



# 2024

## ANNUAL REPORT



**Los Angeles County**  
SHERIFF CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT COMMISSION



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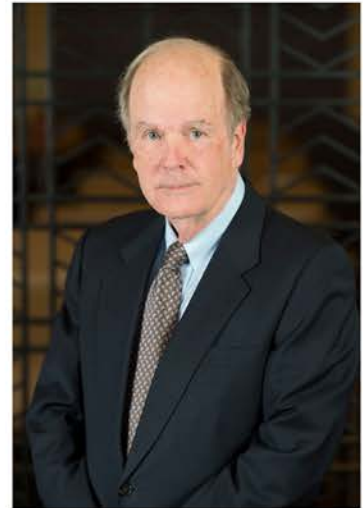
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## A Message from the Chair

The mission of the Civilian Oversight Commission (Commission) is simple and straightforward: providing independent civilian oversight of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and making our oversight as effective as possible to improve the Department and build public trust.

In our eight years of existence, the Commission has made important recommendations for improvement of the Department in its interactions with the public, and 2024 was no exception. Many of our recommendations have been adopted by the Sheriff. Moreover, we have continued to use the Commission's Measure R subpoena power to investigate, including conducting public hearings in 2024 that exposed the abuse of power by the former Sheriff who set up a rogue unit to investigate and intimidate those with oversight authority or who simply dared criticize him. This must never be allowed to happen again.

In the space of only a decade, civilian oversight of law enforcement has gone from being relatively rare to now something that is common, at least with respect to the larger police and sheriff's departments. The benefits of civilian oversight are clear. It helps professionalize the Sheriff's Department's sworn personnel, fosters constitutional policing, reduces liability of the County resulting from deputy misconduct, and helps build public trust in the Sheriff's Department. But these benefits can be fully realized only if the Commission is able to provide effective and independent oversight.

Without independence, oversight commissions risk becoming symbolic, mere window dressing. We believe that from the beginning of the Commission in late 2016,



the Board of Supervisors, which created the Commission, wanted the Commission to provide independent oversight. The independence of the Commission was underscored by County voters when, in March 2020, they overwhelmingly passed Measure R which explicitly gave the Commission independent authority to subpoena witnesses and documents in furtherance of its mission.

To be fully effective, the Commission must be able to access confidential records of the Sheriff's Department. Indeed, our Measure R subpoena power is meaningless without such access. Some oversight commissions can access and review confidential information relating to the conduct of law enforcement officers, which is absolutely necessary for oversight to be effective. However, our Commission has been unable to do so -- not because the Sheriff is unwilling, but because he has not been cleared to do so by County Counsel. In essence, the Sheriff believes that he might be violating state law in absence of a legal opinion from County Counsel that he may provide such access. Needless to say, the Commission's inability to access unredacted death review reports of people who have died in jail as well as closed investigations involving allegations of use of out-of-policy force or participation in deputy gangs has severely hobbled our commission's ability to provide effective oversight over the department we are charged with overseeing.

It is the worst of all possible worlds: Being mandated with doing something but denied the tools to do it.

For this reason, in September of 2024, the Commission proposed several revisions to Chapter 3.79 of the County Code to the Board of Supervisors to update the Commission's governing ordinance and bring it in line with best practices for law enforcement oversight commissions. Importantly, these revisions provide a legal framework for the Commission to access confidential Sheriff's Department reports. They also clarify that the Commission is expected to provide independent oversight of the Department. We hope to be able to report in our next Annual Report that the Board adopted the Commission's proposed revisions. Stay tuned.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert C. Bonner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Robert Bonner, Chair  
Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission



# Members of the Commission

The Commission is composed of nine members 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.

Their diverse backgrounds reflect a broad range of experiences. Commission members include a mental health advocate, registered army nurse, US Air Force veteran, nonprofit executive, retired law enforcement professional, former federal judge, and attorneys. Their biographies are posted on the Commission's website at [coc.lacounty.gov/commissioners-and-staff](http://coc.lacounty.gov/commissioners-and-staff).

On June 20, 2024, the Commission presented the Slate of Nominations for Commissioners to serve as officers during the incoming year. On July 18, 2024, the Commission elected Robert C. Bonner as Chair and Luis S. Garcia and Hans Johnson as Co-Chairs to serve a term from July 2024 to July 2025.



**Robert C. Bonner**  
Chair



**Luis S. Garcia**  
Co-Vice Chair



**Hans Johnson**  
Co-Vice Chair



**Arthur Calloway**



**Irma Cooper**



**Patti Giggans**



**Jamon R. Hicks**



**James P. Harris**



**Sean Kennedy**

# Commission Staff

The Commission is supported by nine staff members that assist in the management and administration of program operations and provides administrative support to the Commission. The Commission is supported by Executive Directive Sharmaine Moseley, who was appointed by the BOS in November 2023.

In 2024, the County hired the Commission's first Deputy Executive Director Bikila Ochoa. Support of the Commission includes planning and coordinating Commission meetings, conferences, town halls, events, and hosting trainings intended to engage the public and hear community feedback. Learn more about the staff at: <https://coc.lacounty.gov/commissioners-and-staff>



**Sharmaine Moseley**  
Executive Director



**Bikila Ochoa**  
Deputy Executive Director



**Christina Villacorte**  
Communications  
Manager



**Tracy Jordan**  
Principal  
Staff Analyst



**Robert Flores**  
Community Services  
Coordinator



**Nune Petrosyan**  
Management Analyst



**Ingrid Williams**  
Management Analyst



**Starlet Atkins**  
Management Secretary



**Vacant**  
Senior Staff Analyst



# Introduction



**Board of Supervisors in 2024 (L-R):**

Janice Hahn, Hilda Solis, Lindsey Horvath,  
Kathryn Barger, Holly Mitchell

Under [Los Angeles County Code 3.79](#), the Los Angeles County Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission was created by the Board of Supervisors (Board) on November 9, 2016, to improve public transparency and accountability with respect to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) by providing robust opportunities for community engagement, ongoing analysis and oversight of the department's policies, practices, procedures, and advice to the Board of Supervisors, the LASD and the public.

In 2024, the Board took action to ensure public safety and provide resources to community members through the following motions:

- [Community Safety: Updates on Addressing Illegal Street Takeovers, Side Shows, and Street Races \(Mitchell and Solis, July 9, 2024\)](#)
- [People Over Profit: Fairness and Equity in Commissary Prices for the Los Angeles County Jails \(Horvath and Solis, July 9, 2024\)](#)
- [Conditions at Men's Central Jail and County's Commitment to Care \(Horvath and Solis, June 25, 2024\)](#)
- [Menstrual Products in L.A. County Jails, Patrol Lockups, and Court Holding Tanks \(Solis and Hahn, June 25, 2024\)](#)
- [Updates on Addressing Street Takeovers \(Solis and Mitchell, July 9, 2024\)](#)
- [Proper Maintenance of Cameras in the L.A. County Jails, Patrol Lockups, and Court Holding Tanks \(Solis and Hahn, June 4, 2024\)](#)
- [Prison Rape Elimination Act \(PREA\): Building Connected Communities \(Solis and Horvath, March 19, 2024\)](#)
- [Industry Indians Investigation and Outcome of Deputy Gangs \(Solis, January 23, 2024\)](#)



## History of the Commission

On November 9, 2016, the Board enacted an ordinance creating the Commission which is codified in Chapter 3.79. Shortly thereafter, the first nine Commissioners were appointed, and the Commission's oversight of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department started with its first public meeting in January 2017.

The Commission provides oversight of the nation's largest Sheriff's Department with nearly 18,000 employees who provide service to 42 incorporated cities, 141 unincorporated communities, courthouse security, and the County jails.

From the beginning, the primary mission has been to identify, with the help of the public and subject matter experts, systemic issues within the Department and develop sound and thoughtful recommendations to the Sheriff regarding changes in policies and procedures to eliminate them. Many of these recommendations have been adopted by the Sheriff to provide for better policy and better operation.

Although it has had limitations, the Commission also has strived to improve transparency and attempted to assure that the Sheriff's Department and its personnel are held accountable for misconduct in their interactions with the public. In addition, the Commission's public hearings and town halls have provided opportunities for the public to voice concerns about how their communities are policed and the treatment of inmates in the County Jail.





## **Civilian Oversight Principles**

According to the National Association for Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) there are 13 Principles for Effective Civilian Oversight. The principles consist of, but are not limited to:

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

The NACOLE principles represent best practices for civilian oversight of law enforcement. To the extent possible under our current ordinance, the Commission has attempted to operate according to these principles.

The Commission continues to support public safety in our neighborhoods and strives to balance the need for public safety with the principles of constitutional policing and protecting the civil rights of vulnerable populations. Commissioners and staff embrace the diversity of the County and encourage communication and relationship building between the Sheriff and members of the Sheriff's Department and our communities. Part of our mission is ongoing engagement with stakeholders to develop continuous support and trust. This is helpful when it comes to disagreements, problem-solving and collaboration with stakeholders. These are some of the essential components of effective oversight.

## **Commission Mission**

The mission of the Commission is to provide independent and effective civilian oversight of the Sheriff's Department. A key component of effective oversight is the Commission's capacity to study, investigate, and make recommendations about the Sheriff's Department's policies and procedures, especially regarding systemic issues that have an adverse impact on the community.

The Commission also works to facilitate public transparency and accountability with respect to the Sheriff's Department and provides ongoing review, analysis, and oversight of its 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 collaborating with the Sheriff's Department and creating a safe space for public involvement, which is why the Commission provides many opportunities for robust community engagement.

### **County Code Chapter 3.79**

The Commission is a hybrid civilian oversight model. The County Code of Ordinances Chapter 3.79 provides the Commission with several duties and responsibilities including:

- Provide reports and make recommendations for the improvement of policies and procedures of the Sheriff's Department affecting the community and request a response from the Sheriff.
- Work with the Sheriff, the Board and other stakeholders to see that the Commission's recommendations are implemented.
- Investigate [through the Office of Inspector General (OIG), or through its own staff], analyze, and make recommendations to the Board and Sheriff on systemic Sheriff-related issues or complaints affecting the community.
- Review policy recommendations made by outside entities at the request of the Board or recommendations made in other reports that in the judgement of the Commission merit analysis.
- Monitor settlements only at the request of the Board or the Sheriff.
- Serve as liaison and mediator at the request of the Board, the Sheriff, and/or community groups to help resolve ongoing disputes between the Sheriff's Department and members of the community.
- Obtain community input and feedback on specific incidents involving the use of force, detention conditions, or other civil rights concerns regarding the Sheriff's Department.
- Work with the OIG in soliciting community input on issues the OIG is investigating itself or at the request of the Commission.
- Function as a bridge between the LASD and the community by providing an additional means of giving input to the Sheriff and obtaining answers from the Sheriff to community concerns about the Sheriff's Department's operations, practices and activities.
- Seek the Sheriff's input prior to completing any of its recommendations.
- Evaluate the OIG's responsiveness to Commission requests.
- Advise and make recommendations to the Sheriff and the Board, understanding that the Commission lacks authority to manage or operate the Sheriff's Department or direct the actions of the Sheriff.



## Strategic Plan

In 2024, the Commission adopted its first strategic plan under the leadership of its new Executive Director. At its January 18, 2024 meeting, the Commission formally adopted the strategic plan which included defined objectives and measurable results to guide the work of the Commission and staff. The plan outlined a clear path to achieve the Commission's priorities by structuring it around three main goals:

- Goal 1: Advocate for policy updates that encourage fair and unbiased policing and ensure the safety of all parties.
- Goal 2: Restructure/Strengthen Civilian Oversight in LA County to be viewed as a National Model
- Goal 3: Build relationships with community members, by hosting effective community engagement events, attending public meetings, and receiving community feedback.

This report highlights the many objectives, initiatives, and activities the Commission has undertaken in alignment with these goals and serves as a benchmark for accountability and progress moving forward. Also listed are the accomplishments of the Commission during this period.

At its December 19, 2024, meeting, the Commission adopted its updated strategic plan and more closely aligned it with priority goals for 2025 for its ad hoc committees.

## Commission Budget

In 2024, the Commission had a net County cost of \$2.03 million with nine budgeted staff positions. During this year, Commission staff struggled to meet the needs of the Commission due to continuous staff leaves and vacancies. As the year progressed, Commission staff were able to exchange a vacant Senior Paralegal position in the operation for a Community Services Coordinator position, which was more conducive to the business needs stated in County Ordinance 3.79. Near the end of the year, Commission staff was able to hire a new Communications Manager, Community Services Coordinator, and a temporary analyst.

In 2024, Commission staff developed its operation budget request. During the process of developing the budget request, Commission staff determined that the Commission had seen an ongoing increase in its legal services cost over several years and did not have a line item in its budget for such cost. As a result, Commission staff included a request for a "Legal Services Line Item" in the Commission's budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26. Staff also requested an additional Principal Staff Analyst, two Senior Staff Analysts, one Staff Analyst position to support the Commission's Ad Hoc Committees and an increase for security, training, and travel.



# Key Recommendations

## Recommendations Regarding Deputy Gangs and Cliques

Since its formation, the Commission has been studying the issue of deputy gangs within the Sheriff's Department. At its March 3, 2023 Special Hearing, the Commission unanimously approved a Report on Deputy Gangs and Deputy Cliques and adopted all 27 recommendations (listed on the next page). This report was the product of an investigation led by Special Counsel to the Commission and a team of pro bono attorneys. To support the investigation, the Commission hosted a total of eight special hearings that included witness testimony and public comments. The Special Counsel's team also interviewed nearly 80 anonymous witnesses. The report and recommendations were sent to Sheriff Robert Luna and the Board of Supervisors for consideration. It included findings that:

- Confirmed the existence of deputy gangs/cliques and provided an overview; Identified current gangs/cliques and illustrated the impact they have on the community and the LASD;
- Found that all deputy gangs evolved from deputy cliques;
- Confirmed that eliminating unauthorized, exclusionary subgroups is constitutionally permissible; and
- Provided 27 recommendations to eradicate deputy gangs and cliques, which fell under the categories of leadership and supervision, policy and training, redeployments and rotations, and accountability.

On January 12, 2024, the Commission held a special hearing on deputy gangs where testimony was taken from former Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva after legal action by the Commission to enforce its subpoena and require his attendance. At its regular Commission meeting on March 13, 2024, the topic was discussed again. Throughout the year, the Deputy Gangs Ad Hoc Committee continued to collaborate with the Sheriff's Department urging that all 27 recommendations be swiftly implemented. At its October 24, 2024, Commission meeting, the Sheriff's Department leadership advised that a self-assessment chart was developed to address the recommendations and that a copy of the chart had been provided to both the Commission and the OIG.

Goal #1 of the Commission's Strategic Plan included objectives to eliminate deputy gangs/cliques in the Sheriff's Department and decrease excessive uses of force. In 2024, the Sheriff adopted recommendations that were previously made by the Commission in both areas. The Sheriff's Department fully implemented new policies which included a policy prohibiting participation in deputy gangs as defined in Penal Code section 13670; engage labor unions (ALADS, PPOA) to support policies on deputy gangs/cliques; and hold community meetings to ascertain the impact of deputy gangs/cliques on the public and public trust in the Department. The table on the next page provides a glimpse of the status of each recommendation as it relates to deputy gangs/cliques.



<b>DEPUTY GANGS &amp; CLIQUES</b> On March 3, 2023, the Commission adopted <a href="#">27 recommendations</a> . Those in red were fully or significantly implemented in 2024.		
	<b>Recommendation</b>	Status as of 2024
1	The Sheriff must clearly state his vision of deputy gangs/cliques.	Partially Implemented
2	Adopt a policy prohibiting participation in deputy gangs as defined in Penal Code section 13670.	Fully Implemented
3	Adopt a policy prohibiting joining or participating in deputy cliques.	Not Implemented
4	Develop a department-wide initiative to eliminate deputy gangs/cliques.	Partially Implemented
5	Engage labor unions (ALADS, PPOA) to support policies on deputy gangs/cliques.	Fully Implemented
6	Ensure that captains and senior executives support and implement the Sheriff's vision on deputy gangs/cliques.	Partially Implemented
7	Assign two Captains to 6 patrol stations with a history of active deputy cliques, such as the Banditos, Executioners, Cowboys, Regulators and Reapers.	Partially Implemented
8	The Sheriff should implement a clear policy to eliminate deputy cliques and deputy gangs; prohibit future use of deputy tattoos that are clique-related or depict violence.	Not Implemented
9	Investigate violations of policies banning participating in deputy gangs/cliques and refer violations for disciplinary action.	Partially Implemented
10	Department Leadership should emphasize the adverse career consequences of joining deputy gangs/cliques.	Partially Implemented
11	Notify the District Attorney's Office when a deputy involved in a case is linked to deputy gangs/cliques.	Partially Implemented
12	Actively investigate violation of policy banning participation in deputy gangs/cliques.	Partially Implemented
13	Train supervisors to mentor deputies on the dangers of deputy gangs/cliques.	Partially Implemented
14	Hold community meetings to ascertain the impact of deputy gangs/cliques on the public and public trust in the Department.	Fully Implemented



15	Rotate deputies to prevent the formation of deputy gangs/cliques.	Not Implemented
16	Assess dual career track for Custody/Court services and provide report back	Not Implemented
17	Assess the feasibility of not requiring the first assignment of a new deputy to Custody	Not Implemented
18	Ensure senior executives, Captains and above, are implementing the Sheriff's policy, vision and goals regarding deputy gangs/cliques	Partially Implemented
19	The OIG should monitor implementation of the COC's recommended policies banning participation in deputy gangs/cliques	Partially Implemented by OIG (not applicable to LASD)
20	Consider present and former deputy gang/clique involvement in making promotions	Partially Implemented
21	Develop a standard set of questions regarding a deputy's current affiliations in force reviews and internal investigations	Partially Implemented
22	Ensure captains are notified when deputies involved in force incidents have deputy gang/clique affiliations.	Partially Implemented
23	Implement the Comp/Stat (SCIF) process to risk management for indicators of deputy gangs/cliques within patrol stations.	Partially Implemented
24	Ensure that captains hold lieutenants and sergeants accountable for deputies under their supervision that are involved in deputy gangs/cliques.	Partially Implemented
25	Ensure that sergeants actively and recurrently mentor deputies regarding policies prohibiting joining and participating in deputy gangs/cliques.	Partially Implemented
26	Flatten the chain of command for better oversight.	Partially Implemented
27	Make prohibition on joining deputy gangs/cliques a condition of employment.	Fully Implemented



## Recommendations Regarding Use of Force Policies

For some time, there has been a significant lag between the Commission's policy recommendations and their adoption by the LASD. This was the case regarding important use of force policy recommendations made by the Commission's Use of Force Ad Hoc Committee and adopted by the Commission on June 15, 2020.

USE OF FORCE		
On June 15, 2020, the Commission adopted the below recommendations which were among <u>18 recommendations</u> adopted by the Commission in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd. The four COC recommendations listed below were implemented by Sheriff Luna on July 19, 2024, after a lengthy meet and confer process with ALADS.		
	Recommendation	Status
1	<i>Immediately</i> assure that Use of Force policy clearly and unequivocally prohibits chokeholds and other restraints on the carotid artery by whatever means and assure that this prohibition is immediately made part of Deputy training.	Implemented in 2024. See <a href="#">LASD Manual of Policy &amp; Procedures (MPP) Section 3-10/025.00</a>
2	<i>Immediately</i> make clear in policy that a deputy witnessing excessive or unnecessary force being used by another deputy has an affirmative duty to intervene and attempt to stop such use of force.	Implemented in 2024. See <a href="#">MPP Section 3-10/030.00</a>
3	<i>Immediately</i> require de-escalation before resorting to use of lethal force [unless it is objectively impossible to de-escalate before using such force.]	Implemented in 2024. See <a href="#">MPP Section 3-10/009.00</a>
11	Assure that the Table of Discipline provides for termination of any deputy determined to have used unnecessary, excessive or out-of-policy use of force and similarly for any deputy who takes no action to prevent it, and /or does not promptly or accurately report the same.	Implemented as of 2024. See LASD Guidelines for Discipline



## **Key Actions and Areas Reviewed**

### **Public Corruption Unit**

At an October 11, 2024, Special Hearing, the Commission investigated the use of a now defunct squad created by former Sheriff Alex Villanueva's "Public Corruption Unit." Two witnesses were subpoenaed by the Commission and testified at the hearing: former LASD Detective Mark Lillienfeld and LASD sergeant Max Fernandez. The Commission heard evidence that the Public Corruption Unit was a unit of deputy sheriffs that Villanueva used to investigate oversight officials and others who criticized his running of the LASD.

This, as well as other Special Hearings of the Commission, illustrate the importance of Commission Special Hearings for focusing on serious and systemic issues within LASD.

### **LASD Budget FY 2024-25**

Commission Report issued March 2024

### **Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA)**

Commission Report issued April 2024

### **Other Actions**

- **Six new Commission Ad Hoc Committees created:**
  - **Complaints Ad Hoc** created with the primary purpose to review, study, analyze, and evaluate LASD's policies, procedures, and practices for handling external (citizen/resident) complaints related to the conduct of LASD personnel as well as examine the best practices of other law enforcement agencies regarding the handling of external complaints, and recommend any changes in policies or procedures needed to improve the LASD complaint process. (12/2024)
  - **Jail Staffing Ad Hoc** created to study the ideal ratio of deputies to custody assistants and make any appropriate recommendations to the Sheriff regarding jail staffing. (10/2024)
  - **Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Ad Hoc** was reestablished to complete the Commission's response to the Board of Supervisors' 3/19/2024 motion on behalf of the Commission. (6/2024)
  - **Nominating Committee Ad Hoc** was created to start the process for election of new officers on the Commission. (5/2024)



- **Rules/Procedures (Governance) Ad Hoc** was created to review, analyze, and make recommendations for procedures that will shape the Commission, as well as revisions to the County Ordinance. (3/2024). This Ad Hoc Committee has been reconstituted as the Governance Ad Hoc Committee.
  - **Interview Panel Ad Hoc** was created to participate in the interview process to fill the at-large Commission vacancy position on the Commission. (3/2024)
- **Two Ad Hoc Committees dissolved:**
  - **Interview Panel Ad Hoc** was created to participate in the interview process to fill the at-large Commission vacancy position on the Commission. (9/2024)
  - **Nominating Committee Ad Hoc** was dissolved after fulfilling its duties related to the process for election of new officers on the Commission. (7/2024)
- **Issuance and ratification of subpoenas to appear before the Commission:**
  - Former LASD Sheriff Alex Villanueva was subpoenaed to appear at the Commission's Special Hearing on deputy gangs in March 2024.
  - LASD Sergeant Max Fernandez was subpoenaed to appear and provide testimony at the Commission's October 2024 Special Hearing related to the now dissolved Public Corruptions Unit of the Sheriff's Department.
  - Former LASD Detective Mark Lillienfeld was also subpoenaed to appear and provide testimony at the Commission's Special Hearing in October 2024.
- **Trainings Attended**
  - Commissioners attended conferences, webinars, and trainings hosted by the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE), including but not limited to: Subcultures in Policing: Features and Implications; Firearms 201 with Doc Whetsone; Using Data and Collaboration to Drive Innovative Change; Using the Intersection of Policing and Social Justice to Strengthen Stakeholder Relationships, and more
  - Educational presentations and webinars during the Commission's public meetings included, but are not limited to the following topics, Conditions of Confinement; Family Assistance Program, PREA Compliance, LASD Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST), and new laws impacting LASD public safety services
  - The Commission's ad hoc committees participated in presentations, demonstrations, and facility tours provided by subject matter experts. In 2024, the topics included but were not limited to K-9s and drones.
  - The Commission approved a Training Program for New Commissioners, which is currently in development.



# Additional Areas of Review

## Proposed Revisions to Chapter 3.79 of the County Code

The Commission was created in Los Angeles County Code Chapter 3.79 in 2016 to provide effective oversight of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Since the Commission was established, the role of civilian oversight of law enforcement organizations has evolved and expanded across California and the nation. This has led to granting oversight bodies subpoena power, and a clear understanding that oversight includes both the authority to access needed information and the ability to independently investigate and address systemic issues within law enforcement organizations such as the LASD. Since its inception, the Commission has struggled with complying with its mandates to provide effective oversight of the Sheriff's Department. Even with the passage of Measure R in 2020, by the voters, the Commission still lacks the ability to subpoena confidential reports of the Sheriff's Department.

On September 19, 2024, the Commission unanimously voted to adopt proposed revisions to Chapter 3.79 of the County Code and directed the Executive Director of the Commission to promptly forward the proposed revised ordinance to the Board of Supervisors through the Executive Officer of the Board. The principal changes to the Commission's governing ordinance include:

- Clarifying that the Board, consistent with NACOLE principles, expects the Commission to provide independent oversight of the Sheriff's Department.
- Clarifying that the Commission can generally comment on levels or absence of discipline, but not comment or discuss discipline in specific cases.
- Authorizing the Commission and its staff to conduct inspections, including unannounced inspections, of Los Angeles County jail facilities.
- Removing problematic and incorrect language regarding the Brown Act that County Counsel interprets as prohibiting the Commission from going into closed session.
- If the Sheriff does not adopt a recommendation of the Commission, he would be required to state his reasons for not doing so in writing within 60 days of the Commission's recommendation.

Although the Commission's proposed revisions cover more than access to confidential LASD reports, they include a revision, negotiated and agreed to by County Counsel, that will make it possible for the court or the state Legislature to determine whether the Commission can go into closed session to receive subpoenaed LASD reports. The Chair of the Commission, Robert C. Bonner, has stated, "The Civilian Oversight Commission cannot perform its oversight role without access to confidential information, which is currently denied to the Commission. To be truly effective, the independence of the Civilian Oversight Commission needs to be made clear, and we must have access to confidential information."



The Commission strongly believes that access to confidential LASD information is key to its ability to provide effective oversight of the department and being responsive to the needs of the community and other stakeholders. This is one of the 13 principles of meaningful and effective civilian oversight of law enforcement established by NACOLE. Unfortunately, the Commission has not yet gained access to necessary confidential information or documents, particularly force reports and internal investigations, which has hampered the Commission's ability to meet its mandates.

The Commission drafted a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Sheriff's Department and the Commission allowing Ad Hoc Committees of the Commission to receive confidential documents, reports and information and submitted it to the Sheriff in August 2024. The MOU has been reviewed by County Counsel.

### **Sheriff's Department Jails**

The LASD is responsible for the care, custody, and security of people incarcerated in County jails. The Commission is also responsible for providing oversight of county jails. The Commission continues to receive complaints about jail conditions from the public, community organizations, OIG, and the L.A. County Sybil Brand Commission for Institutional Inspections. Throughout the year, several Commissioners visited various County jails and toured locations to observe jail town halls.

At its January 18, 2024 Commission meeting, Commission staff presented their update on LASD Jail Conditions of Confinement Quarter 3 Report. The report focused on jail overcrowding, inmate grievances, in-custody deaths, treatment of pregnant inmates, and communicable diseases. Also, at its April 18, 2024, meeting, the Commission presented their update on Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA). This report focused on PREA standards, OIG audits of LASD facilities, and LASD compliance with PREA standards and requests that the LASD provide a status report back to the Commission with a listing of all PREA policies, a listing of all PREA education curricula for incarcerated individuals, conduct facility self-assessments; report back with a breakdown of a staff model for the PREA Bureau; and revise the Quarterly and Annual reports, among other things.

### **Harassment of Grieving Families**

Over the last several years, there have been several reports of deputies harassing family members of people killed by LASD personnel. On January 16, 2024, the Commission requested that the OIG assist with determining whether complaints of harassment of families by LASD personnel have been investigated by the department. On March 18, 2024, the OIG produced a report to the Commission addressing the issue with recommendations. Commissioners continue to collaborate with the LASD to implement a policy to address the issue.



## **Sheriff's Department Budget**

The Commission hosted a virtual conference on February 8, 2024, regarding the LASD's budget to educate the community. At its March 13, 2024, meeting, an LASD representative discussed the department's budget priorities and challenges. The Commissioners adopted its staff's report on LASD Budget Priorities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-2025, requesting that the Sheriff's Department continue to provide and publicly post on its website the written Budget Status Report and provide copies to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Board and the Commission; and that the CEO and Board approve select LASD FY2024-25 Budget Priorities and Unmet Needs. The Commission continued to monitor and evaluate the Department's budget requests and funding.

## **Family Assistance Program**

The Family Assistance Program (FAP), sparked by the Commission's 2018 report, is designed to provide trauma-informed support to families whose loved ones were killed by or died in the custody of LASD personnel. At the March 13, 2024, Commission meeting, speakers from the Department of Public Health Office of Violence Prevention and LASD, shared an update on their efforts towards implementation of the permanent FAP program.

## **Incidents in the Antelope Valley**

The Commission regularly hears public complaints from Antelope Valley residents about alleged mistreatment from Sheriff's deputies, despite the settlement agreement between the LASD and the US Department of Justice. At its March 13, 2024, Commission meeting, the Commission's Executive Director discussed efforts of Commission staff to attend Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings in Lancaster and Palmdale for community engagement. The Commission looks forward to continued community engagement and updates from the LASD on a continuous basis and not only when significant incidents occur.

## **Drone Pilot Program**

At its May 18, 2023 Commission meeting, LASD representatives requested to present a deployment proposal for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), commonly referred to as drones. They advised that the drone pilot program was currently being tested in Malibu, Lancaster and West Hollywood, and would be in effect for approximately one year. At the June 20, 2024, Commission meeting, the Commission's Technology Ad Hoc Committee provided an update on its meeting with LASD staff on May 20, 2024. They met to learn more about how the department anticipates the use of drones at different LASD stations. Commission staff continued to receive information about the LASD expansion of its drone program and provided updates to the Commission.



# Commission Meetings and Educational Opportunities

## Commission Regular Meetings

Community input into LASD policies, practices and procedures is an important element of Commission oversight of the LASD, and key to improving transparency and accountability. Commission meetings provide an opportunity for the public to give community feedback and may also provide direction on issues the Commission evaluates. In 2024, meetings were held in person with a virtual component that allowed for remote public comment through a computer or via phone. All meetings continued to be streamed on Facebook Live and videos are posted to YouTube immediately following the meetings. Commission meetings are publicized through email notifications, social media posts, and on the Commission's website. In 2024, Commission regular meetings were held at St. Anne's Conference Center on the third Thursday of each month from 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., except in August when the Commission does not meet. In 2024, the Commission's February 15, 2024, meeting was canceled due to lack of quorum.

## Commission Collaborative Meetings

For the first time, the Commission hosted and participated in two joint hybrid meetings with other County Oversight Commissions in 2024.

- On June 27, 2024, the Commission hosted a joint hybrid meeting with the Probation Oversight Commission at Earvin "Magic" Johnson Recreation Area on the following topics:
  - "School Resource Deputy (SRD) complaint process"
    - "Research, Analysis, and Recommendations from COC"
    - "Overview of SRD Complaint Process"
  - Discussion on the proposed process for the Probation Oversight Commission to receive and refer complaints about Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) School Resource Deputies (SRD) to LASD and track those complaints to share trends with the Board of Supervisors and the public".
  - "LASD Complaint Process"
- On September 26, 2024, the Commission appeared as special guests at the Sybil Brand Commission's Meeting on September 26, 2024, at Earvin "Magic" Johnson Recreation Area on the following topics:
  - "Presentation on the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) Employee Media, Video and Social Media Use - Policies, Procedures and Discipline in the Jails"
    - "Overview of Forms of Employee Media and Video Use in the Jails"
    - "Overview of Policies, Procedures and Discipline associated with Media, Video and Social Media Use"



## **Educational Opportunities**

The Commission collaborated with various County agencies and community partners to provide educational opportunities during Commission meetings and other settings. During 2024, the Commission and attendees received educational presentations from the following:

- **Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD):**
  - LASD Custody Inmate Grievance Form (11/2024)
  - Two-Captain Model (11/2024)
  - LASD Conditions of Confinement 2024 Quarter Two Report with emphasis on communicable disease among incarcerated individuals (10/2024)
  - Homeless Outreach Services Team (HOST) (9/2024)
  - LASD Use of Force Policy (9/2024)
  - Report Back to the Board of Supervisors on the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Status in the LASD County Jails (7/2024)
  - Complaints on Sworn Personnel Dashboard (6/2024)
  - New Laws Impacting LASD public safety services, including Assembly Bill 2773 and Senate Bill 400 (5/2024)
  - LASD Update on Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) (4/2024)
  - LASD on status of implementation of the Commission's Initial Family Assistance Program (FAP) Recommendation (3/2024)
  - LASD Budget Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 (3/2024)
- **Los Angeles County Office of Inspector General (OIG):**
  - Quarterly Reform and Oversight of LASD July to September 2024 (12/2024)
  - Report back on Transparency & Accountability: Proper Maintenance and Accounting for All Cameras in Los Angeles County Jails, Court Holding Tanks and Patrol Station Lockups (11/2024)
  - Overview of OIG's complaint process received from the public and inmate grievances (11/2024)
  - Quarterly Reform and Oversight Efforts of LASD April 2024 to June 2024 (9/2024)
  - LASD Report Writing (6/2024)
  - OIG Presentation on Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) (4/2024)
  - Third Semi-Annual Report on Meeting the Sheriff's Department's Obligations Under Senate Bill 1421 (3/2024)
- **Commission Presentations:**
  - Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Update Staff Report (4/2024)
  - LASD Budget FY2024-25 Staff Report (3/2024)
  - Update on LASD Jail Conditions of Confinement Quarter 3 Report (1/2024)
- **Other County Entities:**
  - Department of Public Health (DPH) Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) Family Assistance Program (FAP) Update Report (3/2024)



- **Community Presentations:**
    - Dignity & Power Now (DPN) on LASD Report Writing (5/2024)
    - Just Detention International (JDI) on PREA (4/2024)
  - **National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE):**
    - Subcultures in Policing: Features and Implications
    - Firearms 201 with Doc Whetsone
    - Using Data and Collaboration to Drive Innovative Change
    - Using the Intersection of Policing and Social Justice to Strengthen Stakeholder Relationships
    - 2024 Webinar Series: Building
- 

## YEAR IN REVIEW 2024 BY THE NUMBERS

Although one of the most important metrics for the Commission is the number of recommendations made and implemented by the Sheriff's Department, other metrics show clearly how active the Commission and its staff were in 2024.

### Commission Meetings

- 10 meetings
- 878 attendees (in person and virtually)
- 155 public comments

### Special Hearings on Deputy Gangs

- 2 special hearings on deputy gangs
- 1 special hearing regarding former LASD Sheriff Alex Villanueva's Public Corruption Unit
- 787 attendees at special hearings (in-person and virtually)
- 21 public comments

### Community Engagement

- 2,764 attendees at various events
- 1 virtual conference on LASD's Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025
- 1 Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Conference
- 48 resource fairs or other community engagements such as:
  - Community Advisory Committee Meetings
  - LASD Community Dialogues
  - Parks and Recreation Resource Events & Parks After Dark
  - Community Symposium
  - Justice, Care, and Opportunities Department (JCOD) Father's Day Event
- Community Meetings in Florence-Firestone, Athens, Willowbrook, and Lancaster
- Hosted a National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) conference session: *Unveiling Deputy Gangs: Understanding the Phenomenon and Implementing Oversight Measures*
- 4,000+ followers on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, & YouTube



# Community Engagement Efforts

## COMMUNITY EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

### **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Conference**

The Commission's 4th Annual Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement Conference was held on November 8, 2024, at Earvin "Magic" Johnson Recreation Area Conference Hall. More than 100 community members, academics, law enforcement professionals and County Departments gathered for a day of discussion on civilian oversight models, legal obstacles to civilian oversight, and the community's vision for civilian oversight of law enforcement.

In addition to hearing great insight from the keynote speaker, Hon. Mike A. Gipson (Assemblymember of the 65th District), attendees had the opportunity to network and learn from others in the areas of innovative and effective approaches to civilian oversight of law enforcement. Three sessions focused on the challenges to and effective practices in civilian oversight, strategies to strengthen oversight, and community involvement in building the County's vision for oversight of law enforcement. The conference concluded with attendees gathering for a facilitated conversation to recap the sessions and explore steps to implement improvements.

This conference was designed by a joint planning committee of the L.A. County Civilian Oversight Commission, the Human Relations Commission, the Department of Youth Development, the Department of Public Health, and the Justice, Care & Opportunities Department.

### **Virtual Conference**

The Commission developed and hosted one virtual conference in 2024. It was held on March 2, 2024, on the topic of the LASD Budget. Panelist presentation materials and recordings can be accessed by visiting the Commission's website at [coc.lacounty.gov](http://coc.lacounty.gov).

### **NACOLE Conference**

Several Commissioners and staff attended the 30th annual National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) conference in October in Tucson, Arizona. This 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. Commission staff hosted one session at the conference that provided a space for oversight practitioners to discuss issues important to civilian oversight of law enforcement. The title of the Commission's NACOLE session was "Unveiling Deputy Gangs: Understanding the Phenomenon and Implementing Oversight Measures".



## Community Events

Commission staff were invited to and attended a number of community events across Los Angeles County, including the Taste of Soul in Leimert Park, Parks After Dark events for Hispanic Heritage & Winter Wonderland celebrations, the Commission of Children and Families, and various LASD Community Dialogue events in Palmdale, Lancaster, South Los Angeles, and East Los Angeles.

## COMPLAINTS AND COMMENDATIONS

Members of the public make complaints to the Commission about the LASD via email, telephone, in-person, or by mail. The Commission also hears complaints and commendations during public meetings and town halls.

The Commission is currently unable to investigate complaints. The Commission is working to be able to receive, track, and investigate complaints as authorized with the passage of Measure R in 2020. Currently, the Commission refers complaints it receives to the OIG, who then forwards the complaints to the LASD for investigation. Those making complaints should be aware that unless you choose to remain anonymous, your name and complaint will be forwarded to the LASD for investigation. If you do not allow the OIG to share your complaint, it will not be thoroughly investigated. However, the OIG will “evaluate” your complaint to identify systemic issues within the LASD. The Commission’s newly created Complaints Ad Hoc Committee and staff are working with IT to develop a database to track complaints and an electronic complaint form.

## A 3-YEAR LOOK BACK AT THE NUMBERS

Commission meetings, attendance, special hearings, and related events are important law enforcement oversight functions. The Commission often takes time to look back at the number of events that have taken place and the opportunities for community engagement. Below you will find a look back at the numbers from 2022 to 2024.

	2022	2023	2024	Change from 2023 to 2024
Commission Meeting Attendees	685	952	878	-7.77%
Public Comments	140	190	155	-18.40%
Special Hearings	7	1	2	100%
Special Hearing Attendees	1,000	96	603	528.10%
Community Resource Fairs or Other Engagement Events	4	10	48	380%



# Key Oversight Efforts and Achievements in 2024

## **Special Hearings and Follow up on Commission Recommendations regarding Deputy Gangs and Cliques**

In our commitment to uncovering systemic issues within the Sheriff's Department, the Commission held additional special hearings on deputy gangs. These hearings provided a critical platform for expert testimony, community input, and investigative findings that have informed our recommendations to eradicate deputy gangs and cliques from the Sheriff's Department.

## **Special Hearing regarding the LASD's Defunct Public Corruption Unit**

Through a Special Hearing and its investigation into the now-defunct LASD Public Corruption Unit, the Commission exposed this unit, established by former Sheriff Alex Villanueva, for what it was: a rogue squad of deputies who were used to go after and intimidate oversight officials and others who criticized Villanueva's running of the LASD. These McCarthyesque tactics can never be allowed to happen again.

## **Proposed Revisions to Chapter 3.79 of the County Code**

Recognizing the need for stronger oversight mechanisms, the Commission proposed key revisions to Chapter 3.79 of the Los Angeles County Code to clarify the Commission's authority and role. These proposed changes are discussed above.

## **Annual Commission Conference and Participation in National Oversight Discussions**

Our Annual Conference served as a vital forum for community members, policymakers, and law enforcement professionals to discuss pressing public safety issues and the future of civilian oversight. In addition, the Commission was honored to present at the 2024 National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) Conference, where we shared insights on our oversight strategies and engaged with oversight bodies from across the country on strategies for eliminating deputy gangs, cliques and other harmful subgroups from the Sheriff's Department. The Commission also participated in other major oversight conferences throughout the year, reinforcing our commitment to learning from and contributing to national best practices in law enforcement accountability.



## **Creation of Ad Hoc Committees**

To address emerging issues with greater focus and expertise, the Commission established new ad hoc committees tasked with conducting in-depth investigations and developing targeted recommendations on key oversight matters.

## **Strengthening Community Engagement Through New Staff Roles**

Recognizing the importance of public engagement, the Commission welcomed a Communications Manager and a Community Services Coordinator to our team. These new roles will lead in expanding our outreach efforts to ensure that community members are well-informed and actively involved in our oversight work.

## **Joint Meetings with the Probation Oversight Commission (POC) and the Sybil Brand Commission (SBC)**

Understanding that public safety oversight requires collaboration, the Commission held joint meetings with the POC and the SBC to address overlapping concerns related to law enforcement practices, detention facilities, and community safety initiatives. These partnerships have strengthened our ability to advocate for comprehensive reforms across the justice system.





# Looking Forward

As we move into 2025, we recognize that much work remains to be done. The Commission remains committed to pushing for meaningful reforms, strengthening public trust in law enforcement, and ensuring that LASD operates with the highest standards of integrity and professionalism.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the community members, advocacy organizations, and oversight partners who have engaged with us throughout the year. Your voices and participation are the foundation of our work. We thank you for exploring this report, engaging our findings, and joining us in our ongoing mission to create a more just, transparent, and accountable law enforcement system in Los Angeles County.

# Acknowledgements

As we work to bring effective oversight to the LASD, none of this would be possible without the continued engagement of dedicated residents in 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, its Executive Office, and many County departments. Moreover, we want to thank each member of the Commission for their dedication, hard work, and constant desire to assist the community.

A special thank you to Los Angeles County Supervisors Hilda Solis, Holly Mitchell, Lindsey Horvath, Janice Hahn, and Kathryn Barger. Thank you to Executive Officer Edward Yen and his staff for their assistance. We appreciate your ongoing support.



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