Angeles County Supervisors Hilda Solis, Holly Mitchell, Sheila Kuehl, Lindsey Horvath, Janice Hahn, and Kathryn Barger. Thank you to Executive Officer Celia Zavala and the Executive Office staff for their assistance. We appreciate your ongoing support.



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