

# Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement: An Overview

Partnering for Progress: Innovative Approaches to Civilian Oversight

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# CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT MODELS

REVIEW

INVESTIGATIVE

MONITOR /  
AUDITOR

HYBRID

AGENCY

SYSTEM

# LOOKING AT YOUR APPROACH

REACTIVE vs. PROACTIVE

MUNICIPAL vs. COUNTY

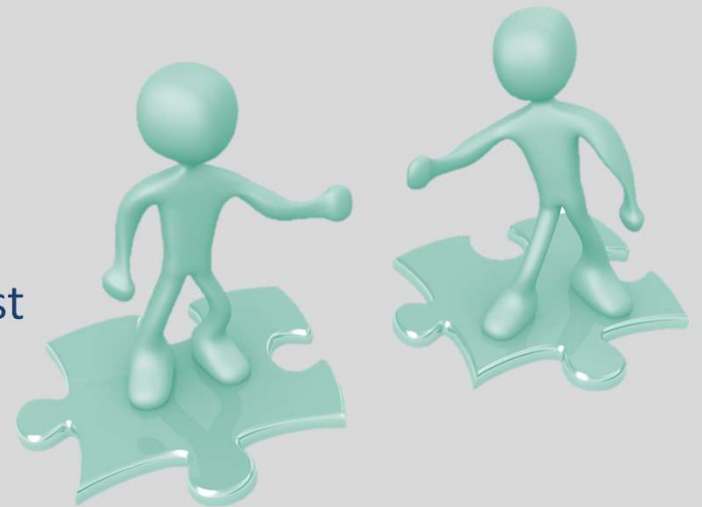
PERCEPTION vs. REALITY

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES



# INDEPENDENCE

- Absence of real or perceived influence from law enforcement, political actors, and other special interests looking to affect the operations of the civilian oversight agency.
- Often looked at in terms of structural independence, political independence, and operational (or process) independence.
- Impartiality, fairness, and working in a manner that maintains community and stakeholder trust is of utmost importance.





CONFIDENTIAL

## UNFETTERED ACCESS TO RECORDS AND FACILITIES

- Required information access to meet mandate
- The ability to review all records relevant to an investigation or other matters within the scope of a civilian oversight agency's authority in a timely manner
- Timely and reliable access to department records, information, and facilities
- The “what” and “how” should be addressed early on — what information will be accessible, how it will be accessed, and within what time frames?

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH & INVOLVEMENT

**Agencies should consider dedicating significant resources to community outreach because of its potential impact.**

- Build awareness of its existence
- Share reports and findings with the public
- Build relationships with stakeholders
- Recruit volunteers
- Solicit community input and involvement
- Facilitate learning and greater understanding
- Broker improved relationships
- Build coalitions
- Develop a greater capacity for problem-solving

**It is important to solicit stakeholder input and involvement on how oversight should function and which issues it should address.**

- When establishing civilian oversight, stakeholders must work to determine the appropriate degree of initial and ongoing community involvement in the oversight agency's work.
- Including community members in the process can take a variety of forms.
- In all cases, community involvement should represent the local population's composition and diversity



# BENEFITS OF CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT

*Civilian oversight is not just about complaints of misconduct...*

## BUILDING TRUST WITH THE COMMUNITY

- Better communication
- Better investigative outcomes
- Collaborative environment

## FAIR AND CONSISTENT PRACTICES WITHIN LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Monitoring of investigations
- Fair and consistent application of discipline
- Policies and procedures that for law enforcement and the communities they serve



# Questions?

**NACOLE**

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